

# Church Knight



*The Cainite Crusade*  
By Danic Scidd



# The Church Knights

by James Seidel (11 Nov 94)

The document is about 350k in text alone, representing considerable background information and character creation details. It will be posted in eleven parts.

The World of Darkness seems to be lacking in one key area - that of a counterbalance to the inherent horror of the Kindred. Even in a Gothic-Punk world, I believe extremes of apparent evil would be counterbalanced by extremes of good:

If you believe in the light,  
its because of obscurity;  
if you believe in joy,  
its because of sin;  
if you believe in God,  
then you have to believe in the Devil.

- On the cover of *Enigma MCMXC a.D.*, Virgin Records, 1991

Vampires proved to be an outlet for my previously purely historical interest in the Crusader Knights of Christ - the Knights Templar, Knights Hospitaller, Knights Teutone. Much interest has been shown in the myths and mysteries of the Knights Templar over the past decade. Books such as *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* and *The Foccult Pendulum* have drawn strong public interest - though the Church Knights do not seem to have attracted any interest among gaming publishers.

I believe this concept has strong application to Vampire. Hunters with an extensive historical background, strong religious convictions (they are, after all, warrior-monks), powers conveyed by God, and the perceived ability to save the soul of a defiled human would have appeal. Potential exists for historical game play (the Church Knights have been in continuous existence in some form or another since AD 1100), and modern game play under the new-age militant orders that I have proposed. Much intrigue and mystery is attached to the history of the Templars, and to a lesser extent that of the Hospitallers and Teutones. The history and myths associated with these groups provide wide scope for adaptation to the Vampire concept and include: *The Holy Grail*, *The Ark of the Covenant*, *The shroud of Turin*, *The Inquisition*, *The Mines of Solomon*, *The bloodline of Christ* . . . the list goes on.

The concept behind the knights is best summed up in the words of their founding father, St Bernard of Clairvaux, AD 1128:

The Church Knight is a fearless knight,  
safe from all sides,  
who, as the body is covered with iron,  
so is the soul by the defence of faith.  
Without doubt, fortified by both arms,  
he fears neither demon nor man.  
Nor indeed is he afraid of death,  
he who has desired death.  
If the cause of the fighting is good,  
the consequence of the fighting cannot be evil,  
just as the end will not be judged as good  
then the cause is not good,  
and has arisen from an unjust intention.

- St Bernard de Clairvaux, *De Laude Novae Militiae*  
(In Praise of the New Knighthood)

A 65,400 word document was the result of my efforts - with the encouragement of the members of a local gaming club. This document has been desktop published, currently being circulated the club for critique, proof-reading and game testing.

The knights are not stereo-typical good guys. The divisions between the Church denominations are reflected within their ranks. Templars, Hospitallers and Teutones all have different theological backgrounds, doctrine and histories. Disagreement between the Orders would be rife. Knights are mortal - and therefore subject to sin. If a sin is committed or their strict Rule broken, they can loose the blessing which gives them their powers - until a term of penance or task of expiation is served. A knight must live and operate to the strict Rule of their vows - a monastic way of life little changed since the 12th century. Moral conflict caused by their vows and beliefs would have to be a common occurrence in a Gothic-Punk world - an aspect that should be emphasised in role-playing. Expanding upon the True Faith system in Vampire: The Masquerades and Hunters Hunted allows these rigors to be integrated into game play. A new system of Piety Dice and Grace Points enforces adherence to the saintly aspirations of the warrior-monks.

The Church Knights are more than a highly trained and well equipped group of assassins with high Faith ratings. Ministry is also an important part. Vampires - while the Church believes them to be inherently evil - can be saved. The blessing of a knight may allow the vampires soul to be judged before God on the merits of its mortal life. In rare circumstances, vampires which have demonstrated their true repentance may be restored to mortality in a ceremony attended by the heads of each Order. (This source-book is not supposed to be a front for any religious group - any Church doctrine used is purely because it cannot be avoided.)

Their powers are based upon that of Faith, Miracles, Gifts, Prayers and Rituals. The concept that their powers come from God, and not from themselves, opens interesting possibilities. A knight may ask for protection against an advancing vampire - and if his prayer is granted, anything from a forest fire or a lightning-bolt from heaven may intervene. My lack of experience with the Storyteller system has made it difficult for me to generate balanced powers. Some powers are simply modified versions of Potence etc, though several new concepts have been introduced such as Absolution, War Cry etc. I have gathered many of these from powers posted on the Internet (with appropriate attribution). I feel this area can be considerably expanded through discussions on this mailing list.

Whether vampires are truly evil or not is irrelevant. The Church and the Church Knights believe it to be so (such is the basis of True Faith, no?). The same applies to the origins of the Kindred. The Church believes the Biblical account of Cain to be the basis of the vampiric bloodline. To them, Cains cursed blood is a lingering stain of original sin, and should therefore be removed.

I await your comments and judgement. The Church Knights is subject to Australian copyright which protects work not openly declared as public domain. Further copyright protection is pending. However, you are free to use this work for your own gaming purposes - just so long as you dont make any money out of it.

A full text copy will be posted to a friends www site shortly (I'll pass on the address once it's uploaded). Do not ask for the PS version: the Quark Express document, with pictures, is 17meg.

Hope it is useful.

Here is the worm that does not die,  
the memory of things past.  
Once it has worked it s way in, or better,  
been begotten there by sin,  
it clings tenaciously and there is no dislodging it again . . .  
I have a terror of this biting worm,  
this death undying.  
I have a terror of falling into the hands of the living death,  
the dying life.  
This is the second death,

which never gives the coup de grace but is forever killing.

Who will grant them to die once and for all,

that they may not be eternally a-dying?

- St Bernard de Clairvaux, founder of the Knights Templar, in *On Consideration*, AD1150

# The Genesis

by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)

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## The Church Knights

"If you believe in the light, it's because of obscurity, if you believe in joy, it's because of sin, if you believe in God, then you have to believe in the Devil."

- Father X, Exorcist, Church of Notre Dame.

## WELCOME

Humble initiates, we welcome you among the warriors of Christ. We who compiled this work hope and pray that you will honor and serve the Word within, dedicate yourself to restoring purity to this sick and corrupt world, strive to nurture the sick, toil to shield the defenceless, and educate the unlearned in the Will and Mercy of our Lord and God.

To have come so far to be able to hold this tome in your hands you must already have received the blessing of pure faith through the Holy Trinity. By now, you have taken Holy vows dedicating your life and your strength to the fight against evil.

We, the Militant Orders, exist as God's sword arm. As the Church is known as the Cloth, being as they are, like a secure blanket against the cold breath of Sin, so are the Knights of Christ called the Sword - the tool used by the hand of God to administer his Righteous wrath.

My Brother, it is a great burden that we bear - a Holy responsibility. But the foundation of this great purpose is a complex one. Buried deep in the history of our respective Orders are the seeds of our divine purpose.

Do not search for enlightenment within these pages - that is in the domain of your own heart and the grace of the Holy Spirit. But the doctrine and histories contained herein will serve you well in your fight against the Kindred.

## WARRIOR MONKS:

Our brotherhood evolved out of the knights and churchmen who fought in the Holy Land during the First Crusade. Then, as now, their lives were dedicated to poverty, chastity and obedience. This devotion in the Lord separated them from the money and land hungry secular knights of the 12th century. While the Militant Orders were quickly endowed with the riches of the land, as individuals they were forbidden the more frivolous and unclean aspects of life. While this removed our brothers from the mainstream of medieval knighthood, it developed their military skills to a degree higher than any other army of that time. God's Sword was blessed in the standards of their training and discipline, the construction and defence of castles, and the tactics of warfare.

Our Lord saw fit to see that the idea of a military monk was embraced with great enthusiasm throughout Christendom. Gifts poured in - especially of land and money - enabling His Orders to expand in the Holy Land. By the middle of the 12th century, there was a Templar or Hospitaller preceptory in every province and in most major towns and cities.

Christ's knights were blessed with a high degree of independence from the Church. After Pope Innocent II issued the bull *Omne datum optimum* (every great gift) about 1130AD, the Templars were exempted from all earthly authority - except that of Christ's Vicar, the Pope.

To our shame, the relationship between the different Orders (especially the Templars and Hospitallers) was rarely warm. By the 1240s, knights from each Order were fighting openly in the streets of Acre - most likely due to professional jealousy and rivalry. This sin of pride permeated the Orders until well into the 13th century. Only the revelation of Satan's control over God's people was strong enough to bring his knights together.

The Militant Orders were left to themselves to defend the Holy Land - the desire to reap the rewards of pillage proving too much for most Crusaders. Our brother's invested huge sums in the construction a chain of castles, some of which never fell to the enemy.

Their fighting reputation was such that, in 1187AD, after the Battle of Hattin, when the Infidel commander Saladin captured about 200 Templars and Hospitallers, all Church knights were summarily executed on the grounds that they were "the firebrands of the Franks".

Because both the Hospitallers and Templars had to live in the Holy Land and their monastic vows deplored unnecessary violence, they entered into almost continuous negotiations with local Muslim leaders. This often resulted in differing perspectives from that of the Cloth and other crusaders, sometimes resulting in open dispute.

In order to finance our massive commitment of resources to the Holy Land, the Hospitallers and Templars both became heavily involved in banking and diplomacy. By the mid 13th century, the Militant Orders were lending large sums of money to kings and provinces.

Eventually, the Templars were destroyed by the corrupted King Philip IV of France. While influenced by the blood of Cain, he also owed large sums to the Order and had been refused initiation.

The Hospitallers evaded Philip's might through the purity of their reputation and lived on, defending Rhodes first, then Malta, against incursions from the Infidel. The Teutones conducted their own crusades into the Slavic nations east of Germany, destroying many enclaves of Kindred before their powers waned.

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## The Vampiric Histories

"Assyria knew the vampire long ago, and he lurked amid the primeval forests of Mexico before Cortes came. He is feared by the Chinese, by the Indian and the Malay alike; whilst Arabian story tells us again and again of the ghouls who haunt ill-omened sepulchres and lonely cross-ways to attack and devour the unhappy traveller."

- The Vampyre, His Kith and Kin, Montague Summers, 1928.

## THE AWAKENING

It was only shortly after the Militant Orders were established in 1116AD when our brothers first made contact with the Cainites. The nursing monks of the Knights Hospitaller noted strange injuries and tales among pilgrims who had been accosted while travelling through the Holy Lands, especially Syria.

The knights Templar, sworn to protect the pilgrim routes from robbers and Muslim raids, heard similar tales and lost several brothers under strange circumstances.

## **Hospitallers**

Shortly after the death of the Order's founding father, Brother Gerard, the new Master Raymond du Puy began receiving disturbing reports from outlying hospices. Strange incidents of bloodless death, often combined with great violence, were occurring among small bands of wandering pilgrims. Concerned with the matter, du Puy ordered several of his most knowledgeable monks to look into the matter. After some time, these investigators chanced upon a severely ill and delirious pilgrim - ranting about how his soul was possessed by the devil, forcing him to drink blood and commit heinous acts. The pilgrim died before the Brothers could get him to the Jerusalem hospital, but reports of his words hung heavy upon du Puy's heart.

Stories of similar acts of "Satan" continued arriving in a steady stream. The Order became so concerned that it began hiring a new group of pious warriors - the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Jerusalem - to escort the Order's members about the Holy Land.

Raymond du Puy also convinced King Baldwin to allow a detail of 20 armed Hospitaller monks to guard the tomb of Christ, lest it be defiled by powerful demons. These "Canons of the Holy Sepulchre" were the foundations of the Order's militant arm. Du Puy appealed to the Pope to allow the Order to develop its own militant Rule (the Templars had by now become an independent Order) which was to be fully established by the end of the 1130s.

## **Templars**

In the early years of the 12th century, a troop of Templars travelling at night came upon a scene of carnage. Their commander, Brother Adrien de Riviere, reported seeing several bloodless bodies lying strewn among their belongings in a narrow pass. With the signs of struggle still fresh and the reek of corruption on the air, Brother Adrien led his eight knights in a search of the nearby hills. When challenging a lone wanderer, the stranger recoiled from the sight of the Cross emblazoned upon the knights' shields and began running faster than any of God's children. Several knights, those mounted upon the fastest horses, overhauled the running devil after a long chase. In the battle that ensued, all three fully armed knights were killed while combating an apparently unarmed man. The remaining knights arrived on the scene and overpowered the weakening creature.

For the remainder of the night, the Knights of Christ tortured their victim for information. The young vampire became panic-stricken before dawn, revealing much in an effort to be let free. The knights tarried too long, and as the dawn broke, the creature dissolved in agony.

Upon learning this, the Templar Grand Master Robert de Craon met with the Grand Master Raymond du Puy of the Hospitallers. Together, they formulated a campaign to learn about these creatures and eradicate them. Vampires were one of the few subjects which drew the Hospital and the Temple together in cooperation.

Since that time, the Orders have gathered one of the largest repositories of knowledge on vampires and vampire lore. The existence of Werewolves and other creatures of ill-aspect were also discovered, but none were considered as abhorrent as the Cainites.

## **Teutones**

When the Teutones were formed in 1190, both the Hospitallers and Teutones warned them about the great evil loose in the Holy Land. The Teutones did not believe it. It was only when they were campaigning in Transylvania for the king of Hungary that their ignorance was revealed. At the centre of one group of pagan dissenters was a blood cult. Here, adolescents were sacrificed during carnal festivals in order to sate the hunger of their god's mortal manifestation in return for protection and favor.

And protect her people it did. The female creature was very old and very powerful. Several companies of Teutonic Knights were wiped out during assaults upon the tribe's mountain strongholds. Survivors told of a

beautiful warrior-goddess which descended into their ranks with lightning speed, tearing fully-armored men apart with her bare hands.

Legends about the vampire and her kind sparked the memories of Hochmeister Salza, who swallowed his pride and approached the Hospitallers for assistance. Several experienced Hospitaller officers were sent to the region to instruct the Teutones in suitable vampire combat techniques.

The vampress was eventually overcome - though at great expense in men. Two Hospitaller Knight Captains died while trying to contain her powers, and a Hospitaller Knight Lieutenant was maimed for life. Almost three dozen Teutones died in combat against her ghouls and herd.

This was a shocking blow to the young Order, for it had lost a sizeable proportion of its combatant knights. Humbled that such a small group could do so much damage, the Teutones never again became complacent about the powers and Corruption of the undead.

The Teutones went on to create a comprehensive treatise upon the vampires of Transylvania and the Balkans. Somewhere among these records is likely to be mention of the progenitor of Count Dracula himself.

## **THE CENTURY OF THE STAKE**

Throughout the 13th century, brothers of all Orders sought out and confronted vampires across Europe and the Holy Land. None were more dedicated than the Templars who did little to hide the purpose of their quest. The Hospitallers and the Teutones took a more circumspect approach, taking care to conceal the nature of their hunts.

The Templars were affronted that Satan would dare influence God's creation so directly. Ruthless in their commitment, the knights of the Temple of Solomon earned a reputation among the Kindred only to be surpassed in later centuries by the Inquisition. Bands of white-clad warriors, their only device being a red cross, scoured the lands between Marash in Edessa down to Daron on the Egyptian border. Other companies roved as far as Ethiopia and India in their hunt.

Between those of the Hospital and of the Temple, almost all vampires living in Outremer and Assyria met their end by either wood or fire. Not even those hiding in the guise of Churchmen survived.

The Teutones, while maintaining a presence in the Holy Land, centred their attention on the Balkan tribes, hunting down the Damned and openly confronting heathens on the battlefield.

## **HASHHASHIN**

In 1094 the religious control of Egypt was thrown into civil war as two sons fought over the succession from their dead father. The Hashshashin (assassins) were partisan supporters of the eldest son, Nizar, who seized and fortified a string of mountain strongholds in northern Persia. These included Alamut in the Elburz Mountains, and Syria. From these fortresses they waged a campaign of terror against both orthodox Muslims and the Christian Crusaders. They often murdered prominent individuals - resulting in the word "assassin" coming to mean a politically motivated murderer in the English language.

Some of the Templars and Hospitallers most formidable castles were built near the Hashshashin's Syrian domain, including Krak des Chevaliers and Saone - arguably the most defensible castles in the world. The presence of such a sizeable and elite military force compelled the Assassins to pay a tribute of gold - a tribute that allowed them to keep their mountaintop realm independent of Christian control for almost a century. Among the Hashshashin was a vampire bloodline - the Assamites. After initially fearing the appearance of God's warriors, an Assamite elder sought to turn their presence to advantage.

Tentative negotiations took place for several years, eventually convincing the knights that the Assamites would be useful in their crusade against the blood of Cain. The Assamites, for their own reasons, also sought the death



and destruction of kindred - thus a tenuous treaty was formed. If the Assamites assisted the knights, their realm would be inviolate - never to be attacked by the Church.

While cooperation was limited, both sides benefited from information supplied by the other.

A powerful vampire masquerading as the Patriarch of Jerusalem was, in 1214, killed by the Hashshashin Assamites - hired by the Hospitallers to make it look like a Muslim action.

The Hashshashin made a critical mistake in the murder of Genghis Khan's son, Jagati, who ruled part of Persia. Jagati had offended the Ismali's and Hashshashin by forbidding certain rituals involved in prayer and slaughter of food animals.

In 1256, the Mongols took their revenge. Most of the Hashshashin were killed and their mountaintop fortresses destroyed. The Church Knights, already weakened by Mongol incursions and civil war, did not send assistance.

The Hashshashin leader, Rukn ad-Din Khurshah, sought to negotiate with Mongu Khan. He failed to obtain an audience, and he and his party were murdered while returning home. Later, his family was captured and subject to long and tortured deaths.

The relationship between the Militant Orders and the Hashshashin was always a shaky one. By the fall of the Holy Land in the late 13th century, the alliance had been forgotten. The Hashshashin and Assamites - though greatly reduced by the Mongol Horde - were subjugated by the Mamelukes in 1273 and fought by their side as the Christians were gradually repulsed from the Holy Land.

## **DOWNFALL**

When the Holy Land fell to the Muslims late in the 13th century, the Templars of the Holy Land turned their attention to Europe. The Hospitallers were greatly weakened by their losses, and set about re-establishing themselves upon the island of Rhodes. The Teutones were occupied carving out their own principality in the Slavic States.

When the Holy Land Templars returned to Europe, they set about cleansing the heart of Christendom of the Corrupt. It was the Templars activity against vampires in Europe that eventually brought about the Order's downfall. Their Grand Master was appalled when he discovered even high- ranking members of the Church - and even their own Order - were Cainites or Cainite-bound.

While the Knights of True Faith had fought valiantly in the Holy Land against the enemies of God, corruption had begun to eat away the Order in Europe. Knights motivated by greed and power forgot the strictures of the Rule, modifying it to suit their own purposes. The Kindred, seeking a means to destroy such a dangerous and powerful group, infiltrated the Orders ranks through their relationship with the Cathars.

When Pope Innocent III proclaimed a Crusade against a band of heretics known as the Cathars in 1213AD, the Templars did not respond to his call. Their reluctance to fight this group, who believed the material world was evil (and openly criticised the Church's extravagance) and that the spiritual world was all important, drew the anger of the Pope and senior Church clerics. However, they underestimated the extent of Kindred power and influence. The Cathars, who the Templars refused to fight and whom they had fought to save, were to become the source of their downfall.

Many of the Cathars were vampires, and some of them were welcomed into the French Preceptories with open arms. The Templars held a particular sympathy for the Cathars, largely because of similarities in their doctrine and beliefs.

Slowly, but surely, carefully avoiding those with the True Faith, these Cainite infiltrators began planting false evidence in AD1305 to bring the Order down. Pope Clement, initially supportive of the Templars, was embraced by the vampire King Philip IV "the fair" of France. Under this cunning vampire's control, the Pope was unable to

exert his influence to stop the calamitous allegations being laid against the Order - though his conscience was enough to prevent his open support.

Other Templars, either dominated by the will of strong Vampires or blood-bound, were used to plant false evidence against their comrades. While such testimony was rarely believed, it provided enough confusion to ruin the credibility of the Templars legal defence.

Even though the Order was brought down, its surviving members retained massive public support. Within months of the death of the Grand Master at the stake, our brothers and their friends had worked their revenge with the deaths of both Philip and Clement.

## **SCHISM**

Upon the dissolution of the Templars in 1316, the Children of Cain rejoiced. The vampires involved in the plot were rewarded with prestige and powers - and changed their name to that of their vanquished foes.

Throughout Europe, small bands of disenfranchised Templars milled about in confusion. While their Order was disbanded, their vows were still valid. Most who had not protested their innocence and were thus burnt at the stake were given a healthy pension. Many tried to continue living under the Rule, with one group in Germany having to be removed from their lands by military force.

The Templars elite band of vampire hunter's were also widely dispersed and unorganised. Some actually joined the same Inquisition that destroyed their Order, while others banded together to create the nucleus that was later to become the Arcanum.

Some fled, seeking refuge among those who were once their enemies. Becoming mages of power, they retained their Templar name, though their Rule was heavily corrupted over the centuries.

One small group remained true to their traditions. In the heartlands of Scotland, a country excommunicated by the Church, the Templars remained living under the Rule with the respect and support of the locals. Over time, the Scottish Templars links with the Masons grew stronger, and the need for secrecy changed the way in which they operated. For some time the Scots Guard in France maintained the Templars fighting tradition, though the Order's strong traditions eventually waned even here.

The scattered remnants of the Poor Knights of Christ were gathered together in the mid 1980s - reformed for a new Crusade. Some groups were left alone, for they no longer represented the ideals under which the Order was established. Others were not interested in re-establishing links with the Church. However, enough was recovered to return the Order to its previous glory.

