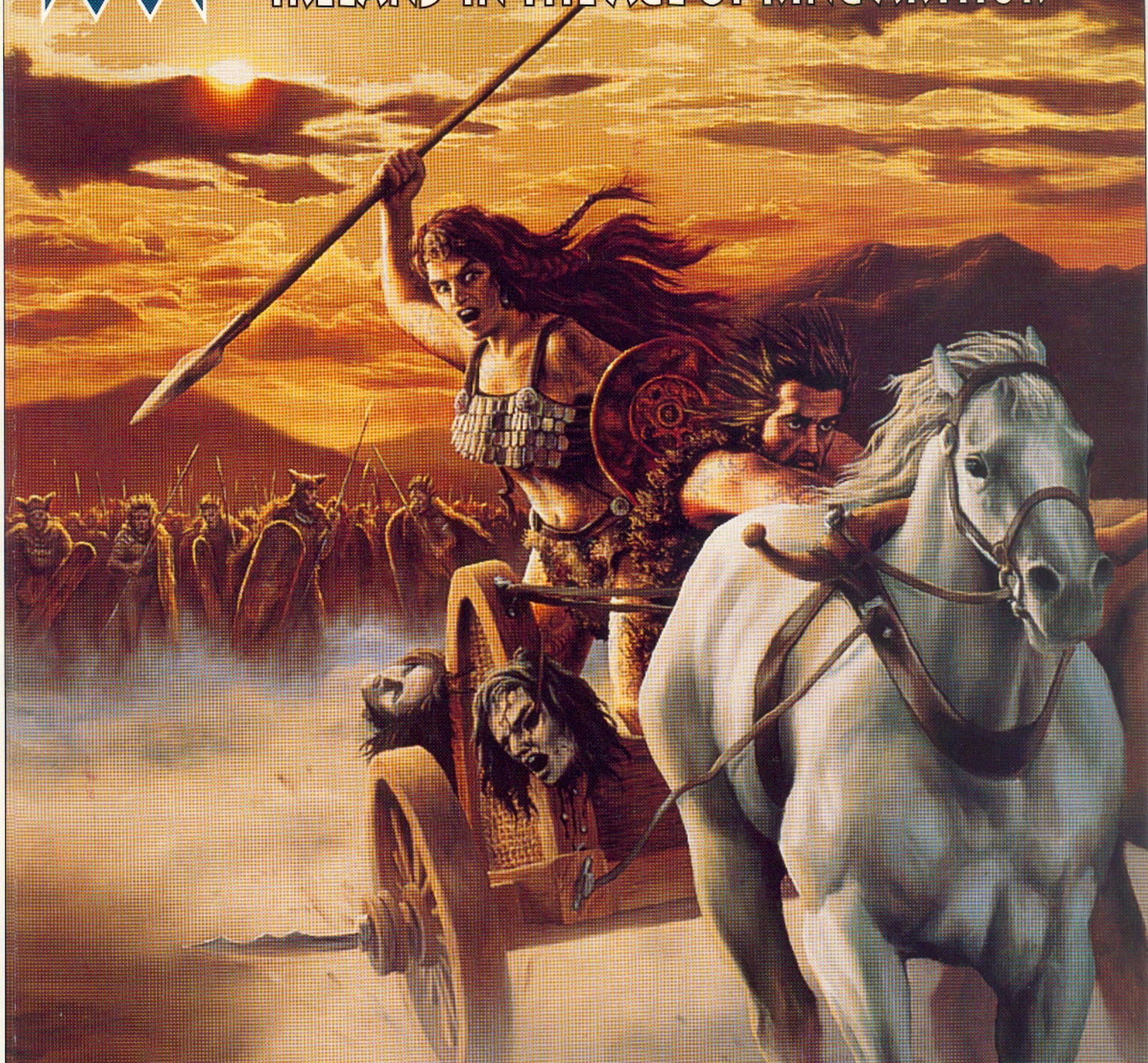




**Pendragon**  
RolePlaying Adventure  
2713

# 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*







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





# PAGAN SHORE

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**Chaosium Inc**

1994





# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	5	Wealthy Bó-Aire (illustration).....	57
Glossary.....	5	Peoples of Ireland.....	58
Pronunciation Guide.....	6	Lochlannach Warrior (illustration).....	64
Blind Harpist (illustration).....	7	Irish Women (illustration).....	69
<b>Irish Landscape</b> .....	<b>10</b>	<b>Irish Magic</b> .....	<b>72</b>
Settlements.....	10	Druidic Ritual (illustration).....	73
Geography of Ireland (map).....	11	Holy Folk of Ireland.....	77
The Divine Landscape.....	12	Druid in a Sacred Circle (illustration).....	78
An Érainn Ráth (illustration).....	13	The Aos Sí.....	83
Travel.....	14	Bachlach (illustration).....	87
Climate.....	14	Geases.....	90
Foreign Settlements.....	14	Chariot Challenge Race (illustration).....	91
Flora and Fauna.....	15	Random Geas Generator (table).....	92
Places of Interest.....	15 - 50	Érainn Horseman (illustration).....	94
Political Divisions (map).....	19	<b>Irish Character Generation</b> .....	<b>96</b>
Tattooed Man (illustration).....	25	Magician Character Generation.....	96
A Crannog (illustration).....	29	A Satirist (illustration).....	100
Inside the Ráth (illustration).....	35	An Irish Knight Fights a Tribal Warrior (illustration).....	107
Long Isles (map).....	37	Homelands.....	110
The Pale (map).....	41	New Skills.....	114
<b>Irish People</b> .....	<b>51</b>	A Charioteer (illustration).....	115
The Family.....	51	Irish Passions.....	116
Social Organization.....	52	<b>Irish Storytelling</b> .....	<b>118</b>
An Irish Lord at Court (illustration).....	53	Cattle Raid (illustration).....	121
Laws of Honor.....	54	<b>Afterword</b> .....	<b>123</b>
Laws of Property.....	55	Bibliography.....	123
Laws of War.....	56	<b>Irish Character Sheet</b> .....	<b>125-126</b>
The Aos Dana.....	57		

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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.

## 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.

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.



## 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 ('). 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"
í	.....	as in "prlStine"
í	.....	as in "prlstine"
o	.....	as in "DONald"
ò	.....	as in "lOne"
u	.....	as in "pUnt"
ú	.....	as in "pUtrid"
ao	.....	as in rAlid
aoi	.....	as in the French "oui"
ia	.....	as in barbarlAn ("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: Sãn is pronounced "sawrn," but Seãn 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 Rí" 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 (BOOAJ-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. Quartering soldiers is also called "coshering" and "coign-and-livery."





C

**Camán** (kohm-AWRN; L-shaped stick): Name for the Irish version of lacrosse or field hockey, called "hurling" in English. Also, the stick used in this sport.

**Cath** (KOTH; Battle): A pitched battle that decides political disputes between two tuaths.

**Cathach** (KOTH-ukh; Battler): A reliquary carried into battle by the Christian clergy allied to a chieftain. Its presence brings victory according to the puissance of the tribal saint.

**Cathair** (KOH-hir; War Citadel): A rãth or dún (q.v.) made mostly of stone, equal in fortification to a motte or minor castle.

**Céile** (KAYL-yuh; Debtor or Retainer): A person who borrows land or stock from a noble, paying him interest in food, goods, and military and political support.

**Céili Dé** (KAYL-eee DJAY; God's Vassals): A conservative movement within Irish Christianity, favoring strict Christian observance and removal of secular influence from the church. Called "Culdees" in English.

**Céilsine** (KAYL-shun-yuh; Indebtedness): Irish counterpart of feudalism, in which a céile temporarily subordinates himself to a noble in return for a loan.

**Ceithearn** (KETH-urn; War-band): Gang of footsoldiers who fight out of duty to their céilsine patron; usually ill-equipped men of bó-aire or betagh rank.

**Clan**: Anglo-Irish word for a fine governed by a thane under feudal laws. Each member of a clan has the status of a household knight.

**Comharba** (KAH-ur-buh; Heir): The head of a monastery, its daughter houses, and the lands and céiles that support them, determined by dynastic succession rules rather than spiritual considerations. In short, a church-chieftain. Equivalent in religious rank to a bishop.

**Comhlann** (KAHV-lun; Equal Blades): A code of conduct governing duels with weapons, bardic contests, and other competitions, which stipulates that participants must compete under the most equal conditions possible. A duel against a blind man is not legal or decisive, under comhlann, unless you blindfold yourself.

**Créaght** (KRAYT; Big Herd): All the cattle owned by a noble family and their retainers, herded together to graze in Winter pastures, or following an army as a mobile larder.

**Cruithni** (KRUTH-nyuh; Painted People): The Picts of Ireland, who co-existed with the aos sí before the arrival of Érainn and Gaels. Their culture mixes primitive Celtic and pre-Indoeuropean elements.

**Cumhal** (KUWHUL; Female Slave): A) a female slave, or B) a measure of value equal to one female slave or five dairy cows.



A Blind Harpist



**D**

**Derbhfine** (DYERV-fun-nyuh; Real Family): Your family for purposes of inheritance. It includes: you, your great-grandfather, every man descended from your great-grandfather down to your generation, and all their wives and daughters.

**Dáil** (DAWL; Senate): A parliament of breitheamhs gathered at an aonach, with the power to pass new laws for their tuath, and to grant emergency powers to their chieftain.

**Druid** (DROOD; Learned One): Aos dána members who manipulate luck, predict the cycles of nature, and contact the aos sí. Not so much priests as a religious consultants. All other aos dána castes are spin-offs from this original brotherhood of teachers.

**Dún** (DOON; Prominence): A ráth (q.v.) atop an hill or promontory.

**E**

**Eachlach** (EKH-lukh; Rider): A messenger and scout of noble status who acts as the eyes, ears and spokesperson of a chieftain. Women always discharge this office in the sagas, based perhaps on the cynical assumption that a woman is less likely to be killed by a rival court.

**Eineach** (EN-yukh; Honor or Face): The measure, in milk-cows, of a person's worth, based on that person's caste. The weight of a person's testimony in court; the compensation due when he or she is injured or disgraced.

**Érainn** (AY-rinn; People of Ireland): Name for the early Celtic culture of Ireland, who have ruled there for at least a thousand years. People from this stock are now subordinate to the Gaels, a group of recent arrivals and cultural progressives.

**F**

**Fearann Claíomh** (FERR-un CLAIV; Sword-Land): Territory held by right of conquest; a pragmatic admission, in Irish law, that property belongs to whomever can best capture and defend it.

**Feis** (FESH; Festival or Copulation): The inauguration of a chieftain, in which the chieftain-elect marries, at least symbolically, the spirit of the tuath. A feis can include Christian or pagan observances, feasting, dancing and games. A chieftain who claims many lands may have to celebrate many feises.

**Fian** (FEEAN; Military Brotherhood): Young or landless warriors who live off a chieftain's domains and serve him as a bodyguard. Often, fian members are all devotees of a pagan war-cult.

**Fili** (fih-LEE; Poet): A poet in the pagan tradition whose verses embody magical powers. An expert on history, mythology, and the world of nature. Above all, a prophet.

The bard provides art; the filí provides knowledge of the past, present and future.

**Fine** (FIN-yuh; Family): An extended six-generation family; a clan.

**Flaith** (FLOTH; Sovereign): The Irish nobility, equivalent in rank to knights. A family gains flaith status by having céiles, and can slip to the ranks of bó-aire if, over time, their céiles desert them.

**Fomhórach** (fah-WHOR-ukh; Harvest-god, "Fomorian"): Cthonic fairies, sometimes depicted as one-eyed giants. They were first inhabitants of Ireland, and the authors of its fertility. The Tuath Dé Danu subdued them and drove them into the sea.

**G**

**Gael** (GAYL; Outsider or Newcomer): Name for the more modern Celtic culture of Ireland, including many Gaulish tribesmen pushed from their homelands by the expansion of Rome. The Gaels rule most of Ireland; the Érainn and Cruithni are subordinate to them.

**Gallóglach** (goll-OW-glukh; Foreign Footsoldier): A mercenary, usually of Lochlannach descent, equipped with mail and a pole-arm for defeating cavalry. Many gallóglachs found dynasties on the lands given them in reward by Irish kings.

**Geas** (GESS; Stricture): A personal, idiosyncratic taboo assigned to a pagan believer, the violation of which brings death. Also, an oath of limited duration which, because it was sworn in the sacred fashion of a geas, brings death to the violator.

**I**

**Imbolg** (IM-bulg; Parturition): Pagan holiday on February 1st; marks the beginning of spring. Associated with sowing and birth.

**J**

**Jarl** (YARL; Earl): Lochlannach word for a chieftain with lesser chieftains subordinate to him.

**K**

**Kern**: Hiberno-English version of the word "ceithearn;" refers to a lightly-equipped footsoldier of commoner rank.

**L**

**Lughnasad** (LOO-nus-ud; Lugh's Festival): Pagan holiday on August 1st; marks the beginning of autumn. Associated with the ripening of corn and the weaning of foals and calves.

**O**

**Odinism**: The religion of the pagan Lochlannach, equivalent to Saxon Wotanism.





Ollaibh (AHL-uv; Doctor, Arch-druid): The chief aos dána of a tuath, chosen by dynastic election from within their own caste. A tuath may have an arch-druid, arch-poet, arch-crafter, arch-breitheamh, and arch-Christian cleric (that is, a bishop). All equal the tuath's chieftain in status, and work within his court.

## R

Ráth (RAWTH; Manor): A fortified homestead, consisting at a minimum of a timber feasting-hall and a rampart of earth. Also, the fief governed by the homestead.

Rí Damhna (REE DOV-nuh; King Material): The pool of nobles in a tuath who, because they can count a chieftain within their derbhfine, are entitled to become a chieftain. In other words, all males related to a chieftain within four generations are legitimate princes. The rí damhna constitute their tuath's ruling dynasty. All Irish characters in *Pagan Shore* belong to the rí damhna of their homeland.

## S

Samhain (SOH-whun; Summer-End): Pagan holiday on November 1st; marks the beginning of Winter and the beginning of a year; associated with the end of harvesting, sacrificing to bless the new year, and the presence of ghosts and aos sí in the mortal world.

Sí (SHEE; Mound): A dome-shaped cairn from pre-Celtic times. Believed by Celts to house gods and spirits. Can also refer to a drumlin.

Skald: The Lochlannach equivalent of a bard.

Slánaíocht (slawrn-EE-ukht; Guarantee): The practice of staking one's einéach to guarantee the conduct of another party. "I vouch that Cormac will follow the laws of our tuath, or the loss of face shall be mine," is an example of slánaíocht.

Spar (SPAHR; point): A) A poleax used by gallóglachs, and B) the smallest element of a gallóglach battle, including one gallóglach, a bondsman or squire who carries his mail and weapons, and a page who tends his horse when he dismounts to fight.

## T

Táin (TAWRN or TOYN; Looting Expedition): Guerrilla warfare to collect compensation from a rival family, or sim-

ply to rob them. "Táin bó" means "cattle raid;" the Cattle Raid of Cuailnge (Táin bó Cuailnge) is Ireland's national epic. And the táin, in the *Pagan Shore* era, was Ireland's national pastime.

Tánaiste (TAWRN-ush-tyuh; Near-King): In Gael custom, a member of the rí damhna appointed by the current chieftain as his successor; an heir-designate.

Tanistry: Hiberno-English word for the practice of appointing tánaistes.

Taoiseach (TWEE-shukh; Spokesman): The president of a fine, elected by them solely to lead in war, settle inheritance disputes, and negotiate with their chieftain. A family patriarch.

Thanage (THAYN-aj; Clandom): In Feudal Irish custom, the territory owned and governed by a thane and his clan. A thanage is an inheritable estate passed from each thane to his tánaiste.

Thane (THAYN; Liege): In Feudal Irish custom, a taoiseach with absolute power over his clan, able to void agreements, arrange marriages, and re-assign property. A thane equates to a banneret in rank. Also called a "cannfenny" (Gaelic ceann-fine, head of a family).

Tír na nOg (TJEER NUH NOWG; Land of Youth): Blanket name for Ireland's Otherworld, where the gods live. A world where nothing ages, and whatever dies is eventually re-born.

Trochlaigh (TRAHK-li; Deterioration): Starving oneself outside another man's ráth, hoping to shame him into conceding a lawsuit. The political fasts of Mahatma Gandhi resemble trochlaigh.

Tuath (TOOATH; Kingdom or Tribe): Dynasties who descend from an ancient god or hero, the other fines subordinate to those dynasties, and the lands they claim. Small tuaths, ruled and populated by one big family, are tribes; larger tuaths amalgamate disparate flaith families into a single kingdom. The average tuath has a population of 3,000.

Tuath Dé Danu (TOOATH DJAY DON-uh; Tribe of the Goddess Danu): The various dynasties of gods and faeries claiming descent from Danu, goddess of the Danube river. A blanket term for Irish gods.



# IRISH LANDSCAPE

## *The Shape of Ireland*



THE ROLLING Armorican Mountain Formation and the steep Caledonian Formation, two dolomite bones over which the skin of Europe is stretched, converge at Ireland, meeting somewhere off the Connacht coast. The ridges rippling across Munster, and the steep-sided Aran islands, belong to the Armorican. The stark cliffs of the Long Isles, Ailech, and North Connacht are Caledonian, as is the tributary chain of granite domes running North-South through Leinster.

Slung between these peaks are the lowlands, with a mean elevation of 100 meters. Because these interior plains receive the run-off, but not the ferocity, of the storms that strike the Armorican and Caledonian coasts, they are characterized by lakes, rivers, "emerald" pastures, forests, and bogs. Ireland is a bowl into which rain falls.

But not a smooth bowl. Glaciers have left their mark on the interior in the form of grassy hills and ridges, built from chunks of granite and turf released by the retreating ice. Small oval mounds of drift, twenty-five meters high and 500 meters long, are called "drumlins." They occur both alone, and in dune-like clusters; altogether, they cover one-eighth of Ireland's surface. Glacioallevial ridges, called "eiscirs," range from three to ten meters in height, from four to twenty meters in width, and up to thirty-five kilometers in length. They thread across Ireland like scars.

### **Water**

Irish rivers gather from storm-water in the folds of the coastal hills. Starting as shallow, gurgling streams, they converge into wide, slow rivers once they meet the gentle interior plains. There, they meander around drumlins and pool into hundreds of shallow lakes and bogs. These overflow into what we might call secondary rivers, which seek exit through the coast, gathering speed as they cut through Ireland's encircling rocks. In sum, rainwater threads its way into the Irish interior, pools up, then threads its way out.

The *Pagan Shore* map shows some well-known bridges and fords. Many raths at fords maintain a fleet of rafts and canoes; these are not for hire, but can be borrowed by a stranger who swears slánaíocht to return them. No person can block, or claim, the central channel of any river; it belongs to everyone and no one, and therefore to the faeries. Here, or at a river's source, a magician can tap the river's

spirit (4d20 Ambient, 2d20 Weather Control, 2d20 Healing; half as much for rivers left unnamed on the map).

Certain areas are marked on our map as flood-lands. These include fens, callows, seasonal lakes, and other areas submerged by water during the Spring, but dry and fecund the rest of the year.

The flood-lands that do not drain are Ireland's lakes (or lochs, or loughs), skirted by bogs, studded with islands, and haunted by maidens and wyrms — unless some saint has prayed their gods to sleep already. Islands within a lake are places of intense magic (6d20 Ambient, 4d20 Glamour), because they represent land surviving from the magical tuath that occupied the acres now submerged. Holy persons of all faiths use these islands as places of meditation.

## SETTLEMENTS

### **The Ráth and Its Vicinity**

Ireland's half-million people live in fortified homesteads. Members of the same fine build their forts within sight of one another, but no closer. Tanners, poets, cow-herders, smiths and doctors live as tenants attached to the manor, or "ráth," of a rich family.

A noble's ráth consists of one or more ditches nested in concentric circles 30 yards in diameter or wider. As the builders dig each ditch, they pile the upturned earth on its outer rim, forming a rampart. Where possible, the rampart is made of unmortared stone, and reinforced by a timber palisade.

A timber hall dominates the ráth's enclosed center. Here, the family and their retainers sleep in niches ringed around the interior wall. Each niche includes a bench, a pile of furs, and a metal or wicker screen for "privacy." In the center of this room lies a hearth, a vat, a feasting table, and an apartment partitioned off by wicker screens, where the lord sleeps with his wife of the evening.

Outside the mead-hall, a ráth's walls may enclose kilns, stables, cooking pits, store-houses, and so on. Most raths include a teach talún ("underground house"): an horizontal shaft dug under the mead-hall's foundations and buttressed with timber frames. These are food cellars, pagan household shrines (1d20 Ambient Life Force, 1d20 Protection), and





# GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF IRELAND

## MAP KEY


0 5 10 15 30  
miles







shrines (1d20 Ambient Life Force, 1d20 Protection), and refuges of last resort.

A weird variation on the rath is the crannog: a circular thatch house on a man-made turf island, in the middle of a lake. A wooden causeway connects the crannog to dry ground. Crannogs are easier to defend than raths, but also less comfortable (imagine Winter ON an Irish lake). The families who own them prefer fishing to herding, and water gods to land gods.

The land immediately outside a rath's walls is divided into walled plots an acre or less in size, planted with corn, buckwheat, or in the south, apple trees. Slaves and serfs build their pathetic shacks near these fields, if their lord permits it. Further out lie the hundreds of empty acres where the owner's cattle graze. He furnishes these lands with local roads and trails, fulachts (a shed and cooking pit left in the woods for the benefit of hunters), cattle pens, wells (the rath itself is rarely built over a well), water-mills, and smaller raths which serve as homesteads for his tenants.

Only the most noteworthy raths appear on the *Pagan Shore* map: tribal capitals, and the homes of famous heroes. Between fifteen and twenty thousand lesser raths are occupied in this era, and ten thousand more are abandoned or in ruins.

## THE DIVINE LANDSCAPE

In Ireland, the Old Gods still live. The hills they own are as well-known as the raths belonging to human kings. If you want to find Aonghus-energy, visit the pre-Celtic cemetery at Brugh na Bóann. If you want to contact the Life Force of Danu, mother of all gods, her breasts are part of the Munster landscape.

What you will really find in these places is clergy: either pagans, or Christians pragmatic enough to pitch their tents beside a well of Ambient magic. Clergy have an interest in keeping the benefits of a holy site to themselves. Invaders — who may themselves be clergy from a different room in the mansion of druidism or the Church — might profane a hard-won Sacred Space. Beside the clergy are their clients: desperate people who need an infant blessed or a tumor healed, and whose objection to an outsider's use of "their" god can be even stronger. Between you and those dice of Life Force stands a wall of protocol and kowtowing.

Most holy places are amenable to any magic, because the god in exile there has many selves. How you channel that magic is in part determined by your behavior on the site: walking around the cairn clockwise while you chant is different from circling it counter-clockwise. See the "Irish Magic" chapter for details.

### Burial Mounds

Each Irish cíneal (the land held in common by one noble family) contains, as the center of its religious life, at least one cairn. The Irish like to situate them atop hills and ridges, so that as travellers enter a new valley, the local cairn is the first thing they see.

A cairn is a mound of earth and stones enclosing a chamber of undressed granite slabs. From the outside, a cairn looks like a hemisphere of sod with a stone slab set into it as a doorway. The interior chamber resembles a teach talún.

The druids use some cairns to transfer burned or skinned sacrifices into the afterlife. Others serve as tombs, meaning that an important dead person — usually a chieftain, his chariot, weapons, wife and slaves — enters the next world as a resident rather than as an offering. Subsequently, the cairn becomes a place to contact his spirit. The mass graves in which ordinary Irishmen are buried lie next to the cairn of their favorite god or ancestor.

The cairn of a god named in the "Irish Magic" chapter projects 10d20 Ambient Life Force, and 6d20 more divided among magical effects of which the god is a patron. Lesser cairns project 5d20 Ambient Life Force. Sealing oneself inside a cairn adds 4d20 to Summon and Necromancy, but usually at the cost of several trait or passion tests, and the risk of a curse based on the cairn's Ambient Life Force should one fail the test. For example, a trespasser in the cairn of the jurist-god Midhir suffers a 10d20 curse — probably aging or Madness — if he fails a Just check.

### Other Religious Sites

Druids might sequester a rath as the temple of a pagan god. More often, they hold their rituals outside a cairn or within a sacred grove, that is, a stand of trees whose symmetry of arrangement or type strikes the druids as magical. Each of these groves houses a deity, who visits the trees on certain nights to collect his or her sacrifices. Groves project 6d20 Ambient Life Force, and 3d20 in Summoning, Controlling, Travel, or Animal Friend magics. Avoid cairns at night, and avoid groves that belong to the gods.

Ireland has over a hundred stone circles. The druids treat these pre-celtic monuments as temples for some of the older cults, such as Nuadhu. Many include sighting-stones which mark the onset of solstices. Ireland also has scores of lone megaliths, each of which houses the energy of a godling, a dead hero, or a long-ago battle, and each of which effects the living in a unique way. The Badhbh stone at Cill Dara confers luck in war to those who kiss it, whereas the famous Blairnis stone near Cork rewards kisses with eloquence ("blarney"). Many stones have cups or sockets chiseled into their sides, where offerings can be placed. Gamemasters should invent whatever kind of luck-stone they find useful or amusing. The same principal applies to large, isolated





An Érainn Ráth



### Climate

The mean temperature of Ireland varies from 35F in deepest winter to 65F in July and August. The Gulf Stream warms Munster by ten degrees above the norm, while Conmacne Mara and Ailech, which face the North Atlantic, average five degrees colder.

The island is overcast and clammy. Both sunshine and snow are rare. Rarer still is a week without rain, fog, or cloudy skies.

Ireland's neighbor isles in the Irish sea, like Pomitain, enjoy shelter from the North Atlantic storms. But the Western isles — Toraigh, the Arans, the Sceiligs, and so on — suffer crushing rains and towering tides driven by hurricane-force winds. Theirs is the worst weather in the British isles.

trees, to springs, and to wells, each of which has its own idiosyncratic micro-cult. These sites provide between 5 and 7d20 in Ambient Life Force, plus 3d20 more in Blessing or Healing magics.

### Monasteries

The typical outpost of Christianity in Ireland is the monastery, and the typical Irish monastery is a rath granted to the church by the local chieftain. A monastic rath contains a refractory, a wooden chapel or oratory, and a series of clochans: one-man "beehive" stone huts in which the monks seclude themselves for contemplation. Some monks supplement their monastery with a round tower — a place to hide from the Lochlannach and other enemies. Each monastic rath is a Christian Sacred Space containing between 20 and 70 points of permanently sacrificed Magical Limit (1d6+1x10, or determine according to the monastery's importance and size). Each 20 points of Sacred Space adds +2 to a specific Talent, or +1d20 points of Life Force for use with a specific Talent. Most are situated over a holy place of long standing, such as a well or grove, and thus project at least 5d20 Ambient magic in addition.

In all other respects, a monastic rath resembles its secular counterpart. It is often surrounded by a large community of céiles, who are called "monks" even though they fight, and farm, and marry, living what would strike people today as a secular life. These retainers are "monks" because they belong to the extended religious commune, just as, in pagan thought, a chieftain is spiritually co-extensive with his lands and his followers.

## TRAVEL

The Irish once used two-wheeled chariots for transportation and warfare. The stirrup has lessened their popularity in both departments. Horsemen now bear messages between raths, and pester enemy flanks in battle, riding on cushions

rather than saddles and bearing shields and javelins rather than lances.

Major roads are noted on our map. The Irish like to situate roads atop eiscirs, to avoid bogs. When crossing squishy ground is unavoidable, they extend the road with timber causeways. Nearly all road-building is credited to sovereignty gods, such as Nuadhu or Mumha Mór. The gamemaster may decide that Ireland's ley lines lie on or near its mythic roads.

Ireland's placid rivers and lochs make travel by barge the best option for people who aren't in a hurry. Ireland's coast is tide-wracked and rocky; only large river estuaries provide safe harbors.

## FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS

The largest and most sophisticated Irish settlements are the work of invaders: the Lochlannach, who build longphorts and minor cities, and Arthur's knights, who build boroughs and castles.

A longphort is a defended ship enclosure. It consists of a horseshoe-shaped timber wall enclosing a stretch of beach, some docks, and a cluster of tents and shacks. Each longphort belongs to a Lochlannach chieftain and his gang, who maintain it as a trading post and a base for piracy.

A longphort which attracts many traders and craftsmen can become a city. All of Ireland's current cities — Dublin, Limerick, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork — grew from longphorts. Dublin has a population of 4500; the other four cities are half as large. Each city is surrounded by a few hundred acres of Lochlannach farmland.

A borough is a walled town populated by 500 or fewer British colonists. Each borough contains a mint, a church, a market, and a garrison of soldiers — features which make it popular with its Irish neighbors, and thus a powerful tool of cultural conquest. The boroughs of Leinster and Meath mark the effective limits of Arthur's rule in Ireland.

King Arthur's army left mottes and castles in its wake, as well. Most house a knight who usurped the seat of an Irish chieftain. The campaign map shows the state of these fortifications in 530. Over the next twenty years, many of the mottes are upgraded to castles, and many of the castles improved.

The Geraldts and Butlers, British adventurers who become prominent barons in southern Ireland, build a distinctive kind of manor for their retainers. This is the "tower house," a single square tower of three or more storeys with a walled yard attached. The tower house is sufficient to defend a knight, his family and his stock against cattle raids, the commonest form of Irish warfare.





## FLORA AND FAUNA

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, except for the cleared and improved pastures of Meath. There, farmers sow barley, oats, rye and buckwheat. Waste areas support heather, and furze, a dwarf shrub growing yellow flowers.

Irish woods contain oak, intermingled with birch, alder and ash. Marshy areas sport strands of willow. In west Munster, warmed by the Gulf Stream, trees remain green year-round, and oak takes a back seat to holly and arbutus. Gallery-groves — trees hugging the good soil on both banks of a river, or at the crest of a ridge — account for most of Ireland's woodlands. Some large forests are noted on the map; copses and isolated trees can be seen everywhere.

The major Irish game animals are red deer or elk, fallow deer, and wild boars. Wolves still prowl the forests, and brown bears still appear from time to time in the Ulster wilds. As you may know, Ireland lacks snakes. (And always has; the legend that St. Patrick cast them out is a Viking fantasy. Christians in *Pagan Shore* know better.)

Cattle graze near the rath in the Winter, then move to highland pastures or callows each Summer. Milk, butter, curds, and cheese dominate the Irish diet. Like Hindus, the Irish will not eat a dairy cow, though they will puncture her shoulder and eat her congealed blood during a lean year. Most bulls, however, are eaten while still yearlings. Ranchers keep a few males alive as studs, at the ratio of one bull to fifteen heifers.

Driving the créaght from winter pastures to summer pastures and back is a turning point of the Irish year. The créaght, more so than the lands they graze, is the measure of a peoples' wealth. In times of war, a tuath may become a nomadic army, wandering from place to place, living off the milk and blood of their créaght, until they carve a new homeland out of Ireland's political mosaic.

In Ulster the predominate herbivores are sheep, which are well suited to the rocky and inferior northern grasslands, and horses, the totem animal of the now-subjugated Ulaidh tribes.

### The Ubiquitous Bog

Bogs are patches of decayed plant-slop that occur in areas with poor drainage. The spongy surface of a bog is actually layer upon layer of peat-moss, six meters deep or more, which has rotted and partly carbonized through long soaking in chilly water. The Irish cut peat into bricks, dry them, and then use these bricks, rather than scarce wood or coal, as fuel for heating.

Roll Folklore for each round of combat, or each hour of extended travel, that you spend in a bog. Modify this roll by

-5 for foreigners, +5 for Irishmen in their native tuath. Failure strands you for that round / hour, while a fumble means that you've stepped in a pool and must make Swimming rolls to avoid suffocation. Mounted characters lose their mounts in the process.

The *Pagan Shore* map shows only large and famous bogs. Smaller bogs are everywhere.



## PLACES OF INTEREST

The following list includes political divisions, religious sites, British and Lochlannach outposts, major geographical features, and other points of note. Most raths named on the map are not covered here: they simply show potential locations for the rí damhna of each homeland.

Dice of Life Force listed for a location are cumulative with the standard Life Force by location given above — if preceded by a plus sign.

### Adare

This keep and curtain castle guards an oak-shadowed ford across the Maigue. Thomas FitzGerald built it in 560 on land bought from the Eoghanacta; before that date it was a stone-reinforced rath. It replaces Knockainey Castle as the Gerald's, seat, and is the capitol of "Desmond" in British reckoning. Ruler: Eoghanacta of Ox Glen (early), Thomas (Late). Vassal of: Caiseal (early), no one (late).

### AILECH

Ailech belonged to the Ulaidh, but doesn't figure in the Ulster Cycle. It borders the world of the Fomhórachs. Probably, no one lived there but a few Picts, until the arrival of St. Patrick shattered the magical barriers in Ailech's hills and forests. Even now, habitation in Ailech is confined to the river valleys and coasts.

### Äine's Hill

The 600-yard summit of this kidney-shaped hill belongs to Äine Cliach ("Brightness of the Rushes"), daughter of Lir. A ruined fort and cave on the east end of the hill also belong to Äine. The hill was a center of Lughnasad ceremonies for local Érainn tribesmen until the conquest of the region by Ailill, a son of Eoghanacta founder Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu. Ailill, with the aid of a fili, invaded the mound on Samhain, and raped Äine — who ripped off his ears during coitus, earning him the sobriquet "Ailill the Earless." The descendants of this union settled the area as the Eoghanacta of Äine. In 529 the Eoghanacta of Äine granted their citadel here (now Knockainey Castle) to Sir Maurice FitzGerald.



Perhaps because of her ordeal at the hands of Ailill and Sir Maurice, Áine is known locally as a patron of madness. Mad persons and mad dogs from all over the world are instinctively drawn to the slopes of Cnoc Áine, where they occasionally menace visitors. On Lughnasad each year pagans ascend the hill, chant, and light bundles of rushes in Áine's honor.

### **AIRTHIR**

Airthir means "easterners:" this tuath contains the eastern remnants of the Airgialla (see Oriel), led by a dynasty descended from Colla Meann. The comharba of Ard Macha comes from the ruling family of the Airthir. The tuath's politics and culture are centered on Ard Macha; "cleric" is the profession of choice for Airthir nobles. Ruler: Donall mac Meann. Vassal of: Tara.

### **Allo River**

A long river which widens into a loch, navigable by ships, on the lower half of its course. The river's presiding spirit is Clíona Ceannfhionn ní Lir ("Clíona, Fair-Haired Daughter of Lir"), who resides at the Plain of Allo, and is also associated with Bull Harbour to the west.

### **Almhu**

A large, ruined hill fort. It is the former headquarters of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his Fianna. Prior to that, it was a ceremonial center dedicated to the poet-god, Find. Some say that Fionn and his warriors are not dead, but rather sleeping in caves beneath this hill until some worthy soul awakens them. Others say that the old fortress had a secret well which provided not only water, but magical inspiration too.

### **Anagassan**

Longphort founded in 507 with the cooperation of the Ciannachta. The Lochlannach here use their Érainn friends as a screen for their raids into Meath. Ruler: Chieftain. Vassal of: Ciannachta king.

### **Anferginan Pass**

This pass between Fosterling and Uí Bairrche lands is the resting place of Cathoir's Lance, which, as long as it rests there from Samhain to Imbolg each year, keeps a local wurm from arising and terrorizing the countryside. See "Maolodhrán mac Crón" and "Sir Tramtrist" in "Peoples" to learn more.

### **Antrim**

Royal Dál Riadhan ráth re-fortified as a motte by Sir Galeholt in 528 and added to his estates. Ruler: Castellán. Vassal of: Galeholt, later Brian.

### **ARD MACHA**

In olden times this hill was sacred to Macha, the Ulaidh goddess of war and horse-herds. As a pagan shrine, it may have fallen into disuse after the destruction of the Ulaidh in 450. St. Patrick made it the site of his first church around 465.

Once given over to Patrick, it quickly grew as a religious center, attracting aos dána from all over Ireland who were curious to learn about the new cult. The community they founded, a village of ascetics ruled by the chieftain-like comharba, became the model for most subsequent Irish monasteries.

Today, Ard Macha's huge secular holdings, and the homesteading céiles camped outside its walls, make it a political center and near-town. It lacks the reputation for holiness and learning of the more recent monasteries. Too much of its energy is consumed with internal struggles between Irish-church, Roman-church and Céilí Dé factions, and too much of its wealth goes to pay the gallóglachs required to guard so rich a target. Its comharba is the bishop of Oriel, and is sometimes claimed to be the arch-bishop of Ireland. Ruler: Benignus (early) Forannán (late).

### **Ardfert ("High Graves")**

Home monastery of St. Bréanainn the Voyager. Sacked by the Lochlannach of Blasket in 529 during his absence. Magic: +5d20 Travel; +5d20 Bless (sea voyages).

### **Ardmulcan**

This small castle (rampart, gatehouse, small keep) houses the de Anglian Baron of Navan (q.v.). Ruler: Baron. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Arklow (Arkel's Meadow, formerly An t-Inbhear Mór, "The Great Inver")**

This longphort was founded by a godi named Arkel and his clan in 517. Arkel quickly made peace with his neighbor, the Thane of the Grey-Green Faces, by brokering the Thane's mining services to his Lochlannach trading partners. Today, Arklow boasts a permanent market of copper and tin-smiths, and verges on becoming a town. Ruler: Arkel (to 542) and his sons (later). Tributary to The Knoll Fort.

### **Askeaton**

Tower House built on a diamond-shaped island in the Deel river in 536 by Sir Hamo de Valognes, a retainer of the Gerald's.

### **Athlone**

This bridge and fortress on the Sionnan (fosse, curtain walls, keep) is the capital of Westmeath. Ruler: Hugo de Ganis I and II. Vassal of: Arthur.





### **Avonmore**

This intensely magical river threads through the Wicklow mountains into the pure and polluted pools of Two-lake Glen. Its lower stretch, the Vale of Avoca, is an oak-shrouded glen blessed by the lingering Life Force of a Cruithni goddess. Magic: +4d20 Bless, Emotion and Heal in Vale.

### **Ballymount**

Motte serving as the capitol of the Uí Brian of Cuala. Ruler: Thane of Cuala. Vassal of: The Justiciar.

### **Bangor**

Monastery founded in 527 by St. Comhghall, who is related by marriage to the ruling dynasties of the Long Isles. Bangor educates new missionaries, among them a youth named Columbanus, who will go on to found many churches in Italy and France. St. Comhghall is also an important ally of St. Colm Cille in the campaign to Christianize the Picts. Ruler: St. Comhghall. Vassal of: no one.

### **Bann River**

The Bann flows north to the Fomhórach's Causeway, tracing the border of the Long Isles. Along with many other local rivers, it drains through the glacial sink known as Eachach's lake.

### **Battle Island**

A sandy spit in the Sionnan estuary with groves of willow and circling flocks of seagulls. The monastery and convent here was founded in 515 by St. Seanán ("the old one"), a cleric from the Seed of Baisceann. Seanán claimed this ground for his monks after defeating a cat-like péist which lived on the island in a magical battle (hence the name), at the same time destroying the chieftain and high-druid of The Black People of the Marshes. Years later, a strange woman walked across the water from the upper Sionnan and persuaded Seanán to allow nuns into his order. The monastery was sacked by Thorgestr's pirates in 521. Seanán dies in 534. Shifting sands on the island's coast hide a spring of healing water, very powerful and very hard to find (Healing and Glamour 8d20 each). Ruler: Seanán (early), abbot and abbess (late).

### **Beann Éadair (Hill of Howth)**

At the top of this rocky promontory sits a cairn dedicated to Éadair, warrior-king of the bird faeries of the Dublin plain. He allegedly died of a broken heart after his romantic overtures were rejected by the goddess Áine. The hill has many other associations: faerie mistresses, musicians and warriors dance beside the cairn at night. Cú Chulainn used it as a fort to defend himself against an army of Leinstermen; the walls he built are dilapidated now, but visible. Fionn mac Cumhaill and his warriors, according to one story, lie sleeping in a cave within Beann Éadair, waiting for the right moment to return.

### **Beann Gulban**

Steep, isolated, sod-covered ridge whose outline suggests the back-bristles of a boar. Gulban was the son of the Munster goddess Duibhne, and Roc, a faerie steward of the youth-god Aonghus. Because Duibhne was in mythic times betrothed to the death-god Donn, her son Gulban was a bastard; Donn crushed the infant Gulban in a fit of anger. His real father, Roc, restored him to life in the form of a locomotive engine-sized boar. This mountain, and the forest that once covered its peak, became Gulban's home until he was killed by the Fionn-era hero Diarmaid son of Duibhne, who thereupon died himself for having killed a kinsman.

Niall Nine-Hostages' son Conall was fostered in the shade of Gulban's Peak by a druid of the Pictish Calf People. He proved his worthiness as a prince of the Uí Niall by learning to run from the foot of Gulban's Peak to its summit without stopping for breath, earning him the epitaph "Conall Gulban." The mountain has sometimes served as a holy place for pagans in Conall Gulban's dynasty. It is the site of a key battle between Tara-king Diarmaid and the rest of Ireland in 561.

### **Beara Island**

Duibhne, dark goddess of Munster, lives here attended by a coven of human witches. The chieftains of the Seed of Lugh, Seed of the Dark one, and The Union journey here to celebrate their feises. Other people only encounter the Hag of Beara if they merit it (critical Valorous check to pierce her Glamour). Magic: Ambient 9d20; Bless, Curse and Glamour +6d20.

### **Birr**

Tower with a wooden curtain held by a castellan of Theobald Butler. Destroyed by raiders from Uí Liathain in 546; rebuilt four years later.

### **Black Castle**

Motte and tower built in 533 for Bran Dubh. The Black Castle allegedly features hidden rooms and corridors behind false walls and under its foundation: these are the headquarters of Bran Dubh's spy ring. The castle governs and collects revenue from the nearby port of Wicklow. After Bran Dubh becomes king, Black Castle is turned over to a scion of the Butlers as Bran Dubh's vassal. Ruler: Bran Dubh, Castellan. Vassal of: Leinster king.

### **BLACK PEOPLE**

The Black People are so called because of their worship of Donn, and other dark gods. Once, they ruled much of Connacht; they preserve tribal memories of the wars between early settlers and the Fomhórach. Queen Meadhbh of the Connachta defeated them, scattering some dynasties into Munster. Since then, these people have lacked any kingship: each cineal is independent of the others. Their shared style of



paganism unites them. Ruler: many. Vassals of: Connacht over-king.

### **BLACK PEOPLE OF THE MARSHES**

This faction of the Black People entered Munster centuries ago to escape Meadhbh, and to serve the demigod Cú Roí, who travels the world in his sky-boat at night. Recently, the ruling faction has largely abandoned Cú Roí for St. Bréanainn (494-581), a local Christian cleric famed for his voyages in search of The Land of Promise. During his voyage of 527-530, St. Bréanainn encountered sea monsters, gryphons, an island inhabited by perfect anchorites, an island ruled by evil smiths who threw tar at his boat, and an island to which the apostle Judas is exiled, among other oddities. His influence is great enough to make him a power behind the throne here. Ruler: Arda (early) Aodh mac Arda (late). Tributary to: Caiseal.

### **Black Pig's Dyke**

Torc Triath (see Treithirne Plain) dug this ten foot deep ditch through the Drumlin Belt centuries ago after being summoned by Ulster druids. Reinforced by raths at twenty-mile intervals, it protected Ulster from cattle raiders. Now, though largely un-garrisoned, it serves the same function for the Uí Niall.

### **Black Sword**

This shallow earthwork — a ditch three to five feet deep — protects the Uí Liathain from the Eoghanacta client kingdoms to the north and east. It is patrolled sporadically by Uí Liathain horsemen.

### **Blackstairs Mountains**

A chain of peaks running north, like steps, beside the Bearbha river. At their north head sits Mount Leinster (2400 feet), where Labhraidh the Exile is buried. Magic: +4d20 Necromancy.

### **Blackwater River**

Slate-colored river draining into the Bóann from Loch Ráth-Mór ("big fort").

### **Bladhma Mountains**

Bog and heather cover these hills, marking the death-site of Bladhma ("Flame"), a warrior from Ireland's pre-Celtic invaders. The center of the range, Ireland's Height (Ard Éireann) is a Lughnasad site associated with the goddess Eriú (8d20 Ambient, 4d20 Bless). The mountains are largely uninhabited, though every neighboring tuath uses them as a hunting ground.

### **Basket Island**

A rath here that once belonged to the Black People of the Marshes is now used by a band of Gall-Gaels under Barith, a

kinsman of Thorgestr. They are driven away forever by Geraldine knights in 559.

### **Blue Stacks**

These mountains gain their name from the bog and scrub, rather than forest, that clings to their sides. Mean elevation: 900'.

### **Bóann River**

The holiest river of Irish pagans. The Bóann originates from the Well of Wisdom in the otherworld, guarded by the cup-bearers of Nuadhu. When Nuadhu's wife, the cow-goddess Bóann, defied her husband by visiting the well, her eyes burst with the frenzy of illumination, and the well's waters chased her into the sea, forming the current river. According to the filis, the Bóann is an endless river which continues flowing after it empties into the sea. It re-emerges in Britain as the Severn, in France as the Seine, then it becomes the Tiber, the Nile and the Jordan (and, one might add, the Euphrates, Congo, Ganges, Yangtze, Mississippi, and Amazon) before returning to the Well of Wisdom; one can follow this magical course in a skiff if one knows the right currents. Pagan pilgrims often travel here to bathe themselves or baptize their children. A glistening white heifer sometimes seen wading among its reeds and shallows may be Lady Bóann ("Bright Cow") herself, cowishly inspecting the world's passage down the waters of time. (Magic: +4d20 Divination and Travel)

### **Bog of Aillen**

A vast stretch of bog and callows. Geese and kingfishers are its main inhabitants. The bog forms a natural military barrier between Leinster and Meath.

### **Brazil**

Among the subject-tuaths of Tara were the Uí Breasal, descended from a Leinster king called Breasal The Cowless because his brief capture of Tara had coincided with a cattle pestilence. Breasal's few remaining descendants, scorned by the Irish, flocked to the British banner and gained this small motte on their ancestral land. Well-enough like by the colonists, their name alone provokes intense hatred from many Irish people, whose ancestors died in Breasal's Famine. Ruler: Taoiseach of Uí Breasal. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Bréifne ("The Hollows")**

This district encompasses the mountains North of the Sionnan, and the West of the Drumlin Belt. The soil here is thin and inferior, except at the very tops of drumlins.

### **Broken Hills**

Low, uninhabited mountains covered with conifers and bog. They belong to a local goddess named Aibhinn or Aoibheall (see Grey Crag), described in folklore as a queen banshee





# POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF IRELAND

## MAP KEY

	<b>ULSTER</b> Province (Large)

0 5 10 15 30  
miles





(see Grey Crag), described in folklore as a queen banshee served by twenty-four lieutenant banshees.

### **Brugh na Bóann**

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This dome-shaped tumulus, covered with sod and mica and encircled by standing stones, is the most important sí mound in Ireland. Its full name, “Mansion on the Bóann of the Youthful Son,” denotes it as the home of Aonghus, god of youth, love and music. Previously, it belonged to The Daghdha and his wife Bóann — or in some stories, Nuadhu and Bóann — until Aonghus gained permanent possession of it through a legal trick he learned from Midhir. The trick is easy: Aonghus claimed the brugh for a day and a night, and occupied it forever, because, says Midhir, “it is of days and nights that eternity is made.”

While Aonghus is the primary tenant, any other Dé Danu god can be found here as a guest, and the healing god Dian Céacht lives inside year-round, guarding the Well of Regeneration. Getting inside would not be easy. Druids, poets, pagan pilgrims, and the Launds warriors who protect them guard the brugh at all times.

### **Bull Harbour**

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Bay associated with sacrifices to the sea gods and the presence of Clíona ní Lir in particular. Clíona fled her father's house to elope with Aonghus, god of youth and love, but just as her boat reached this harbour she was drowned by a giant wave. The tides in this place are now a living, vengeful entity called “Clíona's Wave,” which local sailors propitiate to avoid Clíona's fate. As for Clíona, her soul-salmon swam up the Allo river after her death, where she reincarnated as the tribal goddess of the Allo plain.

The local religious center is the stone circle of Little Hill, a cliff terrace overlooking the sea. The seventeen stones of this alignment sit in a neat circle 30 feet in diameter. In the middle of the circle, a mound of sod conceals the grave of an orphan boy, sacrificed here millennia ago so that the circle could bottle his power. Animal sacrifices are held here routinely by local pagans about to embark on a voyage. (magic: +4d20 Weather Control)

### **Cailleach's Ridge**

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Extensive set of cairns and chamber-graves upon a ridge house the spirit of Fodla, one of Ireland's earliest goddesses. The lake nearby (Lough Crew) contains a crannóg occupied by witches who tend the shrine; they can appear as ordinary folk, or nuns, to passers-by. Most locals avoid the place. Magic: as per god's cairn, +8d20 Glamour.

### **Cainneach's Church**

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St. Cainneach of Connacht (see Cow Field, Cré's Woods) founded a small monastery here in 523, on land given him by Cú Craigh, whom he saved from a Deer People insurrection. The church has been repeatedly sacked by raiders from Waterford. In 534 Sir Brastias founded a motte here, intend-

ed it as a capitol for a Deer People earldom. It was destroyed in 541 by Caiseal-King Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn, who attacked in revenge for a British raid against Cork. The motte was never re-built, though the church remains. A cave nearby called the Eye of the Alders is inhabited by giant cats, similar to those at Cnoghbha. Ruler: Cainneach.

### **Cairn Uí Nét**

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Pile of stones at the summit of a promontory which rises 765 feet above the sea. The god Lugh raised this cairn over his grandfather, Balor, whom he killed at Magh Tuire. Other “dead” Uí Nét gods may live in this mountain as well.

### **Caiseal (“The Castle,” Cashel)**

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Capitol of Munster; a 200-foot high stone crag topped by a tower and church, enclosed by Roman-style curtain walls. Conall Corc founded this tower in imitation of the shore-forts (“castellem”) in Roman Cambria. His descendant Aonghus mac nad Fraoch lies buried under Caiseal's throne, facing North to protect Munster from the Connachta. Nearby is Hore Abbey, a Cistercian monastery founded by French monks in 539. Caiseal is part of Munster's royal demesne: it belongs to the reigning Munster chieftain, or to the last chieftain's steward if no replacement has been found.

### **Canna**

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This desolate island has two noteworthy features: a small community of anchorite nuns, loyal to St. Brighid, and a 500-foot hill on its north coast which is actually a giant lodestone, able to foul compass needles for miles in every direction. The isle is named Canna (“porpoises”) from the many porpoises that play beside its southern coasts.

### **CARLINGFORD**

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Longphort ruled by Jarl Ragnar, cousin of Olaf the White. Vassal of: Sir Galeholt.

### **Carlow**

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Sir Brastias founds this borough in 532, after draining four callows formed by the junction of the Bearbha river with the smaller Buirren river from the northeast. The center of the town features a keep, the home of a local knight. The town is walled in 539.

A dolmen two miles east of Carlow is the largest in Ireland, with a 100 ton capstone. Picts who were driven from these parts centuries ago worshiped there, but no one today knows who or why. Ruler: Cambrian knight and reeve. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Carman**

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This circular earthwork is the magical center of the Lifé plain, and the Lughnasad aonach site for Leinster. Here, Anguish convenes the Lady of the Launds tournament in 531. Magic: 8d20 Ambient, +4d20 Bless.





### **Carrickfearghus**

This sturdy keep on a tidal spit was granted to Eochu, a Cruithni noble, by Sir Galholt. The original rath here belonged to an ancient Ulster king named Fearghus, though no one is sure if it was *the* Fearghus who fought in the Táin. After 548, the keep passes to a vassal of King Brian. Ruler: Eochu (early), castellan (late). Vassal of: Long Isles king.

### **Castleknock**

This former rath-site is now the fief of whoever serves the justiciar as Irish bailiff (tax collector; enforcer). Castleknock features a ditched and ramparted motte, atop which is a second mound with an oval wall and an octagonal tower. Ruler: Bailiff. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Ceallach's Church**

#### **(Cill Ceallach, Cill Alaidh, Killala)**

Monastery founded in 521 by St. Ceallach, eldest son of the Connacht over-king Eoghan Béal. Its most famous attributes are two white stags, tamed by Ceallach, that leave the grounds each day to help local bó-aíres plough their fields.

The monastery is also notable for the venality of its monks (apart from Ceallach himself), four of whom stab Ceallach to death at his retreat on Conn's Lake in 554, having been bribed by Guaire mac Colman. Afterwards, the monastery is often called Cill Alaidh or Killala: "Church of the Impalings." Ruler: Ceallach (early), Minions of King Guaire (late). Vassal of: No one.

### **Cerne**

Three ancient burial mounds sit here atop an outcropping of slate. The Érainn kings of the Tara plain were cremated at this mounds in primordial times. Like Cnoghbha, Cerne is guarded by giant cats who can be seen, or at least heard, on Samhain. Cerne is a bad-luck place for the Uí Niall kings. One mile to the northwest, an empty earthen rampart 360 feet in diameter marks the old aonach site once associated with Cerne.

### **Chapel Isolt**

Queen Isolt The Elder endowed a chapel here for the aid and instruction of Lochlannach peasants in 527. Her daughter, La Beale Isolt, can often be found here ministering to the sick, or teaching children to read. To the north is a spring called Fionn Uisce (white-water), Anglicized as "Phoenix." At present, Phoenix is a Lochlannach cemetery tended by monks from Chapel Isolt. Both Queen Isolt and Princess Isolt are taken here when they die.

### **CIANNACHTA ("Race of Ebony")**

The Ciannachta are a tribe of druids and warriors who live in clientship to The Launds. They welcomed the Anagassan Lochlannach into their kingdom, and into their culture. Combining native death gods (Crom, Donn, Balor, Badhbh)

with imported Berserker gods into a new, semi-psychotic paganism, the Ciannachta now live off theft and intimidation. The prestige of the Launds protects them, and they protect the Launds. British rulers overlook their raiding, which usually targets Oriel. Ruler: Cathmugh ("war-slave"). Vassal of: Lady of the Launds.

### **Cill Dara (Church of the Oaks)**

Standing stones, an enclosed church, a monastery, and a castle are the features of this location, a hill traditionally belonging to the goddess Brighid. The hill was formerly crowned by the Giant's Dance, a huge stone circle and solstice-sight. In 475, Merlin's magic transported it to Salisbury Plain to stand as a monument for slain Britons: we call it Stonehenge. (In retaliation, Ireland's gods banned Merlin from its shores; the druids here claim not to know of him.)

The church founded in place of the old pagan shrine is partitioned in half: women worship in the East, men in the west. Both sides can see the altar, which features an eternal hearth-fire tended by St. Brighid's nuns. Both monks and nuns live nearby in separate buildings; the nuns have precedence over Brighid's male clergy.

At the foot of the hill is a standing stone devoted to Badhbh (+5d20 Curse) and a well created by Brighid (+4d20 Heal). The nearby castle, founded by Gerald Striguil, now features a keep enclosed by curtain walls. Ruler: Gerald (early), William FitzGerald (late); St Brighid and her comharbas. Vassal of: King Anguish.

### **CíNEAL AONGHUS**

Aonghus, founder of this small colony, was a brother of Fearghus Mór who died in 496. His descendants divide the land into petty clandoms, united by their mutual resistance to the Lochlannach. Ruler: petty chiefs. Vassals of: Sir Galeholt.

### **CíNEAL CAIRBRE**

To Cairbre, Niall Nine- Hostages willed the borders of his empire. Cairbre was the tanaiste of Tara-King Laoghaire mac Niall, until he disqualified himself by attempting to murder St. Patrick. Naturally, Patrick cursed Cairbre and his descendants unto the end of time. The Cíneal Cairbre have settled in Bréifne, an infertile, hotly-contended border state between Meath, Connacht and Ulster. Their holdings are interpenetrated by the conquests of a hostile Connachta dynasty, the Uí Brian. Eventually, the Uí Brian will eclipse them. One member of this dynasty, Tuathal Rough-Skull, briefly attained the Tara-Kingship, only to be murdered and replaced by Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil. Ruler: Tuathal Rough-Skull (early), Cormac Caoch (late). Vassal of: No one.



