

BERBER CHARACTERS IN PENDRAGON

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Excerpted from the work in progress "The Courts of King Arthur",
Peter Corless, Editor. (Written for future publication by the Chaosium)

Berber Characters in Pendragon

The authors who presented Arthurian stories were often only vague in matters of Byzantine geography, and were creative in their histories for this far-distant place. In "Courts of King Arthur" we've tried to reintegrate their stories with history, using a variety of devices, for example by having the Saracens as Sassanids, and by combining the western expansions of kings Khosrau I and Khosrau II, to incite the fear that sparked crusading. Explaining the history of the Saracen Sir Priamus requires a further twist.

The Saracens were Rome's allies against Arthur. These were not, however, the Saracens of Khosrau's Empire, nor even, for the most part, the Arab tribes, like the Salihids, who were allied to Byzantium. The Saracens that fought Arthur in Italy and France were, for the most part, Africans.

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Saracens?

For Malory, the Arabs, Persians and Berbers were linked by their faith, Islam, so that "Saracen" referred to any of the Islamic people at the edges of Christendom. In "Pendragon", in previous supplements, "Saracen" is used in a similar way, but with the substitution of Sassanids for Arabs, it's important to note that very few Berbers are Zoroastrian, and few outside Egypt venerate King Khosrau. Pressed for an explanation of why the same term is used by the Romans for both groups, perhaps Berber warriors form a contingent of Sassanid armies, so the Byzantines consider them part of the "enemy". As such, they'd also use "Saracen" to describe the Punjabi warriors who form part of Khosrau's army, although they generally aren't Zoroastrians either. Players wishing to design Hindu characters are left to their own devices.

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African timeline

The "Pendragon" history of Africa is a complicated one, as it is muddled by the historical acceleration of the phases, the geographic carelessness of the original authors and the substitution of one Persian Empire for another. Most gamemasters really won't care, so, in brief, it goes like this:

405-06: German migrations across the Rhine begin.
429: Vandals cross from Spain into Africa.
439: Vandals capture Carthage
422: The Romans accept the Vandal dominance of the richest portion of

western Africa, retaining control of Mauretania, in the west, for a time. Egypt remains a Byzantine province, the border between it and the Vandals being somewhere on the coast of the Bay of Sidra. Berber tribesmen live in all of these states, and Berber kingdoms border them on the landward side.

- 460: Vandal lands include the Balearic Islands, Malta, Corsica, Sardinia and Lilybaeum (Marsala) on Sicily.
- 476: Odacer overthrows the final Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus. For the sake of the "Pendragon" chronology, we need an Emperor of Rome, so we'll use Theoderic, described below. The Eastern Emperor sent a claimant to Rome, but Odacer fought him off.
- 498-492: Theoderic the Ostrogoth, encouraged by the Eastern Emperor, wars with Odacer.
- 497: Emperor Anastasius recognises, by treaty, the right of Theoderic to rule the Romans. Theoderic takes the title "King of the Goths and Romans" and rules, historically, until 526, ably and justly. During the reign of the Ostrogoths, Rome loses Mauretania to the Berbers, who, for game purposes, push north into Iberia, founding the state of Granada. In real life, the two great dynasties of Iberian Berbers were founded on Islamic zeal, but in "Pendragon" they are animist pagans.
- 477-84: Reign of King Huneric, who marries sister of Emperor Valentinian.
- 494: Malta falls to the Ostrogothic rulers of Italy.
- 520: So that the ahistorical "Emperor Lucius" from the canon can be included, Theoderic dies years before his time.
- 525: Lucius demands tribute from Arthur. Arthur decides he'd prefer to be Emperor himself.
- 526: Lucius dies in battle against Arthur, as do most of the Roman Senate. Those few who survive sue for peace. Arthur's campaign leaves Rome weakened, and Justin cranks up his propaganda machine, to create a national desire to "save the West". His activities are, to begin with, of small scale, but he develops an unofficial truce with the Sassanids, freeing up forces for his reconquest of Italy and North Africa.
- 531: The Granadans lose a major battle against Christian warriors, predominantly the French. The back of their state is broken.
- 533-5: Justinian sweeps his forces west, claiming Scily, Carthaginian Africa, Malta and the Balearic Islands. Over the next twenty years they take Italy, some of southern Spain and the Strait of Gibraltar. This shatters the Kingdom of Granada.
- 565: Khosrau II invades Egypt and takes over the Arabic peninsula, sparking a fresh Crusade. Historically this occurs in 602-615, but "Pendragon" needs a reason for the Crusade in phase Five.
- 573: Heraclius forces the Sassanids back to their lands, aided by the Ganis knights, who die on this Crusade. Historically, these battles occur half a century later.

