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Vengeance of Excalibur

ntroduction

The Shadow

(from the Sworn Testimony of Corissa, second parlor maid to the Royal Court, prior to her beheading.)

"Mr. Hyde sent me up to clean the ashes out of the fireplace in the Blue Room, otherwise, I would never have gone up there. So I go in and it's all dark and cold, and I'm halfway across the room before I sees King Constantine sitting there. Such a start it give me, Himself sitting in that big chair, not moving a muscle, all droopy and looking sad and tired. Once, just a few weeks ago, he spoke to me, asked me my name even, I was so proud. But now he just sat there, staring at nothing.

"I always hated that fireplace. It was so big I had to stoop down and walk right into it to clean it. Little did I know that would save me very life! There was this great splintering crash, the door being bashed open, and a flash of light brighter than a lightning bolt. I was in the back of the fireplace, and still I was half blinded. Then there was people moving, and a voice, like a cultured gentleman, talking about treasure. I just pushed back into that awful fireplace as far as I could and hoped they wouldn't see me.

"By the time I could see again, they were going into Nineve's laboratory, where she has all her enchantress stuff. A knight, and a, well... it was a shadow. A shadow, I tell you, not a real man at all. There was this horrible scream from the laboratory, like to freeze my bones, and a few minutes later the two come out again. I could see pretty well by then, and, upon my honor, the one was still a shadow. The Shadow carried a great bag, and the knight had Nineve slung over his shoulder. And on their way out the Shadow said, and I remember the exact words, 'You have done well this night, Sir Breuse. Now, take the woman and the gold and flee the country, for all men shall pursue you.' Only his voice was deep and scary.

"I stayed right where I was for a long time, shaking in me boots. Then I remembered Himself, wondering why he hadn't done nothing, Himself being such a great warrior. He was stiff just sitting there, just like before, not moving. Only before, he had looked tired, like. Now he looked more like he was made out of stone, like a statue. I went right up to him then, and touched him, and he was like he was stone, just like he still is now. And I ran to get help. And, I swear, I didn't take his crown and I don't know how it got under me bed."

The Curse

(excerpt from "A Shorte Historie of Brawton" by Westleye Brawe V. Great-Great-Grandson of Westleye Brawe of Brawton, England, c, 900 A.D., unpublished.)

Some eighteen months after the Great Madrigal Societie Scandal, a stranger came to town, a man of considerable dusty grandeur. He stopped by Father's own Goat's Breathe Inn and asked for food and lodging, and, late into the night, regaled us with the strangest of tales.

It seems he was a messenger of the King's court, one of many sent out to summon the Knights of the Round Table. He said that King Constantine was under a spell that turned Him into a statue. (As our fair city of Brawton once had a statue, we were naturally much distressed by this revelation.) A stupendous shadowy demon had cast the spell and carried off the Court Sorceress, Nineve, and a staggering assortment of treasures. Helye's Book, which contained magic that might defeat this demon. Old King Andred's Gauntlets of Power. The Great King Arthur's helmet and shield and even Excalibur! But, worst of all, the Holy Grail itself was gone!!

Of course, we were all much excited by this intelligence, and mounted an immediate house-to-house search for the missing items. Alas, in vain. (Though we did find Rawley Wight's cat, missing since shortly after Maurra Taight broke her best wooden spoon over hubby Arno's head. The cat was under Rawley's front porch, little more than a skeleton.)

Reconvening at the Goat's Breathe, though, the stranger gave us reason to doubt his sanity. The poor man started raving about how, despite the best efforts of that greatest of magicians, Merlin, the forces of darkness were ravaging England. Epidemics were raging across the land, rats were a veritable plague in London, crops were failing, and the weather had gone mad.

Endwin, our wise vicar, quietly pointed out that we had had no such problems, and the weather was just fine thank you. But the poor man wouldn't stop his drunken fantasizing. He said Spain was the place to go. He said the Christian kingdoms of the north were fighting the Moslem kingdoms of the south, as well as fighting amongst themselves. And bands of roving mercenaries were attacking travelers everywhere. A quick glance around the room sufficed to affirm that Spain was not where the good people of Brawton wanted to be.

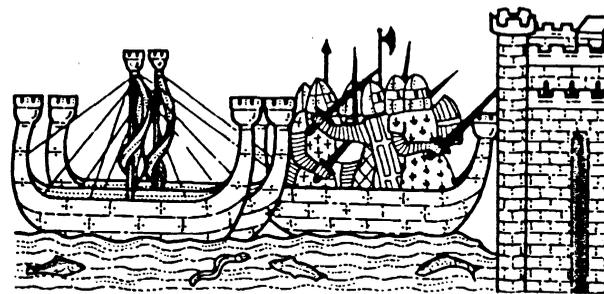
Father wisely decided the man had had enough to drink for one night and extracted from the stranger's purse sufficient recompense for the evening's festivities. Three of us carried him out to the barn to sleep it off. On the way out the man was still talking, saying he wanted to get to Portsmouth and join a group of knights headed for Bayonne, in Spain. He wanted to fight beside them

and find Nineve and the stolen treasures and free King Constantine. This, from a poor man who couldn't even handle his ale!

Fortunately the stranger was gone in the morning. That Sunday, Vicar Endwin spoke of the dangers of foreigners in our midst and we all nodded in solemn agreement.

(Editor's note, The 'Historie' ends here. Much of it was rendered illegible by flood waters and the gnawing of rats.)

Starting the Game



Please review the reference card for your computer for installation and copy protection information.