### **CÍNEAL CONALL**

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To Conall of Gulban, Niall willed his pagan power of Sovereignty. When Conall was seven, Niall gave him as a fosterling to a druid who lived beside Beann Gulban and probably served the boar-spirit who rules that mountain; there, he earned the nickname "Gulban." After leading the Uí Niall conquest of Ailech, Conall of Gulban devoted the rest of his life to consolidating Cíneal Conall. His great-grandson Aodh strives for Tara-Kingship at the end of the *Pagan Shore* era, hoping to maintain the dynasty's *rí damhna* status. Another descendant of Conall is St. Colm Cill. Ruler: Séatnai (early), Ainmerech (Middle) Aodh (late). Vassal of: No one.

### **CÍNEAL ÉANNA**

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To Éanna, Niall willed his good looks. Éanna earned his greatest glory helping his brothers dismember Ailech. His descendants neither expand the territory he willed them, nor produce a Tara-King. Eventually, they are absorbed into the Uí Conall. Rulers: Unknown. Vassals of: Cíneal Conall.

### **CÍNEAL EOGHAN**

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To Eoghan, Niall Nine-Hostages willed his skill in feats and weapons. Eoghan was the chief champion of the mac Niall brothers during the war in Ailech. He was never content with his share of the Sword-Land; his descendants devote themselves to expanding the borders of Cíneal Eoghan, later called Tír Eoghan or Tyrone. His family rules Ailech, though not necessarily the Uí Niall as a whole, for centuries to come. His black-sheep grandson Muircheartach mac Earca becomes a Tara-King during the *Pagan Shore* era. Ruler: Muircheartach (early) Suibhne Meann (late). Vassal of: Nobody.

### **CÍNEAL FEARGHUS**

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Fearghus Mór was the last Ulaídh king at Eamhain Macha. When the Three Collas defeated him in 450, he and his brothers made Sword-Land in the west of Pictland. The fierce wars to claim this rugged place from the Picts left lasting hatreds on both sides. Fearghus died in 501, leaving several candidates to vie for the chieftainship. Fearghus Mór's grandson Gabhrán, fostered as a *breitheamh*, took control in 518. With his extraordinary sense of justice, he managed to settle most of colony's feuds; he became a trusted vassal of Sir Galeholt, and held the colony together until Brian of The Isles killed him in 554. At that point, the colony again dissolved into clans, and never recovered its political cohesion. Ruler: Fearghus (early) Gabhrán (middle, late). Vassal of: Sir Galeholt.

### **CÍNEAL FIACHU**

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To Fiachu, Niall Nine-Hostages willed his aggression. Fiachu joined his father in carrying the family conquests

into Leinster. He personally drove the Uí Dúnlainge out of Meath, and seized the ceremonial mound of Uisneach. After Fiachu's death, much of this territory was lost again. Recently, even more land has been taken from Cíneal Fiachu, passing this time to the de Ganis earls; other Uí Niall factions have kept ownership of their land at the expense of Fiachu's descendants. No Tara-Kings come from this dynasty. Ruler: Muirchaid mac Fiachu (early), Aonghus mac Muirchaid (Late). Vassal of: De Ganis (late).

### **CÍNEAL LAOGHAIRE**

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To Laoghaire, Niall Nine-Hostages willed his features and his skill in war. Laoghaire and his son Lughaid both became Tara-Kings in the Fifth century, and both died by a combination of breaking *geas* and trying to collect the *bóramha*. Since then, his descendants have controlled the land around Tara itself, serving the rest of the Uí Niall as a corps of officers. Ruler: The Tara steward is the Uí Laoghaire king. Vassal of: Tara (early), Justiciar (Late).

### **CÍNEAL LOARN**

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Loarn, brother of Fearghus Mór, ruled this Long Isles colony until he was killed by his grandson Muircheartach mac Earca in 488. His druidess wife Earca supervised the kingdom into the sixth century, then let her sons divide it amongst themselves and their Gall-Gael allies. Eventually, it is absorbed into Cíneal Fearghus. Ruler: Earca (early), Gabhrán (late). Vassal of: Sir Galeholt.

### **CLAIM**

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An impoverished feudal duchy on land claimed — but never captured — by Leinster kings since Cathoir Mór. The Claim pays tribute to Caiseal and Leinster. Most of its land is poor, flat and boggy. After 536, the claim is part of Ormond. Ruler: Duke of the Uí Foghairte dynasty (early), Butlers (late). Vassal of: Leinster, but pays a peace-keeping fee to Caiseal.

### **Cleiteach**

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This *ráth* of the Bóann valley was built in 516 by Tara-king Muircheartach mac Earca as his personal palace. After Muircheartach's death, it has been uninhabited.

### **Cleric's Cape (Cape Clear)**

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Cape and islands in south Munster long associated with *aos dána* *cíneals* (the name "cléir" can refer to bands of bards or musicians, as well as clergy). The bays, inlets and rivers in this region are too shallow to qualify as important ports.

Cleric's Island (An t-Oilean Cléir) has belonged to a small settlement of hermits since 480. Before then, St. Ciarán of Saighir (466-532) was fostered on the island by a pagan wise woman. Ciarán used to appear, praying for his foster-mother, on a small rock near the island, then magically travel back to Saighir on the same day. Perhaps a cowed





figure still appears there even after the saint's death. The innumerable small rocks and shoals near Cleric's Island are called Cairbre's Hundred Islands. Once living followers of the demonic god Cairbre Cat-Head, these beings were turned into rocks by Irish druids during the Battle of White Strand.

### **Cliffs of Ruin**

Many ships have perished against these sheer cliffs, which average 500 feet in height. The cliffs' western promontory is called Hag's Head, after the fuath who rules the area, and discourages human habitation there altogether. Grass and bog cover the cliffs' flat summits. No sound stirs here but for insolent seagulls and thundering waves.

### **Clonfert ("Cemetery Meadow")**

Monastery founded by St. Bréanainn the Voyager (see Black People of The Marshes). Sacked by Thorgestr in 524; repaired the next year.

### **CLONMACNOISE**

#### **("Meadow of the Nobles' Sons")**

St. Ciarán of Clonmacnoise (500-533), who was granted this tract by the Uí Niall in 521, was the son of a carpenter from Dál n-Araidhe. He founded this monastery in particular as a haven for working people and escaped slaves, who eventually create a large (for Ireland) village outside its walls. The monastery was sacked by Thorgestr, and turned over to his wife Ota, in 524. Ciarán, after hiding at Kings' Lake, rebuilt it over the next several years with the aid of Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil, whom he befriended and even sheltered from rival Uí Niall princes. To help re-consecrate Clonmacnoise, Diarmaid "borrowed" a high cross from the church of his kinsman St. Colm Cill at Kells; Colm chased after him, leading to a shoving match between Ciarán and Colm in which the cross was smashed. Since its reconstruction, the monastery has sported high walls, an active scriptorium, and a picturesque Christian cemetery. Ruler: Ciarán (early), comharba (late). Vassal of: no one.

### **Cnoc Meadha ("Center Hill")**

Cairn in the middle of Ireland belonging to Finnbheara ("White-top"), credited as the King of Connacht Faeries. Each Lughnasad, Finnbheara and his troops fight a desperate war over the Sionnan with the aos sí of Meath; if he wins, Connacht's harvest prospers. Finnbheara is fond of humans and often invites them to eat from his table. He is especially fond of human woman, so much so that beautiful girls living nearby are in danger of being kidnapped into his otherworld harem. Üna, his embittered si wife, lives to the south. Magic: +4d20 Glamour and Bless.

### **Cnoghbha (Knowth)**

This barrow sits beside Brugh na Bóann. Érainn kings were buried here to be beside their gods; some Gael dynasties still use it as a cemetery. The presiding spirit within the mound is Hirusân, divine king of cats. Like the phantom cats at Cerne, Hirusân can appear in the flesh to chase away tomb-violators.

### **Coleraine**

Church founded by St. Patrick in 470, in a fern-shrouded gulch overlooking the Bann. In 522, Sir Galeholt built his first motte there, which he later improved to a castle, and ceded to one of his barons. Ruler: Abbott, unknown baron. Vassal of: Ard Macha; Galeholt (early) Dál Riadha chieftain (late).

### **Colm Cill's Glen**

This isolated monastic rath is St. Colm Cill's first foundation, and his home during his years in Ireland. Nearby is a hill marked with standing stones where Colm and his followers hold stations to bless Ailech.

### **CONMACNE MARA**

#### **(Wolf-Sons of the Sea, Connemara)**

Érainn tribesmen who once occupied South Leinster, until Labhraidh the Exile drove them across the breadth of Ireland to the land of forested hills and fjords they occupy now. Their mountainous home is impervious to attack, and their modest herds of sheep and ponies too small to excite envy; a primitive, impoverished life is the price they pay for political independence. They are noted for breeding small, hardy mountain horses. Ruler: Chieftain of the Wolf-Sons. Tributary to: Durlas, sometimes.

### **Conn's Lake**

Conn Hundred-Fighter, founder of the Connachta, gave his name to this murky lake in the shadow of Big Nephin. A peninsula projecting into the northwest of the lake is a holy place where Connachta chieftains can stride into the mist and confer with their ancestor. The same shore is thickly settled by Uí Fiachrach flaith who live from hunting and fishing. An unnamed island in the middle of the lake was a secret meditation spot for St. Ceallach, until he was stabbed to death there by four of his own monks in 554 (see Ceallach's Church). The lake abounds in large, fierce pikes.

### **CONNACHT**

When new invaders from Europe seize the fertile lands of central Ireland, they displace earlier tribes into Connacht, a land of swamps, forests, and barren mountains. These tribes enter a struggle over Connacht's modest endowment of good land. Eventually, a faction or coalition becomes too successful and outgrows Connacht: its members leave the



province, making Sword-Land in Meath, and reversing the tide of migration from west to east. The arrival of the Ulaidh and Laighin, for example, squeezed several Érainn and Cruithni tuaths — including the ancient Fir Bolg — into the far west. Eventually, the brilliant leader Conn Hundred-Fighter united these tribes into the Connachta, who over generations of conflict displaced the Laighin and Ulaidh from Ireland's center.

More recently, Niall Nine-Hostages and his sons erupted out of Connacht and became the leading dynasty, not only of Conn's descendants, but of all Ireland. Ruler: Eoghan (early), Guaire (late). Vassal of: No one.

### **Connor**

Ráth converted into a motte by Sir Galeholt in 526, and ceded as a baronage to the chieftain of the Latharne, an Aitheach-Tuath within Dál Riadha.

### **CORK**

This city grew from a school for clerics founded by St. Barra ("The Fair-haired;" 480-518), after he had banished a péist the lived in the Lí river (it now inhabits the harbour, nine waves past the coast). Lochlannach raiders under a godi named Sitric killed Barra and built a longphort here in 518, which grew into a small merchant town by 525. In 528 Caiseal-king Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn re-captured the city in the name of the Eoghanacta. Cork is surrounded by hundreds of acres of farmland owned by recent homesteaders from Denmark; this region is called the "Ostmen's Cantred." Clerics, wine merchants and mercenary captains from France stroll Cork's causeways of rotting wood today, passing gallóglachs, Eoghanacta flaith and novice monks.

Overlooking the harbour sits Swamp-Crest (Curragh Binion, Curraghbinny), a peak with a pre-Celtic cairn sitting atop it. Pilgrims at this cairn on Bealtaine may spot a comely young man who incarnates the river Lí. A few miles north sits the Blairnis ("Blarney") stone, reputed to give eloquence to those who kiss it. Ruler: Jarl. Vassal of: Caiseal kings, after 528.

### **Cow Field**

Small monastery founded by St. Barra of Munster (famous as the founder of Cork) in 496, on pasture given to him by the chieftain of The Elk People. Barra turned it over to St. Cainneach in 507. Ruler: Barra, then Cainneach, then a comharba.

### **Cré's Woods**

#### **(Ros Cré, Roscrea)**

Forest in the clay foothills of the Bladhma mountains. Site of a monastery founded in 529 and now maintained by an abbot named Cronán, noted for his healing powers. Also home to a castle with curtain walls used by Pennaths of the Gerald family. A bare hill four miles to the east is crowned

by a stone circle and covered with over 200 megaliths, possibly representing retainers of the hero Bladhma, who died in this region. Nearby is a small lake (Loch Cré) with a single forested island in its center. Here, Saint Cainneach of Connacht meditated in 535 until Jesus appeared before him and taught him eloquence and calligraphy. It has since been called Holy Island.

### **Croom**

Tower House held by a retainer of Sir Thomas FitzGerald (see Shanid).

### **Cruachu**

The capitol of Connacht is not a single ráth, but a cluster of ráths occupying a large plateau. This is the old cíneal of Eochu Slave-Lord and his sons; each of their descendants still owns a fort here within the royal demesne. Eoghan Béal moves the Connacht capital to Durlas, and this area becomes the home of a Fian administered by Devouring Wolf. A cave nearby is notorious for monsters: giant cats, female werewolves, and demons have all been reported there. Ruler: Devouring Wolf (early) Unknown (Late). Vassal of: Eoghan, Guaire. (Magic: 6d20 Ambient, +4d20 protect at Cruachu; 5d20 Ambient, Summon and Demonize at cave.)

### **Crumlin**

This small castle (curtain wall and keep) belongs to the Justiciar's office. He uses it to control traffic in the Lifé valley. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Cú Roí's Castle**

Cú roí was an incarnation of Balor and a son of The Daghdha, just as his assassin, Cú Chulainn, was an avatar (and son) of Lugh. A hero, a druid, a godling, founder of most local dynasties, Cú Roí ruled from a fortress which spun as if sitting on a wheel (only the quick could leap inside it), and which turned invisible at night while its master sailed the world's oceans in his sky boat. Locals point to these ruins as the remains of Cú Roí's aerial spinning fort, flung down to earth after Cú Chulainn slew its owner. In all likelihood, the REAL fort of Cú Roí is probably still intact, but invisible, awaiting his return. It may hover over these ruins; then again it may not. In any event, the locals avoid them.

### **Cualigne Plains**

This choice region combines good cattle-land with easy access to the Irish Sea. The famous Tâin bó Cualigne was begun by Queen Meadhbh of Connacht to obtain both of the magic Cualigne Bulls for herself; they were both killed in the war, along with many heroes whose ghosts may sleep here.





### Da Coga's Hostel

The hostel of "the war god" is run by a bachlach named Gerg, whose magic cauldron can heal any wound. His house has the property that, if you arrive in it, your worst enemies also arrive there on the same night, and fight you to gain the cauldron. Usually, the evening ends with dead and dying men strewn everywhere; the survivors awaken, empty-handed, in a ruined r ath.

### Da Dearga's Hostel

Here lies the ruins of a mead-hall belonging to Da Dearga ("Red God"), an alias of Bodhbh Dearg. Conaire M or, the last local king at Tara, became a sacrifice to the gods in this hall after he broke all of his geases. The spot is now barren, lonely, haunted.

### D AL CAS

Tuath-founder Cas was a foster-son of Ailill the Earless, and a kinsman of the Kingdom of Mercenaries. His descendants function as a western branch of the Mercenaries in many respects. Being crowded out of Sionnan callows by the Lochlannach of Limerick has recently fed their distrust of foreigners. Their prophet-goddess, Aoibheall, stirs them to insane recklessness with her promise of a future in which they destroy the Lochlannach and rule from Tara. Ruler: Chieftain. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of  Aine; Geraldts.

### D AL FIATACH

This dynasty shares with D al Riadha the honor of preserving the  rainn royal house of Ulster. The D al Fiatach are Cain to D al Riadha's Able: crude (traditional), grasping (ambitious), and warlike (Irish). Sir Galeholt of D al Riadha defeated their king, Eochaidh mac Muiredach, in 521. They stopped fighting to become over-kings, knowing that the alternating title would become theirs upon Galeholt's death. It was claimed in 550 by Eochaidh's nephew, Baod an mac Cairill, also known as Brian of the Isles. Ruler: Eochaidh (early, middle), Brian (late). Vassal of: Galeholt (middle), no one (early, late).

### D AL N-ARAIÐHE

This rather civilized Cruithni dynasty has long coveted the Long Isles kingship, from which they are theoretically barred. Loyal to D al Riadha, they bear the brunt of the Long Isles' war with the U i Niall in the sixth century. Many lands within this kingdom belong to D al Riadha barons. Ruler Suibhne (early, middle), Aodh the Black (late). Vassals of: Sir Galeholt.

### D AL RIADHA

Sir Galeholt turned this tuath, the ghost of the old Ulaidh dynasties, into a feudal kingdom divided among many barons. Upon his death, half the barons surrender to Brian of the Isles, and the other half declare war. By the end of the





*Pendragon* campaign, the whole region has been defeated and absorbed by the Dál Fiatach. Ruler: Galeholt. Vassal of: King Arthur.

### **Dalkey**

A Lochlannach fortress now dominates this formerly uninhabited island. The chief who rules it has turned from piracy to trade due to the presence of Arthur's men in these waters, but he will turn pirate again as soon as possible. Ruler: family chief. Vassal of: nobody.

### **Danu's Paps**

Two rounded drumlins whose shape suggests giant breasts, each marked at its "nipple" with a pre-Celtic cairn. A glossary compiled by a medieval Irish monk states curtly that the breasts "gave good food," perhaps meaning that sacrifices left there at Samhain promoted fertility. When Fionn mac Cumhaill spent Samhain night in this green cleavage, he had a vision of fires burning within each breast, and heard voices asking "is your sweet food good?" and offering that "what is given to us, is given in return." He also saw a bachlach carrying food from one knoll to the other. Yet another location which the superstitious will avoid at night, especially Samhain night.

### **DEER PEOPLE (Osraighe)**

Once rulers of central Munster, the Deer People were ousted when their old enemies, the Elk People, joined forces with the Eoghanacta. Today, tributes due to the Elk People leave them divided, and in miserable poverty. They also pay a small tribute to King Anguish, hoping to be allowed into the Leinster coalition. Ruler: a dozen or so petty chieftains. Vassals of: Elk People.

### **Delvin**

Mote built in 531 for Gilbert de Nugent, a Ganis knight who married Sir Hugo's sister. Vassal of: Hugo de Ganis.

### **Derry ("Oak-Wood")**

Monastery and village founded at a former pagan grove by St. Colm Cill in 526. The monastery was sacked by Lochlannachs, then re-consecrated, in 534 and 543. Ruler: abbot. Vassal of: Colm Cill.

### **Dinn Ríg**

Dún serving as Leinster's capitol before Labhraidh the Exile destroyed it; now ruined and haunted. Magic: 5d20 ambient; 3d20 Curse.

### **Donegore**

Motte given to a leading family of Dál Riatha by Sir Galeholt in 525.

### **Donn's House**

See Sceilig Mícheal

### **Drogheda**

A Lochlannach clan built a longphort at this ford above the Bóann estuary in 527. They hoped to rival Dublin in collecting trade from the Irish Sea, and The Lady of the Launds supported their venture, hoping for her part to collect its tariffs. She later permitted Sir Brastias to found a borough and castle here in 530, and to build a spectacular stone bridge over the ford. The borough, populated by Lochlannach and British colonists in equal measure, gains a sturdy wall with seven gates in 538. Ruler: Family chieftain (early), reeve (late). Vassal of: The Lady of the Launds (early), the Justiciar (late).

### **Drumfare**

Motte founded by Sir Galeholt in 524. Ruler: Dál Riadhan clan, as barons. Vassal of: Galeholt.

### **Drumlin Belt**

Many regions of Ireland feature swarms of drumlins and glacial drifts. The Drumlin Belt, stretching 175 kilometers long by 70 kilometers wide from North Connacht to Dún Dealga, is by far the largest such formation. One could call it the spine dropped by a dying glacier. It marks the border of the prehistoric province of Ulster. The drumlins are dry, grassy and often arable. The land between them grows moist pasture and pocket bogs that are useful rather than onerous.

### **DUBLIN Castle**

In 530 Sir Brastias built a motte here, south of the Lifé on the outskirts of Dublin's walls, to keep an eye on the Lochlannach. When King Arthur made it the center of the imperial government, the motte was quickly upgraded to a small but sturdy keep with square curtain walls, and a standing garrison of 20 knights and 50 footmen. The buildings beside Dublin Castle constitute the British half of Dublin. Here and there one finds a wine merchant or a furrier, but the majority of buildings are churches, abbeys, shrines, from the Cistercians, Marians, Benedictines, and so on: continental orders eager, under Arthur's protection, to butt heads with the Irish church. Ruler: Justiciar. Vassal of: King Arthur.

### **DUBLIN Longphort**

Olaf the White founded the Longphort of Dublin ("Black Pool," the Lifé estuary) on the Lifé's north shore in 515. As the town grew, its original mead-hall was expanded into a large, circular hall of judgement for a jarl, complete with a pit of vipers for those whom the jarl rules against. Other buildings include taverns, glovers and tanners, a hiring hall for gal-lóglachs, and an open-air slave market frequented by traders from as far away as Babylon. After Thorgestr sacked the city in 524, Olaf fortified it with a wall. By the 530s, the spread of Christianity among the Lochlannach, and the presence of





Arthur's knights, had reduced some of the more unsavory aspects of this market mecca. Ruler: Lochlannach deputy. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Duleek**

Hugo de Ganis founded a Benedictine monastery here. Beside it stands a motte which belongs to the Dullards, an inaptly named family of vassals who served Hugo in the Irish wars. Ruler: Sir Adam Dullard (Middle), Sir Pagan Dullard (late). Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Dún Aillen**

The traditional capital of Leinster was founded by the Dumnonii chieftain Meas Dealmann, who went into the earth and defeated a Fomhórach in order to win this site. It stands today as a superior ráth, with triple earthen banks enclosing a keep. Mindful of tradition, its lords never go all the way in making it a castle. Ruler: Anguish (early), Bran Dubh (late). Vassal of: Arthur.

### **Dún Äine**

Ruined fort associated with the Munster goddess Äine (see Äine's Hill and Loch Gur) in her aspect as a patron of the mad. If a temporarily insane person sits on a recumbent megalith here, the madness will become incurable.

### **Dún Dealga**

Dealga Uí Nét was a warrior-prince of the Fomhórach, and this promontory citadel was his home until the ancestors of the Ulaidh killed him. It has since been a home for Ulster heroes, including Cú Chulainn. Today it serves as the capital of the Airthir. Its inhabitants held off Thorgestr's fleets in 523, and fortified it with a second stone wall after that. Ruler: Airthir chieftain. Vassal of: Tara.

### **Dún Fremu**

Two peaks rising to 200 feet mark the sí fortress of Eochaidh the Ploughman, a king and horse-god in early myths. He is a rival of Midhir, whose cairn (Grey Hill) sits nearby.

### **Dún Laoghaire**

The Uí Brian and other Leinster factions cooperated to build this small port, which competes with, and mimics, Lochlannach ports like Dublin and Arklow. The settlement features a stone fort named for its founder, a dock, a small fleet of curachs, and a small marketplace. Ruler: Thane of Cuala. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Dún Olaf**

This fort on the outskirts of Leixlip is the personal demesne of Olaf the White and his kin. No one granted it to him; he built it during the chaos of Thorgestr's reign. Ruler: Olaf, sons. Vassal of: Nobody.

### **Dún Patrick (Downpatrick; Down)**

Formerly called Dún Leathghlaise ("Green-sided Citadel"), this fortress and its surroundings are the capital of the Dál Fiatach, and the Long Isles in general. After his death at Saul, St. Patrick's corpse was pulled here by a team of masterless oxen, whose random wandering settled the matter of whether the Ulaidh or the Uí Niall should possess Patrick's remains. The bodies of St. Brigid and (later) St. Colm Cill migrated here after death in a similar fashion.

A swamp to the north of the dún was the site of a battle in 523 between Sir Galeholt's soldiers and an Ulaidh army ten times larger. Galeholt stationed gallóglachs with poisoned arrows on a few patches of solid ground, where they were able to repulse the ceitherns of Eochaidh mac Muireadach, the former Ulaidh chieftain and his supporters from Airthir and Cíneal Eoghan.

Galeholt secured the conquest by replacing the old stone fortress with a formidable castle. A chamber inside the castle is dedicated to Sir Lancelot, and features not only tapestries depicting his famous deeds, but even souvenirs — an ogre's severed hand, the wimple of a rescued princess — collected from the scene of his adventures. Outside the castle walls, a mint and market-grounds suggest the beginnings of a small medieval city. Ruler: Eochaidh (early), Galeholt (middle), Brian of the Isles (late).

### **Dunamoy**

Motte given to Dál Riadhan flaith by Sir Galeholt in 528.

### **Dunasmase**

Motte on a rock sacred to Sir Marhaus' patron, Oghma. After Marhaus' death, it belongs to a Butler vassal. Ruler: Marhaus, castellan. Vassal of: King Anguish.

### **Dunboyne**

This small castle (curtain wall and keep) guards the borders of the Pale as part of the Justiciar's estates. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Dunes**

Treacherous harbor and strand of sand dunes, the latter inhabited by the pagan god Donn, escort of the dead (see Sceillig Michael and Judge Hill). Donn patrols here after dark in his guise as a phantom knight, waiting for corpses to scrape home on the beach. He and his slua have sometimes defended this region against hostile faeries in massive faerie battles. Little Fort (Dún Béag, Doonbeg), the ráth of this port, belongs to the Seed of My Druid.

### **Dunluce**

Motte built by Galeholt for Sir Marsil, before Marsil became Duke of Pomitain. Ruler: Marsil, Castellan. Vassal of: Galeholt.



### **Durrow ("The Oaks")**

Monastery and village founded by St. Colm Cill in 528. Ruler: abbot. Vassal of: Colm Cill.

### **Eachach's Lake (Loch n-Eachach; Lough Neagh)**

The people of Eachach, an Érainn ancestor-god, once lived here. In the heart of their territory sat a well which, if it was left uncovered, would flood the whole kingdom. Eachach's daughter Lí Ban ("female beauty") left the well uncovered when she rushed to attend her infant son. The kingdom was instantly flooded to a depth of forty feet, creating the largest lake in the British Isles. Fishermen on the lake today can sometimes glimpse ruined houses beneath its surface, or hear strange music from its depths. Lí Ban ní Eachach lived on here as a half-salmon mermaid until 558, when she was captured in a fisherman's net and brought to the court of Brian of the Isles, where, gasping and thrashing, she died. The lake has few islands. The bogs and forest that skirt its shores make it nearly unapproachable by foot.

### **Eamhain Macha**

This ruined hill-fort was founded in primordial times by the goddess Macha. It served as the Ulster capital until 451, when its ruler, Fearghus Mór, was driven away by the Three Collas. Nothing remains but a shattered wall. A mound nearby was once the Red Branch, meeting-hall of Cú Chulainn and the heroes of the Tain era. During the battle of 451, it was looted by warriors of the Oriel tribes.

### **EARLDOM OF DESMOND**

#### **(Deis Mumha, South Munster)**

Southern section of Munster. Claimed as an earldom by the Geraldts, it is really ruled by local chieftains, and by the Eoghanacta. The Geraldts own isolated estates within these lands, only gaining power late in the campaign. Ruler: Maurice (early, middle), Gerald FitzGerald (late). Vassal of: Caiseal and King Arthur.

### **EARLDOM OF ORMOND**

#### **(Aur Mumha, East Munster)**

Name for the boggy lands between Caiseal and the Bladhna Mountains. This land is considered an earldom of Arthur and, after 556, is governed by the Butler dynasty. Ormond is coterminous with the tuath known as The Claim (q.v.). Ruler: Theobald Butler. Vassal of: King Arthur.

### **EARLDOM OF WATERFORD**

Originally called the Meeting of Three Waters, after the bay where the Nore, Suir and Bearbha converge, this site became a Lochlannach trading city under the Jarl Sitric, who settled there with Anguish's permission in 522. This is the same Sitric who settled Cork, and was killed in 528 by Caiseal-King Feidhlimidh. Sitric's descendants become Earls

of Arthur after 535, but persist in raiding against the new lords of Cork, sometimes with the help of opportunistic knights. The city has a wall and a British garrison after 530. It is the center of Ireland's wine trade, which a scion of the Butlers from Laois has the privilege of taxing. Ruler: Sitric, sons. Vassal of: Anguish, then Arthur.

### **EARLDOM OF WEXFORD**

A trade city with adjoining farmland, founded, like Dublin, by Olaf the White. After it becomes a British possession in 530, it gains a wall and garrison, and is ruled by relatives of Sir Brastias. Ruler: Olaf's nephew (early), Family of Brastias (late). Vassal of: Anguish, then Arthur.

### **Eigg**

This island, whose name is Norse for "indented," has no permanent human inhabitants, and many curious faerie features. It is warm and well-forested while its neighbor isles are cold and bare. A cave on its southern end belongs to an Uath. Sailors see lights here at night, and are hailed by the ghosts of dead kinsmen during the day. Visitors to the island can find many bloodstones, which bear the blood of the FIr Cleas.

### **Eiscir Riadha ("The Careering Ridge")**

This string of eiscirs and drumlins serves as the foundation of a dry road between Dublin and Clonmacnois. It is also the legendary dividing line between the Ireland of Conn Hundred-Fighter (North) and the Ireland of Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu (South).

### **Ele's Hill**

Drumlin upon which sits a cairn belonging to Ele ("Spell"), a leannán sí from the Fionn cycle. Every seven years, one of Fionn's warriors was lured into this mound by a Ele, never to return. That the god-like Fionn did nothing to remedy this problem suggests that the young warriors were a form of sacrifice or payment. Ele has not been heard from lately, though it was upon this hill that St. Brighid, after a long meditation, took the veil. (magic: Summon +4d20)

### **ELK PEOPLE (Múscraighe)**

These animal cultists sided with Aonghus mac nad Fraoch during his conquest of Munster in the fifth century. In return, he settled them in choice lands — partitioned into sub-tuaths which act as buffers between the rival Eoghanacta states — and gave them lordship over their old Deer People enemies. In this capacity, they are cruel and avaricious in the extreme; their chieftain, Cú Craigh, delights in confiscating the land of Os the Deer for the Glory of Músc the Elk. Ruler: Cú Craigh. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Caiseal.

### **EOGHANACTA OF ÄINE**

This faction maintains the cult of Äine, perhaps in recompense for her rape at the hands of dynasty-founder Ailill The





Earless. Like their clients, the Seed of My Druid, they suffer from a degree of congenital madness. Failure to capture Caiseal in this century will take them out of the running as Eoghanacta; they persist as vassals of the Gerald earls. Ruler: Ailill mac nad Froach (early) Geraldts (late).

### EOGHANACTA OF ARAN

A scion of Conall Corc's descendants gained sovereignty over these remote islands, mainly occupied by the Fir Bolg, ancestors of the Érainn. Their capital, Dún Aonghus, was built as a base for piracy and a shield against the Fomhórachs; perched atop a 300-foot sea cliff and featuring stone walls eighteen feet thick, it is the toughest fortress in Ireland by far. This branch of the Eoghanacta never achieves political importance, fading away after this century and leaving behind a culture of proud, dirt-poor fishermen. Ruler: Chieftain at Dún Aonghus. Vassal of: No one.

### EOGHANACTA OF CAISEAL

This faction controls the royal demesne around Caiseal, serving as stewards and hostel-keepers when they aren't ruling as kings. Ruler: Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn (early), Furudán (Late). Vassal of: No one.

### EOGHANACTA OF LOCH LÉAN

This faction of the Eoghanacta are kin to Duí Iarlaithe. They share Duí's taste for treachery, and they also share the gothic paganism — focused on gods like Crom, Donn Desa, and Duibhne — of their Seed of the Dark One clients. These traits endear them to nobody, which is why they hold the rugged Loch Léan region while other Eoghanacta factions hold pasture. Ruler: Duí (early) Cobhthach (late).

### EOGHANACTA OF OX GLEN

The sons of Aonghus mac nad Fraoch confiscated this valley — haunted by an ox-goddess with horns above her ears — from the Uí Fiodhgente. They suffer an unusual fear of offending the sí, instilled in them by Bóinda, their father's druid. Ruler: Fionghuine mac Aonghus (early), Cathal (middle), Breasal (late). Vassal of: no one.

### EOGHANACTA OF POND FORT

This faction of the Eoghanacta dominates the Bandon river valley. Their domain is small, but plentiful in homesteads and farms. Ruler: Aodh Proud-Hand (early), Tighearnach (late). Vassal of: No one.



A Crannog (Lake House)



## **EOGHANACTA OF THE RUSHES**

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Eochaidh, brother of Aonghus mac nad Fraoch, took this region of straw-covered hills as his fief. His kin feel left out of Munster politics, but his nephew Fearghus Scandal does manage to take Caiseal after the *Pagan Shore* era. Ruler: Eochaidh (Early), Fearghus (Late). Vassal of: No one.

## **Erne Lakes**

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The Erne is another river-and-loch system. It runs parallel to the Sionnan, but it flows from south to north, through two large, winding and quite lovely lakes which bear its name. The Erne lakes are bordered by a northward-reaching finger of the Drumlin Belt; as a result, the land beside them is dry and amenable to farming. Like many other Irish lakes, the Erne was once the territory of a tuath, the Ernai, who flooded their lands by breaking geas.

## **Errighal Mountain**

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These steep cliffs mark the northern Ailech coast. The Fomhórach god Balor, who lived/lives on Toraigh Island to the north, has often glared at Ailech with the scorching searchlight of his evil eye. As a result, the cliffs here are always blackened and bare.

## **Fea's Plain (Magh Fea)**

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A fertile plain in the Bearbha valley. It is said to be the home of Fea, one of the goddess Brighid's magical oxen. Fea bellows every time a grotesque injustice is done in Ireland. See also Feimhean Plain.

## **Feimhean Plain**

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A pasture cleared by the god Nuadhu in primordial times, and much later awarded to his servant Eoghan of the Eoghanacta. It is the grazing territory of the giant ox Feimhean, one of Brighid's pets, and the royal demesne of the Eoghanacta kings.

## **FIONNGHALL ("Pale Foreigners")**

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These are the Lochlannach homesteads north of Dublin. The area is divided into several chieftainships, each representing a new wave of Scandinavian settlers. The farmers of Fionnghall have put their viking days behind them. Fionngall was annexed to The Pale in 536. Ruler: Family chieftains. Vassals of: Olaf (early), Justiciar (Middle, late).

## **FIR MANACH**

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The name of this tuath reflects their descent from the Menapii, a Gaulish tribe defeated by Caesar. The ruling dynasty claims to descend from Eimhear, wife of Cú Chulainn and daughter of tribal god Forgall Manach. This same Forgall Manach figures as a powerful, punitive father-god in Fir Manach religion. They are terrified that he will emerge from his phantom castle (see Forgall Manach's

Hostel) and judge them for the waywardness of his daughter. Ruler: Chieftain. Vassal of: Tara king.

## **Flaming Trees**

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Ancient, unharvested oak forest which arose after Amhairghin ("Song Originator"), the first fili of the Irish and the author of the truce between humans and the Tuath dé Danu, was murdered and buried in a secret place nearby. The spirits of its trees are wise with poetic secrets, and potentially hostile to outsiders. The flickering lights that dance from tree to tree after dark may represent Amhairghin's ghost. Local people avoid the place at night.

## **Focluth Wood**

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The druid forest remembered by St. Patrick in his vision belonged to Cruithni and primitive Érainn cultists who follow animal gods. To this day, it is so thick as to be inaccessible. A Patrician hermitage is rumored to exist inside, but no one knows how to get there. Magic: At least 8d20 in Glamour and Protect.

## **Fomhórach's Steps**

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These stepping stones (actually hexagonal pillars of lava; part of a flow) lead out of Ireland and into Fomhórach territory. (Magic: 6d20 Travel).

## **Fore**

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This motte beside a small Patrician monastery (abbot: St. Feichin) was Sir Hugo de Ganis' first conquest in Westmeath, made with the approval of Ard Macha. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Sir Hugo.

## **Forgall Manach's Hostel**

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The "Manach" (Menapii) were one of the Gaulish tribes whose descendants became famous as the Ulaidh. The "Speaker of the Menapii" (Forgall Manach) who operates this *bruion sí* is a tribal ancestor god. He appears in Irish legends as Cú Chulainn's father-in-law, and the lord of a steep-sided *dún* protected by hundreds of warriors. To win his wife Eimhear from the Hostel of Forgall Manach, Cú Chulainn had to go half a year without sleeping, learn to slay hundreds with one blow, and master the salmon-leap, for in no other way could he clear the ramparts. Forgall Manach actually gave Cú Chulainn directions to the fort of the feat-teaching *cail-leach*, Scáthach, figuring that the boy would die at her hands and never claim his daughter. As long as Eimhear lived within her father's house, Cú Chulainn could only speak to her in riddles and euphemisms: dream language in the dream castle. The site of this formidable fortress is today only a ring of rubble and sod near the beach, but on any Samhain, that can change.





### **Fort of Laois**

This ráth formerly belonging to the Gaileoin warriors is sequestered by the Butlers as the capital of Laois after the death of Sir Marhaus. Ruler: Theobald Butler. Vassal of: Anguish, Arthur.

### **THE FOSTERLINGS (Dál Meas)**

This clandom is the "dál" ("share") of Cathoir Mór's foster-children; as such, they are not entitled to the Leinster throne. Their ancestors come from diverse places, including the Otherworld. They nurse a long, bitter rivalry with the neighboring Uí Bairrche. Thane: Maolódhran mac Crón (early), no one (since Maolodhrán left with Cathoir's Spear). Vassals of: Uí Cennsealaigh.

### **Fuad Mountains**

Fuad, a hero of the pre-Celtic People of Parthalán died here; these uninhabited mountains are his cairn.

### **GALLOWAY**

This region, named from the Norse "Gaddgedlar" ("Foreign Gael Territory"), includes Surluse and the west of Gorre. Surluse is its capitol; inland Galloway is a thinly inhabited wilderness. Knights described as "from Galloway" by Malory come from Surluse. Ruler: see Surluse.

### **Galtrim**

Baronial castle (ditch, curtain wall, keep) and surrounding lands, granted by Sir Brastias to a family from London. Ruler: Baron. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Glen of the Larders**

This region once belonged to Lughaid mac Cú Roí, founder of the Lugh's Seed dynasty which later migrated south. It is a gateway between the Claim's river valleys and the flatlands of Connacht. Presently, the glen is a no-man's land haunted by brigands, refugees, and patrolling soldiers from both sides. It is, despite this, a pleasant, well-forested valley.

### **Glens of Antrim**

These gentle, forested hills form the heartland of Dál Riada.

### **Goibhniu's Forge**

This mountain at the Sionnan's watershed conceals the foundry of the smith-god Goibhniu. He is sometimes encountered in the region as an itinerant tinker, who can fix anything but may geas the patron to do a favor in return. Magic: +3d20 Weather Control.

### **GOLDEN VALE**

The Golden Vale is a stretch of fertile cattle-land crossing North Munster from the Suir to the Sionnan. Several small tuaths — cínéal-sized — inhabit this valley as clients of

Caiseal, each serving the capital in a different way: the Gréachraighe breed horses, the Dál Mugh are healers, the Corco Ochaé are harpists, and so on. Ruler: Petty chieftains. Vassals of: Caiseal.

### **Granard**

Castle (rampart and tower) granted to the kings of Tethba in 563 by the de Ganis faction. Before that, a ráth. Ruler: Flann Cuilleán. Vassal of: Tara (early), De Ganis (late).

### **Great Hill**

St. Déaglan (d. 463), Munster's first cleric, was given this flat-topped coastal crag of an island by local kings to use as an hermitage. A blow from Déaglan's crozier made the tides around the rock retreat, connecting it to Ireland as a peak ("ard mór"). The monastery developed a reputation for healing; crawling through a niche within a jumble of stones near the hill's peak is reputed to cure all ailments UNLESS the supplicant is in sin. Curing Caiseal King Aonghus mac nad Fraoch of a plague earned Great Hill a permanent tuarastal from the Caiseal kings. Déaglan's successor, the abbot Ultán (d. 503), preserved the monastery into Lochlannach times, using the power of God to turn a party of raiders into rocks, still visible at the hill's foot. More recent abbots have relied on mortal powers, building a 97 foot round tower beside the oratory. Abbot: Ultán (early), others (late). (Magic: +2d20 Healing at well per Christian virtue displayed by the supplicant.)

### **Great Rock**

This is a chunk of limestone thirty kilometers long by twenty wide, thrust up through the fragile Irish soil. Forged during the wars against the Fomhórachs, the Great Rock is an utter wasteland, with NEGATIVE 3d20 Ambient Life Force.

### **Grey Crag (Craig Liath, Craglea)**

Large rocky outcropping which is home to Aoibheall ní Lir, patron-goddess of Dál Cas and mother of prophecy. Filis who climb to its peak on Lughnasad gain magical insight into the future of this tuath, which is alleged to include High-Kingship at the expense of the Uí Niall and the Lochlannachs.

### **Grey Hill (Brí Liath, Slieve Golry)**

A sí mound within which is the palace of Midhir, god of judgement, and sovereign deity to the families nearby. Midhir despises having his privacy violated by humans, especially suitors for his beautiful daughters. A pool beside the hill is allegedly guarded by the Three Herons of Inhospitability, one which says "avoid," one which says "depart," and another which says "leave." They may be able to shapeshift into Faerie Knights to drive away visitors. Those who do confront Midhir are dealing with a legal mind as devious as Lugh's arm is strong, so beware.



### **GREY-GREEN FACES (Uí Eineachglais)**

Leinster clandom named for Breasal Snot-Green Face, a son of Cathoir Mór whose ghastly complexion reflected his supervision of local mines: the small clandom's prestige comes from supplying lead, tin and copper to the rest of Leinster. They are out of the running for kingship, hence the presence near the Serf Kingdoms. Thane: Cólaibh mac Gabhrán (early), Aodh mac Cairthinn (late). Vassal of: Leinster kings.

### **Grian's Hill**

Grassy hill associated with Grian, a sun goddess, famous in one incarnation as Fionn mac Cumhaill's unfaithful wife. Pagans light bonfires here on Bealtaine. (Magic: +4d20 Weather Control)

### **Grianán Ailech**

This "sun-palace" (Grian is the sun goddess) probably filled only a religious function for the Cruithni and Ulaidh kings of Ailech. The Uí Niall prize it for its elevation (790 ft.) and sturdy walls (17 feet high, 13 feet thick). It serves as the capital of Cíneal Eoghan, and of Ailech as a whole. Ruler: Fearadach (early) Fiachna (late). Vassal of: no one.

### **Hard Plain**

This monastery is named for the barren pasture upon which it sits. Its founder and current abbot is Abán, Bishop of Wexford. He adheres to the Irish Christian principles of seclusion, respect for poetry, and love of nature. Wild beasts follow his commands; he has detailed a pack of wolves to guard Hard Plain and defend its monks against raiding armies. Ruler: Abán. Vassal of: No one.

### **High Meadow (Clonard)**

This monastery once belonged to St. Finnian of Meath, a disciple of St. Patrick who used the site to train clerics (St. Ciarán of Cluain mac Nóise among them). St. Finnian died in 517, and his monastery was utterly destroyed a few years later by Thorgestr. In 530, Hugo de Ganis founded an Augustinian priory and a motte on the ruins of St. Finnian's church. These in turn were destroyed by raiders from Bréagha in 568. Visitors to High Meadow will find either a motte and monastery supervised by de Ganis vassals, or ruins overgrown with moss. Ruler: St. Finnian (early), de Ganis clan (middle), no one (late). Vassal of: Ard Macha (early), Justiciar (middle).

### **Hills of the Rushes**

Thinly forested mountains whose meadows of hay have lent this whole district the name "cliach" (roughly, "the Rushes"). On the southeastern flank of this range is a mountain face whose pleated surface resembles the bow and string of a harp: Cliú, harpist of the Tuath Dé Danu, plays the unearthly music sometimes heard in the mountain's vicinity. At the top-most peak of this ridge sits Dragon's Mouth Lake, where male and female sí can be seen courting in the form of swans.

A serpent who once ruled the lake was subdued by St. Patrick during his tour of Munster.

### **HORSE PEOPLE (Greachraighe)**

This tribe of Ulster exiles descend, in part, from the Uisliú clan that switched sides from Conchobhar to Meadhbh, during the Tàin. They worship the Tàin-hero Fearghus mac Róich ("Virile son of Great-Stallion"), and horses in general. Semi-nomadic, they do not claim any particular territory, but wander most often within the indicated domains. Ruler: Unknown. Vassal of: Connacht king.

### **Howth Castle**

Sir Brastias granted the motte here to the St. Laurents family, distant kin of the de Ganis. Ruler: Baron. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Ide's Church**

A church, convent and orphanage founded in 526 by Ide, a nun from The Kingdom of Mercenaries. Ide is a devotee of Mary, and of motherhood in general. Her convent swarms with local fosterlings and orphans of both sexes, as well as orphaned animals. Once, Ide tried to nurse a huge beetle that wandered into the convent; it ate part of her torso before alarmed nuns pried it loose and killed it. Then Christ appeared in the form of an infant and restored Ide, for her nursing of the beetle was a supreme act of motherly kindness. On another occasion, Ide plucked a thorn from the hoof of a donkey and tossed it on the convent's grounds. A tree grew from it, still visible today, whose thorns all turn inward so that they may harm no one. Characters studying Ide's thorn tree can attempt Merciful; success = check. Ide dies in 560. Ruler: Ide (early) abbess (late). Vassal of: no one. (magic: +4d20 Healing)

### **Iona**

Near-inaccessible island hermitage (pilgrims have drowned many times trying to approach it) founded by St. Colm Cill in 535. Iona became a center of reclusive learning and, after 563, the capital of Colm's Pictish church.

The uninhabited hills to the North of the monastery hide a creature called the Fiend of the Pass. He sometimes manifests as a cú sí, sometimes as a limping old man, but in both cases appearing only at twilight. Monks who wander into the hills at night are found the next day dead and drained of blood through gashes in their thighs and palms. That this creature hasn't been dismissed by the saint who tamed the Loch Ness Monster, and that it kills holy men in a parody of Christ's wounds, suggests that it may really be The Devil, angered out of countenance at Iona's very existence. Magic: +4d20 Divination.

### **Ireland's Eye**

This small, rocky island marks the first encounter between the Gaels who settled Ireland and the goddess Ériu. A lone woman in a widow's shawl can sometimes be seen here today,





watching for the next fleet of invaders. The island's small shrine, founded by St. Patrick, is maintained by a hermit. Magic: 6d20 Ambient

### **ISLES**

This district of the Long Isles occupies the Western coasts and islands of what we now call Scotland. Visitors here will find three things, in order of frequency: remote, forlorn island monasteries founded by St. Bréanainn and St. Colm Cill; Gallóglach clans, serving Ailech and the Long Isles, and ruled by petty chieftains; miles of desolate hills covered with heather and shrouded by fog. There is no single ruler, though most of the local chiefs respect Ketil Flat-Nose and Sir Galeholt. After the deaths of these men, the region falls into anarchy. Ruler: Ketil and family; local chiefs. Vassals of: Galeholt; nobody.

### **Judge Hill**

A cavity near the summit of this hill is an entrance to the land of Donn Desa, pagan escort of the dead, locally called Donn Fírinne ("the judge" or "the truthful"). Pagan corpses are left exposed on the hill where Donn Fírinne can claim them. When he leaves the hill, Donn appears as a black-armored horseman on a white stallion. He sometimes kidnaps promising camán players to add to his otherworldly team. The residents of nearby Limerick worship him as an avatar of Odin. They say that when clouds gather over the hill, Odin is collecting the ingredients of a storm.

### **Kells**

Large monastery with a round tower and spectacular carved stone crosses, founded in 524 by St. Colm Cill. The site served as the capitol of Colm Cill's missionary empire until his exile from Ireland. It was sacked by Thorgestr the year after its foundation. In 536 the de Ganis clan began to build a motte here "for the protection of the monks," but over the objection of Colm, who claimed Kells as Uí Niall ground. A raiding party from Oriel destroyed the motte before it could be finished. The British still consider it de Ganis property. Ruler: abbot. Vassal of: Colm Cill.

### **KILDARE**

The Earldom of Kildare includes the mountain and church of Cill Dara and the eastern half of Leinster's royal demesne. In 520, King Anguish allowed Sir Gerald Striguil and his family to build castles here, rewarding them for driving off the Uí Niall, and discouraging the Uí Niall from ever invading North Leinster again. The Earls family and his knights intermarried with the Uí Dúnlaing, becoming a local dynasty, while his brother Sir Maurice made sword-land elsewhere. Today, Kildare is the most fertile and magical of Ireland's feudal lands, basking in the Ambient Life Force of St. Brigid. Ruler: Striguil (early), William son of Maurice (Middle, Late). Vassal of: Anguish.

### **KINGDOM OF MERCENARIES (Déisi)**

This Érainn tribe from Meath were cursed by druids after they killed a Connachta king. They are spiritual outcasts, condemned to the role of mercenaries. In this respect, they have served Tara, Leinster, and the Eoghanacta (who gave them permanent lands and political equality here), as well as making Sword-Land for themselves in Cambria, where the curse has no effect. Any character with Sword and Battle at ten each, and Honor 12 OR LESS, can join this kingdom as if it were a Fian. Ruler: Captain. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Ox Glen.

### **Kings' Lake**

The dozens of good-sized islands in this lake have often been appropriated by Connacht chieftains as sanctuaries, hence the name. On one of them, the Connachta ancestress Queen Clothra hid from her usurping sister Meadhbh on the assumption that no one who entered the island could hurt her; she was killed by a slingstone from the shore, and buried there. Magic: +3d20 Necromancy.

Other islands in the lake now belong to anchorites, including White Cow Island, where a half-dozen monks live off the milk of a white heifer who never runs dry. Then there's Lone Ox Island, the site of a pre-Patrick anchorite community so holy that, when Lochlannach raiders arrived there in 511, it sank to the bottom of the lake rather than admit the fair-haired heathens. The anchorites are still there — underwater and immortal; the secret of visiting them is known only to the comharbas of Clonmacnoise, who hide there from enemies. This island itself is populated by wild boars who are in fact backsliding monks from the underwater church, cursed to live a lifetime as animals for some minor infraction against the order. Local fishermen whose ancestors were kin to the missing monks visit the island each season, to ensure that any swine killed by hunters or old age receive a proper Christian funeral. The island is also haunted by a single, hostile tarbh-uisce, who may serve the monks as a guardian angel. Beside the Northwest shore sits the sí mound of Siugmhall, son of Midhir and god of thunderbolts. In one story, he kills the solar-horse god Eochaidh with his powers. Magic: +4d20 Protect and Sacred space on every island but Clothra's; +6d20 Glamour at Lone Ox; +8d20 Weather Control at Sí Siugmhall.

### **Kinnitty (Cionn Eitigh, "Unwanted Share")**

Hermitage founded on waste-ground in 531 by St. Fionán of the Seed of the Dark One. Fionán was conceived in 507 when his mother, swimming in Loch Léan, was impregnated by a salmon. His hermitage has no magic, but Fionán himself is accomplished at Divination.



### **Knock**

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Small castle (curtain wall atop motte, with gate tower, large round keep) given by Sir Galeholt to Sir Galleron in 527. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Galleron.

### **Knockgraffon**

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Large motte-and-bailey erected by an expedition from the Pale in 532, then ceded to a knight named Philip of Worcester as a castellan in this region. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Lambey Island**

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Birds swarm over this sparse little island, where men from Thorgestr's fleet replenished themselves by stealing some lambs (hence the name). Today, a family of the bondi caste inhabits the island and, like their Irish predecessors, raise sheep.

### **LAOIS (Leix, Queen's County)**

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Earldom belonging early in the campaign to King Anguish's family, and later to the Butler dynasty from Britain. Most natives of Laois are betaghs descended from the Loigis and the Gaileóin, subject-tuaths from Gaul noted in ancient times for their ferocity as warriors. Laois is the homeland of Sir Marhaus. Ruler: Marhaus (early), Earl Thomas Butler (late). Vassal of: Leinster king.

### **LAUNDS (Bréagha)**

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This tuath, whose various names mean "the heights," is centered on the Bóann valley and the collection of sí mounds around Brugh na Bóann. Traditionally, both the Leinster kings and the Tara kings claim it as a royal demesne. Its inhabitants are a collection of small Érainn clans nudged into this no-man's land by the Tara-Leinster wars. They guard the holy land of Irish paganism, preserving its peace for the benefit of pilgrims, and appeasing the gods whose presence surrounds them. Its current ruler, the Lady of the Launds, supposedly emerged from the Bóann itself after the male rí damhna of Bréagha had died out. Outsiders fear her as an incarnate goddess, or dismiss her as a charlatan. Everyone wonders when this heiress to the gods will marry, and whom. In 530 she swears fealty to Camelot, making Bréagha a district of the Pale. Ruler: The Lady of the Launds. Vassal of: The Justiciar after 530; before that, no one.

### **Leaping Mares (Léim Láracha, Leamlara)**

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Motte in a meadow screened by hills. Dancing white mares were an omen for Liathain, founder of the Uí Liathain, to build a small ráth here. In 530, his descendants granted the spot to the Justiciar, hoping that the presence of Arthur's men would discourage their Eoghanacta enemies. It has since been a motte occupied by a banneret and twenty-five men-at-arms. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **LEINSTER**

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The kingdom of Leinster was founded many centuries ago by an adventurer called Labhraidh the Exile. Labhraidh's family were the rightful Érainn kings of Tara, but they were usurped and scattered by Cobhthach the Scrawny, a great-uncle of Labhraidh's and an ancestor of the Connachta. After many adventures across the sea, Labhraidh the Exile returned to Ireland with a coalition of foreign armies, including the Fr Bolg (the Belgae), the Fir Domhnann (the Dumnonii), the Fir Morca (the Armoricans), and the Gaileoin (a tribe of berserkers from Gaul). This coalition was noteworthy for their use of the ga-laighnibh (Irish for "lance" or "longspear"), from which they were called the Laighin ("the Lancers"), from which name we in turn derive the word "Leinster." The Leinstermen sacked the royal outpost of Dinn Ríg, and trapped Cobhthach the Scrawny in a burning iron house as a sacrifice to their gods.

For many years after their defeat of Cobhthach, the Laighin coalition ruled not only Leinster but the ceremonial centers of Tara and Bréagha as well. They shaped what would become the cult of Tara kingship. Each of their monarchs was the incarnation of Nuadhu, god of rulership; the husband of Brighid, spirit of hearth and pasture; and the patron of Find, demon of poetry. Leinster's claim over the Tara kingship was in time rivaled by the Connachta, and most of all by the aggressive Uí Niall dynasty. The Connachta founder, Conn Céadchathach, slew the last official Laighin king of Tara in 220. The surviving family of this last king, who was called Cathoir Mór ("Great Warlord"), fled south across the Lifé where they founded the dynasties that rule Leinster to this day.

### **Leixlip**

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This town beside a cataract in the Lifé is named "salmon leap" (Norse leix-lip) for the bold creatures who swim past it, upstream. Leixlip began in 520 as a colony of peaceful Lochlannach homesteaders under King Anguish's patronage. Sir Brastias added a mint and a wall, making it a borough. The result is a unique place: a imported Scandinavian town, complete with burghers and shoe-makers, nestled among Irish chieftainships. Ruler: reeve. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Lifé river**

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This river curls through North Leinster into Dublin. The terrain beside the Lifé's bend, a mixture of pasture and rocky ground, is called the Curragh ("rough") of the Lifé, and due to its magic (2d20 Ambient throughout, projected by the goddess Brighid), is the royal demesne of the Leinster kings.

### **LIMERICK**

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This town of a thousand-odd people was merely a "bare spot on the Sionnan" (Luimneach- ar-Sionnan; Limerick) before the Lochlannach chieftain Sicfrith established a Longphort here in 506. Its citizens are among Ireland's least aggressive





W93



Lochlannach, wishing only to manipulate commercial traffic on the Sionnan by peaceful means. This has made them rivals of Clonmucnoise, which also benefits as a trading post between the Sionnan basin and the east. Limerick's markets specialize in wool and cured pork collected from Connacht. Ruler: Sicfrith and sons. Tributary to: Eoghanacta of the Rushes.

### **Lismore ("Mochuda's Great Fort")**

After being ejected from Raithean by the Uí Niall in 526, a bitter St. Mochuda led his loyal monks south-west into the Kingdom of Mercenaries, where the waters of the Allo miraculously receded and exposed this prominence upon the saint's arrival. The large enclosure Mochuda built here is outstanding among Irish monasteries both for its size, and its failure suggest anything but the outpost of a rich warlord. In fairness, Mochuda does indeed have many enemies, and the monastery's profits from fishing on the Allo make it an inviting target for raiders.

Like many Irishmen, Mochuda has embraced King Arthur as an antidote to the Uí Niall. Heeding the saint's petitions, Arthur chose Mochuda's Great Fort as the site of his Grand Council and Synod of 533, when he received (token) submission from the petty kings and comharbas outside the Pale. A motte with a garrison of fifty men at arms has protected the monastery since then. A hill nearby reputedly belongs to a tribe of Leipreacháns. Mochuda dies of the Yellow Plague in 551. Ruler: Mochuda, Mochuda's comharba. Vassal of: The Justiciar.

