



Chapter One: The Pendragon Realm

Pendragon is a game set in an idealized medieval period. However, even the most basic social assumptions of that period are very different from those of our contemporary life. To participate fully in the fabric of *Pendragon*, players must understand the basic facts of the underlying social and “political” environment. This is *not* modern fantasy. Some vital parts of the most important Arthurian stories simply don’t make sense if we view them only from a modern perspective. Thus, this game does not pander wholesale to contemporary sensibilities and re-interpretations, but works as much as possible from the medieval perspective.

This chapter gives background information that is known to every player character, providing the unspoken background for everything that goes on in game. Your first character knows everything in this section. This information is written specifically from a Salisbury knight’s perspective in the pre-Arthurian era. It includes political, geographic, social, and economic information, and a bit of folklore as well. It is very important to understand these things if you wish your character to succeed. Your character may choose not to act within these parameters during the game, but you still need to know these things because this is how almost everyone else is going to act.

This chapter’s information is drawn from both literary sources and the recorded history of the period. The juxtaposition of these two points of view is emphasized here, at the start of the game, because during much of the play of *Pendragon* you may find your character(s) actions informed differently by these two positions.

It is important to understand that the information given here is simply common knowledge, not necessarily the most accurate data possible. A Saxon raider or a Pict might have a totally different perspective on these events and people. The descriptions below are by no means impartial, nor even necessarily true; they do, however, represent what most people of your society and culture have accepted as fact.

RECENT HISTORY

The year is 485 Anno Domini. About seventy years ago, when your grandfather was alive, the *Supreme Collegium* or High Council of Britain chose a native leader, known as Emperor Constantin, to rule the island. He reigned well

in difficult times, and in 440 his son Constans succeeded him. A few years later, Constans was killed, and the throne was assumed by a man named Vortigern.

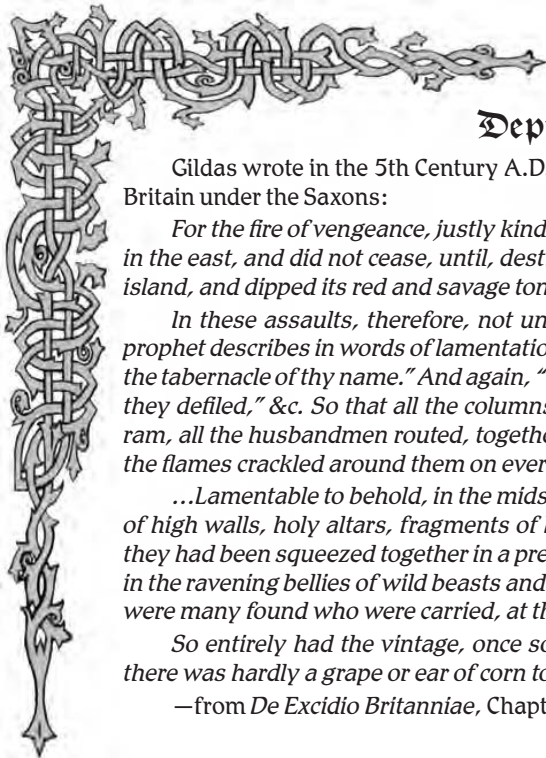
At that time, a massive Pictish and Irish invasion threatened the entire island until Vortigern hired a small mercenary army of Saxon warriors. Victory was not enough, though, and, inflamed by lust, Vortigern married the daughter of the Saxon King Hengest. Vortigern also brought warlike leaders from the north and settled them around the western coasts to defend against Irish invaders. But Vortigern was tyrannical and not well loved.

Soon, many eastern lords of Britain rebelled against their new king, but they were crushed and their lands given to his Saxon allies. Vortigern’s own son led another rebellion, and, though temporarily successful, he was killed in battle just 23 years ago. Then, during the infamous “Night of the Long Knives,” the Saxons betrayed Vortigern, slaying nearly all the British leadership. The island suffered greatly as Vortigern himself came under the rule of his erstwhile Saxon allies.

When your father was a young knight, in the year 466, Aurelius Ambrosius, eldest son of Constantin, landed with an army from Brittany. Immediately, the people of Britain literally flocked to his banner, a magical standard that depicted a great red dragon. Vortigern fled and took refuge in northwestern Cambria. It was there that the child sage Merlin prophesied the fate of Britain. Aurelius Ambrosius overcame the Saxons and then Vortigern himself, and was named High King. He was called the “high king,” or Pendragon, in part because of the great battle banner he bore.

During his reign, Aurelius Pendragon defeated new invasions by Saxons and even led a fleet to ravage the coasts of the Saxon and Frisian lands, suppressing further invasions for years. But when he marched against a combined Saxon and Irish army five years ago, in 480, he was treacherously poisoned, and died. His brother, Uther, led the army instead and gained victory. The grateful nobles then named Uther to be the next High King, the new Pendragon.

Uther has been a successful king thus far, quashing all rebellion, defeating Irish rebels and Saxon invaders alike. Last year he snatched victory from defeat with a surprise night raid that brought most of the northern kings under his rule.



Depredations of the Saxons

Gildas wrote in the 5th Century A.D., thus during King Arthur's time. Here is a part of his commentary about Britain under the Saxons:

For the fire of vengeance, justly kindled by former crimes, spread from sea to sea, fed by the hands of our foes in the east, and did not cease, until, destroying the neighbouring towns and lands, it reached the other side of the island, and dipped its red and savage tongue in the western ocean....

In these assaults, therefore, not unlike that of the Assyrian upon Judea, was fulfilled in our case what the prophet describes in words of lamentation: "They have burned with fire the sanctuary; they have polluted on earth the tabernacle of thy name." And again, "O God, the gentiles have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled," &c. So that all the columns were levelled with the ground by the frequent strokes of the battering-ram, all the husbandmen routed, together with their bishops, priests, and people, whilst the sword gleamed, and the flames crackled around them on every side.

...Lamentable to behold, in the midst of the streets lay the tops of lofty towers, tumbled to the ground, stones of high walls, holy altars, fragments of human bodies, covered with livid clots of coagulated blood, looking as if they had been squeezed together in a press; and with no chance of being buried, save in the ruins of the houses, or in the ravening bellies of wild beasts and birds; with reverence be it spoken for their blessed souls, if, indeed, there were many found who were carried, at that time, into the high heaven by the holy angels....

So entirely had the vintage, once so fine, degenerated and become bitter, that, in the words of the prophet, there was hardly a grape or ear of corn to be seen where the husbandman had turned his back.

—from *De Excidio Britanniae*, Chapter 24



Now, in 485, news has come that more Saxons are gathering in far Saxony to come to the aid of their kinsmen in Britain. The preparations for yet more war are building, and the noble British knights prepare once again to defend the realm under their courageous Pendragon.

Your character's ancestors, your grandfather and father, participated in these events. If you roll through the "Salisbury Family History" section (in Chapter 3), you will learn more of these events.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

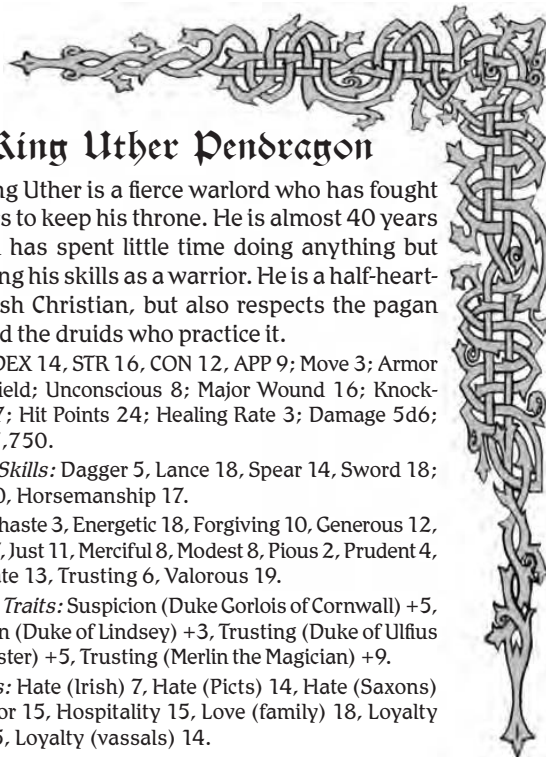
These extraordinary individuals are known throughout Britain and beyond. Your character has not personally met any of these people yet. Players are advised to review these characters briefly to get an idea of the highest level of success and power that can be reached by characters in the game.

UTHER PENDRAGON

Uther is the High King of Logres. He is known to be ambitious and a great fighter and leader, stern in his judgments. He came to the throne when his brother, Aurelius Ambrosius, died. He has no wife, but several paramours, and an illegitimate son Madoc, now a young man recently knighted. He desires to rule all of Britain, not just Logres, and has waged wars against invading Saxons and other British kingdoms.

MERLIN

The great magician and Archdruid of Britain, Merlin is reputedly the son of a nun and a daemon. He was baptized at birth, before the daemon could seize his soul, yet retained the supernatural powers he obtained from his father. He is the most skilled and revered of all magicians and, though respectful of Christians and Christianity, practices pagan magic without shame.



King Uther Pendragon

King Uther is a fierce warlord who has fought for years to keep his throne. He is almost 40 years old and has spent little time doing anything but practicing his skills as a warrior. He is a half-hearted British Christian, but also respects the pagan faith and the druids who practice it.

SIZ 12, DEX 14, STR 16, CON 12, APP 9; Move 3; Armor 12 + shield; Unconscious 8; Major Wound 16; Knockdown 17; Hit Points 24; Healing Rate 3; Damage 5d6; Glory 27,750.

Combat Skills: Dagger 5, Lance 18, Spear 14, Sword 18; Battle 20, Horsemanship 17.

Traits: Chaste 3, Energetic 18, Forgiving 10, Generous 12, Honest 7, Just 11, Merciful 8, Modest 8, Pious 2, Prudent 4, Temperate 13, Trusting 6, Valorous 19.

Directed Traits: Suspicion (Duke Gorlois of Cornwall) +5, Suspicion (Duke of Lindsey) +3, Trusting (Duke of Ulfius of Silchester) +5, Trusting (Merlin the Magician) +9.

Passions: Hate (Irish) 7, Hate (Picts) 14, Hate (Saxons) 18, Honor 15, Hospitality 15, Love (family) 18, Loyalty (lord) 15, Loyalty (vassals) 14.

Skills: Awareness 15, Boating 1, Courtesy 15, Dancing 5, Faerie Lore 1, Falconry 3, First Aid 18, Flirting 3, Folklore 2, Gaming 3, Heraldry 12, Hunting 9, Intrigue 21, Orate 10, Play [harp] 3, Read [Latin] 2, Recognize 9, Religion [British Christianity] 2, Romance 2, Singing 2, Stewardship 9, Swimming 2, Tourney 2.

Distinctive Features: Red hair, powerful physique.

Horse: Charger (6d6).

Equipment: Noble clothing (£9), personal gear, travel gear, war gear.



As a magician, he is greatly feared and mistrusted by all right-thinking people. He has great powers of Glamour, and is thus able to temporarily create things, change shape, conceal himself, and move very quickly around the land. He has helped King Uther several times, as well as some



Merlin the Magician

Merlin the Magician is a middle-aged man with great magical powers who serves as an advisor to King Uther. He is steeped in the druidic lore of Britain, wise and mysterious, and rightly feared and respected by everyone with good sense. Merlin's lord is Britain, not the king, though he helps Uther in many ways.

Merlin is capable of performing any magic known in Britain, whether British Christian or Druidic, Roman Christian, or Gnostic; he even knows something of Egyptian magic.

SIZ 12, **DEX** 17, **STR** 28*, **CON** 19*, **APP** 12; **Move** 7; **Armor** 2; **Unconscious** 12; **Major Wound** 19; **Knockdown** 12; **Hit Points** 47*; **Healing Rate** 5; **Damage** 7d6; **Glory** 14,452.

Combat Skills: **Dagger** 5, **Spear** 6; **Battle** 15, **Horsemanship** 1; **Magical Disarm** 26†.

Traits: **Chaste** 24, **Energetic** 19, **Forgiving** 10, **Generous** 18, **Honest** 19, **Just** 10, **Merciful** 8, **Modest** 12, **Pious** 19, **Prudent** 14, **Temperate** 15, **Trusting** 10, **Valorous** 15.

Passions: **Honor** 10, **Hospitality** 15, **Love (Britain)** 24, **Love (family)** 10, **Loyalty (Uther)** 10.

Skills: **Awareness** 21, **Boating** 5, **Chirurgery** 20, **Compose** 10, **Courtesy** 21, **Dancing** 2, **Faerie Lore** 21, **Falconry** 3, **First Aid** 24, **Flirting** 3, **Folklore** 21, **Gaming** 3, **Heraldry** 10, **Hunting** 21, **Industry** 10, **Intrigue** 3, **Orate** 3, **Play [harp]** 19, **Recognize** 13, **Religion [Roman or British Christianity]** 6, **Religion [Paganism]** 22, **Romance** 2, **Singing** 10, **Stewardship** 2, **Swimming** 2, **Tourney** 2.

Distinctive Features: Long grey hair and beard.


Horse: No need, for magic is much faster...

Equipment: Magician's robes, magician's staff.

Special: Merlin is the only person alive who can use every magical Talent (see "Magic" in Chapter 7).

*These scores are beyond human standards due to bonuses accrued from Merlin's magic: **STR** and **Hit Points** +16 each, and **CON** +8.

†Merlin must have his staff in hand to use this ability, and he must be within 20 yards of the target (even in melee). Otherwise, it is treated as a standard opposed combat roll. If Merlin wins, the opponent's weapon is torn from his grasp and sent hurtling to any location within range, at Merlin's whim.



other kings such as Lot. He claims to have the best interests of Britain in mind, but no one can truly trust a magician. He periodically disappears into his private hideaway to recover from his magical exertions.