After the game is installed properly, you start the game by choosing your companions at Portsmouth. Only four of the seven knights (eleven knights if you have imported four knights from Spirit that are not already included in Vengeance of Excalibur. See reference card for more information about importing characters) can accompany you to Bayonne in search of the stolen items. Each knight has his own strengths and weaknesses:

Lancelot is the best fighter, with the highest combat points. Edward is a close second, and good to have with you if Lancelot should perish in battle. Sangamore carries a prowess potion with him. Amadis has a healing potion in his possession. Bors has the Blessed Cross and is the most pious, though not pious enough to use the Citadel Scroll. He is also the only knight with magical ability. Ironside is the swiftest, and will help you outrun the rogues. Brandiles is the wealthiest which will help you finance mercenaries and buy various other items needed to complete your quest.

Game Instructions

This section of the manual will tell you how to play the game. Many things are hidden in the game environment; while the game mechanics are thoroughly described, we will give only hints about many aspects of the game, in particular magic use and on finding potential allies. With persistence, the thrill of discovery will be yours.

In the sections which follow, we will describe how to issue commands throughout the game. With all commands, several conventions will be used. These are:

1. We will refer to giving commands using the "mouse cursor." You can move the mouse cursor with a mouse, a joystick or the cursor control on your keyboard. To select an icon, a command menu, or an option box, you can press the left mouse button, the first joystick button, or the ENTER or INS keys.
2. Whenever any command sequence is initiated, you can abort it by pressing ESC. Whenever an information dialog box is no longer needed, you can get rid of it by pressing ESC.
3. In all areas of the game, you can make selections from option menus by pressing the first character of any word in that menu. If there is only one option starting with that letter, it will be selected.

If there are several options with the same first letter, the selection cursor will step to each in turn as you press that key again. When the cursor is pointing at the option that you wish, press ENTER to select it.

Levels of the Game

Two levels of screen displays will be used in the playing of VENGEANCE OF EXCALIBUR. They are, respectively, the MAP Level, and the SCENE Level.

Map Level

The Map Level provides the strategic platform for your quest to rescue Nineve and recover the treasures. It is a detailed multi-screen overview map of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), with all of the major towns, castles, roads, and other points of interest represented thereon. There is no single screen

that displays the entire map; to move to any other sector of the map, move the mouse cursor to the edge of the screen. The map will scroll in the indicated direction, revealing other sections to the player's view.

From time to time, dialog boxes will appear to the player, displaying information or menu selections. The dialog boxes appear as stone tablets on the screen. Information displayed here will include force identifications, encounter announcements, and status reports, and will often require a prompt from the player for appropriate action.

Heraldic Shields, representing opposing, allied, and neutral forces will appear on the map and move about on their various journeys and engagements. The shields are functioning icons, which can be clicked on to display their identification and other information. The shields also can be selected and magnified upon for closer scrutiny at the Scene Level (see below). Towns or castles on the map are also viewable in this fashion.

The Map Level gives the means for you to deploy your forces as you see fit to meet the onslaughts of enemy forces, and to monitor enemy progress.

Scene Level

The Scene Level is the action/animation screen. All interactive combat sequences take place here.

Locations on the Map Level may be magnified to this level to provide a close-up view of the action. Movements in and out of rooms and buildings also take place here. Your characters are viewed on this level. Game time does not pass here: the Scene Level represents real time. When individual or army combat is announced on the Map Level, the player will be prompted to Magnify to the Scene Level to participate in the combat, if he chooses (in many cases he will



have no choice but to do so).

On both the map and Scene Levels, groups of icons appear on the top right corner of the screen. Many single-keystroke commands, corresponding to respective icons and other tasks, are also available on both levels. Each level's keystroke commands are entirely different in function and effect from those of the other level. Please keep this in mind to avoid confusion, as you move about and consider your options. The icons and keystroke commands for each game level are described in the following sections.



What the Icons Mean

The icons appear in the top right corner of the screen indicate various game functions, and can be activated by placing the cursor over them and clicking the button. There are two major groups of icons, corresponding to the Map Level and Scene Level screens of the game. The two groups of icons are described below. (You can use keystrokes instead of icons if you prefer. See the basic keystroke sequences. below.)

Map Level Icons

At the Map Level, the player may use the arrow cursor keys, the mouse, or a joystick to move his cursor over the map, icons, or dialog boxes. Pressing a button will select whatever the cursor is resting on. All icons are found at the top-right section of the screen. Icon-activated commands available at this level are as follows:



1) Crystal Ball Icon. This icon activates the status screen which displays information relating to the status of the currently selected party. It displays the stats for Hit Points, Health, Magic, Combat, Armor, Nobility, and Faith as explained below.

The contents of the status display screen shown above consist of the following entries:

HP - Maximum Hit Points. This is the number of hit points a character can take before being killed. Tougher characters have more hit points. Knights begin the game with 5 HP each.

HTH - Shows the health of the character as the current number of hit points left. If this number is the same as HP, the knight has not been injured at all. If this number reaches zero, the knight dies. Healing potions or healing spells can restore a character's health.

MAG (Range 0 - 100) - This is the amount of magic power available to the character. Each use of magic within an episode drains these points until the current episode is completed or the magic level is restored by magical means. Frequent use of magic can, over time, increase a character's ability to use magic.

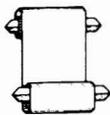
COM (Range 0 - 25+) This indicates the hand-to-hand combat abilities of the character (as opposed to strategic or magical combat abilities). Ability can increase slightly with each successful fight. Higher numbers indicate greater combat skills.