### **Loch Aillen**

Narrow lake near the watershed of the Sionnan. Towers and rooftops are occasionally visible in its muddy depths.

### **Loch Dearg**

See Patrick's Purgatory

### **Loch Garman (Wexford Harbour)**

"Loch Garman" is the pre-viking name for Wexford. The eponymous Garman was a raiding prince of the Connachta who stole the crown of Sláine, river goddess and wife of Cathoir Mór. Cathoir apprehended Garman and tossed him, and the crown, into this bay. A priceless treasure, unlikely to be recovered.

### **Loch Gur (Lough Gur)**

Small lake nestled in limestone hills, and associated in legend with the Uí Lir gods, particularly Áine. The lake's name may mean "warm" or "incubated;" it is said in some legends to be the product of Áine's urine. Loch Gur constitutes a moat around Fort Hill (Knockadoon), a large triangular island considered a fortress (dún) of the goddess. A causeway from Fort Hill leads to a tiny satellite island, where Áine's son Gerald FitzGerald built a tower house in 553. Commonly called Desmond Castle, it serves as the FitzGerald capital until the

phantom knight's "death" in 574. In later years, he is still seen circling the lake on his white stallion, or patrolling its skies in the form of a black goose.

### **Loch Léan**

Léan The Tusked is a goldsmith of the Tuath Dé Danu, usually depicted as a céile of the god Bodhbh Dearg. The cool water needed for his work comes from this chain of three lakes: Upper, Lower and Middle. In the form of a large boar, he still haunts Boar Mountain (Sliabh Torc), overlooking the lakes from the east.

Léan's treasures include a 900-foot tall glass oak tree with a phoenix's nest in its upper limb, and a herd of 500 bullocks with gold horns and silver hooves, both cloaked from the eyes of men. His daughters Blue Lily and White Lily, named for birthmarks on their breasts, can be seen bathing in the lake; they have the notable gift of dissembling their bodies so that their bones can be used as magic weapons, keys or tools, before flesh is restored to them by the water of a local spring. A third daughter, Yellow Lily, married into the Eoghanacta and is an ancestress of the Loch Léan faction. A giant in the region who challenges travellers to a fidhcheall game, and demands their heads or the completion of an impossible task if they lose, is probably another incarnation of Léan.

### **Loch Owel**

On an island in the middle of this lake, Thorgestr built the enclosure where he intended to deflower Irish princesses. See the "peoples" chapter to learn the result. A lochlannach magician can try to raise his spirit here, and those of his underchieftains. (Magic: Necro-mancy +5d20 (for Lochlannach).

### **Loch Rudhraighe**

This inlet is named for the ancient rulers of the Ulaidh, the "Rudhraighe" or "entitled (ones)." Anglicized as Rury or Rory, it remains a popular name for Irish leaders. Perhaps an ancient fortress of the Rudhraighe lies beneath these waters. The Wave of The Rudhraighe, one of Ireland's living waves (see Bull Harbour), screams whenever a true king of the Ulaidh dies. Dún Drum ("Ridge Fort"), overlooking the bay, was converted into a castle by Sir Galeholt in 522. Ruler: Dál Fiatach flaith. Vassal of: Galeholt, Brian.

### **THE LONG ISLES**

Once, the Ulaidh (Ulster) tribe ruled the whole north of Ireland. After the capture of Ailech and the subversion of Oriel by the Uí Niall, all that remained of the Ulaidh empire was the land east of Eachach's Lake, ruled in alternation by the Ulaidh dynasties of Dál Riadha and the Dál Fiatach. The lands seized by Fearghus Mór and his brothers in Britain are assumed to belong to Dál Riadha. During the *Pagan Shore* campaign, King Galeholt adds Surluse, Pomitain and the Isles to what has become an international coalition. Ruler: Dál Fiachta chieftain (early), Galeholt (Middle), Brian (Late). Vassal of: Arthur (Under Galeholt), or no one.





### Lothra

Monastery founded c. 535 by St. Ruadhán (513-574), a disciple of St. Brigid. Formerly the site of a druid-prized oak tree, in whose hollow lived a magic boar. Ruadhán banished the boar and built an unfortified church near the tree, whose sap he and his monks and their guests now use as food. Ruler: Ruadhán. Vassal of: Comharba of Cill Dara.

### Lusk

This abbey founded by Colm Cill has lately turned Cistercian, over Colm's objections. The motte and bailey that guards it

belongs to a knight who serves the Archbishop of Dublin. Ruler: local knight. Vassal of: Archbishop of Dublin.

### Luttrells

Motte belonging to the Luttrell family, appointed by King Arthur as vice-counts (essentially powerful sheriffs, like the Sheriff of Nottingham) of Dublin. The ruler here replaces the Justiciar when he's absent or indisposed. Ruler: Sir Geoffery Luttrell. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### Mac Da Ré's Hostel

Details of the "son of the moon god" and his Hostel are unknown.

### Mac Da Tho's Hostel

The "son of the silent god" (Nuadhu?) held a raucous contest here in olden times to see who would win a magic pig. Now, of course, only ruins are visible.

### Magh Tuire ("Plain of the Tower")

Here, the Fomhórach lords of Ireland collected tribute from the Fir Bolg and the Tuath Dé Danu in a floating stone tower. A rocky pasture littered with hundreds of standing stones, each marking the grave of a demigod or a shard of the tower, marks the site today. Magic: 3d20 Ambient and 2d20 Curse and Necromancy throughout; double this amount at large stones.

### Main River

The Main river valley, which parallels the Bann from Eochaidh's Lake to the sea, is a superior area with fewer swamps and floodlands. The Long Isles depend on this valley for milk, butter, and oats.

### Malahide

Motte at a patrician shrine, with a small village beside it. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Dublin Archbishopric.

### Masc Lake

This lake sprang from the grave of the god Oghma when he was slain at Magh Tuire. It counts as his sí palace.

### Maynooth (Magh Nuadhu)

This medium-sized castle (keep, gate-house, curtain walls) atop an old pagan mound is the oldest Arthurian outpost in Ireland, having been given to the Geraldts in 521 for their services to King Anguish. Today it belongs to a son of Sir



Maurice. Ruler: William FitzGerald. Vassal of: Earl of Kildare.

## **MEATH**

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The flat terrain of Meath — in particular, the river basins of the Bóann, Liffé, and Blackwater — is the first land occupied by each new wave of invaders from the east, including the British. The cairns and pagan cemeteries here are the oldest in Ireland, making Meath to the Irish what the Valley of the Kings is to Egypt. Never unified as a province, Meath is instead a series of cult capitals, including Uisneach, Tlachtga, Tailltiu, and Sláine, of which Tara has become the most important.

Since the first century A.D., Leinster and the Connachta have contested Tara, while beside it, and the other pagan shrines, primitive Érainn tuaths have lived as tribute payers and cult guardians. Most of these sean-tuatha (“old tribes”) were destroyed by Muircheartach mac Earca in a series of campaigns between 497 and 510; only the high-holy kingdom of The Launds preserved its independence. The Uí Niall divided the spoils of Meath into cinea, each founded by one of Niall’s sons, but these in turn are being dismembered by the expansion of Arthur’s colony. By the end of the *Pagan Shore* campaign, it is the Southern Uí Niall who are tribute payers, cult guardians, dinosaurs. Ruler: Tara king. Vassal of: Arthur.

## **Minch**

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This strait between the inner and outer Hebrides is cold, treacherous, and swarming with whales and sharks.

## **Mis Mountains, Ulster**

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High, cold domes and plateaus covered by bog and heather. The mountains are sometimes considered the terrestrial home of the indifferent sea-god, Lir.

## **Monkschurch**

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This monastery was founded in 528 by Benedictine monks from France. Now it serves mainly as a school; its abbot, an old and very severe man named Nothail, hopes to correct the idiosyncrasies of Irish Christianity by training a new cadre of traditional-minded priests. Nothail maintains close ties to the monastery of St. Martin at Tours. He is happy to meet and assist any French characters who find themselves in Leinster. Ruler: Nothail. Vassal of: Benedictine order.

## **Mound of the Fair Field**

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This sí mound is a terrestrial capitol of the sea-god Lir, who counts as a family patriarch in these parts. Among Lir’s irrational descendants is Míodhna mac Aillen, a fire-breathing faerie warrior who used to burn Tara to the ground every Samhain, until Fionn mac Cumhaill killed him. Other beings encountered in this mound would tend to be equally powerful and cruel.

## **Mountain of the Women**

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A mountain haunted by aos sí of every kind, but especially ghostly women. A cairn at its peak, Sí ar Feimhean, is the abode of sacrifice-bearer Bodhbh Dearg and his flesh-collecting fear deargs. This cairn is the feis site of the Eoghanacta over-kings.

## **Muadhán’s Wood**

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This oak-and-holly wood is haunted by Muadhán, a gentle forest spirit. A giant lives here also, guarding a magic tree on Muadhán’s behalf. See the “Irish Magic” chapter for details.

## **MUGHDORNA**

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This tribe, “Servants of the Hand,” live as hunters in the mountains that bear their name. The Hand is the severed hand of Nuadhu: a symbol of sacrifice and commitment. Their culture is backward, materially impoverished, and righteous. Ruler: Chieftain with one hand. Vassal of: Nobody.

## **Muirbolc**

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The traditional capitol of Dál Riadha is a stone-reinforced rath, occupied by Galeholt’s castellan after Galeholt captures Dún Patrick. Ruler: Castellan (early) local flaith (late). Vassal of: Galeholt (early); later conquered by Brian of the Isles.

## **Mullingar**

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Motte given as a fief to a family from Cíneal Fiachu. Vassals of: de Ganis.

## **MUNSTER**

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Ireland’s Southern province is the stronghold of the Érainn people, a branch of the primordial Fir Bolg who expanded into countless sub-tuaths. In one legend, the god Cairbre Cat-Head poisoned the wine of the other gods during their assembly at Tara, allowing the Érainn to claim rulership of Ireland and drive the gods underground. Later, Cairbre Cat-Head came to collect his due by invading Munster at White Strand with an army of demonic beings called Cat Heads and Dog Heads; Fionn mac Cumhaill defeated him in a huge battle, and won Munster’s independence from the gods forever. It is noteworthy that the Tuath Dé Danu in Munster take a back seat to local land-goddesses, including Mumha, for whom the province is named, and several estranged daughters of Lir. More recently, the Munster Érainn have become clients of the Eoghanacta family, Gael warlords driven to copy the imperial politics of Rome.

## **Naas**

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Old Leinster aonach site, now granted to Sir William FitzGerald and fortified as a motte. Ruler: Castellan. Magic: +5d20 Ambient.





### **Navan**

Sir Brastias planted a borough here in 533, on the site of an abandoned ráth and teach talún. Sitting at the junction of the Bóann and Blackwater, Navan enjoys exclusive trade with Uí Laoghaire lands, and Oriel. The borough belongs to a barony granted to the de Anglians, Angle-born allies of the Ganis faction. Ruler: reeve. Vassal of: de Anglian baron.

### **Nenagh (Ant-Aonach)**

This citadel is the Samhain aonach site for west Munster. Ruler: Steward of Caiséal. Vassal of: Caiséal.

### **New Ross**

Borough founded by Sir Brastias on the edge of a forest claimed by the Leinster kings. Populated by townfolk from Logres, who have made it a local center of trade for textiles and beer. Though belonging to the Justiciar's office, New Ross is administered by kinsmen of the Earl of Wexford. Ruler: reeve, and Wexford earl. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Nore river**

River running through Ormond and Leinster.

### **Oaks Island (Valencia Island)**

This forested island is a druidic stronghold and school, founded by Mugh Roth (see The Plainsmen, The Seed of My Druid). The island remains taboo to ordinary people; local pagans visit it by boat on certain nights, but never ferry outsiders there, nor describe what rituals they witness in its trees.

### **Oirbsiu Lake (Loch Corrib)**

This lake belongs to Oirbsiu, a god of the Conmacne Mara who migrated with them from Leinster to Connacht. Oirbsiu is an avatar of Manannán mac Lir. As a master of creating land within water, Manannán/ Oirbsiu has raised one island in this lake for each day of the year; a sailor in these waters may find spots as strange as those visited by St. Bréanainn or Maol Dúin.

### **Old Laighin**

This old ráth site is one of the first Laighin colonies in Ireland. Labhraidh the Exile chose it because of its proximity to the Yew of Ros, a still-living tree that guarantees Leinster's prosperity as long as it stands. Sir Brastias founded a borough here, governed by people from Cambria, in 531. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **ORIEL**

The land now called Oriel was once the heartland of the Ulaidh. Under the Ulaidh yoke in this region were many small aitheach-tuaths classified as Airgialla ("Hostage-Givers"), from which the name "Oriel" is derived. All this changed in the fifth century A.D. with the eastward crusade of Niall Nine-Hostages and his family. Joining in that crusade were

three brothers, distant members of Niall's derbhfine: Colla Uais ("The Noble"), Colla Meann ("The Stammerer") and Colla Fochra ("The Partitioner"). The Three Collas, as they are called, installed themselves as leaders of the Airgialla dynasties, united them, and led a revolt in the center of Ulaidh territory even as Niall's sons were capturing the Ulaidh north. Together, Niall and the Collas smashed the old Ulaidh capitol of Eamhain Macha in 450.

When the dust settled, The Three Collas gained control over the Airgialla territories, in return for which they forfeited the Tara kingship to the Uí Niall. Furthermore, the kings of Tara gained the right to muster all the armies of Oriel for six weeks in Summer, but no more than once every three years.

There is no king over Oriel as a whole. Each of its constituent tuaths is a tributary to Tara. Each is ruled by a tiny Gael minority, descended from the Collas, beneath whom are many subordinate families of Érainn and Cruithni stock. While the Gaels of Oriel are barred from High-Kingship, the fertile lands and subject-warriors they control makes them powerful as king-makers. Ruler: none.

### **Ox Mountains**

A wasteland of rounded hills covered with heather and bog. Once the estate of the Fomhórach god Breas, it assumed its current state after its master's defeat by Lugh. Now all but uninhabited, this range can only be crossed through a few passes. The faeries here are malign ghosts of Breas's retainers.

### **PALE**

The Pale marks the limit of Arthur's justice in Ireland. Sir Brastias and Sir Hugo de Ganis subdivided these formerly Lochlannach and Céinal Laoghaire lands into manors ruled by their supporters. Many British civilians live here as well; farmers imported from Logres are slowly turning the Pale from a land of herds and chieftains to a land of fields and manors. Ruler: Pale nobles are enfeoffed to the Justiciar. Vassal of: Arthur.

### **Pallas Grian**

Tower House founded on a hillock sacred to the sun-goddess Grian in 554 by Gerald FitzGerald. Ruler: FitzGerald retainer. Magic: 5d20 Ambient, 3d20 Weather Control.

### **Paps of Mórríoghain**

Another instance of adjacent drumlins that resemble breasts. Women of the Mórríoghain cult used to worship here; other people avoid it. Sleep between them, it is said, and a Cailleach will appear and challenge your to a Great-spear comhlann (her skill is 28). Losers gain a Fear (Witches) 2d6+6 passion and a major wound. Winners are taken inside the mounds for a reward determined by the gamemaster. Magic: +4d20 Curse.



### **Path of Patrick's Cow**

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While St. Patrick conducted his mission at Caiseal, he received word that his disciples at Ard Macha were lacking for milk. He instructed a white heifer to walk to Ard Macha and give milk, which she did, overnight; a trade and pilgrimage rout sprang up in her path. The road is maintained by the comharba of Ard Macha; the Munster sections fall into disrepair during the Caiseal-Ard Macha feud under King Feidhlimidh. Magic: +5d20 Travel.

### **Patrick's Peak**

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During St. Patrick's tour of Connacht, this mountain sacred to a cailleach was pointed out to him as a pernicious center of paganism. His magic drove the cailleach into the consecrated waters of Loch Dearg, miles to the east. Then, he stayed on the mountain, fasting forty days in trochlaigh against Jehovah. At the end of this period, he won the right to act as judge of all Irish folk in the afterlife. Since then, this mountain has been the center of the Patrick cult in Connacht. Stations held here each Lughnasad draw pilgrims from the whole province, and beyond. Magic: +5d20 Bless.

### **Patrick's Purgatory**

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On an island in the middle of Loch Dearg, St. Patrick founded this shrine where the war-like people of Ulster can reduce their time in purgatory by confronting their sins directly. Beside the shrine are seven clocháns, each corresponding to one of the Deadly Sins (in *Pendragon*: Lustful, Lazy, Selfish, Proud, Indulgent, Deceitful, Cruel). Pilgrims who spend a night in a given clochán can attempt to roll the pertinent trait: success = aging check as the victim is tormented by devils; failure = increase opposite trait by one point. Each clochán only works once per pilgrim. In later years, the clocháns are associated with *Pagan Shore*-era saints. For the truly adventurous, a cave beneath the shrine leads directly to Hell. A pile of rocks at one end of the island are the bones of Caoranach, the maggot-péist destroyed by Patrick when he claimed the lake. Magic: Ambient +4d20. Vassal of: Ard Macha.

### **Pendragon Castle**

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This castle in Britain's Pennine mountains features a modest tower and a lavish dungeon. It was ceded to Galeholt by the King of a Hundred Knights, during their alliance against King Arthur. Its name reflects Galeholt's ambitions at the time. After submitting to Arthur, Galeholt handed over the castle, so distant from the Long Isles, to his allies from Dál Fiatach, whence it fell into the hands of a young Brian of the Isles. Brian at this stage was testing himself in the world of British knighthood; realizing that a large income could be made from ransoms, he turned Pendragon Castle into a prison for knights and ladies unlucky enough to lose themselves in the mountains. In 538, Sir Lancelot defeated Brian, freed some thirty knights and forty ladies from its dungeon, and turned it over to a former prisoner, Sir La Cote Male Taile (Malory IX,

6-9). Brian probably continued this practice somewhere else. Ruler: Brian, then Sir Nerovens de Lile. Vassal of: Sir Nerovens is a vassal of La Cote Male Taile.

### **Pig Counting Plain**

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Once, queen Meadhbh saw a troop of swine moving across this plain. They had the peculiar quality that they could not be counted, though their number was small. These white-skinned, red-eared sí pigs still cross the plain from time to time. The person who, using critical Awareness rolls or some other trick, manages to count the pigs, can probably collect them.

### **Plain of Adorations**

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The center of this pasture once contained a ring of thirteen standing stones, representing Crom, lord of fate and death, and twelve lieutenant deities. Druids "adored" these bad gods with human sacrifices, often of infants stolen from distant kingdoms. In 466 St. Patrick cursed the stones, destroying their magic and sinking each on them into the sod, where they are barely visible now as grey lumps. Rumors persist of a conspiracy to resurrect the cult by uncovering the stones.

### **Plain of Bird-Flocks**

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The open country and gentle hills around Dublin were cleared of trees by the People of Parthalán, the first time a plain was ever cleared in Ireland. The Bird-Flocks are a clan of raven witches (male and female) called The Bird Troop of Éadair. The Érainn kings of Tara ruled this district only by the Bird Troop's leave. They have not been seen since the city was built.

### **Plain of Bréagha**

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Bolstered by the magic of the Bóann valley, the Plains of Bréagha are the best pasture in Ireland. Consequently, they have always been a no-man's-land of raids and counter-raids, claimed by Leinster, Ulster, and even Connacht. Under the stewardship of British barons, this constant raiding ends, for about a year in the 530s, then re-commences with new technology.

### **Plain of Meath**

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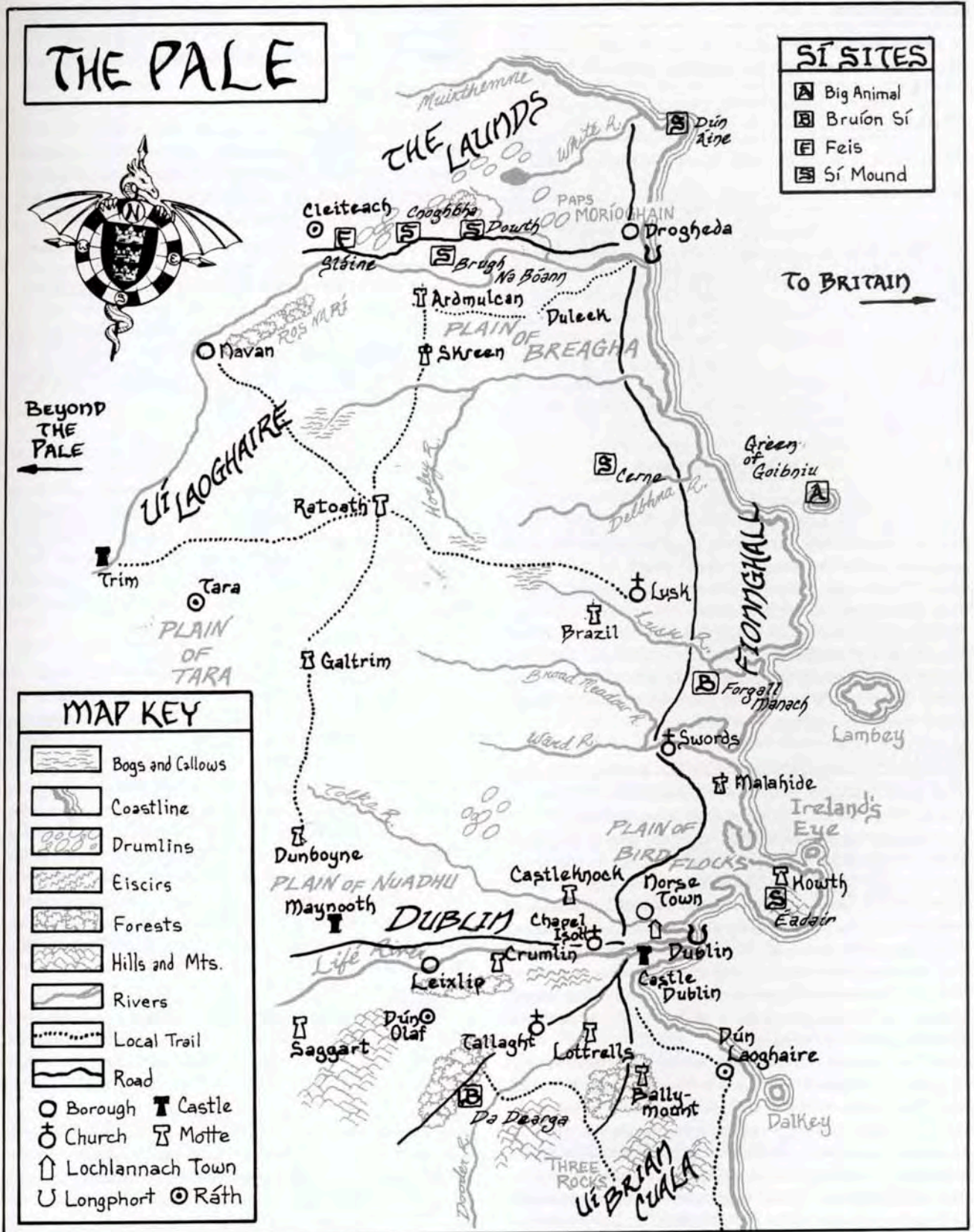
The flatlands of Meath, between Dublin and Cill Dara in the south, and the Drumlin Belt in the north, are Ireland's larder, featuring hundreds of square kilometers of pasture, fields and settlements. These lands are watered, but not soaked, by the Finn, Bóann and Lifé rivers.

### **Plain of Nuadhu**

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Nuadhu, god of kingship in the southeast of Ireland, cleared this region of forests, as well as building many local ráths and roads.







### **Plain of Ráths**

These flatlands are dotted with the best estates of the Long Isles, and hence a target for recurring raids from Oriel and Meath.

### **Plain of Tara**

These fertile lands are the royal demesne of the Tara kings.

### **Plain of the Allo**

Green river basin dominated by the 800 foot peak of Rough Mountain. Atop this peak sits a circle of ten standing stones, each around ten feet high. Stations are held on the mound during St. John's Day / Lughnasad. To the south is Carraig Clíona, a large boulder which houses the otherworld palace where Clíona was taken after her death at Bull Harbour. Clíona is a patron of poetry in general, and the poets of the local Uí Caoimh family in particular. She may respond (in good verse) to visitors who address questions to her rock (in good verse).

### **PLAINSMEN (Fir Magh, Fermoy)**

A Érainn tuath expelled from Ulster by the Uí Niall. As pagans, the Plainsmen were called the Rothraighe ("wheel people") because they worshiped a huge sky-juggernaut wheel associated with the powerful druid Mugh Roth ("Wheel Slave"). Made into fervent Christian converts by St. Patrick, they now equate Mugh Roth with Simon Magus, and the Wheel with the Leviathan of the last days. When the Yellow Plague hits Munster, the Plainsmen starve and flagellate themselves, believing the plague to be a curse from Mugh Roth. They supply teams and chariots to Caiseal. Ruler: varies. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Caiseal.

### **POMITAIN**

This island belonged to Érainn tribesmen until 519 and the arrival of Jarl Godred Crovan and his huscarls. Godred transformed it into a true Gall-Gael kingdom, neither Norse nor Irish. The northern half of the island is mostly Lochlannach; the southern half is mostly Érainn. Near the middle is Tynwald Hill, meeting-place for the Tynwald, a council of nobles, carls, and jurists, and the House of Keys, a parliament of farmers and merchants. These two institutions, in which both Manx cultures are fairly represented, govern the island. Their decisions are enforced by the Watch and Ward, a combination militia and police force staffed by the most trusted residents of each sheading (shire).

Other peaks in the center of Pomitain play other roles in the island's clockwork culture. Witch Hill, named for a cail-leach who was defeated by early Érainn settlers, is now a site where witches — hapless old women whom someone has accused of using magic — are tried and executed at least once a season. Mt. Snaeffal, on the other hand, belongs to Manannán mac Lir, whom the islanders revere as a patriarch, patron saint, and protector of merchants. Sir Marsil becomes

"ruler" of this self-governing society after Godred's death in 533. Ruler: Petty chieftains (early), Godred Crovan (Middle), Marsil (late). Vassal of: Galeholt (middle), Brian (late).

### **Púca's House**

The benevolent púca associated with this ruined stone house usually takes the form of an ass. He and a team of miniature púcas spin extraordinary garments which they sometimes present to their human friends. The ruin and the oaks surrounding it are quiet and empty by day, but haunted by night.

### **Púca's Pool**

This small spring belongs to a púca capable of living underwater. He sometimes ventures out on the form of a brollachán to steal small livestock from locals. Deep within the spring, bards say, is a fortress made from bug shells and cattails where Sir Púca lives with captured wives of every species. But surely the bards have never been there. Magic: lots.

### **Púca's Rock**

This boulder is the door to the otherworld mansion of a hostile púca. He demands tribute from local cínicals in the form of sacrificed cattle, sometimes sacrificed humans. Ignoring his demands brings a terrible famine and pestilence. Favoring no shape or form over another, he can, like Shakespeare's Puck, "neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, / Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn." Magic: Shapeshift +4d20.

### **Raithean**

Small monastery founded by St. Mochuda, an acolyte of St. Bréanainn, in 520. This intrusion of a Bréanainnian saint into the Leinster-Meath region angered the abbots of local Patrician monasteries. They complained to the comharba of Ard Macha, who complained about Mochuda's presence to Muircheartach Mac Earca, who sent a war party against St. Mochuda in 526. After some touchy negotiations, Mochuda cursed Muircheartach and his descendants, then led his monks out of Leinster and into the Kingdom of Mercenaries (see Mochuda's Great Fort). Since then, this monastery has been another small star in the Patrician constellation. Ruler: Mochuda (to 526), appointees from Ard Macha (later). Vassal of: Ard Macha.

### **Rathwire**

Motte-and-bailey given to Robert de Ganis, Hugo I's nephew, during Hugo II's minority. Vassal of: de Ganis, Justiciar.

### **Ratoath (Loch Gabor; Lagore)**

The site was once an alternate capitol for Tara kings, consisting of a crannog on a very small lake. By choosing to fight Arthur's army at Tara, Muircheartach forfeited Lagore. The loch was drained, and a motte and bailey were built on a hill





nearby and ceded to Hugo de Ganis. After Hugo's death, the FitzGerald justiciar seized this spot for the crown, but when Hugo II reached adulthood, he got it back without a fight. Ruler: de Ganis family. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Red Cataract**

Cataract and fort near the mouth of the Erne. The cataract is haunted by Aodh the Red, an ancient Ulaidh king who died gazing at himself in the Erne, but has reincarnated on the river as a giant salmon. Like the speckled salmon of the Bóann, Aodh is credited with ultimate wisdom. He can perhaps be summoned and interrogated (+4d20 Summon) at his cairn near the river.

### **Red Cow Lake**

The crimson cow seen near this lake on Samhain appears to have veins and muscles on the outside of her body. She is bad luck. Because she groans as she walks, anyone can hear her approach; looking at her is equivalent to being hit with an Aging curse. Magic: Curse +5d20.

### **Red-Eye Lake**

When the thunderbolt of Siugmhall (see Kings' Lake) struck Eochaidh the Plough-man, an Érainn solar god, it put out one eye, forcing him to bathe the bloody socket in these still-reddish waters. Today, the lake is notable for the presence of Cealtra Island, home to a substantial Patrician monastery sacked by Thorgestr in 524, but rebuilt in 528 with lavish silver and gold altars under the patronage of Guaire mac Colman.

### **Rhum**

This rhomboid-shaped island is barren and uninhabited.

### **The Ridges**

This eiscir near Dublin is the site of a large barrow belonging to the People of Parthalán, a race of early settlers. According to the Lochlannach, it is haunted by a troll who only appears at night.

### **Road of the Púca**

This path leading from Cré's Woods to The Aonach was built overnight by a púca, who did it to win a bet with some cocksure mortal. The creature still appears here in semi-human form, offering gambles that one ought to pass up. Mysterious lights seen in the nearby pastures at night are called The Púca of The Black Moon. Magic: Travel +3d20.

### **Ros na Rí ("King's Wood")**

Communing with nature in this cheerful strand of oaks was a prerogative of the Tara kings, as was hunting its game. A few of them are buried there. In these trees, Niall-Nine hostages and his step-brothers met the Sovereignty Goddess. After this

area joins the Pale, the forest is owned as a commons by the people of Navan, and many of its trees fall to the axe.

### **Saggart**

This motte belongs to the Justiciar's office. He uses it to control traffic in the Lifé valley. Ruler: Castellan. Vassal of: Justiciar.

### **Saighir**

This shrine was founded in 519 by St. Ciarán of Saighir (see Cleric's Cape). When no parishioners or monks heeded his call, the good saint made monks of local animals: a Brother Badger, Brother Wolf and Brother Owl followed him through his rituals each day. A hawthorn bush beside which he fell asleep one day never died, and its leaves gained curative properties (+4d20 Heal activated by Merciful check). After Ciarán's death in 532, the shrine remains in the hands of a lone human disciple, and the animal monks depart to convert their kin in the forest, seldom returning to visit. Magic: Travel (to Cleric's Cape) +10d20, Animal friend +6d20.

### **Saul**

Motte beside a barn that belonged to St. Patrick; the site of Patrick's death. Ruler: Local Dál Riadhan baron. Vassal of: Galeholt.

### **Sceilig Micheal**

Hermitage on a sheer island pinnacle dedicated to the Archangel of Death. The Christian ascetics here do nothing but pray for the souls of the recently dead, which, they say, are always visible on the peak at night. Before the Christians arrived at the turn of the century, this island was called Donn's House. The souls of dead pagans were collected by death-god Donn in a procession across Ireland resembling the Wild Hunt, ending here, where they were re-cycled into the wheel of being.

### **SEED OF BAISCEANN (Corca Baisceann)**

Cairbre Baisceann was another Érainn hero supposedly fostered by Ailill the Earless (see Seed of Lugh). He descended by blood from Conaire Mór, the King Exiled By Phantoms (see Da Dearga's Hostel). The Seed are, then, the cursed progeny of the last legitimate Érainn dynasty at Tara. Smarting from the doom of their ancestors, who defied geas, they practice a neurotically conservative paganism today. Like other Thomond tuaths, they support Connacht as often as Munster, but their support counts for little in either case. Ruler: doomed chieftain. Tributary to: both Cruachu and Caiséal.

### **SEED OF LUGH (Corca Lughaidh)**

The Seed of Lugh descend from a union between the South Munster goddess Duibhne (see Seed of the Dark One) and Lughaidh mac Cú Roí, a grandson of The Daghdha,



foster-son of Ailill the Earless, killer of Cú Chulainn, and incarnation of Lugh. After many battles with his Eoghanacta foster-siblings, Lughaidh controlled not only central Munster but Tara as well, where his power was finally broken by Tara-King Cormac mac Art. His descendants were squeezed by the Eoghanacta and the Elk People into their present territories. Today, the Seed of Lugh is a traditional Érainn tuath, worshipping the god Lugh as incarnated by their founder, and their current chieftain who descends from him. They are rivals to the Seed of The Dark One, just as Lugh rivals The Mórríoghain, but they still inaugurate new chieftains in a secret ceremony on Beara Island, under Duibhne's patronage. The geases they follow are meant to encourage a (highly unlikely) re-occupation of Tara. Ruler: Chieftain. Vassals of: Eoghanacta of Pond Fort.

### **SEED OF MY DRUID (Corca mo-Druith, Corcamorue)**

The druid referred to here is Mugh Roth, founder of The Plainmen and lord of Oak Island. His descendants do not speak his name, keeping its power to themselves. The clans directly descended from Mugh Roth suffer a high incidence of congenital madness; other subordinate peoples here are necessarily skilled amateur psychiatrists. Hence it is that the Seed supplies Caiseal with both court fools and stern door-keepers in lieu of tribute (in pagan times they probably sent druids as well; interestingly, the Gaelic words for "druid" and "fool" or "jester" are virtually the same). The Seed also pays tribute to the Connacht kings, and sometimes aids them both in internal wars, and against Munster. Ruler: crazed local chieftain. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Loch Léan; also tributaries to Durlas.

### **SEED OF THE DARK ONE (Corca Duibhne)**

Duibhne, the "Dark One," is the only female tuath founder in Ireland; and she is no ordinary woman. The Dark One is in fact an immortal cailleach credited in mythology as a wife of the death-god Donn and the mother of the boar-god Gulban and the Fionn-era hero Diarmaid, and known in folklore as "The Hag of Beara," who gazes over the ocean mourning for an Ireland lost to the English. She once ruled the fertile Feimhean plains, and she would look with special kindness on a descendant who re-captured them.

The Seed's residents are backward, mysterious, and obstinately pagan. They boast few warriors, but many aos dána. Their rivalry with the Seed of Lugh over control of the Beara peninsula mirrors the ancient rivalry between Lugh and the Mórríoghain. Ruler: Duibhne's current husband is the chieftain. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Loch Léan.

### **SERF KINGDOMS OF LEINSTER (Fortuatha Laighean)**

A collection of small tuaths whose ancestors were defeated by Labhraid the Exile. Backward and impoverished, these tribes

now occupy waste land in the Wicklow mountains as tenants of King Anguish. Some of them live by banditry, making travel in these parts unsafe. No player characters come from The Serf Kingdoms. Ruler: Various petty chieftains. Tenants of: King Anguish.

### **Shanid**

Small castle (curtain wall, square keep) and fief granted by the Eoghanacta of Áine to Thomas FitzGerald, a stay-at-home son of Sir Maurice. After finishing the castle in 533, he founds a Marian nunnery beside it the next year.

### **Sí Neacht**

This mountain, the source of the Bóann, belongs to Nuadhu in his aspect as Neacht, god of fresh water. The Well of Wisdom lies in faerie beyond the mundane spring that feeds the Bóann. Magic: +3d20 Heal, +6d20 Divination.

### **Silverwood**

Aspen forest in Deer People territory. The deer-goddess Flíodhais appears here in the form of a doe who leads lost travellers back to safety. The forest is also home to a family of quasi-werewolves: a nameless clan who defied St. Patrick during his mission, and were cursed by him to spend seven years as wolves, then seven as men, then seven as wolves, for all time. As wolves they have human cunning and as men they have canine ferocity, making them dangerous opponents. They may wish to break the curse by marrying into a human dynasty.

### **Sionnan river**

The slow, green river Sionnan forms near Goibhniu's Forge in Bréifne, then runs southwest to the sea through a series of long, narrow lakes, ending in Loch Sionnan, its estuary. There is a small cataract where the Sionnan crosses the Broken Hills, but apart from that the whole river is navigable. South of the Kings' Lake, the Sionnan is bordered by the Callows, a strip of floodland which, when it is not submerged in two feet of chill water, offers some of the richest grazeland in Ireland. Sin, goddess of this river, appears in mermaid form from time to time near Two-Streams.

### **Skreen**

Motte and bailey over a shrine (scrín) founded by St. Patrick. The lord of Skreen, a vassal of the de Ganis faction, rules both this motte and the lands south-west of it. Ruler: Baron. Vassal of: de Ganis.

### **Skye**

This island of ridges and inverts resembles a wing when viewed on a map; its name derives from "sciath" ("wing" or "shield"). During the Ulster Cycle, Cú Chulainn journeyed to Dún Sciath, somewhere on this island, to learn martial arts from the cailleach called Scathhach ("shadowy"). Her fortress





extended into Tír na nÓg; to enter it, Cú Chulainn had to cross a bridge that buckled under his feet like an unbroken horse. A ruin in the south of Skye bears the name Dún Sciath now, though it is not necessarily the dún's real location. Skye's modern inhabitants are limited to a hundred-odd Lochlannach homesteads, and an Anchorite settlement loyal to Colm Cill at Annait. A Gall-Gael matriarch named Máire deserves special mention. She owns a longphort at Kyleakin, and can allegedly stretch a barrier from there to the mainland to catch passing ships.

### **Sláine**

Pagans used this hill in Bealtaine ceremonies involving stations, chanting and bonfires. The spirit they appeased, Sláine, was a goddess of prosperity usually associated with Leinster. St. Patrick kindled his Paschal fire on this hill in 456, in violation of Tara-King Laoghaire's laws. Since then, monks from Ard Macha have kindled a Paschal fire on this hill every year in celebration.

### **Sláine River**

Leinster river associated with a goddess, Sláine, whose name means "health" or "security." Up to Cathoir Mór, Sláine was the ritual wife of the Leinster kings. She has not been heard from lately. A priceless crown given to her by Cathoir rests at the bottom of Loch Garman.

### **Slángha's Mountains (Donard mts.)**

Slángha, ruler of these forested hills, is an aos sí woman with horns on her head, served by two similar-looking handmaidens. The three of them raise unearthly screams in the mountains at night, audible for miles away. Fionn mac Cumhaill once went to investigate their screaming, but the story leaves off just as Fionn encounters Slángha. Nothing more is known about her.

### **Smith Hills**

A cluster of ridges and drumlins in the northeast of which lies a cave sacred to Goibhniu. Few people enter this cave, whose spectral inhabitants forge iron scythes which they sometimes leave for men to find. Throughout the *Pagan Shore* era, the Smith Hills are a cíneal ruled by a taoiseach named Fionnchu ("White Wolf"). The smiths of Goibhniu's cave supply him with scythes which he uses in war, and in a bizarre self-mortification ritual in which he drives sickles into his armpits and suspends himself over the corpse of a kinsmen. This discourages the devil from taking the deceased's soul. Fionnchu and his people specialize in smithing iron for the Eoghanacta. (Later tradition makes Fionnchu a saint, but his name, and activities, cast him as a warrior if not a local god.) Ruler: "Saint White-Wolf." Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Caiseal.

### **Sorrow**

This modest cairn atop a drumlin is the tomb of Niall Nine-Hostages. His noble descendants visit the place often, and post warriors there to chase away outsiders.

### **St. Comáin's Woods (Ros Comáin, Roscommon)**

Small monastery and bardic school within a stand of oaks. The renowned satirist Anéra mac Conglinne spends most of his time here inventing new insults and studying Irish history. In his most famous adventure, Anéra coaxed a demon of gluttony out of Munster King Cathal mac Fionghuine's throat by describing a lavish feast. Other monks here share Anéra's poetic avocation, and striking cynicism toward the church. Abbot: Comáin. Vassal of: comharba of Ard Macha.

### **STRANGFORD**

Longphort ruled by Jarl Ragnar, like the nearby Carlingford. The bay here was the site of a huge naval battle in 534: Thorgestr's first strike against Olaf and his kin. For three days, eighty longships on each side crowded these waters, leaking blood and fire. Then Thorgestr's fleet, led by his son Ivarr, retreated, preferring to attack Dublin instead. Vassal of: Sir Galeholt.

### **Suir river**

River running from Ormond through Leinster and Waterford.

### **SURLUSE**

The Kingdom of Surluse occupies the hammer-shaped peninsula known today as the Rhinns of Galloway. The Roman general Agricola captured Surluse during his war with the Picts, building a large port there; later, the peninsula was settled by transplanted Romano-Britons. The invasion of Ireland which the Romans once contemplated would have been launched from here.

A British dynasty under King Gloier ruled Surluse in Arthur's name until Galeholt's invasion of 528-9. Galeholt killed Gloier, and began building new castles and Irish settlements at a rapid pace. After Galeholt swore fealty to Arthur, the kingdom returned to stability, and even prosperity, under its new ruler. When the Long Isles fall into King Brian's hands, Surluse becomes an independent state under its duke, Aodán son of Gabhrán of Cíneal Fearghus, a man noted for his high Just trait. Later it is over-run by brigands and opportunists egged on by King Brian. Ruler: Gloier (early), Aodán the Just (late). Vassal of: Galeholt

### **Swords**

This well (sord) and abbey founded by Colm Cill in 528 has been absorbed into the Roman-church archbishopric of Dublin. A motte here belongs to a knight who protects Swords as the Archbishop's vassal. Ruler: local knight. Vassal of: Dublin church.



### Tailltiu

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This hill is the cairn of Tailltiu, a minor goddess associated with the Lugh cult. Atop the hill sits a circular earthwork 340 feet in diameter; it is the Lughnasad aonach site for Meath, and Ireland in general. Holding the Aonach of Tailltiu is a special buadh of the Tara kings. Magic: Ambient 10d20; Bless +6d20.

### Tallaght (Tamhlacht Maol Rúain, Maol Rúain's Retreat)

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Maol Rúain, an abbot trained at Candida Casa in Britain, founded this hermitage in 517 as an ascetic alternative to the diluted and politicized Irish church. Maol Rúain's Retreat is the mother church of the Céilí Dé movement. It consists of a modest oratory and dozens of beehive huts. Few services are to be had here by the traveller, aside from counseling in how best to pray, fast and meditate. However, new Céilí Dé converts often give all their wealth away at once; many paupers therefore congregate outside this place hoping to get lucky.

Despite its poverty, Maol Rúain's Retreat was sacked by Thorgestr in 524, and again by Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil's tribute-collectors in 538. Maol Rúain himself died and was buried in the cemetery here in 527. Its current abbot, Eochaidh, is waging a campaign to prevent the paganish Aonach of Tailltiu. He wants the church as a whole to excommunicate anyone who attends this fair. Ruler: Maol, Eochaidh. Vassal of: no one.

### Tara (Teamhair na Ríogh; "Kings' Lookout")

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Tara is one of Meath's ancient ceremonial mounds. It was the home of Nuadhu before his destruction at Magh Tuire. Subsequently, it passed first to Érainn tuaths, then to Leinster kings, who maintained Nuadhu's cult. In the third century A.D. Tara fell to the Connachta, who began to change its nature profoundly.

All of the fortifications now at Tara, except for the Lios of the Kings, Ráth Gráinne and the Royal Seat, were added by Conn Hundred-Fighter's grandson, Cormac mac Art. This includes the cairn 1/2 mile to the south dedicated to Meadhbh Red-Side, Connachta goddess of sovereignty. Cormac and his descendants were colonists in Meath: they built big walls to keep out natives, and replaced local gods with their own. The fact that Tara was now an outpost which had to be defended constantly against Leinster and Ulster made it more like a secular fort than the holy place it had once been. When Niall Nine-Hostages inherited Tara from the Connachta king Eochu Slave-lord, he chose it as his capital, and since the goddess Flaitheas had entitled him to rule all Ireland, that made Tara the capitol of *everything*. From then on the king at Tara has been called a "High-King."

With the arrival of Christianity, the last pagan function at Tara — the ceremonial feis between the new king, and a woman who represents Meadhbh — has declined. Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil revived the feis in 556, but this was truly the

last hurrah: Tara was cursed by Diarmaid's foes in the clergy, and fell into ruins in 563. At that point, with Tara uninhabited, the Plain of Tara was annexed to The Pale.

Taking the earthworks at Tara in order from North to South: Gráinne's Ráth is an open circular rampart within which is a high stone wall reminiscent of Grianán Ailech; the building is used as a temple for celebrating solstices. Thirty feet to the west are two sloping mounds used as assembly places. This complex was dedicated to the sun-goddess Grian during the Érainn reign at Tara — not to her namesake, Cormac's daughter Gráinne, whose name the place now bears. The Grian cult at Tara, and these structures, declined after the Connachta take-over. The Banqueting Hall is a stone keep 600 feet long by 50 wide. Built by Cormac, it fills exactly the function indicated by its name. Tara proper is the Lios of Kings, an oval rampart 700 feet long by 600 wide, lying about 100 feet south of Cormac's Banqueting Hall. Attached to the north of the Lios like a blister is the smaller Ráth of Synods, another assembly place; to the east of the Synods is a shrine and cemetery founded by St. Patrick. Inside the great Lios, just below the Synods, is a small ráth called the Mound of Hostages: the timber house here houses Tara's hostages, including its Boy Troop. The center of the great Lios belongs to two smaller ráths which abut each other like binary stars. The northern one is Cormac's House, seat of all Connachta and Uí Niall kings. At its gate sits the Fál Stone, which screams whenever a legitimate king steps on it (the Fál stone toppled and cracked in the year Christ was born, and has not been reliable since then). This fort's southern partner, the Royal Seat, was the old Tara capital but now belongs to the king's retainers and cronies. Laoghaire's ráth, south of the Lios of Kings, was meant to be an enlarged Mound of Hostages, but the project was abandoned as unnecessary after Laoghaire mac Niall's death. (Magic: 12d20 ambient; 6d20 after Diarmaid discards the ridge-pole.)

### TETHBA

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To Maine, Niall Nine-Hostages willed his horses, his chariot, and his mercy. While Niall captured Tara and led the Collas against Eamhain Macha, Maine took control of Tethba, an ancient district in the west of Meath. His descendants hold part of this region, but do not produce any Tara-Kings. They become de Ganis allies and vassals. Ruler: Cormac mac Maine (early), Flann Cuillein (Late).

### Three Rocks

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These peaks below Dublin are the northern extremes of the Wicklow mountains. Most of them are topped with cairns. Kings of the old Érainn tuaths at Tara were buried here to protect the region from southern invaders.

### Thurles

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Capitol of the Claim; maintained as a motte by the Uí Foghairte dynasty in vassalage to Theobald Butler.





### **Tide Head**

Name given to a promontory in south Munster, and the Bandon estuary which it overlooks. At the very end of the promontory sits a small chapel founded by St. Patrick (vassal of Ard Macha). Its abbot, named Earc, claims to have baptized the poet-god Fionntan in 557; he last saw the dying fili rowing out to sea in a skiff.

### **Tlachtga**

400-foot hill crowned by a ring-fort. This hill was a site for Samhain sacrifices by the pagan kings of Tara. The ceremony persists despite Céilí Dé protests. For most of the year, the fort is inhabited by the Tara-kings retainers; it belongs to the royal demesne. Ruler: Uí Niall druid. Vassal of: Tara.

### **Toraigh Island ("Outlaw's Island")**

This barren, kidney-shaped island of the bitter North Atlantic coast is a place of bad magic, sometimes visible to men and sometimes not. Its modern name arises from Christian-era legends that caution seafarers against its inhabitants, variously described as cruel pirates or Lochlannachs. Actually, the "pirates" of Toraigh are the Fomhórachs, for this island was formerly the capital of the Fomhórach god Balor Uí Nét. The walls of his ráth, Dún Balor, are still evident here, as are some of its abandoned stone houses and underground chambers. North of the ráth stands Balor's Tower, a large, black pinnacle-shaped volcanic cone. In the era of the gods, Balor imprisoned his fair daughter Eithne in a crystal tower atop this mountain, because she was prophesied to bear a son who would slay him at Magh Tuire. A Tuath Dé Danu hero named Cian freed Eithne and impregnated her with Lugh, who chased Balor from this island to his tomb at Cairn Uí Nét. Whether visitors to the modern Toraigh Island find only ruins, or ruins plus evil ghosts, or a princess imprisoned by a giant, or no island at all, is a matter for the gamemaster.

### **Treithirne Plain**

This pasture in West Munster is the current home of the god Torc Triath, a boar the size of an aircraft hanger attended by seven BIG piglets. Builder of the Black Pig's Dyke, and sometimes considered a pet of the goddess/saint Brighid, Torc Triath is in fact a reincarnation of Cian, father of the god Lugh. In 548, Torc Triath and his piglets go mad, ravaging much of Ireland and then invading Britain where they are finally defeated by King Arthur. Whether and how to include a creature of this scale in the campaign is a decision left to the gamemaster.

### **Trim**

A small religious community was founded by St. Patrick at this ford on the Bóann in 457. So it remained until 528, when Sir Hugo de Ganis seized the ford as his fief, moved its dwindling supply of monks to a nearby abbey, and began building a massive cruciform castle with four towers, a moat, and double

curtain walls, which upon its completion in 544 is the largest castle in Ireland. It marks a border of the Pale, and houses a garrison of 60 knights and 100 men-at-arms, ready to defend "Ireland" against "Eire." Ruler: de Ganis clan. Vassal of: the Justiciar.

### **Tulach Mór ("Great Hill")**

This hill is the feis site of the southern Uí Niall kings. Each Uí Niall factional chieftain, and each Tara king, comes here on Bealtaine in the year of his election to be blessed by priests from Durrow. Magic: Bless +6d6.

### **Tulach Og ("Youth's Hill")**

Standing stone that served as the pagan northern Uí Niall feis site, where new kings secured their control over Ulster, province of Macha, by copulating with a mare, then drinking her blood. Christianity has mellowed this ceremony, say the Uí Niall; their enemies say it still goes on. Magic: Bless, Divination +5d20 each.

### **Two-Lake Glen (Gleann dá Locha, Glendalough)**

Monastery and motte set in a spectacular forested valley cut by the Bigwater River, which pools into a small lake, and downstream, a larger lake. The lesser lake is the traditional abode of a cruel, powerful péist. This monster kept anyone from inhabiting the valley until 518 and the arrival of St. Caoimhghin, an ascetic monk of Dál Meas descent. St. Caoimhghin banished the péist to the larger lake, and discovered that the site which the péist had guarded possessed healing properties. Persons who mortify themselves at Two-Lake Glen transmit their sicknesses into the small lake; from there, the river carries disease-energy into the large lake, where it weakens the péist into a state of perpetual near-death. Rarely, the diseased monster surfaces in its lake, an omen of death to whomever sees it. King Arthur's men left a motte here in 531 with the saint's consent. Called "Castle Kevin" (Caoimhghin), it belongs to the Justiciar's office. It is usually occupied by a castellan and ten men-at-arms. Ruler: Caoimhghin (early), Aodán, his comharba (late). Vassal of: the motte belongs to the Justiciar.

### **Two-Streams**

Small abbey operated by Cistercians from France; site of a summit between Munster and the Uí Niall in 551. Vassal of: Earl of Ormond.

### **Uí AILILL**

The descendants of Eochu Slave-Lord's son Ailill are today a minor Gael dynasty, bent on consolidating their control over the local Érainn. Each time the Connacht kingship is up for grabs, they muster to seize it; so far, they've always lost. Ruler: Unknown. Vassal of: No one.



### Uí BAIRRCHE

This thanage descends from Muiredach Most Smooth, a Fionn-era Leinster king, and Daire Bairrche, beget by Cathoir Mór upon the Connachta goddess Meadhbh. Originally intended to inherit Cathoir's lance and the South of Leinster, they were cheated out of the former by the Fosterlings (who claimed special privileges from Cathoir due to the aid they gave him in war) and out of the latter by both the Fosterlings and the Jarl of Wexford. Local people now call them "the Uí Bitter." Thane: Unknown. Vassal of: Leinster kings, in theory.

### Uí BRIAN OF BRÉIFNE

Bréifne, the inhospitable border lands claimed by the Uí Brian mac Eochu, are subject to an irreconcilable claim by Cíneal Cairbre Uí Niall. Dauí Uma mac Brian was briefly King of Connacht in 496-502, but during most of the *Pagan Shore* campaign the Uí Brian are too preoccupied with Cíneal Cairbre to seek the throne. Ruler: Dauí (early), Eoghan Sréam (Middle, Late). Vassal of: No one.

### Uí BRIAN OF CUALA

This minor branch of Cathoir Mór's descendants has been absorbed into the Pale, and its chieftains made knights. Ruler: Conchobhar O Brian (early), Feidhlimidh O Brian (Late). Vassals of: Justiciar.

### Uí CAIRTHINN MAC UAIS

Gaels descended from Colla Fochra rule this ethnically Cruithni tuath. The Cruithni natives worship Lí, salmon-goddess of Eachach's Lake. Early in this century, they defend Oriel against raids from the Long Isles, and are mustered to attack Sir Galeholt at Dún Patrick in 523. When the Later Long Isles king Brian kills Lí, the druids of Uí Cairthinn go into a frenzy of cursing him, evidently without result. Ruler: Cairthinn (early), Donall (late). Vassals of: Tara.

### Uí CENNSEALAIGH

A large tuath combining several powerful dynasties who trace descent back to Eanna Cennsealaigh ("Head-Taker"), great-great grandson of Cathoir Mór. Under king Anguish's pseudo-feudalism, the tuath is divided into thanages, each of which holds land directly from the king. The descendants of Criomhthainn mac Cennsealaigh hold the largest thanage, alternating kingship with the smaller Uí Feidhlimidh (q.v.), and acting as de facto rulers of south Leinster. Many of them privately resent the monopoly of the Leinster kingship by Northern dynasties. They gain control of the province upon Anguish's death. Thane: Cormac ó Criomhthainn (early), Bran Dubh mac Eochu (late). Vassals of: Leinster king.

### Uí CRÍOMHTHAINN MAC FOCHRA

This tuath is ruled by the sons of Conall son of Niall Nine-Hostages, called Conall Criomhthainn because of his

blood brotherhood with Colla Fochra's son. King Fearghus Cearrbheoil and his son Diarmaid could scarcely hope to gain territory on the scale of other Uí Niall factions, but their alliance with this and other Oriel dynasties let Diarmaid rise to Tara-kingship by the threat of mustering the subject-tuaths. This tuath is particularly feared because its king bears The Dark Servant, a magic shield looted from Eamhain Macha which adds +10 to Battle. Ruler: Fearghus Cearrbheoil (early) Aodh Shield-Arm (late). Vassal of: Tara.

### Uí DAIG

This small thanage suffers constant raiding from the Deer People. Descending from Nad Buidhbh, a king who followed Cathoir Mór, they are entitled to rule Leinster but never do so, eventually being absorbed into the Uí Cennsealaigh. Thane: Unknown. Vassal of: Leinster kings.

### Uí DRON

Uí Cennsealaigh clandom descended from Eanna's brother, Dron. They never become over-thanes of the Uí Cennsealaigh, and their dynasty dies out in this century (but is resurrected later by distant heirs). Thane: Dron (early), Diarmaid mac Dron (later). Vassals of: Uí Cennsealaigh thane.

### Uí DÚNLAINGE

Characters from this, the ruling dynasty of Leinster, are detailed in the "Peoples" chapter. The lands the control are traditional Leinster estates recovered by Dúnlaing himself from Fiachu mac Niall. Thane: Anguish (early), Cormac (late). Vassal of: Arthur.

### Uí ECHACH

Cruithni dynasty intermarried with the Dál Fiatach. Barren hills and forests comprise most of their land, though during the reign of King Mongân the forests become a magical place, filled with fat stags and singing birds. Few outsiders visit them, and that is as they prefer. Ruler: Fiachna (early), Mongân (late). Vassal of: Galeholt (early), Brian of the Isles (late).

### Uí FEIDLIMIDH

A section of the Uí Cennsealaigh descended from Eanna Cennsealaigh's son Feidhlimidh. They alternate with the main Uí Cennsealaigh in electing thanes. Thane: Eochu mac Aonghus (early), Bran Dubh mac Eochu (late). Vassals of: Uí Cennsealaigh thane.