In Geoferry of Moumouth and Lazamon, a Berber prince invades England and gives it to the Saxons well after the death of Arthur, in the process destroying Christianity so that it can be later re-established by St Augustine of Canterbury. This warlord worships an idol, so he isn't a Muslim and is unlikely to be Zoroastrian. He is probably a Berber.

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Character creation: Berbers (called "Moors" in the setting, generally)

Region and Lands:

Berbers ("Moors") come from North Africa and have interbred with the populations of the Egyptian, Carthaginian and Mauretanian colonies of Rome.

Earlier supplements of "Pendragon" include the Reconquista states and the Arabic Kingdom of Granada. In this supplement, this is also a Moorish kingdom, rather than an Arabic one.

Roll 1d6

Rural:

- 1: Egypt
- 2: The Vandal Kingdom / The Colony of Cathago Nova
- 3: Mauretanea

Cities:

- 4: Alexandria in Egypt
- 5: New Carthage in the colony of Carthago Nova.
- 6: Granada (Granada's not a city, but it's people are civilised, rather than semi-nomadic.)

Culture and Religion:

Berber (Moorish) and ss

Berber Religious Attributes: Add +3 to each of:

ss

Berber (Moorish) characters may also convert to Christianity, or Zoroastranism, if they wish.

Father's Class Table:

Most Moors who enter Arthurian Britain are merchants, those rich enough to travel from Granada or North Africa, or the servants of these lords. Some few will be sold as slaves in the market of Dublin.

Cities (d20)	Africa (d20)
1 Lord / Officer	1 Clan Chieftain
2 Banneret Knight	2- 3 Family Chieftain
3- 4 Vassal Knight	4-10 Warrior
5- 7 Bachelor Knight	11-13 Mercenary Knight
8-10 Mercenary Knight	14-20 Trader
11-14 Warrior/Legionarius	
15-20 Trader	

Trader: As per "Pagan Shore"

20 points to spend plus
4 in both Boating and Intrigue.
2 in Orate

+2 in both Selfish and Deceitful
Honour -3

Inherited Glory: 1d6

Berber Cultural Weapon: The Horse

Berbers are essentially cavalry warriors, born in the saddle. They prefer swords, but used as cavalry sabres. They add two to any weapon skill, if

on horseback.

Name and Father's Name: Moors should use Berber historical names that they fancy, or, since they are taking the place of their Arabic-ruled descendants in "Pendragon", any Arabic name they feel suits their character. "Abdallah", or its derivatives "Abdullah" or "Abdul", though quite popular names for Arabs in Western literature, mean "Servant of Allah" and therefore aren't appropriate for Zoroastrian characters. It's also best to avoid the names of other prophets, such as "Yacob".

Liege Lord: Ask your gamemaster where the campaign is to be run. If it is in Logres, your Lord is probably Primus the Saracen.

Trait Modifiers:

The Berbers are a nomadic group that have, in some areas, settled into urban life. In Granada they reach heights of culture that surpass, in some ways, those of contemporary feudal societies.

All: Love (family) +2

Nomadic Berbers are Selfish in that they have very limited resources, and live in a harsh environment. As their tribes lack an overarching law, save tradition, it's vital for each man to stand up for their rights, hence their pride. They are afraid of the ill-luck that can be fatal to those in marginal environments.

Traits: Energetic +2, Selfish +2, Proud +1, Pious +1

Civilised Berbers:

Civilised Berbers are really transposed Arabs. They are therefore, culturally similar to the Persians described in the Sassanid chapter. They are Pious (+1), Energetic (+1), Selfish (+1) Proud (+1) and Prudent (+1)

Directed Traits and Passions:

Most of the traits that would make Berbers distinctive have little value in Arthurian Britain.

Characteristics:

Berbers have +2 DEX and +1 SIZ

Starting Skills:

Berbers although they have courtly customs and methods of distinguishing each other in battle, do not practice Romance or Heraldry in the French fashion. They instead Flirt and try to Recognize other knights. North African creatures from the other side are not recognizable as Faeries, and are so dissimilar from those in Britain as to make a Moor's Faerie Lore zero. The sport of Tourney has not developed among Berbers yet. They prefer racing. So as not to disadvantage Berber characters greatly, the gamemaster might assume merchant associates or learned scholars in a nearby city who may explain the basics of these odd, British customs to the character, allowing them to add to these scores during the creation process, to a maximum score of five in each.

