King Arthur’s Roundtable: The Search for the Holy Grail

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Introduction From the Chair

Hello delegates, and congratulations on being a part of *King Arthur’s Round Table: The Search for the Holy Grail*. My name is Kyle Matthew Choy and I will be your Chair for this year’s Greater Washington Conference of International Affairs (GWCIA). I am a 2nd year student in the School of Engineering and Applied Science at The George Washington University studying Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. I have been involved in Model United Nations for over five years, which began in my first year of high school. Since then, I have staffed four conferences including crisis staff of last year’s India, Pakistan JCC in GWCIA and Chair of Apple Innovative Crisis in last year’s WAMUNC. Take this conference as a learning experience and most importantly, have fun with it.

The key to this committee will be using cooperation and quick thinking to resolve the affairs and find the Holy Grail. The lore for this time period has already been written, but we will be making our own story that changes as the committee goes on. Most of what happens throughout this committee most likely cannot be found in any variation of Arthurian legend. To make the committee more interesting and political, we have created many of the characters. Therefore, thorough research on the deeds of specific characters will not be entirely helpful. Delegates are encouraged to do extensive thinking on their key portfolio powers, what their character is capable of accomplishing, and what type of approach they would like to take to the committee. A greater understanding of the time period and its limitations is also essential to effectively solve issues. Remember, delegates are not required and are sometimes even discouraged to cooperate with others if it is not in their best interest to do so. Progress can be made by working with others on committee directives, but personal directives sent to the crisis staff are also essential. Well-written personal directives, or crisis notes, can turn the tides and allow delegates to achieve tasks they couldn’t in committee. **Keep in mind that we are looking for delegates who accurately portray their roles and are able to create a difference in committee.** Successful delegates do not allow personal opinions influence their decision making.

I hope to meet you all in person. Be prepared and good luck!

-Your Chair, Kyle M. Choy
Introduction From the Crisis Director

Hello, and welcome to *King Arthur’s Round Table: The Search for the Holy Grail* in the Greater Washington Conference of International Affairs (GWCIA). My name is Charles Michael Santiago, and I am a 3rd year student at The George Washington University studying International Affairs with a concentration in Europe & Eurasia and a minor in Russian Language. I have been involved in Model United Nations for over two years now, having started my Freshman year. Running committees I have worked for 3 committees in the past, including WAMUNC 2013: US Senate 1860, GWCIA: European Commission, and most recently as Crisis Director for WAMUNC 2014: Senate of Rome 500 AD. This will be my first time working in a fictional committee, so I look forward to working with all of you and making this committee and your experience in this conference the best it can be.

The tales of King Arthur are some of the oldest and most influential literature in history, and I look forward to seeing how your own story folds out over our sessions. You will find that focusing on the singular task of finding the Holy Grail will be difficult while being responsible for advisement on an entire kingdom. Coordination will be important among yourselves to successfully manage and balance Camelot, and hopefully achieve the greatness that Camelot itself reached. Your relationships with other delegates and the world around Camelot will be fluid, and you will need to be ready to constantly think ahead to match the situation at hand. Research the guide, think beyond the obvious, and be ready for all possibilities.

I look forward to working with all of you, and hope that this experience will be educational and fun.

-Crisis Director Charles M. Santiago

Arthur’s Camelot

**King Arthur:**

Britain was under attack from the Saxons, a barbarian tribe, for many years before King Arthur was born. The Saxons destroyed towns and churches and the British could not defend themselves. One day a young prophet named Merlin predicted that a great King would be born from Uther, a member of the royal family, and this new King would save Britain and allow a period of Renaissance, but the Saxons would return.
This great King that was born from Uther and his wife Igraine, was named Arthur. As a baby he received many gifts from fairies, such as courage, strength, kingship, wisdom and long life. These gifts were very helpful to Arthur as he took the crown at a young age, after his father died in battle against the Saxons. Immediately upon gaining the crown, King Arthur began fighting the Saxons but his army was outnumbered. However with the assistance of elf made armor and his sword, Excalibur, Arthur was able to kill Saxon leaders and end the attacks from the Saxons. Despite this victory Arthur continued to fight all of those that supported the Saxons, such as the Scotts. However, the Scotts immediately surrendered to Arthur and declared him their King. Next Arthur attacked Ireland and captured that Kingdom. After this Iceland, Orkney, Wendland, Denmark, Norway and Gaul all fell to Arthur without a fight.

