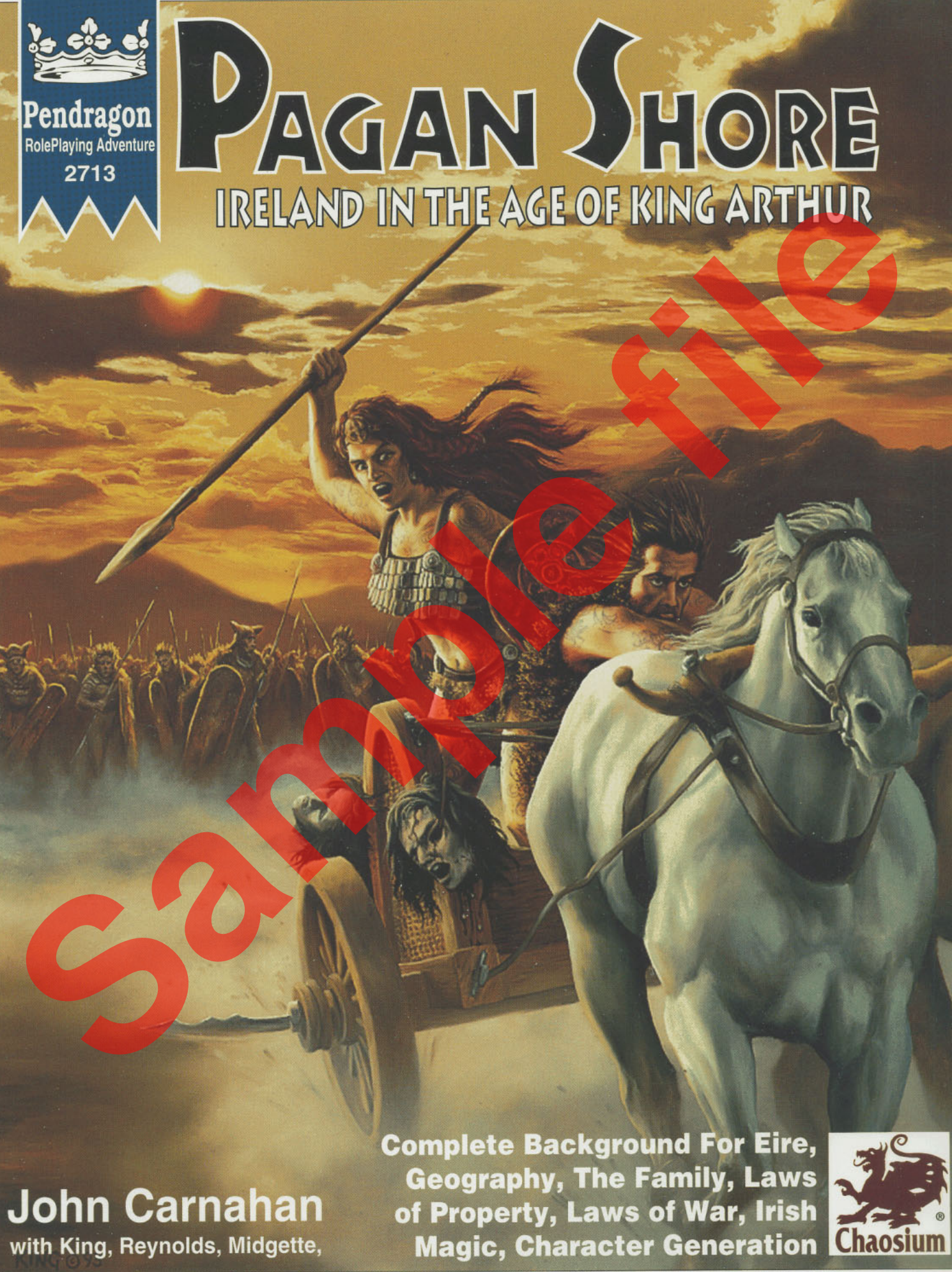




**Pendragon**  
RolePlaying Adventure  
2713

# PAGAN SHORE

## IRELAND IN THE AGE OF KING ARTHUR



**John Carnahan**  
with King, Reynolds, Midgette,

**Complete Background For Eire,  
Geography, The Family, Laws  
of Property, Laws of War, Irish  
Magic, Character Generation**



# PAGAN SHORE

## IRELAND IN THE AGE OF KING ARTHUR



The Irish call their homeland "...ire," "Banba," or "Fodhla," after three goddesses known to early settlers. In Ireland, the Old Gods still live. The hills they own are as well-known as the raths belonging to human kings.

Ireland's interior plains feature emerald grasses, clumps of heather, hazel bushes, isolated oaks, and stranded glacial boulders. Few of the Irish plains are arable. Irish woods contain oak intermingled with birch, alder and ash.

Druids wield real power in Ireland. They oversee the rituals and ceremonies to which all Irish look for their livelihood: the rituals of harvest, ceremonies of birth and death. They wield power over kings and battles, with the ability to geas nobility and halt warfare, like sacred referees.