## **MASQUERADE**

The toppling of the Templars proved to be a hollow victory. Within a century the same Inquisition that was the instrument of King Philip's cause had tracked down and killed many Cainites in the greatest campaign against evil the world has ever known. Thousands of innocents died as the Inquisitors became victim to their own power, but in the process a significant proportion of true vampires, witches, Magi and lupines were rounded up.

The Hospitallers and Teutones contributed enormously to the eradication of Corruption. While refusing to assist the Inquisition directly, the Church Knights used their knowledge and powers to covertly track down and destroy true evil. Very few innocents died at the hands of the Church Knights.

This disastrous age, which saw the rise of the Camarilla's power in 1435, resulted in a desperate ploy to avert the attention of the Inquisition: the Masquerade.

As more and more vampires came under the yolk of the Camarilla, the harder it became for Inquisitors and Church Knights alike to find Cain's children.

Taking this to mean success, both religious organisations turned their attention elsewhere. The Church Knights believed the hold of the Kindred to be broken: that any further encounters would only be with young vampires, alone and unlearned in ancient lore.

## **THOSE WHO REMAINED**

It was the Hospitallers and Teutones clandestine hunting techniques that saved them the fate of the Templars. While not as effective, the Hospitallers and Teutones still accounted for many more vampires through the ages - especially those attaining high public status.

Both Orders were distracted by other matters, and the Cainite Masquerade had its desired effect. The Teutones were increasingly put under pressure to maintain their Reich in the Baltic nations. The Hospitallers found more and more of their resources dedicated to keeping the Mediterranean free from the Infidels.

Neither forgot the power of the undead. Regular sweeps were made of their lands and members to detect and eradicate any Kindred corruption.

Eventually, such precautions became a matter of course - with little real effort put into them. The Kindred appeared to be vanquished.

Though the Teutones eventually lost their fight against time, our brothers the Hospitallers remain active to the present day. An elaborate international espionage network was established in the 15th century, among its primary tasks was to monitor the strength and extent of Kindred influence. This network is maintained by our brothers even today.

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## **The Cleansing Crusade**

"And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death will fly from them."

- Revelations 9:6

## **STORM WARNING**

During the early 1980s our brethren in Malta uncovered several documents about the same time as a rapid increase in reported vampiric activity. The various Church denominations became increasingly aware that the Cainites were not, in fact, gone from God's creation. In 1982, the Hospitallers gained evidence of a massive vampire plague in various African Horn nations.

Alarmed by the power the Cainites possessed, the Knights of St John called a general Synod of all Church leaders. Somewhat surprised at the positive response returned from all the Catholic, Protestant and Reformist Churches, the Hospitallers convened the secret meeting in their ancient headquarters at Valletta, Malta. Every Church had a story of undead activity, painting a picture of almost worldwide infestation

The Synod's resolution was to re-form the Militant Orders. All contributed funds, property and members toward establishing what was meant to be a new, combined denomination Order. However, negotiations broke down about the nature of the new Order's Rule - each Church refusing to compromise its doctrine.

The result was an international search to uncover the fragmented remains of the Templars and Teutonic knights. Through organisations such as the Freemasons, who were later to join the Synod, and the remaining Teutonic nursing charities and secret military organisations, the Militant Orders were re-established.

Each Order received the backing of the denominations most suited to it - the Teutones gained the Reformation Churches; the Hospitallers the traditional churches such as the Catholics; the Templars a mix including the

Anglicans and Freemasons.

Members of each Order do not have to belong to any particular denomination, though each Order's differing philosophy attract different members.

The Orders, while independent, agreed to put aside their theological differences and unite their skills in the battle against the undead. This cooperation, while sometimes shaky, has so far been effective.

## **HERE AND NOW**

Through the bulk of the 80s, the Orders fought and trained in the African Horn countries of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. No doubt, you have yourselves undergone your advanced combat training in one of these preceptories.

Gradually the Knights of Christ have gained in numbers and strength, and in April, 1993, the decision was made to intervene in established Western countries.

Now brothers, we are taking the battle into the streets and fields of the developed world. Our quest to destroy corruption in its heartland is at its peak. Young knights like yourselves face the greatest challenge since our forbears recaptured the Holy Land almost a millennia ago.

The lessons of the past have been well learned. No-one can become a brother of the Militant Orders unless they can demonstrate the high levels of Faith you have. Only those blessed with the powers of the Holy Spirit can become a knight.

To maintain this integrity, the strict Rule of the ancient Orders has been revived and must be observed. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience do much to nourish our Faith, as well as focus determination and dedication. Supplementary members of the Orders are being kept to a minimum to prevent a repeat of the infiltration under Philip IV. Remember, brothers, ware the evil within.

Each Order maintains an independent headquarters, guarded by their most powerful knights and warded by our combined Faith. The active knights are dispersed around the world, their locations by necessity kept secret even from each other.

Once a breach in the Masquerade is discovered, teams of knights such as yourselves will be dispatched to destroy the Cainites organisation and power - without compromising either their or our identity to the public.

Low-level cooperation is established with the Arcanum, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Squad, the Centre for Disease Control, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), the Special Intelligence Service (SIS) and MI5. None of these organisations know the extent or power of the Militant Orders, but believe them to be a militant arm of the Inquisition.

Remember brother, only use these organisations in times of dire need. Their integrity is suspect, their motives unknown.

Beware most of the Society of Leopold. This name disguises the Inquisition. Their misguided beliefs and corrupted powers are an offence in the eyes of God. Do not trust them, and report their presence whenever encountered

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## **Knight Politics**

"O outcast of all outcasts most abandoned! to the earth art thou not for ever dead? to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden aspirations? - and a cloud, dense, dismal, and limitless, does it not hang

eternally between thy hopes and heaven?"

- Edgar Allan Poe, William Wilson.

## **THE CHURCH**

The bride of Christ (The Church) is a unruly partner: given to jealous fits of self interest and power. The history of the Church has not been left untainted by greed or corruption - many of its activities have proven regretful and narrow-minded. Schisms within the ranks have left a widely divided Church spread over a broad spectrum of theology, some bordering on the extreme.

Some churches are even controlled by organisations such as the Mafia, others by the Kindred themselves. These groups will try to impede the Knights mission at every turn - but they are also among the highest priority targets of the Knights themselves.

Interference of Militant Order business is one of the best leads in tracing influential vampires.

But the Church remains the House of God and the channel for his Word.

Because of this, all Churches are respected and Holy institution to all Knights. While each Militant Order is completely separate of any particular denomination, all have recognised the importance of inter-denominational cooperation. While the Order's are all independent of direct Church control, the relationship remains close with continuous dialogue between senior representatives.

However, the purity of the Church is itself largely suspect. Only those which the Knights recognise as having True Faith are truly trusted. Other members of the Churches are only allowed to know a knights corresponding rank within the clergy.

Vampires and those they control can even be found within Church hierarchies. These Corrupt will do all they can to discredit the Orders and revoke the support of their denomination. However, there is a strong ground-swell of support among the pastors and priests in the field, those who actually have to deal with the discarded residue of kindred activity. The internal wrangling is continuous, with the pendulum swaying from one side to the other continually. The outcome cannot be predicted.

Nevertheless, the sanctuary of the Church can be sought world- wide. Assistance in almost any form can be obtained from individual congregations - if the right people are approached. This help is often vital during the first and final stages of any campaign against the Kindred.

## **OTHER RELIGIONS**

The Church Knights are no longer on a religious crusade. Their new role is to rid the world of Satan's presence in the form of Vampires and Lupines. Religious tolerance is required at the present - the order of the Synod of Malta being to leave preaching of The Word to the Church. All Orders accept this, recognising their method of worship differs from the traditional sense.

Cooperation with "heathens" is not unheard of. Knights cannot deny that American Indians can possess almost Holy blessings - as can Muslims and Buddhists. While the theological implications of this is wide-reaching, it is not the place of the Sword to wonder why. It is a matter for the Cloth.

## **VAMPIRES**

The blood of Cain is among the most ancient, and most vile, of mankind's sins. Cain, and his progeny, have been cursed for all time. That it remains on this Earth is an affront to all that is Holy. By its very nature, a vampire mocks the image of God - the form in which all men were created. It is God's work tainted - fouled by the blood of ancient betrayal and murder.

The origin of the kind is derived from the very essence of the Fall of Man. While the tainted blood of Cain remains, mankind will continue to be one-step further away from God.

A vampire is no longer human. Is a devil incarnate. But the creatures origins must not be forgotten. The belief that the original tormented soul is trapped deep within a vampire's being is a strongly debated point between the Orders. Those of the Hospital believe the lost soul may re-assert itself, and can be saved if given the chance to stand before God in judgement. Thus, repentant vampires must be given a chance to prove their repentance - and save their soul from damnation.

No vampire clan is considered better or worse than any other. Wheresoever such disciplined organisation exists between the Kindred, it must be broken down. For too long the Cainites have exerted their influence over the destiny of God's children. The yolk of their kind must be removed forever.

## **WEREWOLVES**

The philosophy "any enemy of mine enemy is my friend" does not apply to the Garou. Through their own actions the natural order of things has been upset. Only mankind has the authority to change his environment: the Garou wish to resist this - even though they have upset the balance themselves. The lack of were- animals, exterminated by the Garou for their own political and religious reasons, has left a gap in the chain of life.

This is not the knight's greatest concern: rather, it is the Garou's policy of decimating the human race.

The Garou are not on the top of the list of enemies - vampires hold that honor. Groups such as the Black Spiral Dancers are considered especially dangerous and must be eliminated as soon as is practicable. Normal Garou tribes should assessed, catalogued and then left alone. They are the problem of another day.

## **MAGI**

These magicians of great power follow ancient traditions - most based on pagan religions and rituals. While the powers they use are not inherently evil, the purpose for which they are used often is. Most seek arcane lore in order to give themselves power over others. It is this thirst for power which is considered evil in the eye of God. Magi are not high on the list of Church Knight enemies, though information on those discovered is usually passed on to other hunters.

## **CELESTIAL CHORUS**

Much is rumored about this nebulous group of mages. Some claim they were responsible for the initial founding of the Knights Templar, basing their work on the independently evolving Hospitallers, and later loosing control of what became an immensely popular organisation. Some claim the whole First Crusade was instigated by a group of the Celestial Chorus based in the French Province of Champagne. Almost all of the original nine Templars came from this region, as did the first Christian King of Jersuaem and St Bernard de Clairvaux. Interestingly, the original author of The Grail legends also came from Champagne: Chretien de Troyes. The link between the Celestian Chorus and the Templars is unknown to the rank and file, and the Grand Master refuse to be drawn into the discussion. They do not appear on the Church Knight's list of enemies.

## **GHOSTS**

Ghosts are pitiable creatures. They are lost souls, trapped through some extreme event or emotion on this plane until relieved of their bind. Ghosts, whether placate or poltergeist, must not be judged by the knights. Exorcism is their only change of judgement before God - lest they be trapped between heaven and hell forever.

Releasing these spirits from their agony can involve a variety of methods. Quests may be necessary to right ancient wrongs, ensure the safety of their progeny - or even righteous revenge. Others may simply require the

appropriate ritual to satisfy their "souls".

The process is not always approved of by the Ghost. Some may not realise the knights good intention, others may not want to change their existence or face their own judgement day. Strong resistance can make an exorcism extremely difficult.

## **WORLD GOVERNMENTS**

Essentially, avoid at all costs. While most of the lower-ranked public servants and decision makers may be completely innocent and of good intentions, the higher echelons of power are almost certainly Corrupt. It is this degree of vampiric influence that caused the Church Knights to be reformed. Destroying the vampires which use governments as puppets is a primary goal of the Militant Orders. The task of ridding the world of evil is made extremely difficult while Kindred have such positions of influence within their grasp. Once this organised protection is removed, the scattered remains can be "picked-off" at leisure.

Contacts must be chosen with care. Public servants can be motivated by honor and concern just as easily as they can be by corruption and vice. Some are even prepared to put their job on the line for "the better good of the community".

Journalists are often in this category, though the media proprietors may not. The journalistic principles of freedom of information and community protection (plus the enjoyment they find while "hounding" prominent and powerful people) can often be useful to employ.

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## **Contemporary Hunters**

"They who should have used their strength against Christ's enemies fight now in their cups and drunkenness, waste time in sloth, moulder in debauchery, and dishonor the name and office of knighthood by their degenerate lives."

- Peter of Blos, 1170, in *Knights*, Andrea Hopkins.

## **BROTHERS IN ARMS**

In your quest to combat Cain's blood, you will find several groups which claim to share your task. Brother, beware. Many have a chequered past, and others exist only to serve their own needs. Some, such as the Inquisition, may even seek our own destruction. But among this collection of thorns there is the potential to find a petal - a budding rose of Faith that may be brought within the nursery of the Church. The following is a synopsis of available reports. Heed the information well, for it may be vital during your Crusade.

## **THE INQUISITION**

It is generally acknowledged that the Roman Catholic Church learned of the Kindred during the Inquisition. Instituted in 1229, the Inquisition concerned itself with the suppression of various heresies spreading through Europe. Partially in response to the rise of the Catharist heresy in the south of France and northern Italy, Pope Innocent IV approved the use of torture in 1252.

The Militant Orders refused to take part in the Crusades against the Cathars, and were aware of the Kindred at least 20 years earlier than the Church. There are tales that Catharist beliefs were supported by many Kindred in the south of France. The knights Templar also supported the Cathars both overtly and covertly. Later, Cathars became an important part of the Templars French preceptories.

Some Kindred fell into the hands of the Inquisition when their brethren were forced to confess their heresy. This came as a major shock to the Church, and it overreacted. Ignoring the advice of the Militant Orders, the Church

authorised the Inquisition to take extraordinary measures to eradicate the "Cainite Plague". Working independently of each other, the Church Knights and the Inquisition caused the death of many Cainites - prompting the Masquerade.

The Church remains aware of, and concerned about, the existence of vampires. The Inquisition continues still - though the Militant Orders have as little to do with this organisation as possible.

Today the Inquisition is an organisation of scholars and researchers of the occult, as well as a gathering place for many of the greatest vampire hunters. Many freebooting hunters have been trained or equipped under the Inquisitors instruction, and many more are being brought into the fold each year.

Though no longer officially supported or sanctioned by the Church, most of its members are Catholic. Under their new name, the Society of Leopold, they claim to be scholars interested only in research. They are well aware of the best ways to immobilise and kill vampires, and have access to the Vatican's massive library of occult records.

Among the most influential members of the Society are the Dominicans, who can trace their involvement back to the first Inquisition, which they partially oversaw. The exact interest and concerns of the Dominicans remain unclear today.

The Jesuits, linked to a group called the Assassins of Christ, are currently in dispute with the Holy Office. Rumors persist that they are taking vampire slaying to an extreme, even killing innocent and implicated Church members in the process.

- The head of the Society of Leopold is Monsignor Ameliano, a long time hunter who was taught by his father (a Catholic priest). After encountering a vampire in a graveyard, he was able to drive it away through the powers of his faith alone. While trying to ease the Society into modern times without losing its important traditions, he believes too many hunters have been corrupted by the ways of the world. Based in Rome, missionaries are sent all over the world to establish Chapterhouses and educate the unaware.

## **THE ARCANUM**

The Arcanum has existed for less than 300 years, though some trace its origins back to a group of white-clad monks during the period of the Inquisition. The core of the Arcanum is a group still known as The White Monks. Speculation is rife among the Templars that these may have been Brothers that survived the tragedy of their Order's excommunication and continued the fight against the Kindred. However, they maintain no formal link with either the Inquisition or the Militant Orders, and do not engage in Witch Hunts. The word that the Arcanum studies, but does not destroy, has been around for a long time. While on the whole true, the Arcanum does not tolerate interference from Kindred who are concerned about the masses of data collected on their kind.

The Arcanum has three known Foundation houses - one in Boston, one in Paris, and the third in Vienna. Other Chapters can be found all over the world. Its members, recruited from the cream of intellectual society, are devoted to the gathering and studying of occult-related information, and are focused primarily on the past rather than the modern world. There are some members who show interest in the here and now, but it is understood many in the Arcanum believed the Kindred to be a long weakened, dying power. However, this has not stopped the Arcanum from initiating routine blood tests for its members in an attempt to weed out any Ghouls who threaten their work.

The Arcanum has evidence of the Kindred, werewolves, fairies and the spirits of the ethereal plains. More is being gathered through archeological digs and searches of old libraries

- There is no overall head of the Arcanum,. Each nation has its own head and matters of international policy are resolved through mutual consent.



## THE FREEMASONS

The Freemasons are the latest incarnation of a secret society which dates back thousands of years. Based among the architects and stonemasons of antiquity, the Freemasons have taken several mystic organisations under their wing during the centuries. This included a group of Templars which survived the Inquisition by fleeing to Scotland. The Templar traditions, records and treasures were preserved. When the world's Churches approached the Freemasons for help, everything was ready and in place. Many ancient books and artifacts were preserved in secret vaults under Rosslyn Chapel, deep in the Scottish Templar heartland.

The massive worldwide organisation and wealth of the secret society has been placed at the feet of the knights of the Temple. All Lodges have been warned to assist members of the Order in all ways possible, without question. So far, this assistance has been prompt and forthcoming.

The resources of the Freemasons are staggering. Almost every city and major town in the Western world has a Masonic Lodge, with members drawn from the intellectual and business elite. These people are in positions of influence, often using contacts through their organisation to serve their own needs. The public have a strong interest in Freemasons and the secretive organisation has undergone much scrutiny during the past decade. A flood of books have been published, each claiming to be the final revelation on the Freemason's "true purpose".

Mounting pressure has forced the organisation to become more public than ever before in its history, but its innermost ceremonies and traditions are still a jealously guarded secret. While assisting in the re-establishment of the Order, the Freemasons are themselves concerned with Kindred activity. Moves have been taken to analyse its own membership for corruption. Any Freemason discovered to be undead, or implicated thus, can be assured a swift death.

But the Freemasons are an extremely large organisation, and it is unlikely this purge will have any lasting effect.

The society's ancient traditions and records are being scrutinised for all things Kindred related. Some of the Society's best minds have been given the task of finding a way of eradicating vampires once and for all.

# Knights of Christ

*by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)*

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## Modern Disposition

"A knight must be merciful without wickedness, affable without treachery, compassionate towards the suffering, and open handed. He must be ready to help the needy and to confound robbers and murderers, a just judge without favor or hate. He must prefer death to dishonor. He must protect the Holy Church for she cannot defend herself."

- Lancelot, Vulgate Cycle, Chretien.

### NATURE:

The nature of the Militant Orders have changed little during the centuries, though they have by no means lost touch with the times. Military doctrine has adapted to modern weapons and fighting techniques, as have training and behavioural codes. The knights are still required to be monks - as it is only through the sacrifice of their freedom that they gain the blessing of their powers through God. The strict nature of The Rule has been relaxed slightly, allowing knights to talk at meals, to wear a variety of clothes, gain wide ranging information about their Order and retain ties with their family.

A much less rigorous form of The Rule applies to Novices who are often drawn from the diverse general community. Known as The Code, It allows them to maintain a normal life outside of the Order, but ensures they lead pious enough a life to retain some measure of True Faith.

### LOCATION:

Since the re-establishment of the Orders in the 1980s, each has established headquarters associated with their history. This link with the past is a sign that these properties have become Holy Ground, inherently blessed by the Church Knights' presence. This power now serves to protect the senior members of the Orders, their traditions, secrets and supplies.

While each Order has its headquarters, the combatant knights are rarely found there. It would be too easy to place such prominent places under intensive surveillance. Once the knights are off the Holy Ground, they are vulnerable to the powers of the undead. Knights rely upon the masses for their security. Once an individual knight has mingled with a community and has a secure alternate identity, it is extremely difficult to track him

down. A knight is at most danger when actively tracking down vampiric activity or engaging them in combat - but the danger of discovery is always there.

However, each headquarters is an important place of respite and security. Knights must gather at the centre of their respective Order to elect a new Grand Master. Vital assemblies cannot be trusted to any other place.

Hospitallers:

The militant arm of the Knights Hospitaller has been granted their old castle on Valletta Harbor, Malta. The charitable arm of the Order retain their presence at the Vatican, Bonn, The Hague and London - though all support their militant brothers as of old.

Templars:

The Templars would love to return to the place from which they derived their name - The Temple of the Mount - but continued conflict between Israel, the Arab nations and Christian denominations makes this unlikely. As a result, the remote Scottish Rosslyn Castle is the apparently unlikely base of the ancient Order. However, the history of the survival of the Knights Templar after the Inquisition is strongly linked with this region - a fact commemorated by their continued association.

Teutones:

The charitable nursing Teutonic Order can still be found in two European cities: Vienna and Amsterdam. The militant arm has regained its castle at Marienburg - once the heart of their vanquished Prussian empire.

## **DOCTRINE:**

Each Order would only have about 100 combatant knights - making them a stretched and valuable resource. Novices number about three per knight, give or take a few. Not all are combatants, though. Some serve in scientific and support roles, others can be found in almost all walks of life.

Knights are sent to "hot spots" on need, using the sovereign diplomatic status of their respective Order's to gain entry to a country or the less noticeable international espionage network established for the purpose over the centuries by the Hospitallers. Once in a "combat zone", often a city where vampires have been detected, the knights "disappear" into the general populace, using their Order's contacts among the Masons, the Church, paramedic organisations etc for support.

Active knights must disperse among the population seeking safety in separation. If one knight is tracked down, he will be the only one in direct danger. Dead-letter boxes, ambiguous pager calls and secure mobile phones or radios are the main means of communication between a dispersed combat team. The knights only gather for major briefings or combat.

