

A History Noble and Unknown

The Order's claims of its antiquity cannot be wholly substantiated. The Masters point to a Hebrew document, the *Pesher Ben Josef*, which dates from the first century after Christ and was recovered from a tomb in the Levant. The *Pesher Ben Josef* forms part of the lost Gospel of Thomas; the sections pertinent to the Order are taken from the fourth and twelfth books of this gospel.

Thomas 4

1 And Jesus and his disciples came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes
2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
4 Because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, and there too were the bones of those he had murdered.
6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,
7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.
9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.
10 And he strove with Jesus, but was defeated.
11 Now was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.
12 And forthwith Jesus did cast out the unclean spirits. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place towards the sea, (they were about two thousand).
13 And Jesus appointed four of his disciples to follow after the swine and said let ye not shed the blood of any man, but those beasts that are with unclean spirits, these I give you leave to kill.
14 And they went out to see what it was that was done.

Thomas 12

22 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he said to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.
23 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;
24 And said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.
25 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.
26 And one of his disciples approached him and said, Master, all the city is in uproar against thee. Follow, and I shall bring thee to a refuge.
27 But Jesus refused, saying this is not my father's will. But thou go, and remember what I have told thee, and let no harm come to those who follow me.

28 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

29 And again he went away, and prayed, and spoke the same words.



Rich Longmore

Precursors

There are other groups comparable to the Order in certain respects. Wherever evil men consort with evil powers, surely the Lord will move the spirits of good men to intervene. Even among the pagans and the Saracens there are found a few virtuous souls who take up arms against demons and sorcerers. These other groups lack the divine blessing that enflames the souls of the Order.

The most important of these precursor orders existed during the Roman era. The *Averunci* were a secret sect under the direction of certain rich families. At night, they would creep through the streets of Rome, searching for foreign priests, druids, practitioners of human sacrifice, magi and demon-worshippers. The *Averunci* employed spies and informants, as well as tools such as the Hoffman Device favoured by our Order, but their chief weapon was ever the sacrificial blade of blood-quenched iron. When the dawn rose over the city, the vile followers of these blasphemous cults would awake to find their masters dead, their throats cut and their tongues removed. In this fashion, the *Averunci* defended the Roman republic from the worst effects of sorcerous interference.

Medicine has voiced the suspicion that Benjamin was cursed by a powerful sorcerer. He has a number of apprentices who read for him but each one of these is an added security risk. There are secrets only the Prior of Letters should know and Benjamin knows that he must soon retire, leaving his work unfinished.

Playing Benjamin: Peer blindly at whoever is talking to you but finish their sentences for them because your spies have already told you everything you need to know about them.

Edric, Prior of Lihou

'Corruption and sin everywhere, I tell you. Let it all burn!'

The Priory of Lihou is the Order's secret sanctum where it dabbles in sorcery and magic and Edric is its master.

According to protocol, Edric's appointment as Prior should be reviewed every seven years by an Assembly. No-one has dared do so, as no-one is sure how the unstable old man would react to being removed from Lihou. Edric is one of the most powerful magic-users in the Order but he is clearly on



Edric, Prior of Lihou

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	7	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
CON	16	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
SIZ	12	7-9	Abdomen	-/7
INT	17	10-12	Chest	-/8
POW	22	13-15	Right Arm	-/5
DEX	7	16-18	Left Arm	-/5
CHA	8	19-20	Head	-/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	-1d2
Magic Points	22
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+12

Typical Armour: None

Heroic Abilities: Reincarnation

Equipment: An array of occult charms and magic items, Grimoires, Demon Fetish

Notable Skills: Athletics 44%, Culture (Saxon) 44%, Insight 84%, Language (Enochian) 34%, Language (French) 84%, Language (Greek) 34%, Language (Latin) 54%, Lore (Christian Theology) 44%, Lore (Occult) 114%, Lore (Regional) 44%, Manipulation 79%, Mechanisms 49%, Meditation 77%, Perception 59%, Persistence 89%, Resilience 42%, Sorcery (Black Book of Cornwall) 74%, Sorcery (Book of Abra-Melin) 54%, Sorcery (Simon Magus) 104%, Spirit Binding 60%, Spirit Walk 66%, Stealth 49%, Unarmed 34%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Quarterstaff	M	L	24%	1D8	4/8

Defensive Throw: The attacker is thrown one metre. It otherwise works the same as the offensive manoeuvre.

Martial Sweep

Requirements: DEX 12 or higher, Unarmed Combat 60% or higher

Hero Points: 3

Duration: 1 Round

The character can use the Martial Sweep combat manoeuvre this round.

Martial Sweep: Do not roll for Hit Location normally; instead, the attack hits a random leg. If the attack inflicts damage, the foe must make a Difficult (-20%) Athletics Skill Test to avoid falling prone. This is both an offensive and defensive combat manoeuvre.