### Uí FIACHRA

The Uí Fiachra dominate Connacht during the sixth century. Information on them, including their string of murdered rulers, can be found in the "People" chapter.





### Uí FIACHRACH MAC UAIS

This Oriel tuath preserves an old rivalry between Colla Fochra and Colla Uais. When Oriel musters, they stay at the other end of the battle from the mac Fochra factions, or trouble starts. Ruler: Fiachrach (early) unknown (late). Vassal of: Tara.

### Uí FIODHGENTE

Like the Uí Liathain, this tuath descended from Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu, but was defeated and pushed out of power by Conall Corc and his descendants. More recently, their chieftain and chief-druid were both killed by St. Seanán when he claimed Battle Island (q.v.). The chieftain's son, Neachtan, converted to Christianity and adopted Seanán as a patron saint. The transition brewed conflict between Christian and pagan Uí Fiodhgente early in the campaign, weakening them against the Eoghanacta and the Geraldts. Later, they took tuarastal from Guaire mac Colman of Connacht, aiding him against Eoghan Béal's sons in return for lands across the Sionnan. Ruler: Bréanainn the pagan (early), Neachtan mac Bréanainn the Christian (late). Vassal of: No one.

### Uí GARRCHÚ

Faction descended from a distant cousin of Cathoir Mór. Their current leader, Gurmun, is a Leinster king deposed by Anguish, who gave him a meaningless vice-regentship and settled his clan beyond the Serf Kingdoms. Members are occasionally spotted among Lochlannach raiding parties against the Uí Dúnlainge. Thane: Garrchú (Early), Eoghan mac Drost (late).

### Uí LIATHAIN

A tuath descended from Liathain ("Grey One"), an ancient druid; his name may be a euphemism for Mugh Roth or Cú Roí, magicians who founded other local tribes. The Uí Liathain also claim descent from Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu, and so count as Eoghanacta, but in a debater's sense only. They are independent of, and hostile to, the descendants of Conall Corc who call themselves Eoghanacta today. Ruler: Unknown (early), King of the Black Reeds (late). Vassals of: no one.

### Uí MAINE

The Uí Maine ultimately descend from the Seven Maines, warrior sons of Queen Meadhbh who were all named "Maine" because of a prophecy that a "Maine" would kill her enemy, King Conchobhar. Theirs is an independent tuath that preserves the culture of Meadhbh's era: hill forts, chariots, prophetic poetry, druids. Their military (and magical?) skills keep the Connacht and Munster kings at bay. Thanks to their descent from the Connachta matriarch Meadhbh, they are entitled to rule the entire Connachta — yet never have. Ruler: Maine Athracoil ("The Fatherly"). Vassal of: no one.

### Uí MAOL

Leinster clandom descended from Maine Maol ("the bald"), a distant relative of Cathoir Mór. The Uí Dúnlainge have crowded them out of kingship and political power into the Siberia of Wicklow. Their leader, Aodh the Ill-Born, spoils for a chance at kingship. Thane: Aodh Ill-Born (early), Criomhthainn mac Aodh (late). Vassal of: Anguish.

### Uí MEITH MAC FOCHRA

The tiny Uí Meith feel cheated by the Airthir faction's proximity to Ard Macha. In compensation, they are the comharbas of minor Ard Macha offices, like the sacristan. Of course, they want more. Ruler: Unknown. Vassal of: Tara.

### Uí TUIRTRE MAC UAIS

This subject tribe is, by marriage and military cooperation, slowly being absorbed into Cíneal Eoghan. A geas against helping the Connachta is a leftover from the days when they served kings like Conchobhar against queens like Meadhbh.

### Uishneach (Ushnagh)

This cone-shaped, lightly-forested hill marks the geographical center of Ireland. Here lives Flaitheas, primordial goddess of sovereignty, who may appear in the guise of Danu or Meadhbh or the Mórríoghain. Holding a feis or sacrifice or other ceremony atop Uisneach connotes magical authority over all Ireland. In 456 Tara-King Laoghaire mac Niall arranged a magic comhlann at Uisneach between his druids and a newcomer named St. Patrick. Laoghaire's druids blanketed Meath with fog and snow, but then could not dismiss these effects; Patrick did. Patrick then countered the druids by stationing both their leader, and his own serving-boy from Rome, in a burning house; the boy survived, protected by Christ, while the druid's magics failed and he was immolated. An impressed King Laoghaire converted to Christianity. Magic: 12d20 Ambient.

### ULSTER

The Ulaidh peoples from whom Ulster is named descended from the Belgae and Menapii tribes, wanderers through Britain, the Low Countries, and Gaul. They were a semi-nomadic warrior race, better at fighting than farming. Arriving in northern Ireland centuries ago, they quickly subdued its Cruithni inhabitants, destroying some kingdoms utterly and turning others into favored vassals. They introduced the cult of Lugh to Ireland, and possibly the use of chariots as well. Besides Lugh, their chief gods were Macha, goddess of horse-herds and war, and Fearghus mac Róich ("Virile son of Great-Stallion"), an ancestor god whose prowess is commemorated by the Bód Fearghus ("Fearghus's Prick") standing stones scattered across the Ulster hills.

The apogee of the Ulaidh is recorded in the stories now known as the Ulster Cycle, which are set in the first century A.D. (according to monkish chronicles, that is). They show



the Ulaidh ruling all of Ailech and Oriel under King Conchobhar and his lieutenants, the demigods Cú Chulainn, Fearghus (above) and Conall Cearnach ("The Victorious," ancestor of the current Cruithni dynasties). Conchobhar's political maneuvering turned Conall and Fearghus against him, however, and Cú Chulainn died without an heir, so this period of glory was not prolonged. The Ulaidh slowly lost ground to their old enemies from Connacht, and their subject-tuaths — the Airgialla — became openly rebellious.

### **Üna's Hill (Cnoc Sí Üna, Knockshegouna)**

Üna is the name of the local ancestor-goddess, and the wife of Connacht faerie chieftain Finnbehear. Her followers and descendants keep her secrets to themselves. Probably, she belongs to the Uí Lir. Pagans hold processions here on Imbolg and Lughnasad.

### **UNION (Uaithne)**

The Union began as a fian led by Fothadh Canainne, a third-century hero and rival of Fionn mac Cumhaill. Fothadh won territory in Munster by marrying Duibhne, founder of the Seed of the Dark One. Currently, the fian combines hereditary members from that marriage with new recruits chosen by trail of arms (beating another member in comhlann, then accepting geases and entering the fian as an adopted son). Hereditary Union members have a special facility with the skills of Swimming, Falconry and Read/Write; this is because, during his adventures, Fothadh collected hostages from all birds, streams and languages in the world. A "captain" rather than a chieftain leads the kingdom; he parcels out land and titles based on military accomplishment only. Becoming Captain requires defeating the previous captain in a comhlann-to-the-death held on Beara Island. The Union serve as Munster's royal fian and bodyguard in lieu of tribute, though they despise the Loch Léan Eoghanacta (whose founder murdered Aonghus mac nad Fraoch) and would likely oppose any Loch Léan kings. Ruler: Fian Captain. Vassal of: Eoghanacta of Ox Glen.

### **WESTMEATH LIBERTY**

The Meath estates governed directly by the de Ganis clan are called a "Liberty" because they are at liberty to make new laws here, covering anything but taxes and capital crimes. Most of these castles belong to de Ganis retainers, but a few have been awarded to friends from Cíneal Fiachu and Cíneal Maine (Tethba). Ruler: Hugo de Ganis I and II. Vassal of: Arthur.

### **White Cow Lake**

This lake is named for the alabaster heifer seen on its shores near Imbolg. This sí cow is docile, but only gives milk if several people share her udders at once (check Generous to obtain milk; failure = check Selfish; Selfish success = hit by Lampoon). Up to four shares of milk for the generous can be obtained per year; each share equates to a dose of Uileíoc. Magic: +3d20 Summon.

### **Wicklow Mountains**

These rounded granite domes and the forested glens between them are impassible to large or mounted parties except on the indicated roads. They serve as a haven for serf tuaths, lochlannach, and brigands, three categories which usually overlap. Red and fallow deer and eagles can be found here, as well as small mountain lochs whose trout, and pagan spirits, remain unmolested by men.

### **Wicklow Port**

#### **(Viking Meadow, Mantan's Church)**

A cleric named Mantan built a small monastery here in 505, on a beach and fine harbor ignored by the land-obsessed Irish chiefs. Three years later Mantan and his followers were slain by a band of Lochlannach, who proved large enough to defend the beach as a longphort for several decades. In 532 Arthurian knights led by Bran Dubh routed the longphort's chieftain, and left behind field fortifications and a garrison which in short order became Black Castle. Wicklow has since been a trading post whose tamed viking merchants pay tribute to the Black Castle's lord. Markets specializing in British wool and beer, and a small shrine in memory of Mantan, are its principal features.

### **WOODSMEN**

Following tree gods, or wooden effigies of Patrick, this impoverished tribe remains independent of both Ulster and Meath. Their woods border the Muirthemne lands that Meath covets, but fighting in their haunted forest is like fighting Robin Hood. Ruler: Unknown. Vassal of: Nobody.

### **Yew Shore (Imleach Iubhair, Emly)**

Monastery and School situated in a grove of yews beside a small lake, formerly a pagan shrine. St. Patrick granted this site to St. Ailbhe (d. 487), one of Munster's pre-Patrician clerics. He trained many of the current Munster bishops at this site. He is buried near a well, the water from which, if sprinkled on crops, discourages birds from eating them up. The abbot of Yew Shore is the Bishop of the Claim.





# IRISH PEOPLE

## *The Érainn world*



THE ÉRAINN WORLD is an anarchy governed by lawsuits rather than laws. Its customs are a source of scenario premises, and a clue to psychology of a vanished culture. More progressive Irish peoples still maintain many of these customs.

For Irish-born characters, knowledge of Irish customs and *breitheamh* law is based on the Courtesy skill. Foreigners must check Courtesy at -10 to remember one of these customs.



## THE FAMILY

As an Érainn character, you belong to a *fine*: a large six-generation family. You can recite your pedigree and relations from great-great-great-grandfather down to the present generation. The four-generation *derbhfine* is the family you are obligated to love and protect, both by law and by your Love (Family) passion.

What is a *derbhfine*? The Irish say that "the real-family extends from palm to finger-tips." Look at the tip of your middle finger. That's your position within the *derbhfine*. Your brothers occupy that position, too. The second section of your middle finger, below the tip, represents your father. The third section represents your grandfather. The palm is your great-grandfather. The other fingers, rising from the palm, represent other lines stemming from your great-grandfather. Thus, the tip of the index finger is a male cousin of yours. The second section of the index finger is an uncle. The third section is your grand-uncle. The palm is, again, your great-grandfather. Any male relative who fits somewhere in this scheme belongs to your *derbhfine*, as do their wives and daughters.

The *derbhfine* is a kind of family syndicate. Besides the property they own as individuals, the *derbhfine*'s members may own land and stock in common. They are collectively liable for debts, legal fines and blood vendettas incurred by any single member. When a man dies, his wealth is redis-

tributed among his *derbhfine*-kin in equal shares; thus his living brothers are as much "heirs" as his children.

Each person's *derbhfine* is different. Your sons do not belong to your *derbhfine*, but you belong to theirs; they can inherit from you, but not vice-versa.

Each *derbhfine* includes a leader, usually the senior male, who represents their interests to the outside world, settles internal quarrels, and leads them in war.

## Marriage

Marriage is a private agreement between a man, a woman, and their families. It is valid until the principals tire of it. Polygamy and the rare polyandry are both legal. Divorce is legal both by mutual consent, and as the result of a lawsuit against a cruel, delinquent, or infertile spouse. The flexibility of these laws protects noble families, who treat marriage as a capital investment and a guarantor of treaties, and who want an escape hatch should their alliance with another family become odious.

Marriage is an economic exchange — *tionscra* (bride-price) for *spré* (bride's endowment). The ideal marriage joins two people whose *eineachs*, symbolized by these gifts, are exactly equal. In practice, one side always brings more wealth to the table than the other. This side prevails in the marriage, treating the poorer partner as a legal ward.

Unless she is the superior partner, a bride belongs to her husband's *derbhfine* and inherits only through her in-laws. A man never leaves his birth-family in this regard.

## Fosterage

Irish nobles foster-out some of their children, for three reasons: to get rid of them until adulthood, to train them in unusual caste skills (like Latin or poetry), and to provide rival chieftains with hostages. For this last reason in particular, provincial capitols like Cruachu and Tara house small armies of subordinate kings' sons, called Boy Troops.

A fosterling does not normally inherit from his adopted *derbhfine*, though they can bequeath land to him by special provision. Aside from that, they owe him, and he owes them, the same love and duty expected of blood relatives.



Persons of low status, or professional teachers like druids, may charge a fee to keep fosterlings. Fosterlings may also be exchanged as part of a céilsine deal.

Usually, fosterage lasts from age 11 to age 17. The fosterling may remain with his adopted family and tuath for long afterwards, more loyal to them than to his blood kin.

## The Cíneal

A cíneal is the combined property of one aristocratic family, plus their serfs and debtors. When you think of "home," you think of the cíneal in which you were raised.

You might, for example, come from a river valley ruled by grandchildren of Raon, and hence called Uí Raon valley. Entering this valley, you would see a cluster of a half-dozen ráths, each at least a quarter-mile from the others, connected by dirt tracks. These are the homesteads of your father and his uncles and brothers; in time, one of them may belong to you. The best of them belongs to the taoiseach and his wives: it serves as the cíneal's capitol. Down-river, in boggy lands, stand the smaller homesteads belonging to the bó-aíres who serve your family as retainers. These subordinate families might have ruled the valley themselves before it was conquered by great-grandfather Raon. In the hills above the river are the cairns of your noble ancestors, and the upland pastures, owned in common by the Uí Raon, where family cattle graze in the summer.

The cíneal is the atom of Irish politics. Most people live and die in the cíneal of their birth, seeing no leader more exalted than the family druid or chieftain, unless they go to war.



# SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

## Rank

Status is based on professional accomplishment, and passed through the derbhfine like an heirloom. It can be gained or squandered over time. The Irish proverb, "five generations from scepter to shovel," reminds us that a king's offspring have no special status beyond four layers of descent.

Irish freemen belong either to the flaith or bó-aíre castes, below which are several grades of serf and slave. In power, a bó-aíre is a prosperous farmer who owns a cuirboilli vest and a spear, and owns, or borrows, a hundred acres of land, twenty-odd cattle, five serfs, and a homestead protect-

ed by an earthen wall. A flaith is a bachelor knight whose holdings can be ten times as great as a bó-aíre's. His sword, horses, mail, chariot, wives, and armed bó-aíre retainers mark him as an aristocrat and professional warrior.

Some rí damhna are the richest of the flaith due to their proximity to chieftainship and the chieftain's demesne. They own large mead-halls screened by stone walls and moats. Others, only distantly related to a chieftain, or belonging to a weak dynasty, live as flaith or bó-aíres. Still other rí damhna princes may join an aos dána profession. All, by definition, are entitled to the throne.

The chieftain and his kin act as patrons for aos dána families who lease royal land in return for spiritual and artistic services. Lesser nobles may have aos dána retainers as well. At any given time, the tuath may also play host to itinerant aos dána clans: wandering troops of clergy or bards. The separate world of the aos dána caste is described in more detail below.

## The Tuath and the Aonach

A tuath is a collection of families under one leader. Often, the whole tuath is named for its founder: the Uí Niall tuaths were founded by Niall Nine-Hostages. Only the ruling coterie of these tuaths can really claim descent from Niall, however.

Just as several fines may combine into one tuath, several tuaths may combine into one province: a collection of small kingdoms under an "over-king." Just as only a few families in a tuath can produce new chieftains, only a few tuaths in a province can produce new over-kings; the rest are aitheach-tuaths. An over-king is thus the leader of the leading dynasty of the leading kingdom in his province. Still higher in rank is the ard-rí, a leader from the Uí Niall dynasty who claims — vainly — to rule all Ireland.

The Irish hold local, provincial, and national aonachs which correspond to the tuath, province, and Tara chieftainships. Aonachs are to *Pagan Shore* what tournaments are to regular *Pendragon*. Here you will find single combats; games of camán between rival tuaths (treat these as mock battles using the Battle and Sword skills); feasts; bardic competitions; announcements of wars and expeditions to come, and the chance to meet new enemies, patrons or lovers.

Two functions distinguish the aonach from the medieval fair. An aonach includes a dáil, formed by the breitheamhs of the tuath(s) sponsoring the fair, which is both as a high-court in which important lawsuits are resolved, and a parliament where new laws are proposed, corresponding in jurisdiction to the importance of the aonach. Second, an aonach is a pagan religious festival, convened to honor the local god with sacrifices, bonfires, and processions in which the god's effigy is led around in a flower-bedecked chariot. Christian kings try to de-emphasize this aspect of the aonach.





## Election to Chieftainship

As a *rí damhna* member, you may enter a *tuath* election. An election begins when the current chieftain dies, and lasts for a season, during which time the late chieftain's steward governs the *tuath*. At the season's end, you must assemble all the men who will vote in your support at the *tuath* capitol. While in theory each free male casts one vote, *céiles* usually vote in sympathy with their patrons. Thus each *flaith* has as many votes as he has *céiles*. If your supporters exceed the supporters of any rival candidates by a simple majority, you win; tied results prolong the election for another season.

Once you win, you and your supporters celebrate a *feis*: a symbolic marriage to the spirits of the *tuath*. Depending on local custom, a *feis* can include: human or animal sacrifice; pilgrimages to holy places; displays of prowess — like

pulling a sword from a stone — which qualify you to rule; real or symbolic copulation with representatives of tribal gods.

New chieftains receive *geases* and *buadha* from their *tuath's* *ollaibhs* at the *feis*. These reflect the *tuath's* history. If the hero who founded the tribe died on a certain mountain, that mountain will be *geas* to his successors. If he always fished in a certain lake, all fish caught in that lake will belong to his successors by *buadha*.

The *tuath* election follows no code of conduct; it combines the corruption of modern politics with the savagery of dynastic war. Bribery, warfare, and allegiances with rival *tuaths* are all part of the show. Members of the *rí damhna* cannot kill one another without flouting the law against kin-slaying, so disqualifying would-be chieftains by blinding them, technically no more than battery, is the easiest way to



An Irish Lord at Court



clear a path to the throne; castrating the blind victim ensures that no new sons will avenge him. A reigning chieftain can be deposed by the tuath's nobles as easily, and brutally, as he was elected.

## Courtly Duties and Officers

A chieftain represents his supporter's interests to the outside world. He leads the tuath in war, and makes treaties and claims hostages from defeated foes on the tuath's behalf. He receives visitors to the realm, promoting the tuath by showing them courtesy and hospitality, and defending the tuath by exercising police powers over their conduct.

Above all, he is an ambassador to the celestial courts. He rules the tuath by marrying or befriending or subduing its totem spirit. God, or the gods, will curse or bless the tuath based on their assessment of its king: his health and good looks, his material success, and his maintenance of geas, among other things.

A chieftain generally has no authority over his "subjects." He cannot dole out justice; hearing cases is the prerogative of the breitheamhs. He cannot strip a family of its ancestral land in order to bestow it on someone else. He does administer a large royal estate which belongs to his office, and passes intact to whomever succeeds him; he uses land from this estate to reward his cronies.

The chieftain's incapacity in his own realm is tempered by two exceptions. First, a chieftain's buadha may give him despotic powers — such as the right to demand taxes or raise an army — over some of his subjects. Secondly, a chieftain can ask the tuath's dail to grant him emergency powers, amounting to martial law over his subjects, when the tuath is in serious danger.

The Irish rules of kingship create a royal bureaucracy just as elaborate as Arthur's court. A chieftain never travels without four bodyguards, a breitheamh to advise him on legal matters, an eachlach to bear his words, and a champion to answer comhlann challenges against him. At home, he needs a steward, a gate-keeper to fend off rude guests, game wardens, pig-keepers, hostage minders, and court aos dana. A "substitute commoner" replaces the chieftain in lawsuits, so as not to besmirch the chieftain's eineach. A "lord of coups" both watches and protects outsiders pursuing lawful compensation within the tuath; he can even kill a fellow citizen to defend a breitheamh-authorized raider. A "hosteler" uses the best of the chieftain's estate rent-free, in return for which he offers his rath as a hotel for the chieftain's guests. These men are all flaith who are kin to the chieftain, or who gave crucial support during his election.



## LAWS OF HONOR

### Eineach and Lawsuits

Eineach measures, in dairy cows, your worth as a person. The struggle for eineach defines Irish society.

Slaves and serfs have no eineach. All free adults do, including foreigners. Your eineach is based on your current profession, as follows:

Your body is worth your eineach, and your reputation is worth your eineach as well. Killing a 30 eineach man allows his kin to sue you for thirty cows; a lesser injury costs some fraction of thirty cows. Likewise, a crime can impinge upon some or all of your professional dignity. Murdering a warrior *from behind* adds insult to injury; his kin can sue over both.

In court, your testimony has the weight of your eineach. Suppose that you and your brother, both of eineach 15, charge a druid of eineach 35 with murder. In the absence of physical evidence, the druid will win, because his eineach 35 "over-swears" your combined eineach of 30. The Irish resort to "over-swearing" when a case of your-word-versus-mine threatens to become interminable.

Lawsuits are adjudicated by a breitheamh. He awards damages for property loss, injury and disgrace based on the eineach of the offended party. In return, he earns 10% of the damages as a fee. Collecting the damages is entirely the burden of the winners; if the guilty party doesn't pay you, you are authorized to stage a tain against their lands, and collect your compensation in stolen cows or slain ceiles.

Breitheamhs can strip eineach from a person who kills kinsmen or breaks oaths, leaving that person a legal weakling.

### Eineach Per Caste

#### *Eineach Caste*

10-19	Betaghs, Gall-Gaels
20-29	B6-aires, craftsmen, bards, monks, squires, bondis.
30-49	Flaith, druids, filis, abbots, knights, Lochlannach family chieftains.
50-59	Tuath chieftains, ollaibhs, lords, thanes, jarls.
60+	Kings and ollaibhs who rule a province; Tara kings.





## Slánaíocht and Hostages

If your friend Conall borrows a sword from your friend Neasa, you can swear slánaíocht to her, staking your einéach that Conall will return the sword. If he doesn't, Neasa sues you, not Conall. If losing the sword penalizes Conall's Hospitality or Honor, it penalizes yours by a like amount.

If a citizen of a foreign tuath vouches for you, you belong to his derbhfine for the duration of your visit, and gain the same rights, and duties (such as avenging the slain), as the rest of his family. A chieftain can extend slánaíocht to any visitor, but many chieftains delegate this job to their officers.

Slánaíocht is binding for a set time: until Neasa's sword is returned, until the visitors leave the tuath, and so on. When you vouch for someone, you can place him under as many as three geases to ensure his good conduct. The geases expire with the slánaíocht.

As an extension of the slánaíocht custom, you might offer yourself as a hostage to cement an agreement. The Irish keep hostages for the duration of a treaty. A chieftain can demand hostages from the families of his tuath as a show of subordination, and they can send different kinsmen every year to play hostage in alternation. Forfeited hostages of high birth are usually blinded — disqualifying them as *rí damhna* — rather than slain.

## Trochlaigh

Trochlaigh is an injured person's last resort against powerful enemies who refuse to pay compensation. It preys on a nobleman's duty to feed members of his tuath, and members of the *aos dána*. If you belong to one of these categories, you can camp outside the offender's *ráth* and begin a fast. Your target has only three options. One, he can concede the case. Two, he can ignore you, losing Honor and Hospitality if you die. Three, he can out-fast you; whoever starves longest before giving up or dying wins the dispute.

Fasting is like suffocation (*Pendragon* p. 109), but it requires a CON roll every four days, rather than every melee round. You must also check Temperate in the first week, boosted if possible by Hate or Loyalty inspiration. Failure means that you surrender; success means that you grow indifferent to food and need not check Temperate again.

Druids sometimes practice trochlaigh against a *sí mound*, hoping to win something from the god inside it. Each week of fasting in the appropriate place counts as two weeks of preparation (*Pendragon* p. 279) for a magic ritual. Starve yourself long enough and you WILL see the gods.



## LAWS OF PROPERTY

The Irish describe an item's value in cows and *cumhals*. Two cows equate to one *Pendragon* librum.

Traditional Ireland has no markets, and no money. You cannot "go to the smithy and buy a sword" when the mood strikes you. Property can only be exchanged through theft, inheritance, marriage, *céilsine*, or *tuarastal*.

## Céilsine

In *céilsine*, a wealthy patron (by definition, a *flaith*) lends property at interest to another man (of any caste). This "property" could be a sword or a chariot, but it is more often the income-producing trinity of serfs, cows, and pasture. Frequently, the property is a fief from the lord's lands which the debtor occupies as a tenant. Acquiring tenants increases the yield of the patron's land, because more people are working it.

The amount of interest paid, the coin in which it is paid — food, yearling cattle, military service, *aos dána* service — the duration of the lease, and the means by which either party can sever the agreement are subject to negotiation between the patron and debtor. A *céilsine* agreement can involve any kind of service, extra rents, or political favors. Most land leases must be renewed every seven years, a detail that helps explain some faerie tales.

Feudalism is permanent; *céilsine* is a lease contract with a finite duration. Feudal lords rule their vassals; Irish *flaith* have no power over their *céiles* beyond the terms of their contract.

## Tuarastal

When you receive a gift in Ireland, you must reply with a "counter-gift:" another present of at least equal value. If you refuse to fight for a chieftain who has paid you *tuarastal* in the past, he can sue for insolence — unless you buy yourself out of his debt with a counter-gift. This counter-gift may be lavish enough to require a counter-counter-gift, and so on. Renumerations can become quite complex

Refusing a gift rudely costs Hospitality. Instead, refuse on the grounds of modesty; admit that you are too puny and poor to reciprocate the award. If the gift-giver really intends charity, not moral blackmail, let him swear an oath to release you from any obligation the gift implies.



## LAWS OF WAR

### Comhlann

The free Irish can resolve disputes by recourse to a comhlann, or formal duel. A duel that does not qualify as comhlann has no legal sanction: its outcome constitutes battery, or murder.

The issuer of a comhlann challenge sets its parameters (fight with spears, chariot race, etc.), the conditions for victory (fight to first blood, chariot race from Dublin to Tailltiu, etc.), and the consequences of victory (loser abandons his lawsuit, loser forfeits his chariot, loser accepts a *geas*, etc.). Each challenge is either simultaneous or sequential. In a simultaneous challenge, the two characters roll their skills in opposition, as in a *Pendragon* joust. In a sequential challenge, one character makes an unopposed skill roll, and then the other character tries to match or exceed his level of success: people taking turns in an archery contest, or a game of darts, exemplify the sequential challenge.

The person who issues a sequential challenge always goes *first*. Thus, if you challenge someone to jump off a cliff and land on his head, the burden of performing this act first falls on you, and if you fail, your foe has won by default.

You must either accept each challenge issued to you, or forfeit two points of Honor; challenges from a person whose *eineach* is less than 1/4 of your own, however, may be ignored without penalty. You may also refuse as unfair any challenge for which your effective skill or physical statistic roll would be at least 11 points less than the challenger's. In other words, a character who earns a reputation as a great harpist (skill 20) cannot rack up Glory by challenging amateurs (skill 9 or less) to harp contests — unless they rashly accept his terms.

In a challenge to the death, the winner keeps the loser's head. Preserved with lime, the head serves as a trophy, and a fetish for magical power. Collecting heads is against the ethos of *Pendragon*: Irish warriors gain Cruel and Worldly checks each year they persist in it. They also earn 10% more Glory for defeated foes than usual; thus an Irish warrior who kills and beheads an Ordinary Knight gains 55 Glory instead of 50.

### Táin and Cath

Each summer, Irish nobles embark on táins: small raids to steal cattle from a neighbor, either for gain, or as part of an outstanding feud. Raiders rely on small numbers and stealth,

hoping that they will not be caught and forced to answer the prerogatives of comhlann.

Real warfare — the cath — settles a feud forever, usually by extinguishing one of the competing dynasties. A cath is comhlann on a large scale. Irish chieftains do not jockey for terrain advantages or out-flanking maneuvers — except against foreign outlaws like King Arthur. They aim to match warrior against warrior in equal rows. They accept the battle's outcome as decisive to the degree that it was balanced.

A cath begins when the armies of two tuaths meet at a pre-arranged battlefield, usually a river-ford. Fighting starts with a lengthy exchange of javelins, sling-stones and insults between the arrayed ceithearns of each side. From time to time a man steps forward from his companions to fight toe-to-toe with an enemy warrior, and the exchange of missiles stops as both armies peer at the outcome. Chariots drive figure-eights between the two hosts, their riders tossing spears and feinting charges at enemy footmen. If a challenge ends decisively, if an enemy leader falls to a sling-stone, if a mock charge drives a ceithearn back, then the side which has gained a brief advantage in morale takes this as a signal to charge in earnest. Given the small size of Irish armies, and the all-or-nothing temperament of their warriors, the first charge usually decides the battle. In a moment of panic, a kingdom is lost; the survivors bare their wrists to accept the chains of hostages.

### Military Duties

You *must* fight to protect, and gain compensation for, members of your own fine and foster-fine. Patrons and céiles must fight for one another as their céilsine agreements require. A chieftain of a tuath may, in times of great need, be able to demand military service from the noble fines he represents; these nobles may in turn muster their kinsmen and céiles. Usually, the nobles report for battle in chariots, and their céiles fight beside them on foot.

### Fians

Most fian fighters are young men who lack sufficient land to support themselves in the style they prefer. Others are ex-nobles, disenfranchised by dynastic wars in their native tuath. An entire tuath may serve a second, larger tuath as a fian: a client-kingdom that gains land in return for military service. All fians earn income from looting, ransoming hostages, and aiding vendettas in return for a share of the compensation.

Each fian is under the protection of a chieftain. He extends the fian-fighters citizenship within his kingdom, in return for which they serve him, at least part of the year, as a





bodyguard. Landless warriors without the protection of a chieftain are simply brigands, however noble their origins.

Each fian has a captain, appointed either by election or a contest of arms. Each fian has its own standards for admitting new members: drinking contests, accepting geases, feats of arms, feats of arm wrestling, assessment of number and severity of scars, and so on. If you join a Fian for at least two years, you gain a Loyalty (fian) passion of 3d6.



## THE AOS DÁNA

### Qualifications

Joining any aos dána profession requires long apprenticeship under a master followed by initiation into a professional clique. Having the skills required by that profession is just a prerequisite. A warrior with a bard's skills is not a bard unless the local bards swear him in, and unless he ceases to practice as a warrior.

Most aos dána are born into their profession. Their family specializes in a single aos dána trade, like smithing. Some aos dána families are absurdly specialized: poets who only make satires, smiths who only forge spears, druids who do nothing but maintain the shrine of a certain god, and so on.

### Privileges

Aos dána members have extraordinary privileges based only on their professional status. A poet from a rich family has the same rights as a poet whose kin are paupers, or slaves.

Whereas the rights of most people derive from their membership in a tuath, and are limited to that tuath, the aos dána have the same rights everywhere: they are citizens of every tuath, and members of every clan. Killing an aos dána member is nearly as serious as killing a kinsman.

This universal citizenship allows the aos dána to wander Ireland freely, without swearing slánaíocht to local leaders. Moreover, they are entitled to the same material support in foreign tuaths that they would gain at home from the circle of their kin. An Irish lord makes every effort to feed and house visiting aos dána, fearing lampoons and curses if he fails.

### Restrictions

The aos dána's universal citizenship is reciprocal: attacking their host in a distant land is as much a crime as attacking





their chieftain at home. The aos dāna rarely fight except in self-defense. They participate in wars only as the advisers, cheerleaders and magicians of the faction they support. Both Christian and pagan aos dāna may adopt severe vows, such as poverty or chastity, in their quest for power and Insight.

## Role

The aos dāna are their society's only educators. They preserve local history, mythology, and law. They supervise human relations with the gods. They are the technocrats of carpentry, medicine, smithing, metric verse, and other processes that mystify Irish laymen. In the most backward tuaths, all these functions are discharged by a single druid.

Within a tuath, the aos dāna protect the chieftain from bad luck. Their geases bind the chieftain from actions that might offend the powers of nature. Their buadhá help the chieftain appease the powers of nature, and properly assert his rights to chieftains above and below him. They are powers behind the throne who rule by superstition.

Thanks to their universal citizenship, the aos dāna preserve Irish culture not only within kingdoms, but between them as well. A great poem composed in Leinster can find its way to Ulster as a song, relayed from singer to singer. It is the aos dāna as a whole, not the "High-Kings," who have the power to unite Ireland's factions against King Arthur — were they not divided into factions themselves.



## PEOPLES OF IRELAND

The following sections describe the special customs of Ireland's cultures, apart from the Érainn. Taken in order, they form a progression from Aran to Dublin, paganism to Christianity, and tribalism to feudalism.

### CRUITHNI

Whatever the Cruithni, or Picts, may have been in real life, in *Pagan Shore* they are the pre-Celtic aborigines of the British Isles, and the painted savages of pulp fantasy.

They resemble the Picts of *Pendragon* in every respect.

#### Politics

Wild Cruithni clans gather in confederation for war. Otherwise, each clan is independent, governed by a taoiseach who combines the functions of druid and chief-

tain. The more civilized Cruithni tuaths follow Érainn customs.

In Ireland, the Cruithni are aitheach tuaths subordinate to the Long Isles.

#### Famous Cruithni

**Dál n-Araidhe kings:** Suibhne mac Aillil was the Dál n-Araidhe king in the early and middle campaign: a short, wiry man with a gift for poetry and a hatred of Christians. In the summer of 549 he was cursed by St. Rónán (whose church he had attacked) just before entering battle against Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil at the Plain of Ráths. Because of the curse, or because of the intensity of the battle, Suibhne went mad, deciding that he would rather be a bird than a king. For ten years afterwards he lingered on as a filthy hermit, leaping from tree to tree (Inspired by madness, he could leap nearly a mile), making bird noises, and creating matchless poems on the pain of solitude and the beauty of nature. People in every corner of Ireland encountered Suibhne The Mad in their forests, or heard his inhuman shrieking at night. He eventually settled down as a ward of St. Mólíng, in Leinster, who absolved his sins and buried him there in 560.

Meanwhile, Suibhne's son Aodh the Black, an ordained priest at Ard Macha, abandoned his vows and took the kingship. Aodh had been fostered in the Tara Boy-Troop, and was a friend of Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil. Now, however, he began to blame Diarmaid for his father's madness. Aodh the Black killed Diarmaid in 563. This moved St. Colm Cill to curse Aodh with an anonymous death at sea. Aodh perished three years later in a sea battle, as he attempted to wrest the Long Isles kingship from Brian.

**Uí Echach kings:** Fiachna, a cousin of Brian Of The Isles, ruled here in the early and middle campaign. He was a great warrior, and he despised Brian; upon Galeholt's death, the two went to war over the Long Isles kingship.

In 555, after years of stalemate, both leaders asked for help from their relative, St. Comhghall. Comhghall replied that the victory would go to whichever man forfeited God's grace. Brian announced that he cared more about winning than about God; he killed Fiachna a year later.

Back in 540, while Fiachna was raiding against Saxons in North Britain, a strange man appeared in his wife's quarters. He told her that Fiachna was about to die, but that she could save Fiachna if she made love to him, stranger though he was, at that moment. She complied. This stranger was Manannán mac Lir, and the son born of their liaison — called Mongán ("little hairy one") because he was born with a full head of hair — became an Uí Echach king and filí, but never, exactly, a human.

When the Uí Níall poet Dallán Forgaill argued with Mongán over a point of Fionn-era history, Mongán summoned the ghost of Caoilte, Fionn's friend, to prove him





wrong. When a monk in Leinster tried to prevent him from meeting Bran Dubh, Mongán summoned a river to sweep the monk away, assumed the missing man's shape, and sneaked into Bran Dubh's court. If killed, he was able to return from the grave on the same day a year later. He spent most of his time in Tír na nÓg. His attention to the Uí Echach waxed and waned, as if the kingdom were a chess game, waiting on a table in his house, which he fiddled with as he moved from room to room. Even so, the Uí Echach prospered as long as he lived.

Taking his father's throne in 557, he made peace with Brian of the Isles; but according to one story he later changed his mind, slew Brian, and became over-king. He was killed by British raiders one day in 584; because it was a leap-year day, his power to return on the same day one year later didn't help.

## GAELS

The Gaels are formerly "Érainn" tuaths affiliated with Conall Corc, unifier of Munster, and Niall Nine-Hostages, conqueror of Connacht, Ulster and Meath. Érainn tuaths bear the names of gods and animals ("Deer People"), whereas Gael tuaths are named after chieftains ("Uí Niall"); this by itself shows the Gael transition from shamanism to politics.

Niall and Conall Corc, pirates of the Welsh coasts, saw Rome gain power by pitting one petty tribe against another, and secure that power with standing armies, fortified borders, and statist politics. They saw the barons who appeared with Rome's dissolution, men who grew fat from the slave-labor of their subjects, yet who by their very despotism discouraged invasions and revolts. They were called Gwyddels ("outsiders") by Romano-Welsh; pronouncing this as "Gael," they adopted it to name a newly-minted culture of cosmopolitan Romano-Irish.

The first Gaels vowed to create an imperial tuath of over-kings, whom the Érainn and Cruithni would serve as aitheach tuaths, and to replace the crudeness and diversity of pagan belief with the cohesive, materially sophisticated cult of Christ, all without forfeiting the Érainn traditions in which they were raised. Their descendants continue this mission with mixed success.

### Stereotype

A Gael may fight from horseback, or wear a crucifix, or leave his estate to his first-born son, while resembling his Érainn counterpart in every other respect. He is more likely to be rich. He never travels without a train of clerics, courtiers, buannas and gallólachs.

The other Irish accuse the Gaels of haughtiness and contempt for tradition. The British, bracketing the Gaels

with the Érainn, see them as a more polished version of the chariot-borne Irish bumpkin.

### Attitudes

The Gaels consider themselves an elite. Only by uniting under the Gael banner can Ireland resist invaders like Arthur. They think in nations, whereas older tribes think in clans, a distinction obscure to outsiders yet palpable to the Irish.

### Player Characters

As a bridge between pagan and medieval Ireland, Gael characters have the widest possible choice of beliefs and roles. They may suffer prejudice from their ties with rich, hated dynasties like the Uí Niall.

### Politics

In Gael mythology, Ireland was divided centuries ago between Conn Hundred-Fighter, ruler of the northern half, and Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu, ruler of the southern half. Every Gael character in *Pagan Shore* belongs either to the Connachta (people of Conn) or the Eoghanacta (people of Eoghan). The so-called High-Kings or Tara-Kings belong to a powerful offshoot of the Connachta, the Uí Niall.

### Special Customs

Tanistry: Many Gaels practice tanistry to avoid the strife of tuath elections. A chieftain can pick any king-material man as his tanaiste, and need not consult other nobles in doing so. The tanaiste is confirmed in a feis, gains a chieftain's geases and eineach, and lives as a court officer until his predecessor's death.

In reality, an unpopular tanaiste will never take the throne. Gael chieftains are too weak to overrule their tuath's flaith. Many nobles, however, will defend the *idea* of tanistry — they value a real peace more than a quasi-democracy.

Professional Soldiers: Gael chieftains hire mercenaries to serve as a full time soldiers. Some are from aitheach tuaths, others are galloglachs, and still others are scurvy mercenary knights from Britain and France.

A chieftain may pay these men out of his own estate. More often, he forces buannacht conditions on his céils, who must quarter any of his soldiers at any time, as long as the cost of doing so over the course of a year does not exceed their céilsine-rent (which they still pay, in addition to buannacht). Finally, the chieftain may grant these men land of their own, making them family retainers.

### Famous Gaels

**The Connachta:** The current Connachta descend from a desperado named Eochu Slave-Lord (361-438), king of Cruachu and Tara.



Eochu's sons were hunting one evening in the forests of Ros na Rí, and needed some water to boil game. Fearghus mac Eochu went looking for water and found a well guarded by an ugly cailleach, who demanded a kiss in return for a sip from the well. He spat on her. Next, Brian mac Eochu and Ailill mac Eochu each went to the well, and each retreated upon seeing just how ugly the hag was. Fiachra mac Eochu managed to kiss her, and was rewarded with a small sip. But Niall, Eochu's bastard son by a British princess, had sex with her. She transformed into Flaithias ("sovereignty"), a beautiful damsel, and promised Niall authority over all Ireland, Fiachra a province-chieftainship, Ailill and Brian tuath-chieftainships, and Fearghus nothing. And that is just how things developed. Niall claimed Tara. The term "Connachta" came to mean the dynasties of his less fortunate brothers. The leaders of these dynasties during the *Pagan Shore* era — the province-kings of Connacht — were the descendants of Fiachra, who chastely kissed power.

Fiachra's popular great-grandson Eoghan Béal ("The Spokesman") ruled Connacht early in the campaign. After taking the throne in 501, he began cattle-raiding against Meath. Only the growing power of the Lochlannach checked his raiding (they captured all the best treasures ahead of him), forcing him to make peace with Tara-King Muircheartach mac Earca in 524. He secured this treaty by giving Muircheartach his daughter, Duaibhseach, in marriage.

Eoghan resumed raiding after Muircheartach's death. In 543, he encountered Forghus and Domhnall, the sons of Muircheartach and Duaibhseach. They killed him. They may have been acting on a rumor that Duaibhseach, rather than the pagan priestess Sin, had bewitched their father (see below). Eoghan was buried near Loch Gill, standing up and facing east to protect Connacht from its enemies.

Eoghan was the last pagan king of Connacht. He sent his sons to Christian schools, and encouraged other kinsmen to investigate the new faith. After his death, the ceremonial raths at Cruachu, with their aura of paganism, were abandoned as the Connacht capitol in favor of Durlas.

Ailill Ionbhanna was Eoghan's brother, tánaiste, and successor. Trained as a monk in Cill Dara, he spent most of his reign at Glastonbury in Britain, building a shrine for Brigid and Patrick to complement the shrine of St. Joseph of Arimathea. Frequently, Ailill used his ties with Britain to press for the arrest of Forghus and Domhnall, Eoghan Béal's killers. These two men ambushed Ailill and killed him in 550, as a preventative strike.

St. Ceallach, trained in holy orders at Clonmacnoise, was Eoghan's eldest son, and Ailill Ionbhanna's chosen successor. He abandoned his vows and ruled Connacht for two years. When his cousin, Guaire mac Colman, began a campaign against him in 552, Ceallach abdicated to avoid fighting a kinsman, and returned to a small monastery he had

founded earlier in Connacht. This was not enough to pacify Guaire, who assassinated St. Ceallach in 554 to prevent him from ever seeking the throne again.

Muireadach Devouring Wolf was Eoghan Béal's youngest son. A born warrior fostered in the wilderness of Conmacne Mara, he earned his nickname at age 13 by killing with his bare hands a wolf than had eaten nine of his foster-brothers. Muireadach always distrusted Guaire mac Colman. When Guaire seized the throne from St. Ceallach, Muireadach vowed to unseat him. He spent many years in the Pale, trying to organize an expedition of knights against Guaire. St. Ceallach's murder, in which Guaire's influence was widely suspected but never proven, fueled Devouring Wolf's crusade and brought it to the attention of Irish clerics. In 556 Muireadach usurped Guaire with the aid of Pale knights, his own fian, and the former supporters of King Ceallach. A few days later, Guaire treacherously poisoned Muireadach and his allies at a feast, eliminating the last of Eoghan Béal's unhappy family.

Guaire was now unopposed king of Connacht. Noted for his lavishness with material gifts, Guaire personifies the character with a high Generous, but little Honor or Hospitality. He resembles a modern mafia chieftain: a thief and murderer revered by poor people for his kindness, and scrupulous about tithing to the Church — but not too scrupulous to murder an individual cleric who annoyed him. His ability to buy friends accounts for the wide tolerance of his evil behavior in seeking the throne.

Guaire gained a taste of hardship himself in 560, when Maolodhrán mac Crón, the Tara-King's tax collector, tried to extort money from Guaire's son Aodh. Guaire's son slew Maolodhrán, and this prompted Tara-King Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil to invade Connacht at Beann Gulban. The rest of the Uí Niall rallied to Guaire's side and helped him beat the Tara-King. Even so, Diarmaid executed Guaire's son. Guaire's desire for revenge was satisfied a few years later by Diarmaid's death at the hands of Aodh the Black of Dál n-Araidhe.

Guaire died in his sleep in 574, mourned by the common people of Connacht as a saint. Subsequent Connacht kings came from the Uí Brian: Fiachra's kiss with sovereignty had ended in Guaire's reign of murder and deceit.

**The Uí Niall:** The Uí Niall are the descendants of Niall Nine-Hostages. His sons Conall Gulban, Eoghan, Cairbre and Éanna conquered Ailech; his sons Laoghaire, Maine and Fiachu conquered Meath. The Colla brothers, his mercenaries, subverted the vassal-tribes of Ulster and created the sub-province of Oriel.

Niall left Tara to all of his sons as a capital, assuming that they would rule it in alternation. Any of these men, and four generations of their male descendants, can become Tara-Kings. This means that any player character born into an Uí Niall faction before 520 can become (titular) King of





the Irish. If the descendants of a chieftain do *not* re-capture the throne within four generations, the fifth and subsequent generations are no longer *ri damhna*. Some dynasties of the *Uí Niall* have already lost the right to become Tara-Kings by the time King Arthur arrives.

*Laoghaire mac Niall* was the first heir of Tara, and the king who welcomed St. Patrick to Ireland. He consolidated *Niall's* gains, but died from breaking *geas*. His son, Tara-King *Labhraidh*, also died from breaking *geas*. A pattern was becoming evident: the Sovereignty goddesses fed on royal blood.

*Muircheartach mac Earca* was the most ruthless and effective Tara-King since *Niall*, and the last Tara-King to rule independently of Arthur. *Muircheartach's* father was *Muireadach* son of *Eoghan* son of *Niall*. His mother was *Earca*, daughter of the Long Isles hero *Loarn*. When the young *Muircheartach* was exiled from *Cíneal Eoghan* for killing some jesters, he adopted his mother's name and fled to *Loarn's* kingdom. A few years later, he killed *Loarn* himself in a bid for chieftainship, and went into exile again, this time with a company of *Lochlannach* pirates. He returned to Ireland in 494, finding it in turmoil over the royal succession at Tara. *Muircheartach* played the *Uí Niall* factions against one another and, his previous sins forgotten, won the support of *Cíneal Eoghan* for Tara-Kingship.

*Muircheartach's* early and middle reign saw the rise of formidable opponents: the feudalized culture of Leinster, the Long Isles, and Britain; and the *Lochlannach*. The new Leinster proved indomitable: *Muircheartach's* attempt to collect the *bóramha* and seize *Kildare* in 520 was thwarted by the *Geralds*, King *Anguish's* mercenary-knight allies from Britain. The *Lochlannach*, under the leadership of *Thorgestr*, took over Tara in 524 while *Muircheartach* was in *Connacht* wooing *Duaibhseach ní Eoghan Béal*. *Muircheartach* could not return to his capital past the huge fleet *Thorgestr* had assembled on the *Sionnan*. But, when *Thorgestr* demanded virgin girls as tribute at his island fortress on *Loch Owel*, *Muircheartach* saw an opening. He disguised warrior-boys of the *Uí Maine* as girls, and sent them to an orgy planned for *Thorgestr* and his fifteen under-chieftains. The under-chieftains were stabbed to death. *Thorgestr* was bound in chains and tossed into the loch. In one maneuver, a generation of *Lochlannach* leaders in Ireland were destroyed. *Muircheartach* regained Tara by 525.

Five years later, he lost it. Repeated attempts to collect the *bóramha* led some of the Leinster barons to seek help again from their allies in *Logres* and *Ganis*; meanwhile, King Arthur's defeat of *Sir Galeholt* gave Britain a foothold in the North. Arthur invaded Ireland in 530, quickly capturing the *Lochlannach* towns of Leinster, then riding to Tara. *Muircheartach* was defeated; allies summoned from *Oriel* arrived a day late and were defeated, too, in a second battle.

Recognizing that Arthur was his superior as a warlord, *Muircheartach* submitted. Since then, the Tara-King has been a vassal of Arthur: King of the Irish, but not of Ireland.

*Muircheartach's* fate was sealed in 533 when he saw a woman of unearthly beauty riding her chariot on the lawn of *Brugh na Bóann*. She told him, in the classic style of a faerie mistress, that she had watched him from the Other World for years, and fallen in love. Her name, which she forbade him to reveal, was *Sin* ("storm"). Smitten, he moved to *Cleiteach*, a *râth* beside the *Brugh*, and dismissed his previous wife and his retainers. Word of the event spread to *Ard Macha*, where *Muircheartach's* cousin *Cairneach* was a priest. *Cairneach* hurried to *Cleiteach*, put a curse on it, and dug a grave nearby in anticipation of *Muircheartach's* death.

*Sin* held *Muircheartach* under a Glamour. All day he swung his sword at bushes outside his palace, thinking that they were goat-headed men, rival armies, or *Fomhórachs*. He retired from this fighting to a lavish feast — which was really water and straw — and a night of intercourse with *Sin*. Each day left him weaker. Kinsmen tried to spirit him away, but *Cleiteach* was now surrounded by a *Giannachta* army taking orders from *Sin*. *Muircheartach* finally died on *Samhain* in 534. *Duaibhseach* died of grief and was buried with him. As for *Sin*, she approached *Muircheartach's* priests with a confession: her father, a chieftain of the old *Érainn* tribes of *Meath*, had died at *Muircheartach's* hands years ago; she was no goddess, but a druidess who had confused and poisoned *Muircheartach* out of revenge. She then died of remorse.

*Muircheartach's* ensorcellement by *Sin* aroused the ambitions of *Uí Niall* dynasties previously excluded from Tara. Supported by *Sir Brastias*, the Justiciar, *Tuathal Rough-Skull* of the *Cíneal Cairbre* sent armies into *Meath* as *Muircheartach* neared death, then claimed the throne. *Tuathal* was a British puppet and a non-king. He presided over the expansion of *The Pale* and the loss of *Cíneal Fiachu* lands to Britain. Few of the Irish mourned when he was murdered and replaced by *Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil* of the *Uí Conall Criomhthainn* in 544. *Maurice FitzGerald*, the new Justiciar, supported *Diarmaid's* accession in return for help against the *Eoghanacta*.

The first five years of *Diarmaid's* reign promised a return to paganism, strong leadership, and the path of the war-lord. A 549 expedition against the Long Isles, whose legitimate king was dead, gained no territory, but kept the people of that region at bay and put a king, *Suibhne mac Ailill* of the *Dál n-Araidhe*, out of commission. The same could be said of the famine his druids caused in *Munster*, by putting a demon into the apples eaten by *Caiseal-king Cathal*. Few knew about *Diarmaid's* hand in this except his *FitzGerald* supporters, who stocked their larders well in advance. *Diarmaid* made a truce with the *Munster* king in 550, after the curse had worn off.



Diarmaid antagonized the British and the Céilí Dé by trying to resurrect the feis of Tara in all its pagan glory (Muirheartach and Tuathal had celebrated it covertly). He summoned the immortal filí Fionntann from Munster — a favor he had won from the Munster monarchs — to advise him on the pre-Christian traditions of kingship, then held the celebration according to Fionntann's instructions in 556. The festival was marred by a murder during the camán tournament. Diarmaid pursued the killer, an Uí Ailill prince from Connacht, into the sanctuary at Kells, and executed him. This enraged St. Colm Cill, who began talking to his Ailech kinsmen about deposing Diarmaid.

At first, no such move was made. Diarmaid was a good king in the pagan style, supporting poets and bringing prosperity to his lands. The many prophets associated with Diarmaid did issue repeated warnings about his death, which would come under the ridge-pole of Tara and at the hands of Aodh the Black, son of Suibhne mac Ailill. Diarmaid circumvented this by taking down the ridge-pole and casting it into the sea, even though his druids warned him that the pole had guaranteed Tara's stability since the days of the gods. The one universally-hated aspect of Diarmaid's administration was Maolodhrán mac Crón, his "maor" or bailiff who, in a fashioned learned from feudal kings, wandered Ireland with a host of gallóglaachs, collecting tribute from everyone who owed it, and everyone who didn't. When Maolodhrán was slain by Aodh mac Guaire of Connacht in 560, Diarmaid's excuse to make sword-land had finally come.

Diarmaid mustered Oriel and entered Connacht through the north, at Beann Gulban, in 561. He was met, not only by the Connachta, but by all the Uí Niall factions of Ailech — led by St. Colm Cill. Diarmaid's druids summoned a fog to confuse the enemy; Colm dispelled it. Diarmaid was routed after a bloody battle. He did learn Aodh mac Guaire's whereabouts: the prince had taken sanctuary with St. Ruadhán. Diarmaid gained permission from the British to find Aodh, whom he executed over Ruadhán's protests. He also brought excommunication proceedings against Colm Cill.

The clergy of Ireland had had enough. Ruadhán, St. Bréanainn, and ten other clerics began trochlaigh, not against Diarmaid, but against Tara itself. The feasting hall at Tara collapsed into rubble late in 563. Diarmaid fled, for rival Uí Niall armies were moving against him, just as Tuathal had advanced on the dying Muirheartach years before. Wandering in the Ulster wilds, Diarmaid was invited into a ráth (Little Ráth in Dál n-Araidhe) by a comely woman. The ridge-pole of the ráth seemed familiar to him, so he inquired about it. The woman replied that her father Aodh had salvaged this fine piece of wood from the sea. Diarmaid ran for the door, but Aodh the Black awaited him

there with a spear, which pierced his heart. The doom had come.

Diarmaid was the last king to live at Tara or to celebrate its feis. In 563 the Tara estates were finally annexed into the Pale; the site itself stayed in ruins. Later Uí Niall kings chose their own capitols. The end of the *Pendragon* campaign leaves the Uí Niall kingship centered in Ailech, and contested by Forghus and Domnal mac Muirheartach, and Colm Cill's cousin Aodh mac Ainemirech.

**The Eoghanacta:** Munster's Gael dynasties descended from a mythical hero, Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu; they also counted his grandson, Aillil the Earless, as a key dynastic founder despite his evident cruelty (his ears were torn off by the goddess Áine, while he raped her — see "Áine's Mound" in Places). They owed their *Pagan Shore*-era prominence to a fifth-century hero: Conall Corc, one of the Irish raiders expelled from Britain by the Welsh chieftain Cunedda in 410. A vision of a glowing yew tree springing from a rock led Conall to found Caiseal ("The Castle"), an imitation of Roman shore-forts, on a mammoth rock in Elk People territory. It remained the most impressive fort on the Irish mainland until the coming of King Arthur.

More extensive power for the Eoghanacta was won by Conall's successor, Aonghus mac nad Fraoch (424-490). Previously, Munster had been a patchwork of Érainn tribes who followed a bewildering constellation of animal gods. Aonghus pitted these tribes against one another, using the Elk People in particular to drive away the rival Deer People, and to contain two ambitious Gael dynasties, the Uí Liathain and the Uí Fiodhgheinte, who trace descent from Eoghan, but not from Conall Corc. The Érainn who served Aonghus in these wars became aitheach tuaths with considerable land, privileges and independence. Aonghus is also noteworthy as the first Christian of the Eoghanacta, converted by St. Patrick himself around 470. Even so, he credited his success in battle to the sorcery of a druid named Bóinda.

The Eoghanacta split into rival factions after Aonghus was murdered by his ambitious lieutenant, Duí Iarlaithe. Duí's reign at Caiseal was never fully accepted by the other Eoghanacta and their Érainn clients; the Union Fian rebelled and killed him at the Ford of Pursuits in 516. This rebellion left the Eoghanacta leaderless for three years, a period of chaos exploited by the Lochlannach founders of Limerick and Cork.

Finally, the Eoghanacta chose a king from the "neutral" ground of the church in 519. This was Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn, a great-grandson of Conall Corc fostered by the Céilí Dé theologian Feardácric. Feidhlimidh was an accomplished warrior, poet and cleric determined to use his new office to further the Ceilí Dé — and to unite Ireland under one pious ruler. In 528 he became the first Irish king to re-conquer a Lochlannach town (Cork), and the first





non-Uí Niall noble to declare himself High-King (a declaration met with total indifference outside Munster). He campaigned to appoint a Ceili Dé abbot at Clonmacnoise after St. Ciarán's death in 533; thwarted by Ciarán's comharba, he sacked the monastery, only to be driven off by Ciarán's allies among the Uí Maine. Later, Feidhlimidh trained his ambitions on Patrick's see at Ard Macha. A bribe from Caiseal installed a Ceili Dé monk named Diarmaid as abbot there in 535, but Diarmaid was quickly deposed by a legitimate comharba, Forannán. Feidhlimidh responded by kidnapping Forannán during a state visit in 539, and ransoming him back to Ard Macha's monks for the amount of his original bribe.