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## **Militant Organisation**

"Every brother who is professed in the Holy service should, through fear of the flames of Hell, give total obedience to the Master; for nothing is dearer to Jesus Christ than obedience, and if anything be commanded by the Master or by one to whom he has given his power, it should be done without demur as if it were a command from God . . . for you must give up your own free will."

- The Rule of the Templars, as recorded by scribe John Michael at the Council of Troyes, 1128.

The Militant Orders have significant differences in their religious and combat doctrines. To understand the nature of this difference, simply look at the relationship between the Catholic and Anglican Churches.

Essentially, they agree to disagree - from major aspects of doctrine through to minor elements of Church decor. The same is true of the knights.

The Teutonic knights converted to Lutheranism during the Reformation - something for which the Papacy has never forgiven them.

The Templars conducted extensive research into the origins of the Church and came up with a different ideology from that of mainstream Catholicism - something for which the Papacy has never forgiven them.

The Hospitallers remain basically Catholic, though they tend to be a little more broad minded than most. Because of their first hand experience with medicine, the Hospitallers have always been a strong advocate of science - something for which the Papacy has never forgiven them.

Internally, the structure of the Militant Orders are the same. The Hospitaller's military system was copied from the Templars, and the Teutonic knights were basically "little Templars" from the start. This similarity in organisation has been a major factor in the cooperation between the Orders during the Cleansing Crusade. The individual differences between the Militant Orders are described later in the text.

Highest among the Militant Orders is the Grand Master. The lowest is that of novice. Ranks correspond to the amount of experience and Faith individual knights attain.

\* Associate: A member of the public with a Faith rating of at least one. Usually involved in the service industries, such as a mechanic, technician, accountant, etc. These members of the Orders do the general run-of-the mill work which could compromise a knight.

\* Novice: Very few people have True Faith - even fewer attain the higher levels. The Novice is basically an initiate of the Militant Orders with low levels of True Faith - though not yet a knight or a monk. Novices must have a Faith rating of at least 1, progressing past level 4 before undergoing the knighthood initiation ceremony. While they benefit from intense training in their fields of speciality, as well as combat, they are not taught the specific Way's applicable to each Order. Only fully initiated knights may be taught their Order's secret powers. Most novices never attain this honor, but serve their Orders through their professions - such as doctor, accountant, merchant, soldier, hacker etc. Novices are the single largest group within the Orders. They are called upon when needed, operating under the supervision and guidance of a fully ranked knight.

\* Knight Sergeant: The first true knight holds the rank of Sergeant. They are the lowest ranked initiated knight, with Faith ratings that must be five or greater. Their Faith gives them some important powers to help nullify the supernatural advantages of their enemy, and their training is comprehensive.

There are generally three Sergeants per knight Lieutenant - the basic cell of the Militant Orders.

\* Knight Lieutenant: These are Brothers of the Orders who have attained the respect of their colleagues and have had some experience fighting the Kindred. The Lieutenants have a close relationship with their men, somewhat akin to that of a corporal in the standard military. Their powers increase with their Faith, and to take full advantage of this their training is considerably more intense. A Lieutenant has under his command three Sergeants and a Page. In a campaign, only the knight Lieutenant knows the means of contacting all his men, and the identity of his immediate commander. This follows the "pyramid" security system which reduces the impact of an exposed Brother.

\* Knight Captain: Directly under a Captains control are between two to four knight Lieutenants. Strategic command for particular regions rest in the hands of Captains, as does command of actions involving more than one Brotherhood cell.

\* Knight Preceptor: In their territories, the Preceptors are of equal authority to that of the Master, and only relinquish it if the Master himself is with them. In matters of policy, they are led by the Master, but are directly responsible for the men under their command.

\* Knight Draper: The Drapers duties are not military. He is responsible for everything concerning the brothers clothing and bedding, personal equipment and lodgings. The accounting and maintenance of the Orders is a massive task, and the Draper has a large personal staff.

\* Knight Commander: He is responsible for the health and well- being of the brothers, organising the protection of the wider community and the safeguarding of Holy Relics. The Commander also oversees any research into physiological aspects of the Kindred.

\* Knight Marshal: Not only is the Marshal third in command, but he is also the supreme military commander controlling the allocation of arms and equipment, deciding on tactics and strategy, and leading major battles against the enemy.

\* Seneschal: This is the second-in-command to the Grand Master. He is the guardian of the Standard, and acts for the Master in his absence. Generally, he acts as consultant and as an "authority figure" where needed. If a Grand Master is killed, the Seneschal acts in his place until a Chapter of senior knights is held at the first available opportunity.

\* Grand Master: While the most powerful of all the knights, he is not a dictator. For while every brother is responsible to him, he in turn is responsible to the Order as a whole. His position, directly comparable to that of an Abbot, gives him powers and privileges, but both are limited. In important decisions he is obliged to consult a Chapter of knights; and though his voice is influential, he has only one vote. In matters of war, he has to consult with the knight Marshal, in matters of health and morale - the knight Commander, in matters of accounting and general policies - the Seneschal, and with equipment and supply procurement - the Draper.

## **FORMING A CHAPTER**

A Chapter of 12 members is necessary to decide any major issues affecting an Order, to elect a new officer or to invest a new member. The seniority of knights present should reflect the seriousness of the issue: for example, the 12 should be senior officers and preceptors when electing a new Grand Master - while the Chapter can simply be an assembly of 12 knights from a particular preceptory when judging an applicant for novitiate status.

The process is formal, rooted deep in the histories of the Orders. The most senior knight is allowed to choose one other to help him select a further two members. The assembled four then must select another four. The assembled eight must then choose four novices. The assembled 12 must then choose another - usually a member of the clergy (the Orders do have their own) - to act as Chaplain (essentially a chairman who also leads the prayers).

The full chapter must consist of eight knights and four novices. These represent the 12 Apostles, and the Chaplain the guidance of Jesus Christ.

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## **Novitiate**

"Once you know that the Church is being continually work down by such a succession of disasters and by so many deaths of the sons of God as a result of the oppression of the pagans, we believe that not one of you will lie low. We urge you . . . to do your utmost to defend your brothers and to liberate the Churches."

- Pope Calixtus II, 1123.

Becoming a novice is no small honor. It is a sign that a person has True Faith and a high degree of intelligence and skill - each rare enough possessions in these troubled times.

The Initiation Ceremony is designed to bring the applicant under Gods scrutiny. As a novice or knight, the measure of one's Pious behavior is reflected in the Blessings available to them. Essentially they are placed under

Gods judgement - effective immediately, not only on Judgement Day.

Apart from True Faith, there is little or no restrictions on who can become a novice. However, gaining entry to the Militant Orders requires a high degree of dedication, devotion and commitment - something which many people are unable to give.

Becoming a novice involves putting one's own life - and those of their families - at risk. For fighting the Kindred is a bloody business. It is a case of find or be found. Kill or be killed. This risk cannot be over-emphasised. This is not a monastic Order where monks can lock themselves away from reality in a safe and controlled artificial environment. Church Knights are at the forefront of the fight against evil. As a result, they are frequently exposed to the "underside" of humanity - a compassionless world of crime, corruption, greed, lust and debauchery.

## **ASSOCIATES**

Often trustworthy people may not want to commit themselves to the strict and demanding life of the Church Knights, but still desire to provide assistance where possible. These people can be recognised as associates, linked to an Order through prayer and irregular contact.

Associates can be called upon for non-combat related tasks at any time - though they do not have to respond. Essentially, they provide a place of respite, care and support in times of need. Often, they will be asked to use their skills or community influence to prepare the way for the arrival of fully fledged knights and novices.

No secrets of great import are trusted to these people - mostly for their own protection. If an associate feels in any way threatened, the Order to which he is linked must respond to protect them and their family.

## **BECOMING A NOVICE**

There is no rigid method of becoming a novice of any Order. Usually, first contact is made through recommendation and necessity. For example, active knights in a region may urgently require medical assistance. A trusted (and vetted) priest may recommend a doctor in his congregation as being a pious and good man who would treat the wounds without question.

The experience the knights have with this doctor and their observations of his behavior may prompt the senior officer to invite him into service. If the response is positive, the good doctor must open up his past to scrutiny and repeatedly demonstrate the degrees of willingness and resilience necessary for acceptance.

Once the senior knight (usually a Knight Captain) is satisfied, the applicant can then be taken to the nearest Preceptory for further questioning and analysis. The Knight Captain must recommend the applicants service and take on all responsibility for his behavior and safety.

People who have actively sought out the Militant Orders to become a knight or novice are looked upon with suspicion.

Usually this means they have an alternate motive - personal revenge or aggrandisement being the most common. Occasionally such people are plants, put there to try and infiltrate the Orders.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

To accept a new novice into the ranks of the Church Knights, a special gathering of the local Chapter must be convened. The local knights can meet at any church, or even their local preceptory if convenient. In the presence of the knights and a member of the clergy, the new novice must declare his desire to join their ranks and commit his life to God. The novice must vow to uphold the tenets of The Code - though the Rule of Poverty does not yet apply.

The applicant novice can then choose the Order he is to become a member of and declare the means by which he can serve best. All novices and knights of the Order he has chosen have the right to question the applicant - and even demand demonstrations of skill and knowledge.

The most senior knight of his chosen Order will then administer a portion of the Investiture ceremony used for a full knight:

"You seek what is a great thing, but you do not know the strong precepts of the Order; for you see us from the outside, well dressed, well mounted, and well equipped, but you cannot know the austerities of the Order. Can you bear these things for the honor of God and the safety of your soul?"

The novice must reply in the affirmative, stating he will bear all things in the service of God.

The ceremony concludes with the senior knight stating: "Go, may God make you worthy men."

The equipment which belongs to his position among the knights will then be presented to him: his novitiate robes, a bayonet, handgun and communications gear.

Once a Novice is accepted and undergone their essential military and occult training it is likely they will return the community, not to be called upon for several years for anything other than refresher courses. Others may be forced to discard their previous lives altogether - so vital is their contribution to the Order.

## **TRAINING**

If a Novice proves suitable, he/she will be taught the skills found in Fighting Techniques over two years - often involving excursions to the African Horn for extensive field training.

All novices are then taken away for intensive paramilitary and occult training.

Training includes:

- Firearms/sword handling

- Personal security

- Vampire/Mage/Lupine/Faerie Law

with compulsory specialisations in one of (detailed in Character Creation):

- Signals

- Munitions

- Medical

- Intelligence

Once the basic course is completed, the Novice may then choose a field of speciality. This can range from brain surgery to bomb disposal - so long as his new Order will benefit. Only full knights of higher True Faith levels are taught the advanced Rituals and Prayers which serve to negate many powers of more senior vampires.

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## **Investiture**

"It was not pedantry, . . . observance of the Rule, but custom, and faith, and obedience to their monastic vows, all of joined together with their duty as warriors of Christ to make their Order, and without which the Order would not be."

- The Last of the Templars, William Watson.

Becoming a knight is likely to be the single most important event in any Brother's life. The dramatic and emotion-charged investiture ceremony is designed to ensure the applicant has a True Faith rating of at least five and is absolutely committed to a life of complete devotion to the Militant Order.

When the Rule of the Templars (later to be adopted by the Militant arms of the Teutones and Hospitallers) was created at the Council of Troyes in 1128, so was the basis for what was later to become known as the Investiture. While the ceremony grew and evolved throughout the decades, its present form is based upon that used about 1290 and recorded by young knight called Gerard de Caux.

According to de Caux, the ceremony begins with the presentation of the postulant before an assembled chapter of knights led by at least one Knight Preceptor. The ceremony, reminiscent to that of a wedding, has to be conducted in a holy place.

The most senior officer among the chapter of knights makes the following speech:

"Good brother knights, you see well that most of you have agreed to make (this man) a brother; if there is any one of you who knows any reason why he should not, in law, become a brother, let him say it now, for it is better that such a thing should be said before rather than after this man has come among us."

If there are no objections, the postulant is then taken to an adjoining room and questioned by the eldest and most senior knights of the Order. He is asked formally if he wishes to join the brotherhood of warrior-monks, and, if replies in the affirmative, then shown "the charitable commandments and the great hardness of the house (The Rule)."

The postulant must be made to understand clearly that upon entering the Order he would "willingly undergo everything for God and would be the servant and slave of the house for ever, for all the days of your life."

Then the postulant is asked about his marital status, any binding vows or commitments, unpaid debts, the state of his health and whether he was bound legally to any organisation or man. If any of the replies were not according to The Rule, the postulant must be barred from entry.

Once the elders are satisfied with the answers, they return to the chapter without the postulant to recommend him to their service. The postulant's replies are repeated to the gathering so that no subversive rumor may disturb his welcome to the ranks.

The Master, or the officer in charge, then asks the chapter if they wish "in the name of God" that the man should join. The reply from the chapter should be:

"In the name of God, let him do so."

Only then is the postulant again allowed into the chapterhouse. Kneeling in the pose of prayer, he must make this formal request:

"Sire, I have come before God, before you and the brothers, and I beg and require you in the name of God and of Our Lady to accord to me your company and the benefits of the house, as one who will henceforth always be its servant and slave."

The Master then replies:

"Good brother, you are asking a great thing, for you see only the outer shell of our religion; you see that we have good horses, good harnesses, good food and drink and clothes, and it may seem to you that you will be at ease here. But you do not know the strong commandments which are within; for it is a difficult thing that you, who are lord of yourself, should make yourself the servant of another. You will hardly do anything that wish: if you want to be in Europe, you may be sent beyond the seas; if you wish to be in Acre, you may be sent to Tripoli, or Antioch, or Armenia. If you wish to sleep, you may be awakened, and if you are wakeful you may be ordered to lie down. Good brother, can you suffer well all these hardships?"

The postulant should answer:

"Yes, I will suffer all that is pleasing to God."



The Master responds:

"Good Brother, in our company you must not seek lordship or riches, nor honor, nor bodily ease. You must seek three things: to renounce and reject the sins of this world; to do the service of Our Lord; and to be poor and penitent.

Will you promise to God and Our Lady that hence-forth, all the days of your life, you will obey the Master of the Temple and any commander placed above you?

That you will live in chastity, without personal property?

That you will uphold the good customs of this house?

That you will help, in so far as you are able, to conquer the Holy Land?

That you will never leave the Order, neither through strength nor weakness, neither in worse times nor better?"

If the postulant is still determined to join, and if the chapter still agrees, then the Master must pronounce the words of acceptance:

"In the name of God, of Our Lady, of St Peter (or the Order's particular patron saint) and of our father the pope, we accord to you, to your father, your mother and all those of your lineage whom you wish, the benefits of this house, as they have been from its beginning and will be until its end. And you, you accord to us all the benefits which you have and will have; and we promise you bread and water, and hardship, and work, and the poor robe of the house."

As the master speaks, members of the chapter bring the new knight the robes of the Order and place it over his shoulders. After this, a sword belonging to the Order is handed to the knight which he must unsheathe and hold before him hilt-up - forming the sign of the Holy Cross.

"Take this sword; its brightness stands for faith, its point for hope, its guard for charity. Use it well."

The Rule of the Order is read aloud as the new knight kneels before the altar. Once completed, the most senior knight concludes with: "Go, may God make you worthy men."

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## The Code

"I tell you, the Lord has not done this for any other generation before, nor has he lavished on our fathers a gift of grace so copious. Look at the skill he is using to save you. Consider the depth of his love and be astonished, sinners. . . He comes from heaven to help you in your necessity. This is a plan not made by man, but proceeding from the heart of divine love."

- St Bernard of Clairvaux, 1147, De laude novae militiae

## THE MODERN RULE

The strict monastic code of the 12th century no longer applies to all members of the Militant Orders. Novices and associates are bound by a separate, though similar, doctrine known as The Code. This Code reflects the strictures of the Ten Commandments, Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Virtues.

These can be found in the Character Creation section in the chapter on Piety.

Modern knights, however, must live a monastic life of self sacrifice based upon The Rule, without the era-specific regulations (this will be explained at the end of the chapter The Rule ).

The Code provides a philosophy more in keeping and sympathetic to modern ideology while still promoting the essential Christian tenets of Faith. However, the sacrifices detailed under The Rule are a vital component of

gaining Holy favor and the blessings of miraculous powers. Once a novice understands the meaning of, and is prepared to accept, the full Rule as his means of worship - only then is he eligible to gain full knight status.

## **The Code Of Service:**

New initiates vow to become a servant and slave of the Order for ever. The essential promises are to renounce and reject the sins of this world, to do the service of the Lord, and to be poor and penitent. Loyalty and obedience is the core of everyday life. The Militant Orders were among the first to introduce the concept of instant obedience to military service. Novices are taught that obedience could make the difference between victory and defeat in an ever-changing battlefield environment. Many battles were lost during the Middle Ages because secular knights led their own charge against the enemy, ignoring the orders of their battle commander. Often, the only difference in the quality of the Warrior Monks and normal knights was their fighting discipline - not individual skills.

## **Holy Violence:**

This concept was developed during the 4th and 5th centuries, and was widely touted during the time of the Crusades. Its basis was that violence was not evil, but was morally neutral. Moral coloring was drawn from the intention of the perpetrator, which could be loving - or hatred.

Any perpetrator of Christian violence had to have the right intentions. They also needed a just cause, because violence could only be resorted to in response to previous injury in the form of aggression, menaces, tyranny or invasion.

Acts of violence had to be authorised by a legitimate authority, who could be a minister of God or a king. Fortunately for the knights, most preceptors also held the rank of minister - so they could order their own violence.

However, Christ's intentions for mankind are believed to be at risk if violence is overused. Essentially, violence against the pagans was considered an act of Christian charity and loving concern.

## **The Code Of Parley:**

The code of parley is designed to avoid unnecessary conflict. Essentially, the code calls for Novices to hold discussions with the enemy before combat becomes inevitable. Militant Order members and their enemies meet under a flag of truce to discuss their differences, often in the presence of an independent intermediary. In the Cleansing Crusade, this involves an initial declaration to a domain that the knights are present - ready to accept any vampire's repentance, or to kill them. The code does not end there. During the course of conflict, Parley can also be called for extraordinary matters, issues of honor or surrender terms. Knights and Novices are compelled to answer such a call - under truce - but not to answer all questions or agree to all demands.

## **The Code Of Courage:**

Courage is possibly the single most important tenet applicable to any knightly Order. Courage in the face of the enemy is what makes a knight different from the footslogger or mercenary, and is a compelling tradition moulded by the blood of knights over countless generations. About 2000 knights Hospitaller successfully defended Malta against 40,000 Turks in 1565. At the end of the battle, 600 Hospitallers remained - but only 10,000 Turks left the island alive. In another battle, 200 Templars valiantly stood against a massive invading army. Only two lived to tell of the defeat. Such traditions are compelling, and many a Novice's honor is based on the concept.

## **The Code Of Fighting Proficiency:**

Honing skills with the sword, lance and bow occupied most of a knight's spare time during the Crusades. Similar principles apply today. Skill with the blade, guns and martial arts are a constant arena of competition among the warrior monks. Much honor and status is gained through proficient skills, but honor is also gained through innovative ways of avoiding their use. A Novice or Knight who cannot demonstrate high standards of combat skills is retired from active service into an administrative position.

### **The Code Of Piety:**

This is the dutiful devotion to God and observance of religious principles. Aside from being warriors, Templars, Hospitallers and Teutones are primarily monks. All are required to take an oath, including monastic principles such as chastity and perpetual worship. Prayers had to be offered to God at regular times each day - though knights in action or on a mission were permitted to offer silent homage. Novices, while not full monks, are still Churchmen of rank and status. They are permitted to be married - though this does make life difficult, like any soldier. Personal possessions are also permitted.

### **The Code Of Honor:**

The concept of personal integrity, allegiance to moral principles. It includes strict observance of all other tenets of chivalry. Personal honor is not the issue - but the honor of the Order is everything. An Order's prestige is enhanced through acts of social service, courtesy and tolerance. Novices must never do anything to bring the honor of his Order into disrepute.

### **The Code Of Generosity:**

A willingness to give away one's money and time freely, without expectation of reward or favor. Generosity toward the poor, infirm and generally needy is a vital part of a Novice's honor and oath. Ensuring the physical and spiritual safety of the innocent populace is a prime concern, and is the underlying cause of the knight's existence.

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## **The Rule**

"Have I not been obedient to the Rule? The Rule is the bones of my body, it runs from my feet to my head, and it is in my arms; these fingers. . . The Rule is my marrow. Am I not also garbed in the Rule, for it tells me what I wear/ The Rule is within me and about me. It is my hand when I fight and tells me what my weapons are. Within and Without."

- The Last of the Templars, William Watson.

The Rule is the tortuously detailed document stipulating every element of a Church Knight's life. When compiled in 1127, during the formal recognition of the Order of the Temple by the Pope, it was made as comprehensive as possible. The original 72 articles of its original Latin version covered everything the councillors could think of, from general religious procedure to the knight's daily diet. Its religious aspects were similar to those of any monastery, and were generally Benedictine in tone: The brothers were to pray together at appointed times each day, or, if they were absent from the Preceptory, to recite various numbers of paternosters. Meals were held in silence, and silence was maintained at night. The brothers were instructed to care for any sick or elderly members of the Order, and to have mass said for the souls of their dead; and after the death of a brother, they were to feed a pauper for 40 days. They were forbidden to hunt any animal except the Lion and other dangerous beasts which have threatened a community. Hunting was considered too close to the life of an ordinary knight, and threatened to awaken sinful pleasures within the knights of Christ.