OTHER NOTABLES

KING LOT

Lot is the greatest king of the north and a rival to King Uther. He rules over a powerful confederation of kings who resist the rule of the Pendragon, and everyone knows that Lot himself covets the esteemed title of High King.

ULFIUS, DUKE OF SILCHESTER

This neighboring lord of Salisbury is a renowned warrior and a loyal follower of King Uther. He is one of the most influential lords in Logres.

NIMUE

Lady Nimue is the Lady of the Lake, a powerful enchantress and head of a sisterhood of powerful pagan priestesses. Her home is beneath a magical lake which comes and goes at her call, and which may appear in almost any land.

THE FISHER KING

King Pellam, better known by his title of Fisher King, is known by reputation but never seen. He is the Keeper of the Holy Grail. His realm is hidden from mortal eyes, known only through legend. Thus, the secret Castle of the Holy Grail remains undiscovered.

KING ÆLLE

Ælle is the *bretwalda*, reigning king among the many Saxon tribes that have settled in Britain. His personal land is Sussex. He has boasted that he will take over all of Britain, and has fought many battles against King Uther. Migrants coming from the continent are continually reinforcing him, although other Saxon immigrants instead ally with his rival Saxon kings.

ARCHBISHOP DUBRICUS

Dubricus is the Archbishop of Britain. He oversees the religious affairs of the island from his holy see in Carlion, a Roman city in southern Cambria. He is a Roman Christian who uses his diplomatic skills to try to convince the many abbots of the British Church, which has no single leader, to submit to his (and Rome's) rule. Thus far, he has been unsuccessful.

BRITAIN AND EUROPE

In this short section, the basic geographical and political organization of your character's world is revealed. Note that the information here represents commonly accepted estimates, not the work of trained geographers, demographers, or other technical specialists, who will not exist for perhaps a thousand years.

As you will see, your character knows little about the world outside his own homeland of Logres, less of Europe, and nothing about lands and peoples outside of Europe.

POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF BRITAIN

Britain is divided into five areas: Logres, Cambria, Cumbria, Pictland, and Cornwall. Logres is by far the most important. Furthermore, several Saxon kingdoms inhabit the eastern coastal regions.

LOGRES

Logres is the lowland region of Britain previously ruled by the Romans, who established many great cities. Your character's county, Salisbury, is located here. Logres is the largest and most powerful kingdom of Britain and the home of British civilization and culture. It includes about one half of the island's population. It is divided into several regions that are loosely based on the pre-Roman tribal areas. However, those tribal regions have been subdivided into administrative counties, each ruled by a count (though a couple of them have dukes instead). These Roman-imposed regions are stronger and more practical than the older divisions.

Regions of Britain

KEY

Region Name
 KINGDOM NAME

INFLUENCE ONLY
 KINGDOM'S CENTER OF POWER
 WILDERNESS



Ireland

Pictland

HIGHLANDS

LOTHIAN

CORRE

NOHAUT

Cumbria

MALAHAUT

PERILOUS FOREST

Eburacum

LINDSEY

GWYNNED

CAMBRIAN WILDS

CAERCOLUN

Cambria

Logres

London

SILCHESTER

KENT

SUSSEX

CORNWALL

ESTREGALES

DEMETIAN SEA

SEVERN SEA

BRITISH SEA

NORTH SEA

IRISH SEA

OUT ISLES



Logres contains several significant cities, of which London is the largest and most important.

A map of Arthurian Britain appears on the endpapers, representing your character's knowledge of the world. The roads shown are all of Roman manufacture, but are now royal roads. They are considered to be the property of the local king. However, local lords have a responsibility to maintain these major thoroughfares. Anyone who commits violence upon the roads commits treason and incurs penalty as if having violated the sanctity of the king's own feast hall. Other Roman roads also exist in Logres, but they are not royal roads.

THE CHURCH

Two rival types of Christianity are practiced in Britain at this time.

- *British Christianity* is native to the island, established by immigrants four centuries ago. It has bishops and abbots, but no single figure rules over all of them. Their local kings or noblemen appoint these important leaders, who in turn are loyal to their regional lords.

- The *Roman Church* is part of a hierarchy that takes its orders from Rome, so the pope determines its bishops. The Roman Christian Church in Logres has one supreme churchman, the Archbishop of Carlion, a Cymric, Dubricus by name; there are also a dozen or so abbots of great houses.

Churchmen are not considered noble unless they are also landlords, which is not uncommon. Many noble families have made land grants to churches or abbeys, which in turn supply knights in the usual feudal manner.

For more on Christianity, see Chapter 7.

PAGANISM

Much of Britain is still pagan. Many farmers across Logres still make offerings to the field and weather gods, and many kingdoms outside of Logres even have kings and nobles who sacrifice to the old gods. The local kings are advised by councilors who are professed druids, a class of bardic priests and wise men who are in touch with the ancient powers of the land. The druid leaders are appointed to their positions by the local kings. A druidic network exists, but it does not have a ruling hierarchy. Instead, druids acknowledge each other's ranks through their exercise of knowledge and power.

Merlin the Enchanter, the Archdruid, is the acknowledged leader of the pagan religion, for no one is wiser or more powerful than he. Indeed, his power dwarfs that of all other druids, who are more advisors than magicians.

Another magical organization exists whose members are not druids, but who are yet priestesses and advisors. These generally lead local covens and perform farming and fertility rites. Like the druids, they are not a single organization but acknowledge each other through recognition of power and prestige. The leader of this group is Nimue, and her organization of the Ladies of the Lake is highly respected, if only from arms' length.

For more on Paganism, see Chapter 7.

FOREIGN BRITAIN

All the rest of Britain outside of Logres is foreign land. These lands are divided among five larger regions, each of which has several kingdoms within it. Many lands are inhabited by Cymric peoples, others by Irish, Saxons, or Picts.

CAMBRIA

Cambria is the western region of Britain. It is sometimes called Wales or, in the French fashion, Gales. Cambria, however, extends eastward beyond modern Wales to include a much larger region.

Two strong kings contend for power in Cambria. In the south, King Lak rules over Estregales. His subjects are generally descendants of ancient Irish raiders who settled here. He receives fealty from the lords of Escavalon, Gloucester, and Cardigan.

The lands of Gomeret and Isles (Anglesey and the Holy Isle), including Cheshire, are ruled by King Pellinore, an ambitious and difficult king. He is a fair and just man, but his passion for the hunt sometimes overcomes his obligations to his kingdom. Still, his people love him, and he has protected the land well from Irish raiders.

The interior of Cambria is all rugged mountains and forests. Many tribesfolk live there, outside the rule of any king or civilized ways.

CUMBRIA

The people of Cumbria are often called the "northern British." Cumbria includes all the lands north of the Humber River and south of the Pictish mountains. Much of this region is of moor-covered mountains or dense, unexplored forest.

King Lot, the King of Lothian, is the preeminent king of the north. He comes from the northern islands of the Orkneys, but rules over Lothian. He also has alliances with many Pictish tribes. Though Lot is dominant, the rulers of most of the other British kingdoms have not submitted to him.

The Kingdom of Malahaut is the strongest single kingdom, and King Uther recently saved its king, Sir Barant de Apres, from the Saxons. Barant has as many titles as King Uther does: the Centurion King, King of the Brigantes, heir of King Coel the Old, and especially King of One Hundred Knights. He rules from the city of Eburacum (York).

THE SAXON COAST

Several regions of eastern Britain have been settled by Germanic peoples from the northern mainland of Europe. Collectively, they are called Saxons, though technically not all are from Saxony. Saxons currently hold Sussex, while the Jutes hold Kent. Angles hold the lands of Nohaut and Diera. These regions each have their own kings.

Although they are all hostile to the Cymry, the "Saxons" are also rivals, and a rough peace is maintained through a high king called a *Bretwalda*, who is currently King Ælle of Sussex.

PICTLAND

Pictland includes everything north of Cumbria. Most of it is mountain, unexplored and unknown to anyone except the wild, tattooed natives. Its rugged western coast-

line, called the Long Isles, is occupied by Irish from the powerful kingdom of Dal Riada.

The wild tribesmen of this region regularly raid and pillage Britain, returning home with plunder.

CORNWALL AND BRITTANY

Cornwall and Brittany are “the west.” Cornwall includes the entire southwestern peninsula of the British Isle (an area much larger than the Cornwall of modern times). It is famous for its rich tin mines and its close political connections with Brittany, whose settlers have been populating and dominating the northern half of the peninsula for a generation.

Cornwall is divided between two rulers. Neither has ever submitted to Uther. The northwestern half of it is ruled over by Duke Gorlois; his wife, Ygraine, is the most renowned beauty in Britain. The southeastern half is ruled by King Idres, who also rules most of northern Brittany.

Brittany was once a Roman province, but it was severely depopulated by barbarians and disease, and has recently been settled by emigrants from Britain. Its coastal lands are rich and thriving, although the interior is a wild and enchanted forest. Most of the north is ruled by old King Idres of Totnes, the Cornish king. King Conan of Vannetais, in the south, is the other major ruler, ambitious and troubled by a fierce hatred for the King of France.

BEYOND BRITAIN

IRELAND

Ireland is a barbarous island populated by many clans of notorious wildness, all divided into five great kingdoms. It has a High King, but he rules more in name than in fact. The savage tribesmen of the region regularly raid across the Irish Sea to pillage Britain.

EUROPE

Little is known of continental Europe in this time. The major regions are Rome (Italy), France, Ganis, Gaul, and the far-distant Byzantine Empire. The great Roman Empire of the Caesars has fallen, replaced by warring barbarian kingdoms ruled by grandsons of the ancient German war gods.

France is a large country in the north occupied by the Franks. Its king is Clovis, who does little more than oversee the many Frankish lords who continually bicker among themselves. The capital city of Paris is a squalid, fortified city.

Ganis is a powerful land in the southern coast of Biscay. Sailors of Ganis and Brittany contend for the Atlantic trade routes between Britain and the Mediterranean, along with the many Saxon pirates who ply the region.

Gaul is the southern region, more civilized and Roman than the northern French. (Most of its inhabitants can still read and write!)

Italy is dominated by the Goths, Germanic tribesfolk who try unsuccessfully to ape the Roman ways. In Rome is the pope, the leader of the Roman Christian church.

The Byzantine Empire is a powerful one, but is so far away that it is beyond concern. Every other land in Europe

is a feudal or barbarian kingdom. The farther north the kingdom lies, the more barbaric it is, making the Picts and the Scandinavians the most barbaric.

THE HIGH ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD

As a knight, your character knows all this information intimately. Other important information about knighthood is found in Chapter 7.

THE ORIGINS OF KNIGHTHOOD

In the beginning, all men were equal in a perfect world of harmony and peace. But Adam and Eve condemned humanity to live in the world of trouble and death. Envy and covetousness came into being, and when men became violent, then might triumphed over right. Cruel people became leaders and forced themselves upon the weak and hapless.

At last, knighthood was instituted to restrain the unjust and to defend the weak. The most strong, courageous, and loyal man in every thousand (the *ex mille electus*) was chosen to be a knight (*L. miles*). He was given weapons, armor, a noble horse, and a squire to serve him. He was placed over the common people to protect them from tyranny and wild beasts. Commoners, in turn, were to till the earth and support the knight.

Since virtue is inherited, it has been the duty of each knight to train his son to follow in his noble steps, and so the institution has continued. The great Biblical heroes were knights: Judas Maccabeus and King David, for instance. Certain ancient pagans were knights as well, Alexander and Julius Caesar being among their number.

BECOMING A KNIGHT

A formalized sequence for learning the skills of knighthood is an established part of the feudal tradition. Except under very special conditions, every aspirant to knighthood must follow these steps.

PAGE

Pages are young boys or girls between the ages of ten and fifteen who are learning the ways of courtly life by observing their elders and doing those tasks assigned to them. After serving as pages, most girls become maids-in-waiting and wives. Boys become squires.

SQUIRE

Boys may become squires at age fifteen. Squires are servants of their knights, studying the ways of knighthood as they serve. Those who are confident in themselves, who show promise, and who have the right connections may become knights. Most will remain squires.

KNIGHT

Most aspirants must wait until age 21 to be knighted, after serving six years as squires. Men knighted younger are exceptional, but not unknown. (Lancelot was knighted at eighteen.) Sometimes a young heir must be hastily knighted and ennobled upon reaching his majority at age eighteen or, even rarer, at fifteen.



RANKS OF KNIGHTHOOD

All knights share certain duties and traits. However, not all knights are equal in rank, and there exist several grades of knighthood. The difference between these is determined primarily by the source of income for the knight. (Note that the descriptive term to describe a knight may either precede or follow the word “knight.” Thus, it is equally correct to say *knight bachelor* or *bachelor knight*. This is a vestigial remnant of the French influence on Germanic English.)

The grade or rank that your character attains affects the course of the game in many ways. The rules for the effects of varying incomes are given in the Chapter 8. The rules that indicate how increased prestige affects the game, as derived by increasingly powerful and respected grades of knights, are found in Chapter 7, “Ambition and Faith,” and under “Glory” (in Chapter 5).

KNIGHT MERCENARY

Knights without a lord are the lowest class of knights. They are called *mercenary* because they must seek to sustain themselves through work for money. Since knights are fighting men, they generally make their living by seeking mercenary soldier employment, and differ from ordinary mercenary cavalry (sergeants) only in that they have taken the oath of knighthood before a lord.

KNIGHT BACHELOR

Knights bachelor derive their income directly from their lord, either through direct maintenance or by cash payments. (The word bachelor derives from *bas chevalier*, or “low knight.” It has come to be associated with unmarried men because bachelor knights were generally not rich enough to support a wife.)

Knights bachelor are also called “household knights” because they live in their lord’s household, not on their own land. They are his bodyguard and standing army, and travel wherever their lord takes them. Their loyalty is crucial to the lord’s success, perhaps even to his survival, so they are usually treated well and receive great honor.