ARM (Range 0 - 100%) This indicates the armor level of a particular knight. The average knight comes equipped with standard plate armor (40%). Subtracting this number from 100 shows the percentage chance for that knight to be hit in combat (usually 60%). Magical or enchanted armor will improve this number further. The greater the number, the greater the protection.

NOB (Range 0 - 20) This indicates the nobility level of the knight. Most knights begin with a nobility level of 13-15. This is considered to be higher than the average personage of noble blood who would only have, say a level 10.

FTH (Range 0 - 20) - This represents a character's faith levels, his belief in God and the rightness of his cause. The average number is 10. Priests usually have a level 15 or higher.

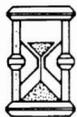
Individual character entries can be selected to display further information about that character, such as his followers and the inventory of items that he is carrying. To select a character, press the first letter of his name. If there are several with the same first letter, the cursor will step to each in turn. Press ENTER when it is on the character you wish to examine. Alternatively, move the cursor to the character you want more information about and select him.



2) Scroll Icon. This is the file control for the game. Selecting this icon displays the archive menu, which has two options: to Load, or to Save a game. It is recommended that the user lean heavily on this ability to save different games at different positions and times.



3) Map Icon. Appears as a Map of Iberia. Selecting this icon will move the player out to the Overhead Map display. The Overhead Map is a condensed map of Iberia. In this map, the entire peninsula of Iberia is visible on the screen at one time. This map can be used as an overview of the actions of your various parties. All the parties under your control appear on the map as red marker lights. Use this feature to help you from losing track of your valiant knights in hostile terrain. You can use the Magnifying Glass icon to zoom in to any part of the map.



4) Hourglass Icon. This controls the speed of the game at the Map Level. You are given three choices: slowly, medially, and quickly. Use this to speed up a long journey or to slow down moments of critical decision making.



5) Magnifying Glass Icon. This is the zoom control that allows you to zoom in for a close up view of the action. In using this, you are switching modes from the Map Level to the Scene Level. Game time is also changed to the real time of the Scene Level in which strategic (Map Level) events are suspended. The glass may be clicked upon any location on the Map Level indicated by a location icon (lake, city, town, village, castle, fort, and sometimes the heraldic shields of the different personages) to provide a close up view of that scene and any forces or characters located there. The Magnifying Glass is also available to zoom in on locations from the Overhead Map Level (See number 3, the Map Icon, in this section for more information on the Overhead Map display.)



6) Rider Icon. This knight on horseback is the movement control at the Map Level. Selecting this icon causes the cursor to change into an arrowhead. In this mode the player will select the party he wishes to move, and the destination to go to. Once the party is selected, the cursor will change to a destination icon:



The destination may then be specified by a mouse click on a location of the map. If you change your mind, press ESC or click on any icon to abort the movement

command. When selecting the destination for a character or force, there are several principles you must keep in mind. First, you can only set a destination for characters or forces that are loyal to you. All other characters move independently of your desires. (In fact, you might note that your enemy does the exact opposite of what you want him to do.) Second, take note of the terrain your party must travel over to reach your destination. Plot a course using the roads whenever possible because the terrain is a factor in the speed of your movement. Third, keep in mind that your party begins the game as strangers in a strange land. Even the fabled knights of old are capable of getting lost, and this is reflected in the game. If your destination is far away, try using short hops rather than commanding your force to span the entire country in a single click. When your party becomes lost, you will find them circling aimlessly just like any other poor lost soul in the wilderness. If you have someone with your party who knows the territory, you will find your chances of becoming lost decrease.

7) Shield or Symbol Icons. These icons represent characters or groups of characters within the game. The shield icons are distinct, and with a little practice you will be able to recognize a character by the emblem on his shield in the same way that chivalric knights actually did. When a group is moving together, the shield shown is that of the leader of the group. Icons representing characters within the game other than knights have symbols that are representative of their nature (i.e., a wagon for the gypsy, etc.)



8) Helm Icon. The knight's helm icon functions as a locator. Selecting this icon will bring up a dialog box of your party members. If your party is together, only your leader will appear. However, if you split up your party, this box will display the name of each member. Click on the name of the person you wish to find, and you will be taken to their location on the map.

In addition to using the icons just mentioned, the player has other means at his disposal to control the play of the game at the Map Level. To pause the game, click on the magnifying glass icon yet do not select an area to inspect. When you wish to resume, click the glass again or click off to the side of the map. To identify locations or characters (shields) within the game, click with the normal (arrow) cursor upon the location or shield that you wish to know more about. If you click on a location, the computer will also tell you who is at that location. This is especially helpful in finding characters who are not represented by an icon. The player can also use the right mouse button to toggle between the different icons available at the Map Level.

Scene Level Icons



1) Crystal Ball Icon. This is the Status report. Select this icon to see the current status of those characters that are at the currently displayed location. The status display is identical to that displayed at the Map Level as described in the previous pages.



2) Scroll Icon. This icon lets you load and save games from the Scene Level. It works the same as the Map Level scroll icon.



3) Map Icon. Appears as a Map of Iberia. Selecting this icon will move the player out to the Map Level display.



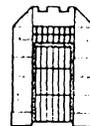
4) Gauntlet Icon. This picture of a mailed fist represents the action control. Upon selecting this icon, a dialog box with a list of options will be displayed.

PICKUP	DROP	TALK	USE
SEARCH	TRADE	REQUEST	MAGIC
SEIZE	GIVE	BRIBE	ATTACK

Choose the option that corresponds to the game character's situation. For example, it is not a good idea to **ATTACK** the kind and gentle abbot of a monastery to obtain what you need. Such inappropriate actions will adversely affect aspects of your character. **FAITH** and **NOBILITY**, being critical elements of your character's makeup, may be weakened. Keep in mind, also, that some things simply cannot be bought (for example, good sailing weather), and that acts such as bribing may not always be appropriate. Much of this is discussed in greater detail under the **FAITH AND NOBILITY** section of this manual.