The Rule stated: "The company of women is a perilous thing, for through them the ancient demon denied us the right to live in Paradise; and therefore women may not be received as sisters into the Order. . . and we believe it is dangerous for any religious man to look too much at women's faces. And so none of you should presume to

kiss a woman, neither widow, nor maiden, nor mother, nor sister, nor aunt, or any other woman; therefore knights of Christ must flee from women's kisses."

The Brothers were forbidden to act as godparents, the councillors fear was that a longing for normal family life would be stirred in the knights by the relationship. Partly for the same reason, children were forbidden from entering the Order. This portion of the Rule does not apply to modern knights.

The Templars were from the beginning determined only to accept mature men who came forward on their own wish and conviction.

Their clothing was regulated, according to the Order's particular uniform. Brothers could not have any personal property; everything was held in common. A gift to any one brother was a gift to all; not even a personal letter could be read privately. Personal pride was seen as one of the root causes of jealousy and strife, and sought to prevent its appearance anywhere within the Order. No pennants on lances, no jewels on armour, no pointed shoes, no excessive talking or laughter. Instead, poverty, chastity and humility were demanded. But even above these three qualities was obedience.

A system of practical punishments was included, ranging from small penances through to humiliating acts such as eating one's food off the floor. Some were expelled from the Order, others were starved to death in cells.

Everything in the Rule was intended to bring about, if necessary to enforce, a communal way of life - an abrogation of the individual in favor of the corporate Order.

The most honored Churchman of the Crusades, St Bernard, summed up the philosophy of the Militant Orders in an open letter calling for recruits.

"The warriors are gentler than lambs and fiercer than lions, wedding the mildness of the monk with the valor of the knight, so that it is difficult to decide which to call them: men who adorn the Temple of Solomon with weapons instead of gems, with shields instead of crowns of gold, with saddles and bridles instead of candelabra: eager for victory - not fame; for battle not for pomp; who abhor wasteful speech, unnecessary action, unmeasured laughter, gossip and chatter, as they despise all vain things: who, in spite of their being many, live in one house according to one rule, with one soul and one heart."

The Rule of the Templars was based on the Rule of St Benedict of Nursia (Benedictine Monks) and the Cistercian Monks, of which St Bernard of Clairvaux was a member. Its initial form was created by St Bernard and Hugh de Payns at the Council of Troyes, about AD1128.

The original Rule was essentially the following:

- To become a knight an applicant must have been of legal adult age, a volunteer, and debt-free.
- Applicants must serve at least one full year as a Novice before attempting to become a Knight.
- A knight required at least two horses, one a war-horse and the other a lighter breed for travelling. Each knight needed at least one squire to help him into his equipment and carry extra weapons and his heavy shield (which was worn hung around the neck during battle), one hand used on the reigns and the other on his weapon. The squire (or during the earlier years, sergeant at arms) required his own horse and basic weaponry.
- A Templar could have no personal possessions other than those provided by the Order (such as his armor). This was defined as three horses, clothing, two towels, a hat, two shirts, a long-sleeved tunic, a white robe, a white robe lined with wool for winter, chain mail, white surcoat with Rose Crosse, a helmet, and horse tackle, with the sword, shield, lance, knife, axe and mace of his trade. Other personal gear allocated to each knight (basically the first "kit-bag" since Roman times) included a bedding, a swag and eating utensils. The modern equivalent of this equipment list is defined in the chapter Uniform and Equipment.
- No clothing was allowed to have any form of decoration - the emphasis on quality other than gaudiness. This uniformity provided a strong esprit de corps - (which essentially means the opposite to humility).
- Knights were permitted to eat meat and were forbidden to fast.

- The major prayers for the day were conducted during the morning, leaving the afternoon free for training and maintenance of their craft.
- Knights keeping watch, or travelling, were given exemptions from attending chapel for prayers - though suitable number of paternosters (essentially prayer-formulas) had to be spoken or thought of at the appropriate times.
- Designated chores had to be completed in the morning and afternoon which involved cleaning and maintaining their gear, inspecting their horses and weapons proficiency. Any knight who failed in these duties or was found with poorly maintained equipment was disciplined.
- The concept of full and immediate obedience enforced among the Knights of Christ was a unique concept of the time. Most secular knights simply obeyed a command when it suited them. Many battles were lost because of impetuous charges at the wrong time by small groups of knights, causing confusion among the main body.
- A Knight was denied maintaining associations with his family.
- A knight was forbidden to act as a godfather as it may invoke feelings of family outside the Order.
- Knights were not allowed to kiss or embrace any woman (including mothers and sisters), and they were not permitted in any house where a woman was giving birth.
- Homosexuality was considered a serious offense.
- St Bernard stipulated that white lambskin girdles were to be worn by the knights at all times as a reminder of their vows of chastity - even when going to bed.
- No-one was allowed to see a Knight's naked body.
- Knights were not allowed to bathe - this being considered an "effeminate" affliction.
- The dormitory had to have a lamp burning all night.
- Knights had to cut their hair short - but Templars also had to wear a beard. Beards were considered signs of virility and masculinity in the Middle East, helping promote a respectful image among their enemies.
- Pope Innocent II issued the bull *Omne datum optimum* which essentially made the Templars inviolate from any earthly authority other than his own. No king or priest had any legal power over a Templar - something that caused a great deal of jealousy and conflict later in the Order's career.
- No one could ask a Knight to swear an oath.
- They could appoint their own priests.
- The Orders were exempt from paying local taxes and tithes.
- Any gift given to an individual Knight belonged to the Order as a whole.
- Debts among individual knights were not permitted.
- The Rule also demanded a knight immediately attack any enemy they sighted. This was usually overridden by another tenet of the Rule: that of obeying orders and not acting outside one's authority. However, this rule did cause problems at times.
- Knights had regular training - with specific fields and trial courses established at each base. Parading and synchronised movements were also practiced. Most movements centred around their orders particular battle standard.
- Militant Order funds were prohibited for use in ransoming. (It still happened, on occasion - with the excuse that the money was not that of the Orders!).
- Fighting to the bitter end was expected - and happened if the commander did not give the order to regroup. Retreat could only be ordered if the knights were outnumbered by more than 3 to 1.
- Strict punishment was invoked if a knight discussed the Order's business with outsiders. He was not allowed to question his Order's authority.
- Knights were not allowed frivolous talk, and speech was prohibited at meal times.

"All the commandments which are said and written above are at the discretion and judgement of the Master."

- The Rule of the Templars, as recorded by scribe John Michael at the Council of Troyes, 1128.

## THE RULE NOW

Essentially the Modern Rule is the same as the above, with only era-specific or overly harsh requirements removed.

- The tenets of Omne datum optimum no longer apply because the Pope's worldly authority has diminished greatly since the 13 century.
  - Short hair and long beard are not required as they represent nothing. Many knights choose to follow this tradition, anyway.
  - The benefits of bathing have long been established and the attitude "cleanliness is next to holiness" has taken root.
  - The specified equipment has been changed to suit modern needs.
  - Knights do not have to wear a lamb-skin girdle to demonstrate their chastity. Their Faith and Piety is before God - any breach in this trust is reflected in their loss of status.
  - The Malta Synod removed the Church Knights right to appoint their own priests. This remains the domain of the Cloth.
  - Not being in a house where there is a woman giving birth may actually conflict with other tenets of Pious behavior. This restriction has been dropped, though other rules concerning women still apply.
  - Knights may maintain associations with their family - but they must recognise this can put them at risk. Such contact must be discreet and appropriate.
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## Ministering to Vampires

"To break the heathen and uphold the Christ; To ride abroad addressing human wrongs; To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it; To honor his own word as if his God's; To lead sweet lives in purest chastity. . . Not only to keep down the base in man; But teach high thought, and amiable words. . . "  
 - Idylls of the King, Tennyson

It is a common misconception that the Church Knights are nothing more than a highly trained, heavily equipped band of vampire assassins. Wherever the warrior monks declare their presence, rumors spread thick and fast among vampires about their efficient hunting and killing techniques.

This self-perpetuating fear is encouraged by the knights as frightened Kindred sometimes become desperate - and make mistakes. Conversely, it can also be a hindrance - enforcing Kindred adherence to the principle of the Masquerade.

But the religious component of the Church Knights must not be forgotten.

The belief that a vampire has lost its soul, and is doomed to eternal damnation, is only partially correct.

It is hard for a knight to consider a vampire evil if it conducts itself in as civil and humane manner as possible. Having to kill such Kindred can cause a crisis of faith. For this reason, ministration is considered a viable alternative.

Blessings:

Because of their True Faith, a knight's blessing is not simply a collection of empty words. A blessing of good health and happiness can result in just that - a heightened sense of serenity and peace. The example provided by someone with True Faith can act as an inspiration and encouragement to others. A knight's own joy in life can help lift others out of the depths of despair. The whole purpose of a knight's presence is to make the world a safe place for normal people to live and worship. Encouraging the general populace must never be neglected - or else the fight against Corruption may end up for nought.

Repentance:

The Militant Orders - Hospitallers in particular - believe that a repentant vampire can, with a knight's blessing, have its soul freed to be judged like any other mortal. The knight cannot convey judgement or forgiveness. But he can provide a chance for mercy.

The fact that this option requires the death of a vampire limits its popularity, but any Kindred burdened with guilt and horror at what it is should see this as a viable alternative.

Golconda:

Vampires actively seeking Golconda (vampire-heaven) are encouraged - to an extent. While still essentially corrupt, such a quest involves renouncing much of a vampire's evil nature. This reduces the need for the knights to "cleanse" the world of that particular vampire.

The Church Knights have their own definition of Golconda - that of pious worship, repentance and service. Vampires may find solace and security within the Church, though they must devote themselves to a monastic life and cease feeding on human blood. Such Vampires can serve as consultants and instructors for the Militant Orders, but they cannot join in on any mission. The risk of wanting to re-join their kind is considered too great.

Red Mass:

In its lesser forms, the Mass involves the breaking and forgiveness of Vampiric domination. Ghouls can have their blood-bond removed and, if repentant, forgiven for their actions while under Kindred influence.

In such situations, the knight is simply the vessel for God's will. The outcome can never be guaranteed.

In its highest form, the Grand Masters of each order can meet and conduct a ceremony to restore mortality to a deserving vampire. The blood of Cain can be removed, restoring the creature to the same mortal state as when embraced. Once again, the knights are only a vessel for God's will.

When the Grand Master of each Militant Order believes a supplicant vampire has proven beyond earthly doubt that it desires repentance, the ritual known as Red Mass can be performed.

The vampire is taken to one of the different Order's most Holy places and asked to bow before the altar before a full chapter of knights and each of the three Grand Masters.

During the course of the ceremony, the vampire is required to place some of its own blood in a crystal chalice. As the assembled knights and the vampire prey, the Grand Masters observe the chalice for any changes.

If the blood remains unchanged, then the vampire has not yet fully atoned for its sin or demonstrated genuine faith. It has not yet earned God's attention.

If the blood turns to wine, his repentance is accepted and his earnest desire to cease being a vampire granted. At the same time the blood in the chalice changes to wine, the vampire will "die" peacefully, and his soul raised to heaven for judgement.

If the blood in the chalice turns to water, the vampire's blood will be purged of its taint and returned to normal. The now mortal, ex-vampire, will be weak and is unlikely to be capable of standing. He must be given medical attention to ensure his blood and body chemistry levels are restored fully. The state of ageing picks up from the time of embrace - not counting the years as an undead creature. The restored mortal is then allowed to choose its own destiny, free to be judged upon his death like any other person.

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## Investigation Techniques

"You could not afford to allow someone like Lord Ruthven to survive. He might after all eventually persuade too many people that being a vampire was just fine."

- Vampire, a Complete Guide to the Undead, Manuela Dunn Mascetti, 1992.

Tracking down the Kindred is a complex and arduous task. Only a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach can bear fruit. While all knights and novices are thoroughly trained and equipped for combat, they are also versed in investigative techniques.

No one method is enough on its own. Just as a combat team must contain a mix of heavy weapons, explosive, security and communications skills - so to must it have a variety of hunting skills.

Specific skills are broken down into the following categories: Research, Forensic, Contacts, Interrogation, Occult Knowledge and Tracking.

Each skill is specific and complex - taking years of study to obtain the highest standards. Holding multiple skills is possible, just as it is possible to have more than one university degree. However, specialisation is more likely.

Once a combat team has been placed in a new city, each knight branches off to investigate their own area of expertise. Once a week, knights will meet at a pre-arranged safe-haven to discuss their findings, and compare notes.

Utmost security is paramount. No knight must know another's movements or lodgings. If one is discovered, this reduces the chances of the whole groups integrity being destroyed.

Regular contact must be maintained, however, often through the use of mobile phones, pagers, dead letter boxes and pre-arranged signs. Telemetric units are only operational during combat operations, but may be switched on by individual knights during moments of crises - to transmit the circumstances for later analysis.

## **RESEARCH**

Physical collection of all available data is a complex and time- consuming process. Knights skilled in this process would analyse the content of local newspapers, church newsletters, police and court records dating back several years. Use of computer databases is a vital component - especially as most newspapers now record all articles on such systems for reference.

Hospital and police demographic records can also be helpful, revealing concentrations of particular types of crime or medical conditions (such as low-blood levels).

Each lead, as it is uncovered, must be exhaustively followed up. It is possible for a paper trail to lead directly to a suspect. However, more often research is a means of proving or fleshing out existing suspicions. Public records such as business' annual reports, land registry documents, births, deaths and marriage files can provide vital clues and leads. School records are a valuable source of an individual's history, especially year-books. Once the paper trail has been exhausted, the process of interviewing sources and monitoring suspects begins.

## **INTERROGATION**

Interrogation does not necessarily mean the red-hot coal and poker approach. In a watered-down form it is known as an interview. Knights skilled in extracting information from other people would be used to discuss events with witnesses, draw useful information out of uncooperative suspects - as well as interrogating captured minions and Ghouls.

Reports found in newspapers and other documents may be spartan, biased or simply inaccurate. Contacting the source direct can remove this form of filtration and reveal more information of use to a knights investigations.

## **CONTACTS**

Each militant order has support from different parts of society. Overall, the various church denominations are generally eager to help. Church knights hold senior ranks within their associated denominations - and are well



within their rights to act as envoys from the Vatican etc. Most churches, when faced with such a senior visitor, would usually open their books (and hearts) willingly.

Other sources of support are available on an international scale. The Templars have had a long association with the Freemasons, and may hold corresponding ranks within the secret society. Hospitallers are associated with the Order of St John - found in most Commonwealth countries as ambulance and paramedical associations. Teutonic links are much more general - usually relying upon the common bond found between soldiers and police the world over

These institutional contacts can be among the most valuable sources of information. Masons may provide financial and legal support, along with access to otherwise secret information. St Johns can offer practical medical assistance, as well as the experiences and services of its members. Police and military contacts, once again can offer behind-the-scenes information and cooperation - such as access to their own investigation records. As experts in their own fields, Knights can win the support of other professionals. For example, a Hospitaller may be a highly trained surgeon. Other surgeons would feel comfortable discussing any "strange" afflictions or maladies they have discovered.

However, knights must constantly be aware that all these organisations are open to Kindred infiltration. As a result, their true identity must remain concealed. Each knight must only act in the capacity of member or affiliate of these organisations. Only the most senior officer of each group - if he/she is trusted - is allowed to know the full truth.

Other organisations may also be sources of information. The Salvation Army (another Militant Order), the Red Cross: just about any humanitarian organisation concerned with public welfare.

## **FORENSIC**

This scientific approach is much more limited in its application than the above, though more likely to produce positive results. The areas of knowledge that come under the term forensic- science practices include pathology, toxicology, anthropology, odontology, psychology, and criminalistics.

A forensic pathologist will conduct an autopsy on a victim to locate any signs of injury or disease.

Toxicology is linked to pathology but specifically concerned with the presence of poisons or drugs. Even vampires can bleed (though only a little). Blood and skin samples may prove or disprove a suspects vampiric nature.

Criminalistics applies to the use of physical and natural sciences - such as analysing objects found at the scene of a crime. This evidence includes a variety of materials - drugs, hair, fibres, soil, blood, paint chips, firearms, fingerprints, documents, bullet distortions, type of wounds - all can reveal a great deal of information.

identification of bones and skeletal remains is the responsibility of forensic anthropology, which uses comparative body and bone measurements - along with morphology. Odontology uses dental evidence to identify remains and can be helpful in summarising bite-mark impressions.

Forensic psychiatrists analyse human behavior and personality in connection with crime. Psychiatric examinations may serve to determine whether the state of mind of an individual may have been affected by or contributed to the incident - deliberately or otherwise.

Knights trained in Forensics have a good understanding of all these areas. They are trained to recognise and draw conclusions where they can and use their limited resources to the full. Anything beyond their capabilities can be forwarded to their Headquarters for greater analysis.

This includes DNA "fingerprinting" of semen or blood stains. No field packs are yet available to 'tag' particular strains or types - they are still under development. So far only the Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu,

Toreador, Tremere and Ventrue blood types can be recognised in the underground labs of the Hospitallers in Valleta, Malta.

The Militant Orders are also researching what exactly it is in vampire blood that makes them what they are. Other areas of research include vampire repellents, sources of aggravated damage and how to nullify their supernatural powers. Every piece of information helps.

## **TRACKING**

While all of the above help identify individual vampires, reveal their abodes and their habits - actually finding the creature is another matter altogether. Tracking is usually associated with hunting in the wild, identifying and following the spoor of specific creatures. This also applies to hunting vampires and lupines - though involving different techniques in a metropolitan environment.

Vampires can leave traces of their presence. The mind's and aura's of passers-by may still show the effects of Dominate and Obfuscate. Vampires using physical powers will leave marks different to humans such as shoe scuff marks, deeper-than-usual imprints, oil-less fingerprints and no residual body heat (just sit on a leather couch that a vampire has vacated - you'll see what I mean).

Other giveaways are:

- Lack of insect activity about the person (especially in tropical regions).
- Insect bites do not swell (the old "fake wasp on your shoulder trick" should apply here).
- Behavior of nearby animals.
- Effect upon trodden grass, plants etc.
- Lack of breath vapor on a cold night.

Fingerprints taken from the scene of known vampire activity may help narrow the field of suspects and scuff-marks on the floors or ground may prove whether Celerity has been used. The full range of traditional tracking techniques also apply such as identifying particular sets of shoe or tire prints, walking styles and other tell-tale signs.

Dogs: The canines extraordinary ability to sense kindred, lupines and spirits has been well documented throughout history. Dogs appear to go into a frenzy whenever such evil is nearby. The Church Knights have learnt to control and train this sense, using suitable dogs to follow the spoor of vampires for great distances. Like police tracker dogs, these animals can sense the smell and corruption of a vampire for up to four hours. After that time, the dogs would have to rely upon sensing objects strongly associated with the prey - such as a discarded shoe or item of clothing, a trail of blood or a place where they have spent enough time to leave a heavy scent. A knight who knows his dog well would be able to sense or notice the effects of the vampiric discipline Animalism.

## **KINDRED LORE**

This is direct knowledge of vampire habits, customs and internal politics. By knowing such factors, the behavior and activities of a group of vampires can be anticipated and predicted. If you're lucky. It is an imprecise science as not all vampire Clans are known or understood. Inter-clan politics is also a murky business and can often confound carefully laid traps.

Much knowledge has been gleaned from repentant vampires. However, these vampires are usually young and know only about their own bloodline. Not all Clans are likely to produce vampires with high humanity and faith - reducing the sources of information considerably.

These gaps are constantly being researched and new information often comes to light. Inter-clan politics is a fluid thing, however, and what was once an enmity may now be an alliance.

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# Uniform and Equipment

"The Templars are ready and armed at whatever time of the day or night they may be called, either to fight or to accompany travellers; and when they pursue the enemy, they do not ask 'how many are they?', but only, 'where are they?'"

- Jacques de Vitry, 12th century.

## CEREMONIAL DRESS

Formality, ceremony and ritual is much a part of a knight's and novice's daily life. An integral part of such formality is dress - a means of proclaiming identity, philosophy and status while generating a strong sense of esprit-de-corps. Clothing can also re-enforce in the wearer's mind a sense of purpose and mood: thus the designation of ceremonial and combat uniforms.

Monastic habit for all Orders is simple but of good quality. The spartan robes merely reflect the Order to which they belong - signs of rank being considered unnecessary.

Once Outremer fell about 1300, a crusading treatise established by the Church recommended all three Militant Orders be combined. A similar move was made during the Malta Synod of the 1980s. Both proposals saw the new order wearing black robes with a red cross. Neither move was successful, however, and the Orders remain independent.

Hospitallers: Monastic dress is a black hooded mantle known as the cappa clausa. The white eight-pointed Maltese cross is sewn on either the left breast or across the whole chest. Officers of the Order have the right to wear red in place of black, though the cross remains the same. Sergeants (now novices) wore the same black garb as their brother knights.

Templars: The monastic habit of the Templars is basically a white woollen tunic, white mantle and a skull-cap. This uniform was granted to the Order upon their papal recognition in 1128. In 1146, the Templars were given the right to wear a red cross on their left breast or shoulder. Initially a simple intersection of lines, the cross later developed to become what is known as the "crosse formee". Sergeants (now novices) wore a similar habit, though it was colored brown.

Teutones: The white habit of the Teutones was very similar to that of the Templars (much to the latter's disgust). This right was granted them by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Their black cross (sometimes with yellow border) was similar in shape to that of the Cross of Jerusalem (four T's radiating from a centre-point). In the late-13th century they were also granted the right to place the German Royal Eagle at the heart of the cross - though this practice has since been discontinued. Teutone sergeants (equivalent to modern novices) wore a Tau cross (looking like a single capital T). This cross was also known as a crux commissa.