A knight bachelor may bear a *pennocelle* (a small pennant) upon his lance to distinguish his rank from mercenary knights and commoners, who wear no decoration.

KNIGHT VASSAL

Knights who own their own land are knight vassals. They have their own manor and lands, and are thus substantial landlords capable of equipping themselves for war. Knights vassal generally live at their own home, but are obliged to serve for forty days per year at war, plus a customary extension of twenty more if the lord demands it. They must also serve three months of castle garrison duty, and appear at court to offer advice whenever the lord demands it. A knight vassal may bear a pennant on his lance.



KNIGHT LORD

Knights are sometimes lords over other knights, and are thus called knight lords. Knight lords are the upper-rank noblemen, the lords of the land. In this book, a “lord” means any knight who has taken on other knights as followers. The lowest grade of lord is a banneret knight. The highest is the High King.

THE COAT OF ARMS

Each knight has his own unique coat of arms. This is a design carried on his shield and surcoat, but also used to mark anything of the owner’s as a personal possession. Only the knight, his wife, and his hired herald (who must wear a special type of coat called a tabard) can wear a knight’s personal arms.

The knight’s eldest son wears his father’s arms, but with a special mark called a *difference* which is taken off only after he inherits the title and other rights of his deceased father. Other sons generally make some modification to their father’s coat, so families all have similar coats of arms. Look at the examples in this book to see how the de Galis family all have three red diagonal stripes, or the Orkney clan all have a yellow double-headed eagle on a purple background.

The art and science of understanding coats of arms is called heraldry, and it can become extremely detailed and complex. These complexities are discussed in great detail in any number of books you can find at your local library, and are touched upon only briefly in *Pendragon*.

FEUDALISM

The rules and laws of feudalism govern the world of *Pendragon*. The following sections deal with facts and beliefs that were prevalent in the Middle Ages, but which are unknown to most people today.

However, note that the rules and laws of *Pendragon* are generally based on the considerably more well-known laws of Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries, not those of 6th-century Britain. Still, they are historical facts — the reality of a brutal and violent world. Players must be at least vaguely familiar with these factors in order to understand their characters fully.

Feudalism begins with the belief that everything belongs to the king, as highest lord of the land. All rights derive from the king, who has distributed some of his rights and responsibilities among his lords; they, in turn, distribute some of these rights and responsibilities to their knights. All obligations are personal, dependent upon the relationship between a lord and his followers. The followers swear fealty to the lord, and afterwards are known as vassals of that lord.

The lord ensures the loyalty of his favored followers by giving them land, the single most valuable and permanent commodity in the realm. To receive gold is a slightly dubious honor, since even a peasant can be bribed with gold. However, a transfer of land is sacred. Two types of land transfer are common:

- A *gift* is given for the duration of the recipient’s life but upon death reverts to the lord.
- A *grant* is given for the life of the recipient and his heirs.

A vassal does not really *own* the land he is given, but he does own all the granted benefits collected from that land. The vassal receives his grant in return for loyalty and services. As long as the knight’s obligations are satisfied, the benefits are legally his and cannot be justly taken away. Typically, a knight’s obligations are to serve loyally in his lord’s military campaigns and to advise his lord on important matters. In return, the lord owes his vassal protection, sustenance, and livelihood. Thus, there is a non-equal but reciprocal agreement between lord and vassal.

Obligations may be changed only if both parties agree. Usually they are only changed when one person has done something significant for the other. If the vassal rescued the king on the battlefield, he might receive his former gift as a permanent grant. If the knight violates his loyalty, he can lose the land he has of the lord. Typical reasons for land to revert to the lord include treason, failure to support the lord, or the lack of an heir when the grant holder dies. Daughters may inherit their father’s grants only if there are no male heirs.

Ranks of feudal vassalage begin with those closest to the king, both in friendship and in wealth. In *Pendragon* these are the British kings, lords, and office holders. In turn, these men appoint their own vassals. Knights (and squires, as knights-in-training) are the lowest class of noble vassals. They may hold land from the king, a count, a lower lord, or even from another knight; in some rare cases, a knight may become a vassal without a gift or grant of land.

Church officials and monasteries also rely upon land grants to knightly vassals in return for loyal service. Monasteries often became powerful landowners with their own knights to protect them.

OATHS

An oath is a promise made under the witness of God, the most sacred form of promise, and cannot be broken except with the gravest consequences: To Christians, it implies the threat of eternal damnation in Hell.

Perhaps just as important, though, are the more immediate social consequences. All normal people shun oath-breakers. A man’s sworn word is one of the few possessions that he has after all material goods are taken away. It measures his soul and personality. A breaker of oaths has a shriveled and tiny soul, is not to be trusted, and forfeits the rights that he had as a member of society. Since all of society is based upon oaths and keeping one’s word, anyone who fails in this duty fails to uphold society and, therefore, cannot be part of it.

Oaths can be taken literally or figuratively. However, most common people look to the oath’s spirit to be fulfilled, while intellectuals sometimes allow only the letter to be fulfilled. Such misunderstandings are the cause of much friction between classes. In game terms, oaths are handled using the Honor passion (see “Passions” in Chapter 4).





HOMAGE AND FEALTY

Every knight but the king is someone's vassal. Everyone who has a lord has undertaken a ritual (later called a *ceremony of commendation*) composed of *homage* and *fealty*, pledging two free men to an unbreakable, permanent bond of loyalty.

The first part of the ceremony, homage, is ancient, having originated among the Franks and Saxons. Homage is an act of submission. It is the personal oath of an underling to his lord. The vassal kneels and raises his clasped hands to his lord, who encloses them in his own. The vassal gives a brief oath promising aid and counsel. *Aid* means military assistance, while *counsel* means support of the lord in his business and the granting of advice. Then the lord gives a similar promise of leadership, and of support expressed as a *beneficium*, or gift. The *beneficium* is usually a land grant, or *fief*. After swearing, the vassal rises, and the men kiss once to seal the oath. This finishes the act of homage.

Fealty is an oath of faithfulness. It is a solemn oath, often sworn upon saints' relics. Fealty's most common clause includes a promise never to attack the lord. Unlike homage, which can be sworn only once, a fealty oath is sometimes re-sworn to remind someone of his place, or whenever otherwise felt by the lord to be necessary.

After both of these oaths have been sworn, the vassal is the "man of another man." He is also sometimes called "a man of hands and mouth."

Multiple loyalties are possible when a man swears fealty to two (or more) different lords. The issue is confused at court, but currently the most popular solution offered to the problem of multiple lords is the practice of having a *liege lord*. That is, among all of one's lords, one is selected to be liege, and he has priority in the vassal's loyalty in case of conflict.

Your character has only one lord to begin, which creates no problem. However, if he acquires lands elsewhere, the character will eventually have to choose one as liege.

SOCIAL CLASSES

Society consists of three strictly separate social classes — nobles, clergy, and commoners. Everyone participates in this system. People are born into a specific class and enter the same occupation as their parents. People do not usually expect to change their status.

This seems shocking to us today, when individual freedom is the highest ideal. Members of our modern, democratic society have difficulty understanding the class system which dominated medieval society, but an understanding of it is necessary to capture the feel and meaning of the literature and events of the Middle Ages.

Strict social classes are not inherently wrong or bad. Many people find comfort in avoiding responsibilities and knowing that their daily routine will be predictable and unchanging. It is not being in a caste which is bad, but rather being in an exploited and abused caste. Thus, although many miserable serfs would like to have their condition improved, they know they will always be serfs, with all the advantages and disadvantages of being a man or woman of the soil.

The ruling class of nobles jealously holds its prerogatives. So insistent are noblemen on maintaining class differences that a knight is likely to lose his status for engaging in non-knightly behavior, such as physical labor or money lending. The inarguable belief in "might makes right" allows noblemen to maintain their prerogative at everyone else's expense.

It is important, however, to remember that these are social classes, not strictly hard castes. For instance, any knight may attain the status of lord by being richly rewarded by his own lord. Furthermore, even a lowly commoner may attain knighthood through prowess of arms displayed on the battlefield. Finally, the clergy fill their ranks from people of all classes.

Admittedly, every age has people who do not fit into their class. Such people are exceptional and, like exceptional people in any time, will find a way through or around the system to their advantage. In the Middle Ages, exceptional commoners usually join the Church, or become personal employees of a nobleman. Exceptional members of the ruling class may become saints, like St. Francis, or heroes, like King Arthur.

THE NOBLE CLASS

The nobility is the upper class. Nobles are the leaders and warriors of society. They do not work for their own maintenance, but acquire the food and goods of their life from others.

However, within this class not all persons are equal. Two distinct divisions exist, commonly called the higher and lower nobility. The lower nobility are the knights. The higher nobility are called lords. Lords include all knights who have their own vassals, and includes all hereditary landholders. Lords are also knights, of course, but are usually referred to by their higher rank.

This division is common among most feudal cultures. In English, the terms for higher and lower nobility are *lords* (higher) and *gentry* (lower); in French, they are *barons* and *chevaliers*; in German, *Herren* and *Ritter*; and in Spanish, *grandes* and *hidalgos*.

Further, within the category of lord are several ranks of noblemen. Among the British, these are ranged from lowest to highest as follows: banneret, baron, earl, duke, king.

The knights' primary responsibility is to serve as the military force for their lord. They have many privileges and freedoms which are not available to the lower classes, gained in exchange for the pledge to die, if necessary, for their lord.

Knights fill the most advantaged class, and thus have the greatest freedom and most privileges of anyone else in the game. *Pendragon* concerns itself primarily with this class of men.

THE CLERICAL CLASS

The clergy includes all members of the Christian Church, a powerful institution which owns considerable lands and has many rights of its own. Churchmen are exempt from most ordinary laws and claim loyalty to God, a

higher authority than the king — a claim which is a source of great conflict between clergy and royalty.

The clergy, supposed to be chaste, can hardly be expected to reproduce itself, so it draws members from both the nobility and the commoners. It is not unusual for younger sons of the nobility to join the clergy rather than be landless knights, seeking whatever opportunity the Church can give them. For bright and ambitious commoners, the Church provides the best opportunity for advancement.

Churchmen may be secular clergy or monastics. Secular clergy includes bishops and the village priests who administer the sacraments to commoners, and who oversee the spiritual development of their parishioners. Monastics are men or women who have taken the religious path of isolation and joined special communities that practice devotion apart from the ways of ordinary mankind.

THE COMMON CLASS

Everyone who is not of the nobility or clergy is a commoner. Commoners are the basis for society, and make up 95% of the population. They are the ordinary people who provide the food and goods that allow noblemen and clergy to pursue their specialized functions. Commoners are mostly farmers, whether poor serfs without any freedom or rich landholders who maintain the right to change lords at will. However, the artisans who populate cities and make their wares are also commoners, as are the merchants who act as middlemen and brokers for trade across Britain.

Members of the nobility can become commoners. A squire's sons are considered commoners, though of good status within the broad spectrum of commoners.

Commoners can sometimes enter the ranks of knighthood, as well. Anyone who can acquire weapons and employment in the ranks of mercenaries might rise from soldier or sergeant to squire or knight through recognition by his leader. Commoners who perform outstandingly, even off the battlefield, can be raised to the status of squires or even knights by their grateful lords. Sometimes lords desperate for money sell knighthood to rich men. More often, though, lords' daughters marry wealthy commoners, who thus share their wealth with the lord in return for the chance for their own children to become noble.

CUSTOMS AND LAWS

Every player must remember that these rules of society are the keystones of his character's society and of the world. They are what make people into people, and set them apart from beasts.

THE UNIVERSAL LAWS

Certain customary laws — *hospitality*, *family*, *loyalty*, and *honor* — are universal among all the peoples of Britain. Your character knows these unwritten laws well. From childhood on, they have been a part of life for every knight.

These laws are respected even between enemies. For instance, when an enemy Pictish king accepts the hospitality of King Arthur, he is confident that he can eat and relax

in the Pendragon's halls without fear of murder, even if he is dead drunk. Only the Saxons and other dastards perfidiously break this rule, and then only occasionally. Similarly, if the enemy Pict king was conquered by Arthur and swore loyalty, then Arthur can be confident that his new vassal will obey him. Finally, if someone marries into a family, even that of his enemy, he becomes a kinsman and can therefore be trusted.

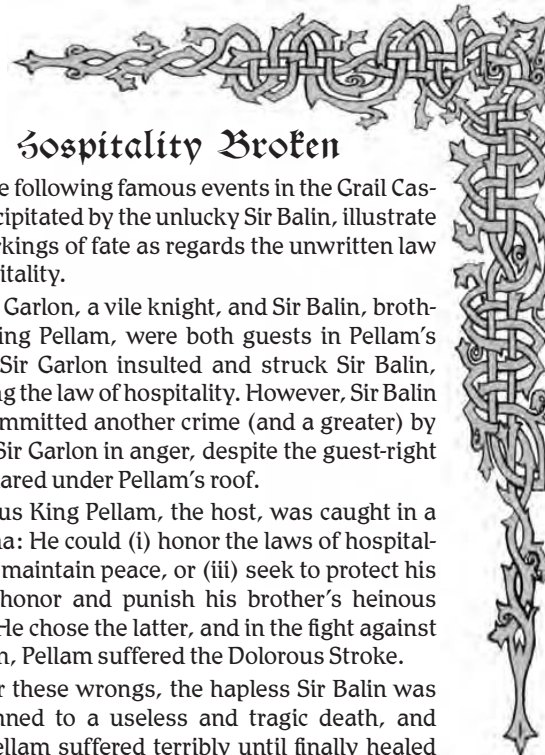
This is not to say that your character must *always* abide by the four laws, or that he must assume that others will. You control your own character, and tricky issues such as consistency of behavior or your character's reputation are handled by the game rules, not just left to the Gamemaster to enforce or ignore.