Berbers from Dublin are exposed to the Danish and Irish cultures surrounding them and, after Anguish and Galahad feudalise their

territories, feudal customs as well. They gain the skills mentioned above as normal. "Irish" Sassanid characters may become subject to geas or may be fostered, as normal Irish characters are, according to rules in "Pagan Shore". Characters from other Celtic realms adapt similarly to their social environment.

Beginning Saracen (Sassanid) Skills

Awareness	3
Boating	2
Chirurgery	0
Compose	3
Courtesy	1
Dancing	3
Faerie Lore	0
Falconry	3
First Aid	3
Flirting	4
Folk Lore	1
Gaming	5
Heraldry	0
Hunting	2
Industry	1
Intrigue	3
Orate	4
Play (Lute)	4
Read (Greek or Persian)	4
Recognize	4
Religion (Berber or other)	3
Romance	0
Singing	2
Stewardship	3
Swimming	3
Tourney	0

Combat Skills

Battle	2
Horsemanship	15
(You can move these points into camels if you wish)	

Weapon Skills

Sword	5
Lance	2
Dagger	2
Spear	1
Bow	4

Luck Benefits:

01	Money, 3d20 d.
02-03	Money, 1L.
04-06	Money, 1d6L.
07	Your ancestor was a Vandal king, or a Ptolemaic prince. Gain 100 glory
08	You have a Barbary Courser
09	You have an Arabian charger
10	You have a share in a speculative enterprise; 1d6L profit possible every Winter Phase (see special rules)
11-16	Family Heirloom: Roll 1d6. Value 1-3 = 1/2L. 4 = 1L. 5 = 2L.

6 = 5L.

- 17 You own several useful slaves (those in Arthur's realm should treat these as vavasours and maidservants.); recieve +2 Stewardship.
- 18 You have a healing potion (heals 1d6 points, once only) Priceless
- 19 Upgrade your outfit by 1
- 20 Roll twice.

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SIDEBAR

Speculative Enterprise Rules:

Knights in Logres are allowed to own premises and businesses (such as mills and mines) upon which tenants pay rent. Saracens from the Holy Land are more likely to own shares in trading caravans or merchant vessels.

Effects:

- Earns you 1d6L, rolled annually in Winter Phase.
- * On roll of 1-5, recieve profits equal to roll in L.
 - * Roll of 6, business fails, no profit; requires 6L paid immediately to keep enterprise from folding permanently.

Modifiers:

- Roll "Stewardship" (for Logres business) or "Industry" (merchant trade)
- * Critical success allows you to modify the d6 roll up or down by one *after* the d6 roll is made. Minimum profit is always one, and maximum is always 5. 6+ and business fails.
 - * Successful skill roll allows you to modify the d6 roll up or down by one, if you wish, but must be applied *before* rolling the d6.
 - * Failure has no effect on the d6 roll.
 - * Fumble of Stewardship/Industry is the same as rolling a "6" on the d6; immediately causes the business to fail.

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Career Class:

As per normal, with the exception of traders, who are as per "Pagan Shore" p. 106 [Requires 13 Intrigue, 10 Orate, 10 Boat]. Since it is relatively easy to become a trader, many PCs will place their spare points into combat skills, becoming merchant adventurers.

Character Sheet Back:

Saracens who were once slaves may not have a family whom they can call upon for aid. Discuss this with your gamemaster for a decision before play. The character's clan is generated normally if they are civilised, but if they are nomads they roll on the Clan Size Table. Each family in the clan can outfit two warriors in leather armour, or five without armour, or one warrior in leathers and two without.

Clan Size Table:

- 01-05 1d20+10 families (small sept of a major clan, or a clam of social outcasts)
- 06-10 1d20+30 families (small independant clan, large sept)
- 11-15 1d20+50 families (Independant clan, ruling sept)
- 16-20 1d20+70 families (very large independant clan)

from "Beyond the Wall" pp. 84-5.

SARACENS IN PENDRAGON

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Saracens in "Pendragon"

Arthurian literature is built up in layers, with each addition representing the prejudices of its time. The treatment of the Saracens in the Arthurian canon demonstrates this. In earlier works they are sometimes confused with the other ancient and heathen enemy, the Saxons. In later works most of important Saracen characters give up their religion and embrace the faith of the authors, Christianity. In the historical period corresponding to Arthur's time, Islam did not yet exist, it's prophet was centuries from being born, but later authors added Saracen enemies to the stories to give historical depth to their rivalry with the Muslims in the Holy Land.