## STANDARDS OF THE ORDERS

As all Militant Orders are derived from cavalry fighting units, each has its own battle standard which acted as a rallying point after the charge. The standards still exist, though are used only for ceremonial purposes such as "showing the flag".

Hospitallers: The standard of the Knights Hospitaller was a white "splayed" cross on a red field. The most common example is set rigid between two light poles - ensuring the standard is spread - with five red tails hanging from the trailing edge. The standard, first seen in 1182, was the responsibility of the Orders Gonfanonier, but generally carried by a squire. The color of the knight's shield depended upon the color of his surcoat, though the cross remained the same.

Templars: The Templars held particular reverence for their battle standard, otherwise known as Bauseant. It was in use from at least 1128. The standard is a simple one - a white field with the upper quarter filled in black. It was the responsibility of the Gonfanonier knight who was supported and protected by the squires. In battle the standard was often protected by up to 10 knights and its loss by a brother would result in his expulsion from the Order. Secondary commanders and preceptories used a flag of a red cross on a white field. Both designs were used on individual knight's shields.

Teutones: In the early days of the Order the Teutones battle standard was simply a black cross on a white field. But as they successfully established a principality in the Baltic States, the cross was dressed up. By 1330 the Order had adopted the yellow cross of Jerusalem bordered in black for their standard, with the German royal eagle at its heart. This was placed on a white field. Shields mostly held a simple black cross on white.

## **MODERN COMBAT EQUIPMENT**

Knights require proper clothing and equipment for a successful conclusion in a "cleansing" operation. All weapons, clothing and equipment are supplied by the knights Order - and remain the property of the Order. For fully-ranked knights, personal possessions are forbidden. Novices may use privately owned equipment - if they have demonstrated both proficiency and need. The troops wear a dark grey one-piece suit, made from fire-retardant material, together with heavy combat boots. A bullet-proof, sleeveless jacket is still often worn, comprising a casing into which ceramic kevlar armored plates are inserted front and rear. Similar to flak-jackets in basic design, they are tailored to meet individual requirements. This includes pockets for to contain ancillary equipment such as radios and grenades. This body armor is being replaced by a new, individually moulded armor which also covers the arms and legs while allowing full freedom of movement. Gloves are worn to ensure a good grip on weapons and other items of equipment. In addition, a belt rig, usually made of ballistic nylon or tough hide is worn around the waist and comprises a personal selection of pouches - usually for St George's oil dischargers, air-dart flingers, sun-torches etc. The ballistic-belt also has clips to allow a sword scabbard to be attached, though most knights prefer to have their sacred weapons slung on their back over the right shoulder.

A drop holster for the Glock 18a rides low on the right leg, with spare magazine pouches worn on the other leg. In addition, a spare magazine is often worn on the left wrist for a rapid magazine change.

Strap-on seat-type harnesses are often worn in case abseiling is necessary. Used in conjunction with stabilised descenders, quick-release fittings and a rope bag on the leg (to prevent those below seeing the rope), it is worn only when its use is likely. Other items of equipment placed on the body and webbing include spare magazines for the SMGs, bolt-cutters, hand hammers, axes and glass cutters.

Sewn-on patches for bayonet scabbards complete the rigs and are attached either to the upper arm or thigh, upper chest or body armor waistcoat. Specialised equipment such as flares, flash darts etc are stored in a similar manner.

Experience has taught that only materials of the highest quality are suitable for anti-vampire operations. Knights are often fighting in situations where they are physically inferior to their quarry. Only the best quality equipment can reduce this deficit.

## **BASIC ISSUE EQUIPMENT:**

The following is a list of basic equipment, issued as standard to all knights. Further weapons and items are available from each Order's stores upon request, and are outlined in Apendice 1.

Equipment:

- MPK2000 - submachinegun

- Glock18a - automatic pistol

- Sword

- Bayonet

- Dart Knife
- Small wooden stakes
- Bodymould armor
- Night vision goggles/scopes
- Telemetry unit
- Flashdart pack (x2)
- Flare pack (x2)
- Stun Grenade (x2)
- Grenade (x2)
- Combat coveralls
- Belt rig / webbing
- First Aid Kit
- Gloves
- Monastic habit and dress

## SETUP

Each knight is responsible for his personal kit, while the commander is responsible for checking each man's individual equipment and dividing the specific-to-task kit throughout the patrol - ensuring each man knows what the others are carrying. Individual check lists would include personal weapons, ruck- sack and belt kit and spare ammunition for their personal weapon (normally carried in pouches in belt kit or in webbing). Other equipment such as "bang" darts and stick flares are usually attached to various parts of the arms and legs. Each man's personal belt kit would also contain additional survival and medical gear, stun grenades, water bottles and emergency rations. Passive night vision goggles are strapped here when not in use. The ruck-sack carries everything else: radios, batteries, ammunition, explosives, rations, water, sleeping bags and clothing.

The knight-lieutenant and the second-in-command would usually carry items specific to their roles, like command and navigational equipment. Detailed maps, night vision binoculars and a hand- held thermal imaging device or sunlamp/camcorder unit.

The point man carries more night vision aids than the standard low-light goggles, wire cutters and an electronics kit to defeat high-tech security devices. He may also have a grenade launcher attached to his weapon to put down suppressive fire in the event of a contact.

When contact is made, the other knights must get into position as quickly as possible - ensuring their point man is not left alone.

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## Fighting Techniques

"At the will and command of their leader, they proceed to battle, not in an impetuous or disorderly fashion, but prudently and with all caution, being the first to go forward and the last to retreat - which is why they became so dreaded by the enemies of the faith of Christ."  
- Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre, 1227

The four-man team has historically been the basic fighting unit of the Church Knights.

The unit of four originated during the Crusades when it was stipulated that each knight must equip from their own estate three armed sergeants. These sergeants were given basic weaponry and protection, as well as one or two horses each. While rarely fighting alongside their knight on the field, a knight and his sergeants were usually the basic component of a patrol.

In large-scale combat, the sergeants fought as heavy troops and commanders among the mercenaries, while the knights grouped together and fought as heavy cavalry.

It was quickly found that the small, self-contained nature of the four-man team was the most efficient and practical fighting unit - allowing high mobility, speed, surprise and hitting power. Less than this number is obviously too few, restricting what can be carried and limited in the amount of firepower brought to bear. Four warriors are capable of defending themselves if ambushed, as well as continuing the mission if one of their members is killed or wounded. More than four becomes unwieldy, harder to coordinate and conceal from the enemy.

The unit is also an ideal size for large scale operations, with each group of four being the basic components of highly flexible larger forces. Most major assaults are actually conducted by four or five such units working in concert to a thoroughly pre-planned operation.

The modern four-man team is made up of a leader, a pointsman, a defenceman and someone responsible for watching the rear. The leader is responsible for the team's assault, and also liaises with other combat units and senior officers.

The pointsman leads the team during the approach and lays entry charges if necessary.

The supportman does just that: back up one of the others as they carry out their task.

The defenceman provides security for the pointsman and serves as second-in-command while carrying any additional equipment - typically explosives or high-calibre weapons.

## **UNIT COMBAT SKILLS**

The four-man unit is designed to operate primarily on its own, often in remote areas and frequently on hostile ground. In addition to general reconnaissance and investigation, it can perform sabotage and ambush missions. While the four-man unit is not exactly an aggressive fighting unit, large scale ambushes can be conducted with eight or 16 man combined teams.

Every unit member has his own speciality - such as signals, demolitions, medicine or languages.

Communications is one of the most important skills among the Church Knights, acting as an efficient force-multiplier for their limited numbers. Every knight must have skills including high- standard field communications, code and ciphers.

Despite this general knowledge, each unit has a specialist signaller responsible for calling in aerial support, casualty evacuation, patrol coordination and regular contact. Morse is the basic method of communications, allowing quick messages under difficult transmission circumstances. The Orders have adopted Latin as the standard language of communication as a simple measure of security. When combined with Morse, messages would be beyond the scope of most untrained cryptologists.

Demolition skills are also an important part of the four-man unit. Explosives are useful in opening up secure entrances, sabotaging transport or supplies, as well as causing general confusion. The last of the four main skills is medicine. A unit's medic can perform surgery and cure common diseases, as well as helping win the "hearts and minds" of primitive societies. There are two basic medical kits carried while on operations: individual medical packs and patrol medical packs. The individual kit is usually a part of a knight's webbing, containing essentials for first aid and mild drugs. Patrol medical kits are far more comprehensive and carry a wide selection of medicine, dressings, drugs and surgical packs.

All members of the Church Knight units must have more than just one patrol skill. Therefore, a knight may be trained as an investigations specialist, but also have the ability to competently handle explosives. A communications officer may also be trained as a medic, supplementing or replacing the unit's official medico when necessary.

Essentially, each unit member receives cross-training in each others individual specialisations.

Tertiary skills such as sniping, hacking, shadow driving etc are trained according to the individual abilities of each knight.

## **CLOSE COMBAT**

Individual knights are taught to take no chances. Given a clear shot at a vampire he will often empty an entire magazine into the target. There is good reason for this: the vampire can heal itself, given time. The more damage, the more time it takes to heal. If a knight is given enough time, he can reach a position to decapitate the creature.

A double tap (two quick shots) on its own is often insufficient to stop even a mortal from detonating hidden explosives or pulling a weapon. Sustained and accurate firepower keeps the vampire or ghoul's hands away from his body, making it impossible to reach a gun or button.

Knights employ body-line shooting in close combat situations, not head or heart shots. Where possible, shots are aimed at the trunk of the body (Vampires have no vital organs anyway). Head shots usually require only one bullet to kill a mortal or do severe damage to a vampire, but the target area is much smaller. In a darkened, smoke-filled room full of people the chances of shooting accurately are greatly reduced.

However, knights are trained to shoot accurately at heads and hearts in ambush situations, and if such is the only target presented to them.

## **BUILDING COMBAT**

Once the pointsman has defeated the building's security or blown open an entrance, the assault team will quickly and systematically begin to clear the rooms, hallways and stairs of enemy.

Preferably, snipers from a second "perimeter" combat team will provide covering fire and prevent anyone escaping the building. The assault team will also be carrying stun/flash grenades to disorientate vampires, making them incapable of effective concerted action.

Room clearance drill is simple.

Each knight has his own arc of fire. He must be adept at calculating his arc of fire to encompass any area in which he is operating in. For example, in a corridor the field of vision is limited and consequently arcs of fire are reduced, but there are doors on each side - each a possible threat. Each room must be approached and cleared, under cover of a comrade. If any doors are locked, then one of the four-man team will blow off the door hinges using a shotgun; the door will be kicked in and shock grenades tossed in. A two-man team will immediately follow, killing any hostiles with almost full-magazine bursts. The initial action should be over within four seconds, with the two knights following up their action by decapitating all present vampires, ghouls and allied mortals.

The team will then immediately move on to any other rooms, repeating the process.

If in a large building, different teams will have specified areas to clear - assigned before the action. When attacking an aircraft or railway carriage, all entrances are attacked at the same time.

## **WEAPONS ABILITIES**

A high standard of shooting skills is required from all knights, and all are expected to be marksmen with any weapon they may have to carry. They must be excellent shots from both the prone position, and also capable of sustained and accurate fire at close quarters. Ambush fire control procedures, contact drills, fire and movement routines and night firing must all be second nature.

Specialist weapons skills are easily researched, but one is included here as an example of the careful integration of such training in a Militant Order combat team.

The sniper, operating either alone or with a partner, can pin down a large enemy force by killing its leaders and communications specialists.

In a vampire "cleansing" action, snipers and support crew are often placed in buildings around the targets location. Snipers add to the confusion by firing through the windows as the assault team bursts in. Once the assault team is inside, snipers do not fire into the building. However, they are ideally placed to supply fire support under direct instruction of the assault team, and pick off any enemy trying to escape the building. They also provide a perimeter defence, warning the assault team of new arrivals.

Marksmanship is not enough alone; a high level of camouflage and concealment skills, plus advanced field craft, are vital to a sniper if they are to be effective. Snipers must be able to move across open terrain without being spotted, select concealed firing positions and have an avenue of escape once the action is completed.

## **RELIGIOUS POWERS**

In return for the sacrifices made through taking their monastic vows, and their high faith, the knights have been blessed with "supernatural" powers. These powers are a vital component in the war against Corruption, as vampires outmatch even the best trained mortal.

However, these powers do not belong to the knight - but to God. The blessing of supernatural powers must only be used under the guidelines of the Rule - a knight cannot use them for selfish or vain purposes such as in revenge, laziness or personal profit. While some specific abilities are granted for specific purposes, they may not necessarily be carried out the same way every time.

Miracles are a prime example of this. A desperate knight may beg for a miraculous obstacle to appear between him and an advancing vampire. This "barrier" could, by God's will, be anything from a wall of fire, a collapsing tree, a swarm of bees or the souls of the vampires victims.

The powers embodied in Faith, The Gifts, Prayers and Rituals all assist in all aspects in the battle against the Cainites. Investigation of, protection from and combating vampires all benefit in different ways.



# The Orders

by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)

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## Templars

Knights Templar are members of the oldest and most powerful of the three Militant Orders. Because their headquarters was near the site of Solomon's Temple they were named Templars. By 1118AD the Order had been officially sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church and attracted many members, growing greatly in wealth. They were a very well organised Order, with wide ranging contacts - such as the Saracen Hashshashin assassins.

The Templars fought bravely for Christianity during the 2nd Crusade, but after Jerusalem was recaptured by the Turks, the Templars retreated to Cyprus. Once removed from Outremer, the Templars had no purpose for their existence - and the vultures closed in. The Templar inventions of banks, cheques and other methods of credit - designed to help finance their activities in the Holy Land - were used to hasten their demise. The Templars were not the first Militant Order to encounter the vampires, but they were the first to actively hunt them down on an organised basis. Their ruthless pursuit of the Kindred and their surprising success eventually prompted the children of Cain to organise themselves and plot to overthrow the Order. King Philip IV (a vampire puppet) tortured and killed many Templars and seized their properties and the dominated pope, Clement, disbanded the Order. But they were only fragmented, surviving through widely dispersed secret societies who have Lodges through the world.

**Full Name:** Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon

**Archetype:** The Templars are intellectual and business people with very high dress codes. Business tycoons and spies are counted among their ranks. Their combat equipment is the same as that of all knights - and no identifying marks are allowed. Their monastic and ceremonial robes are distinctive, with a red splayed cross (the Croix Patte) set on a white background. The Order's banner is a black sky on a white field - called Bauseant.

**Headquarters:** The Templars have been a fragmented force for more than 600 years, surviving as a fugitive and underground organisation. The revived Order's headquarters is in Scotland, at a mysterious castle and cathedral both known as Rosslyn.

Situated in the Scottish heartland, this mystical place is rumored to have contained many of the Templars secrets for centuries

**Background:** Templars are a suspicious and overly cautious group - reflecting the bitter experience of the early 14th century. Much importance is placed upon investigation and research techniques. The philosophy of "knowing one's enemy" succeeded in pulling-off the unconceivable in 1316 - disbanding a Militant Order subject to no earthly authority other than the pope's. The Templars have learnt their lesson well. Women are allowed to

serve in non-combatant roles, after adopting the Nun's habit. Pressure for full acceptance of women within the Order is intense.

**Character Creation:** Templars are almost obsessed about understanding their enemy, so the Knowledge attributes are primary as are research skills. They usually have professional and highly educated concepts. Their demeanour tends to be intellectual, with good bureaucratic, investigative, linguistic, law and money skills. For background traits they usually have strong Contacts, Influence and Resources.

**Weaknesses:** Their quest for information on the blood of Cain often takes precedence over actually "removing" them. This often causes conflict with the Teutones who believe it is a Church Knight's primary responsibility to get rid of Kindred Corruption for humankind's greater good. The Templar's history also makes them overly cautious when it comes to dealings with the open public. Generally, the Templars believe that if the Militant Order's cannot do something themselves, then it should not be done at all.

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## Hospitallers

Formed by as a nursing Order after the First Crusade, the Hospitallers were originally totally devoted to providing healing and respite to weary pilgrims. Raiding Infidels and contact with the Kindred soon changed that. The Hospitallers followed the Templars lead, and soon became devoted to the Militant defence of Christendom. However, the knights Hospitaller never forgot their origins and always maintained a hospital to care for the sick and destitute. The knights of St. John have a philosophy of healing, and all are trained in medicine. Succouring God's people is seen by the knights as their primary purpose for existence - and the only reason for their Militant Arm is to combat the Kindred "disease" at its source.

The Hospitallers were the only Order to survive the changing centuries intact, and thus enjoys the status of most senior Militant Order. They adapted their role from guardians of the Holy Land to that of forward raiders from Rhodes and bastion of the Mediterranean from Malta. During the past few centuries, they have often acted in concert with the Vatican's espionage arm.

Most people see them as wholly dedicated to charitable work, especially in world-wide ambulance and disaster relief services. .

**Full Name:** The Knights Hospitaller of St John, Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta

**Appearance:** The members of this Order are well dressed in public. Like most doctors, they believe in high standards of cleanliness and hygiene. The ceremonial uniform of the Hospitallers is a black robe emblazoned with an eight-pointed cross of white (the Maltese Cross). Occasionally, the most senior warrior-monks wear red robes with the white Maltese Cross.

**Headquarters:** Since being forcibly removed from their island home of Malta in the 1700s by Napoleon, the Hospitallers have had to be content with a small property near the Vatican in Rome. However, the knights have recently been allowed to return to their Valletta castle in strength - though the Maltese no longer accept them as rulers.

**Background:** Members of this Order are generally chosen from medical, science and priesthood backgrounds. An arm of the Hospitallers has been heavily involved in espionage for centuries, so experienced spies are also available.

This is the most traditional Order, placing great emphasis on religion and ceremony. As a result, women are only allowed to serve within the Order in a non-combatant manner.

**Character Creation:** Hospitallers are mainly from medical backgrounds. Social Attributes are generally primary, as are Knowledge Abilities. Normal background traits include Resources and Status. The Order is a

very humane one, this Virtues such as conscience and humanity are usually high.

**Weaknesses:** The Hospitallers have a strong sense of justice. They will not have any dealings with people or creatures which they think are evil. This often puts them at odds with the Templars and Teutones. Their concern for the general populace often over-rides their immediate pursuit of the Kindred. If there is an accident or disaster involving many mortals, they will abandon a hunt to lend assistance.

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## Teutones

The Order of Teutonic knights was founded in 1190 by German Crusaders in Palestine and were recognised by the Pope in 1199. Modelled after the knights Templars and the knights Hospitaller but restricted in membership to the German nobility, the new Order grew to become a major principality.

It is largely because the Teutones initially ignored warnings about the Kindred that they are so determined to wipe them out. Their ignorance cost the lives of many Teutonic Knights, and the Order is embarrassed it had to call for Hospitaller assistance during their Hungary campaigns against tribes lead by ancient Kindred.

In 1229 the Teutonic knights began a crusade to convert and pacify the pagan Slavs in Prussia. They crushed the native Slavs, who were often lead by vampires who had adopted for themselves demi-god status. Their merciless treatment of such evil earned them a reputation as vicious warriors.

The Teutonic Knights have become cynics, and believe direct conflict with the Kindred is the only means of eradicating evil quickly and efficiently. To this end, military training is paramount.

**Full Name:** The Sacred Order of the Teutonic Knights

**Appearance:** The members of this Order are usually muscular, reflecting their military mien. Battle dress is the same as all knights, though a Teutone may have a few more optional extras tacked on. Ceremonial dress is similar to that of the Templars, though their white robes are adorned with a simple black cross.

**Headquarters:** For several centuries, the most pure fragment of the Teutones have been serving in Vienna as a charity nursing Order. However, now that the Militant nature of the knights has been restored, they have managed to reacquire their ancient headquarters Marienburg Castle.

**Background:** It has an appearance to normal people as a semiclerical Order, devoted to charity work. But who ever heard of nurses who had the strength to bend iron bars? The Teutonic knights pick their members carefully from special police and military forces units from around the world. The knights are very secretive, rarely revealing their identity in public. This is the only Order to continue enforcing the ancient Rule of not maintaining family contacts. Their backgrounds are almost impossible to trace, their personal details well protected (even from fellow Teutones) and their fighting skills carefully honed.

**Character Creation:** Most knights Teutone come from military or police force backgrounds. Physical attributes are primary, as are fighting abilities. Their disposition is often one of short temper, eager to get into the fight. This is often misinterpreted by the Hospitallers and Templars as pure bloody mindedness. The other Orders do not appreciate the hatred and concern with which the Teutones consider the Kindred. Delays are frustrating to the Teutones, as are strategic long-term considerations. They've spend most of their lives training to fight, and they want to put that training to use.

**Weaknesses:** Teutones are not well known for their restraint or subtlety. They tend to be hard to get along with socially as they are often engrossed with their mission. They dislike trickery or subtle tactics, believing front-on confrontation to be the best approach. This will often lead them into dispute with the Hospitallers and Templars, and sometimes Teutones may ignore instructions from officers outside their own Order if they believe it is inappropriate or indirect.

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## An Historical Perspective

"Go forward in safety, knights, and with undaunted souls drive off the enemies of the cross of Christ, certain that neither death nor life can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, repeating to yourselves in every peril : Whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's"  
- Bernard of Clairvaux, De laude novae militiae

### Knights Templar

The Knight's Templar had their origins in a small band of crusader knights who took upon themselves the task of keeping the Holy Land's roads safe and secure. Formed about 1115 by Hugh de Payens or Burgundy and eight other knights, the small band quickly won the favor of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. After being granted the right to use part of the old Temple of Solomon as their headquarters, the Poor Knights of Christ began to be called Templars.