Players must understand that these laws precede and underlie the bold new concepts of chivalry that King Arthur will promote. Even the most barbaric or vicious groups in Britain accept these ancient traditions as necessary and essential for survival in an unforgiving world. In game terms, these laws are the four basic passions held by all characters. See Chapter 4 for further information.

HOSPITALITY

This unspoken law, of the four mentioned above, deserves a little more attention here. Among the divergent cultures of Britain, there is one matter upon which all agree — the rules of hospitality. The host may never act against his visitor, but must treat him as an honored guest. The visitor, in turn, must be civil and not insult his host.

A person's house is considered to be sacrosanct, protected by whatever powers watch over mankind. This is true whether one lives in a hovel or a mighty castle. This sanctity does not mean the powers intervene to protect a



Hospitality Broken

The following famous events in the Grail Castle, precipitated by the unlucky Sir Balin, illustrate the workings of fate as regards the unwritten law of hospitality.

Sir Carlon, a vile knight, and Sir Balin, brother to King Pellam, were both guests in Pellam's castle. Sir Carlon insulted and struck Sir Balin, breaking the law of hospitality. However, Sir Balin then committed another crime (and a greater) by killing Sir Carlon in anger, despite the guest-right both shared under Pellam's roof.

Thus King Pellam, the host, was caught in a dilemma: He could (i) honor the laws of hospitality and maintain peace, or (iii) seek to protect his family honor and punish his brother's heinous crime. He chose the latter, and in the fight against Sir Balin, Pellam suffered the Dolorous Stroke.

For these wrongs, the hapless Sir Balin was condemned to a useless and tragic death, and King Pellam suffered terribly until finally healed by the celebration of the Mass of the Holy Grail many years later.



house if it is attacked. It does mean, though, that the offender is never trusted in anyone's house again if he breaks the rules, and that an ill fate will dog the offender's footsteps from then on.

A person need not invite anyone into the safety of his hearth, but if he does, then *both* people must obey certain rules of respect and safety. Once inside, peace must reign between them, even if they later discover that they are deadly enemies. They can go outside and fight, or one of them can leave and then return with hostile intentions, if he is permitted back in. But while inside, both parties must be peaceful, and the visitor must even aid the owner of the hearth to defend it if they are attacked.

Any breach in this unwritten contract is viewed and corrected by the powers that oversee the laws of hospitality. Such powers ensure that justice is eventually delivered. Hence, common superstition assures your character that, if a person abuses this rule, something terrible will occur to him at the most inconvenient time, whether delivered by God, Llew, or Wotan, all of whom protect the hearth.

FAMILY

The world is a dangerous place, and it is easy to mistrust in others, even if they are not strangers who speak a different tongue and worship alien gods. Foreigners are, *a priori*, hostile and threatening. The loyalty and affection of a person for his family is considered to be inherent to nature. It is unthinkable that someone would turn against his family. A kinslayer is inhuman, almost demonic.

One's own kin should always be trusted. Even if a kinsman acts despicably to others, he is still to be trusted. Only one's family can be counted upon in an emergency — any emergency. Given this understanding, an individual is not helpless against the world, but can always count on his kin for aid.

Sometimes a knight has to choose between loyalty to his kin and loyalty to his lord. There may be no way to resolve such problems without offending someone important. Such dilemmas fuel some of the greatest stories, and thus offer the best chances for roleplay.

Some of the commonly used family terms are as follows:

Clan: All people who claim descent from a common ancestor.

Family: The nuclear family, consisting of a husband and wife, and their dependants.

Lineage: All people who can actually trace their ancestry to a common ancestor. This is the "extended family."

Kindred: All people who are relatives of an individual, including those who are outside his lineage (e.g., his wife's family).

LOYALTY

Loyalty is acknowledged as the basis for all of society beyond the family. All members of society, excepting the mad, hold loyalty to someone. For warriors and soldiers (like your character), loyalty is particularly important because it is the foundation of military organization and the basis of survival in battle.

Logic and self-interest both provide a basis for loyalty. No one would consider it fair or just to perform hostile acts

against the person who supports them with food, protection, and comfort. Moreover, loyalty to a leader extends a person's influence outside of his own family, giving him a place in the larger world.

Loyalty is assured by ritualized pledges and oaths that establish the relationship between two people. As noted earlier in this chapter, feudal loyalty is an agreement between two parties: a leader and a follower.

Those who break an oath of loyalty are outcasts from society and will never again be trusted by right-thinking people. As with the laws of hospitality and kinship, the supernatural powers that watch over man may intervene to bring oathbreakers to a terrible end.

HONOR

Honor is the last and least of the four universal laws of society. It is required of knights, but not of everyone else. Having honor is one of the things that sets a knight apart from all others. Churchmen do not need honor, for they are supposed to put the interests of God and the Church before their own. Commoners do not need honor, for they have enough difficulty simply staying alive. Women do not need honor because they are "merely women," although women who *do* have honor are esteemed above others.

Knights, however, must have honor because they have agreed to take the oath of knighthood. Without honor, no oath is worth taking, for without it the sworn word will soon be broken. It is conceivable that a knight could cheat and connive yet maintain his own sense of honor, as long as the oath of knighthood was never violated.

Honor includes your character's personal code of integrity, pride, and dignity, which is important enough to be backed up by force of arms. Beyond these words, however, definition gets more difficult. Difficulty stems from using the critical adjective "personal." Every knight has agreed that it includes some things, such as killing a woman, for example. (The "Dishonorable Acts" table in Chapter 4 lists the things that everyone agrees are dishonorable actions for a knight.)

However, the concept of a *personal* definition of honor is important. It means two things: First, some aspects of honor are determined by the individual, not by common social consent. Secondly, "personal" is used to separate honor from the other sworn or innate social obligations, including the other unwritten laws of society or any others, which are determined socially.

CUSTOMS OF THE FAMILY

Feudalism and vassalage, already discussed, are the most important customs in the world of *Pendragon*. The laws of property and marriage, though, are still vital.

PATRIARCHY

The laws of patriarchy are based on Roman models and are reinforced by the beliefs of both the Judeo-Christian and the Germanic warrior traditions. These three systems uniformly hold men and male things as inherently more important than women and female things. Property belongs to the father, or *patriarch*. Thus the system is called patriarchal, in which everything of importance revolves around the family's leader.

Women in this system are degraded by the Church and diminished by the legal system. They are promised as pledges of friendship between men who would be allies. Their only power comes from overseeing the household and the family lands.

MARRIAGE AND INHERITANCE

Marriage is a sacred and legal institution that is supposed to secure certain inheritance rights for all members involved. It is sanctioned and blessed by the Church, and is recognized by all government authorities. Divorce is not allowed.

Note that there are absolutely no emotional requirements for marriage. It is an entirely political act, with little care evident for individual feelings. Thus it is not surprising that both men and women seek love, emotional expression, and satisfaction in extramarital affairs. These affairs eventually acquire unofficial sanction in the Courts of Love, wherein the art of *fine amor* is developed and exercised.

RULES OF MARRIAGE

In marriage, a woman leaves her blood relations and takes up residence with her husband, thereby joining herself and her children to his family. A critical function of marriage is to produce an heir (a son being vastly preferable) who will obtain control of the properties of both father and mother, as ordained by law.

Marriage is a legal institution, and children born to a legally married couple are *legitimate*, or “within the law,” and can inherit things without problem or question. Children born outside of wedlock are illegitimate, commonly called bastards (see Illegitimacy, below). Marriage also serves to increase property holdings, and is thus usually arranged for political ends; on rare occasions, however, it serves emotional needs as well.

In general, marriage and love are entirely separate matters for most medieval couples. Many marriages are arranged, and some couples see each other for the first time on their wedding day. The occasional happy marriage inspires bards to write poetry, spiteful overlords to become jealous and cruel, and other lovers to take heart. Most, however, are not so loving.

Marital fidelity was a constant issue in the Middle Ages. The desire for the lord to maintain his bloodline demanded complete fidelity from his wife, and fearful punishments could be invoked upon her for having a lover. Churchmen, themselves servants of a jealous Father God, thundered constantly about chastity from their pulpits. Undoubtedly, most women followed the social norm and remained faithful to their loveless marriage, just to keep things simple and safe.

Such fidelity was not expected, however, or at least not as expected, from married men. The now-infamous “double standard” was in its heyday. Women could be murdered for having a lover, but men were, in some circles at least, admired for their capacity to engender children upon numerous women.

ILLEGITIMACY

Many children are born out of wedlock. Noblemen seem especially subject to propagating this vice. Their partners are sometimes called lovers, concubines, courtesans, or

paramours, and are frequently of a social class significantly lower than that of the nobleman.

Children of such issue are illegitimate, or, basely said, “bastards.” The issue is not one of knowing one’s father or not. Often the children know quite well who their father is, but because they were born outside of marriage they have fewer rights than legitimate children. Most importantly, illegitimate children have no rights to inherit any property from their father.

Illegitimate children can be legally adopted and therefore allowed to inherit, but only if no legitimate children are living. Even then, other kinsmen close to the deceased father can challenge their rights.

Noblemen, at least the truly honorable ones, often provide for their concubines after they are dismissed. Sometimes such women are married off to one of the noble’s retainers as a reward for his loyalty. The women might even receive valuable properties to be passed on to the bastard afterwards. Noble fathers often keep half an eye on their illegitimate sons, too, and might even use their own influence to help their unacknowledged children advance in station beyond their mother’s class. This influence may be quite overt. In many cases, illegitimate sons help their legitimate brothers as loyal, reliable retainers.

DIVORCE

Divorce is the dissolution of the sacred bond of matrimony. It is a legal matter, but more importantly a religious one. However, the parts are so bound together that no one in the Middle Ages ever gets a legal divorce without Church approval. (That doesn’t occur until Henry VIII.)

Divorce is allowed only in cases of *adultery* and *consanguinity*. Adultery means the woman had or has a lover; the term is never applicable to men. Occasional annulments are granted on grounds of consanguinity — i.e., the person whom you married is more closely related to you than you originally believed. In general, marriages between any persons more closely related than third cousins are prohibited. Proving consanguinity is an expensive and laborious option, usually available only to kings or others who can afford the immense cost of pontifical procedure.

INHERITANCE

Strict laws govern inheritance. These laws may be bent, but they cannot be broken without considerable intervention. Parties who defend the laws are usually the next of kin, who stand to inherit the property, and the lord, who has much to say in its governing.

The British cultures of *Pendragon* follow the custom of *primogeniture*: The eldest son of the father is held to be the heir. As a rule, the eldest son gets everything. If the father is rich, then the younger sons might get something, although if they are knighted and merely receive sets of armor, they should be grateful. If a lord is very rich, he is more likely to give small parts of his wife’s property to his younger sons, but keep his patrimony intact. The Merovingian French divide their estates among all their sons, but the result of that practice is seen in the impoverished and anarchic state of that kingdom. The lesson is not lost on the British.





The eldest son also inherits his father's coat of arms. Thus his arms are exactly the same as his father's, but with a small mark called a *difference* to set them apart for as long as both father and son live. The *difference* is established by tradition as a horizontal stripe with downward tabs. Although a tradition of other differences for younger sons is present, younger siblings can also choose their own coats of arms. Again by tradition, though, these are similar to the father's.

If there are no sons, the eldest daughter often inherits the land, or the widow might keep it. There is a good chance, however, that some other male of close kinship receives it instead. Likely candidates are the brother to the dead lord, or his bastard son, or even the father if he still lives. In all cases, the lord of the lands has some say about who gets disputed property. If a woman, whether daughter, widow, or mother, retains property rights, a lord always has final say as to whom she marries.

Wills may specify the inheritance preference of a deceased property holder. Your character sheet has a place for Heir to be written in. Use it. The Game-master need not accept any unrecorded will.

Second only to war, litigation is a lord's favorite activity, although few of us desire to play out constant legal wrangling in our games. If legal disputes do arise, they should be settled through trial by combat, or be referred to the judgment of the next highest common lord — or perhaps even the Pendragon himself.

CUSTOMS OF KNIGHTHOOD

YOU ARE THE LAW

Knights are sheriff, judge, and jury for all matters of Low Justice on their own domains (see below for the three types of temporal justice). If a character has land, then it is his responsibility to maintain justice within it. Likewise, on their lord's land, knights must act on their lord's behalf, either delivering justice then and there or else taking the wrongdoer to the lord's court.

Knights who break the law are subject to justice in the courts of whoever was offended. If the law-breaking takes place in a knight's own domain, then his own lord makes judgment. The only exception to this is when a knight breaks a rule of his lord, in which case the other knights of the court stand to deliver a judgment.

Appeal to a higher court can be made, but the higher lord's court can always decide whether or not to hear the petition.

Knights accused of wrongdoing at any time may claim trial by combat instead of normal court justice.

TRIAL BY COMBAT

In any case of justice, any knight may choose trial by combat. In this trial, everyone knows that God will favor the right party, that right will aid might.



HOTZ

A lord can, and a woman must, choose a knight to fight in his or her stead. The fight may be for love of fighting (the first combatant to be knocked down or wounded loses the fight — see Chapter 6); for conquest (the knight who yields loses); or to the death. The ruling of battle, made by God, cannot be reversed or appealed.

JUSTICE

Four types of justice exist, as follows.

Low Justice is the purview of any noble of a land, including knights, who can judge any case less critical than murder, rape, or other capital crime. Knights can deliver justice to commoners, up to and including imprisonment and the cutting off of hands, ears, and other body parts. They cannot judge capital crimes or deliver a sentence of death, or judge other nobles or members of the clergy.

High Justice is reserved for higher nobles, usually only kings. They make rulings on capital crimes, which are anything that may be rewarded with the death penalty. This includes treason, rape, murder, and theft of the lord's goods.