Arthur has been able to rule over this massive kingdom, peacefully ever since. However, now Arthur is growing older and sicker and there are rumors of the Saxons growing stronger. Merlin’s old prophecy of the Saxon’s inevitable return is discussed in whispers throughout the Kingdom, as many fear they are waiting to strike again upon the possible death of Arthur.

**The Round Table:**

King Arthur needed a lot of assistance in running such a large kingdom, so he held a plenary court. However, whenever meetings were held nobles, kings, barons and knights fought over the seating arrangement as they wanted to sit at the head of the table near King Arthur to boost their power. In order to avoid these issues, King Arthur created a Round Table, so that the seating rank would be equal for all nobles, kings, barons and knights. This added to the time of peace that Arthur created and currently allows for ease of discussion so that the vast kingdom can easily be run.

The Round Table consists of all of King Arthur’s most trusted advisors. Arthur often turns to the Round Table whenever there are any issues or major decisions to make. He hired specialists that have been gathered from all throughout the land to represent all parts of the kingdom. This way, he is able to keep track of the kingdom’s resources and capabilities to effectively resolve issues. The goal of the Round Table has always been to ensure the prosperity
and integrity of the land. Under Arthur’s guidance they have been successful, but as he grows older and sicker, the Round Table meets more and more, often without Arthur around. Whenever Arthur is not around the old bickering over rank and power plague the members of the Round Table. Each member has issues to resolve, but no one is sure which one should be fixed first. This bickering is starting to make it difficult to run the Kingdom efficiently and effectively.

**Camelot:**

As mentioned above, King Arthur expanded his kingdom greatly after the defeat of the Saxons. However, the capital of the Kingdom always remained Camelot, located in Great Britain, where Arthur grew up. Camelot is the center of all policy making and houses all Round Table discussions. Camelot also has King Arthur’s castle and many churches.

Currently the only domestic issues are between the various nobles due to the increased absence of Arthur. However, some nobles are informing commoners throughout the Kingdom of some of these tensions and a state of uneasiness is settling. Despite this state, the Kingdom is still currently running smoothly and all economic activities are relatively normal.

Some of the abundant resources found in the area are tin, coal, steel, and lumber. Maritime trade and communication are flourishing and anything the kingdom lacks can most likely be attained through international trade. Notable trade routes are those around the Baltics and the Mediterranean.

Internationally, the threat of the Saxon’s return still remains. Many fear they are growing stronger, while Camelot and Arthur are starting to weaken. Also there has always been tensions with the Romans as they feared Arthur while he was expanding the Kingdom. Arthur however never had any plans to take over Rome and has always sought to have a better trade relationship
with Rome. Under emperor Justinian the Eastern Roman Empire has been expanding since the early 6th century. He has successfully unified most of Italy of what used to be the old Western Roman Empire and expanded to Northern Africa. As of now, the two kingdoms have been separated by the united Germanic tribes known as the Franks. This separation has kept the strongholds of the two kingdoms apart and on-land interaction at a minimum. Trade still continues in that area due to open trade routes through the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The Holy Grail

Introduction:

Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries the Holy Grail was the center of literature. There are many different stories about the Holy Grail, and although the details of the stories always vary, all the stories seem to allude to the grail having some type of healing or restorative power. This power was often sought after to solve some health-related crisis that a nobleman had. A majority of the myths also focused on some significance of a holy bloodline of the King. This bloodline was often vulnerable, as many began to question the right of their ruler to reign, and it needed to be protected. Thus, retrieving the Holy Grail seemed to be the solution to choosing future leaders. Although many of the myths have similar aspects, many essential details have changed over time and the remaining sections will elaborate on that and emphasize the points that will be most relevant to this committee.
Pagan Holy Grail Myths:

Paganism is a collection of various religious traditions that were common in Europe, particularly the Roman Empire, prior to the birth of Christianity. Although specific beliefs vary between different cultural groups, in general Paganism tends to be polytheistic and influenced by nature. There are also often aspects of magic, alchemy and witchcraft. Many Christian and European myths, traditions and philosophies have Pagan roots. Many of these similarities are a result of Christian missionaries that aimed to make Christianity appealing to Pagans by incorporating some Pagan traditions and beliefs. Thus it makes sense that even the Holy Grail myths, which has a lot of Christian influence, are rooted in Pagan tradition.