In 1118, the small band swore before the Patriarch of Jerusalem that they would uphold the monastic vows of poverty, obedience and chastity while protecting pilgrims en-route between Jerusalem, Jericho and the Jordan.

The number of knights grew rapidly, the concept of a devout group of warriors doing God's work in the Holy Land proving popular. With this increase in size, Hugh acted to have his knights recognised as an official monastic order with special rules for their combat role.

In 1124 Hugh travelled to Europe to muster support for his new band of warrior-monks. The Council of the Catholic Church at Troyes, and personal relative St Bernard of Clairvaux, approved the idea and compiled what was to become known as The Rule. The Pope's and Bernard's approval resulted in a flood of new entrants. When Hugh returned in 1130, 300 new members travelled with him.

The new Order was led by a Grand Master, Seneschal, Marshal, Commander and Preceptors (masters of provinces). Each province was divided into several preceptories, each with its own knight captain and a lieutenant. The Templars allowed subordinate members into the Order as sergeants, as well as "confrere knights" - knights who only served for a short term, were permitted to marry but had to bequeath half their estate to the Order upon their death.

Gifts of land and money also poured in. At the height of the Order's power it owned more than 9000 titles and manors throughout Europe and the Holy Land. It was this vast wealth that eventually led to the Order's downfall. The skills needed to keep track of such vast amounts of money turned the Templars into the world's first international bank. It also attracted a lot of resentment.

By 1147, the Templars and the Hospitallers fielded about half of the total available forces in Outremer. About 80 Templars, leading 300 other knights, led a cavalry charge in 1177 which smashed through Saladin's much larger army. The Moslems were routed, greatly enhancing the Order's prestige.

Their victories were tainted by several stupid defeats. In 1187, Grand Master Gerard de Ridefort led a force of 90 Templars and 40 others to charge 7000 Moslem cavalry. Only he and two other Templars escaped with their lives. But they regularly demonstrated their willingness to fight unto the bitter end. In 1243, at the loss of Jerusalem to the Moslems, only 36 Templars out of 300 survived. In 1250, 200 Templars died in the streets of Mansurah after their Grand Master had warned others of an impending ambush - but had been overruled.

At Christendom's final defeat in the Holy Land - the fall of Acre - the knights were forced to take refuge in their chapterhouse after the walls were breached. While negotiating a surrender treaty, the Moslems began slaughtering civilians sheltering within the Order's boundaries. True to their vows, the remaining Templars jumped to their defence. Later their surviving officer, the Knight Marshal, was treacherously beheaded while

negotiating. After another week of fighting, the Templar remnants died along with 2000 Moslem attackers when their building collapsed upon them all.

By the time the Order was expelled from Outremer in 1291, the Templars were too deeply involved in banking to afford a new crusade. Despite a few unsuccessful raids, the Order had been reduced to a group bankers and money-lenders.

King Philip VI "The Fair" organised the downfall of the Order by planting infiltrators among the ranks - with a carefully organised plan for trumped-up charges of heresy. When one of these plants, renegade Templar Esquieu de Floyrian laid charges against the Order in 1305, it was the beginning of the end. Similar attacks were mounted in England and Spain, but the charges were thrown out as ridiculous.

Several years of legal wrangling followed, during which the Grand Master Jacques de Molay placed his faith in the Order's supposed invulnerability from all earthly authority and relied upon papal protection. Eventually charges were laid against all individual members of the Order - not the Order itself. Against this, the imprisoned and tortured Templars had no defence.

In 1312, the Order was dissolved.

## **Knights Hospitaller**

The knights Hospitaller are an Order whose role and power are much more thoroughly documented - and tangible - than the Templars. This Militant Order is the Templars traditional rival. The knights Hospitaller of Saint John had a structure based on that of the Templars but had a greater focus on medical health.

The Order of Saint John originated with a hospital dedicated to Saint John in Jerusalem about 1070, - 30 years before the First Crusade - by a group of Italian merchants wanting to look after pilgrims. It appears to have been constituted as an Order about 1100, just after the First Crusade, when it took on its first Grand Master. The Hospitallers thus pre-dated the Templars, but they were solely dedicated toward medical work.

By 1126, however, about eight years after the Templars appeared publicly, the knights of Saint John had begun to assume an increasingly military character which would soon become more prominent than their hospital service. Interestingly, the Hospitallers may have had to adopt a militant arm because the Templars were not doing the job given to them - they were running around the Holy Land searching for Holy relics instead of protecting pilgrims.

The Hospitallers, along with the Templars and Teutones, became the major military and financial power in the Holy Land. This power spread throughout the Mediterranean.

Like the Templars, they became immensely wealthy. The Order developed into a vast military, ecclesiastic and administrative organisation with hundreds of knights, a standing army, numerous secondary services, a network of fortresses and enormous holdings of land across the Christian world. The Order remained true to its origins, maintaining well run hospitals staffed by its own surgeons.

In 1307, when the Templars had been charged with a catalogue of offences against Catholic orthodoxy, the Hospitallers managed to stay clean of any stigma. They retained the favor of the papacy. In England and elsewhere, ex Templar holdings were handed over to them - boosting their wealth.

After the fall of the Holy Land in 1291, the knights of Saint John retired to Cyprus. Then in 1309 they proceeded to establish their headquarters on the island of Rhodes, which they governed as their private principality. They remained here for two centuries, withstanding two major sieges by the Turks. In 1522, a third siege forced them to abandon the island and in 1530 they re-established themselves on Malta. In 1565, Malta was besieged by the Turks in an ambitious attempt to conquer the Mediterranean.

In an epic defence, 541 knights Hospitaller and sergeants along with 1500 standing soldiers and mercenaries repelled the repeated assaults of a historically verified 30,000 attackers. The historic defeat inflicted upon the

Turks destroyed their invasion plans. Six years later, in 1571, the Order's Fleet, together with warships from Austria, Italy and Spain, won a decisive victory at the naval battle of Lepanto, shattering Turkish maritime power. The Hospitaller fleet was awarded disproportionate credit for sinkings.

In the late 16th century they were still one of the supreme military and naval powers in the Christian world, with strength and financial resources comparable to most nations.

But the Protestant reformation had begun to shatter the strength of Catholic Europe, and the Order itself was split by changing beliefs. Chivalric behavior had become "quaint" and out dated, and Europe moved on to a new age of religious tolerance and mercantilism.

The knights were still on Malta in 1798, though only a shadow of what they were. Freemasonry had eroded their Catholic allegiances, and when Napoleon invaded the island on the way to Egypt, the knights offered no resistance. When Horatio Nelson recaptured the islands, the knights were able to re-establish an unofficial presence on their island again. In 1834, an official base was established in Rome.

Once again devoted to hospital and health work, the knights maintain their fortress in Malta but have no magisterial powers. Interestingly enough, it was seriously considered to hand Israel over to the knights after World War II.

In international law, the knights of Malta have status as an independent sovereign principality, with the option of a seat in the United Nations (which they have never enacted). Embassies can be found in African and Latin American countries with full diplomatic privileges.

## **Knights Teutone**

The Teutonic knights are a German military and religious Order based on the Hospitallers and Templars. The youngest of the three militant Orders, the Teutonic knights were founded as a nursing unit in 1190 by German Merchants who were concerned about their disease-ridden compatriots among the Christian army camped outside Acre. After being granted land to build a hospital, and being granted Monastic status, the Teutones were somewhat surprised to be instructed by Pope Innocent III to become a Militant Order.

The militant arm was closely modelled on the knights Templar, and the hospital arm based on that of the knights of St John. Membership of the Teutones was not restricted to members of the German nobility. The only limits were to be a freeman and not to be in wedlock.

The Order generally wore a white habit with a black cross. Each Chapterhouse of the Order numbered 12, after the number of disciples. Their leader was known as a Komtur - meaning bailiff. When a Grand Master died, all Komturs were gathered to elect 13 members, who, in turn, would elect a new Master. Other officers of the Grosskomtur (command) were the Ordensmarshall, the Tressler (treasurer), the Spittler (hospitaller) and the Trapier (quartermaster).

The Order never distinguished itself in the Holy Land. It fought no famous battles, nor did it initially enjoy the wealth of support given to the other Orders. It is partially because of this lack of support that it remained a purely Germanic movement- a fact that soon saw its interests turn closer to the Fatherland.

In 1216AD the order lost most of its knights and its Grand Master in action defending the Holy Land. While continuing their presence in Acre until the kingdom fell in the late 13th century, the Teutones increasingly focussed their strength on the Balkans. First, the Order assisted King Andrew of Hungary in the 1210s to evict the Kumans who were raiding Transylvania. However, the king reneged on rewarding the Teutones with their own principality in the district of Burzenland.

Fortunately, the Polish Duke Conrad of Masovia asked the Order for protection from the pagans on the borders of his country. By 1229AD, Pope Gregory IX instructed the Teutones to "convert" the Prusiskai - with any conquered land becoming their own with only nominal Church interference.

The Order was ruthless in its fight against the heathen tribes, with even small numbers of heavy cavalry being virtually invincible in the face of any enemy.

Any captured knights were tortured to death under pagan rites. But the Teutones were no more merciful. Every conquered man, woman and child was faced with conversion or death. The natives became the Order's serfs, controlled from a series of powerful fortresses. Eventually, their domain extended through the Balkans from Poland, through Lithuania to Sweden.

In the following 100 years they extended their domain which was held as a Papal fief, along the Baltic from the Gulf of Finland to the Pomeranian borders. The Teutones colonised the land with Germans and established a strong central government with a headquarters at Marienburg, Prussia.

Rebellions in the 1260s stretched the Order to the limit. After several Balkan castles and Acre fell in the late 13th century, the knights moved their headquarters to Venice. The lost ground in the Balkans was soon recaptured.

The Teutonic Knights governed their new land efficiently. Most colonists found it strange to have to answer in financial matters to monks who were not allowed to own anything, but this limited corruption and allowed business to operate effectively

During the early 1300s Inquisition, which saw the fall of the Templars, the Teutones were periodically subject to charges of cruelty and witchcraft - though their primary theatre of operations (Prussia and the Baltic Coast) placed them safely beyond the reach of any authority wanting to act against them. The rule of the Teutones was not an easy one. The 14th century was a series of continuous battles against the Lithuanians - up to 80 expeditions in all with up to seven in one year. The Teutones reached their peak of power and reputation during this period - budding some of the best military minds of the era.

Defeated by the Poles and Lithuanians at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410, the Teutonic knights were forced in 1466 to cede West Prussia and Pomerelia to Poland and to move their headquarters to Königsberg in East Prussia.

In 1525 their grand master, Albert of Brandenburg, converted to Lutheranism and made East Prussia a secular Polish fief. The Order remaining possessions in France and Germany were secularised by 1805.

The Teutonic image, as well as part of the Order itself, was hijacked by the Nazi party in World War II. The Order's Slavic Crusade was held up as an example of German superiority and used as an excuse for another attack on Russia. Many members of the SS styled themselves as knights of the Militant Order. The Order of Teutonic knights still exists in Austria as a semiclerical organisation devoted to charity work.

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## Holy Places

" . . . it came into Sir William Sinclair's mind to build a house for Gods service, of most curious worke, the which, that it might be done with greater glory and splendor, he caused artificers to be brought from other regions and forraigne kingdomes. . . "

- Father Hay, On William St Clair and Rosslyn Chapel, 1722.

## VALLETA, MALTA

Among its original features were a series of auberges (inns), each representing areas of Europe from which conscripts were drawn such as Aragon, France, Germany, Provence, Castile, Italy and England.

On the northern coast of the island is the bay where St Paul was shipwrecked on his way to trial in Rome. The presence of the knights remains, with several structures and fortifications commemorating the areas religious significance.

But most prominent are the sea castle of Sant'Angelo, the fort of St Elmo and the walled suburb of Vittoriosa, embracing two prominentories which provided an easily defended natural harbor. All were part of what was to become the city of Valleta. The city was named after Grand Master Jean de la Valette, veteran of the siege of Rhodes and successful defender of Malta against the Ottoman Turks.

In the centre of the fortifications built to defend Grand Harbor is St Johns Cathedral, built by the Knights Hospitaller as the centre of their worship in 1578. The exterior of the Cathedral is austere, but inside is it is surprisingly extravagant. On the floors of one room are 375 marble tablets, each highly decorated and recording the deeds of the Order. This room is known as the mausoleum of chivalry.

The great hospital - containing one of the largest rooms in all Europe - is the highpoint of Hospitaller medical construction. The main ward is 185ft long by 35ft wide with ceilings of 31ft. Built in the 1570s, it still stands today. Strict standards of cleanliness and hygiene were enforced, long before this was generally accepted. Knights themselves tended the patients, using implements of silver to ensure hygiene, and the Order's surgeons were the best trained in all Europe.

The city was taken by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 without a fight. Reduced to a few scattered land holdings and a building in Rome, the Hospitallers sought solace in the origins of their Order, returning to the strictures of their Rule. In time, with the re-emergence of their power and prestige, their property within Valleta has been returned.

## **MARIENBURG CASTLE, POLAND**

The headquarters of the Teutonic Knights in East Prussia (now Poland), Marienburg castle was originally built in 1276 under Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode as a functional fortress, its strategic importance leading it to become the headquarters of the Teutones by 1309. As the knights extended their territories and brought peace to the area, the castle "sprawled" to become a magnificent hotel for visiting noblemen and knights who wanted to take part in the Order's campaigns.

Restored to full height during the 19th century, Allied bombing reduced it to ruins during World War II. The Polish Government has returned the castle to the Teutones as a means of restoring and maintaining the historic site.

## **ROSSLYN CHAPEL, SCOTLAND**

Three miles south of Edinburgh and seven miles from the old Templar headquarters in Scotland, Balantrodach, stands the village called Rosslyn.

Perched on the edge of a gorge above the town is Rosslyn Chapel - so heavily dripping with Gothic, Nordic and Celtic carvings that it appears to be part of something greater. That was the intention. Rosslyn Chapel was originally intended to be the Lady Chapel, part of a much larger structure intended to be the greatest Cathedral in Europe. A lack of funds and a need of attention elsewhere prevented the massive work from being completed.

The interior of the chapel, which had its foundations laid in 1446, is a riot of carved images and geometric patterns. Symbols which later found popularity among the Freemasons abound. It is a chapel full of Christian - and pagan - motifs. There are dozens of carvings showing the Green Man of Celtic mythology, his wild head poking through a wide variety of foliage. On some columns, North American aloe cactus is represented - even though the Chapel was built 40 years before Columbus (in a mission sponsored by the Knights of Christ - a Templar remnant) "discovered" America. Other profuse images include those of the Temple of Solomon and the Holy Grail.

The original, incomplete design is said to represent the highest achievement of Sacred Geometry - the domain of a secret society known as the Masons. The Apprentice Pillar, an ornate column in a wing of the chapel, is a central piece of Masonic myth. The apprentice that built the masterwork is said to have been killed by his Master



- a recurring theme in Masonic theology. Above the west door of the chapel is a carved head of a young man - his head gashed on the right temple. Legend has it that this is the image of the slain apprentice.

The vaults of the cathedral contain the graves of each Baron of Rosslyn, all said to have been buried in their armor rather than a coffin.

Rosslyn Castle was destroyed in 1650 by General Monks. Only ruins now remain. Rosslyn Chapel was spared - and still stands as a monument to the philosophy of Gothic architecture.

## **NEW TEMPLE CHURCH, LONDON**

The first Temple Church in London was built about 1128. It had a house, a garden, an orchard, a cemetery and a round church of Caen stone. It was protected by a ditch and mound of earth. By 1161 it had become too small and was replaced by a larger site on the north bank of the River Thames. This sight, to become known simply as "New Temple" was consecrated in 1185 by Heraclius, the patriarch of Jerusalem.

The distinctive, circular design building is now hidden among the structures of two Inns of Court and currently serves as the lawyer's chapel. Once again in the possession of the Templars, the traditional "crossing to the bar" by London's "barristers" is still permitted.

The Temple Church contains a choir 65ft by 100ft long. At its western end is the impressive circular structure, 65ft in diameter. This is the original 12th century portion of the building.

From the buildings about the Church, the knights administered an international financial and military network - the likes of which was not to be seen again until centuries later. The Church contains effigies of knights, though they are not all `Templars. At best, they were affiliates of the Order.

Round churches are very rare: only 10 are believed to have been built in England. The shape is based on that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre - the Templars mother-house in Jerusalem.

## **CHARTRES CATHEDRAL, FRANCE**

Widely considered the architectural masterpiece of its time, Chartres Cathedral is also linked to another outstanding figure - that of St Bernard of Clairvaux. St Bernard had played a formative role in the evolution and dissemination of the Gothic architectural formula in his early days (it had been at the height of his powers in 1134 that the soaring tower of Chartres cathedral had been built).

It was he who constantly stressed the principle of Sacred Geometry which had been put into practice in the tower and throughout the wonderful building.

Bernard said "there must be no decoration, only proportion". But his eloquent sermons inspired artists to create new heights of leadlight ornamentation! It was this philosophy of harmony, proportion and balance that was the main influence on the Cathedral's architecture.

St Bernard said: "What is God. . . He is length, width, height and depth." Apparently St Bernard had a strong relationship with the Bishop of Chartres, Geoffrey, - "inspiring him with an uncommon enthusiasm for the Gothic formula and holding almost daily negotiations with the builders themselves."

Chartres had been an important Christian site since the sixth century and the central point for the cult of Madonna after being given responsibility for a veil said to have been worn by Mary when she gave birth to Jesus. In the 11th century the original church was burnt down - and its Romanesque replacement also severely damaged by fire. This shell was renewed as the first example of the ornate, upward striving style to become known as Gothic.

The north tower was completed by 1134, the south during the next two decades. The Cathedral is a vast construction, with so much sculpture on its external walls as to be confusing. Many say the sculptures contain many secrets - waiting to be decoded by those who understand "sacred geometry".

Remarkable stained glass windows, each depicting a biblical story, flood the enigmatic inner labyrinths with strange patterns of light. The tall flying buttresses which support the ceilings, pointed arches and columns all combine in an overwhelming sense of proportion and harmony.

The whole structure has been specifically designed to express religious messages - acting as a mystical "book of stone".

## **TROYES, CHAMPAGNE**

The region of Troyes, Champagne, France is of great significance to Church Knight tradition and history. The first King of Jerusalem came from here, as did most of the original nine Templars. St Bernard de Clairvaux was probably its most famous resident. The Templars were officially recognised at the Council of Troyes, and St Bernard began his campaign for the Second Crusade there. The Grail Legends originated from here in 1180 (Chretien de Troyes, Le Conte del Grail). The region is also strongly associated with the Celestial Chorus.

Just how all these places, people and events are linked is unknown - though highly suspicious. (It is the subject of the first campaign I am designing - JS)

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## **Important Personages**

"Their praiseworthy state and their memorable holiness of life attract us; they suffer heavy and unbearable labors and expenses for the extension of the faith, and have made themselves into an unbreakable wall to defend the faith against pestilential enemies of Christ"

- Chronicler Froissart, 1328, in Knights, Andrea Hopkins.

## **Order of the Temple**

**ST BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX** The most influential spiritual leader of the early 1100s was a humble monk, living in a rugged monastery of his own creation near the town of Clairvaux in southern France. Bernard of Clairvaux also happened to be the nephew of Andre de Montbard, one of the founding members of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Jerusalem (Templars).

Bernard was a slightly built man with a short brown beard. In 1126, then aged 36, Bernard appeared as frail as that of an old man. He had a chronic gastric disorder that kept him perpetually weak. Yet through this physical frailty shone a spiritual strength that caused even Popes and Kings to seek his advice.

Legend has it that before his birth, his mother dreamed that she bore a barking dog within her. A monk interpreted the dream as meaning her child would be a healer and watch-dog of the Church.

By the age of 21, Bernard had joined the monastery of Citeaux - persuading 29 others to take the vow with him and four of his five brothers. His youngest brother joined him later.

By the time Bernard was 35, the austere Citeaux monastery had grown to include three daughter-houses. Bernard was abbot of a monastery he had built-up from nothing, in an isolated valley called Absinth.

His faith was simple, direct and uncompromising. Many of his letters survive, giving a clear picture of a man totally devoted to his faith, but with love and compassion. His letters and sermons saw his reputation as a visionary spread quickly and far.

Even before 10 years as abbot had passed, Bernard had been called upon to resolve international disputes, chastise kings, advise those who asked and inspire the population to piety.

Bernard slept little, and ate minimally because of his condition. Anything less than complete worship was, to him, a waste of time. He feared no man's anger and was eminently practical in his decisions.

King Baldwin sent Montbard and Gondemare of the Templars to petition St Bernard's support for a new Militant Order. Bernard leapt upon the idea, convincing the Pope and the Holy Council of the Church Knights merit. On January 13, 1128, St Bernard addressed the assembly at Troyes cathedral - presenting the Rule of the Knights Templar which was to defend the Holy Land for almost 200 years.

St Bernard was forced by Pope Eugenius III to throw much of his reputation and status into raising the disastrous Second Crusade. He did this, despite failing health and great reluctance. After Christendom's defeat, he returned to his monastery where he composed a series of sermons which have since become literary classics.

He died at Clairvaux in 1153. By the time of his death, his monastery at Clairvaux had grown to include more than 160 affiliated daughter-houses.