Arthur's Justice, or the King's Justice, is a humanitarian system of rules inaugurated by King Arthur to pacify his lands and keep the peasants happy and whole. The ideals of the Round Table are extended not just to the noble class, but to all of humanity. Thus, a peasant may not be murdered for cursing at a knight who has trampled his crops

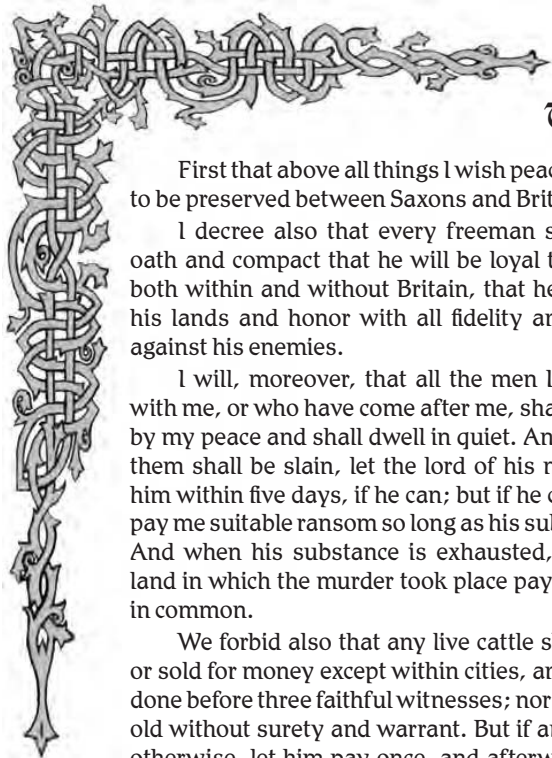
and carried off his daughter if the place is protected by the Laws of Arthur. Thus, as Arthur's bold fellowship conquers the island, the reign of peace grows, and fair (if not exactly equal) justice is available to all.

Church Justice, or Canon Law, is applicable only to members of the clergy, and it is determined only by higher-ranking members of the clergy. Further, it applies also (though not exclusively) to matters of the Church and its properties. Thus monks, friars, nuns, and priests alike are generally tried under this justice, and bishops and abbots claim the right to try anyone who harms their properties under this rule.

NOBLE PRISONERS

Knights are often captured and held in various states of arrest. Sometimes they are maintained according to their station, sitting at their captor's table and making no attempt to escape since they have given their word of surrender. Often, though, they languish shamefully in dark dungeons, dirty and unfed.

Surprisingly, even enemies of the worst kind do not kill their enemies. Hated murderers languish away in prison rather than being hung or killed. Player-character knights may occasionally spend years in prison this way, for reasons the Gamemaster must understand.



The Laws of Arthur

First that above all things I wish peace and security to be preserved between Saxons and Britons.

I decree also that every freeman shall affirm by oath and compact that he will be loyal to King Arthur both within and without Britain, that he will preserve his lands and honor with all fidelity and defend him against his enemies.

I will, moreover, that all the men I have brought with me, or who have come after me, shall be protected by my peace and shall dwell in quiet. And if any one of them shall be slain, let the lord of his murderer seize him within five days, if he can; but if he cannot, let him pay me suitable ransom so long as his substance avails. And when his substance is exhausted, let the whole land in which the murder took place pay what remains in common.

We forbid also that any live cattle shall be bought or sold for money except within cities, and this shall be done before three faithful witnesses; nor even anything old without surety and warrant. But if anyone shall do otherwise, let him pay once, and afterwards a second time for a fine.

If a Briton shall charge a Saxon with perjury or murder or theft or homicide or "ran," as the Saxons call open rapine which cannot be denied, the Saxon may defend himself, as he shall prefer, either by the ordeal of hot iron or by wager of battle. But if the Saxon be infirm, let him find another who will take his place. If one of them shall be vanquished, he shall pay a fine to the king. If a Saxon shall charge a Briton and be unwilling to prove

his accusation either by ordeal or by wager of battle, I will, nevertheless, that the Briton shall acquit himself by a valid oath.

Every man who wishes to be considered a freeman shall be in pledge so that his surety shall hold him and hand him over to justice if he shall offend in any way. And if any such shall escape, let his sureties see to it that they pay forthwith what is charged against him, and let them clear themselves of any complicity in his escape. Let recourse be had to the hundred and shire courts as our predecessors decreed. And those who ought of right to come and are unwilling to appear, shall be summoned once; and if for the second time they refuse to come, one ox shall be taken from them, and they shall be summoned a third time. And if they do not come the third time, a second ox shall be taken from them. But if they do not come the fourth summons, the man who is unwilling to come shall forfeit from his goods the amount of the charge against him, and in addition to this a fine to the king.

I prohibit the sale of any man by another outside the country on pain of a fine to be paid in full to me.

I also forbid that anyone shall be slain or hanged for any fault, or his eyes be put out or him be castrated. And this command shall not be violated under pain of a fine in full to me.

—Modified from *The Laws of William the Conqueror* (which are actually much more brutal than these we have adopted for our Good King Arthur).





The answer lies in the fact that most knights and lords do not have the right of life and death over their prisoners. This is determined by the division of Justice into High and Low, as mentioned above. Most lords have the rights only to Low Justice, which allows them to enforce most laws *except* those of capital crimes. Any crime that warrants death of the culprit is a matter of High Justice, enforceable only by a king. To execute a criminal would be unusual and illegal, drawing the lord's attention and wrath significantly enough that the knight might lose his station for disobedience to his rightful office.

Remember, most knights are law-abiding in their own realm and sworn to uphold their king's justice. Thus, instead of killing his foe, a knight will simply throw the offender into jail, a thing which is well within the rights of his office.

PUNISHMENTS

Knights can be punished for disobeying their lord's laws or the customs of the land. Usually the punishment is a fine. A more severe penalty is *banishment*: The knight must depart all of his lord's holdings for the term of the banishment, which is typically a year and a day for the first such offense. The banished knight is considered an enemy of the lord during this time, even unto being killed without his kin justly claiming revenge. During his absence, the lord controls all the lands and obtains all income and benefits therefrom.

More serious offenses can be punished by *outlawry*, which is permanent banishment, and is usually accompa-

nied by the knight's family's forfeiture of all lands and titles to the lord.

Finally, *degradation* is the ultimate punishment, for the knight is stripped of his title and his right to his rank. This ceremony is a public humiliation, and the effect is permanent, so that another lord cannot re-bestow knighthood.

CUSTOMS OF THE CHURCH

The Church is the spiritual institution of the land. It blesses the people and land, oversees crises (both spiritual and temporal), and guards the realm from wicked magic. The Church itself is feudal, having its own hierarchy of bishops and abbots, priests and monks, and lay clergy.

The ultimate clerical authority for the Roman Church is the pope, in distant Rome. The British Church has no single head. Further details are contained in Chapter 7.

LANDHOLDING

The Church holds lands, both as abbeys and as bishoprics. The leaders of these institutions act in every way as vassals of whoever gave them the land. Even the Roman Church has not yet obtained independence from the King of Britain — though its priests are working on it.

ECCLESIASTICAL LAW

The Church has the right to try all of its members who have broken laws. They also have the right to try any laymen who have violated Church laws, such as robbing the clergy, plundering abbeys, and so on. However, we largely ignore this latter fact in *Pendragon*.





tion of this fact illustrates one of the unwritten sorrows of the Arthurian legend. May consolation be found comparing the plight to that of King Arthur himself? Perhaps.

Frustration is not the desired end of this process, however. If you fail to conceive a child or if your children continue to die as the years pass, talk to the Gamemaster about the situation. Perhaps one of the young family knights is a cousin who can be discovered as a player character.

SONS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

Once a son survives to age of majority, you have an eldest son, a squire who is ready to be knighted and played. Create the character using normal character generation methods, with some modifications.

Check the list of fiefs gained by your heir upon his reaching knighthood. Of course, if the father still lives, then he holds these until he dies, when they are passed to his son. In some cases when the father holds many fiefs, however, he can give one to his son while he yet lives.

Personal Data: This information is derived from the father's. The Year Born has been recorded on the back of the father's character sheet. Calculate the age with careful reference to the campaign date.

Traits and Passions: Players choose whether they wish their characters' heirs to keep the same traits, directed traits, and passions as the father. The heir must start the game with these qualities at the same numerical value as the father, although the Gamemaster must approve of any inherited traits, directed traits, or passions above 20.

Equipment: The heir inherits everything his deceased father owned, as long as it was brought home. If the father lives, then the new knight gets whatever equipment the father deigns to part with.

Attributes: Attributes are calculated as usual, with the standard 60 point distribution. If the player wishes, these stats may be identical to the father's.

Skills: Skills and combat skills are calculated in the usual manner for starting characters.

Coat of Arms: The eldest son's coat of arms is the same as that of the father, with the special heraldic mark (the *difference*, shown below) for the son if the father still lives.



Glory: Initial Glory for the heir is equal to 1/10th of the father's Glory, determined when the knight is made or when the father dies (whichever comes first). Like all characters, the heir gets 1,000 points for being knighted, and perhaps more if other inheritances (such as landholdings) are involved.

Family Characteristic: The heir receives the same Family Characteristic as his father (as do all of the heir's male siblings).

YOUR HOME

Starting characters are, by default, natives of Salisbury, a county in Logres, the most important kingdom in Britain.





Consider the information in this section to be what your character would learn just by growing up at the court of Salisbury. Remember that no accurate maps are available — the type of map we use in the 21st century is a relatively late invention.

Note that your character does *not* know this quantity and quality of information about other regions, and also remember that if you have a character from another region, he won't know this much about Salisbury, either. This ability to separate personal knowledge from character knowledge is one of the marks of good roleplaying.

This section, like the rest of this book, assumes that your campaign begins during the latter portion of Uther Pendragon's reign. During Arthur's reign, things will be very different.

THE COUNTY OF SALISBURY

Salisbury is one of the most interesting places in Arthurian legend. It is one of the most densely populated areas. Many of the great events are going to occur here — the Battle of Badon, which will establish Arthur as king of Logres, for example; and the final Battle of Camlann, which concludes the campaign.

Many interesting places are here, as well, such as Stonehenge, most famous of the ancient monuments; and Amesbury Abbey, to which Arthur's mother will retire early in the campaign and to which Queen Guenever will retire near its end. Many interesting landmarks are nearby, especially the dozens of prehistoric mounds, stone circles, and the unusual White Horse. Camelot, the future capital city, is also nearby.

Salisbury is thus a good place to start.

Salisbury County, proper, consists of all the holdings of the Earl of Salisbury. This fief consists primarily of the city of Sarum and the large land area on Salisbury Plain around it. The fief is composed of good farmland, and provides other good forms of income for the count — fisheries, taxes on merchants, and tolls from the bridges.

Two maps are provided for the County of Salisbury: a two-page map showing major features, and a smaller map showing travel times, in terms of one or more days of travel.

The county includes one large city, Sarum, which is described in detail below, three smaller walled cities (Wilton, Warminster, and Tilshead), and dozens of much smaller towns and villages that are not shown on the maps, but which are generally clustered in the river valleys around the cities. It has five castles. The one in Sarum is very strong, and is also behind the city walls; the other four (Devizes, du Plain, Ebble, and Vagon) are common motte-and-bailey castles. Note that Amesbury Abbey is not part of the county, but is held by the Church.

Several towns and cities are cited in this description as "local markets." This means that the local farmers bring their excess grain and livestock there to sell, and also go there to buy goods or produce that they do not make or grow. Sarum, however, is the central market and is the only place at which some types of goods are available for pur-

chase. These include good cloth, clean salt, and anything from outside of the county.

The roads shown on the maps are nearly all hard-packed dirt roads, the best travel routes available. Thus, there is no real road from Tilshead to Warminster, even though they are but 10 miles apart. Rather, rutted tracks and hunters' trails connect these. The good roads are more heavily traveled, and the only ones used by travelers passing through the territory. The poor roads are less used, mainly by locals traveling within the region.

The Old Tracks have been known since the Bronze Age, and traverse high ground. Though they are usually dry, they are difficult for horses, which are reduced to traveling a mere 5 miles per day; hence, mainly peasants on foot use them.

The King's Road runs through the territory from Levocamagus to Sarum, and then onward towards Dorchester. This used to be a Roman road, and is both wide and paved, though overgrown at the edges and with many tufts of grass cracked through its surface.

THE CITY OF SARUM

Sarum is your home base, sitting upon a steep, wind-swept mound amidst the rolling Salisbury Plain. Educated, Latin-speaking persons call this city *Sorbiodunum*. Its old Cymric name is *Caer Caradduc*.

Sarum was first settled centuries ago during the time before iron was used, in the days when people still worshipped the sun at Stonehenge. A series of concentric rings surround the city: a massive ditch on the outside, then a huge rampart, then another large ditch and another rampart.

A great curtain wall perches on the inner rampart and overlooks the inner ditch. The wall is 12 feet thick and 40 feet high. Battlements give its top a serrated shape, made by merlons (the upright stone) and crenellations (the breaks or indentations between the merlons).

Two gates, to the east and west, pierce the walls. They are defended by towered gateworks, each with its huge iron-reinforced portcullis, murder holes, and drawbridges. As with all cities, these are closed at night and normally admit no one.

In the center of the city is a great *motte*, or artificial mound, upon which sits the large castle of the earl. Four ditch-and-rampart spokes radiate from the castle almost to the outer wall, and divide the city into quarters. The northwestern quarter is given over to the magnificent cathedral and church buildings, a part of the fief of the Bishop of Salisbury. It is occupied by churchmen and the bishop's retinue. The cathedral is dedicated to Saint Mary, the Mother of God.

The city occupies the rest, and it serves as the outer bailey for the castle. It is large and relatively rich. It serves as the trading center for the entire county and the earl receives rich revenues from its taxes, part of which go to the High King. A royal mint is here stamps out silver pennies that show King Uther's image on one side and the name of mint and minter on the other. The earl receives no income from this source.