Fleeing from a failed attack on the Lochlannach of Waterford in 541, Feidhlimidh lost his crozier among the brambles — an accident that symbolizes his essentially secular behavior. On Samhain in 547, after another aborted raid on Clonmacnoise, Feidhlimidh was confronted in his bedchamber by the ghost of St. Ciarán, who jabbed him in the stomach with the missing crozier. Within three days, Feidhlimidh was dead from an ulcer.

Feidhlimidh's tánaiste, Cathal mac Fionghuine, was a generous and popular king who tended to pick feuds with Leinster and the Uí Niall. When Cathal began to lust after Liogach, sister of Tara-King Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil, Diarmaid hired a druid to curse a parcel of apples that Liogach sent to Cathal as a gift in 549. After eating the apples, Cathal became possessed by a demon of gluttony which led him to singlehandedly consume Munster's harvest in 550. Early the next year Cathal was cured of gluttony by Anéra mac Conglinne, a cleric and satirist from the school at St. Coman' Woods, and subsequently made peace with Diarmaid in a summit at Two-Streams. One year later, Cathal died from the Yellow Plague. Mumha Mór, pagan patroness of Munster, appeared in banshee form to keen at his funeral.

Cathal's death without tánaiste sparked another war between the heirs of Conall Corc, by now divided into seven derbhínes: The Eoghanacta of Áine, of Caiseal, of Loch Léan, of Ox Valley, of Arann, of Pond Fort, and of The Rushes. For nine years, Munster was without a legitimate king. This period sees unchecked raiding from the Uí Maine and other Connachta dynasties, the rise of the Gerald and Dál Cas as de facto lords of the west, and, finally, the capture of Caiseal by The King Of The Black Reeds, a usurper from the Uí Liathain.

Cairbre Crom of Ox Valley faction killed the King Of Black Reeds and re-captured Caiseal in 561. He presided over the official division of Munster into sub-provinces: the west to the Gerald, the east to the Butlers, and the south-central regions to the remaining Eoghanacta. This settlement, and Cairbre Crom's military skill, leaves Munster in relative peace for years to come.

## LOCHLANNACH

The Lochlannach, or Vikings, exist in *Pagan Shore* to account for the Viking towns (like Dublin) found in Malory's sixth-century Ireland. They fill out *Pagan Shore's* collage of pagan-to-Norman Irish culture.

### Stereotype

Irish sagas depict the Lochlannach as blonde, ill-tempered giants. They are noted for their cruelty, greed, boastfulness, courage, and love of good company.

The Irish accommodate these pariahs for their usefulness as mercenaries and traders. The British see no distinction between the Lochlannach and the Saxons.

### Player Characters

Military adventures can plausibly combine Irish and Lochlannach characters. But the Lochlannach are out of their depth, and unwelcome, in Ireland's high-courts and sacred groves.

### Attitudes

A Lochlannach does not see himself as a semi-divine prince whose magic aura would be sullied by trade or contact with foreigners. Compared to other cultures of their era, they are pragmatic, cosmopolitan, and unpretentious.

Lochlannach courage is fueled by pessimism ("it doesn't matter"), not hope. Even their gods obey the indifferent powers of luck and decay. The Lochlannach greet success grim resignation, and the expectation of eventual disaster.

### Politics

Lochlannach raiding parties have been sacking Ireland's coasts since 490. Lochlannach traders have frequented the island for just as long, building markets and cities. Many raiders who lack the means to return to Scandinavia remain in Ireland as bondis (farmers). Others serve Irish chieftains as gallóglachs, and earn fiefs on the frontiers of the Long Isles in compensation.

### Special Customs

Lochlannach society began when a god named Rig the Walker slept with three mortal women, and beget three sons: Thrall, Freeman, and Chieftain. These three castes, and the various subcategories within them, correspond to the Slaves, Cow-Lords and Sovereigns of pagan Ireland.

The Lochlannach hold property jointly within an extended family. A freeman never owes tribute or rent to anyone, and never loses his property unless he is outlawed for a serious crime. Freeman pay their chieftains in labor and military support. They cooperate with their chieftains on longship expeditions in return for a share of the spoils. Upward mobility is common.



Chieftains rule on the strength of their descent from previous chieftains, and from Odin the All-Father, but their subjects can change allegiances by moving to a different region. In some places a local chieftain is the highest authority; elsewhere, petty chieftains are subordinate to a jarl, who essentially rules a province, and who may in turn be subordinate to a national king.

A chieftain travels with a bodyguard of huscarls, or sworn soldiers. They fight in return for food, shelter, and booty. Rich young men serve as huscarls, briefly, to gain experience and prestige; lesser men serve the chieftain all their lives, hoping that he will pension them out on a farm from his holdings.

The freemen of a Lochlannach settlement meet every year in a "thing," or assembly. Like the Irish aonach, the thing is a senate, in which new laws are proposed, and a high court, in which important civil cases are adjudicated. A chieftain presides over the thing and appoints twelve free people from any background to serve as its jury. Law-speakers reconcile the thing's judgments with traditional customs; they do not try cases or make new laws themselves.

Each free person has a mansbot: an honor-price equivalent to an einéach. The Lochlannach prefer to exact mansbot compensation in blood.

The Lochlannach skalds (poets) resemble filis. Apart from the skalds, there is no pan-tribal "aos dána" caste whose powers set them apart from ordinary people. Among pagans, a single man can serve as both chieftain and priest; the word "godi" refers to either.

The Lochlannach follow Saxon gods. Odin, their version of Wotan, is both a father of dynasties and a magician-poet; his cult resembles the Daghdha's.

Gall-Gaels: "Gall" means foreign. "Gall-Gaels" are Irish people who adopt Lochlannach ways, even Lochlannach religion, after their lands are conquered by the fair-haired foreigners. Such half-castes have few rights as Lochlannachs or Irishmen, so they support themselves by piracy. You can designate any Lochlannach characters as Gall-Gaels. Treat them as Irish bó-aíres fostered by sailors. Gall-Gaels cannot be fostered-out normally.

Irish chronicles single out some Gall-Gaels as "worse than vikings" for their icon-smashing antagonism to Christianity. Such Gall-Gaels may be disgruntled Irish Christians who have joined a Lochlannach berserker cult to fight their way back to paganism. Squads of Gall-Gaels inspired by Hate (Christianity) make good opponents for Christian knights.

### Famous Lochlannachs

Jarl Olaf the White: Olaf led several raiding parties against Meath before settling down to build a longphort at Dublin in 515. This decision was informed by the price on his







head back in Scandinavia, for an unknown crime. Olaf declared himself a jarl over the burgeoning city of Dublin and the agricultural outskirts called Fionnghall, and built a judgement-hall for himself (featuring a pit of vipers into which miscreants were thrown) as well as an Irish-style rath a few miles to the south.

While not adverse to dealing in local textiles, or stolen monastic silver, Olaf's real inclination was toward slaving. He sold the Irish to the French, the French to the Irish: everybody to everybody. Most infuriating to Irish Christians was his willingness to sell local captives into Saracen lands. Slave-traders and explorers from Egypt and Arabia frequented his court, and a squad of "blue men" (Africans) whom he met while trading in Morocco served among his huscarls. It's important to remember that slavery was legal, and common, in Ireland during these years, though sincere Irish Christians shunned it.

Thorgestr's attack on Ireland in 524 was partly directed against Olaf, for Olaf's old crime had apparently injured Thorgestr's family. While Thorgestr himself led a fleet of longships up the Sionnan, Ivarr son of Thorgestr attacked Olaf's relatives at Carlingford, was beaten back, then attacked Dublin itself, burning part of the city and forcing Olaf to hide in the Deer People wilds. In 526, Olaf returned from hiding, and fortified Dublin with a stone wall.

Olaf was an opportunist, even a coward. He wouldn't risk founding a longphort, or raiding for slaves against the Uí Niall, without a patron backing him up. This patron was nearly always King Anguish, who collected tariffs from Dublin and mustered its gallóglachs against his enemies. Anguish's embrace of this foreign slave-lord was a continuing source of disgust to his enemies in Éire.

The arrival of the British did not alter Olaf's status as a feudal client. After Olaf's death in 543, his son Aelle served the Justiciar as "deputy" in charge of the Dublin Norse.

**King Thorgestr:** Thorgestr was a prince in his native land, which encompassed parts of Norway and Jutland. A dearth of political opportunities at home, plus his hatred of Olaf the White, led him and fifteen under-chieftains to the Irish Sea — not as pirates, but as invaders. His force, including more than 200 longships, makes Arthur's Irish invasion look half-hearted.

Arriving in March of 524, Thorgestr sent his son Ivarr to the east, attacking Carlingford and capturing Dublin, while he circled around Ailech to the Sionnan, and from there moved into Meath. By August, he had installed himself as King of Tara, killing Muircheartach's steward and all of his best warriors. Thorgestr's downfall six months later is detailed under the section on Muircheartach, above.

If Thorgestr occupied Tara without harming it, this was due to his respect for magic. His name betrays descent from Thor. His son, Ivarr, knew spells: Ivarr's stare was so intimidating that no beast or warrior could approach him head-on

(Olaf's son Aelle put a bag over Ivarr's head, then tossed him in the Dublin snake-pit). Thorgestr's wife, Ota, was a practicing witch who claimed to be the daughter of Siegfried the Volsung and Brynnhilda the Valkyrie. As a gift to her, Thorgestr attacked Clonmacnoise, driving St. Ciarán into hiding and killing many monks, then gave Ota the site as a temple to Hel and Freya.

Ota was never captured by the Irish. Rumors persist that she is still in the western isles, recruiting soldiers to avenge her husband, or making curses against the Uí Niall.

**Jarl Ketil Flat-Nose:** Ketil was a gifted and cruel mercenary captain, whose band of Gall-Gael pirates terrorized the Christian centers of the South. In 527, Sir Galeholt gave him sovereignty over the Isles in return for gallóglach services and a promise of good behavior.

Ketil had previously been an ally of Olaf the White, even giving Olaf his daughter, Auda Deep-Thinker, in marriage. Joining Galeholt made Olaf his enemy. Auda Deep-Thinker fled from Olaf's court; she and her son by Olaf ruled the Isles after Ketil's death in 530. When Brian of the Isles took power, he refused to shelter Ketil's family from their various enemies any longer. The aged Auda spirited her children out of the Long Isles with the help of monks from Iona, who led them to Thule (Iceland). Here, a new culture began from Gall-Gael roots.

## FEUDAL IRISH

The Feudal Irish are an historical fiction. Theirs is the culture of Isolt, Galeholt, Fergus of Galloway, and other "Irish" characters in late medieval romance. I have filled out Malory's vague Leinster with the props of feudal Scotland, as depicted by Hollywood and Sir Walter Scott.

### Stereotype

The Feudal Irish speak with a brogue. They drink whiskey. They are berserk in battle, quick to make friends afterwards, and quick to take offense the next day.

Irish knights wear tartan kilts beneath chain or partial plate armor, carry great-swords, and often dismount to fight on foot. They eschew helmets in favor of tam-o'-shanters or silver headbands. Lords combine Gaelic dress with the fancy crowns and robes of high-medieval kingship. They lounge in court wearing purple cloaks trimmed with ermine over tartan togas. Wealthy women, like la Beale Isoud, wear long grey-green dresses which contrast to fine effect with the ringlets of auburn hair that fall, unhindered, across their shoulders.

The Feudal Irish are promising students of Arthurian culture. An undertow of pagan anarchy makes them exotic to the staid knights and ladies of Logres.



Other Irish people see them as schemers who enrich themselves by betraying Ireland to foreign influences.

### Attitudes

Feudal Irish culture struggles to reconcile Christianity with the native cults of Brighid, Nuadhu and Find the Filí. Both sides are winning; the feudalists are Christian and pagan in alternation. They find no middle ground between chastity and nymphomania, abstinence and alcoholism, submission and jihad.

They disdain those savages who cling to traditional Irish customs. No alliance is too unseemly and no tactic too cruel when it comes to fending off the unwashed Irish hordes, especially the Uí Niall, whose armies hover on their borders.

### Player Characters

Irish knights make fine *Pendragon* characters. Their titles are acknowledged throughout Arthur's realms.

In Ireland, the Feudal Irish suffer the same prejudices as the British, below, with the added burden of being perceived as cultural turncoats.

### Politics

Leinster and The Long Isles are the feudalized Irish kingdoms. Each turned to foreign customs early in the campaign, led by the despotic and charismatic leaders Galeholt (in the Long Isles) and Anguish (in Leinster).

### Famous Feudal Irish

**King Anguish:** Anguish (Aonghus) of the Uí Dúnlaing began his transformation of Leinster after the death of his father, Leinster-king Dúnlaing, in 499. A prince named Gurman of the Uí Garrchú was his fiercest rival, but Anguish placated this man with a co-chieftainship which became increasingly token as more Leinster chiefs flocked to Anguish's faction.

Hoping to settle the feud dividing Leinster between Dúnlaing (North) and Cennsealigh (South), Anguish married Isolt, an Uí Cennsealigh fláith educated in France, in 501. Together, they imported French customs to Leinster, just as Arthur and Guenever were feudalizing Britain. After opposing Arthur early in his reign, Anguish, realizing his need for allies, became a vassal of the *Pendragon* and a companion of the Round Table.

The transition from Irish government to quasi-feudalism came in a series of dáils held at Naas in 511-14. Hoping to unify Leinster against its enemies, the Uí Dúnlaing granted Anguish near-absolute emergency powers. He eliminated dynastic elections, céilsine, and land-ownership except in vassalage to a king. Leinster's citizens became Anguish's tenants, which means only that they fight for him, submit to his justice, and render "aids" (taxes) in times of emergency. He was to be replaced by a tánaiste from the Uí

Cennsealigh: intended for Sir Marhaus, this role ultimately went to Bran Dubh.

In short, Anguish created a derbhfine whose taoiseach has the power of a feudal lord. Anguish called this super-taoiseach a "thane," the family he leads a "clan," and the territory they own in common a "thanage." Anguish also assigned aitheach tuaths to his supporters, including some British knights, as earldoms. Residents of the tuaths either entered the ranks of knighthood, were recognized as a free clandom by the king, or, most often, remained on the land as betaghs.

Other Leinster tuaths followed suit. Their lands became thanages passed from tánaiste to tánaiste. The men of a clan have the rank and holdings of a household knight; the thane himself equates to a banneret. A few bó-aire families serve the thane as serjeants or carls: minor freemen with a military tenure.

Anguish was completely successful in pacifying his own province, taming the Lochlannach, making peace with Britain, and keeping the Uí Niall at bay. In person, his adherence to the rules of Honor was irreproachable (see "The Wooing of The Lady of The Launds" in the "magic" chapter for evidence). In a certain light, he was the kind of "good king" about whom there is little to say. But the Uí Niall and other rivals saw him differently: as the traitor who bought peace, for Leinster, by selling Ireland as a whole to ruthless foreigners. King Anguish died in bed in 565.

**Queen Isolt the Elder:** The queen of Leinster was an Uí Cennsealigh heiress fostered at the court of King Bors of Ganis. Marriage to the young Anguish of the Uí Dúnlaing united his ambition with her chivalrous conception of government and culture — and her foster-kinship to the de Ganis family.

Isolt the Elder was an expert surgeon, a skill she passed on to her daughter. Her goals in the middle-campaign included finding a king for her daughter to marry, and promoting the interests of her young brother, Marhaus, whom she expects to succeed Anguish. Fate thwarted these ambitions: Tristram killed Marhaus; La Beale Isolt married King Mark and fell for Tristram; Anguish pardoned Tristram for the murder; Anguish left the throne to Bran Dubh. After Anguish died, Isolt retired to her hospital at Chapel Isolt, Dublin. She died there in 567.

**La Beale Isolt:** This young woman inherited her mother's beauty and skill in surgery. William FitzGerald, Bran Dubh, and Sir Palomides all courted her. But she was most taken by Sir "Tramtrist" (Tristram), who needed her to heal his envenomed wounds, and who played the harp as well as any Irish bard.

Learning of Isolt's beauty from Sir Tristram, King Mark Coveted her for himself, and King Anguish saw the chance for a peace-making marriage between Leinster and





Cornwall. Marriage to Mark in 533 takes Isolt out of Ireland. After Mark kills Tristram sometime in the 550s, Isolt dies of grief, and is returned to Chapel Isolt, Dublin, for burial.

**Sir Marhaus:** Marhaus was Queen Isolt's brother, and a leading noble of the Uí Cennsealaigh. He threw his support behind Anguish's feudalism when Anguish offered him the demesne of Laois as a fief. A love of adventure led him to Arthur's Britain, where he became a respected Round Table knight.

The family of Marhaus and Isolt was the *rí damhna* for the *comharba* of St. Brigid at Cill Dara. Generations ago, they provided druids to Cill Dara instead of nuns. When Merlin swiped Cill Dara's standing stones in 474, the outraged Uí Cennsealaigh took this as a license to attack Britain; they were among the Irish factions that captured land in Cambria. In 491, Uther Pendragon bought the Uí Cennsealaigh off by entitling them to collect a slave-tribute from the rebel kingdoms of Cornwall and Tintagel.

In 529, Marhaus arrived in Cornwall to collect the tribute, bearing an envenomed spear as other Uí Cennsealaigh heroes had in the past. King Mark, tired of sending good men to Ireland, knighted the promising Sir Tristram to oppose Marhaus. In a bitter fight, Marhaus was killed, but Sir Tristram was poisoned, forcing him to seek help in Ireland on the assumption that the brewers of the poison would be best able to cure it. The death of Sir Marhaus ended the slave-tribute against Cornwall.

**Sir Palomides the Saracen:** Sir Palomides first appears in Malory as a knight errant attached to Anguish's court, and a romantic pursuer of La Beale Isolt. He and his brothers Safere and Segwarides were descendants of a Moorish king. If they were among the Moors brought to Dublin by Olaf the White, this would explain Palomides' presence in Leinster.

Like other characters in the Tristram mythos, Palomides seems to forget about Ireland after a few adventures in Britain. Whether he retains land or offices in Leinster is up to the gamemaster.

**Sir Tramtrist:** "Tramtrist" was the pseudonym adopted by Sir Tristram when he journeyed to Ireland for healing in 530. He remained as a guest at Dún Aillen for a year. During that time, a wyrm began ravaging the lands around Anferginan Pass (this creature had been awakened by Maolodhrán mac Crón — see below). Sir Tramtrist killed it singlehandedly, but its head was stolen by Bran Dubh, who tried to win Isolt by taking credit for the deed. Sir Tramtrist proved that he himself had killed the monster, amusing the court at Bran Dubh's expense and further impressing Isolt.

Events at the Lady of the Launds tournament forced Tramtrist to shed his disguise and flee Ireland. Later, in 533, King Mark dispatched him on a suicide mission to win

Isolt from her parents as Mark's bride. Tristram, however, made amends with Anguish by saving him from the de Ganis brothers, who wrongly blamed Anguish for Sir Hugo's death. (Still, I suspect that Isolt the Elder never forgave him for killing Marhaus.) After Isolt's marriage to Mark, Tristram/Tramtrist does not return to Ireland.

**Maolodhrán Mac Crón:** Maolodhrán was the thane of the Fosterlings, near Wexford. His chieftainship entitled him to control a magic lance willed to the Fosterlings by Cathoir Mór; no other human could wield the weapon, which usually rested on a standing stone in Anferginan Pass.

Cathoir's Lance magically consumes one cow's worth of food or the blood of one man every day. It attacks anyone, including its owner, as a means of getting its daily ration. The Lance can speak, but only enough to explain its needs. It can move freely by itself when within Anferginan Pass; elsewhere, it can only move within a three meter radius of wherever it was last placed. It cannot be broken. When fighting by itself, the Lance has a skill of 20 and does 4d6 damage. Whether fighting by itself, or in the Fosterling chief's hands, the Lance has an extraordinary power: In any round, if the Lance's first attack succeeds, it can make any number of subsequent attacks against any number of targets until it misses, or is beaten in opposed resolution.

During a raid against Oriel in 529, Maolodhrán slew two young brothers of the future high-king Diarmaid Mac Cearrbheoil. The Uí Niall put a price on Maolodhrán's head, with the agreement of King Anguish, who hoped to avoid another Leinster-Meath vendetta. Maolodhrán went into hiding, taking the Lance with him, and leaving the people of his homeland at the mercy of a wyrm which appeared as soon as the Lance was gone. In 537, Maolodhrán solved his dilemma by hunting down Diarmaid, then sparing his life in return for amnesty in the matter of killing Diarmaid's brothers. When Diarmaid became Tara-King, Maolodhrán abandoned Leinster to become Diarmaid's tax-collector. He was killed by Aodh mac Guaire of Connacht in 560. Cathoir's Lance vanished at the same time.

During his years of hiding, player-characters can encounter Maolodhrán almost anywhere in Ireland as a dangerous hermit, bitter at both Anguish and the Uí Niall.

**Bran Dubh mac Eochu:** Bran Dubh ("Black Raven") was thane of the Uí Cennsealaigh, factotum to King Anguish during much of his reign, and King of Leinster after Anguish's death.

A thin, twitchy character with a raven's active eyes, Bran Dubh was Leinster's Sir Mordred. In person, he favored extensive elaborations over words like "yes" or "no." He won many battles, usually by ambush. He maintained a circle of spies and informants in every local court, perhaps including Camelot. Fairly or not, the Irish laid unexplained deaths and curious coincidences at Bran Dubh's door. All his mischief,



however, served one end: the preservation of Leinster against its many enemies. This "bad man in a good cause" presents a challenge to the gent's-club morality of King Arthur's knights.

Bran Dubh maintained King Anguish's accomplishments through the end of the *Pendragon* era, even as he essentially ceded North Leinster to British dynasties. In 598, he fended off a final attempt to collect the bóramha by sneaking warriors hidden in food-baskets into the camp of an Uí Níall army. His friend St. Móling convinced the defeated Uí Níall to leave Leinster alone forever. Soon afterwards, Bran Dubh was killed by Saran The Squinter, a spy in his pay who was bribed against him, probably by the Uí Níall.

**Sir Galeholt:** Sir Galeholt was born in 504. His father, an exiled Dál Riadhan noble named Sir Breunor, lived at Castle Pluere ("Weeping Castle") in Cambria. Breunor's wife was a minor princess of the Fomhórachs. From her, Galeholt inherited his good looks and imposing height ("six inches taller than any knight known," according to the prose *Lancelot du Lac*). She held Sir Breunor under geas to slay any visiting woman more beautiful than she, a rule which led Sir Tristram to slay both her and Breunor in 534. Galeholt swore to avenge his parents, but desisted when he learned later of their "evil custom." Such estrangement from his kin implies that Galeholt was fostered from infancy to age 17, probably in Logres or France.

Galeholt's career as a hero began when he entered Ireland in 521, attempting to claim the Dál Riadha throne with the aid of 400 gallóglachs, archers with envenomed arrows, and 60 knights-errant from Malahaut. Much larger Irish armies proved no match for the feudal hammer and anvil of charging lancers and steady footmen. By 523, the Long Isles were a nascent feudal kingdom, and Galeholt was its unchallenged master. He spent the next five years consolidating his conquest, by dividing Dál Riadha cinealets into baronies, and replacing ráths with castles. In 524 he added Pomitain to his empire by marrying the daughter of its Norse king, Godred Crovan. An alliance with the feared Ketil Flat-Nose offered further protection against the Uí Níall.

Fostered abroad, Galeholt saw Ireland as a frontier state for the *Pendragon*, chief chieftain in the whole British Isles. Desiring this office for himself, he asked for King Arthur's submission in the Winter of 528. Politely refused, he forced Arthur's hand the next year by invading Surluse. With Galeholt rode The King of a Hundred Knights, an old ally who jumped at the chance to break Arthur's control over the North.

King Arthur's hastily-assembled force of seven thousand was outnumbered many times by Galeholt, and perhaps out-generaled as well. He would have lost without the intervention of Sir Lancelot, fighting incognito as The Black

Knight, whose prowess was such that Galeholt vowed to pay any price if this unequalled knight would join his side. Lancelot's price was that Galeholt swear fealty to Arthur. So it happened that The Haut Prince and would-be *Pendragon* became Duke Galeholt of the Long Isles, King Arthur's first Irish vassal.

This meeting shifted Galeholt's super-human energies from conquest to love. Despite his politically sound but childless marriage to Afreeca Godredssdotter, a homosexual fine amor led him to enter the cult of Lancelot. Errantry and romance became his definition of true knighthood. French became the language of his court, and the de Ganis barons became his brothers, whose lands in Meath he would not molest. An apocryphal story about Lancelot has him consummating his love for Guenever under Galeholt's patronage; to this day, the name "Galeotto" (Galeholt) in Italian describes a procurer who arranges trysts.

Helyes, Galeholt's court astrologer, predicted that he would die without Lancelot's company, but Galeholt refused to be a clinging vine; instead, he honored Lancelot's wish to serve Arthur, and his greater romantic interest in Guenever. In 549, Galeholt learned from a messenger that Sir Lancelot had died. In fact, Lancelot had been living as a hermit for two years under a spell of madness, and was shortly to re-appear at Camelot. But upon hearing the false report, Duke Galeholt of the Long Isles slumped over dead in his throne.

**Galeholt's Knights:** Sir Galehodin, born in 520, was a distant kinsman of Galeholt's. He claimed the throne of Norgales, where his closer relatives live: it does not count as part of the Long Isles. After Galeholt's death, he joined the Round Table and became a retainer of Sir Lancelot, whom he followed into a monk's life after the fall of the *Pendragon*.

Sir Galleron was a local warrior knighted by Galeholt. He supervised some of the gallóglach clandoms in North Britain, and served as Galeholt's marshall. Late in the *Pendragon* campaign, Galleron died helping Agravaire and Mordred in their attempt to trap Lancelot with the Queen. From this we can guess at his later career: Galeholt's death embittered him against Lancelot; he remained in North Britain and may have joined the Orkney faction; he may even be the one who leaked Lancelot's secret to the Orkneys.

Sir Marsil was an early follower of Galeholt's, perhaps from Malahaut. Galeholt gave him Pomitain as a fief upon Godred's death in 533. He remained there, never joining the Round Table. He later switched his allegiance to Galeholt's evil successor, Brian of the Isles.

**Brian of the Isles:** Brian (called Baodan in Irish), a Dál Fiatach flaith, became king of The Long Isles after Galeholt's death. An ox-like half-Lochlannach pirate, Brian





had Galeholt's military skill and ruthlessness, but not his gift for making allies. During his youth, he supported himself by ransoming knights from Pendragon Castle (see the Places chapter) until Sir Lancelot kicked him out in 538. As king, he spent many years fighting rival clans at home in Ireland, while Galeholt's feudal confederation at large reverted to barbarism; castles crumbled, fleets went unrepaired, and allies and vassals turned rogue.

By 560, Brian had subdued the Cruithni and Ulaidh, but his forces across the sea were little more than brigands and Gall-Gaels. Luckily, King Arthur's empire was decaying at the same time. Playing on the Gall-Gaels' greed and resentment of Christianity, he turned them loose on the unprotected Britons of Rheged, Gomeret, and Chesire. He may have fought on Mordred's side at Camlann.

The end of the *Pendragon* campaign leaves Brian ruling the Long Isles by terror, and possibly expanding their borders into North Britain. His ultimate fate is uncertain. One chronicle claims that he became High-King over all Ireland, plus Pictland and Strathclyde. The story of Mongán, the poet-prince-demigod of the Uí Echach, has him die at this being's hands. Alternatively, a regnal list attributes his death to "Arthur, a British Chief" in 579.

## BRITISH

Malory implies, but does not describe, Arthur's campaign against Ireland. My version imitates the Irish expeditions of King Henry II, and the subsequent development of the Anglo-Norman settlement.



*Backgammon is a Sophisticated Import from King Arthur's Court*



## Stereotype

The British strike the Irish as rich, warlike, and snobbish. They are wholly unwelcome in Ireland except as antidotes to the Gaels and the Lochlannach.

## Attitudes

The British are imperialists. Good imperialists improve the lands they seize, and bring unity to a divided world. Bad imperialists exhaust local resources and treat their subjects as slaves. Whether Arthur's knights are "good" or "bad" imperialists is a foundation-laying decision for the gamemaster.

## Player Characters

Any knight can visit the Pale on a mission from his liege. Knights' families may hold land in Ireland, especially if they come from a Roman or de Ganis background.

British knights may "go native" in Ireland if an Irish chieftain grants them land or invites them into his *fian*. They will never be *flaith*, since no Irish dynasty wants foreigners voting in its elections.

## Politics

The first British foothold in Ireland belongs to the Gerald family, Romano-Britons from Cambria. In 520, King Anguish of Leinster asked Camelot for help in repelling a huge invasion by Tara-king Muirheartach mac Earca. The Geraldts (and perhaps some player knights?) answered the call, and were rewarded with lavish fiefs on the Leinster-Meath border.

In 530, Arthur considered attacking Ireland to secure his western border once and for all, having just barely prevailed against an invasion from the Long Isles. Arthur's aging Romano-British officers (Lucan, Constantine, Brastias and Baudwin among them) obtained submission from Leinster and, with its aid, easily defeated Tara-King Muirheartach mac Earca.

Dublin, and the manors surrounding it, became "The Pale" — the limit of Arthur's justice in Ireland. A keep in Dublin houses the Justiciar of Ireland, who governs the Pale in Arthur's name, mediates disputes between the Irish and the British, and allocates a colonial budget, sent each year from Camelot, to build roads, drain swamps, and fortify towns.

Arthur made "speculative grants" (meaning, "it's yours, but you have to collect it") of Irish lands whose chieftains feigned submission to him. The recipients of these grants gained fiefs, but little political power, in the territories allocated to them. Citizens of the Pale call them "marcher lords" because they live beyond the marches (outskirts) of the colony.

British settlements displace the Irish *flaith*, *râth* by *râth* rather than kingdom by kingdom. *Bó-aires* remain in these lands as *betaghs*, renting back their old estates from the new

owners. An earl or reeve can make his *betaghs* fight in an emergency, as defined by the Justiciar: the resulting horde of pitchfork-armed rabble is called the *gaiormsluaigh* ("screaming mob"). As a rule, British earls summon the *gaiormsluaigh* once per year to repel raiders from outside the Pale.

## Famous Britons

**The Geraldts:** Sir Gerald Striguil of Pembroke was a Companion of the Round table who answered King Anguish's plea for aid against Muirheartach in 520. No more than 30 knights were necessary to drive away Muirheartach's expedition, which had crossed the Leinster border to collect the *bóramha* (fruitlessly) and depose St. Móchuda of Raithean (successfully — see "Places"). In return, King Anguish followed the Irish custom of rewarding supporters with fiefs from the royal demesne. Gerald built castles over the ceremonial *râth*-sites at Cill Dara (Kildare), Naas, and Maynooth; the original tenants became Geraldine household knights. Notable members of Sir Gerald's 520 entourage include his grown son Maurice, and his brother, a monk named Gerald of Cambria, who stayed in Ireland collecting tales for a book on the island, and employed many British knights to explore its curiosities and report on them. Gerald died in 540, and was replaced as Earl of Kildare and Maynooth by Maurice's son William. Maurice, in the meantime, had obtained other lands.

In 529, Sir Maurice gained Cnoc Äine as a castle from the Eoghanacta of Äine, who hoped to strengthen their hand in Munster by inviting Britons into the royal demesne. No sooner had Sir Maurice settled into his new possession than he spotted a nude woman — the goddess Äine — bathing in a nearby river, and coerced sex from her by stealing her robes. Nine months later the goddess appeared at Knockainey Castle presenting Sir Maurice with a son, who would become the phantom knight Sir Gerald FitzGerald. In the same year, King Arthur granted "Desmond" (south Munster) to Maurice and his family. Maurice became Justiciar in 538, and died in 546.

Gerald FitzGerald aided his father in planting new castles across Desmond for their retainers, and succeeded him as its Earl. The expansion of Geraldine estates in Munster brought the family into conflict with both the Caiseal-kings and the Butlers, since all three sides lacked a coherent entitlement to the territories they claimed; their lands are the scenes of constant skirmishing in the latter half of the campaign. By his birthright from Äine, he also assumed chieftainship of the Eoghanacta of Äine. A figure of near-worship by the local Irish, Gerald could leap ten yards at once, recover from any wound, and ride his ageless black stallion over water. His ghost remains near his castle at Loch Gur after his death — or apotheosis — in 571.

**Sir Brastias:** The Romano-British Brastias, in his role as Warden of the North Marches, supervised Arthur's Irish





conquest, and the infeudation of Leinster and the Pale. He garrisoned Waterford and Wexford, whose Lochlannach governors were later entitled as Earls holding directly from King Arthur. He founded mottes at strategic fords and passes, and beside monasteries whose saints Arthur wished to promote and protect; these were staffed by trustworthy knights who served in the wars against Galeholt and Muirheartach. He founded each Irish borough, importing the sons of praetors from Roman Cambria to serve as mayors and reeves, and importing skilled peasants from Logres to turn nearby pastures and swamps into fields. He served as Arthur's first Irish Justiciar before retiring as an hermit in 538. In person, he was a Roman: stoic, piously patriarchal, a prudent general rather than a reckless knight. A few of his sons retained mottes in Leinster, marrying into the Ui Cennsealaigh.

**The de Ganis:** Queen Isolt the Elder had long encouraged her Ganis foster-kin to intervene in Ireland. Hugo, a nephew of King Bors, answered the call by assisting Sir Brastias and King Arthur against Muirheartach in 530.

Hugo was keen to distinguish himself within his famous family by becoming a lord; he successfully petitioned Arthur to make him a speculative grant of Meath outside the Pale. Never exercising political control over Meath, he instead spent two years founding castles there with the Justiciar's assistance, retaining them for himself, granting them to bachelor knights, or — often — granting them to Ui Niall flaith, who were happy to exchange part of their sovereignty for the chance to live behind stone walls, instead of mud walls. He essentially became a prominent and popular Ui Niall baron, though many of his castles in the north of Meath were raided by opportunists from Oriel. Yet his success ended in 532, when he was assassinated while inspecting a new fosse at Athlone.

Hugo's soldiers described his assailant as a young fair-haired man, thin as a sapling, who wielded a huge pole-ax. He appeared from nowhere, surprising the battle-hardened Sir Hugo and beheading him with one stroke, then vanished into the woods before Hugo's men could catch him. He was, indeed,

never found. His strange appearance led Ireland's bards to call him The Boy Without Bowels. Perhaps he was not human at all, but a coroniaid (see "Irish Magic").

Rumors that The Boy served this baron or that chieftain were rife, but Justiciar Brastias refused to authorize a vendetta based on rumors. This didn't deter Hugo's cousins Sir Blamore and Sir Bleobaris, who assumed, perhaps because their knowledge of Irish politics ended at Leinster, that the Boy was Bran Dubh. In 533 they accosted King Anguish in Britain, intending to execute him, but Sir Tristram exonerated Anguish in a duel of honor. Blamore and Bleobaris may have shifted their accusations to another Irish leader afterwards.

Sir Hugo left behind an infant son, Hugo II. During Hugo II's minority, the de Ganis estates in Ireland were administered by the Justiciars; some were even abandoned. Hugo II took office as Earl of Westmeath in 551, and became Justiciar himself in 559.

**The Butlers:** Sir Lucan The Butler was one of the Romano-British officers who effected Arthur's conquest of Ireland. As part of Arthur's settlement with the Irish, Sir Lucan was granted Laois and later Blackcastle by the Leinster kings, as well as the speculative grant of Ormond (East Munster), whose local kings were loyal to Anguish and whose overlord, Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn, wanted to follow Anguish's example of screening his kingdom with British barons.

The Butler family's Irish domains were really ruled by Lucan's cousin Theobald. This man was an avaricious conqueror and a staunch upholder of the British colony, who constantly accused his Geraldine rivals of "going native" as Irish warlords. An attempt to block Maurice FitzGerald's Justiciarship led to a small war on the border of Ormond in 538; after many of his new castles were sacked by Maurice and his Irish allies, Theobald abandoned the cause, but tended to ignore the Justiciar's powers afterward. He claimed the office himself in 547. His various sons — all by British-born wives, not locals! — divide his holdings upon his death in 559.





# IRISH MAGIC

*These rules extend or modify the magic rules from Pendragon.*



**M**AGIC IN IRELAND works much as it does in Arthur's realm. Beyond the Pale the land and people are less civilized, and thus closer to the Other Side and more magical than their Arthurian counterparts. This is evident in numerous ways: places of magical power exist in greater abundance; creatures of faerie, though still not common, are encountered with greater frequency; the people of Ireland live under the auspices of magical geas-tes; as well as other differences which are explained below.

by traveling south deducts -1d20 Life Force from magic cast on its behalf. The gamemaster might also add 1d20 to Curse magic cast by its opponents.

North is the direction of war and trouble. It adds 1d20 to Banish and Curse. West is the direction of knowledge. Dead souls cross Ireland from east to west. It adds 1d20 to Divination and Necromancy. South is the direction of music and harmony. It adds 1d20 to Emotion and Glamour. East is the direction of Plenty. It adds 1d20 to Bless and Heal.

Traveling clock-wise around a person, or a human artifact such as a *râth*, is a sign of obeisance and respect: it adds 1d20 to Bless magic. Traveling counter-clockwise is an insulting gesture which adds 1d20 to Curse. This courtesy is reversed with regard to the *aos sí*. Moving clockwise around a *si* place adds 1d20 to Curse attempts, but subtracts 1d20 from any other magic and from the magician's magic defense. Moving counter-clockwise ("widdershins") around a *si* place adds 1d20 to Bless. It also adds 1d20 to Protect; walking in a way opposed to the usual custom mitigates the gods' power against the humans who approach their home.



## EXTRA SOURCES OF LIFE FORCE

These sources of Life Force add to the ones described in *Pendragon*. Their use is confined to Ireland. Britain lacks these sources of Life Force because it is more urbanized.

By contrast, the existence of Arthur — a just and effective High-King — is, from the Irish standpoint, a profound and enviable magic confined to Britain's civilizing energies.

### Directions

The flux of Life Force in Ireland is stirred by the sun's daily journey from Leinster to Connacht. Moving with, against, or perpendicular to this flow has well-known effects. The antipodes of the Irish universe have different spiritual charges, much like the poles of a magnet. Druids use this knowledge in their magic.

If, during the performance of a ritual, either the target of the magic or the magician unswervingly faces or moves in a single direction, the magician gains certain Life Force benefits. Finding exact directions requires a Geomantic Lore roll if they are not obvious.

Moving exactly contrary to a lucky direction decreases Life Force by 1d20. For example, an army that enters battle

### Bardic Skills

The Irish see little distinction between naming a thing correctly, and invoking it. The bards' power to sway emotions or know the future derives from the precision of their language and music. The perfect poem or tune interacts with the forces behind the surface of the world. All creation may be a word on the lips of an over-god(dess).

Success at bardic skills cumulatively contributes added Life Force to a casting. Failed skill use mis-invokes the powers of the universe, and detracts from the casting. Using bardic skills to aid a casting is optional for most magics, but required for Emotion magics.

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#### *Life Force From Bardic Skills*

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- Critical: Add 10 Life Force to the casting.
  - Success: Add 5 Life Force.
  - Failure: Subtract 5 Life Force from the casting. An unmodified roll of 1 always fails in this regard.
  - Fumble: The magic fails, and the bard may not try it again this day.
-





A bardic contribution to a casting always involves using the Compose skill, plus at least one other skill of the bard's choosing, and one trait or passion if the bard so chooses. Each skill, Passion, or Trait attempted can add to the Life Force. These bonuses are accumulative. In total, a bardic contribution can encompass the following rolls:

- Compose
- Orate or Sing
- Harp, Tiompán or Drum with or without Orate or Sing.
- Any other musical instrument in place of Orate or Sing.
- Any single Trait or Passion, rolled to boost Emotion magic which will alter that trait or passion.

The Compose skill is rolled first, before rolling performance skills such as sing. A failed Compose roll disallows the use of other bardic skills in that casting. Each bardic skill can only contribute to specific types of castings, as noted below.

*EXAMPLE: Geilghéis the bard casts an Evoke Emotion (Lazy) magic. As part of her ritual, she sings a lyric, strums a harp, and draws on her personal Laziness for added force. Her player attempts Compose (Success), Sing (Critical), Play (Harp) (Failure), and Lazy (Success). Geilghéis gains 5 + 10 - 5 + 5 = 15 additional Life Force for her magic.*

When using the Emotion Talent, each bardic technique only manipulates certain emotions, and therefore only assists certain magics: a harp can put you to sleep, but drums can't. The bard who learns many instruments and styles will be a more versatile magician.

**Compose:** Contributes to any magic *except* the following: Demonize, Glamour, Travel, Shapeshift, Weather Control.

**Orate:** Contributes to Banish, Bless, Control, Curse, Dispel, Divination, Emotion (Reckless or Prudent), Necromancy, Protect, Summon.

**Play (Drums):** Contributes to Banish, Bless (in battle only), Curse, Emotion (Hate, Fear, Loyalty, Cowardly, Valorous, Reckless, Cruel, Proud, Vengeful), Necromancy, and Protect.

**Play (Feadán):** "Feadán" refers to the family of reed instruments, ranging from the recorder to the oboe. Contributes to Animal Friend, Bless, Emotion (Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Modest), and Healing.

**Play (Flute):** Contributes to Animal Friend, Control, Emotion (Madness, Fear, Energetic, Deceitful, Arbitrary, Suspicious, Cowardly), and Necromancy.

**Play (Harp):** Contributes to Animal Friend, Bless, Emotion (Love, Loyalty, Hospitality, Invoke Melancholy,



Druidic Ritual in a Sacred Grove



Forgiving, Merciful, Lustful, Lazy, Indulgent), Healing, and Summon.

**Play (Tiompan):** The medieval tiompán consisted of strings stretched over a drum-box. It resembles the lute, the zither, and the French "tamburin béarn." Contributes to Curse, Emotion (Chaste, Honest, Just, Pious, Prudent, Temperate), Necromancy, and Summon.

**Play (Uilleann):** The Uilleann is a bag or bladder-pipe, varying in size and sonority. Contributes to Animal Friend, Banish, Emotion (Madness, Lazy, Selfish, Cruel, Proud, Worldly, Honest), Healing, and Protect.

**Sing:** Contributes to Animal Friend, Bless, Emotion [Any], and Healing. Any Irish magician, whether trained as a bard or not, can attempt to summon Life Force through singing, if he first succeeds in a Compose role.

## Sovereignty

A living chieftain in Ireland is charged with Life Force. The chieftain does not manipulate this magic himself. Rather, his presence at a ritual contributes to the magician's casting, much like, and cumulative with, the energy emanated by a standing stone or a Christian relic. The sovereign must cooperate in some degree with the ritual, even if it is simply to give his permission to perform it.

Every tuath ruler or Tara-king has a Sovereignty total. The total is based on the combined statistics of two sovereigns, that is, a king and a queen (usually, the chieftain's senior wife). Thus an unmarried sovereign has only half as great a potential score. To assist in magic, at least one of the sovereigns must be present when the Life Force total is determined and the magic is cast.

Find a tuath's Sovereignty total by adding together the rulers' APP, CON, Honor, Just, and Generous. Add +20 for each ruler who has a religious bonus (in any faith). Compare the total to the following table:

### *Life Force from Sovereignty*

Total	Effect
0-99	+3d20 to Curses directed against the rulers or their domains.
100-149	No effect
150+	+3d20 to any magic EXCEPT Curses against the rulers or their domains, and Demonize.

The influence of the rulers' Sovereignty (or lack of it) is evident in small ways throughout their domains, especially to a visitor with the Sight.



## SPECIAL IRISH MAGICS

These magic effects are characteristically Irish, taken directly from Irish folklore and tales. Again, as explained in the *Pendragon* rulebook, they are not the only effects that may be achieved, but rather give explanations and suggested Life Force totals for magic found in the sagas.

### Curse

#### **Femininity: 35**

Only women can use this magic, and only against men. The magician demonstrates her femininity, reminding male onlookers that, as a woman, she bears special generative and cursing powers beyond their ken: fighting her is bad luck, for the Mórríoghain is on her side. The nearest male (of any species) suffers a -10 Valorous modifier (*Pendragon* p. 339) should he approach her for the duration of the spell. Females are unaffected. Extra Life Force may include more targets in this spell or extend the duration of its effect.

#### **Venom: 90**

This curse targets an open wound, which must be physically touched in order for this curse to work. The duration of the magic need only last long enough to envenom the victim. Once struck, the venom remains. The wound will not heal, and will deteriorate by 1d6 every week. Natural healing begins, and deterioration ceases, during any week in which the victim receives a critical Chirurgery roll. Any Healing, Bless, or Dispel magic involving 40 Life Force or more has the same effect as a criticaled Chirurgery roll.

Usually, the Venom is placed upon a weapon as a focus. Extra Life Force can be used to extend the duration of the magic, so that the weapon remains envenomed longer. An envenomed weapon can be used by anyone, not just the caster. An envenomed weapon must cause a wound (at least 1 Hit Point of damage) in order to poison the opponent. The effects of the venom are not accumulative on one person; the victim loses only 1d6 Hit Points per week, no matter how many poisoned wounds he suffered, and only one Critical Chirurgery roll is needed to overcome the effects of the poison.

### Divination

The Irish practice only three kinds of Divination: Imbhas Forosnai, Teinm Laoidhte, and Dicheadal Do-Cheannaibh. These are known as the Three Virtues of Filíocht (the art of





filis). The first two require the Divination talent; the third involves the Necromancy talent.

**Imbhas Forosnal (“Light of Prophecy”):  
varies, as per Pendragon**

This is standard Divination. The seer meditates on a question about the future, and is rewarded with a spontaneous poem which reveals things to come in a cryptic and allusive fashion.

The Imbhas can only be used at the beginning of something: a person’s birth, a person’s inauguration into a new caste or office, the outset of a voyage or military campaign, the beginning of a year, and so on. The act may be accompanied by consulting an oracle of some kind. *The Destruction of Da Dearga’s Hostel* describes an oracular ritual called the Tarbhfeis (bull-feast). On Samhain, a bull is anointed with oils and scents and flowers, then slain. A chieftain eats the bull’s meat, drinks its blood, and drinks mead, until he falls into a stupor. When he awakens, his dreams — which must be pretty lurid, after that feast — are interpreted as omens of the coming year by a filí using the Imbhas. In *Pendragon*, this is an act of Divination to which Ritual, Sacrifice, Time, Place (it was at Tara) and perhaps Sovereignty have contributed.

With the expenditure of 60 points of Life Force, a druid may use this spell to determine the geases of a newborn or other newcomer.

**Teimn Laoidhte (“Fire Chant”): 60**

The Fire Chant is a self-mortification ritual undertaken by a single person. It is based *solely* on your personal Life Force and the sacrifice of your own Hit Points, which add 2 points of Life Force per hit point expended. The expenditure of hit points must be in d6 increments, as in “I choose to flay myself for 3d6 damage.” If you decline to expend hit points, you are still assumed to injure yourself to a minor extent, such as biting your tongue.

By braving the fires of pain, you sharpen your powers of concentration and recall to an uncanny degree. Fire Chant allows you to answer any one question about the past, or about intellectual subjects such as Breitheamh Law. Who built this artifact? Who lived in this old rath? What is the law governing the theft of pigs? All these questions are amenable to the Fire Chant. The gamemaster may rule that certain questions — who murdered this man in the woods? — involve too much secrecy to be answered in full by the Fire Chant, which taps the collective, public intellect of Ireland. It would still provide good clues.

Fionn mac Cumhail’s ability to suck his thumb and answer any riddle was a Fire Chant. The phrase translated as “thumb-sucking” can also mean “marrow-biting,” which explains why Fionn didn’t do it very often.

**Emotion**

For Irish magicians, the stricture that a magically-manipulated emotion must be a Virtue to the caster’s or the target’s religion should be waived. Instead, a magician who wishes to bend an emotion should use her own Trait or Passion as a bardic skill (above) that adds Life Force to the casting. Therefore, a magician lacking a particular Passion has no ability to affect it in others.

**Glamour**

**Solas Sí (“Faerie Light”): 60**

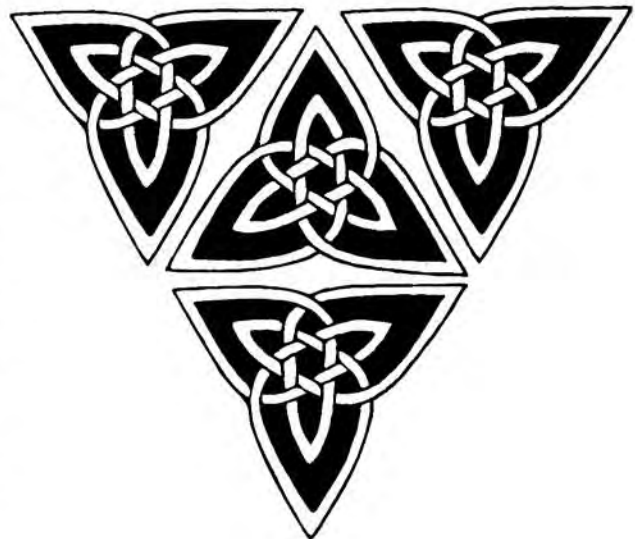
This effect targets one person. The person becomes severely disoriented, and must make a Recognize roll at -5 to find ordinary landmarks, like roads or doors. Through the target’s eyes, the things of the world have their usual shape, but are unfamiliar: what, he wonders, is that door-shaped thing *for*? The effect lasts for an hour, during which the target must check Recognize to move at all, and check it again as needed to choose one direction over another.

“Solas Sí” can refer to phantom lights which lead travellers astray after dark. This is a subterfuge of aos sí who do not want to be found.

**Healing**

**Uille-íoc (“all-heal”): 150**

This magic cures all wounds and ailments in the patient, including faerie poxes. It does not cure Madness, nor does it compensate for aging, or for curses like the Lampoon. The magic requires mistletoe harvested with a silver scythe on Samhain. It must either be used on Samhain, or preserved





within the mistletoe under Talisman rules. Each magician can attempt Uile-íoc only once per year.

## Necromancy

### Dicheadal Do-Cheannalbh ("Divination from Heads"): 20+

Success allows the caster to summon and interrogate a ghost from a severed head. Find the length of time since the head was severed on the Duration Costs chart (*Pendragon* p. 276); the indicated number is *added to* the cost of this spell. Thus, interrogating a head severed a week ago costs 20+30=50 Life Force.

The head answers three questions truthfully, based on its experiences in life, and in the afterlife. Each additional question after the third costs +5 points. A single head may be re-used, until a magician fails to invoke its spirit. This releases the ghost back to the wheel of reincarnation. Subsequently, the head is useless with regard to this spell.

Dicheadal Do-Cheannaibh is the only necromantic magic used by most Irish magicians.

## Shapeshifting

### Form Riding: 120

This allows you to escape any game outcome, including curses, geas-breaking, and death, by forsaking your body for rebirth in a new form. It represents controlled reincarnation. It is only accessible to magicians whose skills qualify them as *filis*. This spell is usually placed in a Talisman as a safeguard against the *filis*' death, since one's death is almost always at an inconvenient moment.

First, you die, and your body is cremated and your goods passed on to heirs, and so on. You are re-born in the instant after death as a Maggot, if the magic works. From there, you can enter a more sophisticated form, such as a Fish, by succeeding in a Shapeshifting Talent roll and expending Insight. You remain in this second form for a certain number of years before you can attempt to enter a third form which logically absorbs your second form, and so on. Failure strands you for another lifetime in the old form, and means that you cannot turn into the attempted category of creature; you must select some other category of creature to turn into. Each attempt, including the first, requires a Shapeshifting roll and costs 1,000 Insight regardless of its outcome. Only the assumption of the first form requires the expenditure of Life Force. Note that Totem forms may be easier to assume, at a cost of 500 Insight if the gamemaster agrees.

The goal is to become a maggot again. The maggot is then accidentally swallowed by a woman — your daughter, if possible — who gives birth to you nine months later.

Within a year, the new you ages to resemble in every way the person you were when you died, minus the wound or disease or whatever that killed you. All Insight is restored, with a bonus of 50 more Insight for each year you spent in the universe of minor forms.

The following list shows the forms you can assume, and the years you must spend in each form. It also shows which forms lead to which: for example, you must move from Doomed Youth to Predator or Maggot, because the transition occurs when the first body is eaten by the second.

**Plant** (Shrub, Flower, Tree)

Years: 10. Leads to: Nuts or fruit eaten by Bird, Fish, Herbivore or Doomed Youth.

**Fish** (Salmon, Eel, Pike)

Years: 3. Leads to: Eaten by Bird, or Doomed Youth.

**Bird** (Owl, Hawk, Eagle, Sparrow)

Years: 4. Leads to: Eaten by Predator or Doomed Youth.

**Herbivore** (Deer, Elk, Bull, Boar)

Years: 5. Leads to: Eaten by Predator or Doomed Youth.

**Predator** (Bear, Wolf)

Years: 5. Leads to: Eaten by Maggot.

**Doomed Youth** (Warrior, Poet, Princess)

Years: 17. Leads to: Eaten by Predator or Maggot.

**Maggot**

Years: 0. Leads to: Eaten by Plant, Bird or Fish. Re-birth on subsequent incarnation.

*Example: A filí with 5d20 Life Force, Shapeshifting 19 and 5,000 Insight dies at Brugh na Bóann. Boosted by its Ambient magic, he summons the 120 Life Force to briefly become a maggot, and expends 1,000 Insight; had he failed, and remained as a corpse, that would end his adventures. Soon afterwards, he succeeds in becoming a plant by rolling his Shapeshift and expending 1,000 Insight. After 10 years in plant form, he rolls Shapeshift again, hoping to become an elk. He fails; this costs him 1,000 Insight and another 10 years as a plant, and means he cannot become an herbivore on his next try. Next, he spends 1,000 Insight and rolls Shapeshift in the hope of becoming a Doomed Youth. Succeeding, he lives 17 years in this form, then expends 1,000 Insight to become a Maggot again. But this time he fails his Shapeshifting roll. Having lost all Insight, he is re-born as another Doomed Youth, over and over, for aeons to come.*

While you are in these forms, you have the usual limitations of a Shapeshifted character. Even as a "Doomed Youth," you do not participate in play. You may even spend lifetimes in India or Scythia or Thule, rather than Ireland.

Form Riding can backfire in two ways. You can run out of Insight, meaning that you become reconciled to living as a cow or a wren or what-have-you. You can also run out of time: a magician whose Form Riding takes him past 570 or so is out of the game.





Two rival magicians can Form Ride against one another as a form of comhlann. They start by adopting the same form during the same year; these forms fight, clashing as waves, bashing as stags, and so on. If one magician escapes from form A to form B, the other magician must try to follow him. Failing means that the first magician has trapped him, and he remains in form A forever. The initiative in picking forms goes to the first caster of the magic; the second caster is in pursuit.



## TIME

Pagan cosmology recognizes five finite divisions of time: a day, a lunar month, a season, a year, and a life. A sixth division, "until Monday," means "forever."

A day lasts from sunset to sunset, rather than from midnight to midnight. A season lasts from sunset on a quarter-year holiday (like Imbolg) to sunset on the subsequent holiday. A year lasts from Samhain sunset to Samhain

sunset (Samhain lasts from 6 p.m. on October 31 to 6 p.m. on November 1).

The duration of a "life" varies according to species. People cursed to spend "a life" as animals often serve their time in short-lived forms like the moth. Seventy years is a good approximation of the human lifespan.

"Until Monday" derives from Luan ar bith ("Monday upon the world"), a poetic term for the Christian Apocalypse. It means "until the end of time." The battle of Magh Tuire, when the Dé Danu gods defeated the Fomhórchs at the cost of their lives, may be a pagan apocalypse. Monkish chronicles put it at the *beginning* of history, perhaps to reconcile it with Christian eschatology. More likely, Magh Tuire is a timeless event which starts and stops each year with the cycles of sowing and harvest.

Each of these time-units mirrors the others; each proceeds from dark to light to dark. Different pockets of Tír na nÓg obey different clocks; in one a mortal year may be a day, in another a mortal day may recapitulate all of history from Magh Tuire to Magh Tuire. This is reflected by the "Time Shift in Faerie" table (*Pendragon* p. 301). An aos sí lord will only honor contracts expressed in pagan time-units, and this is complicated by the fact that his "year" and yours may be years apart.