So as to avoid offence to pious readers, and to prevent the anachronism of having Mohammed born well before his time, in "Pendragon" no stress is placed on the crusades mentioned in Malory. Religious war occurs, but is not a major theme of his stories. The Crusades, historically, were in many cases little better than a barbarian invasion from the West, fuelled by avarice, although there were exceptional characters for whom holy war aided spiritual development.

The gamesmaster is, however, left with a group of significant characters who either are Saracens or die crusading against them. In "Pendragon", portions of culture of the sixth century Sassanid empire in Persia will be used in place of the culture of the Saracens. The Sassanid Empire's official religion was Zoroastrianism, which is described below.

There are many ways for a Saracen to reach Arthur's court. The simplest is to follow the example of King Astlabor and sail. Saracen traders reached the slave markets of Dublin, so there might be a community of them there, or characters might be freed slaves, taken far away after losing a battle in the Middle East. Merlin converts the King of Jerusalem to Christianity and some of his 55 grandsons arrive in Arthur's Realm, although these might be Romans rather than Saracens. Malory mentions that the Saracens attack Wandesborow after the battle of Bedgeraine, while the Vulgate says that the Sesnes, the Saxons, attack Vandalioris in

Cornwall. In "Pendragon" we merge these events and have the Saxons attack Wandesboro in Lothian, but Gamesmasters might wish to have a small group of Saracen warriors, or slaves, take part in this invasion.

The Saracen culture will appear strangely familiar to many readers. The religion of Islam is Arabic in origin, but the Commanders of the Faithful moved their capitals first to Damascus, a Byzantine city, then to Hashimiya, then Baghdad, each Sassanid cities, the last only about twenty miles from the Sassanid capital Ctesiphon. The language and religion of the Arabic conquerors fused with the culture of their Sassanid subjects, creating the ancestor of the culture with which the Europeans later interacted during the Crusades. Gamesmasters may wish to emphasise this by allowing the Saracens to use technologies and lifestyles developed far later by the Arabs, in much the same way as we allow Arthur to use systems and artifacts invented, after his death, by the French.

Just remember, if you decide to allow your Sassanids to borrow from their Saracen descendants, when Sir Dagonet starts telling one on the tales from the "Alf Laya Wa Laya", or when Sir Palomidies impresses the ladies with his ditty about a loaf, a jug of wine, a book of verse and so forth, to remove the references to Allah an Mohammed.

CHARACTER CREATION: Saracens (Sassanids)

Region and Lands:

Saracens (Sassanids) come from the Holy Lands: Syria, Palestine, Persia the Arabian Desert. They may also have entered into Arthurian Britain as immigrants or invaders. The largest such Saracen communities are in Dublin, the Pale and Astlabor. In this section "Celtic Saracens" refers to those characters who have gone native, either by adopting local customs or through being born in Dublin, Leinster, Astlabor or some other foreign settlement.

Roll 1d6. 1-2 Holy Lands, 3-6 Cymric Lands

Holy Lands (d20)	Passions/Traits
1- 3 Syria, Byzantine Empire	Loyalty (Byzantine Emperor)
4- 5 Phoenice, Byzantine Empire	Loyalty (Byzantine Emperor)
6- 8 Oshroene, Byzantine Empire	Loyalty (Byzantine Emperor)
9-12 Arabia Deserta (independent)	Hatred (Byzantine Romans)
13-16 Euphratensis, Persia (Euphrates River Valley)	Loyalty (Persian King) +3 plus Suspicious (Byzantine Romans)
17-20 Mesopotamia, Persia	Loyalty (Persian King) +3 plus Suspicious (Byzantine Romans)
Cymric Lands (d20)	
1 - 3 Carduel, Cumbria	Love (City) / Loyalty (Emperor)
4 - 9 Astlabor, Cambria	Directed Trait: Energetic (Hunting)*
10-13 The Pale, Eire	Saracens do not share the British distrust of the Irish, so they lack their "Suspicious (those beyond the Pale)" trait.
14-20 Dublin, Eire	Selfish (+2)

* Almost all nobles are hunters, but Astlabor's quest to avenge his family upon the Beast has infused his countrymen with a similar spirit. They only gain this bonus if the creature is somehow "noble" or has eluded them

previously.