Exercising the **ATTACK** option opens up a whole new subject, involving interactive combat sequences with mouse, keyboard, or joystick for individual combat, and many command options for full-scale army combat. All this is discussed in greater detail in the **HANDLING COMBAT/MAGIC** chapter.

Dialog boxes will be displayed, showing the player the results of the action he takes. Every action available under the Action command can also be initiated by a single keystroke, which is the first letter of the command: A for Attack, P for Pickup, and so on.



5) Gate Icon. This icon appears only when a door exists in a scene but is not plainly visible. If a gate door is visible, click on it to enter or leave.

6) Arrow Icon. This icon appears at the bottom of the screen, unlike the other icons. It indicates a door in the "fourth wall" of the screen: which is the wall that is removed so you can see your characters, so the characters are moving, in effect, towards the screen. This icon does not mean that the door leads down. It always leads to a room on the same level.

At the Scene Level, you can also click directly on a character to bring up an **ACTION** dialog box for that character. You can click on an object to identify it, and optionally, to pick it up.

During individual combat, if you wish to use a player to fight who does not appear in the combat scroll, click on up or down arrows located to the right of the names listed. The program will scroll up or down: so you can find the person you wish to use. If you do wish to use the mouse, the + and - keys can also be used, with the + key moving down, and the - key moving up.



The Basic Keystroke Sequences

Keystrokes can be used as direct substitutes for icons. At times, it may be faster or more convenient to employ keystrokes, rather than mouse-clicks upon icons. Each keystroke command is the first letter of the desired command. The keystroke commands come in two sets, corresponding to the two levels of the game: Map Level, and Scene Level. The keystroke commands are not case sensitive (i.e., capital or small letters will work equally well).

The Map Level keystroke commands listed below are:

A - **ARCHIVE** menu. Allows saving of a current game, and restoring of a previously saved game. Up to 39 games may be saved. A dialog box will display all available saved games. Any game can be selected with the mouse cursor. The sub-commands for the Archive menu are:

S – **SAVE** a current game. This method is highly recommended for players who wish to replay difficult situations in the game, or to resume later.

L – **LOAD** a previously saved game.

F – **FIND** command. This command will bring up a dialog box of your party members. If your is together, only your leader will appear. However, if you split up your party, this box will display the name of each member. Click on the name of the person you wish to find, and you will be taken to their location on the map.

G – **GO** command. Commands your character to move to whatever destination you select: a fortress city, a town, a spot in the country, or some other force or character you wish to pursue.

M – **MAGNIFY** command. Allows you to zoom in on your selected region. The Scene Level action-animation screen will be shown.

P – **PAUSE** game. Press any key to continue.

Q – **QUIET/Sound** toggle. Allows you to toggle on/off the music and sound effects of the game.

S – **STATUS** command. A status dialog box will appear, giving information about any character or force you have selected. If you have not already selected a character or force, an alert box will appear.

T – **TIME** rate menu. Allows you to switch between the three operating speeds of the game: **SLOWLY**, **MEDIATELY**, and **QUICKLY**.

U – **UP**. Moves you to overview map.

CONTROL-X – **EXIT** the game. A dialog box will appear, asking you if you are sure you wish to leave. Type **Y** or **N** as a reply. If you wish to save your game, you must do so before selecting the **EXIT** option.

The Scene Level keystroke commands, listed below are:

A – **ARCHIVE** menu. Same function as Map Level.

D – **DO** command. Corresponds in function to the Action icon at the Scene Level. Striking this key will give you all the options of the Action dialog box including:

PICKUP	DROP	TALK	USE
SEARCH	TRADE	REQUEST	MAGIC
SEIZE	GIVE	BRIBE	ATTACK

These options may be selected with the mouse or joystick. Any of these commands can also be given by pressing the first letter of the desired command: **P** for Pickup, **R** for Request, and so on. Each of these commands will be followed by appropriate prompts for you to select what to pick up, how much to bribe with, etc.

G – **GATE** command. Pressing this key will allow the player to enter through gates or doors, where appropriate.

M – **MAP** command. Pressing this key will move the player back out to the Map Level. Exception: if you are in a maze or building, you will be told that you must solve the maze or leave the building before you can return to the Map Level.

P – **PAUSE** game. Press any key to continue.

Q – **QUIET/Sound** toggle. Allows you to toggle on/off the music and sound effects of the game.

S – **STATUS** command. Displays the current status of the character or force displayed in the current scene.

CONTROL-X – **EXIT** the game. A dialog box will appear, asking you if you are sure you wish to leave. Type **Y** or **N** as a reply. If you wish to save your game, you must do so before selecting the **EXIT** option.

Handling Combat and Magic

Individual Combat

At any time, the character you control may be challenged to combat, or you may find it necessary to challenge or attack. The challenge may be a simple contest of arms or it might be a fight to the death. If you are at the Map Level when this happens, you may be given the option to watch/control the combat or to ignore it and just hear about the results. In these cases, if you elect to watch you will be brought to the Scene Level, showing your character's situation and opponents. In certain instances, you will not be given an option but will be brought automatically to the Scene Level.



While your character is fighting, you can control both the style and the timing of the blows.

In the combat menu are three style options: cautious, normal, and reckless. These control the degree of wild abandon with which your character fights.

The cautious style is similar to fencing. Your character will defend until a good opening presents itself, then quickly thrust.