# HOLY FOLK OF IRELAND

**T**HE DRUIDS, BARDS, AND MONKS of Ireland differ from those of Arthur's realm. The pagan religion of Ireland flows from an older source than that of the reformed druids of Britain, since the Roman army did not make it to the Emerald Isle to crush the druids there as they did on the Isle of the Mighty. The Christians likewise differ from their continental counterparts, but oppositely so, benefiting from the youthful vigor of a newly established church in contrast to the calcified dogma as it is practiced in Britain and further east.



## THE DRUIDS

Druids wield the real power in Ireland. They oversee the rituals and ceremonies to which all Irish look for their livelihood: the rituals of harvest, in which the grain is divided

among its recipients; ceremonies of birth, death, and in between — the soul's brief journey through this world of material concerns. 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.

Druids can be male or female. They generally wear white robes and are seldom equipped to fight. Male druids wear a tonsure: the tops of their heads are bare, except that a "fence" of hair bisects the bare spot from ear to ear. Druids carry branches or wands culled from various trees, to meet various dilemmas. A rowan switch compels the aos sí to answer questions, sometimes. A willow branch is a badge of office; shaking it silences arguments in court, letting warriors know that a druid is about to pass judgement.

In demeanor, druids appear variously stately, superb, and insane, for some live as court favorites whereas others as hermits in the bogs.

Members of lesser aos dāna castes often imitate the druid's robe and tonsure.



## What Do Druids Do?

Druids are usually born into druid families; a few are recruited as fosterlings. Training as a druid can last up to twenty years. Often, a druid is trained to officiate for a certain cult only, be it one of the gods mentioned in *Pagan Shore*, a less famous local god, or an animal god. The druid may meet his or her god in a fearsome initiation that involves spending the night in an underground pit.

Druids officiate at pagan ceremonies. These occur on the four seasonal holidays (Imbolg, etc.), and at other points in the year as the need arises: to remedy a drought, to inaugurate a chieftain, and so on. Often the actors in these ceremonies are chieftains and their clients; the druid's role is to supervise their performance of ritual, making sure the king circles the tribal cairn counter-clockwise in his chariot, and not the reverse.

In day to day life, druids either wander from place to place offering services in return for shelter, or live as céiles, serving the local aristocracy. Pagans summon druids as consultants when any kind of practical magic is needed, such as invoking rain. Druids perform the usual priestly function of blessing the new-born and consecrating the dead. In the same vein, they perform the uniquely Irish function of laying geases.

Druids spend a good deal of time perfecting their mundane skills and their spiritual acumen. For some, this means solitary meditation and fasting. More social druids sharpen their skills in the agallamh ("colloquy"), a marathon discussion, often lasting for months, in which druids from different tuaths sit in a glen, arguing arcane points and swapping information. An agallamh counts as a Coven (*Pendragon* p. 281), but only for its duration. Witches — female druids whose serve Strife Goddesses — belong to standard Covens led by cailleachs.

## Famous Magicians

Druids served in the retinues of sixth-century kings, like Diarmaid, who straddle the border between paganism and Christianity. Few of them are known by name. The following magicians play important roles in the *Pagan Shore* campaign, but only two qualify as traditional Irish druids.

**Helyes le Clerc:** A brilliant scholar from in French city of Toulouse, Helyes was recruited by Sir Galeholt to teach alchemy and philosophy at Dún Patrick. He owned a book on demonology, whose contents were so nightmarish that he seldom consulted it. He used it once to summon a malign spirit — a ghostly arm holding a flaming sword — which







predicted the year of Galeholt's demise. Neither a druid nor a saint, Helyes was feared and distrusted by everyone around him. His disappearance after Galeholt's death is so total as to suggest that he was murdered and buried in hiding.

**Bragwaine:** This woman was La Beale Isolt's cousin, and her chief handmaiden. Her minor Healing, Curse and Emotion magics were linked to her knowledge of herbs. She brewed the venom coating Sir Marhaus' spear, and made the potion that strengthened Tristram's love for Isolt. When Isolt wed King Mark, Bragwaine renounced Leinster citizenship to live in Cornwall. In one version of the Tristram story, she substitutes for Isolt in Mark's bed, using her natural beauty but perhaps also using Glamour, while Isolt dallied with Tristram. After Isolt's death, she probably entered a convent.

**Mughain:** Wife of Tara-King Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil, her name means "she who serves," and is a common title for druids devoted to a particular god. Given Diarmaid's commitment to the pagan traditions of Tara, his wife was probably a client of the sovereignty-goddess Meadhbh. Her position makes her the chief druid of Ireland during Diarmaid's reign. Like most Ui Niall court druids, her life, background and achievements are a mystery.

**Sin:** The assassin of Muirheartach mac Earca was a druid with a formidable talent for Glamour. Her teachers came from the vanished Érainn tribes of Meath; she is the last survivor of their school. Her mimicry of the Sovereignty goddess shows how magicians exploit the blurred boundary between "god's-client" and "god-avatar." (Which, for example, is Mongán?) The possibility that an alleged faerie is really a con-artist never occurs to most fantasy gamers, though it would be one's first thought in real life.



## THE POETS

The lowest ranking poets dress in a bó-aire's trousers and tunic. Filís, and bards who affect their style, wear grey-green robes, and a slightly different version of the druid's tonsure. Poets often carry a weaver's stick, to show that they weave words for a living. They may also carry a thorn or holly sprig — plants which, if held while reciting a lampoon, bring disaster to the target.

Poets depicted in the sagas typically have one of four personalities. The Mad Poet creates perfect rhymes, when he isn't babbling or drunk, which he usually is. The Bitter Poet specializes in lampoons; he — or more often, she — is a verbal porcupine who can't speak without stabbing. The Greedy Poet is a court lamprey, wielding a bill for praise in

one hand and a curse in the other. The Mysterious Filí appears onstage to tell the hero how he's going to die, then vanishes in a swirl of mist: think of Merlin.

## What Do They Do?

Poets spend between eight and twelve years in professional training. Some study with a poetic guru, but a growing majority go to live at a bardic school, often attached to a monastery. Bardic students learn how to compose rapidly in traditional styles, and how to play the harp. They must also memorize a vast corpus of traditional poems and stories, represented in *Pendragon* by skills like Faerie Lore.

"Pure" bards specialize in praise poems and eulogies. Satirists learn how to make lampoons, which are most often used to goad soldiers into battle. Seanchaís are storytellers and genealogists, who can include ancient poems within their sagas as nuggets of information or rhetorical flourishes.

Like druids, poets live either as tuath retainers, or as wanderers. Ordinary poets recite verse at dinner or before a battle, hoping for favors from their audience. Rich, arrogant ollaibhs do nothing but ponder and compose: professional reciters do the journeyman work of delivering their poems. A storyteller can be a monk, loaned out by the local monastery to entertain their patrons. His stories usually have morals. Harpists accompany every poem or story recited in court.

Poets fill all the functions performed by heralds in the feudal world. Visitors to Irish courts are introduced in verse. A poet must witness events of any importance, like weddings; otherwise, they are non-events by definition. Poets accompany every cath, and, within the limits of their powers, decide the winners.

Poets, like druids, can sharpen their skills in a colloquy. This takes the form of a contest between master bards, or a catechism between teacher and student. Like druidic colloquies, bard's events last for weeks, or months. Winter learning devoted to skills like Compose or Religion (Paganism) represents time spent in colloquy.

## Famous Poets

**Gulaidhe and Sadhbh:** This father-and-daughter team were the two foremost satirists of The Seed of The Dark One in Munster. When Feidhlimidh mac Criomhthainn visited their home in the first year of his reign, Sadhbh — knowing Feidhlimidh's reputation as a scholar and poet too skillful to be mocked — met him at the gate with a stream of insults so exquisite that he could not answer them. Impressed and frightened, Feidhlimidh gave Sadhbh and her father extensive lands from the Loch Léan demesne, and promised not to molest the pagans of Duibhne and other native spirits.



They serve as court lampooners at Caiseal for the rest of the *Pagan Shore* era, and rule a lavish fortress at Srcubby Pass.

**Fionntann:** This immortal poet was a husband of Cessair, the first human settler in Ireland, and an obvious incarnation of the poet-god Find. He lived in various forms — a tree, a stag, a salmon, a shout — for century upon century in the wilds of Munster. In 556, Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil summoned Fionntann to Tara, for Diarmaid wished to learn the history of Irish kingship, and no mortal filí could satisfy him. Fionntann's colloquies describing the political and magical constitution of Ireland became the foundation of all subsequent bardic knowledge on the subject. Fionntann returned to Munster the next year and — his cosmic purpose served at last? — disappeared forever.

**Mongán:** The greatest poet of the *Pagan Shore* era was an inhuman son of the sea gods, and a king of the Uí Echach. His career is detailed under "The Cruithni," above. The Cruithni king Suibhne the Mad also counts as a famous poet.

**Béag mac Dé:** This man, whose name means "Little son of God," was a dwarf whose unflinching stare betrayed his power of Sight. After a career as court poet to the Black People of the Marshes, Béag became famous as Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil's personal filí. His insights served Diarmaid in every possible way, making him a keener king, warrior and father. But on Samhain in 557, Béag announced that Diarmaid would unavoidably die at the hands of Aodh the Black. Worried, Diarmaid went to his druids for a second opinion; the druids said that Béag was right. Béag took this doubt as an insult, and stormed out of Tara into the Samhain night. There, he met St. Colm Cill, who had been inspired by a vision to find Béag and give him the Last Rites. Peerless in divining the future of others, Béag hadn't known that he was doomed to die that night.

**Eochaidh the Sage:** Little is known about Eochaidh except that he was a filí, and that he was the ollaihbh of all Irish poets after Béag's death. Like the "High-King," this title was really limited to Uí Niall lands. In fact Eochaidh had been a Long Isles filí until he was defeated in a competition against Mongán, at the time only a boy.

**Dallán Forgall:** This sightless bard — his name means "eloquent blind man" — was a Long Isles poet displaced by the rise of Mongán. He befriended St. Colm Cill, and served Ailech as a praise-poet and satirist. In 574, Colm appointed him successor to Eochaidh the Sage as high-bard. Dallán died only a few years later, when he violated his geases by trying to satirize the Uí Criomhthainn mac Fochra king into awarding him the Dark Servant (see Places).

**Seanchán Tórpéist:** The Munster poet Seanchán mac Uarchride was 18 years old in 530, when he won a rhyming contest against the Tórpéist ("twisted monster"): a poetic

gruagach with tumor-like brains spilling out of its ears. The defeated monster metamorphosed into Find the Filí, and blessed Seanchán with the Three Virtues of Filíocht. Calling himself Seanchán Tórpéist, he quickly attracted a band of apprentice-poet followers, called the Troublesome Host. A court visited by this rhyming mob soon lost all its wine, treasure, and stock. The alternative to paying Seanchán was suffering his satires: Seanchán could kill mice by reciting a mere two-line joke.

In 555 Seanchán and his band came to the court of King Guaire the Generous of Connacht. Here, Seanchán's pettiness reached heroic dimensions. When Seanchán hungered for a white piglet that was the pet of Guaire's brother, into the pot it went. When a crumb from Seanchán's cake was stolen by a mouse, he killed the court mice with satire, then made a satire against the whole race of cats for their delinquency in killing mice; this drew the attention of the cat-god Hirusán from Cnoghbha (see places), who was heading to Durlas to kill Seanchán and Guaire when St. Colm Cill intervened and turned him back. Guaire tried to invent poetic tasks that Seanchán could not meet, allowing them to dismiss Seanchán as an inadequate poet. Seanchán was equal to every challenge, until Guaire asked him to recite the Táin bó Cuailnge.

The full length of the Táin had vanished from Ireland's collective memory after the destruction of Ulster. To honor their boasts before Guaire, Seanchán and his followers devoted the next fifty years to a search that took them through Ireland, Pictland and Tír-na-nOg. They continued to support themselves as bards; in 579 Seanchán succeeded Dallán Forgall as poet-ollaibh over Ireland. Finally, in 605, Seanchán's band used trochlaigh against the cairn of Fearghus mac Róich (whereabouts unknown), the hero-god of Ulster. In response, the ghost of Fearghus rose from the cairn and recited the Táin in its current form. Seanchán himself died a few days later.

The gamemaster may delegate the search for the Táin to player bards. As an attempt to rescue Ireland's past from the forces of progress and apathy, it has a symbolic importance approaching that of the Grail Quest. Read the Táin to learn about the people and places of the Ulster Cycle: this provides clues for the hunt.



## INSULA SANCTORUM

The learning, devotion and missionary zeal of early Irish monks made Ireland famous throughout Europe as *Insula Sanctorum*, "The Island of the Saints." The following sections introduce the world of the Irish church.





## Beliefs

Religion is based in the tuath. Like warfare, it is mainly dispensed by, and practiced by, the local nobility and their aos dána retainers. The highest authority is the local comharba or tuath bishop.

Practical worship is a matter of endowing hermits and monasteries, who will beseech God on your behalf. A more committed believer perfects himself, by fasting and following pilgrimage routes. "Stations," in which chanting, moaning worshippers ascend a hill in imitation of the ordeals of Christ or a saint, are the most common mass observance. They occur on both pagan quarter-days and saints' birthdays. Enclosed churches that hold regular services are rare except in feudal lands.

## Special Features

These religious offices and artifacts distinguish Irish Christianity from the mother church.

### The Comharba

In his home tuath, a comharba always has the powers of a bishop. A comharba has the resources, though not necessarily the style, of a powerful chieftain, including cattle, warriors, and céilsine debtors. The abbot of Ard Macha is the comharba of St. Patrick, and on this ground claims broad authority over Irish Christendom, usually without result. Lesser comharbas, inheriting from lesser saints, rule only one monastery.

Comharba candidates must claim kinship to a previous comharba. The election of a comharba occurs within the ranks of potential comharbas — the ecclesiastical *rí damhna* — and can include unchurched candidates whose claim to the see rests entirely on blood, not learning or piety. The elections can be just as ugly as their secular counterparts.

### Cathachs

Most prominent tuaths possess a cathach box, which holds the Bibles or the liturgical instruments or the skulls of their saints, current and previous. Its presence in battle is considered so crucial that armies are often evaluated by the strength of the dead saints who accompany them. In play, Irish warriors from the unit that carries the cathach fight as berserkers, and the cathach itself projects between 4d6 and 6d6 Ambient Life Force. Total defeat of a rival tuath includes capturing and desecrating their cathach; otherwise, the power of the saints may curse the victors and restore the defeated, on and on in an endless cycle. No doubt the cathach custom descends from war fetishes of some kind carried by pagans.

### Anchorites

Early Christianity distinguished between Cenobites (monks who live in communities) and Anchorites (monks who live as hermits, even if in proximity to one another). The Anchorite practice was once common among the "desert fathers" of Palestine and North Africa. As the church moved from rejecting the mundane world to leading it, anchorites became less important — except in Ireland, where the example of the desert fathers found fertile ground in the mystical tendencies of the aos dána.

Some Irish anchorites live in the woods, filling the part of the holy hermit familiar from Arthurian stories. Most live in clochans: beehive-shaped stone huts, affording just enough room for a man to sit cross-legged. Some religious communities consist of several clochans clustered together; others contain both clochans and the more traditional buildings of a monastery.

For most Irish Christians, living as an anchorite is a temporary form of purification, rather than a life-long role. The clochans beside a prosperous monastery are inner-space capsules, allowing a monk to exempt himself from mundane influences, if only for a few hours. Lay believers can sweat off their sins by spending the night in a clochan at Patrick's Purgatory, an island shrine in Loch Dearg.

### The Céilí Dé

The Céilí Dé movement was founded by a few dissatisfied abbots, notably Maol Rúain of Leinster and Feardáchrich of Munster. There is no Céilí Dé hierarchy; its diverse members are united by a shared preference for religious fundamentalism and ascetic practices. They oppose the persistence of pagan and secular customs within the Irish church; in particular, they hate comharbas. Some Céilí Dé thinkers want the Irish church to accept mainstream Catholic reforms such as the new calendar and the stricture against married clergy. Céilí Dé philosophy emphasizes the individual's quest for enlightenment and perfection over the shared religious transport of the congregation. Fasting, meditation and solitude are their tools. In the words of Maol Rúain: "The fire thou most darest to burn thee, to it shalt thou go."

Any Christian can join the Céilí Dé, though most members are monks. Applicants need Pious, Temperate, Love (God) and Religion (Christianity) at 13+. They must spend a great deal of time fasting and meditating. Magically-powerful Céilí Dé members gain +2 to Banish and Demonize, but are forbidden from using Glamour, Emotion, Summon, Control, Animal Friend, Shapeshift, Travel, or Necromancy. Belonging to the Céilí Dé earns characters an extra 50 Glory per year.

### Peregrinatio pro Christo

During the early middle ages, many Irish clerics adopted a form of devotion called the *Peregrinatio pro Christo*. They



abandoned Ireland in order to found monasteries overseas. Often, they revived Christianity in regions where the faith had declined, or where it had never been properly established to begin with. The Western Church's debt to Irish monks is second only to its debt to Rome.

While the word "Peregrinatio" later came to mean "wanderer," it was originally a legal term meaning "outcast." A Peregrinatio voluntarily becomes a permanent exile, a stateless person. He then jumps on the next boat for the continent, trusting God to provide for him in whatever kingdom he may reach.

Any Christian can accept the Vow of Peregrinatio pro Christo; in doing so, he renounces all Love (person, family or foster-family) and Loyalty (tuath or liege) passions. The character gains 10 Glory each time he voluntarily lowers one of these passions over Winter (*Pendragon* pg. 204). This reduction in Passion is reciprocal; usually, the Love or Loyalty of the Peregrinatio's kin cannot exceed his Love or Loyalty for them.

A Peregrinatio who has rid himself of all these passions earns an extra 100 Glory per year, as long as his Love (Christ) remains at 16 or higher. He can also add +3 to Sacred Space and Divine Miracle, if he has those talents.

## Famous Saints

**St. Patrick:** From his own writing, we know that St. Patrick was the son of a Romano-Briton named Calpurnias (who may have lived near Glastonbury), and that he was captured by Irish raiders — possibly under the command of Niall Nine-Hostages — at the age of six. He lived as a slave in Ireland, first near the druid sanctuary at Focluth Wood (Connacht), then on a farm in the Mis Mountains (Ulster), before escaping to France as a young man of twelve. He spent many years in Europe studying as a monk. Then one night he had a vision: a mysterious man approached him, holding forth a bundle of parchments, from which emanated voices speaking Irish. Patrick recognized the voices as the men he heard chanting in Focluth Wood years ago. The man asked Patrick to "come, and walk with us again," then vanished. Patrick returned to Ireland as a missionary in 456.

The events of later legends take Patrick in a circle around Ireland from Meath back to Meath. Arriving first at Tara, he converted Tara-King Laoghaire mac Niall by beating Laoghaire's druids in a contest of magic at Uisneach. In Ulster, he gained the holy mountain of Ard Macha as a monastery site by converting its owner, a mysterious "pagan tyrant" variously called "Crom" or "Daghdha." In Connacht he practiced trochlaigh against Jehovah, fasting for forty days before he won a position as judge of all Irishmen in the afterlife. In Munster he destroyed a stone circle where infants were sacrificed to Crom, a god of fate. In Leinster, his prayers outside a sí mound released Caoilte and Oisín,

two heroes of Fionn mac Cumhail's fian who had fled into Tír na nOg after Fionn's death. He engaged the two pagans in a colloquy, famously called "Colloquy of the Old Men," in which he lectured them on the virtues of Christianity, and they imparted to him, as master of the new order, a vast collection of bardic facts about the pagan and heroic Ireland from which they came. The colloquy ended in 495 at the court of Tara-king Muircheartach mac Earca, when the three old men, the stories drained out of them, finally died.

After Patrick, Christianity spread through the aos dána caste. Its novelty and its link to Latin culture appealed to Ireland's intelligentsia: many early saints were druids or poets prior to conversion. The result was an explosion of intellectual energy comparable to the establishment of a new science. Tuath bishops and lay preachers, called saints even in their lifetimes, spread new monasteries across the face of Ireland, and soon into Britain, France, Frisia and Saxony as well. Scribal pens flew into action, producing texts — sagas and hagiographies, bardic poems and monkish meditations, canon law and Breitheamh law — on a scale unequalled in Europe until the invention of print. Laws protecting the aos dána caste insured the prosperity and safety of professional Christians. No Irish saint was ever martyred; Irish warriors know that murdering a religious teacher — a druid, of whatever god — brings curses too terrible to imagine.

**St. Brigid:** Brigid was born in a serf-tuath of Leinster in 538. Her mother sold her to Maithgeann, a male druid, who recognized her as an avatar of the goddess Brigid, and schooled her in druid secrets near the pagan sanctuary of Cill Dara. She became high-priestess of the Brigid cult, until 574 when Merlin violated its sanctuary by stealing the stone circle of Cill Dara — Stonehenge — and moving it to the Salisbury plain.

Taking this as an omen of spiritual changes, Brigid submitted to St. Patrick as his first nun in the same year. Subsequently, she made Cill Dara into a Christian sanctuary housing monks and nuns in separate quarters. She also converted the people of Pomitain to the new faith, and lent her popularity to King Anguish and his feudalizing reforms in Leinster. She died at Cill Dara in 524.

Most stories about Brigid emphasize miracles, rather than political activities. She frequently duplicated Christ's feat of multiplying the loaves and fishes by multiplying cattle, butter, milk, and so on. Fire surrounds her: guests at Cill Dara reported haloes and lights about her person, and a brilliant glow at night from the chamber where she slept. One story has her healing a Leinster king from a curse that left him with horse ears: perhaps this cuckold's symbol was once attached to King Anguish. Her exploits blends pagan and Christian imagery into a new tradition of the missionary-as-tribal-magician. Her chief male disciple, St. Ruadhán, shares the name of the goddess Brigid's half-Fomhórach son. Ruadhán the saint cursed Tara;





Ruadhán the demigod died fighting the Tara gods. A lozenge-shaped cross or swastika made from straw is the symbol of her cult, placed with newborns of every species to bring good luck. Leinster folk commemorate her feast-day (Imbolg) with a Halloween-type pageant in which little girls, dressed in aos dána robes, go from house to house collecting eggs as offerings.

St. Brighid's lack of political adventuring means there is less to say about her here than about Patrick and Colm Cill. She is important as a token of the easy shift from paganism to Christianity, and the continuity of the aos dána into the new faith.

**St. Colm Cill:** Born Criomhthainn son of Feidhlimidh son of Conall Gulban in 501, Colm Cill ("Dove of the Church"), often Latinized as "Columba," became the founder of the Pictish church, and the third most revered Irish cleric after St. Patrick and St. Brighid. Unlike them, he was a high-born noble, fully entitled to the kingship of Tara.

Between 522 and 550, St. Colm Cill founded a string of monasteries in Uí Niall territory, including Derry, Durrow, and the center of his monastic empire, Kells. Often, he was forced to build these monasteries anew after Lochlannach raiding parties — or the supporters of rival saints — sacked

them. He also planted churches in the frontier of the Long Isles, most notably the island hermitage of Iona.

When Colm sheltered a madman who had killed a court guest under Tara-King Diarmaid's protection, Diarmaid sent soldiers into Kells and executed the man, flouting the custom of church sanctuary. Colm sought revenge by mustering Pale knights and his Uí Niall relatives against Diarmaid. The two sides met at Beann Gulban in 561, with Colm Cill fighting, praying and waving his cathach on one side, and Diarmaid's druids summoning an obscuring bank of fog on the other. Diarmaid was driven back into Meath, but both sides took heavy losses.

Colm, a saint, had spilled blood. Diarmaid, Ard Macha and the Céili Dé demanded excommunication. Colm stood before most of the Irish church in a synod at Taitiu in 562; some, like St. Bréanainn, spoke in his defense. In the end, he chose to avoid a stiffer sentence by becoming a peregrinator, swearing never again to set foot on Irish soil. With twelve loyal followers, he retreated to Iona. His subsequent adventures in Pictland, including his encounter with the Loch Ness Monster, take place after the *Pendragon* campaign

## THE AOS SÍ

**T**HE AOS SÍ INHABIT a counter-Ireland which interacts with the mundane Ireland on seasonal holidays like Samhain. Drumlins, cairns and groves give entrance to their kingdoms, though mortals are more often kidnapped through these gates than invited.

### Entering the Sí World

Using Faerie Lore and Geomantic Lore, a competent magician can find an entrance to the Sí world at any pagan holy place. Other people make due by sleeping outside a cairn, or sealing themselves within it. Many of the sí covet their privacy and will confuse mortal visitors with Glamour, or thwart them with Curses.

Besides islands, wells, groves, henges, and mounds, one can add that any place not mapped, sequestered and enclosed by humans is close to the Otherworld. The traveller on a lonely moor or a desolate beach is a mis-step away from the country of dreams.

Entering this world through the gate of a god, like Midhir, puts you inside his tuath. The beings you encounter

are his debtors, kin, and flunkies. Because nothing ever ages in this world, it is called The Land of Youth. Other divisions of the Sí World include Uí Breasal (where many Fomhórchas and other bad or defeated things are exiled) Donn's House (where dead souls congregate before being re-cycled on the wheel of being), The Plain of Promise (a Heaven for the spirit that has accumulated Glory and Eineach in its last life), and the Land of Victories (possibly a pagan Valhalla).

By definition, the Sí World includes everything that is not in Ireland. An island encountered more than nine waves from Ireland's coast (the limit of Ireland according to druids) may thus be an aos sí place. Many sailors report islands inhabited by bizarre animals, beautiful women, or doctrinally-askew colonies of monks or druids, and still other islands that feature giant abandoned ráths with giant weapons and giant pots and giant footprints. The sea gods built these lands for their own obscure purposes. Irish adventures set in "Britain" are often transparently stories about Tír na n-Og. Because they are not Ireland, places like Britain and France are unnatural, fantastic, fey.



## Appearance

Aos sí are either beautiful or ugly. They dress either as lords or churls. They have a predominate color, which reflects in an extreme fashion the types of hair and complexion found in the Irish: blonde aos sí have pale or golden skin, red-haired aos sí have red skin and even red teeth, and brunette aos sí have obsidian skin and ink-cloud eyes.

## Culture

Aos sí culture mirrors Érainn culture. Its various castes discharge the same functions, and demand the same obeisances, as their human counterparts.

Apparently enigmatic aos sí actions can often be understood in terms of Irish law. Many folk-tales depict a loch monster or faerie-mound woman who demands a human sacrifice every seven years from the people of a certain district. This request will seem less arbitrary if you remember that "seven years" is the usual duration of a céilsine contract. The spirits of nature "lease" land to humans, and demand only a modest payment when the loan is up for renewal. Should humans default on the "loan," faerie agents will repossess it.

The aos sí lack seelie or unseelie courts. Their "good" or "bad" demeanor is relative to the observer's interest in their clash of family politics and cosmic forces. When they kill their guests, it is out of spite, or boredom, or offended honor or privacy, or hunger; it is not out of evil. Modern country-folk call them, not demons or angels, but "gentry."

## Animals

Just as there are aos sí kings, druids and smiths, there are also sí plants and animals of every species.

The Irish can spot a sí animal by its color. A horse, cow, pig or dog with red ears and a white hide is a magical version of its type, well-worth the risk of stealing from its owner. On the other hand, 100% black, red or green animals are more usually hostile or accursed, the ebony capall-uisce and the emerald cú sí (both below) being two examples.

## Powers

The typical aos sí who is able to fight has the statistics of a Faerie Knight (*Pendragon* p. 341). Aos sí druids, crafters and so on can be simulated by doubling the skills of a human specimen. The typical Fomhórach has the statistics of a small giant. Aos sí and Fomhórachs mentioned by name in the sagas are gods, with powers far off the scale of *Pendragon*.

Many aos sí have access to the Waters of Healing, and to supernatural physicians like Dian Céacht. They can recover from any blow except one that destroys the brain (i.e. one that qualifies as a critical hit *and* a major wound). Fomhórachs lack equivalent skills, but can regenerate their Healing Rate in hit points every round, unless reduced to death. Magically-competent aos sí would have a Magic Limit of 200 to 300 or even more, 6d20 or so Personal Life Force, and several magical Talents at 20 or more, as well as more than two Natural Talents and several prepared Talismans. Exceptional aos sí are better still.

Feel free to bend the rules concerning aos sí magicians. They do not suffer the limitations of mortal flesh which the magic system places upon human magicians. The aos sí may cast magic spontaneously without preparation; or age in reverse, growing younger; or cause another to suffer their aging rolls in their stead; or carry a pocket full of magic faerie dust, each grain of which contributes 1d20 of Ambient Life Force to a magical casting. They are the creatures of the Other Side, the place of magic; they can do as they will.



## THE IRISH GODS

Each Irish drumlin, grove, lake and standing stone houses its own gods. A god founded each tuath, and sits at the top of its hierarchy as an immortal super-chieftain, wielding super-buadha and obeying super-geases. Gods are all things — mother and father, the four elements, peace and war — to the human neighbors of their cairns. Outsiders seize on one aspect of the myth, so that a ruling god in one district is a fire god in the next, and a fertility god in the third.

The seanchaís glibly treat many gods as aspects of one god, or split one into many, refusing to decide between "trees" and "a forest." They reconcile local gods in the Tuath of Goddess Danu (a local spirit herself, patron of the Danube river on whose banks the Celts once lived). Christian scribes reduce gods to kings, and shoe-horn their myths into the Greek chronicles and the Old Testament. The sum of these learned speculations is chaos, as are most attempts to enforce "continuity" on rival fictions. Pausing over the idiosyncratic — what god made *that* crooked rock, what god lives in *this* gnarled tree, and what *five things* does he want from our clan — brings us closer to the typical pagan.

Magicians in *Pendragon* contact gods only through their emissaries, the Minor Aos Sí (below), and through the Life Force emanated by the gods' cairns.





For now, a few gods and their kin give us a starting point, a junction from which trails depart in every direction.

## The Fomhórach

These beings, of unknown origin, are Ireland's first inhabitants. They appear, on one hand, as misshapen giants, and on the other hand, as handsome beings of human shape and stature. Fomhórach control Ireland's harvests: when land fails, a Fomhórach spoiled it, and when land prospers, a Fomhórach was prevented from spoiling it — or his bad magic was harnessed against itself. Pagan rituals do not honor these beings so much as appease, trick or subdue them.

The Fomhórach were "killed" by Lugh and the Tuath Dé Danu at the battle of Magh Tuire. In fact, these indestructible beings merely vacated the land for the sea, whose storms and currents they still control.

## The Uí Nét

Nét is an obscure war-god. His wives, the war-goddesses Badhbh ("Crow"), Macha ("Herds") and Neamhain ("Panic"), receive more worship today. He also fathered many children among the Fomhórach.

Balor Uí Nét is a god of the Winter sky; a Fomhórach cyclops whose huge eye, when propped open, projects a destructive ray that levels mountains and kills armies. Balor was fated to die at the hands of his grandson during the Magh Tuire battle. To escape his fate, he imprisoned his still-virgin daughter Eithne in a crystal tower on Toraigh Island. A Dé Danu hero named Cian rescued Eithne, and she bore him Lugh of the Summer sky, Balor's rival, counterpart, victim and assassin.

Lugh counts both as a member of the Uí Nét and Nuadhu's Court (below). He unites the powers of his Nét-Fomhórach-Nuadhu-Danu inheritance — war, fertility, sovereignty, and magic — in a single soul. He is the most popular Celtic god.

Ealatha Uí Nét is the Fomhórach over-king. From his peace-making marriage to Eriú, the Dé Danu goddess of Irish bounty, he fathered Eochu Breas ("the handsome"), Tyrant-King of the Gods and husband of Brighid ní Daghda (below). Lugh killed Eochu Breas, turned his estates into a wasteland (the Ox Mountains, Connacht) and banished his descendants into the western sea, where they rule a phantom island, Uí Breasal ("Hy Brazil").

## Nuadhu's Court

Nuadhu is the god of sovereignty, master of fresh water, and the original king of the Tuath Dé Danu, as well as the

founder of the Leinster and Eoghanacta dynasties. His name probably derives from the word "nud" ("fog"). As the river-god Nuadhu Neacht, he owns the Well of Wisdom at the source of the Bóann in Tír na nÓg. His old fortress at Almhu (Leinster) is one of his cult centers. He and his court exemplify kings and counselors for the people of Munster and Leinster. He is noted for losing his right arm in battle against the Fir Bolg, an early human tribe.

As a tamer of livestock, Nuadhu married both the mare-goddess Macha (also a wife of Nét) and the cow-goddess Bóann (later a wife of the Daghda). When Bóann looked into his forbidden Well of Wisdom, its waters rose up and chased her to the sea, forming the Bóann river.

Dian Céacht is Nuadhu's physician. When his mechanical silver arm failed to restore Nuadhu, Dian Céacht's son Miach created a functioning organic version. In a jealous rage, Dian Céacht split Miach's brains, the one wound even he couldn't heal. All healing herbs originate from Miach's grave. Today, Dian Céacht and his daughter Airmidh, another physician, guard the Well of Healing inside Brugh na Bóann ("The Mansion on the Bóann River," in Meath).

Find the Filí, sometimes called Nuadhu-Find, is Nuadhu's poet. Older than the gods, this being is known mainly through his avatars, including Fionntan and Fionn mac Cumhaill. He is associated with the Bóann valley and Almhu. Goibhniu is Nuadhu's smith, and a patron of all trades; he lives at Goibhniu's Forge in the Sionnan watershed, among other places. Oghma is Nuadhu's champion. Both a warrior and a god of oratory, his two natures symbolize the ideal flaith.

When Lugh arrived at Nuadhu's court, he usurped many of the functions ascribed to individual gods like Goibhniu. Because of this, he is called Lugh Ildánach ("master of all arts"). Lugh's cult defeats rival gods by absorbing them.

## The Uí Daghda

The Daghda ("The Good God"), also called Eochaidh Ollathair ("Stallion-like All-father"), is a big fat guy with a cauldron and a club; a wild phallic god of the woods, father of gods and dynasties, mentor of Lugh, and patron of magic. In Christian chronology, he replaces Nuadhu as king of the gods; in fact they may be parallel gods from different parts of Ireland.

Both Bóann (above) and the Mórríoghain have been the Daghda's wives. The Mórríoghain ("Queen of Phantoms") is Ireland's primary war goddess; Macha, Neamhain and Badhbh are her lieutenants. She also rules the powers of satire and prophecy. In one story, the Daghda gains intelligence of an upcoming battle by copulating with her. The relation between Mórríoghain queen-of-shades and Morgan le Fay is a subject for the synthesizing imagination of the gamemaster.



The Daghdha's sons with Bóann include Bodhbh Dearg (god of sacrifices), Aonghus (god of youth, love and music), and Midhir (god of breitheamhs). Midhir fostered Aonghus and taught him a legal trick to gain control of their father's house, Brugh na Bóann; this led the Daghdha to abdicate his kingship and wander into the woods, where he lives now. Midhir groomed his own son, Donn (escort of the dead) to succeed the Daghdha, but Donn is strongly opposed by Bodhbh Dearg. This civil war between dark ("donn") and crimson ("dearg") aos sí continues today; the lack of a high-king over the gods explains their incapacity in the face of Christ.

The Daghdha's most prominent daughter is Brighid, a fire spirit and totem to the Briganti people who settled Leinster. She was given as a wife to Eochu Breas for the duration of his kingship, and bore him four sons who fought for him in Magh Tuire. Three went into exile as the Uí Breasal; the fourth, an ugly Fomhórach named Ruadhán, died trying to steal trade secrets from Goibhniu. Now Eochu's widow, Brighid seems to have gained a measure of Eochu's fertility-power and Goibhniu's technical knowledge: she is a patron of childbirth, smithing, and poetry.

## The Uí Lir

These are the aquatic gods. Lir, King of the Ocean, lives under the Antrim mountains and in the cold sea beside them. Sailors pray to Manannán, son of Lir and patron of Pomitain; the Conmacne Mara treat him as an ancestor god under the name "Oirbsiu." As master of the ocean from which all land is born, he makes the supernatural islands found nine waves from Ireland's coast, and the otherworld paradises, such as Tír na nÓg, where the gods live in exile. His brother Bran the Blessed is both a raven god and an underworld god.

Several inchoate myths describe Lir's estrangement from his children, one of whom seems to be the Celtic horse-goddess Epona. In an Irish story, the Uí Lir were changed into swans by their evil stepmother, only to be restored later by Mochaomhóg, an abbot of the *Pagan Shore* era. In the Mabinogion, Bran the Blessed and Branwyn daughter of Lir die in a war with Ireland, after which Manannán becomes an itinerant tinker. Geoffrey of Monmouth shows Britain divided between "King Lear" and his rebellious daughters, a story later adapted by Shakespeare. Local spirits in the west of Ireland trace descent from Lir, among them Áine, mad goddess of Munster, and Sionnan, goddess of the Sionnan River. Nuadhú's Court stands united; Lir's Children suffer the attritions and humiliations of a mortal family. The land is firm, the sea tosses.

## Minor Aos sí

These creatures are found in the Irish folklore and sagas. They may be encountered in most of unsettled Ireland. The To Banish and To Control listings show the amount that a magician would need to control or banish such a creature. For those creatures that have some magical abilities, their Talents are listed. We have purposely not given Magic Limits and Personal Life force listings for most creatures, as this would vary by creature and should be tailored by the gamemaster to suit his needs.

**B**achlach (BOKH-lukh; churlish one): A tall, flabby ogre with warted black skin. Bachlachs guard magic wells, cauldrons, and aos sí cattle. The name can mean "serf," suggesting a sí version of the cagey yokels from whom lords collect their harvests. Some bachlachs work in husband-and-wife pairs. They have sundry magical powers, such as Glamour.

SIZ 25	Move 4	Major Wound 25
DEX 8	Damage 8d6	Unconscious 13
STR 20	Heal Rate 5	Knock Down 25
CON 25	Hit Points 50	Armor 12
APP 8		

Avoidance: 0

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 100

Attacks: club 13. Grapple 15 does 3d6 damage.

To Banish: 120 To Control: 60

Talents: Glamour 10, perhaps others.

**B**rollachan (BRAHL-lukh-un; flux-being): A shapeless creature that appears as a swirl of fog or a puddle of bog-muck with a few human attributes, such as grasping hands or staring eyes. They frighten, but do not attack, characters in folklore (maybe the people they attack don't live to report it). Often encountered as the child or familiar of a fuath (below). It only takes 1/4 damage from any but magical weapons.

SIZ 10	Move 5	Major Wound 15
DEX 20	Damage 3d6	Unconscious 6
STR 15	Heal Rate 5	Knock Down 10
CON 15	Hit Points 25	Armor 5

Avoidance: 10

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 100

Attacks: Thrashing about 10, doing 4d6 damage.

To Banish: 100 To Control: 75

**B**ruíon Sí (BREEUN SHEE; faerie hostel): Irish chieftains retain "hostel-keepers" who lend their ráths and larders to important guests. The bruíon sí are hostels maintained by Irish gods. Cailleachs, bachlachs, or fear dearg govern them in the name of a Tuath Dé Danu





king. They appear as ruins most of the time, but transform into iron dúns or castles with the passing of the Samhain mists. Mortal chieftains invited to a *bruíon sí* are being tested by the sovereignty gods; passing the tests may earn them a magic cauldron or an expanded chieftainship. Failure means death; the iron hostel, lit underneath by an inexplicable fire, becomes an iron cauldron of sacrifice from which the chieftain cannot escape. Ireland has five famous faerie hostels: The Hostel of Da Dearga ("The Red God"); of Da Coga ("The War God"), of Mac Da Ré ("Son of the Moon God"), of Mac Da Tó ("Son of the Silent God"), and of Forgall Manach ("Speaker of the Menapii," a Gaulish tribe). All are located in or near Meath, the province of sovereignty. Ambient Life Force: none — only the hostel's owners, or Christians, can do magic there.

**Cailleach** (KOLL-yukh; veiled one): Crones with faces veiled by shadowy cloaks, the cailleachs are handmaidens of the Mórríoghain. They test, mock, and tempt young heroes. They invented the martial arts; Cú Chulainn's war-mentor Scathách ("shadowy") was a cailleach. They appear as ugly incarnations of the land-goddesses, amazons who teach war and satire, and / or the wicked witches of folklore.

SIZ 8                      Move 4(+2)                      Major Wound 11  
DEX 14                    Damage 5d6                      Unconscious 5

STR 21                    Heal Rate 3                      Knock Down 8  
CON 11                   Hit Points 19                    Armor 11 (magic)  
APP 7

Modifier to Valorous: -5

Glory to Kill: 200

Attacks: Great Spear 14, Craoiseach 22, Sword 19

Significant Skills: Celestial Lore 17, Faerie Lore 21, First Aid 9, Folk Lore 20, Religion (Pagan) 14, Sight 18

To Banish / Control: Impossible

Talents: Animal Friend 7, Curse 19, Divination 15, Necromancy 12, Summon Faerie Creature 14, Weather Control 14.

**Capall-Uisce** (KOP-ul USH-kuh; water-mare): An echo of Lir's rebellious equine daughters. Gentle at first, she later bolts into a loch or river, taking her master to his death. He can reign her in by overcoming his own Selfish +8 — his attachment to her — with Horsemanship; success saves his life and tames the horse. Yet some capall-uisces are cruel, untameable creatures who wade ashore at night to trample children and lead stallions astray.

SIZ 25                    Move 12                      Major Wound 25  
DEX 40                    Damage 5d6                    Unconscious 12  
STR 25                    Heal Rate 5                    Knock Down 25



Bachel Guarding a Faerie Cow



CON 25      Hit Points 50      Armor 5  
 Avoidance: 15  
 Modifier to Valorous: 5  
 Glory to Kill: 100  
 Attacks: Trample @10  
 To Banish: 100    To Control: 150 (they're stubborn)  
 Talents:

**C**oraniaids (kor-an-ih-AH-ids; gremlins): When the Tuath Dé Danu departed the surface of Ireland, they left behind five faerie agents in each province "to stir up strife and trouble among the Irish people." Usually, these agents create a contest or challenge which leads tuaths into war, just as the Greek gods' beauty contest sparked the war of the Iliad. The ancestors of the Seed of Lugh and the Eoghanacta fought a war when Yew Man, a diminutive aos sí poet, promised to serve the winners: the war was bitter and inconclusive, and Yew Man today serves nobody. Gaelic has no name for Ireland's twenty-five divine trouble-makers, but a parallel Cymric myth provides the term "coraniaid." These were a race of invisible dwarves who could hear all words spoken in Britain, and who used this omniscience to dissolve the social glue of secrecy and trust. "Coraniaids" are thus Celtic "gremlins" who sabotage tuath politics. They can only be detected with a critical Sight roll, unless they choose to be found.

SIZ 15	Move 4	Major Wound 20
DEX 20	Damage 5d6	Unconscious 9
STR 15	Heal Rate 4	Knock Down 15
CON 20	Hit Points 35	Armor 12
APP 10		

Avoidance: 20

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 150

Significant Skills: Awareness 25, Sight 13

Attacks: Craoiseach 12, Sling 15, Sword 13

To Banish: 180    To Control: 90

Talents: Dispel 18, Emotion 17, Glamour 16

**C**ú Sí (KOO SHEE; Faerie Hound): Bruion sí and other faerie places may be guarded by these horrors: dark-green Irish wolfhounds, each one the size of a small bull. They run without making noise, regenerate damage as a Fomhórach, and in some cases have the death-gaze of a basilisk. Despite this, they are said to respect the territory of mortal dogs and wolves, and may back down from a growling dog whose master they would blithely destroy. (Bear it in mind the next time your dog "growls at nothing.")

SIZ 24	Move 5	Major Wound 12
DEX 20	Damage 8d6	Unconscious 9
STR 26	Heal Rate 4	Knock Down 24
CON 12	Hit Points 36	Armor 14

Avoidance: 0

Modifier to Valorous: -5

Glory to Kill: 150

Attacks: Bite 14

To Banish: 80    To Control: 40

**F**ear Dearg (FYER DJERG; red man): Troops of Irish vampires with red skin, red eyes and teeth, and spongy heads moistened by human plasma. They serve Bodhbh Dearg by snatching geas-breaking nobles, whose sacrificed blood is the "pollen" from which Ireland's "honey" — its fertility — is forged. No more evil than mosquitoes.

SIZ 12	Move 6	Major Wound 40
DEX 12	Damage 8d6	Unconscious 13
STR 35	Heal Rate 7	Knock Down 12
CON 40	Hit Points 52	Armor 20
APP 14		

Modifier to Valorous: -15

Glory to Kill: 250

Attacks: barbed Craoiseach 25; if disarmed uses 2 claws at 20 each, for normal damage.

To Banish: 240    To Control: 120

**F**ear Gorta (FYER GAHR-tuh; hunger man): A skeletal beggar who, when his plea for alms is refused, brings unquenchable hunger to the refuser, or starvation to his tuath. The herald of famine. He may be the ghost of a starved man, a pagan spirit of blight, or Christ's vengeance on the uncharitable.

To Banish: 60    To Control: Impossible

**F**ir Cleas (FER KLES; men of feats): Name for two clans of aos sí who live in the northern sky. They war constantly for the favor of their goddess-queen, and as they are all masters of the martial arts, their fighting resembles an elegant, complex dance. This dance-fighting is visible to humans as the aurora borealis. The red sky beneath an aurora is their spilled blood, and the bloodstones found in the Orkneys and Hebrides are the same substance in crystal form, exploitable by a wise magician ("fuil sí;" faerie blood). Humans never visit their courts.

Banish/Control: Impossible.

**F**ochan (FAHKH-un; sub-human): Tall, scaly troll with one eye, one arm, and one leg upon which he hops. Wields a flail or other harvest tool as a weapon. Haunting fallow or bogged-over fields, these agricultural demons are the foot-soldiers of the Fomhórach race.

SIZ 20	Move 3	Major Wound 12
DEX 13	Damage 6d6	Unconscious 8
STR 18	Heal Rate 3	Knock Down 20
CON 12	Hit Points 32	Armor 10

Avoidance: 0

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 150





Attacks: Flail 12

To Banish: 60 To Control: 30

**Fóidín Mearaí** (FOW-djeen mer-EEE; confusing clump): A clump of sod which disorients whomever treads upon it. Similar to the solas sí (See "Glamour"), but the victim thinks he is making progress when in fact he walks in place. Means of escape might include reciting a counter-spell like the Our Father, or being pushed off the sod by a friend. Clearly a weak point between Ireland and faerie-land.

To Banish: 60 To Control: Impossible

**Fuath** (FOOATH; hateful shape): Vicious cailleach linked to a bog or pool. She traps wayfarers in her bog or attacks them with a whip (non-magical armor only protects for half its normal value). She incarnates the bog's cancerous hunger, and its vengeance on peat-harvesters. Use the same statistics as a cailleach, but with a whip at 17.

**Gaoth Sí** (GAITH SHEE; Faerie Wind): Irish peasants believe that small cyclones or dust devils, especially those that arise on a windless day, are faerie traces. Even looking at the Gaoth Sí to learn its destination is bad luck, according to folklore. People who touch the Gaoth Sí unprepared are whisked away to Tír na nOg, or to a bad place. Touching the Gaoth Sí gives a magician +2D20 Life Force for Travel. No combat statistics are given, as fighting the wind is pointless.

To Banish: 20 To Control: Impossible

**Gaeancánach** (gyin-CAWRN-ukh; love talker): Handsome male faerie who lures women away into some ghastly erotic half-life. A male version of the leannán-sí.

SIZ 13	Move 3	Major Wound 12
DEX 16	Damage 4d6	Unconscious 6
STR 13	Heal Rate 3	Knock Down 13
CON 12	Hit Points 25	Armor 0
APP 25		

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 50

Attacks: Spear 13

To Banish: 130 To Control: 70

**Grugach** (GROOA-gukh; hirsute one): Evil trolls covered with matted hair. Dwelling in caves and forests, they represent the rude and crazy people at the fringe of Irish society. They covet human technology; a grugach attacks you, then releases you under geas to bring back some fabulous weapon. Magical banishment or control is impossible; the grugach is a warped human, not a demon or faerie. He must be defeated in combat.

SIZ 17	Move 3	Major Wound 18
DEX 13	Damage 6d6	Unconscious 9
STR 17	Heal Rate 4	Knock Down 17

CON 18 Hit Points 35 Armor 10

APP 6

Avoidance: 0

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 150

Attacks: Craoiseach 15, Spear 17

Banish / Control: impossible

**Leannán Sí** (lin-AWRN SHEE; faerie mistress): A) a sí temptress who leads men to their doom; B) a land-goddess avatar who anoints a king by marrying him. When her lover or his sons die, the leannán sí becomes the bean sí (female faerie; banshee), keening for her lost love in her tuath's woods and inverts.

SIZ 11	Move 4	Major Wound 20
DEX 24	Damage 5d6	Unconscious 8
STR 16	Heal Rate 4	Knock Down 11
CON 20	Hit Points 31	Armor 5
APP 25		

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: 100

Attacks: Dagger 12

Banish / Control: Impossible

Talents: Banish 10, Bless 20, Curse 13, Dispel 12,

Divination 15, Glamour 11, Heal 17

**Leipreachán** (LEH-prykh-AWRN; little one): Early stories distinguish between two kinds of diminutive faerie: the leiprea, midget-sized, and the leipreachán or lucharachán, mouse-sized (they turn up later as Swift's Lilliputans). Both dwell in miniature tuaths, are long-lived, conserve old poems and druidic secrets, and distrust big people. They shrink human guests to their own size, and entertain them with dangerous hunting expeditions against rodents and bees. The powerful leipreachán of recent folklore echoes the myth of the púca. Magical banishment or control is possible if they are faeries, but impossible if they are just another mortal race, like Tolkein's hobbits. The statistics here are for the mouse-sized one. For larger Leipreacháns, use regular Érainn statistics

SIZ 2	Move 2	Major Wound 12
DEX 17	Damage 1d6	Unconscious 3
STR 5	Heal Rate 2	Knock Down 2
CON 12	Hit Points 14	Armor 3
APP 13		

Avoidance: 15

Modifier to Valorous: 0

Glory to Kill: none

Attacks: Spear 16, Sling 14

To Banish: 40 To Control: 20

Talents: Animal Friend 15, Glamour 10, Shapeshift 13



**Péist** (PAYSHT; beast): Loch dragons. Current lore about the péists of Loch Ness depicts them as pleiososaurs. Intelligent, territorial, and hostile, they resemble watch-dogs abandoned by the loch's owning deities, protecting the magic well from which the loch sprang. Christian saints can overrule them in the name of a god greater than Lugh, or trick them into staying submerged "until Monday," that is, until the end of the world.

SIZ 35	Move 10	Major Wound 25
DEX 30	Damage 7d6	Unconscious 15
STR 35	Heal Rate 6	Knock Down 35
CON 25	Hit Points 60	Armor 15

Avoidance: 15

Modifier to Valorous: -5

Glory to Kill: 250

Attacks: Bite 15, tail lash 10. May be used against two different foes.

To Banish: 120 (Christians only)      To Control: 80

**Púca** (POO-kuh; unseen one): Nature spirits corresponding to Greece's satyrs. Formless, they can shapeshift themselves and others, using a Talent of 35, a personal Life Force of at least 12d20, and no need to rest or sleep if the magic is performed within its domain; the likenesses of deer, goat and hare are popular choices from a vast wardrobe. Each rules an untamed place like a bog or grove. Within his domain, a púca is God; he can be tricked

— with difficulty — but not beaten. If local humans respect his rights, he confines himself to blighting unpicked fruit on Samhain Eve. Shakespeare's Puck humanizes the being known as na smear ("The Destroyer"). Combat statistics would be beside the point.

Banish / Control: Impossible

Talents: Shapeshift 35

**Slua Sí** (SLOOA SHEE; faerie host): A) an army of the Tuath Dé Danu, noticed by humans as they march to war; B) dead souls crossing Ireland to Donn's House; C) sinners' souls rounded up by the Devil; D) an Irish counterpart to the Wild Hunt.

Banish/Control: Impossible.

**Uath** (UTH; shade): A shapeless phantom; elemental darkness. This creature can envelop men and sap their will, or restore it. It can also be a secondary form adopted by the cailleach. It can pit its Glamour in an opposed roll against one target's Valorous each round; Success = target rolls on Aging Table (*Pendragon* page 186), although the effects only last as long as the Glamour. Failure = Uath desists after three failures. The Uath has no body and cannot be hurt by mundane weapons. Banish and Control are impossible if it is a cailleach, but can be done if it is independent.

To Banish: 140 To Control: 70

Talents: Curse 5, Bless 25, Glamour 16, Heal 25

## GEASES

**F**OR IRISH STORYTELLERS, the geas (GESS) is a narrative crutch which explains why heroes do one thing and avoid another. This clouds its real functions, either as a life-long religious taboo, or as a transitory oath which is as strong as a religious taboo, but for a limited duration. A powerful pagan carries many geases of both types: vows which stay constant throughout his life, and short-term geases imposed upon him by his associates and his enemies.

Breaking *any* of these geases brings bad luck, dishonor, and eventual death. The geas does not alter a person's will, but it destroys his honor and destiny if he declines to follow its terms.

### Permanent Geases

Permanent geases are laid upon the character at birth. They forbid performing certain actions or interacting with certain persons or places which the person is likely to die from.

Often, this means forbidding behavior that angers the gods, and cancels the contract by which he entered the world, breathes the air, and treads the soil.

A druid or fili examines every child born into a family of consequence. If the seer envisions the child drowning in the Bóann on Bealtaine, he lays upon the child a geas "never to touch Bóann water between Samhain and Imbolg." Because death may occur *near* Bealtaine, the geas includes the whole season in which Bealtaine is situated. The fatal water might be *from*, rather than *in*, the Bóann, hence the stricture against Bóann water in general. A geas must be as unambiguously phrased as a proviso in a contract, which, in a sense, it is.

The idea of preventing fate may strike you as specious. Certainly, the character's life is a series of gambles, one of which he is bound to lose. But each person's luck is different; one person's charm is another's jinx. Geases merely post the odds. Geases identify the bad bets, insofar as a druid can divine them.



Some druids theorize that, if they knew every possible geas affecting a subject's fate, that person, by keeping all those geases, would be immortal. Other druids say that each action creates new geases, and a good druid can no more than advise his clients of the most obvious and the most threatening.

## Transitory Geases

Transitory geases are placed upon social losers by social winners. Having bested a person in war, in sport or professional competition, through a superior display of courtesy, or through sexual wiles, the winner has the right to take their life or — why not? — alter it. The Cymric word for geas, *gorfod*, is the root of the Cymric word for victory, *gorfoddedd*; winning, in the Celtic mind, is symbolized by the strictures you place on the defeated party.

**Geases In War:** The victor may impose conditions on a defeated enemy in return for sparing his life, a custom that influenced Arthurian romance: "I will spare you, in such wise as you journey to the Lady Elaine, and report to her whereof I have done ..." In *Pagan Shore*, this kind of oath is a geas.

**Geases in Other Contexts:** Any game, duel or competition can, by the consent of all parties, be played for geas-stakes. That is, the winner of a geas-stake *fidhcheall* game may impose a geas on the loser. This custom, too, has echoes in Arthurian romance.

**Geases and Courtesy:** When a character's actions costs him Honor or Hospitality, the offended party may impose a geas. This doesn't rectify the loss of Honor; it is simply the right of the victim.

During the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, the Connacht armies were in a situation of dishonor vis-a-vis Cú Chulainn: they outnumbered him 8,000 to one. Cú Chulainn stalled them by invoking his right to challenge the enemy champions. He had the right of geas against Queen Meadhbh; had the Connachta attacked him in great numbers, they would have lost Honor twice: once for surrounding a lone man, and once for breaking the custom he asked of them.

When a character places people under *slánaíocht*, he can place three geases on their conduct. He can, in general, ask other people to accept geases in return for any favors he is about to do them.

**Geases in Romance:** Several stories describe the geases imposed by a comely woman — often a chieftain's wife — upon her suitor. This reflects the Irish (and Arthurian)



Chariot Challenge Race





notion that a woman may impose tasks or conditions on the man who courts her. They are like the tasks forced upon Romantic Knights, but with the penalty of geas-breaking if they are ignored.

**Nature of Transitory Geases:** A transitory geas requires its subject to fulfill some limited goal ("elope with me") or obey a restriction for a fixed amount of time ("wear no armor for a year").

A transitory geas must be imposed in person, and just at a certain moment — the moment when the other party feels his own shame. Recognizing this moment requires a Courtesy roll. Failure means that the moment has passed. This rule does not apply to people who knowingly fight, play camán, etc. for geas-stakes.