Culture and Religion:

Saracen (Sassanid) and Zoroastranism.

Zoroastran Religious Attributes: Add +3 to each of:

Honest, Chaste, Pious, Just, Generous.

Saracenic (Sassanid) characters may also convert to Christianity, during character creation, if they wish.

Father's Class Table:

Saracen characters generally enter Arthurian Britain as free men, or are born there, descended from traders, Roman soldiers, noble adventurers, mercenaries or foreign emissaries. Saracen ladies, such as Queen Zazamanc of Azagouc, were renowned for their wealth, wisdom and beauty. Such women may travel to Britain accompanied of a retinue of knight-suitors, seeking husbands or to meet Guenivere. Alternately, Saracen characters might arrive in Britain under less favourable circumstances -- as slaves. Slavery is illegal in Arthur's realms, but it is quite common in Ireland and among the Saxons and Continental Romans.

The most powerful Saracens in Arthur's Britain are the kin of Palomides -- the sons of Astlabor -- and those related to him either by blood or marriage. A description of this noble clan is included later in this book. Others Saracens have entered the service of nearby nobles. Many Saracens include the valentine, an ancient Sassanid decoration, in their coat of arms.

Holy Lands (d20)	Celtic Lands (d20)
1 Minor Noble (as Banneret)	1 Banneret
2- 9 Warrior	2- 3 Bachelor Knight
10-20 Trader	4- 6 Vassal Knight
	7-12 Mercenary Knight
	13-17 Warrior
	18-20 Trader

Trader: As per "Pagan Shore"

20 points to spend plus
4 in both Boating and Intrigue.
2 in Orate

+2 in both Selfish and Deceitful
Honour -3

Inherited Glory: 1d6

Saracen Cultural Weapon: Horse Bow

Saracens were famous as hunters and hawkers, and loved to shoot game while riding. They also employ this tactic in war, either fighting for or against the heavy Byzantine cataphract cavalry in the Holy Lands. They find it amusing their tactics are not accepted by the knights of Logres. Still, honorable Saracens obey the law of the land, and forego their favorite combat tactic rather than cause a fuss.

Name and Father's Name: Saracens should use Persian historical names that they fancy, or, since they are taking the place of Arabs in "Pendragon", any Arabic name they feel suits their character. "Abdallah",

or its derivatives "Abdullah" or "Abdul", though quite popular names for Arabs in Western literature, mean "Servant of Allah" and therefore aren't appropriate for Zoroastrian characters.

Liege Lord: Ask your gamemaster where the campaign is to be run. If it is in Logres, your Lord is either King Astlabor, or your local nobleman.

Trait Modifiers:

The Saracens (Sassanids) are a regal, imperial people. They are Worldly (+2), Proud (+2), Just (+1) and Prudent (+1)

Directed Traits and Passions:

Saracens (Sassanids) have few cultural traits which are likely to affect them so far from home. Their culture stresses a veneration of the King as a sort of prophet-demigod, shrouded in mystery and withdrawn from the world. Characters who were born in Persian Saracen (Sassanid) domains, generate a Loyalty for the distant King of Persia with a +3 modifier. Characters with high "Loyalty (Persian King)" scores probably wish to return to their homeland, so they may be inappropriate as player characters. Many of these people Hate (Byzantine Romans), but there are so few of them in Britain as to make this passion almost valueless. Other Saracens have lived under the Roman banner for centuries, and are loyal to the Byzantine Emperor, though they do not venerate him.

Characteristics:

Sassanids have +3 DEX.

Starting Skills:

Persian Saracens (Sassanids), though they have courtship rituals and methods of distinguishing each other in battle, do not practice Romance or Heraldry in the French fashion. Instead they Flirt and try to Recognize other knights. Persian creatures from the Other Side are so dissimilar from British Fae as to make a Sassanid's Faerie Lore score zero. The sport of Tourneying has not developed in the Holy Land. Sassanids prefer polo. So as not to disadvantage Sassanid characters, the gamesmaster might assume merchants or scholars in Persia can explain the basics of these odd, British customs to the Saracen characters, allowing them to add to these scores during the character creation process, to a maximum of five points in each.

Saracens from Dublin are exposed to the Danish and Irish cultures surrounding them and, after Anguish and Galahuat feudalise their territories, feudal customs as well. They gain the skills mentioned above as normal and lose their skill of horse archery, as it is not practiced in boggy Ireland. "Irish" Saracens may become subject to geasa or may be fostered, according to rules in "Pagan Shore". Characters from other Celtic realms adapt similarly to their social environment. Saracens from Carduel (Carlisle) are descended from Roman auxiliae who manned Hadrian's Wall. They are generated as other Saracens, but may have "Love (city)" and "Loyalty (Emperor)".

