

THE GREAT Pendragon®

C A M P A I G N



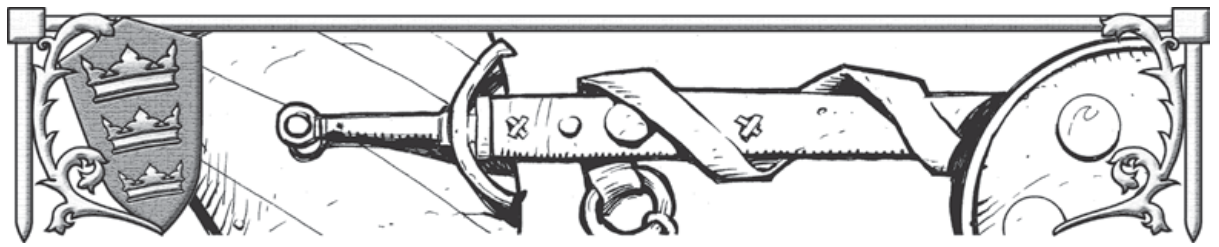
THE GREAT Pendragon® C A M P A I G N

FOR *PENDRAGON* 5TH EDITION

BY GREG STAFFORD



A year-by-year campaign
for the great and glorious reign of King Arthur,
from his conception
to his departure to the Blessed Isles.



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Most of the arms of King Arthur's Knights are based on the
15th-Century French manuscript known as *La forme qu'on
tenoit des tournoys* from the collection of Harvard Univer-
sity, attributed to Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Menours.



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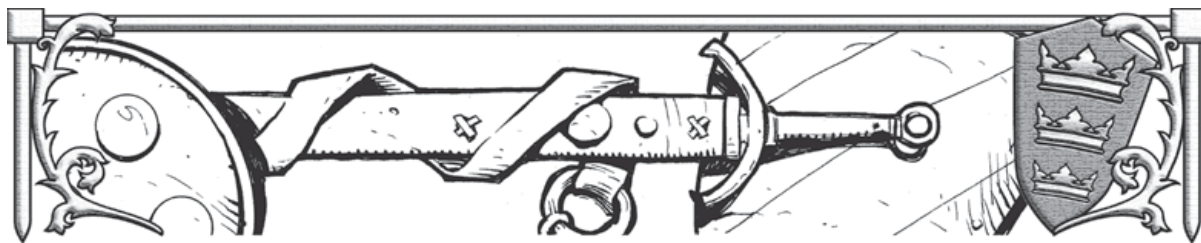
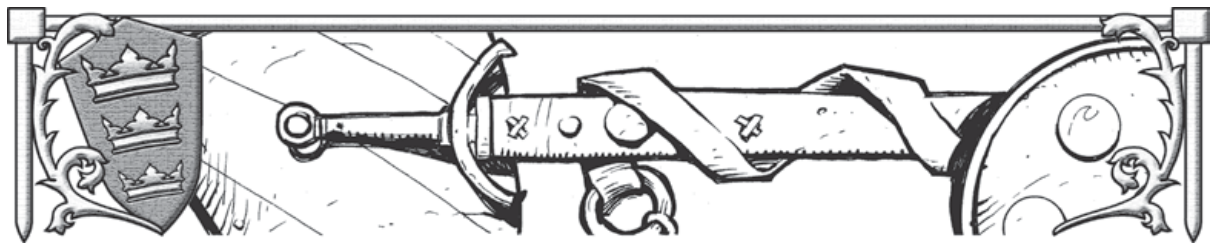