The Pagans seem to be the first group to refer to the existence of a Holy Grail. Pagan Celtic mythology often focused on magical cauldrons that had restorative powers. These magical cauldrons could heal people, provide nourishment and even raise the dead. These magical cauldron myths are often seen as predecessors to the Holy Grail, as the existence of a magical cup is also common in Celtic mythology. The Welsh and Irish have variations that include items similar to both magical cauldron and the Holy Grail. Although all of these Pagan myths are interesting, they are not relevant to this committee, as this committee will be focusing on the Holy Grail myths with Christian influences.

Christian Holy Grail Myths:

Christian Holy Grail myths are unique, however as noted above, there are still many similarities. For example, the Holy Grail was still thought to have restorative healing powers, however the Christians added a few details. Christians claimed that the Holy Grail had healing power because Jesus used the Holy Grail during the Last Supper to share with his disciples. Jesus and his disciples all drank from the Holy Grail. Also, Joseph of Arimathea used the Holy Grail to collect Jesus’ blood after he was crucified. Joseph of Arimathea was a part of the Council that was interrogating Jesus, however Joseph did not wish to be a part of this Council because he was a secret follower of Jesus, and he was too scared to admit it due to the prosecution that followers of Jesus received at the time. Joseph was able to collect the blood of Jesus when he placed Jesus in his tomb. However after the Resurrection of Jesus, Joseph was placed in jail with the
Grail as he was accused of stealing Jesus’ body. Joseph held onto the Grail until he was released, and after he was released he went to Britain, where the Grail remained until the time of King Arthur. However, after this point the whereabouts of the Grail were unknown.

Also it is important to note that the origins of the healing powers for the Holy Grail in the Christian myths seem to be rooted with Jesus and his sacrifice. Joseph was able to collect Jesus’ blood, the ultimate symbol of Jesus’ sacrifice, using the Holy Grail. Thus all those that became exposed to the purest version of Jesus’ sacrifice through the blood on the Grail are rewarded with health.

The Holy Grail myths with Christian influences will be relevant to this committee, however please note that even the Christian myths have variations in details, so do not focus on the littlest details during your research as they may not be relevant to the interpretation this committee is using.

Topics to Expect

The Holy Grail

The issue most pressing right now to Arthur’s Round Table is the acquisition of the Holy Grail for the glory of Camelot. How this quest is executed among knights, how it is funded and represented, and how it comes into play with other kingdoms will all be issues for the Round Table to discuss. As Arthur becomes older and frailer, it is important that the Holy Grail is found because
of its alleged healing powers. The Holy Grail’s ability to continue the royal bloodline is also essential to ensuring the future of the kingdom. Moreover, it is safe to assume that the journey to the Holy Grail will not be straightforward, but clouded and filled with obstacles. Everything from foreign competition and internal corruption could hamper the progress towards King Arthur’s holy goal, and the Round Table will need to choose which paths to take and who to trust. Tough decisions will be made and lesser evils may need to be permitted. In the end, it is King Arthur’s ultimate priority to complete this Holy Quest, and he cannot do it himself.

The Health of the Realm

While the King Arthur and his Knights seek their various quests of glory, the Realm must be maintained. This is the first time that the King has taken such a long absence, which means losing the influence and power of his judgement. From matters of attacks, crime, and public unrest to duties of maintaining food supplies and castle infrastructure, King Arthur’s advisors must work to keep Camelot the greatest kingdom in Britannia.