Beginning Saracen (Sassanid) Skills

Awareness	3
Boating	2
Chirurgery	0
Compose	3

Courtesy	1
Dancing	3
Faerie Lore	0
Falconry	3
First Aid	3
Flirting	4
Folk Lore	1
Gaming	5
Heraldry	0
Hunting	2
Industry	1
Intrigue	3
Orate	4
Play (Lute)	4
Read (Greek or Persian)	4
Recognize	4
Religion (Zoroastranism)	3
or (Christianity)	
Romance	0
Singing	2
Stewardship	3
Swimming	3
Tourney	0
Combat Skills	
Battle	2
Horsemanship	10
Weapon Skills	
Sword	5
Lance	2
Dagger	2
Spear	1
Bow	4

Luck Benefits:

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01 Money, 3d20 d.
02-03 Money, 1L.
04-06 Money, 1d6L.
07 Your ancestor was one of Alexander's generals. Gain 100 glory
08 You have a Barb Courser
09 You have an Arabian charger
10 You have a share in a business, see insert.
11-16 Family Heirloom: Roll 1d6. Value 1-3 = 1/2L.
 4 = 1L.
 5 = 2L.
 6 = 5L.
17 You own several useful slaves (those in Arthur's realm should
 treat these as vavasours and maidservants.); recieve +2
 Stewardship.
18 You have a healing potion (heals 1d6 points, once only) Priceless
19 Upgrade your outfit by 1
20 Roll twice.

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Speculative Enterprise Rules:

Knights in Logres are allowed to own premises and businesses (such as

mills and mines) upon which tenants pay rent. Saracens from the Holy Land are more likely to own shares in trading caravans or merchant vessels.

#### Effects:

Earns you 1d6L, rolled annually in Winter Phase.

- \* On roll of 1-5, receive profits equal to roll in L.
- \* Roll of 6, business fails, no profit; requires 6L paid immediately to keep enterprise from folding permanently.

#### Modifiers:

Roll "Stewardship" (for Logres business) or "Industry" (merchant trade)

- \* Critical success: Business does not fail. Profit is equal to the roll made, plus one, in pounds, but may not be higher than 5L. per annum.
- \* Successful skill roll allows you to modify the d6 roll up or down by one, if you wish, but must be applied \*before\* rolling the d6.
- \* Failure has no effect on the d6 roll.
- \* Fumble of Stewardship/Industry is the same as rolling a "6" on the d6; immediately causes the business to fail.

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#### Career Class:

As per normal, with the exception of traders, who are as per "Pagan Shore" p. 106 [Requires 13 Intrigue, 10 Orate, 10 Boat]. Since it is relatively easy to become a trader, many PCs will place their spare points into combat skills, becoming merchant adventurers.

#### Character Sheet Back:

Saracens who were once slaves may not have a family whom they can call upon for aid. Discuss this with your gamemaster before play.

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#### Archery

Saracens from the Holy Land have the ability to use bows from horseback. These weapons are small and fire projectiles so light that, to protect themselves, Crusaders wore layers of cloth underneath their chainmail to act as padding. The use of missile weapons is considered dishonourable by nobles in Arthur's realm and Gamesmasters should apply firm social pressure upon knights who insist on their use. Knights attacking other humans from a distance, in feudal lands, are considered both Cowardly and Dishonourable, even during war. Outside chivalrous lands a Saracen, unless himself Chivalrous, wouldn't feel bound to engage his foes hand to hand. Against an opponent with a lance or other melee weapon, a bow offers no defence; archers cannot use a shield and bow simultaneously. To fire accurately from horseback the character requires a successful roll in both Horsemanship and Bow, combined with training only available in a Saracen settlement. Negative modifiers apply for motion, speed, rough terrain and horses unfamiliar with riders who don't steer. A horse bow does 3d6 damage, but has an extremely short range compared to English bows. A critical Horsemanship roll does not affect damage done, but allows the character to fire without negative modifiers for the rest of the combat.

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#### SIDEBAR

RELIGION: Zoroastrianism.

Zoroastrianism is an ancient and complex religion, to which a short explanatory note cannot do justice. It is hoped this overview for will spark your interest and encourage research at your local library.

