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Jouer un Sarrasin

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jeudi 19 octobre 2006, par [Timothy Ferguson](#)

un article sur la création de personnages sarrasins, venus des terres lointaines d'afrique. (en anglais)

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Subject : Saracens in Pendragon
System : 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 ancient enemy, the Saxons. In later works, most important Saracen characters give up their religion and embrace the faith of the authors, Christianity. In Arthur's time, Islam did not yet exist. Its prophet was centuries from being born, but later authors added Saracen enemies to the stories to give historical depth to their hatred of the Muslims in the Holy Land.

So as to avoid offense to Islamic readers, and to prevent us having to have Mohammed born well before his time, in Pendragon no stress is placed on the crusades mentioned in Malory. Religious war is not a theme of his stories, and the

Crusades, historically, were, in many places, little better than a series of genocidal bloodlettings, where the _Franc_ [NOTE : Italics, this is an Arabic word.] knights killed indiscriminately, on the principle that God would save the souls of any Greek Christians they murdered. This author chooses not to romanticise their actions, or justify them within the game context.

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SIDEBAR :

Crusading

Although knights may still 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 great 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 nieghbours, Saxon invaders, brigands, Irish pirates or Pictish raiders. "King before God" is a basic rule of feudal life and men who ignore it lose Honour.

During the second phase, the Boy King and his enemies require all of their troops, first to kill each other, then to face down the Saxons.

A man going to Constantinople at this stage is deserting Britain in a time of crisis. Arthur follows the Pope's rule that no crusader's lands should be despoiled, but he, and all other relatives of those at Badon, will hold in low regard the cowards who did not stand against the Saxons.

In the final phase, if you are Arthur's man, you are probably already dead. If not, your liege needs you desperately, as the kingdom falls into pieces. The Catholic de Ganis go off to get butchered and any PC who follows their lead either meets the same fate, or winds up a hermit in Syria, Egypt, or some other distant place.

When the Emperor of Byzantium asks all Christians to aid him in his wars to the East, and the Pope declares murdering unbelievers to be a penitential act, for which you will be forgiven other sins, the Celtic Church exhorts its devotees not to attend. They do not defy the Pope publicly, but some make clear that killing people won't counterbalance adultery. Many suggest that killing Heathens (well, usually Wotanists,

actually) closer at hand is more useful than sailing for months to do the same thing. Few British knights attend.

If, after all of this, a player still desires their knight to go Crusading, 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. Tell them to make a CON check each year to avoid catching leprosy, dysentery, jaundice, or something equally unpleasant. They take an Aging Check each year to represent the strain of armoured combat in harsh terrain, coupled with poor food and a lack, at times, of potable water. They may generate a Love (God) score of 2d6+6 in their first year and in subsequent years gain an automatic experience check. Knights may add a point to this score, when first rolled, for every experience check they take in Vengeful, Arbitrary, Cruel, Proud and Worldly, so long as this does not take the score over 16.

Knights gain the honour of being a Crusader, which is worth 100 Glory. They also gain glory appropriate for their activities in the Holy Land.

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The gamesmaster is, however, left with a group of significant characters who are Saracens, or who die crusading against them.

In this article, I will, in the future, use Sassanids, the rulers of sixth century Persia, in the place of the Saracens. The Sassanid Empire's official religion was Zoroastranism, which is described below. There are many ways for a Sassanid to reach Arthur's



court. The simplest is to follow the example of Sangremor le Desirious and sail. Sassanid traders reached the slave markets of Dublin, so there might be a community of them there, or characters might be freed slaves, taken far way after losing a battle in the Middle East. Malory mentions that the Saracens attack Wandesborow after the battle of Bedgeraine, while the Vulgate says that the Sesnes, the Saxons, attack Vandalors in Cornwall. In Pendragon, I merge these events and have the Saxons attack Wandesboro in Lothian, but Gamesmasters might wish to have a small group of Sassanid warriors, or slaves, take part in this invasion.

The Sassanid culture will appear strangely familiar to many readers. The religion of Islam is Arabic in origin, but the Commanders of the Faithful moved their capital first to Damascus, a Byzantine city, then to Hashimiya and Baghdad, both 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 emphasize this by allowing the Sassanids 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 descendants, when Sir Dagonet starts telling one on the tales from the "Alf Laya Wa Laya", or when Sir Palmodies 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 and Mohammed.

Sassanids either come from Persia or from Dublin. In this section "Irish" Sassanids describes characters who have gone native, either by adopting local customs or through being born in Dublin or Leinster, away from large communities of their countrymen. Roll 1d6. 1-3 Persian, 4-6 Irish.