They are greatly respected and greatly feared. Without the druids to direct and administer it, there would be no celtic culture.

PAGAN SHORE is a supplement for PENDRAGON, describing Ireland as it might have existed in the time of King Arthur. This book includes notes on generating Irish characters, a survey of Irish customs, and an atlas of Ireland's kingdoms. PENDRAGON gamemasters can use this place as a frontier in Arthur's empire, or as the focus of the story, with Britain on the periphery. Instead of serving the high-king, characters from an Irish clan can struggle to become high-king.

### WHAT IS PENDRAGON?

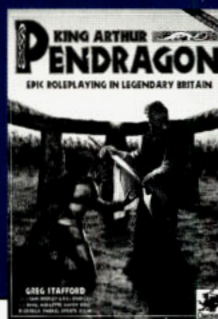
Pendragon is a roleplaying game wherein you and your friends participate in heroic adventures. One player, the gamemaster, presents the story. Everyone else creates knight-characters -- the heroes of the tale. Each player verbally responds to the gamemaster's plot and the actions of the villains, and describes how his or her character reacts. You can face the same dangers that Arthur and Lancelot encountered, but this time you decide your knight's actions!



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2713



# Pagan Shore

*Ireland in the Age of King Arthur*





Dedicated to the memory  
of Brendan O Hehir  
Scholar, Teacher, Ildánach



# PAGAN SHORE

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**Chaosium Inc**  
1994



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# WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

## *An Introduction to Pagan Shore*

**P**AGAN SHORE is a supplement for *Pendragon*, Chaosium's role-playing game of Arthurian Britain. You must possess *Pendragon* in order to use this book. *Pagan Shore* describes Ireland as it might have existed in the *Pendragon* era.

This "Pendragon Ireland" reconciles the Ireland of the Irish Sagas, the Ireland envisioned by Thomas Malory, and the historical Ireland of the Sixth Century A.D. and later. It is a collage of Irish culture: pagan and Christian, tribal and feudal, free and colonized.

The Irish picture their island as a circle, divided into fourths, inside of which is a smaller circle forming the center. They call the northern fourth of Ireland "Ulster," the western fourth "Connacht," the southern fourth "Munster," the eastern fourth "Leinster," and the center, touching everything else, they call "Meath." These are Ireland's traditional five provinces. This neat division of Ireland's real estate has never been realized in history. In the era of *Pagan Shore*, for example, Ulster has been partitioned into three sub-provinces: Ailech, Oriel, and the Long Isles.



## How Can I Use Pagan Shore?

*Pagan Shore* includes notes on generating Irish characters, a survey of Irish customs, and an atlas of Ireland's kingdoms.

This enables gamemasters to run *Pendragon* adventures set in Ireland. As a frontier in Arthur's empire, Ireland is an ideal place for young knights seeking wives, estates or reputations. Also, Ireland is a sideshow with little direct importance to Malory's story; this means that gamemasters can re-arrange its geography and politics at will, without violating *Pendragon*'s Malorian campaign.

You might choose instead to make Ireland the focus of the story, and Britain the periphery. Ireland is a good setting for a variant *Pendragon* campaign, in which warriors, druids, bards and saints are the protagonists, rather than knights. Instead of serving a high-king, characters from an Irish clan can struggle to BECOME high-king, usually by destroying everyone else in their paths.

## What Is This Place Called?

The Irish call their homeland "Éire," "Banba" or "Fodhla," after three goddesses known to early settlers. "Erin" and "Ireland" are Anglo-Irish derivations of "Éire." The Romans called Ireland "Hibernia," and its inhabitants, "scotti" or scots.

The Fál Stone is a boulder at Tara which screams whenever a prospective king rides over it. The rulers of Tara call Ireland "Inis Fál" ("Island of the Fál Stone") to promote the idea that Tara is Ireland's capitol and its king.

## AN IRISH POLITICAL GLOSSARY

The institutions of Old Irish society are even less familiar than the scutage, vavasours, and Treus Dei of feudalism. Use this glossary to decode the jargon of the following chapters, and to practice your Irish pronunciation.

### A

**Aitheach Tuath** (OTH-ukh TOOATH; Commoner Kingdom): A tuath whose members are forbidden by treaty to seek the kingship of their province, and whose members may be to some degree vassals or rent-payers of the provincial king.

**Aonach** (AIN-ukh; Festival): The yearly fair of a tuath, or a province, including tournaments, treaty proclamations, and a dáil. Always associated with a pagan holy place, such as a sí mound.

**Aos Dána** (AIS DAWRN-uh; Folk of the Arts): Ireland's intelligentsia, including poets, crafters, legal experts, and pagan and Christian clergy. Equal in status to nobles and chieftains.

**Aos Sí** (AIS SHEE; Folk of the Mounds): Spirits who live within Ireland's hills, including ordinary faeries and powerful pagan gods.