No character is obliged to follow transitory geases. Geases like "kill yourself" or "betray King Arthur" are self-canceling, since obeying such a geas is at least as bad as defying it.

No transitory geas should exceed eight words. No transitory geas should place its subject under restrictions for more than a year. The gamemaster should modify, or ignore altogether, player-invented geases which violate his sense of fair play and Irish culture.

## Geases and Christianity

If the local Irish warlord refrains from murdering his kin or sacking churches because of some residual pagan superstition, it is just as well in the minds of the Irish clergy.

The occasional geas may conflict with Christian practice. A geas against fasting, or a geas against bowing in a wooden house, would certainly hamper any serious believer. If a character maintains geases at the expense of Christianity, he forfeits any Christian Virtue bonuses, magic, or Glory. He might also incur a yearly Worldly check, and a reduction in Love (God).

## Random Geas Generator

The tables below let you generate reasonably fair and realistic Permanent geases at random. Use them when conditions discourage you from inventing your own.

### Rolling a Random Permanent Geas

- 1) Roll 1d20 on the Random Geas table, below. Each entry directs you to one of the sub-tables that follow. Use those tables to fill in the bracketed, uppercase items.
- 2) If your character trained/fostered in a secular profession, and you rolled a "Never refuse the demand of ..." result, roll 1d6. On a roll of 4-6, re-word "Never refuse the demand of" to read: "Never refuse a challenge from."
- 3) If you trained in the aos dána, reduce ALL d20 rolls on ALL the following tables by -2. Other characters add their rí damhna generation number to ALL d20 rolls.
- 4) Show the results to your gamemaster. Discard results that will hurt the campaign.

### Random Geas Table

1d20	Result
1	Never ask a favor or reward of [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] while you are in [LOCATION] [TIME].
2	Never ask a favor or reward of [PERSON] while you are in [LOCATION].
3-4	Never use [TOOL] while you are in [TERRITORY] [TIME].
5	Never use [TOOL] in [LOCATION] [TIME].
6-7	Never eat [ANIMAL] from [TERRITORY] [TIME].
8-9	Never travel in [TERRITORY] [TIME].
10	Never enter [LOCATION] [TIME].
11-12	Never enter [LOCATION] in [TERRITORY] [TIME].
13	Never obey the demand of [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] while you are in [LOCATION] [TIME].
14-15	Never obey the demand of [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] [TIME].
16	Never fight [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] in [LOCATION] [TIME].
17	Never fight [ANIMAL] from [TERRITORY] in [LOCATION] [TIME].
18	Never refuse the demand of [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] while in [LOCATION] [TIME].
19-20	Never refuse the demand of [PERSON] from [TERRITORY] while in [LOCATION] [TERRITORY] [TIME].



## Random Geas Generator (continued)

### Geas Sub-Tables

Roll on the homelands tables in the Character Generation chapter of this book to determine random tuaths.

Territory	
1d20	Result
01-02	A random tuath of Ulster
03	Ulster
04-05	A random tuath of Meath
06	Meath
07-08	A random tuath of Leinster
09	Leinster
10-11	Your home tuath
12	Your home province
13	Tír na nÓg
14	Ireland
15-16	A random tuath of Munster
17	Munster
18	A random tuath of Connacht
19	Connacht
20	Anywhere

Time	
1d20	Result
01	When the moon is new
02-3	Between sunrise and sunset
04	On Bealtaine
05-6	Between Bealtaine and [roll 1d3: 1 = Lughnasad, 2 = Samhain, 3 = Imbolg]
07	On Lughnasad
08-09	Between Lughnasad and [roll 1d3: 1 = Samhain, 2 = Imbolg, 3 = Bealtaine]
10-11	Roll 1d20:
1-5	Roll twice
6-7	on Sunday
8-9	on Monday
10-11	on Tuesday
12-13	on Wednesday
14-15	on Thursday
16-17	on Friday
18-20	on Saturday
12	On Samhain
13-14	Between Samhain and [roll 1d3: 1 = Imbolg, 2 = Bealtaine, 3 = Lughnasad]

15	On Imbolg
16-17	Between Imbolg and [roll 1d3: 1 = Bealtaine, 2 = Lughnasad, 3 = Samhain]
18	When the moon is full
19	Between sunset and sunrise
20	Ever

Animal	
1d20	Result
01-04	Cattle
5-6	Sheep
7-9	Horses
10-11	Fish or aquatic creatures in general
12-13	Birds
14-15	Pigs, boars
16-17	Bears
18-20	Wolves or dogs

Person	
1d20	Result
01-03	Chieftain (or jarl, feudal lord, etc.)
04	Flaith (or huscarl or knight)
05	Bó-aire (or serjeant, reeve, bondi or squire)
06-07	Member of the opposite sex
08	Fomhórach
09	Member of own derbhfine
10	Aos Sí (or any faerie)
11	Christian clergy (or rabbi or imam)
12	Crafter, smith
13-15	Bard (or any musician, contuer, fool, filí, etc.)
16	Breitheamh
17-19	Druid (or Enchanter, Enchantress, Godi, or Witch)
20	Any Aos Dána

Tool	
1d20	Result
01-02	Any weapon
03-04	A spear
05-07	A sword

08-09	A shield
10-12	Armor (except for Armor of Honor)
13-15	Crafter's tools*
16-17	Healer's tools, herbs, bandages*
18-20	An axe

\* -10 to skills requiring these instruments if you do not use the tools when practicing the skill.

Location	
1d20	Result
01-02	The ráth, castle or other fortress of [PERSON]
03	A ráth, castle or other fortress
04-06	A ship or boat
07	A doorway
08	A Christian cemetery
09	A river-ford
10	A church or monastery
11	A crossroads
12-13	A cairn
14-17	A sacred grove
18-19	An iron house (bruíon sí)

EXAMPLE: *Geilghéis ní Laoghaire, a bard from Munster, rolls for a Permanent Geas, subtracting -2 from all d20 rolls:*

*d20-2 (8) Never travel in d20-2 (6) Meath d20-2 (19) between sunrise and sunset.*

*"Never travel in Meath between sunrise and sunset." As long as Geilghéis is in Meath, she should only travel at night. A druid foresees her dying in Meath; how, he isn't sure, but definitely in daylight.*

*Now she rolls a second geas:*

*d20-2 (1) Never ask a favor or reward of d20-2 (10) a member of the aos sí from d20 (10) anywhere while you are in d20-2 (4) a ship or boat, d20-2 (14) between Samhain and 1d3 (2) Bealtaine.*

*"Never ask anything of an aos sí while you are in a ship or boat between Samhain and Bealtaine." The filí who taught Geilghéis had a terrible vision; he saw her strike Faustian bargains with a dark faerie of Mannánan during Winter. Hence his wise geas upon her.*



Breaking geases on Christian principles earns checks to Love (God) and Pious. If, by breaking geases in this fashion, a character disqualifies himself from play, he retires as a holy hermit, rather than dying.

## Geases and Non-Irish Characters

Non-Irish characters have permanent geases — that is, things “fated” to kill them — but do not know it. One day, to their complete surprise, these people will die. On the other hand, Irish nobles have geases, and know it, so when they die, they will take a certain religious satisfaction in knowing *why* they are dying. The only real advantage in having geases is that the person knows five or ten sure ways to kill himself. The burden of geases may show one reason

why the Britons have not been eager to revive the druidic orders destroyed by the Romans.

A foreigner leaves himself vulnerable to transitory geases insofar as he courts an Irish lady, accepts *slánaíocht* from an Irish noble, or enters any challenge with an Irish character for geas-stakes. A foreigner may impose geases on the Irish only if he is under an Irish chieftain’s surety; in essence, he can lay geases in the chieftain’s name. This requires a Courtesy test at -10.

A foreigner who accepts and then breaks any geas suffers all the usual penalties (below). In any Christian knight, there lives a Celtic heathen who still fears druid curses and the powers of Fate.

In imposing geases upon one another, the Irish have the implied consent of a shared culture. For persons outside this culture, consent and understanding between the two parties







of a geas must be active and honest. Otherwise, the geas has no force.

## Breaking Geases

As a gamemaster, let your players know how you intend to interpret their geases. Consider the various ways in which each player-character geas might be violated. If a geas strikes you as vague or confusing, re-write it before it starts bitter arguments in play.

Interpret geases by the letter, not the "spirit," of the law. If a character is geased "Never to fight a Leinster poet in his house," he can shoot an arrow at him through the window, or fight him in the doorway with one foot on the ground. If you imposes a geas on your defeated foe, "bring me the magic sword of King Arthur," the foe may return in two days, with King Arthur at his side, and he may ask King Arthur to wedge his magic sword between your third and forth ribs, all without violating Honor or breaking geas or angering the men of Ireland.

Each geas costs 1d6 Honor when it is first broken; once broken, a geas is no longer binding. Having violated any geas or geases, a character will continue to lose 1 point of Honor each year for the rest of his life. A character who manages to earn a point of Honor every year can, with luck, forestall the catastrophe of losing Honor altogether.

If the character's Honor becomes negative due to breaking geases, apply that number as a negative modifier to all skills and statistics. Thus a miscreant with Honor -13 has so annoyed The Powers that all his skills and statistics suffer a 13 point reduction.

Breaking geas cancels all benefits from pagan religious virtues. Each broken geas also subtracts 1d20 from a magician's Life Force. Negative Life Force contributes to curse magic worked against the character from any source.

## Geases and Glory

Each geas maintained earns 5 Glory every Winter. Thus a character with 6 geases gains 30 Glory annually.

Breaking a geas earns 10 Glory. If the character breaks a second geas, the Glory award doubles to 20. A third broken geas earns 40 points, a forth earns 80 points, a fifth earns

160 points, and so on. A character who breaks 10 geases in a single year earns 5,120 Glory. This is pretty lavish. But he loses 10d6 Honor, as well; few geas-breakers will live long enough to collect the reward. Breaking geas earns Glory precisely because, brave and foolish, it defies the deepest laws of gods and men.

## Geas Guessing

The act of determining geases for an infant, or for a person newly initiated into a certain caste or role, resembles casting an horoscope. It encompasses such trivia as the date of the person's birth, the direction of the wind, whether or not the family dog growled, and so forth. Magicians with Imbhas Forosnai can exert 70 Life Force to discern a fuzzy picture of the subject's probable death, and coin geases accordingly. Magicians relying on lesser Divination, or the Sight, receive strong intuitions that this or that thing is unlucky. The un-magical majority bluff their way through this procedure. Whether the seer is a Merlin or a mountebank determines how fallible the geases are as an outline of potential deaths; they are never perfect. You need not duplicate this ritual in play.

Someone may, however, wish to learn the geases of a rival character (or monster or faerie), the better to defeat him. This is a job for the Teinm Laoidhte style of Divination. Its base cost in Life Force is the percentage of the subject's current geases (from any source) you hope to learn: knowing half the subject's geases thus costs 50 points. Depending on how well you know the subject, this base cost is increased by zero (close kin or friend, about whom you know everything) to 100 (never met subject, know only caste and tuath) points.

Lacking the Teinm Laoidhte, magicians can receive a hint about one or two permanent geases ("Being a queen, she might have geases governing her patronage of poets") with a Sight roll in person, or a critical Celestial Lore or Religion (paganism) roll otherwise. The gamemaster should roll these dice in secret, cloaking their real outcome from the players.

Geases have a skewed logic to them. Players should have a vague sense as to what professional or religious taboos a king, or a druid, would be warned about. If this is not true in your campaign, make your geases a little less arbitrary.



# IRISH CHARACTERS

## Character Generation



**I**RISH CHARACTER GENERATION expands on the one given in *Pendragon*. Its additional rules need not disqualify pre-existing characters from play. The system below produces random character types in a distribution approximating that of Ireland's population. Gamemasters may instead select one homeland as the campaign base, from which all Irish characters will originate. This ensures that all characters have common passions, and a reason for being together. Exotic characters — Christians in a pagan homeland, for example — can enter the campaign as fosterlings.

**British Colonists:** Characters born in Ireland after 530 may be descended from British colonists. Thanks to the influence

of local culture, they are considered "Feudal Irish" in every respect.

**Magicians:** *Pagan Shore* allows secular characters to be raised or fostered in the aos dána. Entrusting young nobles to a druid or friar was a common practice in Ireland. Your character's aos dána mentors were run-of-the-mill clerics or poets with no magical talents.

You may choose to play a magician, that is, an aos dána member born with the ability to work wonders. See the boxes below and on the following pages for details.

**Female Characters:** The Eachlach is a special roll reserved for female characters. A woman from any Cruithni, Érainn or Gael background can become an Eachlach if she meets the qualifications noted under "secular professions." Serving

## Magician Character Generation

**P**AGAN SHORE DIFFERS FROM *PENDRAGON* in that the creation of magician characters is integrated into the standard character generation rules. You can choose to play a magician of a certain type, then find a homeland capable of generating that type, rather than rolling Family Class randomly. A Christian magician can come from any homeland. A pagan magician must come from a "mixed" or "pagan" homeland. A witch must come from a tuath which includes a cailleach (see map).

Since you have decided to play a magician, you have a few extra considerations before you can begin play. These are explained fully in the Magician Character Generation chapter of *Pendragon*, starting on page 264. If you are already familiar with the procedure for generating magicians, then you should be able to use the information in these boxes to make a character.

### Magical Traditions

Your magical tradition was determined when you decided what variety of aos dána, cleric, or godi to play. If you were fostered by a member of one of these magical traditions, then you receive added bonuses listed in brackets with the father's class, found later in this chapter. Specific notes for some traditions are listed below.

**Érainn, Cruithni and Lochlannach magicians** use the starting skills for their gender and culture, but add 1 point each to Celestial Lore and Geomantic Lore. Other magicians use "magician" starting skills from *Pendragon*.

**Druids:** Any pagan who qualifies can become a druid, but most are raised in the caste. Basic and qualifying Druid abilities are listed in Character Generation.

**Breitheamhs:** A few Irish judges, if pagan, know minor magics which further their profession. Breitheamhs always have Midhir as a patron. Any pagan can enter this role, as detailed in Character Generation. A player-character Breitheamh is an itinerant judge who wanders from place to place solving legal disputes.

**Bards:** Base and qualifying skills for a bard are listed in character generation. The listed magic is only available to pagan bards. A Christian magician may of course have a bard's skills.

**Filis:** Characters trained as bards may qualify for filí status if they have a high Divination talent. Characters cannot be raised in this profession. Its qualifying skills are listed in Character Generation.

**Christian Clergy:** All Irish Christian clergy characters are nominally monks. Whether they stay in the monastery, or live as hermits, or wander around preaching, is a matter of personal vocation. Thus there is only one kind of Irish Christian magician: a monk or nun whose ability to work miracles earns the title "sanctus:" a saint. The skills and talents for such a character are detailed in Character Generation.

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**Witches:** An Irish witch is a female druid who serves a cailleach. She may even be the daughter of a cailleach and a mortal hero. There is no chance of rolling "witch" as a family caste; the gamemaster either will or will not permit you to play a witch character.

Witches are shunned even by most pagans. They cultivate curse magic, insults, bad behavior, and cruelty. When their tuath is endangered, they emerge from the woods to save the day with tactics the flaiith fear to use. The rest of the time, they live off tribute extorted by the threat of a curse. They incarnate the contrary. They are Trouble, and thus they are a sword for their friends, a sword against their enemies. They are Chaos, and thus they cull the weak from their tribe, and hone the strong.

Witches use male Érainn starting skills, physical statistics and trait modifiers. Find a witch's skill bonuses, passions, and so on from the "fostered by a cailleach" entry under Fosterage, in Character Generation. The skills needed to qualify as an Irish witch are noted in the aos dána section. All witches have the Strife Goddesses as a divine patron, without needing to roll. If instead you use the table from *Pendragon*, their patron is always Cerridwen.

**Godis:** A godi has Lochlannach starting skills, rather than magician starting skills. This caste is a catch-all of Norse magicians, and can represent a divine chieftain, a heathen prophet or holy man, or a warrior Berserk (able to Shapeshift into a bear) or Ulfserk (able to Shapeshift into a wolf).

A godi who chooses the Chieftain path has Thor (equivalent to Lugh-Balor) as a patron; a magician-godi follows the death-goddess Hel (equivalent to Donn), and a shapeshifter follows Loki (Crom) with a wolf or bear totem. Characters must be born into this caste.

## Irish Pagan Patronage

Irish magicians may roll on the following table to determine a divine patron. Each patron confers certain Talent benefits, as well as a geas which you must obey in addition to the geases you received normally.

Where this table differs from the one in *Pendragon*, as for example in assigning different qualities to Lugh/Llew, it merely reflects the multifaceted nature of the Celtic gods. The gamemaster may use either table, or, after studying Irish legends, develop his or her own interpretations. Roll a d20 on the following table, subtracting ten from the die if the character is male.

### Irish Pagan Patronage

d20	Result
-9	Crom
-8	Daghdha
-7	Donn
-6	Lugh Ildánach
-5	Lugh Long-Arm
-4	Lugh Sétanta
-3	Lugh-Balor
-2	Mannánan

-1	Oghma
0-1	Sovereign God
2-3	Aonghus
4	Bodhbh Dearg
5	Dian Céacht
6	Find
7	Midhir
8-9	Tribal Ancestor
10-11	Water Deities
12-13	Brighid
14	Caer
15-17	Land Goddess
18-20	Strife Goddess

Modifiers: -10 if male.

### Results

**Aonghus**, God of Youth, Love and Music: +5 Emotion, +5 Glamour; Never refuse a queen's request. Totems: Moccu the Boar.

**Bodhbh Dearg**, God of Sacrifices: +5 Divination, +5 Necromancy; Spend every Samhain in a pagan Sacred Space.

**Brighid**, Goddess of Smith-fires, Hearth-fires, and Poem-fires: +5 Bless, +5 Emotion; Always spend Imbolg in a pagan Sacred Space. Totems: Os the Deer, Bran the Raven.

**Caer**, Goddess of Dreams: +10 Glamour; Never refuse an Aonghus worshipper. Totem: Éachtach the owl.

**Crom**, God of Damnation: +10 Curse; Never obey the request of a Christian or a Lugh follower. Totems: Cú the Hound, Bran the Raven.

**The Daghdha**, Druid-God: +5 Glamour, +5 Animal Friend; Never wear clothes (including armor) other than a druid's robe.

**Dian Céacht**, God of Medicine: +10 Healing; Never refuse First Aid to one who requests it.

**Donn**, Escort of the Dead: +10 Necromancy; Never go clockwise around a cairn. Totems: Eoch the Stallion, Bran the Raven.

**Find the Filí**, God of Prophecy: +10 to Divination; Never tell a lie.

**Land Goddesses** (Bóann, Meadhbh, Mumha Mór, Áine, etc.): +10 Blessing; Always spend Bealtaine in a pagan Sacred Space. Totems: Bó the Cow, Epona the Mare, Os the Deer.

**Lugh Ildánach**, Master of All Arts: +10 Dispel; Never enter a fortress without announcing yourself. Totems: Cú the Hound, Tadhgh the Badger.

**Lugh Long-Arm**, God of Champions: +10 Banish; Never refuse a challenge at a ford. Totems: Cú the Hound.

**Lugh Sétanta**, Driver of the Sun-Chariot: +10 Travel; Never travel after dark. Totems: Eoch the Stallion.

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**Lugh-Balor**, Sky God: +10 Weather Control; Always spend Lughnasad in a pagan Sacred Space.

**Mannánan**, Sea-God: +10 Travel (at sea only), +5 Weather Control; Never ride a horse.

**Midhir**, God of Lawyers: +5 Summon Faerie Creature, +5 Glamour; Never fight without first offering to place your enemy under slánaíocht.

**Oghma**, God of Eloquence: +10 to Emotion; Never refuse a Harp challenge. Totems: Cú the Hound, Tadhgh the Badger.

**Sovereign God** (Nuadhu, Lugh, etc.): +5 Bless, +5 Healing; Never touch a person who has broken geas. Totems: Eoch the Stallion, Cú the Hound, Eo the Salmon, Tadhgh the Badger, Musc the Elk, Tarbh the Bull, Arth the Bear.

**Strife Goddesses** (Mórríoghain, Badhbh, Macha, Neamhain, Duibhne, Mongfhionn, etc.): +5 Curse, +5 Glamour; Never refuse a challenge from a Lugh worshipper. Totems: Epona the Mare, Bran the Raven.

**Tribal Ancestor** (Fearghus mac Róich, Eoghan Slave of Nuadhu, Conn Hundred-Fighter, Labhraid the Exile, etc.): +10 to Protect; Never refuse the request of your tuath's chieftain. Totems: As Sovereign God.

**Water Deities** (Lir's Daughters, River Goddesses, Nuadhu Neacht): +5 Healing, +7 Weather Control (Only to increase or decrease water and humidity); Never refuse to share a drink. Totems: Eo the Salmon.

### Totems

Many Irish cults include the veneration of animals. These animals incarnate an aspect of the god's energy. Worshipers can approach the virtues of the god by emulating their totem animal.

If your patron god's write-up includes a list of totem animals, pick one. You gain +5 Shapeshift for the purpose of becoming that animal. In return, you must accept a geas never to harm a specimen of that animal (if it is a wild animal, like an owl, or never to harm it between Samhain and Bealtaine (if it is a food animal, like a pig). Totems refer to general categories of animals, so that "dog," for example, always includes both tame dogs and wolves. The follower of an animal sub-cult indicates his or her allegiance by wearing feathers, furs or designs appropriate to the animal, and by taking the animal's name. You may decline to join any animal cult while still accepting your god's patronage.

### Irish Christian Patronage

Irish Christian holy folk do not have "patron saints;" they are the patron saints of future generations. Many, however, have a divine gift, such as the gift of Healing or the gift of Prophecy. These gifts entail obligations, intuitively known by the recipient, which are expressed as geases; they may also include the gift of communion with a certain animal. In fact, gifts resemble pagan patronage in every surface respect. But if the saint's ancestors once personified, for example, the Gift of Prophecy through the

god Find, it is unimportant; the saint knows that his gifts actually come from the Pan-Creator.

Céilí Dé members should roll for a patron saint, as in *Pendragon* page 272, instead of using this table.

#### Irish Christian Patronage

d20	Result
01-02	Gift of Authority (Lugh Long-Arm) +10 Protect
03-04	Gift of Bardship (Aonghus) +10 Emotion
05-06	Gift of Brighid (Brighid) +5 Bless, +5 Healing
07-08	Gift of Eloquence (Oghma) +5 Orate, +5 Emotion
09-10	Gift of Healing (Dian Céacht) +10 Healing
11-12	Gift of Mastery (Lugh Ildánach) +10 Glamour
13-14	Gift of Prophecy (Find) +10 Divination
15-16	Gift of Prosperity (Land Goddesses) +10 Bless
17-18	Gift of the Waters (Water Deities) +10 Weather Control
19-20	Gift of the Woods (Daghdha) +10 Animal Friend

### Natural Talents

Roll on both the *Pendragon* childhood and initiate natural Talent tables (*Pendragon* pp. 270 & 272) when you generate your magician character. Write these down on your character sheet and underline them to show that they are your Natural Talents.

### Traits and Statistics

Religious Traits are listed in *Pendragon* page 54. Find the appropriate traits for your character's religion and underline them. Remember to add + 3 to all your religious traits. Determine your Magic Limit, Personal Life Force, and Magic Protection as described in *Pendragon*, page 271 and fill them in on the character sheet.

### Talismans

Determine what magical talisman your character has as you begin play (*Pendragon* pages 273 and 284).

### Qualification

The qualifications for membership in Irish magical traditions are given with the father's Class tables, below.

### Graduation and Insight

Upon graduation your character gains 1000 Insight. Write it on your character sheet and spend the bonus point as you wish.



her chieftain as an herald, scout, and spy, the Eachlach has an enviable political clout and freedom to adventure.

Druids, Christian clergy, and poets (especially satirists) are other non-domestic roles assigned to women in the sagas. Warrior women are mentioned as well; for some their role overlaps with the devotees of the Strife Goddesses.

## 1. HOMELAND

This section concerns your home tuath, and its influence upon you.

### 1a Find Home Province

Roll on the following table to find your home district or province.

PROVINCES	
01-02	Ulster: The Long Isles
03-04	Ulster: Oriel
05-06	Ulster: Ailech
07-08	Connacht
09-10	Meath
11-12	North Leinster
13-14	South Leinster
15-16	East Munster
17-18	South-Central Munster
19-20	West Munster

### 1b Homeland

Find the Homelands table (at the end of this chapter) corresponding to your home province, above. Roll to generate a random homeland. Record its name, and be sure to note whether it is classed as Christian, Pagan or Mixed in religion.

### 1c Liege Lord, Current Home

Only Feudal Irish characters have lieges. Find your liege's name, if any, from the "Places" section.

If you are the child of British colonists, choose any castle within your homeland as your current home. Other characters live in cities, tuath capitals, or, most often, minor raths or castles not mentioned on the map.

### 1d Passions and Directed Traits

Examine the description of your home tuath. Find out to whom or what you are Loyal, and whether you have any unusual passions or directed traits. Generate these passions, as well as basic traits, Honor and Hospitality now. See page 116 for a discussion of uniquely Irish Passions.

### 1e Culture, Statistics and Starting Skills

Your culture is either Érainn, Gael, Cruithni, Feudal Irish, or Lochlannach, as noted on the Homelands tables.

Find your personality trait modifiers, starting skills, and statistic modifiers on the Cultures sidebar. Generate your physical statistics now, record starting skills, and adjust traits to reflect the mores of your culture.

### 1f Religion, Underlined Traits

Find your religion from the Homelands table, or pick one. Underline personality traits according to your religion (*Pendragon* page 54).

## 2. FAMILY

### 2a Name

Select a name appropriate to your culture from the following lists.

#### Érainn and Gael Names

Members of these cultures have a given name and, rather than a single family name, an extensive genealogy which they can recite to bored strangers at will. They indicate lineage using the words "mac" ("mok"), meaning "son of;" "ní" ("neee") meaning "daughter of," and "ó" ("ow") which means "descendant within four generations of." (The plural of "o" is "Uí," meaning "descendants of;" the Irish use it in tribal names). Your character might be named "Neasa ní Conall," but also "Neasa ó Eoghan," who in turn is named "Eoghan mac Suibhne," and so on.

Build a name using "mac," "ní," and/or "ó." If you are the direct descendant of a chieftain, be sure to include his name.

#### Male Irish Names, for Pagans or Christians

Aillil (OL-lyil), Anéra (on-AY-ruh), Aodh (AI), Aonghus (AIN-gus), Art (ORT), Bran (BRON), Breasal (BRYEH-sul), Brian (BREEUN), Cairbre (KOR-bryuh), Cathal (KAH-hul), Cian (KEEUN), Conaire



(KAHN-uh-ruh), Conall (KAHN-ul), Conán (kahn-AWRN), Conn (KAHN), Cormac (KAHR-muk), Criomhthann (KRYIV-un), Diarmaid (DYER-mudj), Donall (DAH-uh-ul), Eochaidh (EKH-ij), Eoghan (EH-wun), Fearghus (FYER-gus), Feidhlimidh (FEY-luh-mij), Fiachna (FEEUKH-nuh), Fraoch (FRAIKH), Labhraidh (LOV-rij), Laoghaire (LAI-yuh-ryuh), Laogh (LAI), Neara (NERR-uh), Néidhe (NAY-huh), Niall (NEEUL), Oisín (ah-SHEEN), Oscar (AHS-kur), Raon (RAIN), Rudhraighe (RUR-i-yuh), Sreang (SHRONG), Suibhne (SOOIV-nyuh), Tadhg (TOYG), Tuathal (TOOA-hul), Ultán (ul-TAWRN)

**Male Irish Names, for Christians Only**

Mícheál (MEEKH-awl), Pádraig (PAWRD-rug), Peadair (PYED-ur), Séamus (SHAYM-us), Seán (SHAWRN), Tomás (tahm-AWRS)

**Female Irish Names, for Pagans or Christians**

Ailbhe (AHLV-yuh), Aillin (AHL-yun), Aoife (AIF-yuh), Badhbh (BOYV), Bláthnaid (BLAWRTH-nudj), Buan (BOOAN), Caer (KORR), Caon (KAIN), Cearnait (KYER-nutch), Clíona (KLEE-nuh), Clothra (KLAHTH-ruh), Daolach (DAI-lukh), Éadaoin (AY-deen), Earc (EHRK), Eimhear (EV-ur), Eithne (ETH-nyuh), Fann (FON), Gráinne (GRAW-nyuh), Liadhain (LEEUH-yun), Meadhbh (MEYV), Muirne (MUR-nyuh), Neasa (NYES-uh), Niamh (NEEUV), Sadhbh (SOYV)

**Female Irish Names, Christian Only**

Brigid (BRIH-yudj or BRIJ-id), Máire (MAWR-yuh)

**Names for Feudal Irish Characters**

Many of these people have adopted French styles of naming. Choose either an Irish name (above) or a Malorian name (*Pendragon* page 32).







**Skills for Érainn and Gael**

	<i>Érainn</i>	<i>Gael</i>
	<i>M/F</i>	<i>M/F</i>
Awareness	5/4	5/4
Boating	5/0	5/0
Chirurgery	0/8	0/10
Compose	5/5	3/2
Courtesy	2/2	3/3
Dancing	3/2	3/2
Faerie Lore	3/3	2/2
Falconry	0/0	0/0
First Aid	2/10	2/10
Fishing	3/2	2/0
Flirting	2/3	3/4
Folk Lore	5/4	2/0
Gaming	2/2	2/2
Heraldry	0/0	0/0
Hunting	3/1	2/1
Industry	1/4	0/3
Intrigue	2/2	3/3
Orate	10/2	8/1
Play (Harp)	5/4	4/2
Read (Ogham)	2/0	1/0
Read (Glyphs)	2/1	1/1
Recognize	2/4	3/5
Religion (...)	3/3	2/2
Romance	0/0	0/0
Singing	2/4	2/4
Stewardship	3/3	2/4
Swimming	2/2	2/2
Tourney	0/0	0/0
Battle	2/1	2/1
Drive Chariot	4/2	1/0
Horsemanship	1/0	2/1
Sword	5/2	5/0
Great Sword	3/0	2/0
Lance	0/0	0/0
Spear	3/1	7/0
Craoiseach	7/0	3/0
Great Spear	2/0	0/0
Dagger	3/3	3/3
Javelin	5/0	5/0
Great Axe	0/0	2/0
Sling	3/0	1/0
SIZ	+1	0
DEX	0	0
STR	0	0
CON	+2	+3
APP	0	0
Cultural Weapon	Craoiseach	Spear
Trait Modifiers	Vengeful +2	Vengeful +1
	Indulgent +2	Energetic +1
	Reckless +1	Indulgent +1
	Proud +2	

**Names For Cruithni Characters**

The Cruithni are as likely to have Irish names as to draw from the short Pictish name list in *Pendragon* on page 110. They show lineage using mac, ní, and ó.

**Names For Lochlannach Characters**

The Lochlannach use names from their own language, though their admiration for Ireland's ruling dynasty has made Njal (Niall) a popular choice for Irish-born sons. They show lineage using the suffixes —sson and —dotter, as in Sitric Einarsson, "Sitric the son of Einar."

**Lochlannach Male Names**

Ari, Bjorn, Einar, Eirik, Grim, Gunnar, Hakon, Harald, Halfdan, Hjalti, Hrothgar, Ivarr, Ketil, Knut, Leif, Njal, Odd, Olaf, Ragnar, Sigurd, Sigmund, Sitric, Snorri, Svein, Thorgrim, Thorvar, Ulf, Yngvar

**Lochlannach Female Names**

Asa, Astrid, Bera, Freydis, Grimhild, Gudrid, Gunnhild, Helga, Hild, Ingirid, Ingunn, Ragnhild, Sigrid, Thora, Thurid, Unn, Valgerd, Vigdis

**2b Son Number / Rí Damhna  
Generation Number**

For Feudal and Lochlannach characters, determine a "son number" as in *Pendragon*.

For all other Irish characters, roll 1d20 to find your position in the tuath's rí damhna:

**Generation Number**

<i>d20 Roll</i>	<i>Result</i>
01-02	Generation 4: You are the brother, sister or cousin of a chieftain.
03-06	Generation 3: You are the son, daughter, nephew or niece of a chieftain.
07-12	Generation 2: You are the grandson, grand-daughter, grand-niece or grand-nephew of a chieftain.
13-20	Generation 1: A chieftain was your great-grandfather.

**Modifiers:** Gaels roll at -5

Record this "Generation Number" on scratch paper. It modifies many subsequent rolls to find your initial training and Glory.

**2c Family or Fosterfamily Class**

The Homelands table either assigns you to a background class, or tells which of the Family Class Tables you are to consult.



Some *Pagan Shore* characters are fostered to learn caste skills away from their parents. Consult the Fosterage Table (below). If your character was fostered, record your foster-family's name, location, and class.

### Family Class Tables

Each of these tables requires a d6 roll to determine a (vertical) column and a second d6 roll to determine a (horizontal) row. The column roll shows whether you learned a secular profession or an aos dána profession. The row shows the actual profession.

If your result is the left-hand (Secular) column, roll again to find a row. This side of the table assigns professions according to wealth. Irish characters add their Rí Damhna Generation Number; thus, the son or nephew of a chieftain rolls at +3.

Feudal characters add +1 to the "secular" column if they come from Leinster, -1 if from the Claim. Lochlannach characters roll at +1 if they come from a Lochlannach city.

The right-hand (aos dána) column organizes professions according to their degree of paganism. When you roll for row on this column, modify the result by +1 for characters from pagan tuaths, but by -1 for characters from Christian tuaths. "Mixed" tuaths carry no modifier. For feudal characters, adjust the aos dána roll just as you would adjust the secular feudal roll, above.

By cross-indexing rows and columns, you can find your character's exact background profession. For example, if you are from the Uí Maine of Connacht (pagan Gael tuath), a column roll of "3" and a row roll of "6" makes your father a druid.

	Family Class					
	Gael		Érainn		Cruithni	
	aos	aos	aos	aos	aos	aos
sec.	dána	sec.	dána	sec.	dána	
1-3	4-6	1-4	5-6	1-5	6	
Clergy	—	0-2	—	0	—	0
Hunter	—	—	2	—	2-6	—
Mercenary	—	—	3	—	—	—
Bó-aire	2-4	—	4-5	—	7-8	—
Bard	—	3-4	—	1-3	—	1-3
Flaith	5-9	—	6-9	—	9	—
Breitheamh	—	5-6	—	4	—	—
Chieftain	10	—	10	—	10	—
Druid	—	7+	—	5+	—	4+



### Skills for Cruithni and Feudal Irish

	Cruithni	Feudal Irish
	M/F	M/F
Awareness	10/5	4/4
Boating	1/1	3/0
Chirurgery	5/10	0/10
Compose	1/1	3/2
Courtesy	1/1	5/5
Dancing	2/2	2/2
Faerie Lore	10/10	1/1
Falconry	0/0	1/0
First Aid	5/10	2/10
Fishing	3/3	1/0
Flirting	1/1	4/3
Folk Lore	6/6	0/0
Gaming	0/0	3/2
Heraldry	0/0	1/1
Hunting	5/5	2/0
Industry	1/5	0/5
Intrigue	0/0	2/2
Orate	1/1	2/2
Play (Drums)	1/1	0/0
Play (Harp)	0/0	2/2
Read (Glyphs)	3/2	0/0
Read (Latin)	0/0	1/1
Recognize	2/5	2/2
Religion (...)	4/4	2/2
Romance	0/0	7/7
Singing	2/5	3/5
Stewardship	2/2	2/3
Swimming	5/2	2/2
Tourney	0/0	2/2
Battle	3/2	4/1
Drive Chariot	1/1	0/0
Horsemanship	1/1	5/3
Sword	4/0	2/0
Great Sword	1/0	0/0
Lance	0/0	7/0
Spear	2/0	2/0
Craoiseach	1/0	1/0
Great Spear	7/0	1/0
Dagger	1/2	3/3
Javelin	5/0	0/0
Great Axe	0/0	2/0
Sling	5/0	0/0
SIZ	-3	0
DEX	+3	0
STR	0	0
CON	0	+1
APP	-3	+2
Cultural Weapon	Great Spear	Lance
Trait Modifiers	Pious +2	Lustful +1
	Suspicious +2	Proud +2
	Cruel +1	Valorous +2



<i>Skills for Lochlannach</i>	
	<i>M/F</i>
Awareness	5/4
Boating	10/0
Chirurgery	0/10
Compose	2/2
Courtesy	5/4
Dancing	2/2
Faerie Lore	2/2
Falconry	2/2
First Aid	2/10
Fishing	5/2
Flirting	2/3
Folk Lore	2/2
Gaming	3/2
Heraldry	0/0
Hunting	2/0
Industry	3/5
Intrigue	5/3
Orate	3/2
Play (Harp)	1/0
Read (...)	0/0
Recognize	2/3
Religion (...)	2/2
Romance	2/3
Singing	3/2
Stewardship	2/3
Swimming	5/3
Tourney	1/1
Battle	3/2
Drive Chariot	0/0
Horsemanship	3/2
Sword	3/0
Great Sword	3/0
Lance	0/0
Spear	2/0
Spar	2/0
Great Spear	1/0
Dagger	1/2
Javelin	1/0
Axe	1/0
Great Axe	7/0
Sling	1/0
SIZ	+3
DEX	-3
STR	+3
CON	0
APP	0
Cultural Weapon	Great Axe
Trait Modifiers	Vengeful +1
	Selfish +2
	Energetic +1
	Valorous +1

<i>Family Class, continued</i>				
	<i>Feudal</i>		<i>Lochlannach</i>	
	<i>sec.</i>	<i>aos dāna</i>	<i>sec.</i>	<i>aos dāna</i>
	1-3	4-6	1-2	3-6
Squire	0-2	—	—	—
Clergy	—	—	—	0-1
Bondi	—	—	1	—
Sailor	—	—	2	—
Gallóglach	—	—	3-4	—
Huscarl	—	—	5	—
Bard	—	1-3	—	—
Knight	3-4	—	—	—
Trader	—	—	—	2-5
Thane	5	—	—	—
Breitheamh	—	4	—	—
Clergy	—	5+	—	—
Chieftain	—	—	6	—
Lord (Earl)	6	—	—	—
Skald	—	—	—	6
Lord (King)	7	—	—	—
Godi	—	—	—	7+
Jarl	—	—	7+	—

## 2d Fostered?

Roll on the following table to see if you were fostered, and by whom.

<i>Fosterage table</i>	
<i>1d20</i>	<i>Result</i>
01-15	Not Fostered
16-17	Fostered in Own Tuath
18-19	Fostered in Own Province
20-21	Fostered in Distant Province
22-23	Fostered by Foreign Lord
24+	Fostered by a Cailleach

### Modifiers:

- +2 if father was a Feudal Lord or Thane or Lochlannach Chieftain
- + Generation Number for Rí Damhna characters.
- +2 if Érainn

### Fostered in Own Tuath

You were fostered by family friends in your home tuath. Find a random Family Class for both your family and foster-family. Modify both rolls (above) for you native tuath, religion, rí damhna membership and so on.





### Fostered in Own Province

Using the Homelands tables, find another tuath in your home province, then determine your foster family's class, as above. Note that Irish characters can be fostered by Lochlannachs, pagans by Christians, and so on. Creating alliances between natural enemies is the goal of fosterage.

### Fostered in Distant Province

Find a random province other than the one in which you were born, then find your foster family's class.

### Fostered By a Foreign Lord

You were fostered in Britain or France. Use the Advanced Character Generation rules from *Pendragon* to detail your adopted homeland and skills.

### Fostered By A Cailleach

Like Cú Chulainn, you learned war and wisdom from a faerie amazon. Find the Cailleach whose lair is nearest to your homeland. She gives you the following skill adjustments:

- 10 points to spend
- +5 to Great Spear and Battle
- +2 to any other weapon
- +4 to Religion (paganism)
- +2 to Compose and Faerie Lore
- +2 to Valorous and Cruel
- 3 Honor

Directed Trait: Trust (witches and female faeries)

Two extra random geases.

Glory: 6d6+200

Loyalty (specific goddess or cailleach) 2d6+6.

[For magicians — Starting Talents: Curse 3, Divination 3, Emotion 2, Bless 1, Shapeshift 2. Restricted Talents: Healing, Demonize. Other benefits: Sight +3]

### Effects of Fosterage

Treat fostered characters as ordinary members of their adopted caste except as noted below:

**Skills and Traits:** Find your skill and trait bonuses from your fosterfamily class, but reduce them by -1 unless you were fostered by a cailleach. Then add +1 to those skills and traits which are from your birth-family class.

**Homeland-derived Passions and Traits:** If you wind up with two "homelands," retain both sets of traits and passions, but reduce all of them by -3. If this brings a passion below 8, discard it. If a pair of passions or traits are obviously in contradiction (Love: the Uí Niall; Hate: the Uí Niall), discard the lesser of the two. If two are the same, then take the greater of the two.

**Love (Family):** A fosterling has both Love (Family) and Love (Fosterfamily). The two passions are separate because

they may sometimes come into conflict. Find your Love (Fosterfamily) by rolling 2d6+6.

**Religion:** The religion of your fosterfamily may differ from that of your parents. If so, you may choose to convert. If you aren't sure what to do, test Love (Family): failure = conversion.

**Magical Tradition:** For magician characters, use the foster family's magical tradition, if any, to determine bonuses in character creation, not the tradition of the birth family.

## 2e Adjust for Family/Fosterfamily Class

Find the description of your family (or fosterfamily if you were fostered) class below. It lists bonuses to skills, traits and passions, as well as a pool of points for spending on skills. This represents your experiences up to age 15.

### Irish Secular Professions

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*All:*

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- +1 to Hunting, Stewardship, or Boat
  - +2 Cultural Weapon
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*Hunter*

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- 15 points to spend
  - +2 Awareness
  - +2 more to Hunting
  - +2 Javelin
  - +2 Folk Lore
- Glory: 2d6+20

*To Qualify: Automatic by birth. A "hunter" is a person of bó-aire rank who, due to the backwardness of his tuath, lives by hunting-and-gathering instead of agriculture.*

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*Mercenary*

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- 20 points to spend
  - +3 to Sword
  - +3 to any other weapon skill
  - Cruel +1d6
  - Valorous +1d3
- Glory: 2d6

*To Qualify: Anyone who sells his sword gains "mercenary" status, regardless of his skills.*

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**Bó-aire**

20 points to spend  
 +2 Stewardship  
 +1 Javelin or Sling  
 +1 Honest  
 Glory: 3d6+50  
*To Qualify: Automatic by birth.*

**Flaith**

28 points to spend  
 +2 Cultural Weapon or Drive Chariot  
 +2 Battle  
 +3 Orate, Courtesy or Javelin  
 +1 Proud  
 +1d3 each to Honor and Hospitality  
 Glory: 4d6+75  
*To Qualify: Automatic by birth.*

**Eachlach**

This is not an available family class, although characters may attain to this during play.  
*To Qualify: Any Weapon, Awareness, and Horsemanship or Drive Chariot at 12 each. Gain a Loyalty (Chieftain) of 2d6+3, as well as 3d6+75 Glory upon qualification.*

**Chieftain**

As per "Flaith," above, plus:  
 5 more points to spend  
 +2 Proud, Honor, and Hospitality  
 +1 Worldly & Just  
 +2 Courtesy  
 +2 Sword  
 +1 Religion (paganism)  
 Glory: 6d6+100  
*To Qualify: Only by election during play.*

**Aos Dána Professions**

The [bracketed] magic Talents listed with some professions are those gained by magician characters raised in that Aos Dána profession. Some of these professions also have bracketed requirements listed with the qualifications. These are the minimums required to qualify as an accomplished magician of that caste.

**All**

+2 Faerie Lore

**Breitbeamb**

20 points to spend  
 Courtesy +4  
 Just +1d3  
 Loyalty (tuath or liege) +2  
 Honor +1  
 Glory: 4d6+30  
 [Sacred Space, Protect and Dispel +2 each; Restricted Talents: Demonize.]  
*To Qualify: Just 10, Courtesy 15, Orate 10 [Sacred Space and Protect at 5 or more]*

**Christian Clergy**

10 points to spend  
 +5 to Chirurgery, First Aid, Orate, Read (Latin), Religion (Christianity).  
 Faerie Lore +3  
 Loyalty (Abbot or Comharba) and Love (God) 3d6  
 Glory: 5d6+50  
 [Banish 2, Bless 3, Curse 3, Demonize 3, Dispel 3, Divine Miracle 2, Heal 4.]  
*To qualify as a nun or monk, the skills and passions listed above must be at least 8. Priests and abbots in the Irish church gain office by election from the ranks of monks and nuns. Comharba are elected in the same way as chieftains. [Christian magicians also need Bless, Curse and Heal at 5 or more, and Divine Miracle or Divination at 10.]*

**Druid**

8 points to spend  
 +3 to: Chirurgery, First Aid, Read (Glyphs or Ogham), Religion, Lore, Orate.  
 +5 to: Faerie Lore, Celestial Lore, Geomantic Lore, Religion (paganism)  
 Glory: 6d6+75  
 [Animal Friend, Bless, Curse, Sight, Divine Miracle, Summon Faerie Creature and Control Faerie Creature +3 each; Glamour, Healing or Shapeshift +5; restricted talents: Demonize]  
*To Qualify: Must have all the above skills at 12+. [And four of the above talents at 10+.]*

**Bard**

20 Points to spend  
 +3 Compose  
 +2 Faerie Lore and Recognize



+1d3 Indulgent

+6 among Play (Instrument), Orate, and Sing.

Glory: 4d6+30

[Bless, Curse and Sight +3, Emotion 5, Necromancy 1, Dispel or Divination 2, and Healing 2; restricted talents: Demonize.]

*To Qualify: Compose 14, Play (instrument) 11, Orate or Sing 11, Courtesy 8. [And Emotion 10, Bless or Curse 10.]*

### Fili

*To Qualify: Must qualify as a bard, plus have Sight, Divination, and Celestial Lore 12+, and Necromancy 5+. For qualifying, add 50 Glory.*

### Ollaibh

An aos dána professional may be the child or fosterling of an ollaibh. Try to roll less than your Generation Number of 1d6; success means that you studied with the high-druid, high-bard, bishop, etc. of your tuath. Gain 50 extra glory and one geas.

### Witch

*To Qualify: Religion (paganism), Faerie Lore, Great Spear, Sight and Battle at 10; Curse at 5.*

## Lochlannach Professions

### Bondi

The bondi, or homesteaders, are equivalent in every way to the bó-aire.

### Sailor

18 points to spend

+3 Boat

+2 Javelin

+1 any other weapon

+1 Battle

+1 each to Cruel and Selfish

Glory: 3d6

*To Qualify: Sailors are part-time pirates. To join a longship crew, your character needs Battle, Boat and any weapon skill at 10 each.*

### Christian Clergy

Equivalent to the aos dána caste, above.

### Huscarl

As per Warrior, *Pendragon* p. 51.

*To Qualify: Must be selected by a chieftain during play.*

### Gallóglach

As per mercenaries, but the "other weapon" must be a spar or greatsword.

Glory: 6d6+50

*To Qualify: Sword 10, Spar or Great Sword 10, Battle 10, and Honor 5.*

### Trader

20 points to spend

+4 to Boat and Intrigue

+2 Orate

Selfish +2

Deceitful +2

Honor -3

Glory: 1d6

*To Qualify: automatic by inheritance. If someone from a different caste wants to work as a trader, he must build up contacts and capital by himself; this requires Intrigue 13, Boat 10 and Orate 10 at a minimum.*

### Chieftain

25 points to spend

Any axe or sword +2

Boat +2

Orate +2

Valorous +1d3

Honor +1d3

Glory: 6d6+100

*To Qualify: by inheritance, election, or appointment. Your father is a family chieftain who may or may not be subordinate to a Jarl.*

### Skald

A Skald is the same as a Bard, but replace Faerie Lore with Courtesy.

### Godi

15 points to spend

Great Spear +5







Read (Runes) +8  
 Orate, Folk Lore, First Aid, Faerie Lore, Celestial Lore and Religion (Odinism) +3 each.

Loyalty (clan or subjects) 2d6+6

Glory: 6d6+80

[For magicians fostered by a godi, add: +8 to Sight and +8 to one of Weather Control, Divination, or Shapeshift; +2 Healing, +1 Bless and Protect; restricted talents: Demonize and Glamour. For Berserks or Ulfserks, add Madness (Acts like an animal) 3d6 — this madness Passion can contribute to Shapeshift.]

*To Qualify: Only by descent from Thor or Odin, indicated by being born in this caste, or a Luck Table result. To function as a community leader or magician, you need Orate, Folk Lore and First Aid 12 or more. [for a magician godi, you also need Bless, Protect and Sight 5 each.] Berserks and Ulfserks can only qualify as Bondis, Sailors, Huscarls, or Gallóglachs.*

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**Jarl**

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As per "Chieftain," above, but add the following:

+5 points to spend

+1 cultural weapon

+2 Intrigue

+2 Honor

+50 Glory

*To Qualify: by election, inheritance, or appointment.*

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**Feudal Professions**

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**Squire**

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As per *Pendragon*.

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**Christian Clergy, Bard or Breitheamb**

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As above.

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**Knight**

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Equivalent to a bachelor knight from *Pendragon*.

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**Thane**

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Equivalent to a Banneret Knight from *Pendragon*, but add +2 Orate. This office can only be gained by inheritance or election.

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**Officer**

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As per *Pendragon*.

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**Earl**

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As per Lord, in *Pendragon*.

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**King**

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As per Lord, but gain extra roll on Luck table.

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**2f Generate Love (Family)**

Fostered characters require two Love (family) scores. Érainn, Gael and Cruithni characters do not subtract any "son number" from this passion. Otherwise, this works just as in *Pendragon*.

**2g Geases**

Cruithni, Érainn and Gael characters have a number of Permanent geases equal to their rí damhna number. One of these geases *must* be the mandatory geas (if any) of the tuath where you were born. The others may be determined randomly (see "Geases") or in consultation with the gamemaster. Some characters may have still more geases by virtue of training with an ollaibh or cailleach, or pagan patronage.

**2h Luck Table Benefits**

Roll on the following tables to enjoy the Luck O' the Irish.

**Modifiers by Province:**

Meath = unmodified

Leinster = unmodified, roll twice

Ulster = roll at -5

Connacht, Munster = roll at +5

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**Irish**

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d20	result
01	Family Heirloom: ancient bronze sword which adds +1 to sword skill. Weak Blade: it will break in combat as if it were not a sword. Value: 5 cumhals.
02	Famous ancestor, +100 Glory.
03	You have a charger.
04	You have an Irish Courser.
05	You own a splendid scythe-chariot worth 7 cumhals, or a suit of Norman chainmail.
06	Magic tattoos give you +1 armor.
07	Family Heirloom: gold torc worth 6 cumhals..
08-11	Family Heirloom: Ceremonial shield covered with intricate designs. Value: 5 cumhals.



- 12-13 Upgrade your outfit by 3 extra items.
- 14 You have a Conmacne Mara rouncy.
- 15 You have one Love Potion. Reduces Chastity and increases Lustful by 10, with no maximum, for one day.
- 16 You have two Healing Potions (each cures 1d6 Hit Points).
- 17 Family Heirloom: Harp that adds +5 to Play (harp).
- 18 Make one extra roll on the Family Characteristic table.
- 19-20 Family heirloom: Aos Sí cloak adds +2 to DEX rolls when being stealthy. Easily torn, rotted or burned by careless use. Value: 6 cumhals.

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*Lochlannach*

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<i>d20</i>	<i>result</i>
01	You have a blessed great axe, +1 to Great Axe skill when used. Breaks normally. Value: 2£.
02-04	Odin is your ancestor. +200 Glory.
05	You have a part-share in a longship. Check with gamemaster for details.
06-08	Cache of money worth 4£.
09	Cache of goods worth 8£.
10-11	You have a rouncy.
12-13	You have a charger.
14	Upgrade your outfit by 1.
15-17	You have a Magical Healing Potion, adds 1d6 once.
18-20	You have a blessed bearskin cloak. Adds +2 to armor. Priceless.

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## 4. CLASS AND EXPERIENCE

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In this section, you determine your character's adult professional role.

### 4a Age to Adulthood

You are now age fifteen. You may begin play, or age further ("Previous Experience," *Pendragon* p. 39) in the hope of qualifying for a profession.

### 4b Qualify for a Profession

You can enter almost any caste in Ireland. Most classes have a list of skills and passions which represent a minimum professional standard. Many professions, such as "flaith," can be entered automatically by those born to them — and by no one else. An unqualified character can always become a mercenary.

All professions but "knight" should be considered optional. Characters descended from Irish warriors, druids, and so on can be knighted at the start of play, perhaps by a friendly Irish feudalist like Duke Galeholt. The son of a thane, knight or lord should always be knighted if he qualifies.

### 4c Find Current Home

Most characters practice their professions in their home tuath. Irish characters with knighthoods are bachelor knights in the retinue of a Pale, Marcher Lord, Long Isles or Leinster noble, selected by the gamemaster.

### 4e Glory and Eineach

Each caste description gives a starting Glory for people born in that caste. Add the Glory for your foster-class, if any, to this score. Add 1000 Glory if knighted. Determine your character's Eineach (page 54), according to his profession, and write it in.

### 4g Outfits

The following lists are organized according to class and culture (secular Irish, aos dána, Lochlannach). Fosterlings use their foster caste's list, or the "secular" list if raised by a cail-leach. Feudal characters use *Pendragon* outfits, downgraded one level unless they come from Leinster or The Pale.

#### Aos Dána List

Select 9 items from this list if trained by an ollaibh; otherwise select 6 items. A given item can be selected repeatedly. Up to a third of the items you choose can come instead from the secular list, below.

Whetstone; sewing needle; tinderbox; 25 feet of rope; plain cross; 3 vials holy water; hymnal; fine silver crucifix worth 2 cumhals; small stone effigy of pagan god; chirurgery tools; Latin Bible; flask of good wine; missal bell; pouch of mushrooms, oak galls and rare gems worth 4 cows; 1 good-quality musical instrument worth 1 cumhal; wigs, masks and face-paint for pageants and ceremonies; 1 fine white robe or monk's habit; dress shirt and mantle worth 4 cows; sturdy work tunic with kilt or trousers; fosterling who adds +1 to





any one caste skill or talent, and is present on a roll of 13 or less (no more than one fosterling can assist per skill); holy relic (1d6: 1=fingers, 2=eyes, 3=teeth, 4=shinbone, 5=testicles, 6=splinters of True Cross); powdery stuff that flashes when you toss it in a fire; oaken staff; obsidian stone for sighting the sun; shamrock.

### Secular List

Secular characters may choose 3 items (+ *rí damhna* number) from this list, and (*rí damhna* number) in items from any other list. Thus a chieftain's brother picks seven secular items, and any four other items.

Spear; *craoiseach*; great spear; five javelins; a sling; one knife; Connemara pony; butchering tools; hook and line; tattoos; small bow and 24 arrows; sword; shield; 1-handed axe; Highland pony; Shetland pony; Celtic pony; Irish courser; Roman rouncy; trousers, cloak and cloth shirt; adequate kilt; extra set of winter clothes (counts as 1 point of armor); one *ráth* and its estates (equivalent to a manor); leather armor (4 points); hand mirror; pack of 4 ordinary

wolfhounds; 1 wooden unscythed chariot; kit with tinder, tools, a rope and a spare wheel; bronze torc worth 1 cow; 1 set of skirt, blouse, mantle and cape; two *céiles* of *bó-aire* rank who fight for you in wars; fosterling who functions as a squire on 13 or less; one curach.

### Lochlannach list

Lochlannach characters may choose 6 items from this list, and 3 from any other list. Traders pick twice as many items.

Great axe; axe; spear; shield; dagger; 3 javelins; trousers; cloth shirt and bearskin vest; 3 £ in trade goods; 1 £ in coin; cuirboilli armor (6 points); sword; vest and fancy cloak worth 120d; boy spar-mate who functions as squire on 13 or less; one market stall in any city earning 1d6-2£ per year.

### 4h Final Details

Finish your *Pagan Shore* character by determining his Derived Statistics and Distinctive Features (*Pendragon* p. 39-40) and Family Characteristic (p.46).

## HOMELANDS

**T**HIS LISTING DETAILS the different homelands for *Pagan Shore* characters. After determining the character's province in the character generation section, roll on the appropriate province table below to determine the specific homeland. Information for each homeland follows this format:

**Culture (Culture/Religion):** If many cultures are listed, choose one. The religion half of the entry describes the tuath as a whole. You can be a Christian, despite your tuath's paganism. Only characters from "mixed" or "pagan" tuaths, however, should be pagan.

