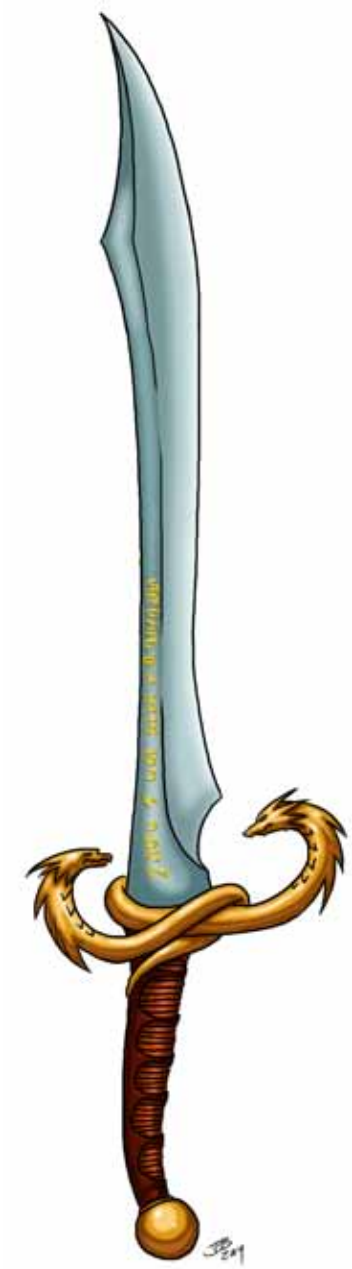
Relic Files

Treasures of Camelot II

Caladbolg



Drawing on the rules presented in the *Genius Guide to Relics of the Godlings I* and *II*, the *Relic Files* bring new magic items to your game table. Drawing on historical myth and traditional fantasy tropes, each *Relic Files* PDF presents a new relic suitable for use in most fantasy campaigns.

For suggestions on how to use relics in your campaign, you should consult Volume I of *The Genius Guide to Relics of the Godlings*, which includes rules on how to use relics without unbalancing a campaign (and even rules on making more relics). Even without those rules, any relic can be added to a campaign as the object of a quest or used like a lesser artifact.

The first three volumes of the *Relic Files* are collectively called the *Treasures of Camelot*. Each of these short PDFs presents an iconic treasure of Arthurian Legend, but each comes from a very different point of view. In this Volume we offer *Caladbolg*, a new interpretation of the sword Arthur received from the Lady of the Lake. *Caladbolg* draws not only on Arthurian Legend, but is also heavily influenced by older Welsh myths. Volume I presented a traditional version of *Arthur's Scabbard*, and in Volume III we'll feature a Roman-themed Sword in the Stone.

Each of these relics can be inserted into any campaign setting, but it is unlikely they would appear together (although that could be the seed for an amazing high fantasy post-Roman occupation Britannia campaign!). Rather, the intent was to offer new perspectives on these great treasures and spark your imagination. For campaigns set in settings lacking specific Arthurian legends, these relics can be presented as the legendary gear of any famous king or warrior, allowing some of the flavor of the Arthurian mythos to be used without tying directly to any real-world legends.

Andrew Marlowe

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Wait a Minute, This Isn't Excalibur?

Yes and no. Arthurian Legend is rife with conflicting accounts, particularly when dealing with Arthur's swords. According to one version of the legend, Excalibur is the sword Arthur gets as a gift from Nimue, the Lady of the Lake. This presentation of *Caladbolg* is more inspired by that explanation of Excalibur than the sword in the stone version.

Either way, though, *Caladbolg* only draws inspiration from the legend rather than replicating any version of Arthur's sword perfectly. Part of the reason for this is that many people (the author included!) have strong opinions about Excalibur, and it would be impossible to satisfy everyone's favorite interpretation within the design space of a single relic.

Caladbolg was the sword of the hero Fergus mac Róich, who with three strokes smote three small hills, slicing (or blasting) off their tops. It is also believed that it could have been called Calesvol, Caledfwlch, or Caliburn. In time, the blade was famously renamed Excalibur—the very sword Arthur is given by the Lady of the Lake.

The *Caladbolg* that appears below draws inspiration from all of those legends (as well as a few flights of fancy) to create a new relic blade suitable for the heroes in your fantasy campaign.

Caladbolg

Sir Bedivere blocked a wild swing from an enemy with his shield before driving his own blade into the goblin's bowels. He scanned the melee and called out for his king, but all he could see was smoke, goblins, and blood. His voice was hoarse and cracked as he yelled again for his missing liege. Bedivere's voice broke into ragged coughs as smoke from the burning boats choked off his yell.

Those boats had been hope for the King' s men until the witch had set them aflame with her fell magics. Now, Bedivere thought grimly, we die trapped on this damn beach—but not without a fight!

Men, goblins, and horses screamed, their voices nearly lost in the tumult of swords clashing on shields and the crashing waves.