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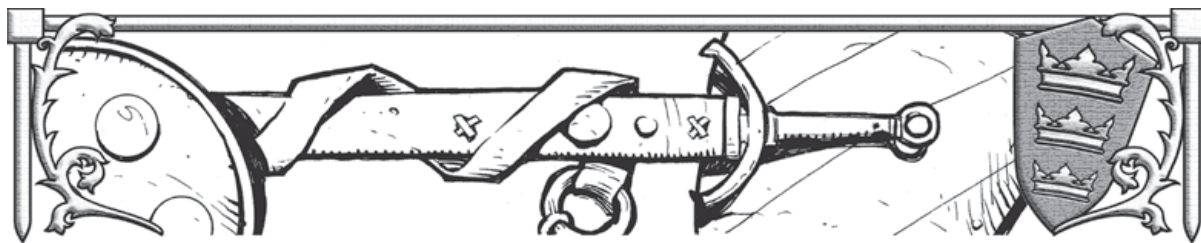
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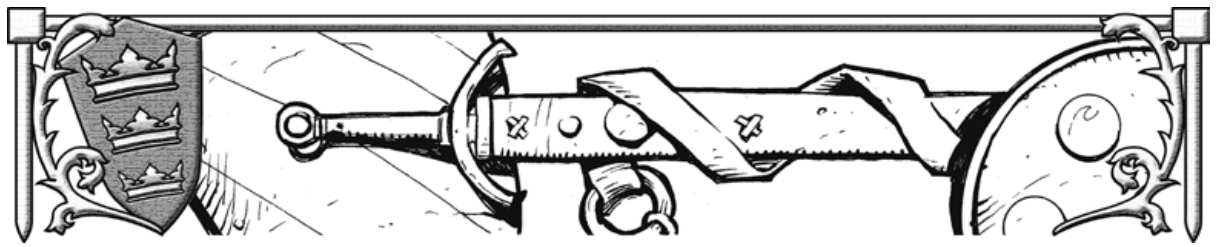
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WHERE THEY LIVE





Introduction

Welcome to the wondrous realm of King Arthur.

This is a book of material for the *Pendragon* role-playing game. It provides materials for Gamemasters to use to bring the Arthurian realm to life for themselves and their players. It includes finished adventures, raw material, and instructions specifically for Gamemasters.

Great Pendragon Campaign is a tool to run a year-by-year *Pendragon* campaign that allows each player to establish a dynasty of knights whose family story coincides with King Arthur's. Through play these knights help or hinder the High King establish his fabled realm.

THIS BOOK

This book is a guideline for an 81-year campaign that includes the entire reign of King Arthur, starting a short time before his birth and ending just a few years after his departure to Avalon. Through this book, player characters experience the brutality of Arthur's father, the anarchy of the interregnum, the war and drama of King Arthur's rise to power, the quests and otherworld adventures of the high adventure period, and then the decline and destruction of the Round Table.

Pendragon is designed to encapsulate about one year's worth of adventure per playing session, though a number of years will require several sessions to complete. The entire campaign thus requires almost two actual years if played weekly; in that time, it covers about three generations of family, and probably at least one character in each generation per player. The scope and sweep of the dynasty portion of the game will have full expression in this time and provide a new experience in roleplaying.

THIS IS BACKGROUND

This book is not the game, but the stuff behind the game. The real game is the story of the player characters, but they are set against a medieval backdrop that provides all the static parts of the world:

castles, armor, tapestries of heroes surrounding the feast hall, and so on.

Upon that is the Great Pendragon Campaign, which is the movement of legend towards its destiny. Player characters should do what they wish, and your campaign may take an unlikely turn ("Hey, great! You just unhorsed Lancelot!") or two ("What, you killed Mordred?")

The GPC is what goes on while the player knights are living their lives. There, where the player characters are living their lives in the midst of the fantastic Arthurian world, is the real game.

THIS IS OPPORTUNITY

This book provides another resource, over a hundred adventures of varying lengths to provide the seeds (or in some cases entire fields) of information for game play. Some of these are presented as themes or tropes, others as full-blown, highly detailed stories.

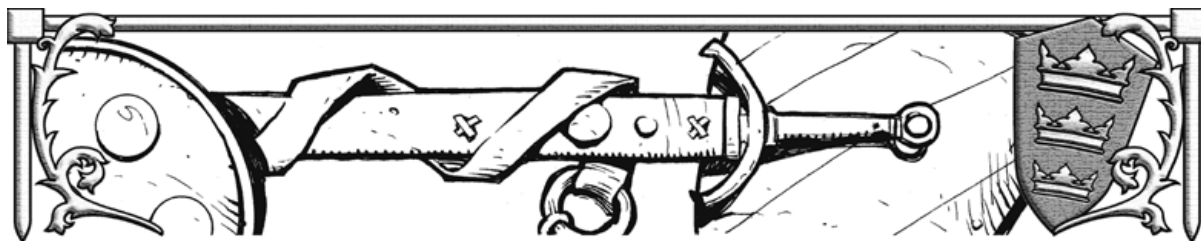
CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

The campaign is divided into blocks of years that share, more or less, important characteristics. Don't be fooled by the names of the periods, though. Each of them holds far, far more types of adventures than the title names.