Without their leader, the kingdom could fall into chaos at any moment if any of these issues strike. Fortunately, news of King Arthur’s fleeting health is only still a rumor to the citizens and to other kingdoms. Only the Round Table and Arthur’s most trusted allies know of this truth, but this situation can change if word gets out. A once peaceful kingdom can turn unstable and under the threat of foreign attack. However, this news spreading isn’t the only danger to the health of the realm. If other issues such as sickness, famine, or rebellion is present, then the kingdom will seem weak. It will be the duty of King Arthur’s Round Table to address these problems regardless of their grander plans. While the royal advisors have more influence in these matters, his knights will also have his ear in deciding how to address each issue. It is a critical time and the whole kingdom hangs in the balance.
Internal Friction

As in any government, there is bound to be varying opinions and corruption among its members. As all of these tasks come to the Round Table, problems will need to be solved not only from outside its chambers but within. King Arthur’s knights and advisors have a multitude of stances on everything from corruption and honor to religion and mysticism. In addition, personal disagreements between various members of the Round Table may threaten the progress of the realm. Not everyone will have the same goals for the committee and some might even take this situation as a chance to take power. An important question to keep in mind is who is loyal to Arthur and who is not? It can be expected that there will be many times when the Round Table will need to solve its own private disputes before working towards the glory of the kingdom.
Questions to Consider

- What are the abilities and limitations of your character and who will you need to work with to achieve your goals?
- Would your character use methods that are honest and just or crafty and deceiving?
- What issues may arise that you can have direct influence in resolving and how will you resolve them?

Character Backgrounds

Merlin
One of Merlin’s earliest allies and friends, Merlin was the illegitimate son of a Royal Princess turned nun. As he was rumored to be the son of a demon, he gained the disdain of the clergy and most religious folk until his baptism. It is said that, by being baptised, become holy yet still possessed the gift of prophecy. His most noted prophecy was that of the coming of Uthor Pendragon and his succession by a great child: Arthur. From Arthur’s birth, Merlin was a close tutor and friend, and today serves him as an advisor on all mystical matters.

Queen Guinevere
Guinevere, the daughter of the royal lines of Cameliard and Castell y Cnwclas, has taken Arthur’s hand in marriage and is now queen of Camelot. As Arthur’s wife, she has his ear and is capable of swaying his opinion in many matters. In addition, as an extremely popular figure among the common folk, Queen Guinevere has an incredible influence on public opinion in the kingdom.

High Priest Florence
A common man risen to the highest religious position in the kingdom, High Priest Florence is the head of the Christian church in Camelot. As the head of the holy church, his authority on religious matters from priest appointments to religious policy is surpassed only by that of the king. As a zealot, Florence is vehemently against any mystical inclusion in the kingdom, and supports the most stern policies against what is deemed heretical practice. His hatred for mysticism has led to his strong distrust of Merlin, despite his baptism and trust by Arthur.

Head of Agriculture Houdain
Not all of Camelot can focus on matters of legend and greatness, for at all times the general functions of any civilization must be attended to. For this, King Arthur has appointed the wealthy landlord Houdain as “Head of Agriculture.” Already owner of the largest growing field in the kingdom prior to his appointment, Houdain’s position has made him a figure of guidance to many on crops and food production. While his known greed and emphasis on finances rather than moral values has placed him at odds with some of the more traditional and idealistic
advisors, his success in keeping the Kingdom’s stockpiles full, people fed, and merchants wealthy has kept him in the King’s good graces.

**Financial Advisor Drystan**

For matters of coin, King Arthur has appointed the bookkeeper Drystan as his Financial Advisor. Known to be trustworthy, uncorrupt, and a devout follower of Arthur, Drystan has been charged with ensuring that taxes have been collected and all funds of the treasury flow to the correct places. This position as an overseer against misuse of the kingdom’s treasures has placed him at odds with many of the less trustworthy members of King Arthur’s court. While his policing against corruption has placed him at odds with the likes of Houdain, they are in agreement in the judgement that the financial success of the realm must take precedent over spiritual affairs and matters of “greatness.”

**Head Physician Morgan Tud**

For the wellbeing of all knights and advisors in Camelot’s court, King Arthur has appointed the brilliant Morgan Tud as Head Physician. Responsible for the health of the court and King Arthur himself, Tud has developed a close relationship with nearly every person of power in the castle. In addition, he is responsible for distributing surplus medical supplies throughout the kingdom, and thus has a large influence on all physicians within the kingdom. However, despite his high position and many influential connections, his tendency to over distribute his wealth among other physicians in the kingdom has left him as by far the poorest member of King Arthur’s court. Still, as a known philanthropist and long time friend of King Arthur, his opinion is valued on the Kingdom’s affairs.