Another goblin lunged out of the smoke, swinging an evil-looking sword at Bedivere's face. The knight's sword met goblin steel, but his parry was a breath too slow, and the goblin's sword rang against Bedivere's helm. Furious, his ears ringing, the knight lunged hard and fast. His sword punched through the creature's breastplate. The dying goblin twisted and fell, wrenching Bedivere's sword from his hands even as another of the creatures advanced.

Bedivere stumbled backward, reaching for a discarded goblin blade, but his enemy was faster and kicked the sword out of the knight's reach. The goblin's face split in a tusk-filled grin as he raised his sword to deal a deathblow.

The air split with the crack of thunder. Bedivere winced against the glare as the goblin was struck mid-swing by a bolt of lightning. Arthur strode from the smoke. The long curved blade of his enchanted sword, Caladbolg, flashed with reflected firelight. The king extended a hand to help the knight back to his feet.

"Retrieve your sword and shield," commanded Arthur, "they're coming again!"

Goblins swarmed towards the two men. As he recovered his sword and shield, Bedivere's skin prickled. Again Caladbolg called down bolts of lightning, driving the enemy back. Together, knight and king stood, driving off goblin after goblin. The knight felt his heart lighten despite being outnumbered and pressed against the sea; the king still stood, and Caladbolg, crackling with power, was mightier than even the stories claimed.

Caladbolg

Aura: strong evocation; **CL:** as wielder's level
Slot: Held; **Weight:** 7lbs.

Description

Caladbolg is an elegant elven curve blade, its sinuous golden pommel taking the form of two intertwined draconic serpents. The beast's heads stare fiercely at one another to form the narrow crossguard. When drawn, sparks dance and arc between blade and scabbard. Etched along either side of the blade is a phrase in shimmering elvish script. On one side the script roughly translates to "take me up", clearly denoting *Caladbolg's* power in battle. On the other, the script reads "cast me away"—a reference to times when diplomacy is preferred.

Forged from hardened lightning by elven smiths in ancient times, *Caladbolg* was a gift for the king of the neighboring human kingdom at a time when the elven people needed an ally against goblin hordes invading from the mountains.

Since those times, many heroes have carried this sword; some noble, others rakes. The best of them have used the blade's enchantments as the elven lords intended, to forge alliances and fight encroaching evil, while other bearers embraced their baser desires, turning diplomacy to seduction. However, despite any faults in their character, each man—whether noble king or bandit lord—has borne this blade to protect good people from great evil.

When this sword was last seen, it nearly fell into the grasp of the forces of darkness. A betrayed king lay dying on the battlefield. He ordered a loyal knight to cast *Caladbolg* into the sea. The knight was loathe to waste such a magnificent blade, but he seized the sword as he was bid and made his way to the shore. With enemies closing in, the knight's loyalty to his dying king overcame his reservations and he hurled the sword with all of his might into the sea, where it was caught by a slender hand that rose from the waves to draw it into the ocean's protective embrace. There it will stay until need calls it forth, and a new hero arises to wield the sword.

Level 1: *Caladbolg* is a masterwork elven curve blade, considered magic for purposes of overcoming DR, but does not give a magic enhancement bonus to attack or damage rolls, though it does grant a +1 nonmagic enhancement bonus to attack rolls as a masterwork weapon.

Level 2: Adds a +1 competence bonus to Diplomacy checks. The weapon need not be drawn to grant this benefit, but must at least be on the character's person.

Level 3: Grants electricity resistance 1. The weapon need not be drawn to grant this benefit, but must at least be on the character's person.

Level 4: Electricity resistance increases to 3.

Level 5: *Caladbolg* now functions as a *+1 elven curve blade*.

Level 6: Competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +2.

Level 7: Electricity resistance increases to 4.

Level 8: *Caladbolg* now functions as a *+1 shock elven curve blade*.

Level 9: Electricity resistance increases to 5.

Level 10: Competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +3.

Level 11: *Caladbolg* now functions as a *+2 shock elven curve blade*.

Level 12: Competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +4, electricity resistance increases to 10.

Level 13: Grants the wielder a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity and Charisma. The weapon need not be drawn to grant this benefit, but must at least be on the character's person. Treat this as a temporary ability bonus for the first 24 hours the weapon is carried.

Level 14: Competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +5, electricity resistance increases to 15.

Level 15: *Caladbolg* now functions as a *+2 shocking burst elven curve blade*.

Level 16: Competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +6, electricity resistance increases to 20, and the enhancement bonus to Dexterity increases to +4.

Level 17: Electricity resistance increases to 25, and the enhancement bonus to Charisma increases to +4.

Level 18: *Caladbolg* now can call a single bolt of lightning as *call lightning storm* 3 times per day. Also, the competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +8 and electricity resistance increases to 30.

Level 19: *Caladbolg* now functions as a +3 shocking burst elven curve blade. Also, the competence bonus to Diplomacy checks increases to +9 and its call lightning ability increases to 5 times per day.

Level 20: The competence bonus to a Diplomacy checks increases to +10, and the enhancement bonuses to Dexterity and Charisma increase to +6.

Go Rogue!!

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