The normal style involves a series of thrusts and overhead blows mixed with a defensive posture.

The reckless style is a series of slashes in a frenzied manner with little regard for self-preservation.

In addition to the automatic fighting, you may directly control your character. Move the cursor below the Combat menu. Now, the left button or insert key controls the slash maneuver, while the right button (or delete key) invokes a thrust.

You can also opt to retreat and send another fighter into the combat by selecting a character from the combat dialog box and commanding him to attack. Also, during a fight, any character (even bystanders that are not actually fighting) can be commanded to USE some item or CAST a magic spell. You can

strengthen a friend or weaken his opponent while they are busy with their battle. Some items and spells do not work during combat.

Army Combat

When hostile armies approach each other, you will be offered several options. You can choose to ignore the coming battle and just hear the results. Or, you can choose to observe and watch the ebb and flow of the battle with a display of the casualties as they occur. Finally, you can choose to command the forces of the Round Table and their allies and try to improve their showing in battle with your superior tactics. When a battle begins, you will first be asked if you wish



to GO THERE or IGNORE IT. The latter option will simply give you the report of the casualties without showing you the battle itself. In some cases, your army leader may be challenged to single combat by the leader of the opposing forces or by a captured foe. If you accept, individual combat will result. The loser's forces will be dispersed.

During any combat, a small graphic screen of the battlefield will appear, with the forces shown in severe miniature. Each of the relevant forces will be listed by name. You can issue commands to your forces by either selecting them by name or by clicking on the force on the battlefield display.

Adjacent to the list of forces are the command options that you can use to issue your orders. Whenever you select a character or force, the relevant command options will be enabled. These include:

CHARGE
ENGAGE
USE ITEM
MAGIC

FLANK
RETREAT

These seven menu options give the player considerable flexibility for battle strategy. The commands can be issued to any forces under the player's control.

Episodes

The game is divided into seven major Episodes. Each episode has one major goal, but accomplishing this goal may require you to complete a series of minor quests along the way. Successful completion of all these minor quests are not necessary to complete the game. However, each side task may add items or knowledge that will become very important later. Each episode will be presented to you with a small introduction to give you an idea of the major task and where you are in the game, but there will also be items of information that you can only learn by talking to important characters along the way.

Episode One

Your party has sailed to Bayonne where you will begin your quest. Your main task in this Episode is to find and kill Breuse sans Pitie, and recover the Gaunts d'Poer (Gauntlets of Power) from him. Standing in the way of your success, are several foes: rouges roaming the countryside sent to destroy your entire party, Basques determined to keep strangers from crossing the Pyrenees mountains, and an army at Santiago de Compostela that is protecting Breuse.

In order to defeat the army at Santiago, your party must have a larger and stronger army. To accomplish this, you must finance mercenaries to join you. However, your party lacks the funds necessary to finance mercenaries for any long length of time. Therefore, your first objective is to obtain the necessary funds to buy yourself the strength you need to enter Santiago.

Episode Two

You have been given the onerous mission of returning the stolen church bell to Santiago. In addition, you will be told that Nineve, kidnapped by Breuse, was transformed into a bird - the one you're carrying, coincidentally - and must be restored to her natural form. Because Nineve is such a powerful sorceress in her own right, you would be better served if you restored her first before seeking the church bells. The spell that holds Nineve's soul inside the bird is a powerful one - one that requires great magic to negate.

Heading south from Santiago, your party will encounter various enemy armies who are determined to thwart any progress you have made. Be sure to keep your mercenaries with you if you enjoy being alive.

Episode Three

After returning the stolen bell to Bartholomew in Santiago, you were told that the rest of the treasures were taken to the City of Brass, a place which has no obvious entrances from the outside. In order to recover the treasures, you must first find a way in to the city. While the Djinni has the ability to grant your party flight over the walls, he needs to enchant a carpet that is unlike any other.

Not only is the City of Brass hard to enter, it is also hard to remain alive in. Guarded by thousands of skeleton soldiers, you must find a confederate who has the military strength to defeat them. There are not many in the land of Iberia who do not fear the undead.

Inside the city, you will find Helye's book, one of the treasures stolen from the treasury of Camelot. But before you can recover the book, your party must tackle an opponent as powerful as the Djinni who is under your command.

Episode Four

After defeating the evil Djinni in Episode Three, you became the proud owner of Helye's book. As you might have suspected, al-Mansur did indeed betray you by taking the rest of the treasures of Camelot and is at this very moment heading toward Kurtuba. You must reach Kurtuba before him, if your party is to have a chance at retrieving Arthur's Helm and Shield. You cannot take on his army en route to Kurtuba, as it is much too strong for you to claim victory.

The guards at Kurtuba will never let you pass into the city, so you must find an alternate route. There is a side gate into the city, but it is locked. Ruy Diaz, who is a mercenary, is travelling through Zamora to Salamanca. He may be able to help you to get inside the city. However, he has a quest of his own. In exchange for his aid, you will be committing yourself to helping him with his quest - however dangerous it may be. Your mission: to find Landoine. Landoine, daughter of King Alfonso, was kidnapped and taken to a harem inside Kurtuba. To find Landoine, you must get the help of Breuse, who is in a prison in Kurtuba. Breuse knows where Landoine is, and will be able to help you rescue her.

Episode Five

After finally finding Arthur's Helm and Shield, you find yourself once again betrayed, this time by Breuse. He has stolen Arthur's Shield yet again, and has disappeared. Having no idea where he has gone, it's better to continue your mission until you find him again. al-Mansur has again thwarted you and left for Tuliatala. Before travelling there, you must raise a large enough army to defeat the forces that protect the city. You will have the opportunity to help three different cities in exchange for their aid. But heed this warning: attempting to help all three will enable al-Mansur to raise an army that is so formidable, even a prayer won't protect your party from certain death. After acquiring more knights and soldiers, you must travel to Tuliatala and somehow obtain Excalibur by defeating al-Mansur.