Culture and Religion :

Sassanid and Zoroastranism.

Zoroastran Religious Attributes : Add +3 to each of :

Honest, Chaste, Pious, Just, Generous.

Father's Class Table :

"Persian" Sassanids usually enter Ireland as slaves. Some come freely to make money, if traders, seek adventure, if nobles, or guard a trader or nobleman, if warriors. In either case, by the time they are sufficiently old to be played, all PCs are fortunate enough to be free, unless the Gamesmaster decides otherwise. In Arthur's realm slavery is illegal, although it's common in Ireland and among the Saxons.

"Irish" Sassanids generated as PCs are usually free. The most powerful are members of Palomides' family, either by blood or marriage, although others have entered the service of nearby nobles.

Persian

01	Minor Noble (as Banneret)
02 - 09	Warrior
10 - 20	Trader

Irish

Banneret	01
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CHARACTER CREATION : Sassanids

Region and Lands :



Vassal Knight	02 - 03
Bachelor Knight	04 - 06
Mercenary Knight	07 - 12
Warrior	13 - 17
Trader	18 - 20

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

Name and Father's Name : Sassanids 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. The name "Abdallah", or its derivatives "Abdullah" or "Abdul", all quite popular for Arabs in Western literature, mean "Servant of Allah" and therefore aren't appropriate for Zoroastrian characters.

Liege Lord : Ask your GM where the campaign is to be run. If that's undecided, it is King Astalabor.

Trait Modifiers :

The Sassanids are an empire building people. They are Worldly (+2), Proud (+2), Just (+1) and Prudent (+1)

Directed Traits and Passions :

The 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, which adds +3 to their Loyalty for the distant Emperor of the Sassanids, should they generate one. Characters with high "Loyalty

(Sassanid Emperor)" scores will 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 Arthur's court as to make this passion valueless.

Starting Skills :

Persian Sassanids, although they have courtship 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. Faeries in Persia are so dissimilar from those in Britain as to make a Sassanid's Faerie Lore zero. The sport of tourneying has not developed there. They prefer polo. So as not to disadvantage Sassanid characters greatly, the gamesmaster might assume that there are merchant associates or learned scholars in Persia which can explain the basics of these odd, British customs to the player characters, allowing them to add to these scores during the character creation process, to a maximum score of five in each.

Sassanids 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 one point in each of the skills mentioned above, so long as the skill is available in Ireland but lose the skill of archery, as it not practiced in Ireland. "Irish" Sassanid characters may be made more complicated using the rules presented in "Pagan Shore".

Starting Skills :

skills/people	PERSIAN	IRISH
Awareness	3	3
Boating	2	2



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

Luck Benefits :

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 part-share in a business, which earns you 3L. annually. (Knights are forbidden to craft things themselves, or to engage in usury, that is they may not lend money. They are, however, allowed to own mills, premises and businesses, upon which the tenants pay rents.)
11-16	Family Heirloom : Roll 1d6. Value 1-3 =1/2L., 4 = 1L., 5 = 2L., 6 = 5L.
17	You own several useful slaves.
18	You have a healing potion (heals 1d6 points, once only) Priceless.
19	Upgrade your outfit by 1.
20	Roll twice.

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 :

Sassanids who were once slaves may not have a family whom they can call upon for aid. This is a GM's decision.

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SIDEBAR

RELIGION : Zoroastranism.

Traits : Honest, Chaste, Pious, Just, Generous

Zoroastranism is an ancient and complex religion, to which a single sidebar cannot do justice, and it is hoped you'll look up its finer details in your local library. For the purposes of roleplaying Zoroastrans, here are some tips.

Zoroastrans believe that the universe is a battle between Truth and Lie and the Gods are aligned to each pole. These are Ahura Mazda and Arhiman. Each good act by a member of the faithful brings Ahura Mazda closer to victory, but victory is still at least four thousand years away. In the final days, the world will be cleansed in molten metal and made new, whole and good. As this faith develops it incorporates increasing amounts of Persian pantheism, so that each God gains a retinue of lesser Gods that serve them. The most important for Ahura Mazda is Mithra, around whom a splinter-cult forms.

Truth is the cardinal virtue of Zoroastranism. Charity to the needy is also highly valued. Fire is sacred, even when used for cooking.

Believers wear a sacred undershirt and a girdle (basically a cord worn as a belt) every day of their lives. Believers ritually purify themselves upon awaking, after they have done anything that 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 think good things, do good things and say good things. A said thing is good when 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 Zoroastrans should leave their dead to be eaten by carrion birds. It is wrong to convert 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 Zoroastrans 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 child can still be stillborn.