SALISBURY CASTLE

Salisbury Castle, also called Sarum, is a modern (i.e., in the Arthurian era) stone castle. It sits upon a great motte in the center of the city, and is the main seat for your lord, the Earl of Salisbury.

Curtain walls 8 feet thick and 20 feet tall surround the inner bailey, which is roughly circular and about 300 feet in diameter. Within this bailey are the earl's domestic buildings, including the bakery by the east gates. The castle well is in the center of this bailey.

Sarum Castle has four towers. Two regular gates and one postern gate pierce the wall. The gates have defensive towers and drawbridges that cross the ditch surrounding the motte. The east tower protects the postern gate, which goes through it. The south tower is large and stands attached only to the wall, while the northern tower is attached to the keep.

The keep, or donjon, is the center of domestic and administrative activities. Four other rectangular, two-story buildings, all surmounted by battlements, surround a central courtyard that is paved with crushed chalk to cast more light within its enclosure.

The keep can be entered only by ascending a staircase and crossing over a wooden drawbridge on the second floor. The ground floor is used mainly to store food and supplies.

The private chambers of the earl, his family, and county officers occupy the eastern and northern buildings.

The north tower, situated along the wall, is connected to the keep.

The western building holds the great, high-ceilinged hall where the earl meets his petitioners and otherwise holds court. Here most of the household knights sleep at night.

The south building contains the kitchen and chapel, and above it more private chambers for county and castle officers, and for guests.

THE GREAT HALL

When your character stays with his lord, Earl Roderick, he does not have private chamber. Instead, like most people in the castle, he sleeps at night in the same place where he works in the daytime. (Thus, cooks sleep in the kitchen, bakers in the pantry, and grooms in the stable.) As a knight, your character sleeps in the Great Hall. This is also the permanent home of the earl's household knights. They each have a large chest here to store personal possessions.

By day, the great hall is the lord's courtroom. The floor is cleared of furniture except for the lord's high chair, which remains upon the raised dais at the far end of the room. In the evening, trestle tables and benches are brought out for the evening meal. At night, the tables and benches serve as beds, or people sleep on the floor.

SURROUNDING COUNTIES

Several other regions of Logres surround Salisbury. These are detailed in the descriptions below, and include Silchester to the east; Hampshire, southeast; Dorset, far south, across dense and inhospitable forests; an independent kingdom of Somerset, westward; Clarence, north and northwest; and Marlborough, a barony to the north.

PEOPLE

These are the most important people in your character's home, the County of Salisbury. Few except Earl Roderick and Bishop Roger are well known outside Salisbury.

Since your character is personally acquainted with these people, their Glory numbers and, for the ladies, Appearance attributes and holdings, are given here.

THE EARL AND FAMILY

These are important people, for to them you owe both loyalty and fealty. Your entire future lies in obeying Sir Roderick, for he is the lord who will knight you, and your entire job is to protect him and his lands, and to obey him.

Earl Roderick (Glory 8,840): The Earl of Salisbury, Roderick is a warrior famed for his prowess, having fought under King Uther against the Saxons to the east. He is noted for his deadly feud with Sir Blains, the Steward of Levcomagus, for whom he holds a deep grudge (Mistrust +6) because they were both suitors of Lady Ellen many years ago.

The Earl's arms are blue and gold (yellow) horizontal stripes.

Countess Ellen (Glory 1,470; APP 14): The Countess Ellen is a daughter of the Count of Silchester. Her dowry was comprised of several manors that lie on the road between Levcomagus and Mildenhall, for which she was much sought after by many wealthy and influential people, including Sir Blains, Steward of Levcomagus.

Young Robert (Glory 0): The infant son and heir of the Earl of Salisbury was born last year. He is the pride of the household and is always surrounded by fawning handmaids.

Lady Jenna (APP 14): The daughter of Earl Robert and Lady Ellen, Jenna is still a girl, not yet marriageable, but her promised dowry is significant. Many suitors are already putting their cases before the earl. *Promised Holdings:* 5 demesne manors; 5 enfeoffed manors; the town of Upavon (annual income £12).

THE KNIGHTS

These are the local men whom you know and admire. They are the key figures and most distinctive individuals among the seventy or so other knights of the county.

Sir Elad (Glory 4,189): The Marshall of the county, Elad is the castellan of Vagon as well.

Sir Hywel (Glory 2,457): The banneret of West Lavington, he holds many manors which he inherited from his father; he has only a young daughter. Since his wife died at her birth and he refuses to remarry, his daughter will inherit great wealth.

Sir Amig of Tilshead (Glory 3,234): An older man, scarred and with a noticeable limp, Sir Amig is a veteran of many battles. He was just granted castellanship over Tilshead, built to defend the county against the witches and monsters of the nearby forests.

Sir Jaradan (Glory 1,190): A skilled and ambitious young knight, he is the best swordsman at court (Sword skill 22).





ELIGIBLE LADIES

Many women live in the county, but these are the ones who are available and have the largest holdings — or other reasons to be worthy of marriage to you.

Lady Adwen (Glory 740; APP 18): The beautiful young (but marriageable) daughter of Sir Bles, who was killed in battle. Her holding would make her husband a banneret and a rich knight. *Holdings:* 2 demesne manors, 4 enfeoffed manors.

Lady Elaine (Glory 258; APP 18): Elaine is a beautiful woman whose first husband was killed by her base-born lover a few years ago, and who was subsequently hanged for killing a knight. She is rich, but considered an unfaithful hussy by every other woman in the county. *Holdings:* 4 demesne manors.

Lady Gwiona (Glory 856; APP 16): Gwiona is the second handmaiden of Countess Ellen. She is the heiress of two manors. Her last four suitors all were killed in war shortly after proposing to her, but the priest says she is not really unlucky. *Holdings:* 2 demesne manors.

Lady Indeg (Glory 2,140; APP 12): A 40-year-old woman, the richest heiress of the county, holding 3 manors in her own right. She has been widowed twice, so she can choose her own husband this time. However, she is lonely and might like a dashing young knight to keep her company. *Holdings:* 2 demesne manors, plus £2/year extra income. *Widow's Holdings (Gifts):* 3 manors.

THE RELIGIOUS

These are a few of the important or interesting religious figures of Salisbury.

Bishop Roger: The Bishop of Salisbury is both wealthy and worldly, in a religious sort of way. His wealth comes from the holdings of the church, including the church holdings of Amesbury and those around Sarum and Warminster, and the other numerous sources of church income. He is well educated, widely read, and influential; he loves to travel to London for business. He tends towards practicality when conflict between the count and the church arises.

Father Tewi: The priest of Salisbury Castle, Tewi is personal confessor to the earl and his wife, as well as the general religious overseer of the castle and its people. He is not particularly wealthy, but is well maintained by the earl. He loves his drink, and is rumored to have a wandering eye (and hand, depending on who tells the tale) when it comes to several of the serving maids.

Father Brugyn: The priest of the manor you will gain upon being knighted, Brugyn is neither terribly smart nor terribly holy. He attends to the spiritual welfare of his flock with a businesslike efficiency unstained by either scandal or avarice.

IN AND AROUND SALISBURY

In the following section is the information your character knows about specific locations in his homeland. *ITALICS* indicate places within the fief lands of the County of Salisbury. Lower case indicates places outside the fief of Salisbury.

See the map of the County of Salisbury and the associated Travel Times map, which shows the same area in terms of how many days' ride places are from one another. Travel times are based upon 15 miles per day, always following the roads.

AMBROSIUS' DIKE

Aurelius Ambrosius, the first Pendragon and brother of Uther, built these massive earthworks as a part of a defense system against the Saxons to the east. Too large to be manned as walls, these were used to observe the moving army, hinder its approach, and hide an ambushing defensive army. They now mark the northern boundary of the county.

AMESBURY ABBEY

Aurelius Ambrosius established this monastery, which is still supported by royal funds. It is a double-abbey, having facilities for both men and women. Although this is within the county, it is actually a fief of the Church and contributes no income to the earl.

AVON RIVER

This river is one of several of the same name in Britain. It is the main drainage of the Salisbury Plain, and continues to flow southward through the Camelot Forest and Dorset to the British Sea. It is navigable by coastal ships that sail all the way up to Wilton.

BADON HILL

This is an ancient hill fort. Its great destiny lies in the future, after the Saxons have overrun a large part of Britain.

BATH

The main city of Somerset, it is called in Latin *Aqua Sulis*, or the Baths of Sulis, because of the magical healing properties of its springs. It is three days' ride from Sarum, in the land of Somerset.

BOKERLY DIKE

This is a north-facing bank and ditch built in Roman times to separate tribes that have, since then, become extinct. It now marks the boundary between the counties of Salisbury and Dorset.

BOURNE RIVER

A tributary to the Avon River. Many villages and farms dot the valley.

CALNE

This is a fortified city that serves as the local market, and is part of the fief of Clarence. It is about two days' ride from Sarum.

CAMELOT

Camelot is a small city about two days' ride from Sarum, the center of the county of Hampshire. It was an important Roman city, but deteriorated badly before and during the Saxon occupation. It is destined to become the capital first of the invading Saxons, and then of King Arthur, when it will house the Round Table.

CAMELOT FOREST

This is a dense forest that forms the southern border of Salisbury County. It is inhabited by both normal and fabulous beasts.

CAMPACORENTIN FOREST

This dense forest lies several days' ride north of Sarum. It stretches for many miles, primarily east and west, and encloses many holdings, some of which are still independent from the High King's rule.

Like all forests, it houses many strange creatures, but is especially noted for a pair of huge night-black lions that periodically terrorize nearby peasants. A persistent rumor about the forest tells of a rich princess imprisoned in a tower surrounded by a garden of giant, thorny roses.

CIRENCESTER

This was once an important Roman city, and is now the primary seat of the Duke of Clarence. It is about four days' ride from Sarum.

CLARENCE

The Duke of Clarence feuds continually with the Duke of Gloucester.

COLINGBOURNE WOOD

This woodland is a favorite hunting place for knights and commoners both. It probably has no exotic animals or faeries.

DEVIZES

This is a market town with a motte-and-bailey castle. It is about 1 to 2 days' ride from Sarum.

DU PLAIN CASTLE

One day's ride from Sarum, this town marks the eastern boundary of the county.

EBBLE CASTLE

This is an old motte-and-bailey castle made mostly of wood, but still serviceable in defense. It is the most southern settlement of the county.

EBBLE RIVER

A tributary of the Avon River, this river valley is not densely inhabited. Menaces often come out of the surrounding Camelot Forest.

Of late, the river has been plagued by a school of repulsive water leapers (see Appendix 2) that prey upon small boats.

FIGSBURY

This is one of numerous hill forts on the Salisbury Plain. It has been abandoned since ancient times. Sometimes on Midsummer's Eve, it is said, the sounds of groaning men and clanking chains can be heard coming from the ground beneath it.

GLASTONBURY

Glastonbury is one of the most sacred places in Britain, for it was here that the first Christian church was built.

Before that it was sacred to Don, the earth mother, and was a magical entrance to the Otherworld. An abbey is there now.

Glastonbury is about four days' ride from Sarum, within the County of Somerset.

GLOUCESTER

Gloucester, called *Glevum* in Latin, is the most important seaport of the western coast, located near the mouth of the Severn River. It is ruled by the Duke of Gloucester, a rival of the Duke of Clarence. It is about five days' uninterrupted ride from Sarum.

GROVELY CASTLE

Not really a castle, this is an ancient hill fort of great earthworks, now mostly overgrown with thorns and wild flowers.

HANTONNE

This is a part of the County of Hampshire, and is the nearest seaport to Sarum. It is two days' ride from Sarum.

JAGENT

This city is the center of a county ruled by a militant lord who defends his ancient rights fiercely.

KENNET RIVER

A large, eastward-flowing river which is a tributary which joins the Thames far to the east.

LEVCOMAGUS

This city is part of the fief of the Duke of Silchester. Its steward and his brothers hold a fierce grudge against all men of Salisbury because Earl Roderick obtained the hand of Lady Ellen in marriage.

LONDON

London is the largest and most important city in Britain. It has no lord but the High King, and is ruled by a council of its most important merchants. It is about eight days' ride from Sarum.

MARLBOROUGH

This is a fine castle. It is built atop a large ancient mound, believed by many to be the burial mound of an ancient wizard. It is about two days' leisurely ride from Sarum.

MILDENHALL

This unwalled city is the local market for the farms along the Kennet River, and is held by the castellan from Marlborough.

MODRON'S FOREST

This dense forest which lies to the west of the county is named after an ancient goddess of the Britons. It is rumored to be inhabited by many wicked faeries and beasts.















NADDE RIVER

This is a heavily populated river valley. The river is a tributary of the Avon River.