Episode Six

Although you have recovered Excalibur, and killed al-Mansur, you must reforge Excalibur before you can finish your final quest to destroy the Shadowmaster. To reforge Excalibur, you must have a "fragment of heaven." Such an item is not easily found in this time period but you will hear of a monk in Valencia who deals with such matters. You will also hear of a dragon on the isle of Majorica. The teeth of this beast, legend claims, will sow into skeleton soldiers. The final battle with the Shadowmaster is close at hand, and your party will need all the help it can receive.

Episode Seven

In the Enchanted City in the south of Spain resides the Mastermind behind all of the evils you have encountered: the Shadowmaster. To complete Episode Seven and solve the game, you will need to overcome the greatest obstacles yet and kill the Shadowmaster himself. Yet there are many things which lie between you and your nemesis. Look for the reappearance of the traitor with the stolen Arthur's Shield. Also you must find and defeat the Wizard who possesses the Citadel Scroll. Once you have these items, you will be ready to engage in mortal combat with the Shadowmaster!

Historical Background

Vengeance of Excalibur is set in a period of time that is frequently overlooked by the history books. The events depicted in this game could have occurred right around the year 1000 a.d. This was at the height of the occupation of the Iberian peninsula by the Muslims.

The Arab peoples who embraced the Islamic faith taught by the prophet Muhammed were primarily nomads who wandered the desert plains. Although rich in culture, the harshness of their surroundings made supporting smaller tribes easier economically and logistically, except where there were available sources of water. Around such oasis in the desert were formed the great cities of Arabia. The same harshness of the desert forged a tough, weather-hardened people that came together for the first time under the unifying force of the Islamic religion.

The collapse of the Roman empire left a power vacuum in the area of the Mediterranean sea at just the time that the young Arabic culture was coming into its strength. It was into this absence of power that the hordes of the new Arabian conquerors flowed. At first, the ease of their conquest surprised even the victors themselves. The lessons learned as nomads (the movement of supplies, the handling of horses, etc.) proved them in good stead and soon the cavalries of Islam swept almost completely around the Mediterranean and even eastward into what is now Pakistan. By the year 750 a.d., the Islamic empire had reached its high point. In just over two hundred years, the Islamic culture was born and grew to dominate almost the entire civilized world of the time!

The Islamic occupation of Iberia flowed across the straits of Gibraltar from the continent of Africa. The Moors were primarily Moroccan Muslims who came to occupy the peninsula of Iberia. (In fact to this day, 'moor' is used in some European cultures to describe a black person.) The early Islamic invasion force was under the command of a freed slave named Tarik. Gibraltar is from a contraction of 'Jabal Tarik,' the mountain of Tarik. Tarik was under orders not to probe too far into Iberia, but the natives of Iberia and the Jewish inhabitants who were being mistreated under the occupying Visigoths welcomed the liberating armies wherever they went. Tarik found himself in control of half of Iberia in less than a year. There had been no swifter conquest in all the

records of the armies of Islam. However, because Tarik had acted beyond the scope of his orders, instead of being rewarded for his conquests, he was disgraced and returned home in chains.

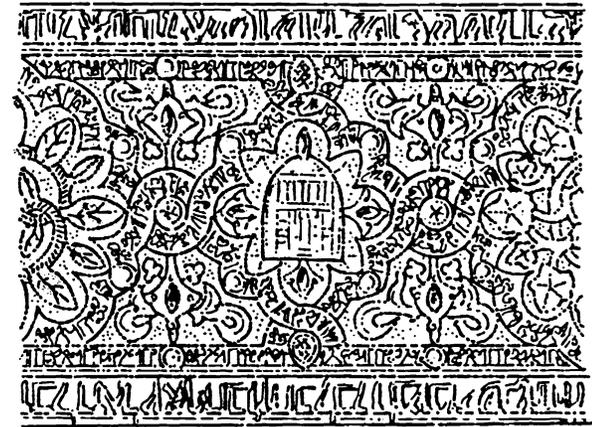
In the tenth century, Muslim Cordoba enjoyed its most splendid and prosperous period with two outstanding rulers in Abd al-Rahman III and al-Mansur. It was the most powerful state in Europe, courted by rulers far and near. At the height of its fame, it had a population of half a million. It also had, according to Arab historians, 113,000 houses, 700 mosques, 300 public baths, 70 libraries and numerous bookstores.

At the end of Abd al-Rahman's reign the king of Leon, the queen of Navarre and the counts of Castile and Barcelona, all Christian rulers, recognized him as their overlord and sent him each year a tribute of money. If they failed to pay, the caliph sent his armies to punish them.

At the time around which the game centers, a boy of twelve, Hashim II, sat on the throne of Iberia. Ruling in his stead was the general, Ibn abi Amir. The Amir seemed invincible, winning victories against both the Christians in the north and rebellious Islamic states in the south in Africa. Ibn ami Amir soon came to be known as al-Mansur, 'The Victorious.' Under the rule of al-Mansur, Iberia was controlled more effectively than ever before. This situation soon changed.