**Royal Architect Awarnach**

For Camelot’s great projects, King Arthur has appointed Awarnach as Royal Architect. As Royal Architect, Awarnach is responsible for overseeing all engineering projects in the kingdom, from castles and watchtowers to monuments and temples. Awarnach was considered fit for this position due to his personal obsession over the grandeur of Camelot and it’s legacy in the future. In addition, Awarnach’s expertise on engineering and architecture has made him an expert on siegecraft. His knowledge on the layout and strength of fortifications throughout Britannia has made him an invaluable advisor in warfare.

**Royal Smith Calibor**

For the success and security of all of Arthur’s men at arms, the best weaponry and armor must be available. For this, Arthur has appointed Calibor as Camelot’s Royal Smith. An expert of metalcraft, Calibor is now the head of all smiths for Arthur’s castle and guard, responsible for their training and management. In addition, Calibor personally smiths the weapons and armor of Arthur’s knights and is the protector and keeper of the royal armory. This has resulted in a very close relationship between him and the knights of the Round Table, and his opinion is highly influential in all matters of combat.

**Royal Messenger Breri**

As the affairs of King Arthur’s court stretch across Camelot, Britannia, and beyond, it is vital that information travels quickly and correctly. For this task, King Arthur has appointed Breri as the Royal Messenger. As Royal Messenger, Breri manages all official writing and
decrees through riders and messengers. With this information access, Breri has a great deal of power, and unfortunately is well known for overstepping private boundaries and keeping information for blackmail. His continued membership and say among Arthur’s advisors despite this reputation is confusing, especially to Arthur’s more devout followers. Some even venture to say that he holds blackmail on the King himself, guaranteeing his position’s safety. Either way, his connections among the wealthy and foreign are matched only by the amount of hatred against him by the more honorable knights and advisors of Camelot’s court.

Royal Historian and Map Keeper Pridwyn
As Camelot seeks its place as the greatest kingdom in history, it must also ensure its history is never forgotten. For this task, the scholar Pridwyn has been appointed Royal Historian and Map Keeper. With this, Pridwyn is responsible for maintaining all past historical records of the kingdom, chronicling the current affairs, and providing all of this information to the court. This has been a vital role especially with the upcoming quest for the Holy Grail.

Sir Lancelot Du Lac
The son of King Ban of Benwick, as a child Lancelot’s kingdom was overrun by Claudas de la Deserte, a rebel who rose against Arthur early in his rule. From his exile he was raised by the Lady of the Lake, bringing him the surname “Du Lac” (“Of the Lake”). When he came of age to be an apprentice, the Lady of the Lake sent him to King Arthur’s court to train as a knight. His skill became immediately clear, and since he has been an invaluable member of King Arthur’s Round Table, assisting in multiple wars and quests. However, some of his life choices have brought discord between him and the rest of the knights, particularly his affairs with various women.

Sir Caradoc
Caradoc was actually once a knight in the service of kings rebelling against Arthur early in his rule. However, after the end of the rebellion, he came to Arthur to repent and serve. Despite his past, Arthur has grown to trust him strongly. As a result of his circumstance, Sir Caradoc has been particularly understanding of other kingdoms, and advocates for reconciliation of enemies rather than destruction. On the other hand, he has had some recent embarrassments at the hand of an “enchantress”, bringing him to a deep hatred of sorcery. This has brought him to agreement and a close relation with the High Priest of Florence, and a strong distrust and opposition to Merlin.