Zoroastrians believe the universe is a battle between the Truth and Deceit, with the Gods Ahura Mazda and Arhiman aligned to each respective pole. Each good act by a member of the faithful brings Ahura Mazda closer to victory, but victory or defeat is still at least four thousand years away. In the final days the world will be cleansed in molten metal and made again new, whole and pure. As this faith develops it incorporates increasing amounts of Persian and Roman pantheism, so that each God gains a retinue of lesser Gods that serve them.

Worship of one of Ahura Mazda's servants, Mithra, migrated along with the Saracen troops serving as Roman auxiliae. Known as Mithras, he became a popular patron for Roman soldiers, who spread his cult to Britain. For a time, his worship vied with Christianity for popularity in the Roman Empire. In Britain, the worship of Mithras was accompanied by that of Epona, a horse goddess, reflecting the concerns of cavalrymen.

Truth is the cardinal virtue of Zoroastrianism. Charity to the needy is also highly valued. Light and fire are sacred, even when used for common tasks such as cooking. Believers wear a sacred undershirt and a girdle, often a basic cord worn as a belt, every day of their lives. Believers ritually bathe and purify themselves often: upon awaking, after any activity which makes them impure, as they enter each of the five sections of the day, and before they worship. Worship of Ahura Mazda is highly ritualised. Those who are good will think good things, do good things and say good things. A spoken word is considered good if it is carefully reasoned.

Dead bodies contaminate those who handle them. As Fire, Water and Earth were made by Ahura Mazda, contaminating them with dead flesh is wrong, so Zoroastrians should leave their dead to be eaten by carrion birds. It is wrong to attempt to convert people from any religion to any other religion, as all religions lead eventually to Truth and each individual has been born into a particular faith for a reason. It is wrong to marry a non-believer. During menstruation, women can contaminate other people and things, so she must not sleep with her husband or tend the hearth.

The religious bonus for Zoroastrians (including worshippers of Mithras) is that their bodies remain pure. They cannot catch diseases and are immune to poisoning. For women, this prevents their own death during childbirth, although the baby may be stillborn.

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SIDEBAR:

Holy War, Crusading or Jyhad

Although knights may go Crusading in any phase, this should be rare. Their swords are needed closer to home. The British nobility and the Celtic Church do not support the crusading movement. Player characters should feel intense social pressure to ignore the Holy Land and deal instead with local concerns.

Although a knight may, in theory, take the Cross at any time, the greatest crusades in the Pendragon era occur during the first, second and fifth phases.

During the Interregnum, a knight would be derelict in his duty to leave the realm. He must defend his liege's lands from covetous neighbours: Saxon marauders, brigands, Irish pirates or Pictish raiders. "King before God" is a basic rule of feudal life and men who ignore it lose Honour. Although it is wrong, according to the Pope, to sack a Crusader's lands, when every man is needed to defend against the barbarians it would be a foolish lord who left valuable manors to go to seed. Characters may return home to find another man governing their lands, spending their revenues and guarding their wife, temporarily of course. This is especially prevalent in Celtic Christian lands, where the Pope is seen as both wise and distant. The wisest knights will leave their lands under the stewardship of trusted brothers. Christians with Pagan lords will probably be attained, that is, their knighthood will be stripped from them, for failing to fulfil the obligations of their office.

During the second phase, the Boy King and his enemies require all of their vassals: first in their fight for dominance of the state, then to face down the Saxons. A man going overseas at this stage is deserting Britain in a time of crisis. Lot is a Pagan, so men of his who go Crusading will be attained. Arthur's knights can trip off to Europe, but gamesmasters should not allow characters to benefit from the player knowledge that Lot's coalition, who care little for the Pope's decree, will be defeated.

Characters who crusade during the Second Phase miss the most glorious battles of Arthur's reign. The High King enforces the Papal decree, but he, the veterans of Badon, the heirs of the Cymric dead and the people of areas like Salisbury will hold little regard for those who avoided the battle. An exception might be made for those who return with great tales of adventure (must accumulate 1000+ Glory). For such a glorious Crusader, Arthur would gladly welcome you to his court, although the Saracens who dwell there would be less friendly.

During the Third Phase, after the conquest of Rome, Arthur's men have some time in which they might go Crusading, were it not for the threats posed by the Picts, Irish and odd magical creatures released into the world. Characters should not act from player knowledge. For example, they should not know that Galahad will change his mind about the High Kingship. Arthur's realm is structured for provision a permanent warrior caste for a -reason-.