After the death of al-Mansur, the Islamic occupation of Iberia quickly deteriorated. From the start the Islamic armies had leaned heavily on Berber mercenaries. (Tarik himself had been a Berber.) Now the Berbers turned on their employers and sacked several Islamic cities. In 1031 the people of Cordoba, a principle Iberian city, turned on their Islamic ruler and disposed of him altogether, locking both him and his small daughter away in a dungeon. By 1150 a.d. there were several large Christian states in what had once been a wholly Islamic Iberia. The Christian armies did not win a decisive battle against the Muslims until 1212 when united armies from the kingdom of Iberia and France clashed with the Islamic armies at Las Navas do Tolosa, one of the main passes leading from Castile to the valley of Guadalquivir. This victory cleared the way for the Christian forces, and where once the Islamic armies seemed unbeatable, they now melted away at the slightest touch of their adversaries. In only thirty years all of Iberia, except for the kingdom of Granada, had been conquered by Christian armies.

Faith



As you will have noticed by now the religion of Islam was very important to everyone living under the rule of the Arabs in Spain — either because they practiced it themselves or because — like the Jews and the Christians — they admired its effects.

Muslims believe that Allah, which is the Arabic word for God, is all-powerful and sole creator of the world. He is not father of any daughters or sons and so they do not accept that Jesus is the son of God, though they do believe in the prophets and their message. The revelations God made to Muhammad were written in the Koran, the Muslims' holy book. Muhammad never claimed to have miraculous powers or be more than human.

Yet legends grew up, as they had done round the persons of Buddha and of Christ, which told of his performing miracles. Muhammed did not claim to be a saviour — each person was responsible for his own conduct to God. He came to guide people to the straight path but others must accept his decisions on matters of faith and conduct, as they came straight from God.

Islám has many ideas in common with Judaism and Christianity. This is not surprising, as in Muhammad's time there were many Jews and some Christians in Arabia, and he would almost certainly have met many Syrian Christians on his caravan journeys to Damascus. Muhammed had never read their Bible but he would have heard about their teachings.

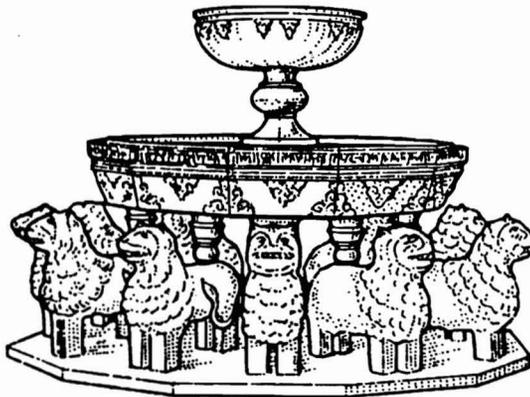
In addition to God and his revelations, Islam has in common with Christianity belief in angels and in the Last Judgment. After death there will be a Day of Judgment for all men. Then those going to Hell will be separated from the blessed, who will go to Paradise. People used to the barren deserts of Arabia thought of Paradise as a very lush place. "They shall recline on jewelled couches," says the Koran, "and immortal youths shall wait on them with bowls and a cup of the purest wine (that will neither make their heads ache nor take away their reason) with fruits of their own choice and the flesh of fowls that they desire."

To become a Muslim, a man had to simply recite the *shahada* (the declaration of belief through which a man becomes a Muslim), starting with the words 'I testify', in front of a member of the Muslim community. Once you had become a Muslim you could not renounce your faith. The punishment for doing so was death. The religion of Islam, which means complete submission to the will of God, is still practiced today by millions of people.

A Society of Many Races

Arabs and Berbers

Arabs were the leaders of Muslim Spain. They occupied the most fertile lands in the valleys, built the finest houses in the towns, and had the main posts in the government. But from their first entering Spain many of them married local women, so that the population became very mixed. Muslim rulers married Spanish girls who bore them children, until in the end the amirs had little Arab blood in them. Most of them were fair or ginger-haired with blue eyes, not dark-haired like Arabs.



There were never many Arabs in Spain. More numerous were the Berbers, who had formed the bulk of the invading armies. The Berbers were scattered over the less fertile hill country, where they were able to scrape a living by farming in

conditions similar to those of their native mountains in North Africa. They were Muslims, but they were loathed and despised by the wealthier Arabs as uncouth barbarians, and were valuable only as warriors. As a result the Berbers felt discontented and were sometimes prepared to take part in plots and revolts against their Arab overlords.

Below the Arabs and Berbers in importance were Spaniards who had been converted to Islam. There was no attempt to force them to become Muslims, but many found Islam attractive if only to avoid the tax which Christians and Jews (but not Muslims) paid. Spanish conversion to Islam was rapid and widespread. Soon Arabic-speaking Spanish Muslims were a majority of the population.

Christians and Jews

Those who remained Christian were well treated, as they were throughout the Islamic Empire. Both Jews and Christians were regarded as "People of the Book;" that is, as people who had their own holy writings, the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible. So long as Christians paid their taxes and did not insult the Prophet Muhammad they could practice their religion freely under their bishops, though they paid special taxes for the "protection" given to them by their Muslim rulers. In Cordoba the Christians continued to worship in the cathedral of St. Vincent, though they were not allowed to disturb the Muslims with hymn-singing or bell-ringing.

Slaves



At the bottom of the social scale were the slaves. The main source of slaves was war; prisoners were the personal property of the victor. He could ransom, kill or sell them as he wished. Dealers often went on campaigns, so that they could buy prisoners for the slave market. Pirates and traders also imported slaves from Europe, Egypt and the Black Sea ports. A person's religion or race mattered

little. Christian slave dealers hired Muslim raiders to capture Portuguese Christians at Coimbra for sale in Spain. The amirs had a liking for fair women from the north of Spain, as we saw on the previous page.