Sir Gawain
Sir Gawain is King Arthur’s nephew. He, along with his brothers Agravain, Gareth, and Mordred, came to serve in King Arthur’s court as a knight. Out of his brothers, Sir Gawain has by far the closest relationship to King Arthur and the other knights. However, while he is strongly loyal to his friends and King, he is known to place his loyalty to morals and honor above all else. Among the knights, his greatest specialty has been his knowledge of herbs on the field. With this expertise, Sir Gawain has proven an excellent healer on journeys, rivaling Morgan Tud himself in skill. With this, he has a close relationship with all the knights and is a valuable member on all quests.
Sir Gareth  
Brother to Sir Gawain, Sir Gareth is also known as an honorable and just knight, fiercely loyal to his King. While he isn’t known to be as loyal as his brother Gawain, he is known as a superior fighter, particularly against other knights. Over his years of service to Arthur, Sir Gareth has shown a tendency to spare those he defeats, often gaining their loyalty as a result. With this, Sir Gareth has a large following of knights under his command, and has shown clear leadership and significant skills in tactics.

Sir Bedivere  
Little is known about the past of Sir Bedivere, however today his reputation precedes him. Often mutilating those he fights against in combat, Sir Bedivere is suspected by many of knowing dark magic and using it in what should be honorable combat. For this, he is absolutely despised by the common people, who have at times resorted to attacking him in public. Despite his extreme aggressiveness in combat and his suspected dark practices, Sir Bedivere shows considerable loyalty to King Arthur and his close friend Sir Kay. However, should he be sent on a quest in the name of the crown, it will need to be done with the knowledge of the large public distrust against him.

Sir Galahad  
Sir Galahad is actually the illegitimate son of Lancelot and one of his former mistresses, abandoned by his father before birth. Despite this unorthodox beginning, Sir Galahad has grown to be known as the most gallant and pure knight of all. With this, he has the highest favor out of all the knights in Arthur’s eyes and in the eyes of the public. However, Sir Galahad has never forgiven his father Sir Lancelot for his abandonment, leading to continued friction between them at the Round Table. Despite this, he is still a favorite among the honorable knights of Arthur’s Round Table.

Sir Kay  
Sir Kay, like Sir Bedivere, is despised by the common people and has significant trouble working in public. However, unlike Sir Bedivere, Sir Kay is also on the bad side of most of the knights in King Arthur’s court, and King Arthur himself. This is due to his reputation as a prideful braggart, who cares more about his own reputation rather than honor or loyalty. Despite this, he has proven successful in quests, and however unorthodoxy has successfully completed many quests in Arthur’s name.

Sir Bors de Ganis  
The Son of a King of Gaul, Sir Bors de Ganis was, along with his brother Lionel, captured as a child and raised in captivity by Claudas, the enemy of Arthur during the rebellion in Britannia. However, he was saved by the Lady of the Lake, who raised him and his brother with their cousin, Lancelot. Eventually, all three of them became Knights of the Round Table. He has become one of finest of the Round Table, noted for his extreme religious devotion. In addition, Sir Bors has maintained an extremely close relationship with Sir Lionel and Sir Lancelot, and is still very loyal to the Lady in the Lake.
Sir Lamorak  
Sir Lamorak is a son of King Pellinore, one of King Arthur’s earliest allies in the first rebellion against his rule. His father was killed by Gawain in retaliation for Gawain’s own father’s demise. Due to this, Sir Lamorak and his brothers have a blood feud with Gawain and his brothers, causing significant tensions among those of the Round Table. King Arthur has avoided taking sides on this issue, and has focused on promoting an ease of tensions or at least peace between them. However, Lamorak’s fierce temper has not helped the situation. Perhaps the only thing that has kept him alive throughout this feud is his incredible strength, which is unrivaled in the kingdom.

Sir Dagonet  
As what many suspect was a joke, King Arthur appointed his beloved jester, Dagonet, as a knight and brought him onto the Round Table. Dagonet, however, is unaware of this, and is extremely proud, constantly boasting of his skill and valor. In reality, the man is a coward, and usually flees on the battlefield. However, he has been very willing to combat against other knights, much to Arthur’s glee. As a result, Dagonet is often sent against knights as an insult against their honor, inferring that they are not worthy of a true knight. Still, his pride is kept untouched by the Round Table due to his violent temper and, however unskilled, his capacity for manipulation cannot be overstated.

Helpful Resources

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table: http://www.kingarthursknights.com/

The Arthurian Legend: http://www.ramsdale.org/legend.htm

Timeline of Arthurian History: http://www.britannia.com/history/arthur/timearth.html