**Passion (Passions and Directed Traits):** In addition to the listed passions and directed traits, characters automatically have Loyalty (Liege) at 2d6+6 if Feudal, Loyalty (chieftain) 2d6+6 if Lochlannach, and Loyalty (Tuath) 2d6+6 otherwise.

**Geas (Geases):** If you have any geases, they must include these tribal taboos. For a homeland with no "geases" listing, determine geases randomly.

**Army (Random Enemies):** Each homeland musters 25 Knight Values per space on the d20 roll allocated to it on the Homelands table; thus if you come from Corca Dorca (a roll of 1-4), it musters 100 Knight Values. The "Army" listing gives troop types followed by the slot they occupy on a

Random Battle Enemy encounter table. For example, this listing — Flaith 1 (1-11), Gallóglachs (12-16) Knight (17-20) — shows that encounters against the army of this kingdom are divided between Flaith (type 1), Gallóglachs, and Knights. This also shows who patrols the borders, and who will be summoned if the king is angry. Keep an eye on local Passions, above: the troops may fight Inspired against a hated enemy. The Leader/Follower bonus is explained in *Pendragon*, on page 263

**BERSERKER:** Many cultures field berserkers; use statistics from *Pendragon*, page 330.

**Bó-AIRE #1 (Céile):** Knight Value .50; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6-1; Skill: Spear 11, Javelin 9; Weapon/Damage: Great Spear 4d6, Javelin 2d6; Armor: 3; Hit Points: 24; Major Wound: 12.

**Bó-AIRE #2 (Kern):** Knight Value .50; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6-1; Skill: Sword & Shield 9, Javelin 10; Weapon/Damage: Sword & Shield 4d6, Sling 3d6; Armor: 4+shield; Hit Points: 24; Major Wound: 12.

**BONDI (Lochlannach):** Knight Value .25; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6-2; Skill: Spear 8, Javelin 5; Weapon/Damage: Spear & Shield 4D6, Javelin 2d6; Armor: 4+shield; Hit Points: 24; Major Wound: 12.



**BOY TROOP:** Knight Value .50; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6+3; Skill: Sling 12, Sword 18; Weapon/Damage: Sword 2d6, Sling 3d6; Armor: 4; Hit Points: 18; Major Wound: 9. The apprentice warriors of a Boy Troop often enter battle in pairs of friends or lovers. Hence their high skill: they always fight Inspired.

**FLAITH #1 (Chariot Hero):** Knight Value .75; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6; Skill: Craoiseach 15, Javelin 14; Weapon/Damage: Craoiseach 5d6, Javelin 2d6; Armor: 6; Hit Points: 27; Major Wound: 14. Can fight in chariot.

**FLAITH #2 (Buanna):** Knight Value .75; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6; Skill: Sword & Shield 16, Javelin 15; Weapon/Damage: Sword 5d6, Javelin 3d6; Armor: 6+shield; Hit Points: 27; Major Wound: 14. Can fight mounted.

**GAOIRMSLUAIGH.** Use Bandit statistics, *Pendragon* page 330.

**GALLÓGLACH:** Knight Value 1; Leader/Follower bonus: 1d6+1; Skill: Spar 15; Weapon/Damage: Spar 6d6; Armor: 8; Hit Points: 29; Major Wound: 15.

**HUSCARL (or chieftain):** KV 1.5; Leader/ Follower bonus: 1d6; Skill: Hammer 19, Javelin 17; Weapon/Damage: Hammer & Shield 6D6 (7d6 vs. plate armor), Javelin 4d6; Armor: 10+shield; Hit Points: 30; Major Wound: 15.

**KNIGHT.** Roll on the Random Battle Enemy Table, *Pendragon* p. 164.



**Long Isles Homelands**

*d20 Homeland*

- 01 Carlingford/Strangford  
Culture: Lochlannach/mixed. Passions: Hate (Thorgestr clan) 2d6+3. Army: Bondi (1-13), Huscarl (14-17), Berserker (18-20)
- 02 Cíneal Aonghus  
Culture: Érainn/Christian. Passions: Hate (Lochlannach) 2d6+3. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-15) Flaith #2 (16-20). Note: subject to Agonies of Macha.
- 03 Cíneal Fearghus  
Culture: Feudal Irish/Christian. Passions: Hate (Picts) 2d6+6, Loyalty (Gabhrán) 2d6+6. Army: Footsoldier (1-13) Gallóglach (14-15) Flaith #2 (16-19) Knight (20). Note: subject to Agonies of Macha.

**The Agonies of Macha**

**I**N ULSTER, CENTURIES AGO, the goddess Macha incarnated on earth as a mortal woman with the ability to out-run any horse. King Conchobhar forced her to enter a race against his heretofore unbeaten horses at the Imbolg festival in Eamhain Macha — even though she was pregnant. She out-ran Conchobhar's horses, but collapsed at the finish line in the agonies of labor, delivering twin children (probably the magic twin horses of Cú Chulainn's chariot) before she died. With her last breath, she cursed the jeering crowd of Ulaidh noblemen: they, and their descendants for 81 generations, would suffer the pangs of a woman in labor for nine days each year on the anniversary of her death.

Today, inter-breeding with the Cruithni and other local tribes has diffused the Agonies of Macha. Only direct male descendants of the spectators at Conchobhar's race inherit them: your character qualifies on a d6 roll of 1-2 if he comes from an Ulaidh dynasty. Victims suffer immobilizing pain (reduce all skills and physical statistics by 1/2) every year on Imbolg, the four days preceding it, and the four days following it. No magician, nor even any god, can alleviate this curse. In compensation, victims gain +3 to Drive Chariot and Horsemanship; this is the positive half of their Ulaidh inheritance.

- 04 Cíneal Loarn  
Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passions: Hate (Uí Niall) 3d6+4. Geases: Never refuse a request from a sí woman. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-10) Gallóglach (11-17) Flaith #2 (18-20). Note: subject to Agonies of Macha.
- 05-07 Dál Fiatach  
Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passions: Covet (Long Isles Kingship) 2d6+3, Suspicious (Dál Riadha). Geas: Never eat dog meat. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-18) Knight (19-20) Note: Subject to Agonies of Macha.
- 08-09 Dál n-Araidhe  
Culture: Cruithni, Érainn / Mixed. Passions: Hate (Uí Niall) 2d6+3, Trusting (Druids). Geas: Never refuse a challenge from a Dál Fiatach member. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-8) Bó-aire #1 (9-17) Flaith #1 (18-19) Knight (20).
- 10-12 Dál Riadha  
Culture: Feudal Irish, Érainn/Mixed. Passions: Loyalty (Galeholt) 2d6+6, Hate (Uí Niall) 2d6+3. Geas: Never eat horseflesh. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-3), Archer (4-7), Flaith #2 (8-10), Boy Troop (11), Gallóglach (12-16), Knight (17-20). Note: subject to Agonies of Macha.
- 13-14 Isles  
Culture: Lochlannach, Gall-Gael / pagan. Passions: Loyalty (Ketil clan) 2d6+6; optional Hate (Christians) 2d6+3. Army: Bondi (1-8) Gallóglach (9-13) Huscarl (14-17) Berserker (18-20). Note: roll 1d6 for family class: 1-3 Gallóglach, 4-6 roll normally.
- 15-16 Pomitain  
Culture: Lochlannach, Gall-Gael/mixed Passions: Loyalty (Godred), Fear (Witches), both 2d6+4. Army: Footsoldier (1-6) Gallóglach (7-11) Huscarl (12-18) Knight (19-20). Note: Character can opt for Watch and Ward experience: add +2 Awareness and Sword, and Suspicious (non-Manx) directed trait.



17-18 Surluse  
Culture: Feudal Irish/Christian. Passions: Loyalty (Galeholt) 2d6+3, Loyalty (Pendragon) 2d6+6. Army: Archer (1-5) Gallóglach (6-13) Knight (14-20).

19-20 Uí Echach  
Culture: Cruithni/pagan. Passions: Hate (Dál Fiachtach) 2d6+3, Trusting (Poets). Geas: Never lie to a poet. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-18) Flaith #1 (19) Knight (20).

### Oriel Homelands

d20 Homeland

01-03 Airthir

Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Covet (church office) 2d6+3. Geas: Never travel in Ireland two days west without going one day north or south. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-8) Gallóglach (9-11) Bó-aire #2 (12-15) Flaith #2 (16-20). Notes: roll 1d6 for family class: 1 = clergy, 2-6 = roll normally.

04 Ard Macha

Culture: Gael/Christian. Passions: Loyalty (comharba) 2d6+3. Army: Gaoirmsluaigh (1-11) Bó-aire #2 (12-14) Gallóglach (15-18) Flaith #2 (19-20). Notes: roll 1d6 for family class: 1-4 = clergy, 5-6 = roll normally.

05 Fir Manach

Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passions: Fear (Forgall Manach) 2d6+3. Geas: Never cross a creek or river by any means while it is raining. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-8), Flaith #1 (9-14) Berserker (15-20).

06-07 Mughdorna

Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passions: +3 Honor. Geas: Never refuse the demand of a man with one hand. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-11) Bó-aire #1 (12-16) Flaith #2 (17-20). Note: roll for family class as Cruithni.

08-09 Uí Cairthinn mac Uais

Culture: Gael, Cruithni/pagan. Passions: Hate (Dál Riadha) 2d6+3, Love (Goddess Lì) 2d6+3. Geas: Never eat salmon. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-13) Bó-aire #1 (14-18) Flaith #2 (19-20).

10-12 Uí Criomhthainn mac Fochra

Culture: Gael/Christian. Passions: Loyalty (Diarmaid mac Cearrbheoil) 2d6+2, Covet (The Dark Servant) 2d6+2. Geas: Never use a sword. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-20).

13-14 Uí Fiachrach mac Uais

Culture: Gael, Érainn/pagan. Passions: Suspicious (Uí Criomhthainn mac Fochra). Geases: Never ride lefthandwise around Tara. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-15) Wild Pict Warrior (16-17) Flaith #2 (18-20).

15-16 Uí Méith mac Fochra

Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Hate (Airthir) 2d6+2, Covet (church office) 2d6+2. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-14), Bó-aire #2 (15-18) Flaith #2 (19-20).

17-19 Uí Tuirtre mac Uais

Culture: Gael, Érainn/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Uí Niall Cíneal Eoghan) 2d6+6. Geas: Never accept slánaíocht from a person of Connacht. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-15) Wild Pict Warrior (16-17) Flaith #2 (18-20).

20 Woodsmen

Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passions: Suspicious (People of Meath). Geas: Never fell a tree on Bealtaine. Army: Wild

Pict Warrior (1-4) Bó-aire #2 (5-16) Flaith #2 (17-20).

Note: Roll 1d6 for family class: 1-2 = hunter, 3 = bard, 4-6 = roll normally.

### Ailech Homelands

d20 Homeland

01-05 Cíneal Cairbre

Culture: Gael/pagan. Passion: Covet (Tara Kingship) 2d6+6, Hate (Uí Brian) 2d6+6. Geas: Never travel from Bréifne directly to Ailech or Oriel. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-20).

06-10 Cíneal Conall

Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Covet (Tara-Kingship) 2d6+3, Loyalty (Colm Cill) 2d6+4. Geas: Never injure a boar. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-11) Gallóglach (12-14) Flaith #2 (15-20). Note: Cíneal Conall characters add +1 to CON.

11-14 Cíneal Éanna

Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Cíneal Conall). Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-5) Bó-aire #2 (6-18) Flaith #2 (19-20). Notes: Cíneal Éanna characters add +1 APP.

15-18 Cíneal Eoghan

Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Covet (Tara Kingship) 2d6+3. Geas: Never attack from behind. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-13) Gallóglach (14-17) Flaith #1 (18-19) Flaith #2 (20). Note: Cíneal Eoghan characters add +1 to Sword.

19-20 Uí Conall of Criomhthainn

Culture: Gael/pagan. Passions: Loyalty (Diarmaid). Geas: Never speak in court before a poet has spoken. Army: none. Note: The Uí Conall have no homeland. They live among the Uí Criomhthainn mac Fochra of Oriel.

### Connacht Homelands

d20 Homeland

01-03 Black People

Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Fear (Fomhórachs). Geas: Never fight facing the sun. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-14) Bó-aire #1 (15-18) Flaith #1 (19-20).

04-05 Conmacne Mara

Culture: Érainn, but roll for family class as Cruithni/pagan. Passion: Hate (Leinster). Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-20).

06-07 Horse People

Culture Érainn/pagan. Passion: Love (Horses). Geas: Never ride in a boat between Samhain and Imbolg. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-14) Knight (15-20) — these are horsemen, represented as poor knights.

08-10 Uí Ailill

Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Covet (Cruachu kingship). Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-11), Wild Pict Warrior (12-17) Flaith #2 (18-20).

11-13 Uí Brian

Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Hate (Cíneal Cairbre). Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-11), Wild Pict Warrior (12-17) Flaith #2 (18-20).

14-17 Uí Fiachra

Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Covet (Cruachu kingship) 2d6+6. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-10) Gallóglach (11-12) Bó-aire #1 (13-15) Flaith #2 (16-20).





18-20 Uí Maine  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Love (goddess Meadhbh).  
Geas: Never refuse a challenge from an Ulsterman. Army:  
Bó-aire #1 (1-14) Flaith #1 (15-20).

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**Meath Homelands**

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d20 *Homeland*

01-02 Ciannachta  
Culture: Érainn or Gall-Gael/pagan. Passion: Loyalty (Lady of the Launds) 2d6+3. Geas: Never travel righthandwise around Tara. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-12) Bondi (13-15) Huscarl (16-17) Berserker (18-20).

03-05 Cíneal Fiachu  
Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Hate (Leinster) 2d6+6.  
Geas: Never refuse a challenge from a Leinsterman. Army:  
Bó-aire #2 (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-18) Berserker (19-20).

06-09 Cíneal Laoghaire  
Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Covet (Bóramha) 2d6+6.  
Geas: Never swear slánaíocht with a druid. Army: Bó-aire  
#1 (1-12) Gallóglach (13-15) Flaith #2 (16-18) Boy Troop  
(19-20).

10-11 Fionnghall  
Culture: Lochlannach/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Dublin)  
2d6+2. Army: Bondi (1-15) Knight (16-20).

12-13 Pale  
Culture: British/Christian. Passions: Suspicious (People beyond the Pale). Skills, etc. as standard *Pendragon* character. Army: Gaoirmluaigh (1-6) Gallóglach (7-11) Knight (12-20). Note: for characters born before 530, re-roll to find a different homeland.

14-17 Tethba  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: +3 to Merciful. Geas:  
Never leave Tethba unless a brother of yours stays behind.  
Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-13) Flaith #2 (14-16) Flaith #1  
(17-20).

18 Clonmacnoise  
Culture: Érainn/Christian. Passion: Love (God), Loyalty (Ciarán or comharba) 2d6+6@. Army: none. Note: Roll 1d6 for Family Class: 1-3 = Christian clergy; 4-6 = bó-aire.

19-20 Westmeath Liberty  
Culture: Feudal Irish/Christian. Passion: Loyalty (de Ganis clan) 2d6+3. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-12) Knight (13-20).  
Note: for characters born before 530, re-roll to find a different homeland.

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**North Leinster Homelands**

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d20 *Homeland*

01-03 Dublin  
Culture: Lochlannach/mixed. Passion: Selfish +2. Army:  
Bondi (1-6) Gallóglach (7-12) Huscarl (13-20).

04-06 Kildare  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Love (Brighid) 2d6+6.  
Army: Footsoldier (1-6) Knight (7-20).

05-09 Laois  
Culture: Feudal/Christian Passion: Cruel (to slaves or serfs).  
Army: Footsoldier (1-6) Berserker (7-13) Knight (14-20)

10 Uí Brian of Cuala  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Loyalty (Justiciar)  
2d6+2. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Flaith #1 (15-19) Knight  
(20)

11-14 Uí Dúnlainge  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Hate (Uí Niall) 2d6+3.  
Army: Footsoldier (1-7) Archer (8-14) Knight (15-20)

15-17 Uí Feidhlimidh  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Deceitful (in politics).  
Army: Footsoldier (1-8) Flaith #2 (9-15) Knight (16-20)

18 Uí Garrchú  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Hate (Uí Dúnlainge)  
2d6+3. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Huscarl (15-17) Flaith #2  
(18-20)

19-20 Uí Maol  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Covet (Leinster king-  
ship) 2d6+3. Army: Gaoirmluaigh (1-14) Flaith #2 (15-17)  
Knight (18-20)

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**South Leinster Homelands**

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d20 *Homeland*

01 Fosterlings  
Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Leinster Kings).  
Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Flaith #2 (15-20).

02-04 Grey-Green Faces  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Trusting (Lochlannach).  
Geas: Never refuse a challenge in The Launds. Army: Bó-  
aire #2 (1-7) Huscarl (8-13) Flaith #2 (14-17) Knight  
(18-20).

05 Uí Bairche  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Hate (The Fosterlings).  
Army: Footsoldier (1-7) Archer (8-15) Gallóglach (16-18)  
Knight (19-20)

06-09 Uí Cennsealaigh  
Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Hate (Uí Niall) 2d6+2.  
Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Knight (15-20)

10-11 Uí Daig  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Hate (Deer People).  
Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Flaith #2 (15-19) Knight (20)

12-13 Uí Dron  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Love (Brighid). Geas:  
never fight on Imbolg. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-5), Bó-  
aire #2 (2-11) Flaith #2 (12-19) Knight (20).

14-16 Wexford  
Culture: Lochlannach/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Anguish).  
Army: Bondi (1-13) Gallóglach (14-18) Huscarl (19-20).

17-20 re-roll

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**East Munster Homelands**

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d20 *Homeland*

01-02 Deer People  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Hate (Elk People) 2d6+6.  
Geas: Never hunt deer between Samhain and Imbolg.  
Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-20). Note: roll for family class  
as Cruithni.



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|---|---|
| <p>03-05 Elk People<br/>Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passion: Cruel (to Deer People), Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Caiseal) 2d6+2. Geas: Never refuse a challenge in Deer People territory. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-16) Flaith #1 (17-20).</p> <p>06 Eoghanacta of Caiseal<br/>Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Hospitality +2. Army: Flaith #1 (1-10) Flaith #2 (11-20).</p> <p>07 Eoghanacta of Ox Glen<br/>Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Fear (Fear Deargs). Geas: Never refuse the request of a sí woman. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-7) Flaith #2 (8-20).</p> <p>08 Eoghanacta of The Rushes<br/>Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Covet (Caiseal kingship) 2d6+2. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-7) Flaith #2 (8-20).</p> | <p>09-11 Kingdom of Mercenaries<br/>Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Ox Glen) 2d6+3, -1d6 to Honor. Geas: Find a random geas, then reverse it: "never" becomes "always," "do" becomes "don't," etc. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-18) Flaith #1 (19-20). Notes: roll 1d6 for family class: 1-4 = Mercenary, 5-6 = roll normally.</p> <p>12 Ormond<br/>Culture: Feudal/Christian. Passion: Loyalty (Pendragon) 2d6+3. Army: same as Claim. Note: For characters born before 531, re-roll.</p> <p>13-15 The Claim<br/>Culture Feudal/Christian. Passion: Loyalty (King Anguish) 2d6+3. Army: Gaoirmsluaigh (1-8) Footsoldier (9-17) Knight (18-20).</p> |
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## Combat Skills

### Drive Chariot (new skill)

This skill covers the use of chariots in and out of battle. Use it in place of Horsemanship. Characters who know Drive Chariot can also drive wagons, carts and other animal-drawn vehicles with the same degree of skill.

The typical Irish chariot has two wheels and is pulled by two horses. A few huge chariots have four wheels and four horses. Rich, powerful Irish warriors drive scythed chariots — this means that a curved blade projects from each end of the chariot's axle, the better to mow down enemy warriors.

**Movement:** The pilot of a chariot must pass a Drive Chariot test to cross road obstacles or turn more than forty-five degrees per round (in combat), or to cross anything but smooth terrain (out of combat). Failure halts the chariot. The gamemaster may reduce the pilot's skill to reflect the severity of the hazard. A fumble destroys the chariot and inflicts 1d6 x 1d6 damage on all its crew and horses.

A chariot's Move per round equals to the average Move of its team, minus two. Thus, a chariot drawn by coursers has a Move of 7 per round. Very big chariots might reduce Move by -3 or more.

A chariot colliding with something at full gallop inflicts damage equal to its Move in d6. Scythes add +2d6 to this score. To cause damage, the driver must pit his Drive against the target's Dexterity (on foot) or Horsemanship or Drive Chariot (mounted). Each three points of damage already inflicted against a chariot reduces the Drive skill of its pilot by -1.

### Fighting from a chariot

Characters fighting from within the chariot's car earn the +5/-5 bonus for fighting mounted. Unlike mounted characters, they may use two-handed weapons. They gain +3 shield armor, under the usual rules for shield use, even if they carry no shield that round (they are partly covered by the chariot's rim).

Some warriors fight while standing at the intersection of the chariot's yoke and center-pole. This action has nothing to recommend it, except that it increases Glory. Fighting from the

yoke is the same as fighting from within the chariot, with the following provisos:

- Cut the character's Knockdown score in half.
- A character knocked from the yoke is automatically knocked from the chariot. He suffers 2d6 damage without benefit of armor. In addition, he constitutes a road obstacle (test Drive at -5).
- Increase by +50% (half-again) any Glory for foes defeated while fighting on the yoke.

### Weapons

**Craoiseach:** The craoiseach is a long spear with a thick, sharp-edged metal blade at its point. It resembles Japanese bladed spears like the naginata. Usable as a smashing weapon or as a thrusting weapon, the craoiseach is treated in *Pendragon* as a halberd.

**Sling:** This is the weapon with which David slew Goliath. It has the advantages of portability and plentiful ammunition. After the javelin, it is the most common missile weapon in Ireland.

Regardless of the user's STR or SIZ, all sling-stones do 3d6 damage. This damage decreases by 1d6 for each 20 yards of distance to the target. Like the flail, a sling strikes its wielder on an unmodified roll of 1 on 1d20.

Characters always suffer AT LEAST 1/3 of the damage inflicted upon them by sling attacks. For example, a sling attack that scores 6 damage points causes at least a 2 hit point wound even to a man in Gothic Plate. Sling-stones inflict concussion damage, which partly ignores armor.

Enemies defeated with a sling counts for 1/10th as much Glory as usual.

**Spar:** The spar is a poleax used by the gallóglachs. It corresponds to a *Pendragon* halberd. It may be a further development of the craoiseach.







- 16 The Union  
 Culture: Roll 1d6: 1-4 = Érainn/mixed, 5 = Cruithni/mixed, 6 = Lochlannach/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Eoghanacta of The Rushes) 2d6+3, Hate (Eoghanacta of Loch Léan) 2d6+3. Geas: Random, but must begin with the clause, "never fight ...". Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-4) Bó-aire #2 (5-7) Boy Troop (8-11) Gallóglach (12-15) Berserker (16-18) Flaith #1 (19-20). Note: For family class, roll 1d6: 1-5 = high-class mercenary (as gallóglach, but replace spar with craoiseach) 6 = roll as if Érainn/mixed. Add +3 to the following skills: Swimming, Falconry, Read/Write (all).
- 17-19 Uí Liathain  
 Culture: Gael/pagan. Passion: Covet (Caiseal kingship) 2d6+6. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-13) Flaith #2 (14-20).
- 20 Waterford  
 Culture: Lochlannach, Gall-Gael/mixed. Passion: Hate (Cork) 2d6+3. Army: Bondi (1-13) Gallóglach (14-18) Huscarl (19-20).

## Passions

**P**ASSIONS DIFFER for the Irish from their British counterparts. Use these changed and new passions when generating Irish characters in your campaign.

### Loyalty

Loyalty (Lord) is rare. A personal bond between liege and vassal is not the linchpin of society in Ireland, as it is in Britain.

Most Irish characters have a loyalty (tuath) score. Loyalty (Tuath) encompasses a chauvinism for one's lands and people, a piety for tribal traditions, and a fear of tribal gods. One can love the tuath while hating its chieftain, just as one can love the United States while hating its President.

### Love (Family) and Love (Foster-family)

Because Irish fathers do not leave everything to their first-born sons, their sons need not subtract a "son number" (birth order) penalty from the Love (Family) passion.

Fostered characters have both a Love (Family) and a Love (Foster-family) passion, each at 2d6+6. Love (Foster-family) covers both foster-parents and foster-siblings.

### Honor and Hospitality

The sláiníocht custom effects Honor and Hospitality. If you vouch for someone, and they lose Honor or Hospitality, you forfeit a like amount.

If a person dies from fasting against you, you forfeit Honor and Hospitality equal to 1/5th of his or her éineach.

Breaking a geas costs 1d6 Honor. Having broken geas once, a character loses one further Point of Honor every year until he dies.

I suggest the following optional rule for Irish characters: No character's Honor can exceed by more than 10 points the lowest Honor of any member of his derbhíne. For example, if the black sheep of the Uí Morna family has an Honor of 4, no one else in his derbhíne can have an Honor greater than 14. This rule makes characters morally accountable for the actions of their close relatives.

### Covet (person, office, or thing)

To Covet is to be obsessed with obtaining, and then keeping, a certain office, thing or person. You can attempt Covet Inspiration when fighting to get, or keep, the object of the Covet passion. You may gain a Covet of 2d6+3 if, when

appraised of some famous treasure or station within your grasp, you score a critical Selfish check.

You cannot Covet wealth and esteem in general; that's represented by the Selfish and Proud traits. You cannot Covet an object as a means to an end; Arthur's quest for the grail is driven, not by a Coveting of the thing in itself, but by his Loyalty (subjects), Love (God) and other virtues which the grail-quest will further. No, the Coveted object must be an end in itself; Queen Meadhbh Covets the bull of Cualigne, and starts the war of the Táin in order that she, alone, may have ... a really big brown bull.

All the members of one tuath may share a "collective Covet." For example, instead of Coveting the Tara kingship for himself, a character may Covet the Tara kingship on behalf of his home tribe. The character wants the wealth and prestige of belonging to Ireland's ruling faction, even if he doesn't envision being king himself.

### Madness (type)

Madness to medieval folk meant a disability of the intangible spirit: insanity, or an obsession or addiction, but also a neurological problem like narcolepsy. You might gain a temporary Madness from fumbled passion rolls in play. You might begin play with a Madness due to an unusual background. You might have an established character go mad, as a role-playing exercise. Madnesses must be specific, as in Madness (chronic depression) or Madness (thinks she's the Queen of Spain).

As often as once per scenario, the gamemaster may roll against your Madness score to see if, in a moment of great stress, you suffer involuntary Madness Inspiration. This subtracts 10 points from ALL of your skills if the roll was successful, or 20 if the roll was critical. It lasts at least one day, after which the gamemaster rolls to see if the condition lasts a second day, and so on until the roll is missed. A fumble reduces the Madness by one point.

Certain Madnesses, rather than reducing all skills, might boost one skill by +10 and leave as many as three other skills unaffected. The classic drunken poet would, when Inspired by Madness, add +10 to Compose; leave Orate, Play (Harp) and Sing unaltered, and reduce all other skills by -10. Work with your gamemaster to customize the effects of your Madness.



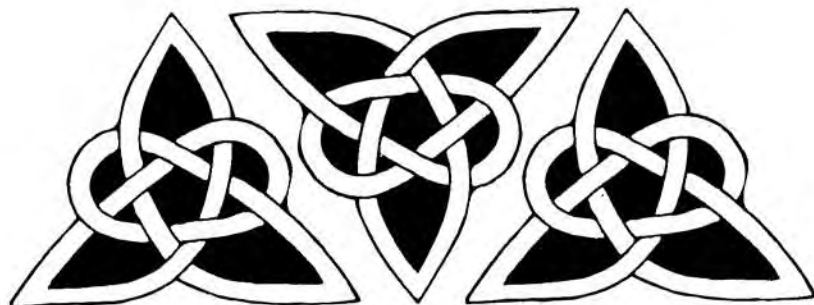
**South-Central Munster Homelands**

- d20* *Homeland*
- 01-02 Black People of the Marshes  
Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passion: Love (St. Bréanainn). Geas: Never refuse the request of a ghost. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-17) Flaith #1 (19-20).
- 03-05 Cork  
Culture: Gael or Lochlannach/Christian. Passion: Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Pond Fort) 2d6+2. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-6) Huscarl (7-13) Gallóglaich (14-20).
- 06 Eoghanacta of Loch Léan  
Culture: Gael/pagan. Passion: Covet (Caiseal Kingship) 2d6+6. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-16) Flaith #2 (17-20).
- 07 Eoghanacta of Pond Fort  
Culture: Gael/Christian. Passion: Hate (Eoghanacta of Loch Léan) 2d6+3. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-14) Flaith #2 (15-20).
- 08-09 Golden Vale  
Culture: Érainn/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Family chieftain), Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Caiseal). Army: none. Notes: All characters from here belong to micro-tuaths. Roll 1d6 for rí damhna generation number: 1-4 = 3, 5-6 = 4.
- 10-11 Plainsmen  
Culture: Érainn/Christian. Passion: Fear (Druids) 2d6+6, Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Caiseal) 2d6+6. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-12) Flaith #1 (13-20). Note: members add +2 to Horsemanship and Drive Chariot.
- 12-14 Seed of Lugh  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Suspicious (Seed of the Dark One), Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Pond Fort) 2d6+4. Geas: Never enter Tara unless a kinsmen is king there. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-7) Flaith #2 (8-17) Berserker (18-20).
- 15-17 Seed of the Dark One  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Love (Duibhne) 2d6+6, Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Loch Léan) 2d6+3. Geas: Never befriend a Lugh cultist, or a Christian, without fighting him first. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-13) Bó-aire #1 (14-17) Flaith #1 (18-20). Note: Family class is secular on a 1d6 roll of 1, aos dána otherwise.

- 18-20 Uí Fiodhgente  
Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Hate (Eoghanacta) 2d6+4. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-14) Flaith #2 (15-20).

**West Munster Homelands**

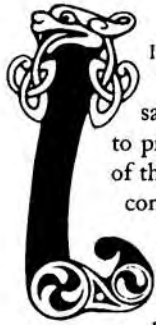
- d20* *Homeland*
- 01-02 Desmond  
Culture: Feudal/mixed. Passion: Hate (Butler dynasty) 2d6+4. Army: Flaith #2 (1-14) Knight (15-20). Note: for character born before 529, re-roll.
- 03-05 Dál Cas  
Culture: Gael/pagan. Passion: Hate (Lochlannach). Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-8) Flaith #2 (9-17) Berserker (18-20).
- 06-08 Eoghanacta of Áine  
Culture: Gael/mixed. Passion: Covet (Caiseal kingship) 2d6+4, Madness (Any) 3d6-6 (a result of no madness is possible). Geas: Never cast a spear at a sí mound, or a thing upon it. Army: Bó-aire #2 (1-13) Flaith #2 (14-18) Berserker (19-20).
- 09-11 Eoghanacta of Aran  
Culture: Gael/pagan. Passion: Proud (of their hardships). Army: Bó-aire in curachs. Note: Characters add +5 to Boat.
- 12-14 Limerick  
Culture: Lochlannach/mixed. Passion: Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Áine) 2d6+3. Army: Bondi (1-20). Note: Roll 1d6 for family class: 1-3 = trader, 4-6 = roll normally.
- 15-17 Seed of Baisceann  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Fear (Bad Luck) 2d6+6. Geas: Random, but generate twice as many as usual. Army: Wild Pict Warrior (1-6) Bó-aire #1 (7-13) Flaith #1 (14-12).
- 18-20 Seed of My Druid  
Culture: Érainn/pagan. Passion: Madness (Any) 1d20, Loyalty (Eoghanacta of Áine) 2d6+2. Geas: Never say Mugh Roth's name. Army: Bó-aire #1 (1-14) Flaith #1 (17-20).





# IRISH STORYTELLING

*The Gamemaster as Seanchaí*



LIKE *PENDRAGON*, Irish storytelling was interactive. The long flights of description in the sagas, so boring to modern readers, were meant to provoke the audience into supplying the name of the person described. Treat this as a Recognize contest at a feast, with 5 Glory going to the winner.

Many events in Irish sagas are motivated by Breitheamh Law. The seanchaís never mention it directly, because their audience understood it all too well. Read the "World of the Érainn" section with an eye toward scenario hooks.

## Cleases

The Irish word "cleas" (rhymes with "mess") describes a warrior's trick or maneuver, like a sucker-punch in boxing. Translators usually render it as "feat." In *Pendragon*, a Feat is represented by a Critical Success. Instead of saying "he criticizes his roll," players should say things like "he enacts the Eye-Gouging Feat of High-Renown and Well-Regard." Some sample "feats:"

### Sample Feats

Critical Roll	Name
DEX for Jumping	Salmon Leap
DEX for Stealth	Dew-Walking
DEX vs. Knockdown	Chariot-Warrior's Crouch
Sling or Javelin	Apple-Tossing Feat
Pointed Weapon	Trussing with Points Feat
Sword	Hero's Feat of Valor
Break foe's sword	Snapping Jaw of Battle Feat

### Optional Rule for Cleases

You can attempt a Feat with any combat skill or physical statistic, except Horsemanship, by rolling under half the skill or statistic's value. Success = critical hit; double damage or game effect and possible added Glory. Failure = fumble, with automatic Knockdown in addition to other fumble effects. Always name and describe the Feat you are about to enact.

## Glory

Actions that earn Glory for Irish heroes do so because they become part of local history and place-lore. A beheading that earns Glory in Conmacne Mara is one of the Three Great Beheadings of Conmacne Mara — or the three great whatever of wherever. No matter what earns Glory, commemorate it. A bard's pun that earns 10 Glory, if it happens beside a rock, christens the rock as The Rock of The Pun. Go ahead and be silly about this. The real bards were.

The following short adventures show typical subjects and devices in Irish storytelling.



## THE FATED DEATH OF SEARBHÂN LOCHLANNACH

**Setting:** This adventure begins in the characters' home court, but leads to Muadhán's Woods in Munster.

**Problem:** A pregnant woman important to the characters — a wife, a sister, a queen — is wasting away from a faerie pox. Druids decide that she can only be cured by the fruit of the magic tree in Muadhán's woods.

As they journey to the site, the characters collect some or all of the following information: The woods belong to a minor god named Muadhán who sometimes appears in person to help hunters. The tree is a sí place within the woods which can only be found with difficulty. The tree is very tall; only a strong person can reach the fruit. A cruel giant guards the tree. The giant's name is Searbhán Lochlannach ("Bitter Scandinavian"); he is a Norse giant who came to rob a monastery, but when he hid from pursuers in this forest, he got stranded in the world of dreams. He is homesick and lonely. No warrior can defeat the giant, for he is invulnerable.





**Characters:** Searbhán Lochlannach has Small Giant statistics, but can regenerate his Healing Rate in Hit points every round. He is gruff and nasty but at the same time lonely, and will permit the characters to spend the night in a shack he's built, but not to take the fruit. He never sleeps or leaves his post, but he can be diverted by conversation (Courtesy) or music (Sing, Play). Each successful roll to divert him allows a member of the party to attempt Climb; three climb rolls are needed to make off with an apple from the tree. Failed diversions lead his attention to the climbing character, and a fight starts. He will kill to prevent the fruit from being stolen. Lochlannach or Gall-Gael characters add +10 to attempts to divert him (he loves to hear about the Old Country).

Muadhán is a wood spirit, similar to a púca. He can be summoned at a total cost of 80 points; he can't be controlled. He has a soft spot for any character with a Love or Amor passion, and will appear spontaneously to offer aid when anyone within his domain is Inspired by these passions.

**Secrets:** The magic place within the woods can best be found by fugitives: the party enters it when their least stealthy (represented by Dexterity) member succeeds in a DEX check (attempt once per day). The gamemaster can provide a hint by having game animals, like deer, vanish in the acting of hiding from pursuing characters. A critical Faerie Lore roll or a Successful Sight roll also locates the entrance.

The tree belongs to Muadhán. When the Norse giant hid in these woods from an Irish hero, he begged Muadhán to make him invulnerable. Muadhán gave him regenerative powers, but put him under geases, one of which forces him to guard the tree. Restrictions on the magic mean that neither Searbhán's armor nor his regeneration works against damage from a certain source.

These restrictions on Searbhán's power could include:

- 1) He boasts that "no stranger can kill me." If the lonely creature invites characters to spend the night with him or eat from his table, they can kill him.
- 2) He boasts that "a sword raised in hate will never kill me." A character Inspired by Love or Amor voids his power.
- 3) He boasts that "Nobody can kill me." He asks visitors their names as a matter of course; a visitor who doesn't reply, or who says "nobody," can kill him (cf. The Odyssey).

**Solutions:** The characters must kill or distract Searbhán Lochlannach. Optionally, a party that summons Muadhán can obtain an apple from him. In return, Muadhán will geas them to bring him the severed head of a local Geraldine

knight who's been logging the forest ... but that's another story.

They apples have the virtue of curing the ailment that set the quest in motion. If the characters botch the adventure, their female friend miscarries.

**Glory:** 100 for getting the apple, 100 for killing Searbhán Lochlannach. Also, -1 Hospitality for stealing the apple, and -2 for killing the giant, if characters accepted his offer of shelter. Deceitful checks to characters who refused their names. Automatic Love/Amor check to a character who gets the apple on behalf of a spouse or lover.

**Notes:** The adventure is based on "The Flight of Diarmaid and Gráinne." In that story, Diarmaid kills Searbhán A) Inspired by Amor, B) as his guest, and C) because Diarmaid is really tough.



## THE BATTLE WITH THE MORNA BROTHERS

**Setting:** During any battle involving the characters.

**Problem:** An Irish warrior that a character defeated from the Random Battle Enemy Table has a tougher, vengeful brother. He in turn has an even tougher brother, and so on.

**Characters:** There is one Morna Brother for every player character. They challenge the player characters to comhlann duels. The second and subsequent Mornas have the same statistics as the first, but fight Inspired by Love (Family).

**Secrets:** An Irish hero might challenge one Morna brother to a geas-stakes duel: loser's faction leaves the battle. After four rounds of melee, one of the Mornas will think of this if the fight is still in doubt.

**Solutions:** Defeat the Mornas in a melee within the larger battle. If they defeat all the player characters, the Mornas will take them prisoner.

**Glory:** 25 per Morna defeated, plus Battle Glory for that round. The Mornas are enemy heroes: defeating them all earns an "enemy battalion routs" result on the next turns' Unit Events Table.

**Notes:** Use this event to underline the clannishness of the Irish, the customs of comhlann, and the importance of single combat in Irish warfare.



## THE UPHEAVAL OF THE MISSING CHIEFTAIN

**Setting:** The home tuath of Irish characters, or an allied tuath being visited by non-Irish characters.

**Problem:** The chieftain has disappeared: his bodyguards lost track of him during a bloody battle. After six months, his steward announces an election among the *rí damhna* to find a new chieftain. A blind, wandering *filí*, his eyes covered with dirty rags, announces that the chieftainship will go to the person greatest in the virtues of Sovereignty. There is no *tánaiste*.

**Characters:** The blind *filí*, and as many local nobles running for chieftain as the gamemaster wishes to detail.

**Secrets:** The blind *filí* is the chieftain. Why?

- A) The chieftain, worried that the *rí damhna* have lost track of the meaning of sovereignty, created this situation as a test. He shaved his beard, cut a tonsure in his hair, and adopted the rags as a disguise. He will use "divination" to single out a chieftain candidate who campaigns honorably, displaying the virtues of Sovereignty, and the religious virtues appropriate to the tuath. Then he will shed the disguise, and name this noble candidate as his *tánaiste*.
- B) As above, but the chieftain's blindness is real: an old enemy caught up with him, and disfigured him to destroy his office. The tuath really is up for grabs, and the pronouncements of "the old *filí*" will not necessarily determine the winner.

**Solutions:** Looking for the chieftain is pointless. The core of the adventure involves campaigning for chieftainship. Any local player character is a candidate. If the situation is a test to find a new *tánaiste*, the winner will be the character who accumulates the most checks to Sovereignty and pagan or Christian virtues. Otherwise, players will have to improvise ways of winning political support.

Gaining political support resembles wooing a lady (Pendragon p. 312), but instead of breaking down "reluctance," characters' deeds, bribes, promises and so on contribute to a Popularity score that ranges from zero to twenty. At the end of the election, player characters roll Popularity against each other, and against 1d6 non-player rivals who have 3d6 Popularity each. Winner takes all.

Foreigners to the tuath can support one side or another, and should do so according to their own political agendas. Which candidate is better for King Arthur, or Jarl Olaf, or

Christianity, or the *Uí Niall*? How will the players ensure that he wins? What favors can they win in return?

**Glory:** Becoming chieftain or *tánaiste* earns 200 Glory, plus 50-75 Glory per year for holding land. Double the immediate Glory, and add 100 per annum for land, if the tuath rules a province. Glory for fighting, boasting, etc. must be assessed as it occurs.

**Note:** Every tuath has a built-in adventure: who gets to be chieftain next? This adventure runs itself, as characters conspire to snatch the throne from their kinsmen. It can be long, bloody and divisive, so use it sparingly. The Disguised Chieftain is a "gentle" was of transferring the throne.



## THE CATTLE RAID OF THE PAGAN PRINCE

**Setting:** On the outskirts of a small pagan tuath. The characters are traversing a boggy field, on their way to somewhere else.

**Problem:** A large party of *Érainn* warriors — one *flaith* and two *bó-aíres* for every player character — ambushes our heroes. They fight for five melee rounds before scattering into the bog-lands, where they can outrun any pursuers. They may have made off with something valuable, like a horse. They will surely kill a valued non-player character: a squire, a fosterling, a kid brother, or a friend traveling under the characters' *slánaíocht*. Failing to redress this crime earns everyone a Forgiving check and a two-point reduction in Love (Family) or Honor, as appropriate.

**Characters:** The leader of the raid is The Pagan Prince. He has just assumed the chieftainship of his tuath. Causing misery to the type of person represented by the player characters — knights if they are knights, Eoghanacta if they are Eoghanacta — is part of his *buadha*: the lucky things or actions that maintain his Sovereignty magic. Burdened with Fear (*sí*) and Fear (druids) passions, the Pagan Prince believes that *Bodhbh Dearg* will drink his blood if the *buadha* are not honored. He will never make amends for killing the characters' friend. He has *flaith* statistics, with +10 added to his combat skills.

**Secrets:** none.

**Solutions:** By custom, the characters should petition a *breitheamh* to rule against the Pagan Prince. The Prince won't contest the lawsuit. The *breitheamh* authorizes the characters to raid the Prince's tuath for an amount equal to the dead person's *eineach*, plus collateral damages if any. The characters may have to make arrangements with the chief-







tains whose lands they cross in the course of the raid: bribing them with part of the spoils is customary. If the party sneaks into the Pagan Prince's tuath, they can kill or rob just about anyone, up to the amount of the damages; the victims, however, are sure to claim that the characters exceeded their sanction, which makes a raid against the characters' homeland legal. Alternatively, the party can approach the prince's Lord of Coups, whose job it is to monitor compensations claimed within the tuath. This official will help the characters collect their due, but he forbids attacks on the Prince or his royal property or his near-kin, because it would injure the Sovereignty of the tuath. Characters who ignore any of these breitheamh rules are, again, giving the Prince a legal pretext to attack their homelands.

Referring the matter to British justice doesn't help. If the offender were an ordinary Irishman, the Justiciar would arrest him. But because he is a minor king, the colonial government fears that arresting the Prince would bring other chieftains to his defense. Unless he can be convinced otherwise, the Justiciar delegates Irish feuds to Irish courts.

Though he has no obligation to do so, The Prince is vain enough to answer a comhlann challenge in person, once. Killing the Prince is satisfying, but pointless: he'll be replaced by a vengeful kinsman. Fighting for geas-stakes could resolve the feud. If the Prince wins the right to place conditions on a defeated player-character, he will force the character to give him hostages, and accept a céilsine loan at usurious interest. This insults the Prince from further attacks, and gives him an excuse for further raids if the character defaults on the loan.

**Glory:** A successful cattle raid earns Glory at least equal to the eineach of goods captured or enemies slain. Defeating The Prince in single combat earns 100 Glory, and may resolve the scenario.

**Notes:** Welcome to Ireland. At any given time, an Irish character has several outstanding feuds of this kind in his ledger of grudges. The Pagan Prince can be one of many recurring enemies. While Irish characters will respond to the Prince's thug tactics in kind, idealistic British knights should follow King Arthur's example: turn enemies into loving vassals by displays of virtue, as well as force. It might work, it might not.



## THE WOOING OF THE LADY OF THE LAUNDS

**Setting:** The aonach grounds at Carman, in 531. King Anguish has declared a festival and tournament to celebrate

Arthur's victory. The winner of the tournament gets to marry the Lady of the Launds, Anguish's distant cousin. Every important character mentioned in *Pagan Shore* or *Pendragon* attends. Uí Niall warriors are keen to win the Lady, but comically incompetent at jousting. The contest is being won by Sir Palomides, until the mysterious Sir Tramtrist defeats him, forces him to forsake his love of La Beale Isolt, and to wear no armor for a year.

**Problems:** Characters can compete in the tournament, and meet prominent folk from Ireland. Queen Isolt the Elder asks knights loyal to Leinster to search for the killer of Sir Marhaus.

**Secrets:** "Tramtrist," obviously, is Sir Tristram. He doesn't want Isolt the Elder to learn that he slew her brother. Clever characters might notice that a large chip is missing from his sword that matches the one found in Marhaus' wounds. If not, the queen herself discovers it. King Anguish refuses to punish him, because he is under the Hospitality of the tournament. Tristram dares any Irish knight who thinks him a miscreant to prove it "body to body." They back down, and he departs.

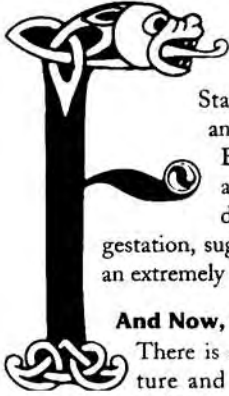
A bigger secret is the name of the tournament's winner, which Malory omits. We know only that Tramtrist beat Palomides. The history of the Launds in *Pagan Shore* has been left vague, to allow for a variety of outcomes to this tournament. What really happened?

- 1) A player-character won the tournament. If a character in your campaign is truly entitled to beat Sir Tristram and marry a goddess-queen ... well, that's a big if.
- 2) "Tramtrist" won the tournament, but ceded the Lady's hand to someone else: a player character, a minor Irish knight like Marsil, or a local chieftain who then becomes King of the Launds.
- 3) The Lady was won by, or ceded to, Muirheartach mac Earca. She is identical with Sin, Muirheartach's killer. After her death, the Launds are absorbed into the Pale and ruled by the lord of Drogheda. People suspect that the whole affair was a conspiracy forged by Leinster nobles.

**Glory:** As per a Regional tournament. 50 Glory for discovering Tramtrist's secret. Hospitality checks to knights who witness Anguish's stern defense of custom. 1000 Glory to the winner of the tournament plus 100 more Glory each year thereafter (winning, marriage, sovereignty over The Launds).



# AFTERWORD



IRST, LET ME PUBLICLY thank Chaosium, in the persons of Greg Stafford and Sam Shirley, for their tolerance during *The Project That Would Not End*. That the Soviet Union collapsed, and the White House saw two presidents, during *Pagan Shore's* "six month" gestation, suggests a scale of woolgathering that only an extremely decent publisher would tolerate.

## And Now, the Moral:

There is a continuity between the Medieval culture and the world of today. Thomas Malory writes to us across a gap of centuries, but his faith, his monarchy, his language and his concept of love still exist.

This cannot be said for the world of the Irish sagas. The Seventeenth century — the time of Cromwell and the Flight of the Earls — terminates Old Irish culture as a presence in history. Yes, Irish Gaelic and Irish Catholicism survived, but as the intellectual property of peasants, and a contraband property at that. Yes, the *aos sí* and the heroes survived, but as clowns and tricksters who populate tall tales. The old order of cleric, breitheamh, bard and chieftain was explicitly outlawed, and destroyed. If you destroyed the religion, laws, art, and aristocracy of a modern country, what would be left?

I do not write this to rehearse well-known grievances. I write to say that the Ireland of *Pagan Shore* is truly a foreign country, as enigmatic as the carvings on an Aztec calendar. Don't assume that you know it. Approach it with an attitude of discovery. Like a detective, use your imagination, and the modest clues I have provided, to reconstruct the day-to-day activities of the deceased. Donning the roles of chieftain and bard in a game is, in this context, necromancy. By playing out the implications of pre-Norman Irish law, for example, you may learn more about it than the scholar who studies a confused and confusing monkish book.

*Pagan Shore's* Ireland is a synthetic fantasy. This Irish *Cano mac Gartnait*, the Norman John de Courcy, and the fictional Sir Galeholt fuse together into a rich new imposture. I would be happy if it led a few readers down the difficult path of recovering Ireland's truths. The chieftains and bards were here, they lived and died, they were wise and foolish, and they left a map of the world they saw. There is no map made that we can afford to discard unexamined. To that end, the following books, from many consulted for *Pagan Shore*, are good places to start.

Byrne, Francis John *Irish Kings and High-Kings*, St. Martin's, 1973. This is my favorite book on pre-Viking Ireland. All the *Pagan Shore* kings are here, as well as their predecessors and descendants.

Corley, Corin transl. *Lancelot of the Lake*, Oxford 1989. This translation of the French prose *Lancelot* was my source for the history of Sir Galeholt.

Cross, T.P. and Slover, Clark, transl. *Ancient Irish Tales*, Barnes and Noble, 1969. This omnibus of frankly poor translations from the Irish deserves mention for its wide availability, and its comprehensive inclusion of stories from the Fionn, Mythological, Ulster, and Kings and Saints cycles. The stories here about Niall, Muirheartach and Cathal mac Fionghuine, for instance, aren't available elsewhere.

De Paor, Liam *The Peoples of Ireland*, Notre Dame, 1986. De Paor's one-volume history covers Ireland from the Stone Age to the present day. The pre-Christian, early Christian and Viking eras, usually skipped or abbreviated in general histories because of their obscurity, receive a detailed discussion here.

Hatto, A. T., transl. *Tristan*, Penguin, 1972. This book combines the incomplete *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg with concluding chapters from the *Tristan* by Thomas of Britain. Gottfried dwells on *Tristram's* adventures in Ireland at greater length than other redactors of the story.

Heany, Seamus, transl. *Sweeny Astray*, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1983. Ireland's premier modern poet in English translates the saga of Sweeny the Mad (King Suibhne of the Dál n-Araidhe).

Jones, Gwyn *A History of the Vikings*, Oxford, 1968. Definitive one-volume book on the Lochlannach.

Kinsella, Thomas, transl. *The Táin*, Oxford, 1979. A readable and beautifully illustrated translation of the epic battle between Meadhbh and Cú Chulainn. The most complete legacy we have from pagan Ireland.

Mac Neill, Eoin *Celtic Ireland*, Academy Press, Dublin, 1981. In these lectures, originally published in 1921, Mac Neill revealed himself as the first scholar to understand the nature of Irish concepts like "derbhfine" and "céilsine." Dense but illuminating reading for anyone interested in breitheamh law.

ó h-ógáin, Dáithí *Myth, Legend and Romance: An Encyclopedia of the Irish Folk Tradition*, Prentice Hall, 1991. This encyclopedia describes hundreds of characters from Irish legend, including the kings and saints of *Pagan Shore*, in useful detail: their adventures, their homes, their families, the shape their legends might have taken had not generations of scribes mangled them. The best single reference for *Pagan Shore*.

Orpen, Goddard *Ireland Under The Normans*, Oxford 1968.

Recommending an out-of-print, four-volume opus confined to large libraries may seem perverse. But shorter works on the subject that I have seen are much less informative and much worse written. Readers interested in the Pale will find many useful details of churches, castles, and charters — and sieges, eye-gougings and beheadings, too.

Smyth, Alfred P. *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland, A.D. 80-1000*, Edward Arnold, 1984. Smyth discusses the Roman invasions of Caledonia, the identity of the Picts, and the era of Vikings and Gall-Gaels with steely scholarship. St. Colm Cill is favored with a lengthy chapter on his post-*Pagan Shore* adventures. Useful for both *Pagan Shore* and *Pendragon*.



## **Tribal Irish Character Sheet**

**T**his character sheet is provided for use with tribal Irish characters. It has entries allocated for cultural information, and for magic skill listings if the character has magical Talent. It is suitable for both men and women of the Érainn, Cruithni, Gael, and Lochlannach cultures. For feudal Irish characters, use the regular knight's sheet found in the Pendragon rulebook.

Some of the entries bear explanation. Current Class and Father's Class indicate whether the character is a flaith or bó-aire. Write the character's actual profession in the professions entry.

On the character sheet back, the Army listing shows how many able warriors the character can raise in an emergency. The flaith and bó-aire entries indicate how many of each type are in the immediate family. These people can be called upon in extreme circumstances. The vassal flaith and bó-aire are the people who can be called upon in short notice. Other lineage men are more distant relations, and levy indicates the unskilled rabble who can be brought to war. All these numbers should be worked out with the gamemaster, who can tell you how many fighting men are in your immediate Family.



# KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON

Tribal Irish Sheet

Player .....

## Personal Data

Name .....

Current Class ..... RI Dahmna # .....

Current Profession .....

Eineach .....

Culture ..... Religion .....

Current Home ..... Age ..... Year Born .....

Home Province .....

Home Tuath .....

Fathers Name .....

Father's Class ..... Profession .....

Son/Daughter Number .....

Fosterfamily Name ..... Profession .....

Location ..... Class .....

Geases .....

.....

.....

.....

## Personality Traits

Religious Bonus (underlined traits all 16+) .....

Chaste ..... / ..... Lustful

Energetic ..... / ..... Lazy

Forgiving ..... / ..... Vengeful

Generous ..... / ..... Selfish

Honest ..... / ..... Deceitful

Just ..... / ..... Arbitrary

Merciful ..... / ..... Cruel

Modest ..... / ..... Proud

Pious ..... / ..... Worldly

Prudent ..... / ..... Reckless

Temperate ..... / ..... Indulgent

Trusting ..... / ..... Suspicious

Valorous ..... / ..... Cowardly

Directed Trait .....

Directed Trait .....

Directed Trait .....

## Passions

Loyalty (tuath) .....

Love (family) .....

Love (foster family) .....

Hospitality .....

Honor .....

.....

.....

.....

## Statistics

SIZ ..... (Knockdown)

DEX .....

STR .....

CON ..... (Major Wound)

APP .....

Damage ((STR+SIZ)/6) ..... d6

Healing Rate ((STR+CON)/10) .....

Movement Rate ((STR+DEX)/10) .....

Total Hit Points (SIZ+CON) .....

Unconscious (HP/4) .....

## Distinctive Features

.....

.....

## Skills

Awareness .....

Boating .....

Chirurgery .....

Compose .....

Courtesy .....

Dancing .....

Faerie Lore .....

Falconry .....

First Aid .....

Fishing .....

Flirting .....

Folk Lore .....

Gaming .....

Heraldry .....

Hunting .....

Industry .....

Intrigue .....

Orate .....

Play (.....) .....

Play (.....) .....

Read (.....) .....

Read (.....) .....

Recognize .....

Religion (.....) .....

Romance .....

Singing .....

Stewardship .....

Swimming .....

Tourney .....

.....

.....

.....

## Equipment Carried

Armor Type [..... points] .....

Clothing [..... Librum value] .....

Personal Gear [on horse #.....] .....

Travel Gear [on horse #.....] .....

War Gear [on horse #.....] .....

# Glory

Glory This Game

## Current Hit Points

Wounds .....

Chirurgery Needed

## Magic

Insight .....

Magic Limit .....

Personal Life Force .....

Magical Defense .....

## Skills

Celestial Lore .....

Geomantic Lore .....

Sight .....

## Talents

.....

.....

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## Talismans

.....

.....

## Combat Skills

Battle .....

Drive Chariot .....

Horsemanship .....

## Weapon Skills

Sword .....

Great Sword .....

Dagger .....

Spear .....

Craoiseach .....

Sling .....

## Horses

### Best Warhorse

Type .....

Damage ..... Move .....

Armor ..... HP .....

SIZ ..... CON ..... DEX .....





# 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!



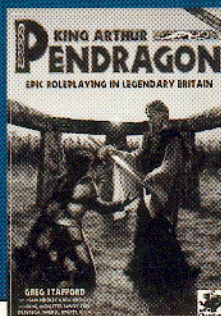
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PENDRAGON is Chaosium Inc.'s fantasy roleplaying game based on the legends of King Arthur.



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