The treatment of slaves depended on where they lived. Life was hard for country slaves who worked hard throughout the daylight hours and at night were locked up to prevent them from escaping. The situation of the town slaves, particularly of the eunuchs, was better. Eunuchs were men who had been castrated, so that they could not have families of their own. They could be more loyal, therefore, to their owners — or so it was believed. Eunuchs in the royal palace had particularly great opportunities, as the amirs were not jealous or suspicious of them. Many of them became very powerful as generals, admirals and rulers of provinces. The amir was protected by his bodyguard of slaves who, in addition to serving as soldiers, ran the palace, acted as clerks and did a lot of the routine government work. The country estates from which the amir got his private income were cultivated by slave labour under the supervision of slave overseers.

Female slaves were often very well treated. Bought as young girls, they were carefully looked after and expensively educated by their owners if they showed great beauty or talent. By bearing sons to their masters, they often earned their freedom and gained favoured places in the households of the aristocracy. It was a slave girl of Abd al-Rahman III who caused the palace of al-Zabra to be built. Dying young, she left a large fortune, to be used to ransom Muslims held in Christian prisons. But there were few Muslim prisoners at this time so her successor as Abd al-Rahman's favourite, al-Azbra (meaning 'with the bright face'), proposed that the money should be spent on building a new palace. As this story illustrates, slaves were usually converted to Islam, and when set free most of them made little effort to return to their homeland.

Women

Women in Cordoba might have great influence with their husbands or masters, but they were in an inferior position to men. For most women life centered on the harem, the women's quarter of the house. Here they lived surrounded by other women and children, as no man could enter the harem, except the master of the house. As well as looking after the affairs of the house they would knit, sew and embroider — and no doubt spend a great deal of their time in gossip. A girl brought up in such seclusion would not meet a young man and fall in love. Her father would arrange her marriage for her, before she had even met her future husband.

A Muslim wife had to share the affection and wealth of her husband with the other wives which the law allowed him. The Koran said that 'men are in charge of women' and permitted a man to have four wives if he could afford to provide for them all. And he had to treat them equally and with kindness. If he was wealthy, he could also have as many slave girls as he wished. If a man tired of a wife, he could easily divorce her, without giving a reason, simply by saying three times, 'You are dismissed.' On the other hand, it was almost impossible for a woman to get a divorce, unless her husband agreed. Adultery was severely condemned in the Koran, which laid down the punishment: 'the adulterer and the adulteress, flog each of them with a hundred lashes.'

Yet women, both slave and free, had far greater freedom in Spain than in most Muslim countries. They could walk about unveiled. Slave girls often talked freely with the guests of their masters. Rich women could study in the schools, several of which were open to both sexes.

Basically, though, the position of women and their treatment depended on what the Koran said. This was because his religion was all-important to the Muslim. If he wanted guidance in his daily life he turned to his faith and its holy book, the Koran.

Glossary of English Words Taken from the Arabic

The intermingling of the essentially Arabic/Islamic culture with the European/Christian culture has enriched our society at a fundamental level. This can be seen more clearly than perhaps any other manner through the way the Arabic culture touched our language. When a culture encounters a concept foreign to itself, it often borrows the language of the people that it borrows the concept from. Here then are some of the words of arabic that migrated into our culture during this time period. Many of them were concepts that began as uniquely Arabian in thought, yet we could not live without them today (i.e., it was Arabic mathematicians, for example, who 'invented' the concept of zero).

Admiral	from amir, commander
Alcohol	from al-koh'l, a fine powder used to stain eyelids, came to mean essence or spirit
Alcove	from al-qobbah, a vault, or vaulted recess containing a bed
Algebra	from al-jabr, the putting together of broken parts
Apricot	is al-birquq in Arabic
Arsenal	from dar, a house, and al-cinasah, a factory or workshop
Carafe	from gharafa, to draw or lift water
Cipher	from cifr, an empty object. Translated into Latin it became qephyrum and later, in Italian, zero. In English both zero and cipher are used
Coffee	is qahwah in Arabic
Cotton	is qutun in Arabic
Damask	means made in or brought from Damascus
Jar	from jarrah, an earthen water vessel
Lemon	is laimun in Arabic
Magazine	from makhazin, storehouses, when used for books it can mean a storehouse of information
Mattress	from al-matrah, a place where something is thrown down, such as a mattress or cushion
Monsoon	from mausim, season (hence a seasonal wind)
Muslin	from the town of Mosul in Mesopotamia where this woven cotton was made
Orange	is naranj in Arabic

Sherbet	from sharbah, a drink of fruit juice and sweetened water
Sofa	from soffah, a part of the floor raised one or two feet and covered with rich carpets and cushions
Sugar	is sukkar in Arabic
Syrup	from sharab, wine (in English, a thick, sweet liquid)
Tabby	from attabiy, the name of a quarter in Baghdad which made striped silks; thus, in English, tabby refers to a striped cat
Tariff	from tarif, what is made known (hence a list of custom duties or hotel charges)

(A note on Arabic spelling and transliterations...

The Arabic language, because it is not based on a roman alphabet, has no exact counterparts in the English spelling system. Instead letters are chosen that 'sound like' the word in question. This process is known as transliteration. Thus there is no 'correct' spelling of Arabic words in English. There are conventions that are agreed on from time to time and from translated language to language. But these 'correct' forms are very short lived. For a ready example of this, witness the number of different spellings of Saddam Hussein used over the past year in the media. Good conventions follow only one rule: that they are internally consistent. We have striven for this type of usage in *Vengeance of Excalibur*. In most instances archaic spellings were chosen in deference to the time period portrayed.)