Period	Span of Years (A.D.)
King Uther Period	485–495
Anarchy Period	496–509
Boy King Period	510–518
Conquest Period	519–528
Romance Period	529–538
Tournament Period	540–553
Grail Quest Period	554–557
Twilight Period	558–566

At certain periods in the campaign equipment is upgraded. New types of armor, weapons and horses become available, castles have new structures and different types of mercenaries come into use. New customs are introduced as well.

These changes are included within various chapters in those sections entitled "What's New?"



NAVIGATING THIS BOOK

The *Great Pendragon Campaign* is a Gamemaster guide designed to facilitate using the *Pendragon* rules in a full campaign. Eight of the book's ten chapters, corresponding to the eight periods listed previously in "Campaign Structure," are meant to make the Gamemaster's job easier.

SPECIAL CHAPTERS

Two special chapters are inserted into the normal sequence of years to explain specific regions that impact the regular campaign Periods:

Chapter 3: Forest Sauvage

Chapter 5: The Wastelands

Appendices 2 and 3 are also designed to be inserted into the regular sequence of campaign years as the Gamemaster chooses.

CHARACTERS

A couple of characters for the early campaign appear in the *Pendragon* core book (see "Famous People" in Chapter 1 of that tome). Other characters relevant to the campaign will appear in a free web enhancement for this book, available at <http://www.white-wolf.com/pendragon/>.

EVENTS

The annual campaign Events entries take up the greater part of this book, listed year by year throughout its chapters. These provide the basic details for Gamemasters to guide the campaign. We don't expect the players to have access to this information as it occurs, but the Gamemaster needs to know. Distribute this information as desired and allow the players to act upon it as they wish.

The Events constitute a variety of adventures and occasions to entertain a group of *Pendragon* players during a campaign lasting for roughly a year and a half in real time. It combines several things:

1. An ongoing script of the background "history" of the Arthurian court drama;
2. A collection of over a hundred arranged and optional adventures for player knights in the *Pendragon* game;
3. Ideas and plans into which you can weave each player knight's family saga;
4. Basic descriptions and guidelines for many famous characters;
5. A weaving together of many Arthurian sources, with an invitation to weave the player knights into the ongoing saga.

These items inevitably contain a good deal of the author's personal opinion, adjudication, and

quirks, many acquired through running and playing the campaign himself.

N.B.: This book is not (or does not do) any of the following things:

1. It is not a retelling of the entire Arthurian legend, a scholarly essay, or a new form of fiction.
2. It does not try to cover everything thoroughly, evenly, seamlessly or with equal sense of importance.
3. It does not set campaign events in stone, but allows for individual interpretation by each Gamemaster and player.
4. It does not attempt to cover every character or scenario appearing in the countless Arthurian sources.

ANNUAL FORMAT

Every year in the book uses the following format, with some minor variations as time passes.

COURT

This entry provides events and observations that take place more or less around the time of Arthur's Pentecost Court for that year, and also names the place where the court occurs. Of course, in most years, Arthur (and later Guenever) may undertake a Royal Progress, much like the "Progress of Salisbury" described for Earl Roderick in Chapter 4 of the *Pendragon* book.

SPECIAL GUESTS

These are people of particular interest at court. Player knights may never meet them, but can have the chance if they wish to take it.

Always remember too that the court always has nobles and their wives, international ambassadors, court officers from all over the realm, and knights of every description and origin.

But when a guest is special, the Gamemaster ought to try in some way to bring attention to him or her.

NEW ROUND TABLE KNIGHTS

Membership in the brotherhood of the Round Table is a paramount ambition for any British knight. This entry lists new members, as noted in Malory, for the famous knights who join the Table in any given year. When a player knight makes it, write his name in to remember the date. After a time, this entry is dropped from the annual events list because so few named knights join late in the campaign.

GOSSIP

Here chatter women and servants, with information related in a casual manner much as it might be overheard. Of course there is much more, but this sample is of the foremost gossip of the day. Although

YOU DON'T NEED IT, BUT...

...as a diligent Gamemaster, you will significantly upgrade the quality of your campaign with access to a copy of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Don't worry, though: You need be only as knowledgeable as a frontier teacher — for any given session of play, just read ahead one chapter beyond the years you are covering. (Largely, though not completely, the campaign event sequence follows Malory.)

Many good editions of *Le Morte D'Arthur* exist. I use the Penguin English Library edition, translated by Janet Cowen. It is clear, with just the right level of archaic language to lend flavor, and is an inexpensive, relatively small paperback that I don't mind writing my own notes in.