Martial Strike

Requirements: STR 12 or higher, Unarmed Combat 60% or higher

Hero Points: 3

Duration: 1 Round

The character can use the Martial Strike combat manoeuvre this round.

Martial Strike: The character inflicts 1d8 damage instead of 1d3 with an unarmed attack. This is an offensive manoeuvre.

Martial Parry

Requirements: CON 12 or higher, Unarmed Combat 60% or higher

Hero Points: 3

Duration: 1 Round



The Order categorises its foes into five groups.

- **Monsters:** Demons, spirits, the undead, abominations and other unnatural creatures. The Order has only a limited understanding of such entities and tends to treat every strange creature as something to be gutted first and studied later. Monsters are described in chapter 10.
- **Cultists:** Cultists worship demons, pagan spirits, powerful sorcerers or other entities. They are much more likely than mere heretics to have genuine supernatural power and to be a threat to the Christians around them. The Order has a great deal of experience in dealing with cults; the standard approach is to decapitate the cult by assassinating the leaders and then scattering the weaker followers.
- **Sorcerers:** Individuals who practise a form of magic, usually sorcery. The Order has spent centuries collecting grimoires and eliminating forbidden magic but sorcery is insidious and always returns. Some sorcerers practise other forms of magic, such as alchemy or spirit magic. The Order considers all sorcerers to be a threat and investigates all rumours of unnatural practices.
- **Heretics:** Heretics are those who hold beliefs contrary to the Church's teachings. Most heretics are below the

Order's notice, as they can be dealt with by local bishops (especially now, through the medium of the Inquisition). The Order becomes involved only when a heresy threatens the supremacy of the Church's orthodox teachings.

- **Impediments:** Impediments are those who do not fit into the other categories but must still be dealt with by the Order.

Cults

The Order's Imperial precursors, the Averrunci, were dedicated to eliminating hostile foreign cults. Now, hundreds of years later, the Order continues to battle against the threat of cultists. Unlike some heretical movements that seek to proselytise and grow, cults must conceal their activities from the Church and from secular authorities. The Order seeks cults in isolated farming villages, in remote communities, in the wilderness on the fringes of civilised lands, or in the heart of great cities where many hundreds of people can gather without being noticed.

At the heart of every cult is a preacher or charismatic of some sort, referred to as the cult leader. Such a leader is usually human – a deranged priest who believes the apocalypse is coming soon, an ancient witch-queen, a necromancer – but



Ben Ellebracht

Creating New Weapons

Characters can tinker with existing weapons to make new ones, or design weapons to deal with specific foes. For example, characters battling a vampire might want to make a heavier crossbow that fires stakes instead of simple bolts, or an alchemical compound that burns bright as sunlight. Making a new weapon for a specific purpose requires that the characters have discovered a monster's weakness. They may then use the appropriate skill to make the new weapon:

Weapon Type	Main Skill	Augmented With
Alchemical	Lore (Alchemy)	Lore (Occult), Survival
Mechanical	Mechanisms	Craft, Engineering
Relics	Divine Fervour	Lore (Occult)

The difficulty of creating a new device is up to the GM but should be modified based on how much the characters know about their foe.

Vulnerable Wings (Flyers Only): The monster is winged and its wing membranes are soft targets compared to the rest of its body. The wings do not share the benefit of any defensive traits.

Beast of Gubbio

'Brother wolf, thou hast done much evil in this land, destroying and killing the creatures of God without his permission; yea, not animals only hast thou destroyed but thou hast even dared to devour men, made after the image of God; for which thing thou art worthy of being hanged like a robber and a murderer. All men cry out against thee, the dogs pursue thee and all the inhabitants of this city are thy enemies.'

The monstrous wolf known as the Beast of Gubbio terrorises the Italian town of the same name. The beast began by attacking livestock but now preys on humans. The beast has grown so large and powerful that it no longer needs to stalk its prey – it sits outside the gates of the town, waiting for meat to come to it. Normal weapons cannot wound the beast, so it has grown lazy but it is still a deadly and crafty foe when pressed.

The Beast first gained its taste for human meat by eating the bodies of the dead; Gubbio is regularly involved in the wars of the city-states of Northern Italy and the Beast scavenged meat from the battlefield. It is the incarnation of the city's greed and belligerence.

Invulnerability: The Beast can only be injured by consecrated weapons. Everyone in the town knows about the Beast's invulnerability but no-one knows that it is vulnerable to holy blades. One brave knight did ask for the bishop to bless his blade but the bishop of Gubbio is corrupt and faithless so his blessing of the weapon did nothing and the knight was eaten by the wolf. If the characters learn of this story and observe the bishop, they can work out that consecrated weapons have not been used against the Beast.