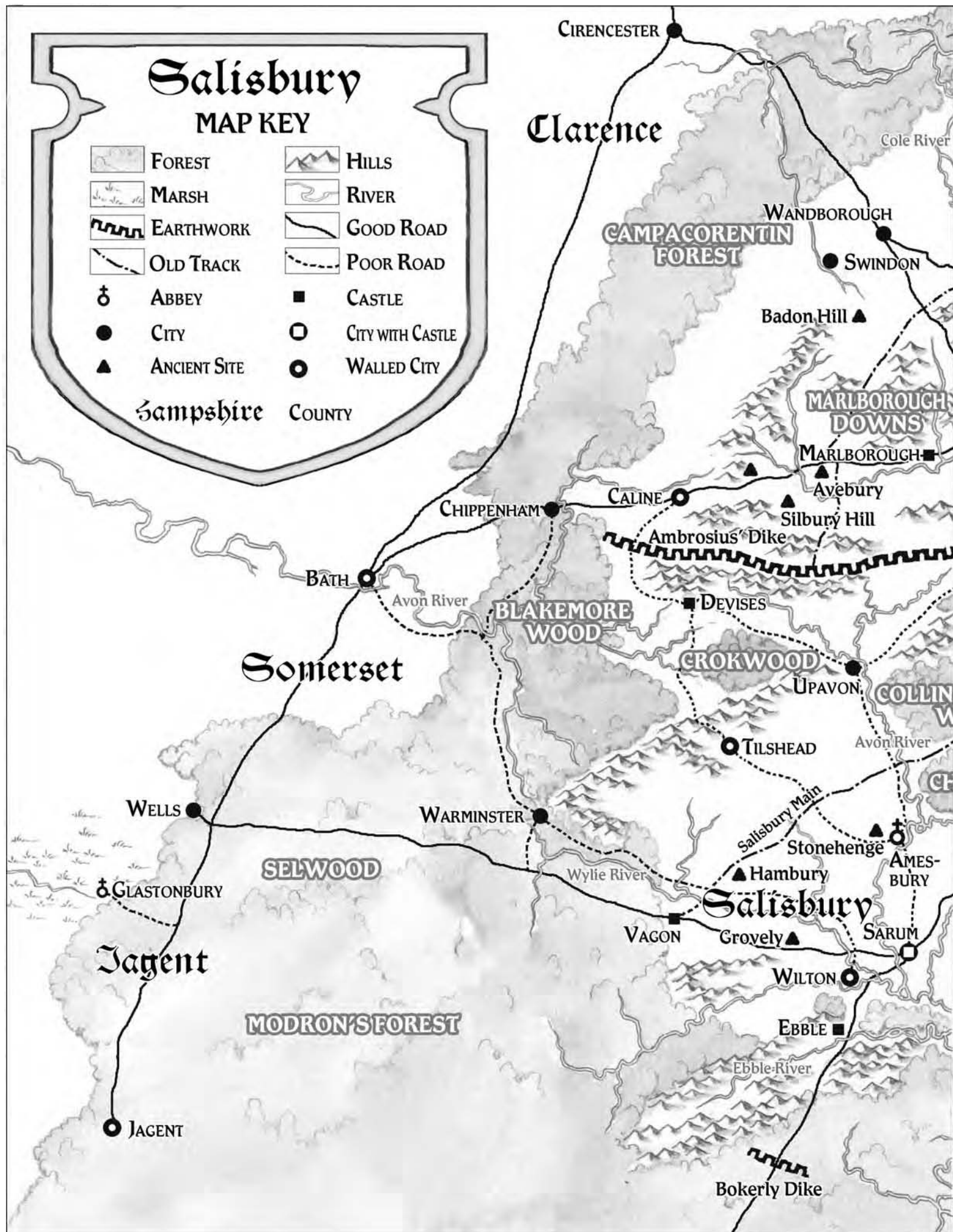


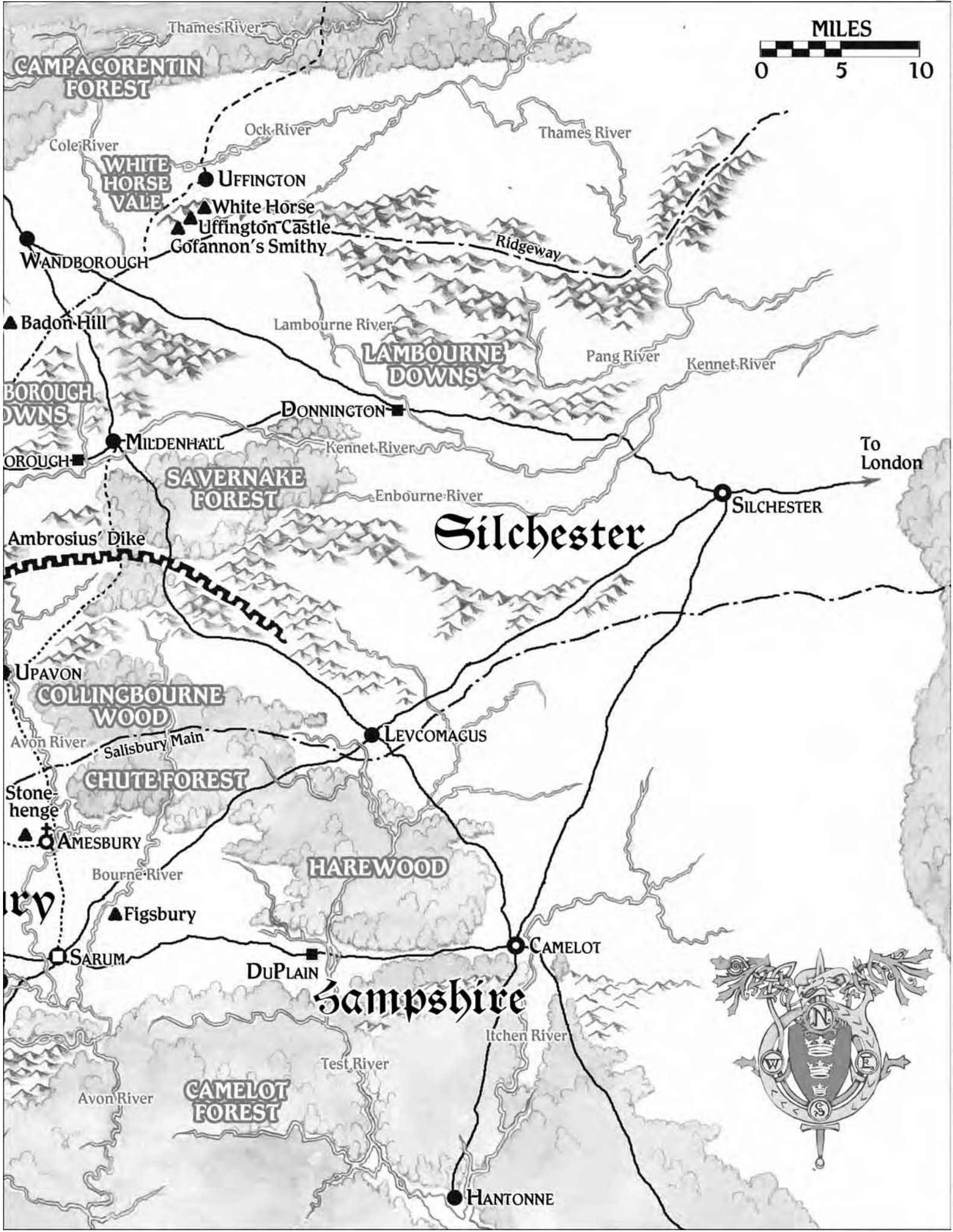
Salisbury

MAP KEY

	FOREST		HILLS
	MARSH		RIVER
	EARTHWORK		GOOD ROAD
	OLD TRACK		POOR ROAD
	ABBAY		CASTLE
	CITY		CITY WITH CASTLE
	ANCIENT SITE		WALLED CITY

Wiltshire COUNTY







OCK RIVER

This is the main river that flows through White Horse Vale. Its farmers visit Uffingham for their local market. It is a tributary of the Thames River.

SALISBURY PLAIN

The Salisbury Plain is a gently undulating plain whose rivers are populated by many villages of farmers. It has also held many ancient bronze- and early iron-age settlements, mostly long abandoned but occasionally resettled, as at Sarum. Only the largest of these are shown on the map, and many are unrecognized as such by the natives.

SARUM

The main county seat, this is a fortified city and castle built within one of the many ancient earthworks of Salisbury Plain.

SAVERNAK FOREST

This border forest is within either or both of the lands of the Earl of Salisbury and the Baron of Marlborough, and has been the cause of considerable dispute between those lords. No faeries have been reported here, though Countess Ellen claims privately to have once seen a unicorn there.

SILCHESTER CITY

This is one of the Roman cities of the past, now much diminished in size and importance, but still great nonetheless. It is about two days' ride from Sarum. It is part of the holdings of the Duke of Silchester.

SILCHESTER DUCHY

Silchester is the dukedom that commands most of the lands east of Salisbury.

SOMERSET

This is an independent kingdom and includes all the lands to the north west of Salisbury.

STONEHENGE

This monumental structure was built by giants in ancient times and dedicated to the sun, stars, and ancestors. It consists of five concentric rings and horseshoes of standing stones and a few outlying stones, all surrounded by a mounded ditch.

One generation ago, a great treachery occurred here when Vortigern the Traitor betrayed the nobles of Britain to the Saxons.

Recently it was refurbished by Merlin the Enchanter, who re-established some of the old magic by stealing some great magical stones from Ireland. Now it is also the burial site for the first Pendragon, Aurelius Ambrosius, brother of Uther.

SWINDON

A city to the north of Salisbury, held by the Duke of Clarence. It is important because of the quarries that lie nearby. It is about three days' ride from Sarum.

TEST RIVER

A river that flows southward to the British Sea, the boundary between Salisbury and Hampshire.

TILSHEAD

A fortified city serving as the market for the local farmers. It is a one-day ride from Sarum.

UPAVON

This is a large, unwalled town that serves as the local market for farmers of the Upper Avon River. It is about one day's ride from Sarum. This town has been promised as the dowry of Early Roderick's daughter.

VAGON

Vagon Castle sits about one day's ride from Sarum. It is a reinforced motte-and-bailey.

WANDBOROUGH

An unwalled city which is held by the Duke of Clarence. It is three days' ride from Sarum.

WARMINSTER

This is a fortified city, which serves as the local market for the farms of the upper Wylve River. It is surrounded by the Modron Forest, and defends the country from incursions from Somerset. It is two days' ride from Sarum.

The cathedral of the Bishop of Silchester is located here.

WILTON

This fortified city is the local market for the many farms of the Nadde River and the lower Wylve River. More importantly, boats sail upriver this far, and unload their goods from the coast before reloading with local goods bound for the sea.

WYLVE RIVER

This river is a tributary of the Avon River. Its farms are divided between Warminster and Wilton.

YARNBURY

This is one of many ancient earthworks. It encloses almost 30 acres within its bank and ditch. Every Beltaine, the local peasants bring all their cattle here and drive them between two big, smoky fires in a pagan ritual.

THE PROGRESS OF SALISBURY

A "progress" is the route that a noble takes to check on his properties and to move his rather large household to where the food is. The Earl spends most of his year at Sarum, the natural collection point for excess goods. His progress can go in any direction or order, and the progress given here is only a typical example:

- at Sarum for late autumn, all winter and early spring (16 weeks total).

- to Vagon for 3 weeks
- to Warminster 4 weeks
- to various hunting lodges in Modron Forest for 2 weeks
- to Devizes Castle for 3 weeks.

Start of Summer:

- to Tilshead for 4 weeks
- to Amesbury for 2–3 days as guest of the abbot
- to Sarum for 1 week

- to Ebble Castle for 2 weeks, hunting and searching for robbers

- to Sarum for 1 week

- to du Plain Castle for 2 weeks, raiding against Silchester

- travel along the Bourne River valley, hunting in Collingbourne Woods, 2 weeks total

- to Mildenhall for 1–2 days as guest

Start of Autumn:

- to Mildenhall for 1 week, perhaps including a hunt in Savernake Forest

- to Upavon for 1 day as guest

- to Devizes Castle again, 2 weeks

- Modron Forest hunting, 2 weeks

- Warminster, 3 weeks

- Vagon, 2 weeks

- to Sarum again, preparing for winter

THE EARL'S ARMY

Given here is the usual distribution of the 50 knights and 100 footsoldiers of the earl's personal armed force. Note several interesting features:

- The earl's entourage always has at least 12 knights, including the earl himself.

- A patrol of knights roams randomly from area to area within the earl's holdings, on patrol.

- Almost any place is only minimally garrisoned if the resident knights depart, as they would certainly do if real trouble or opportunity occurred in the county.

- Hard-riding knights can reach Sarum from any place within the county (Uffingham excepted) within 2 days: 1 day for messengers to go out, and another for the knights to ride in, assuming they are at home. Thus, within 2 days, presumably, most of the county's knights can be mustered at Sarum. This is actually quite optimistic, but certainly within 4 days from sending out word, almost all the knights can reach Sarum.

TABLE 3-1: THE SALISBURY ARMY

Place	Min. Garrison*	Standard
Devizes	5	4 knights + 5 footmen
Du Plain	5	4 knights + 20 footmen
Ebble	5	8 knights + 20 footmen
Sarum	34	16 knights + 55 footmen
Tilshead	14	2 knights + 15 footmen
Vagon	19	2 knights + 10 footmen
Warminster	11	2 knights + 15 footmen
Wilton	24	2 knights + 25 footmen
Patrol	0	10 knights

* Minimum garrison of footmen needed for normal defensive capability.

THE SALISBURY MANORS

Twenty manors are immediately available holdings for starting player knights (see "Personal Data" in Chapter 2), as shown on the Manors of Salisbury map. This map reveals a portion of the main Salisbury map, which does not show any population centers of manor size, in greater detail.

The Manors of Salisbury map also includes several places that are also mentioned in Appendix 3.

YOUR MANOR

A manor is the basis of your character's wealth. A starting vassal knight holds a manor that garners him £6 of annual income. Explained here is a typical knight's holding. An illustration showing a typical manor is presented nearby.

THE HALL

This is a fine house for the knight and his family. Its unique characteristic is its great hall, where the knight holds court for his holdings. Sometimes a manor is called, metonymically, a "hall," naturally implying everything that lies around it.

The knight's squire and a couple of the manor's chief servants (such as a bailiff) probably live in the hall too. Other servants (the pig boy, gardener, stable hands, and so on) live in the buildings where they work. This hall and its building are, basically, the nicest farm in the area.

DEMESNE

These are lands owned by the knight. The lands are planted mostly with wheat for people and oats for horses. Peasants from the holding send men and plows to work the land for a traditionally assigned allotment of time each week. The peasants also pay a portion of their own harvest to the master of the lands, generally of barley.

THE TOWN

This town is the local market where common local craftsmen (blacksmith, carpenter, cooper, etc.) can be found, and where itinerant peddlers meet once a week to hold market. It has a couple of nice houses for the richer farmers, but most buildings are peasant shacks, storage sheds, barley granaries, and cattle byres.