**Ard Rí** (ORD REE; High-King): A chieftain who, like the Uí Niall kings at Tara, claims authority over all other



## How Do I Say These Bizarre Words?

**Y**OU NEED ONLY pronounce Irish words well enough for other players to recognize them, based on their perusal of the following guide.

### Vowels

Irish vowels are of two kinds, long and short. Long vowels carry a long mark (ˊ). Therefore, an unmarked vowel is a short vowel.

Pronounce every single vowel. In multi-vowel syllables, pronounce long vowels in favor of short vowels; if all vowels are short, pronounce only the first.

Short vowels are slurred into an "uh" sound in the second and subsequent syllables of a word. Thus, you need only apply an EXACT pronunciation to first vowels and long vowels.

- a ..... as in "DonAld
- á ..... as in "fArce"
- e ..... as in "sEnd"
- é ..... as in "brEak"
- i ..... as in "prIstine"
- í ..... as in "prIstine"
- o ..... as in "DOnald"
- ó ..... as in "IOne"
- u ..... as in "pUnt"
- ú ..... as in "pUtrid"
- ao ..... as in rAld
- aoi ..... as in the French "oui"
- ia ..... as in barbarIA ("eeeyun").
- ua ..... as in fOOl ("foowuhl").

### Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced as in English. Only two require special attention:

C ..... always as in "can," never as in "cigar."

S ..... as in "sun" if next to "a," "o," or "u," but as in "sure" if next to "i" or "e." Example: Sán is pronounced "sawrn," but Seán is pronounced "shawrn."

### Aspirated Consonants

Written Irish shows that consonants have a heavier breathing ("aspiration") by appending a silent "h" to them, as in the English "sore" and "shore."

- BH\* .. "v" as in "never"
- CH .... "kh" as in "Loch Ness" or "J.S. Bach"
- DH adjacent to a, o, or u ... "g" like the second "g" in "garage"
- DH adjacent to i or e ... "y" as in "yellow"
- FH .... silent
- GH\* .. same as DH
- MH\* .. same as BH
- PH\* .. as in "phony"
- SH\* ... "h" as in "hone"
- TH\* .. as in "thin"

\* When these letters are flanked left and right by "a," "o" or "u," they mute themselves to make a diphthong of the surrounding vowels. This can often be represented as a "wh" sound in English. The word "Samhain," for example, is pronounced "sowhun."

### Grammar

I pluralize most Irish words in this book as if they are English, by adding "s" or "es." I avoid the genitive case and other oddities of Irish grammar; thus I use "Eamhain Macha" rather than the correct "Eamhain Mhacha."

Irish chieftains. Because this claim amounts to wishful thinking, I have translated "Ard Ri" as "Tara-King" in this book.

### B

**Bard (BAHRD; Poet-Musician):** A poet and musician with the special function of praising good nobles and lampooning bad ones. Able to sway emotions by their art; to create frenzy or dispel it. Often, the bard constitutes a weaker, Christianized version of the fili.

**Battle:** A company of gallóglachs, theoretically including 120 spars.

**Bealtaine (BEL-tin-yuh; Good Fire):** Pagan holiday on May 1st. Marks the onset of summer. Associated with the beginning of voyages and campaigns.

**Betagh (BET-uh; Nourisher):** Hiberno-English word for a landless person who rents pasture from a lord, paying him in food and military service. Unlike a peasant, a betagh can move to another landlord.

**Bó-Aire (BOW OR-yuh; Cow Lord):** A petty landholder, free but usually in debt to a nobleman. Equivalent to an English "yeoman."

**Bóramha (BOW-ruh-whuh; Cow-Assessment):** Because a Leinster prince murdered thirty handmaidens at Tara centuries ago, Tara kings have the buadha of confiscating a huge tribute in cattle from Leinster. Their repeated attempts to collect this "bóramha" prolong the Tara-Leinster feud, and usually achieve nothing more than misery on both sides. Shortly after the *Pendragon* era, two Leinster heroes — St. Mólíng and Bran Dubh — force the Uí Níall to desist from the bóramha forever.

**Brehon (BREH-hun) Anglo-Irish** word for "breitheamh."

**Breitheamh (BRETH-uv; Jurist):** An aos dána member who, in return for a fee, arbitrates disputes according to his knowledge of Irish law.

**Buadha (BOADJ-uh; Privileges):** Idiosyncratic, absolute rights assigned to a leader at his feis. Examples: the right to all the fish from a certain stream, the right to deflower every red-haired girl born in the tuath, the right to give sheep in tuarastal to a certain family. The buadha are religious in intent, a mirror-image of the geas. The number of a leader's buadha reflects the importance of his post.

**Buanna (BOOAN-uh; Standing Soldier):** Gael freeman who fights full-time for a chieftain: the aristocratic, mail-coated infantry and riders of a Gael army.

**Buannacht (BOOAN-ukht; Soldier's Pay):** The Gael custom by which a lord quarters buannas at the expense of his tenants. Many betagh households include, as a quite unwelcome "guest," a surly, hungry member of their lord's army. Quartersing soldiers is also called "coshering" and "coign-and-livery."