**HUGH DE PAYENS OF BURGUNDY** On the death of King Baldwin in 1118, a small group of knights - veterans of the First Crusade - banded together to defend travellers and pilgrims on the roads to Jerusalem. Among the nine knights were Hugh de Payns (their leader from the lower nobility of Champagne), Geoffre de St Omer, Payen de Montdidier, Archambaud de St-Agnan, Andre de Montbard, Geoffrey Bisol, Rossal and Gondemare. The ninth member's identity is unknown. These knights had spent nearly half their lives in the east and were dedicated to securing it for Christendom.

Under the new king, Baldwin II, Hugh de Payns obtained for his new Poor knights of Christ accommodation near the Dome of the Rock - the supposed site of the Temple of Solomon. But before long they obtained a new name - the Knights of the Temple of Solomon, or simply: the Knights Templar.

In 1125, the knights received official recognition from Baldwin II who granted his new friend Hugh de Payns the title Master and Count of the Temple. By now the knights resources were increasing - no small part the cause of Hugh's negotiations with the landed gentry. In 1127 Hugh travelled from Syria to Europe (including England) in a surprisingly successful quest for funds and support.

Hugh also convinced Baldwin to write a letter of commendation to St Bernard of Clairvaux, exhorting the knights abilities and cause. The letter also called for papal recognition as an independent monastic Order - Hugh de Payns' ultimate dream.

Hugh was St Bernard's cousin, and seems to have shared his vision for a greater Christendom founded in practicality. When Hugh de Payns attended the papal court for the proclamation of the Knights monastic status, he found his cousin to be an enthusiastic supporter of his cause with a wealth of ideas for its foundation.

The idea of uniting the callings of worship and warrior turned out to be master-stroke of medieval-world public relations. In short time the knights were a recognised religious Order with gifts of land, money and service flooding in. Christendom saw the Templars as the vessel through which the boundaries of the Church could be strengthened and extended - and controlling the fighting spirit of the growing knightly class.

Hugh died in 1136 - aged about 66 - two years before his Order received the highest status on earth - being removed from the yolk of all authority other than the pope himself. Hugh had a dream - and lived to see it fulfilled

**JACQUES DE MOLAY** On the banks of the river Doubs, near one of the Templars oldest commanderies - Temple-les-Dole, is the small hamlet of Molay. Here, about 1244, Jacques de Molay - who was to become the last Grand Master of the Order - was born.

De Molay was elected 23rd and final Grand Master in a heated contest immediately after the Order was thrown out of the Holy Land. The political division evident in the elections probably contributed toward the Order's eventual downfall.

With the morale of the Order at an all-time low, its resources stretched and ranks thinned by battle, Jacques travelled to France for negotiations with Philip IV. Originally lead to expect support, this move led the Order into a carefully laid trap - contrived to remove its international power and gain its wealth for the French crown.

The degree of Jacques' competence is difficult to understand. Generally he is recognised as not being an especially intelligent man - but rather as narrow minded, critical, intolerant and conservative minded.

Upon returning the European commanderies of the Order, he strictly enforced The Rule which had become lax in these peaceful lands.

One major mistake was to deny King Philip IV honorary membership of the Order - yet another factor the King would hold in grudge. Perhaps worse, de Molay requested the French Crown repay its already overdue debt.

But the apparent surprise with which arrests were made on members of the Order may not have actually been the case. De Molay apparently had sufficient warning to remove much of the Templar's treasury from Paris and send it with the Order's entire fleet to an unknown destination. Only 500 members of the Order were arrested in all France, suggesting many others may have escaped. Many tomes of Templar records also disappeared.

Jacques de Molay and the senior commanders of the Order were arrested. After 12 days of torture, he and his officers made a full confession to the Paris university.

Later, de Molay is said to have been "astounded" when his confession was read back to him. When a cardinal envoy from pope Clement IV arrived, he and his officers revoked their confession - sparking six years of violent debate.

During this time de Molay proved to be a poor leader. He refused to answer questions of the French Inquisition - insisting the Templars were only responsible to the pope and that no earthly king held power over him.

His illiteracy and lack of legal knowledge forced him to rely upon member knights to pose a defence. One by one, these "learned knights" disappeared - killed or removed by Philip's followers. After the Order had been dissolved, Jacques de Molay and his officers were given one more chance to confess their heresy - and to serve their lives in a penitent monastery. Several knights took up the option, but de Molay and Geoffrey de Charney asserted their innocence and that of the Order.

They were dragged in chains to slow and agonising deaths, burnt at the stake.

It is said that, from the flames of his pyre, de Molay cursed pope Clement and Philip to eternal damnation - beseeching Christ himself to prove the Order's innocence.

Clement died 40 days later. Philip died within six months. The Capetian dynasty, which had ruled France for more than three centuries, endured only 14 more years.

## **Order of the Hospital**

**BROTHER GERARD OF AMALFI** Even before the First Crusade, Christian pilgrims were regular visitors of the Holy places in Jerusalem. About 1080 a small hospice was built and run by a group of Benedictine monks to provide a place of rest and succour for the steady stream of devoted travellers.

The hospital was established by a small group of merchants from an Italian shipping city known as Amalfi. Brother Gerard was also from this city, and it was he who dedicated the hospice to St John.

During the siege of Jerusalem, Brother Gerard was one of a very few Christians that were not expelled from the city. Rather, he stayed in the city to treat the civilian wounded - and covertly supplied the Crusading army with bread.

Whatever the true form of his assistance was, Brother Gerard became highly regarded by the Christian leaders - in particular Godfrey of Bouillon who became the first ruler of Jerusalem. Godfrey gifted the hospice some land for revenue, and his example was soon taken up by other supporters.

There is no doubt Brother Gerard was a good and noble man - but he was also eminently practical and a good organiser.

In 1113 Gerard rejected the Benedictine for that of St Augustine. Seven years before his death, the Papacy granted the hospice status as a fully independent monastic Order. By this time, the Hospitallers held large properties in France, Spain and Italy - each country benefiting from the Order's medical knowledge.

By the time he died in 1120, Gerard had laid the firm foundations of the Hospitallers that was to survive 800 years. His epitaph says: "Here lies Gerard, the most humble man in the East and servant of the poor. He was hospitable to all strangers, a gentle man with a courageous heart. One can judge within these walls just how good he was. Provident and active in every way, he stretched out his arms to many lands in order to obtain whatever was needed to feed his people."

**DIEUDONNE DE GOZON** In 1311, two years after the Hospitallers successfully occupied Rhodes, trouble emerged in a valley below Mt St Stephen. In the only recorded incidence of its kind, a "dragon" was preying upon the local peasantry - particularly young maidens - and wreaking havoc among livestock.

Several knights at one time or another had given battle to the "dragon", but all had lost their lives. Grand Master Fulk de Villaret gave the order that the creature was to be left alone, not wanting to loose any more promising young warriors.

However, a young knight from Provence called Dieudonne de Gozon was determined to rid Rhodes of the menace. He had a model of the creature made from the descriptions of peasants and trained his dogs to attack it. Once ready, Dieudonne rode to the valley alone and without permission. While the "dragon" was being attacked on all sides by the dogs, Dieudonne approached the creature and slew it.

He was dismissed from the Order for direct disobedience of a Grand Master's. However, great public outcry forced the Grand Master to reinstate him. From then on, Hospitaller records referred to him as "The Dragon Slayer".

Assisted by his popular acclaim among both the Rhodes population and the knights themselves, Dieudonne de Gozon was elected Grand Master in 1346.

## **Order of the Teutones**

**HERMAN VON SALZA** The Teutones did not remain a nursing order for long. Within nine years of their establishment in 1190, Pope Innocent had granted the new organisation full recognition as a Militant Order. The first Grand Master was Herman von Salza, elected to the position in 1210. By this time he had already risen to positions of prominence, most notably as ministeriale at the court of Emperor Henry VI and his son, Frederick II.

Contemporary sources attribute him with unflinching loyalty, stable judgement and political good sense. He became a close personal friend of Frederick II and was often forced to act as a mediary between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Papacy - which he managed to do without loosing the respect of either. The Order flourished under his leadership. In 1220 the Teutones boasted 12 houses in Palestine, Greece, Italy and Germany and could field some 600 military brethren. By the 1270s there were some 2000 members of the Order. He won the support of the Cistercian monks, and together both Orders represented the pillars of missionary work in the north-east,

Von Salza survived a disastrous defeat in 1216 in which the second-in-command and most of the Order's militant monks were killed.

As Grand Master, Von Salza did not see the Order's main role as being in the Holy Land - though the mother-house remained in Acre until it fell to the Mameluks. Rather, much of the Order's resources were committed to fighting pagans in Hungary and Transylvania.

Bitterly disappointed when King Andrew of Hungary reneged his promise of granting the Teutones land, Van Salza ambitiously decided to carve out the Order's own principality from among the pagan Prussians.

Van Salza was not willing to undertake such a campaign without the support of the papacy and guarantees that they would retain any land they captured. Once this support was provided, the Teutone's own great Crusade began.

In 1226 the Emperor Frederick II honored the Order by making the Hochmeister (Grand Master) and all his successors princes of the German Empire - with the right to display the Imperial Eagle on their arms. When Frederick was crowned king of Jerusalem in 1229, it was the Teutones which provided the guard of honor in the Holy Sepulchre.

The Teutones cleared the Baltic coast, driving their enemies into the wilderness, destroying heathen shrines, subduing and converting the natives at the point of their swords. It was at the height of this action, in 1239, that Von Salza died.

## **Others of Influence**

**KING PHILIP IV - "THE FAIR"** Philip IV was a king who believed his own propaganda. He was convinced his word was the word of God - that he was the absolute authority both in spiritual and earthly matters. But he was a very private and aloof man. He never revealed his inner thoughts or desires to anyone. Such was his wall of silence that one contemporary wrote of him: "He is neither a man nor a beast: he is a statue."

What is known is that he was a very handsome man of high intelligence. His apparent lack of humanity may also have been a deliberate ploy to emphasise his "divine" nature. He demonstrated repeatedly that he understood the basics of human psychology and motivation.

His advisers were among the most cunning and devious men in France - men whom Philip recognised would get the job done for their own motives, as well as his own.

Philip's need for cash prompted him to tax the Church - a move that was strongly resisted by Pope Boniface VIII. After nine years of diplomatic conflict, Boniface attempted to excommunicate Philip. The king replied by accusing the Pope of sodomy, sorcery, heresy, simony and blasphemy - and had him kidnapped, fighting the small Hospitaller and Templar bodyguard.

The people of Anagni prevented French success, freeing the Pope and offering him protection. But the 86-year-old Pope died a month later.

Benedict XI, Boniface's successor, was equally as stern against Philip. He died shortly after his ascension - a surprising and sudden onset of agonising internal pains.

In 1305, Philip applied to become a member of the Knights Templar upon the death of wife. But the Templars refused him - the secrecy of the Chapter not revealing the reason, even to Philip. About this time Philip suddenly began to support the merger of the Hospitallers and Templars into a single Order, presided over by a new position - "Bellator Rex", or warrior king. The idea was never accepted.

In November 1305, Philip gave Clement IV support in his election for the papacy.

Continued economic strife within France prompted Philip to grab money from the Jews. In a carefully pre-planned surprise action, every Jew in France was arrested, their money and property confiscated for the crown.

About the same time, Philip had twelve of his men accepted into the Order - one for each of the Templars 12 French preceptories. Clement called the Hospitaller and Templar Grand Masters to France to discuss a new crusade. The Hospitaller Grand Master declined, but Jacques de Molay responded. The trap was set, ready to be sprung at Philip's command.

Philip's masquerade continued right to the end. The morning after giving de Molay and some senior knights the honor of acting as pall-bearers at the funeral of his sister-in-law, Philip had them all arrested - denouncing them as heretics, blasphemers, usurers, traitors, sodomites and idolaters.

**POPE CLEMENT IV** The ascension of Clement IV (Bertrand de Got) to the papacy was an ill-omened one. After his coronation, He rode in procession through Lyons, with King Philip IV of France, the kings brother and another duke. As they rode, King Philip noticed a wall collapsing and reined in his horse. The wall collapsed upon the procession, narrowly missing the king. Clement was thrown from his horse, though unharmed. The duke was not so lucky, he received mortal injuries. Philip's brother, Prince Charles of Valois was also seriously injured. That Philip played a major role in Clement's election is not doubted. The extent of his influence is not known - though Clement certainly owed him "favors".

Clement, as bishop of Bordeaux, was known as a weak and greedy man, honor-bound and averse to responsibility. He hid behind his comprehensive training in Roman and Canon law. It is recorded that Clement caved in on several of Philip's demands - appointing numerous French cardinals, revoking Philip's crusader vow and rescinding the move to place France under Church edict. He resisted Philip's desire for the absolution of an excommunicated friend and the posthumous trial of Boniface.

When Philip told Clement of his plans to accuse the Templars, the pope was apparently astonished and incredulous. Clement's order for a full papal investigation may have been intended to prove such accusations ridiculous - only to be hijacked by Philip's puppet cardinals that Clement had himself appointed. Clement's confusion and uncertainty was probably the single greatest cause of the success of Philip's accusations. While initially publicly declaring his support for the Templars, he failed to act. Frightened to resist openly (remembering previously poisoned and kidnapped popes), he took a path of resistance - causing delaying and legal hurdles, but nothing definite. Finally, he was left with no choice but to dissolve the Order, or lose all credibility.

Clement died one month after Jacques de Molay and Geoffrey de Charney were burnt at the stake. Both he and Philip had been cursed from the flames - a curse that proved lethal.

# Revelations

by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)

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## Character Concepts

"The vampyre is a master of psychological manipulation. He plays upon the lust of the wretched by giving them more, so that they end up beyond redemption from vice, and in his intimate relationship with women he has the power to transform even the most virtuous into a shamelessness. But who could resist his power?"

- Vampire, a Complete Guide to the Undead, Manuela Dunn Mascetti, 1991.

## GAME PLAY

The presence of the knights is a sign that the long suffering world is fighting back. Evil is counterbalanced by good: But it is not a simple equation.

The warrior monks are restrained by the law and their religion. Vampires, whose only restrictions are the masquerade and the control of their princes, have the freedom of the lawless.

Murder, destruction, illegal activities - often involving the death of innocents - are irrelevant to the minds of Cainites.

Knights, however, cannot destroy or damage what they are sworn to protect. There is no such thing as "collateral damage" in a knights dictionary - therefore harming innocents must be avoided at all cost.

The fight against the Corrupt is not an easy one. While vampire hunters have existed throughout history, they have rarely attained a high degree of organisation or continuity.

The knights have the advantage of over a 700 years of written history - but many vampires have lived longer. Knights are mortal : vampires immortal.

This is not as big a problem as it may appear. The knights are fighting a holy war - a cause in which they wholly believe. Through their faith they no longer fear death as they believe it simply brings them closer to their God.

High standards of training and tradition ensure that knowledge is passed through the generations.



The primary quarry of the knights are vampires. While the Magi, witches and werewolves are recognised and regarded as evil, their destruction is secondary to that of a vampire. But finding a vampire is not easy. A basic purpose of the Masquerade was established to avoid the Inquisition - and the knights.

The bulk of a knight's work throughout the ages has been investigation. Tracking down tales and signs of a vampire occupies a significant amount of time. The "cleansing operation" is but the culmination of a long process.

Killing a vampire is not a simple task either. Not only must the Cainites supernatural abilities be taken into account, the action must be of minimal risk to the innocent populace. Each "cleansing operation" must be carefully planned and professionally executed. This is the cause of the high degree of military training each knight must undergo.

There are only a limited number of knights. Each Order would be hard pressed to muster more than 100 fully trained and combat capable knights at any one time. Each Order would also have about 300 Novices.

As a result, the warrior-monks will almost always be out-numbered and in a hostile environment. Knights are themselves high on the hit list. Their extensive training and holy powers are their only protection.

The knights maintain the Masquerade as it serves their own purposes. A populace living in open fear, hostile to all strangers and unusual behavior would be close to hell on earth. Publicly exposing the vampires would also reveal the existence of the Militant Orders. Any organisation with the influence and power of the Knights would attract jealousy and fear - and the tragedy of 1316 France would almost inevitably repeat itself

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## Methods

"Beowulf spoke:'Let your sorrow end! It is better for us all to avenge our friends, not mourn them forever. I promise you - she shall have no shelter, no hole to hide, no towering tree, no deep bottom of a lake where her sins may hide."  
- Beowulf

### SCIENTIFIC METHOD (Templar)

The knights of the Temple take a scientific approach, believing that technology and theories of science will ultimately lead to the defeat of vampires. This particular approach is based in the Militant Order's long history of scientific knowledge - even when many of the key theories were considered heresy by the Church.

The knights of the Temple believe God prefers mankind to use its own resources to resolve its own affairs, and created a self-contained universe. Any direct intervention on His behalf is purely a bonus. Much of the Templars resources, gathered through their contacts, the Masons, is spent on scientific research into vampire physiology and psychology. Such research has resulted in the invention of technology capable of assisting knights in the hunt: sun torches, air-compressed dart guns, weapons of aggravated damage, vampire poisons, and vampire repellents.

While this approach is largely strategic, it is considered vital in the long term war against vampires. In the field, while actually fighting against vampires, Templars adopt the Detective method - supplemented by the fruits of the Scientific approach.

### DETECTIVE METHOD (Hospitaller)

The Hospitallers have been involved in the espionage world for a long time, their status as a Sovereign nation making them particularly attractive to organisations such as the CIA, MI5, KGB etc. A derivative from this

experience is their preference for the Detective method of investigation. Using deductive reasoning and investigation, the knights of St John follow their suspicions until they are satisfied one way or another. Careful investigation of suspects include tailing and direct observation, record searches and talking to associates. Scientific and Medical elements are often utilised in the Detective approach, but generally the Hospitallers believe in getting out there and doing the job with whatever is available.

Stealth and Tracking skills (with specialities in Shadowing) are a must for trailing a vampire back to its lair. Driving skill, with the Following speciality, is good for tailing vampires to their meeting places. Security is useful for breaking into the vampires mansion once it has been located. Brawling and Melee skills are helpful if you bump into anything "nasty".

## **HEAVY FIREPOWER METHOD (Teutone)**

The Teutonic knights are rather old-fashioned in their approach, and their history is a particularly ruthless one. Scientific and Detective methods are too subtle, though sometimes useful. But to the Teutones, such scheming, behind the scenes methods are unchivalrous - they would rather take the battle straight to the Kindred, and fight out in the open. The general tactic is to hit a Kindred hard, then kill them with a stake or sword before it heals itself with blood. Such tactics work with a lot of training, and luck. One item of preference in the Teutone arsenal is the Dragonsbreath round - a shotgun cartridge that sends a jet of flame about 20 feet from the barrel (has a 6 difficulty roll to resist, affects one part of body per shot). Another item just coming into common use is an incendiary bullet. Here, the bullet itself has a magnesium base that ignites as it leaves the gun - similar to tracer.

Teutones usually have little patience. They will not wait around for slower methods to work if they can be killing vampires now.

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## **Character Creation**

The Templar whom God to a strange folk should send as head;  
Must ban all world or question of his country or home or race;  
If his subjects want their rights from him and would in his sight find grace;  
They must not ask his origin, for he must leave them straight away.  
- Parzifal, Chretien de Troyes

Before anything is put to paper, the gamer and the Storyteller must determine what type of character is being played. Is it a fully fledged Knight an experienced Novice or a new Associate of the Militant Orders? It also involves choosing which is the most appropriate Order for a character to be a member of. Is he a Templar a Teutone or a Hospitaller?

Choosing between these will provide the groundwork for a gamer's character.

Becoming an Associate Teutone would indicate he has no powers beyond the Faith rules described in Vampire: The Masquerade but has a police or military background.

A Hospitaller Novice would allow the character to obtain Piety Points and therefore use the Blessings as outlined under the Gifts - but not the Prayers or Rituals. Being a Hospitaller usually indicates a background in the clergy or medical professions.

A Knight Templar is a fully Initiated warrior-monk, blessed with high True Faith and the Holy Powers of the Blessings as granted to mankind under the Gifts, Prayers and Rituals. As a Templar, the character's background is likely to be in science or business.

## **BASE STATISTICS**

Associate: Mortal stats (see Hunters Hunted).

Novice: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 16/12/8, Background 6, Faith 1\*, Freebie 24, Virtues 8.

Knight: Attributes 8/5/4, Abilities 19/15/11, Background 7, Faith 5\*, Freebie 27, Virtues 9.

\* minimum.

## **THE ORDER:**

Choosing the character's Order is somewhat like choosing a vampire's clan. Each Order attracts particular types of characters (as outlined in the Order's Fact Sheets earlier in this volume).

The Order determines the policies a character can follow and provides specialist Blessings known only to members of that particular Order.

Associates do not have to immediately link themselves to any particular Order, though subtle pressure to do so should be applied. By the time of the Novitiate Initiation ceremony, a character must have well and truly chosen. After all, it takes the recommendation of his peers to qualify as a Novice.

## **NATURE AND DEMEANOUR:**

These are simply words to help in the description of the character. Natures and Demeanours are limited to those acceptable to monastic standards (no chance, Madonna!).

Nature is the most dominant part of a character's personality, though not the only factor that applies. It should describe the character's innermost being, feelings and beliefs.

Demeanour is what characteristics a character presents to the open world. Often it is different from true Nature and is a facade to hide insecurities or imperfections.

## **ATTRIBUTES:**

These represent the Physical, Social and Mental components which make up a character. The method of choosing these for a member of a Militant Order is exactly the same as that under Vampires.

Knights are highly trained in the physical attributes, and their minds are always being tested under conditions of combat, their areas of speciality and theological thought. As a result, the statistics for a knight are usually higher than most humans. Give them 8/5/4. Novices are on the same path but have not reached the same level of excellence and devotion. Give them 7/5/3

## **ABILITIES:**

This measures what a character has learnt during the course of his life, including Talents, Skills and Knowledge. Membership of the Militant Orders can have a significant influence on Abilities. High standards of training, education and performance are demanded if one is to succeed (and stay alive).