The town's population is around 120 people, including those people who live in the Hall.

The Church: A small, poor church lies generally at the center of the town. It is the largest building around, and made of stone. The priest, most likely nearly as illiterate as the farmers, is in charge of the local congregation.

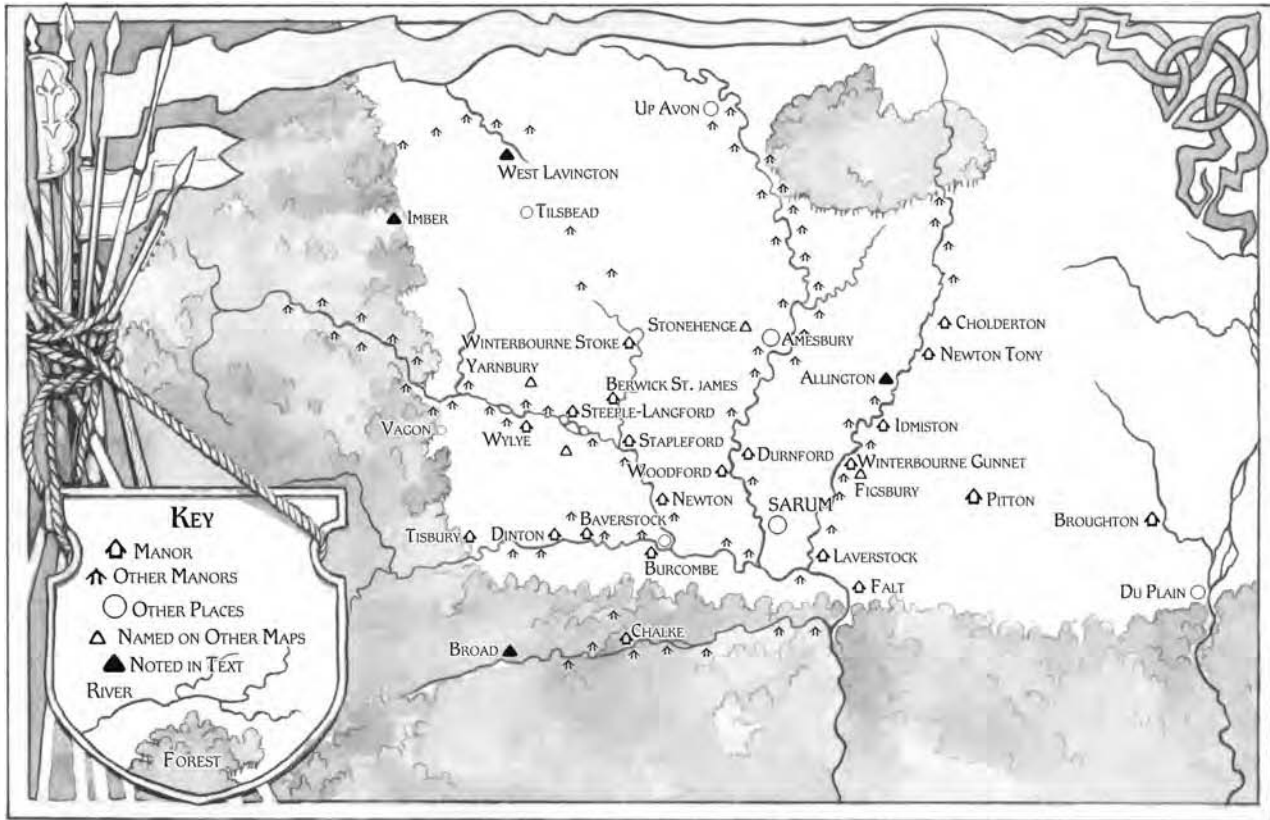
The church is often called the "baptistery" because baptisms, marriages, and funerals are performed and recorded there.

Mill: Several mills work to grind the grain for the daily bread of the peasants. The manor lord owns the biggest mill, and all the townsmen must grind their grain there (those who come from other villages may use the lesser mills). The lord collects a percentage of all proceeds from his own mill, and also collects a smaller tax on the other local mills.

VILLAGES

Three villages, each about a mile away, are part of the manor. They each have about 100 residents who are all farmers. They all come to the town for church, festivals, and to work their share for the lord. The village might have





a dilapidated church, but most buildings are huts, sheds, byres and granaries.

PLOW LANDS

Plow lands are usually crowded into the quarter-mile or so around a village or town. Much more distance than that and the workday is too short for the oxen to be herded out daily from the village. Most fields grow barley used in making the bread and ale of daily life. Oats are a secondary crop, while wheat is a luxury crop.

Note: The knight also owns strips of land scattered among the other plowed lands. Most landholders have their land in strips scattered among the many fields, which increases community cooperation and cohesion.

Fallow Lands: Half the fields are plowed each year. The other half is left fallow, and used to graze livestock.

WILD LAND

Between the plowed lands of each village lie lands that are not cultivated, but which instead supply wood, occasional wild fruit, and grazing for animals. Hunting here is not allowed to the peasants, but unless it is a royal forest, the knight can hunt on his own lands.

ANIMALS

Horses: The knight himself needs at least four working horses at all times (a charger, a rouncy for himself and one for his squire, and a sumpter). Wealthier knights also keep rouncys for their wives, any additional squires, and perhaps a favored servant. Most knights do not have the resources to breed or raise chargers, and his stable is usually restricted to keeping and breeding rouncys, sumpters, and cobs, and sometimes a good courser or palfrey.

The horse herd for the entire manor has about ten horses (1 stallion, 4 mares, 2 yearlings, 2 colts, and 1 gelding being trained). Most knights' stables also include a few ponies, used as mounts for pages and other servants when traveling.

Cattle: Cattle provide meat, leather, and work animals (plow oxen are castrated bulls). The manor has a herd of around 20 cattle (1 bull, 1 yearling bull, 6 oxen, 5 milk cows, 2 unseasoned oxen, 5 calves).

Sheep: Sheep provide both food and wool. A herd of about 21 serves the manor (1 ram, 14 sheep, 6 lambs).

Pigs: Pigs provide the most usable meat per pound of any domestic animal. The herd is around 31 animals (1 boar, 6 sows, 24 piglets) and is loosed into the wild land each year to fatten on wild acorns. They are rounded up in the fall.

CASTLES

Castles abound in Arthurian legend, the natural abode of lords. Your character will spend most of his time, when not adventuring, in one castle or another.

Literature occasionally describes the castles, but more often than not it doesn't. The medieval storytellers simply left out all of the most obvious facts because their listeners or readers would already know about them. Modern players and Gamemasters are not so prepared, so this brief overview is offered.

Castles are the ultimate expression of power in *Pen- dragon*. They are both homes and tools of war. They offer refuge from danger and serve as a base for cavalry raids and major expeditions. Extraordinarily expensive to build and maintain, castles are essential for controlling areas of the

land. They also gain the owner great prestige. Without a castle, your lord would be just another knight.

The basic game provides four “standard” types of castle as a starting point.

MOTTE-AND-BAILEY

The most common type of castle is a simple wood and earth structure called a “motte-and-bailey,” a style that has been known and used for many decades. Some people claim that these edifices should be called “forts” rather than castles. They are relatively easy and inexpensive to build.

The motte is the hill, often artificially constructed, atop which sits the stronghold — a great log or, sometimes, stone (or perhaps half-timber, half-stone) tower. The bailey is a large courtyard enclosed by log walls, which contain the buildings for the followers of the lord. Among these are a stable, a smithy, servants’ quarters, cattle pens, and so on. A log stockade and ditch surrounds the bailey, which can be crossed only by means of a drawbridge.

SMALL CASTLE

Small castles are made of stone. The castle’s heart is a central keep that is the lord’s stronghold. The keep is three stories high, with a basement, and can be entered only through a door on the second story. A courtyard, still called the bailey, surrounds the keep. A tall, thick stone wall surrounds the bailey, and encloses many wooden buildings.

The outer ditch can be crossed only by the drawbridge.

COMMON CASTLE

The common castle is like a small castle but with towers on the outer walls. Two square towers stand at two or more of the corners of the walls, while a third overlooks the drawbridge, creating a “gate tower.”

LARGE CASTLE

A large castle is much like the common castle, but with taller walls, towers at every corner, a large gatehouse, and a larger keep. The buildings in the bailey are probably built of wood, or perhaps stone.

FORTIFIED CITIES

Fortified cities are occasionally seen in Britain. Some have ancient Roman walls, while others are more recently constructed and strengthened by towers.

TRAVEL IN BRITAIN

Your character will spend much time traveling through Arthurian Britain, a risky, time-consuming business. Difficulties of which modern people are largely unaware create problems for everyone moving from place to place in this era.

MAPS

Maps in the Dark Ages are nearly nonexistent, and those that do exist are not at all similar to the maps of our day. First of all, most people are illiterate and thus unable to read symbols. If anything, a “map” might be a list of stops along the way, probably indicated by a coat of arms of the castle or other holding. Some symbol might indicate whether the stop is a manor, castle, monastery, city, or other landmark.

The usual manner of getting around in strange places is to have a general idea of direction and to ask for more specifics every time someone is met along the way. Since most such meetings are with locals, those asked tend to have a pretty good idea of their locality (which in the case of peasants is only the 5-mile radius around their homes, or for knights the extent of their native domain).

People have only vague, often incorrect information about areas outside their homelands. Directions are not usually given in miles, but rather in vague travel times, like “a long time” or “a little while,” or perhaps at best “until high sun” or “nearly till sundown” or the like. Landmarks are better travel aids, and may be specific, like “the ford,” but can be confusing too — “the big tree” or “where the rocks fell down” or “the ruins.” Information about dangerous areas is particularly sketchy, and often plain wrong. Vast areas of forest in Britain are unknown to anyone.

Even moderately settled areas may be lost to the knowledge of nearby folk should a group of enemies cut off the roads and trails to the settlement. A modest quest for a group of young knights might be to travel into an area with which their lord has lost connection, and return with an accurate description of landmarks and so forth. It is not uncommon to get lost and have to backtrack to the last secure place.

TRAVEL TIMES

Traveling is not just a matter of simply going from one place to another. In addition to the problem of not knowing your route are the problems of traveling safely and finding safe accommodations. This increases travel time.

Travel is usually safe within the demesne of a lord, unless of course the local lord lives by robbing travelers weaker than himself — which is regrettably quite common outside of Logres. As well, groups of bandits often hide near roads and tracks through forests and wild lands to waylay the unwary. Journeymen must always be on the lookout, perhaps even sending out scouts, a process that slows them down considerably.

Finally, stopping to eat and rest is common. In particular, persons not used to travel, especially women or children, require more frequent stops.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Knights normally stay at some castle, manor, or other settlement along the way. Hospitality is an honored tradition, and standard custom is to help any traveler according to his or her status. See “Hospitality” in Chapters 1 and 4 for more information on the laws of hospitality.

Most people travel very little, and are likely to be starved for information and gossip about the outside world. Thus strangers who are known not to be enemies are welcome, and if they are entertaining, then they are the more welcome. No payment is expected from the visitors.

Of course, not everyone is allowed entry. The normal procedure is for a party to ride to the gate and knock, blow a horn, ring a bell, or simply shout until someone comes to listen to them. This person is usually called the porter, because his job is to tend the *porte*, or door. Porter is a rather





prestigious job at any location, despite normally being a commoner's position, since he determines who enters immediately or enters later.

The porter is fully authorized to ask who the visitors are and what they want. He may decide to allow entry right away, especially if the visitor is known to him, but more likely will go to his lord and relay the information before making a decision. The travelers wait patiently outside, perhaps in the rain or in the dark.

If it is an enemy who has inadvertently come to the door, the porter simply stalls for a while, perhaps exchanging bitter or insulting words with the travelers, while knights and soldiers arm and prepare to rush out and capture the foe.

Once guests enter a castle or manor, they are shown to the long hall or bedroom where the lord welcomes them, interviews them, and instructs servants to show the guests to their accommodations. Occasionally they are shown to a place to wash up before seeing the lord.

Accommodations for visiting knights are normally in the great hall, where the household knights and ladies also sleep, unsegregated (but also without much privacy). Honored guests may be given a chamber or tower room to themselves, but most likely will have to share it with the rest of their party. These rooms are normally the residences of someone else, who will have been forced to give it up for the guests. Only a great palace has enough space to give individual guests their own private quarters.

A worthy visitor will have pages or women assigned to help him disarm, disrobe, and wash. Washing may be from a public basin or — luxury of luxuries! — a hot bath.

Women servants commonly help men bathe without any necessary sexual implication (but plenty of opportunity...), though the reverse is most certainly not true.

Monasteries have similar customs. Separate rooms are often available for those of different social ranks, thus keeping the nobility away from the commoners. Particularly high-ranking individuals may actually be offered the quarters of the abbot himself.

Where no noble accommodations exist, knights may seek to stay at peasant dwellings. The traveler goes from building to building asking for hospitality until someone tentatively agrees. The commoner complains that he is poor with nothing to spare, and the traveler offers to compensate somehow. They dicker over the price until agreement is reached. Nothing is guaranteed except what is agreed upon by both parties. Remember that commoners are usually reluctant to allow powerful strangers into their houses, and may recommend someone in town who is more affluent and less suspicious. Out of these individuals' hospitality will — within the campaign, but not in Uther's time — grow public inns.

Inns are not yet known at the start of the *Pendragon* campaign. They arise later, in cities but only rarely elsewhere, and will be frequented mostly by pilgrims and merchants. They are generally of very poor quality, unlikely to have private accommodations, a menu to choose from, or food other than common peasant fare. The inn is likely to house everyone in a single large common room with a single fireplace, with space closest to the fire charging a premium rate.

If no accommodations can be found, knights do what soldiers have always done — camp out on the cold, hard ground.