Many knights, utterly unable to find the Grail, try to appease God by Crusading. For every one of them, the curse of the Quest holds true, they come back worse than when they set out. Many, of course, do not come back at all, either meeting a terrible fate, or ending up a hermit in Syria, Egypt, or some other distant place.

In the final phase, if you are Arthur's man, and are still capable of bearing arms, your liege needs you desperately. The kingdom is falling into pieces. If you go, then you'd best not return, for the romance will have ended, and the Saxons will be your lords, should you be of Logres.

The term "Jihad" is Arabic and usually represents the Holy War of the Islamic culture against the infidel. In "Pendragon" it will be used to represent the pious Persian Saracen's participation in wars of this world, which affect the outcome of the spiritual battle between Ahura Mazda and Arhiman. Jihad preserves Zoroastrian religious freedom and the reign of the King of Persia. Zoroastrian characters may therefore go on Jihad, the equivalent of Christian crusade. The game effects of the two activities are similar. It's possible for PCs to be on opposite sides of a Holy War, but it isn't recommended, as each group might develop "Hate" passions for

the other. This makes explaining why the characters are off adventuring together difficult.

#### Resolving Holy War.

If, after all of this, a player still desires their knight to participate in Holy War then tell them to roll twice on the Vassal Service Solo for each year away. A roll of 18 is a battle, not a tournament, as such sports are put aside in times of war. Each participant in the Holy War also makes a CON check each year to avoid catching leprosy, dysentery, jaundice, or something equally unpleasant. Additionally characters take an Aging Check each year to represent the strain of armoured combat in harsh terrain, coupled with poor food and, at times, lack of potable water. Religious Zoroastrans are immune to these hardships, although they still find the deprivation of campaigning unpleasant and fatiguing.

#### Effects of Holy War.

Characters may generate a Madness (Crusade/Jihad) score as per "Pagan Shore" but with the following modifications:

- The Madness has a beginning score of 2d6+6
- Characters may gain extra points when this passion is generated by taking a check in any of Vengeful, Arbitrary, Cruel, Proud and Worldy, so long as these additional points do not take the score over 15.
- In subsequent years they gain an automatic experience check in this passion if still engaged in Holy War. They also get a free check in one, or more Crusading trait.
- When a dozen or more people with the same brand of the Madness are together, it's score is raised by three.

When used in battle, this madness reduces all non-combat skills to zero. It adds ten points to the primary weapon skill, five to any secondary weapon required and five to Horsemanship. Critical success doubles the primary weapon skill, doubles the skill of any secondary weapon required and adds ten to horsemanship. Characters lost to the madness are perfectly willing to slaughter bystanders, not considering the battle to be over until they are sure that no potential enemy yet remains. They tend to accumulate checks in Crusader traits, resorting to genocide, cannibalism and similar terrifying acts.

On the up side, this trait can be used just about anyone the Crusader considers morally questionable, and is supported as virtuous by other Crusaders and some sections of the Catholic church. Crusaders find their passion addictive and many return to the Holy Land for fresh experiences.

In the face of the deparavities of the Crusade, some few knights find God. Many of them leave the crusading host. Those who do not immediately return home join orders of friars, cenobites, or knight-monks. If your gamesmaster agrees that you have found God on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, your character rolls for the Madness, then rolls Love (God). If the Madness is lower, you may discard it if you wish. This process reflects how many crusaders come to God only after a shocking, soul-testing experience. Crusaders remaining in the Holy Land, acting as a mendicant or student for at least a year, gain experience checks in each of their religious virtues. Thereafter, while working as a lay brother, knights gain an automatic check in their "Love (God)" passion each year. Zoroastrans undergo a similar process, except that the characteristics and diet involved are more culturally appropriate.

Many Crusaders simultaneously Love their God and suffer the Madness. This

is the approved philosophy of the Church, which says that if you kill Heathens, you'll be forgiven other sins. It is up to the gamesmaster to decide precisely how violent God want crusaders to be, manipulating the Madness and the Love to reflect the character's progress toward that ideal.

Most Zoroastrans fight the \_Franc\_ as a matter of course, not considering it a particularly religious act. In that sense they are just like Arthur's men resisting the Picts, so they need no modified mechanics to reflect their actions.

Knights gain the honour of fighting in a Holy War, which is worth 100 Glory per year. They also gain glory appropriate for any activities in the Holy Land. Characters who die while participating in a Holy War gain an additional 500 Glory, but remember that PCs do not die during solos.

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