The measure of abilities under Abilities should reflect the specialist training that particular Novice/Knight has undergone (see chapter Combat Techniques). The statistics 19/15/11 for knights and 16/12/8 for novices reflect this intense training - but should only be interpreted as ball-park figures. As outlined below, points must be spent in specific areas of training for them to qualify as members of the Militant Orders.

Talents represent the innate skills that a person possesses, and these can be refined once identified.

All Knights must have a minimum of three dots in Brawl and Melee. With Melee four, special offensive/defensive manoeuvres become available for swordplay (See Appendix 3).

Skills are the primary areas considered for qualification as a Church Knight. Associates enter the Orders with what they have learned from the outside world. Essentially, they are established via the Mortal character creation method as outlined in Hunters Hunted. The Militant Orders have the basic requirement of giving their members the skills necessary for a chance of survival in the fight against evil. A good standard of combat training is vital. Both Novices and Knights must have completed several basic elements of training.

All Knights must have a minimum of three dots in Firearms. Knowledge is the most valuable weapon in the Cleansing Crusade. With it, no vampire is safe from exposure. Upon becoming a Novice or Knight, the Militant Orders will offer training courses in areas of the characters interest or their Order's need. Activities, such as lectures, will take place in order to increase the characters experience points - though they are "targeted" experience points which cannot be used anywhere else. This system is largely up to the Storytellers discretion - he may consider six months of full-time study necessary for Computers Three, but only a weekend session with a friend for Computers One. It is often best to build upon the Knowledges characters bring with them to the Order. Several knowledges are considered vital, and therefore all members must receive training.

### Training

The importance of getting the job done quickly, efficiently and with the minimum of fuss is vital. Too many botches can ruin the Church Knight's own masquerade, destroying any progress they have made in a particular region. Church Knights represent the Special Forces of vampire hunters, and thus must have very high standards of training in at least one major combat-related field. This is expressed through the compulsory competency in one of the following areas: Signals, Munitions, Medical and Intelligence.

	<b>SIGNALS</b>	<b>MUNITIONS</b>	<b>MEDICAL</b>	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>
<b>MAJOR</b>	Computer	Firearms	Medicine	Investigation
	Etiquette	Security	Science	Occult
	Stealth	Science	Empathy	Law
<b>MINOR</b>	Repair	Demolitions	Chemistry	Interrogation
	Cryptography	Artillery	Forensics	Criminology
	Electronics	Heavy Weapons	Biology	Law
	Security	Piloting	Psychology	Research
	Driving	Escapology	Research	Linguistics

To gain competency, a knight must be trained in either a Major Knowledge/Skill to the level of five points, or trained in two Minor Special Skills to a level of four each.

All Knights must also be fluent in Latin, therefore Linguistics one is also compulsory.

### ADVANTAGES:

**Disciplines:** These do not count under the Church Knight System.

**Backgrounds:** These work in exactly the same way as under Vampires: the Masquerade. However, the wide ranging support and resources of the Militant Orders must be taken into account.

**ALLIES** - Friends and associates who can be counted on in times of difficulty. They do not have to know of the character's status.

**CONTACTS** - The number of readily available sources of information the character has.

**FAME** - How widely the character's is known in the world. This can be area specific (such as medical science).

**INFLUENCE** - The Novice/Knights social status or political influence.

**MENTOR** - A more experienced Knight or Monk who acts as the character's personal advisor and, where possible, does what he can to assist.

**Virtues:** While Humanity may seem somewhat redundant with the addition of the Church Knight System's Piety, Faith and Grace Point mechanics - Courage, Self Control and Conscience still have a place. Piety is the measure of a Knight's behavior under their Monastic Rule. Humanity remains the same, judging how humane a character's nature is.

## **WILLPOWER:**

For Militant Characters, Willpower is equal to their Courage (like in Vampires). It can also be modified through freebie points. True Faith can be used in the place of Willpower, once all willpower has been expended. This is an expensive recourse. \*Iron Will (Hunters Hunted and Players Guide) is a Gift given to all Novices and Knights, though not Associates. As an Associate is a normal mortal, they may have this ability from previous experience - but not granted through a Militant Order.

## **HUMANITY**

Like vampires, this is determined through Conscience + Self Control.

## **TRUE FAITH:**

The intricacies of this advantage is described in the following chapters, particularly Holy Powers. However, the following synopsis is for character creation purposes. One level of Faith is the equivalent of Seven Freebie Points. Novices and knights can buy extra Faith Points with Freebie Points. To gain Faith Levels during gameplay, it will cost the Novice/Knight their current rating x3 in experience points up to level 5. For Associates, the cost will be current rating x5 in experience points thereafter.

Members of the Orders only have to increase the equation to Current Rating x 4 in experience points because of the support found within their Order and as a reward for living under holy vows.

## **PIETY POOL:**

All Novices and Knights start out with a pre-set number of Piety Points, granted during their Initiation and Investiture Ceremonies. Knights are given the maximum Piety Rating of Ten, and Novices Five. Piety represents the degree to which the character is pleasing God. A sin or thoughtless act can cause Negative Piety Checks, and a loss of Piety Points. Serious offences cause an automatic loss of Piety Points to a value proportionate to the crime. A particularly good deed can cause Positive Piety Checks and the gain of Piety Points. This system is detailed in Pious Behavior.

## **GRACE POINT POOL**

Grace Points determine how much Grace Energy the Novice or Knight is allowed to expend upon his Holy Powers. His Grace Level is directly linked to his performance under Faith and Piety. Grace Pool = Faith Level + Piety Level. This system is detailed under the chapter The Measure of Grace.

## **HOLY POWERS**

The Gifts, Prayers and Rituals of the Church Knights are not easy to come by. Rather, characters must demonstrate to their Order that they are worthy of being taught how to use such precious Blessings.

Upon the initiation of a Novice, the Order (in other words, the Storyteller) may choose to train him in Three of the Gifts. Any Gifts over and above this must be earned. Initiated Knights may be given an extra Three Blessings on top of what they have already learnt as Novices. However, Knights may also choose from among the Prayers.

Order-specific Gifts and Prayers are automatically granted to Novices and Knights and are not included among the Three choices. Rituals cannot be given in this manner. A Knight must demonstrate his worthiness and then undergo training in the particular Ritual as part of his roleplaying.

## **FREEBIE POINTS:**

These can be spent in exactly the same way as Vampire, though they cannot affect the Piety Pool or Grace Point Pool directly. Piety is a set number, while Grace Points is the sum of Piety and True Faith. Associates (mortals) can only use Freebie Points to buy one Faith Level (cost 7). Knights and Novices can buy as many as they can afford. Attributes cost 5pts, Abilities 2pts, Backgrounds 1pts, Virtues 2pts, Faith 7pts.

## **SKILLS, TRAITS & SECONDARY ABILITIES**

Usually specialities are only available for Attributes and Abilities of level Four or higher. This is not always the case among the Militant Orders.

Some special abilities are considered vital for combat. Hospitaller Novices usually have a speciality in a humanity skill such as First Aid, Templars in the Investigation fields and Teutones in combat or hunting related areas.

As members of combat teams, Knights have particularly specialised roles and abilities. See the chapter Combat Techniques for further details.

You can hold status as a Novice or Knight without any specialities, but not as a full combatant. It should be the aim of early role-play sessions to bring their Specialities up to a suitable standard - if they have decided to spend their Freebie Points elsewhere.

## **EQUIPMENT:**

Associates can spend money or own personal items. The strictures of the Code and The Rule do not affect their daily lives. Militant Orders can give them items to assist with their activities, though this is usually in the form of a loan. Novices have the right to own personal property - supplemented with Militant Order issue items. Knights are bound by The Rule not to have any personal belongings whatsoever. Everything they have is owned by their Order. Issue equipment is listed under the chapters The Rule, Combat Techniques and Uniform and Equipment.

## **QUIRKS, MERITS AND FLAWS:**

Idiosyncrasies of character can add a lot of interest to a character. But they can also be a major liability. Some Flaws may have severe effects on a Knight or Novices Piety and Faith ratings. If this is the case, the character may be required to leave the Order. Other Merits may actually assist in a characters Pious and proper behavior. The essence is appropriateness - a knight is unlikely to have the Trait Vengeance, as his motives are personal and not of Worship.

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## **Religious Powers**

"We fight for the honor of the most glorious Virgin, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the honor and defence of the Holy Church and for all the Christian faith and for the expulsion of the enemies of the Cross."

- The Trial of the Templars, Malcolm Barber

## **RELIGIOUS POWERS**

In return for the sacrifices made through taking their monastic vows, and their high faith, the knights have been blessed with "Divine Gifts". These powers are vital in the war against Corruption, as vampires are generally beyond the ability of even the best trained mortal to defeat.

However, these powers do not belong to the knight - but to God. The blessing of supernatural powers must only be used under the guidelines of the Rule - a knight cannot use them for selfish or vain purposes such as in revenge, laziness or personal profit. While some specific abilities are granted for specific purposes, they may not necessarily be carried out the same way every time. Miracles are a prime example of this. A desperate knight may beg for a miraculous obstacle to appear between him and an advancing vampire. This "barrier" could, by God's will, be anything from a wall of fire, a collapsing tree, a swarm of bees or the souls of the vampires victims.

The powers embodied in Faith assist in all aspects in the battle against the Cainites. Investigation of, protection from and combating vampires all benefit in different ways.

The piety of the followers of God is a coinage measured in Faith. The higher one's Faith the closer they stand to God. The Warriors of Christ wage a bitter war with the Damned, their most valuable weapon and their most effective shield is their Faith in their Lord. The Holiness that they receive from their beliefs grants them ever increasing Blessings which give them the ability to directly oppose the centuries old creatures that they hunt.

These powers do not belong to the knight - but to God. The Blessings must only be used under the guidelines of the Rule - a knight cannot use them for selfish or vain purposes such as in revenge, laziness or personal profit. The term "Blessings" applies to three distinctly different types of Holy Powers which are bestowed upon the Church Knights. These are, the Gifts, the Prayers, and the Rites.

### **FAITH:**

For the members of Militant Orders, Faith is not a Merit - but a blessing and attribute. You simply cannot become a knight without a Faith rating of Five or more. Novices must have a Faith of at least One. When a hunter is in dire straits, and has no more Willpower, then he can call upon the strength of his Faith. Faith points can be used as a substitute for Willpower points. When he is out of Faith, he is out of luck - except for the intervention of a miracle. Willpower can be regained within oneself, but Faith must be regenerated through the dictates of one's religion, such as charity, compassion or penance.

Always give players an idea of the enormity of their Faith. It represents something greater than them. They may direct and focus it, but its power comes from Beyond. They are not its cause, but its servants.

Vampires, in the presence of a Knight concentrating on their Faith have to make a Willpower Check v. Faith. The number of successes equals the number of steps he can move forward. The number of failures represents the steps backwards he takes, a botch results in Rotschreck.

### **Faith Ratings**

1-4 = Novices are initiate knights, with normal human abilities. They have not reached a level of Faith high enough for extra power, or initiation in the Orders. Novices are often at differing levels of experience and training. It is possible for a Novice to have a Faith of 9 - but has not completed enough training to become a Knight. Invested Novices are granted use of the Gifts.

5 = A Faith rating of greater than five indicates a true intimate connection with the supernatural. This level of Faith is the minimum acceptable for Knights. It allows Invested Knights to learn and use the Prayers and the Rituals, and also allows sensing of True Faith in other people.

6 = Cleanse the taint of evil from an area. Cause the difficulty of all reaction rolls in the area to be reduced by 1 (aura of tranquillity). Get a sign from God which inspires you (an extra point of Willpower for the remainder of the scene).

7 = Cause a vampire or psycho killer to collapse with guilt. Add three dice to any reaction rolls made toward you, even with animals. Know the correct answer to all moral, ethical questions. Bless a religious icon such as a cross, etc, so contact with the item damages supernatural beings (1 die or so per success) Get a sign from heaven which inspires the entire unit you command, resulting in an extra point of Willpower for you and your companions for the rest of the scene.

8 = Change the nature of a person for a temporary or permanent period, depending on how well you roll your Charisma + Empathy against the targets Wits + Self Control. Reduce the level of vampiric disciplines by one for every success you roll.

9 = Exorcise demons and evil spirits (Faith versus the demon's willpower). Can also lay a ghost to rest. Those with this Faith rating can leave an aura of tranquillity in an area, such as a violent slum. The residents of the area will be more moral and cooperative, old feuds will fall by the wayside, crime will drop etc. Those with this level of Faith can permanently touch the world with their Faith. Complete protection against supernatural evil is another ability, as long as you do nothing but concentrate and stand still or slowly leave with no aggressive action. Can protect others in immediate vicinity also. A powerful ability is that of causing an evil being, if truly deserving of death, to realise this; it takes at least five successes of your Faith against the targets Willpower. The target must have a Humanity of 2 or below, and must have committed truly horrible atrocities. If successful, the creature will be overcome with remorse and will either commit suicide or submit to the stake (or silver) etc.

10 = Ignore a source of damage (up to 10 dice per round) if at least five rounds are spent in preparation for the feat and a difficulty roll is made against a 9; each success removes two dice of damage. You simply refuse to believe your Faith would allow you to get hurt. Can also cleanse someone of the Embrace (difficulty 10, only in dramatic circumstances and the target must want to be saved). Call the minions of the Divine (usually in mortal form) to aid you in a dark hour.

**Crises of Faith:** Sometimes a person can lose his Faith. Doubts arise about the truth of their calling, and they begin to wonder whether religion is just a sham. Every time a hunter tries to use their Faith and comes up with two or more botches, they lose a point of Faith. For the Church Knights, it is for three or more botches. This can be regained only through the strong support of their fellows, or through further successful actions. If a knight's faith falls below level five, he must subject himself to a great deal of soul-searching. Usually, the knight will remove himself to the nearest monastery where the abbot would hear his confession, provide instruction and support in the Faith and the serene company of monks devout in their worship. Once the knight has restored his Faith to his previous highest attained level, he may leave.

**Gaining Faith:** It costs 7 freebie points to buy a level of Faith. It is the easiest Numina for a mortal to gain. Religion comes easy to humans, but not all can reap its benefits. This is what Faith power represents, a tangible clinging to religion in the face of the darkest night of the soul. It costs the hunters current rating x3 to raise Faith with experience points up to level 5, and the current rating x5 thereafter. Members of the Orders, living as they do in under a monastic Rule, remain at current rating x 3 because their vows and sacrifices make the task easier.

## **HOLY MIRACLES:**

Praying for a miracle takes one round. Roll a percentile dice. The chance of success is 2 per cent per Faith level, plus any modifiers the Storyteller decides are warranted. Success means the miracle has been granted and the event takes place. Failure means the request has not been granted. At the Storytellers discretion, positive or negative modifiers may be added. For example, if the miracle is desperately needed and of great importance to the Church, a +5 per cent or +10 per cent modifier may be appropriate. On the other hand, if the request is simply for convenience or frivolous reasons, a -5 per cent or -10 per cent modifier may apply. If a particularly spectacular or rare miracle is granted - the knight may be on the path to Sainthood (indicated by a Storyteller



defined increase in Faith Points). An increase in Faith must be granted, ranging from one point to five - once again upon the Storyteller's discretion. Praying for a miracle on consecrated ground or with the aid of a significant holy relic may provide more positive modifiers, depending on the circumstances.

## **HOLY GROUND:**

The power of Holy Ground can be tapped by the knight if called upon. The base Faith rate of the site is added to the hunter's when used to resist the Willpower of a vampire attempting to go where it is not allowed. In the case of the knights, it also adds a point to their brawl, athletics and dodge scores if engaged in combat. Most importantly, the Holy Ground's supernatural strength can supplement a knight's own Holy Powers.

While such Holy Ground Faith ratings only reflect the Faith of their patrons, some places have stored power. However, whenever those powers are used it temporarily reduces its Faith base by at least one point. The only places with a Faith rating of 10 points are the Vatican in Rome, the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca etc (essentially the centre of each major religion). Holy Ground is naturally repulsive to evil. Anything evil, such as a vampire, must make a Willpower v Holy Ground check. Invitation nullifies the repulsion.

## **RELICS:**

Holy relics, icons and blessed items are focuses of Faith. While most items serve only as conduits of the subjects own Faith, the Militant Orders have objects which are actual sources of power. Relics are not blessed objects - they are ancient and sacred items, Relics can protect against natural, human or demonic afflictions and cure disease. The presence of a Holy relic can add to the strength of Holy Ground or the Knight/Novice holding it. Once a genuine relic has been found, it must be guarded and respected. A Relic does not have to be authentic - people only have to believe it is. It is not the relic which generates the power, it is the belief the Faithful have in it. An ancient or forgotten relic may still hold True Faith Points, but once they are used the relic is a powerless object. Once, the Knights Templar had under their protection one of the greatest Relics of all time - the Turin Shroud. In fact, it is possible distorted rumors of this holy item helped lead to their downfall. (See Appendice 3 for details). Relics force the same Willpower Checks as True Faith and Holy Ground. Outcomes are the same.

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## **Pious Behavior**

"It is . . . incumbent upon all of us to consider and to choose to amend our sins by voluntary chastisement and to turn to the Lord our God with penance and works of piety; and we should first amend in ourselves what we have done wrong and then turn our attention to the treachery and malice of the enemy."

- Pope Gregory VIII, launching the Third Crusade. In *The Atlas of the Crusades*, Jonathan Riley-Smith

## **VIOLATIONS**

The Council at Troyes foresaw that not all Knights were to be Saints, and that Grand Masters would need a method of enforcing the Rule. Practical punishments ranging from small penances, humiliating acts such as eating off the floor, expulsion from the Order and perpetual imprisonment were laid down to be administered by the Order's hierarchy. At least one knight was starved to death for disobedience in the London Temple. Another was imprisoned in the Jerusalem mother-house for leading an unauthorised raid against the Saracens, and losing the lives of several knights in his troupe.

The modern application of the Rule is no different. However, the composition of the Orders is. Members must have a measure of True Faith, making serious crimes unlikely. Most offences are expected to be simply the domain of human failure - such as pride, ignorance and stupidity.

Knights or novices who abuse the powers given to them, fail to adhere to the Code or break the Rule of their monastic life may lose God's favor and the ability to use some of their Holy Powers. Loss of specific abilities are at the Storytellers discretion - but should suit the nature of the crime. Punishment does not mean loss of all powers. For example, preventing use of a particular Blessed item, Prayer or Ritual can be devastating enough. Total loss of powers should result only from serious or repeated sins.

Definitions of codes of conduct affecting knights can be found in the chapters The Rule and The Code earlier in this volume. Other binding disciplines follow in The Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Virtues.

## **PIETY POINTS**

Piety Points are a measure of a knights performance against the Seven Deadly Sin and Seven Virtue tables. It represents the strict code of conduct knights and members of any monastic organisation have to follow.

Piety Points are also a method of enforcing appropriate role-play and knightly behavior - and only applies to characters who have undergone the Novitiate Initiation ceremony or the Knight Investiture. Failure to behave Piously results in a loss of available Grace Points and, at the Storyteller's discretion, a character's ability to use particular supernatural powers. The whole idea is supposed to be that the gifted powers demand sacrifice and pain.

Measured from one to ten, a knight starts with the maximum Piety Level of Ten. Good behavior and works warrant a Positive Piety Check (Piety dice rolled, requiring a number of successes equal to that of the knights Faith rating level). If the roll of Piety dice is successful (against a Difficulty Level set by the storyteller to reflect the nature of the event), a gain in Piety Points is rewarded. (Piety Points equate available Piety dice). A Negative Piety Check is made when a knight commits a sin.

An offense may attract more than one Piety Check. If the Storyteller feels the wayward knight deserves to loose more than one Piety Point, he may demand multiple rolls - specifying the breach which warrants each Check. Otherwise, major crimes will cost the same as a minor act of thoughtlessness.

An apparent problem occurs when a knights Piety Level falls below that of his Faith. This is deliberate. As Faith Levels increase, so does the difficulty of maintaining the strict self- discipline (Piety Points) that Faith Levels demand. If you have the Faith of a saint, you must behave like a saint (The Faith rating of Nine demands a Piety Rating of Nine - allowing virtually no room for sin).

When a knight's Piety Level falls below the value of his Faith, the knight would be wracked with self-disgust, guilt and self- abasement. His powers may be reduced, and regeneration of used Grace Points suspended. The only solution is to remove himself to a place of worship, serving penance until the Storyteller determines his Piety Level has been restored to that of his Faith Level.

A Piety Level below that of the Faith Level will not allow a knight to roll Positive/Negative Piety Checks. Any Negative Piety Check his behavior incurs will automatically fail, and he looses a further Piety Point. Any Positive Piety Check his behavior causes cannot be rolled as it will not measure up to his Faith - therefore he looses the ability to restore Piety Points through his own actions.

Only Penance can restore Piety Points to the level demanded by Faith. Penance can provide one point per day of total worship. Any interruptions automatically removes that day's benefit. The Storyteller can also add specific tasks needing completion before his Piety is restored to a level no greater than his Faith. Further good works are needed before it grows higher than Faith. (See the For Example at the end of this chapter for further clarification).

If Piety falls below zero, one point of Humanity must be deducted. All powers are lost until the character returns his piety level to that of his Faith. Falling below zero represents continuous failure to live according to the vows, so suitable punishment must also originate from within the Order. This usually involves removal from combat status, an interview by a superior of at least Knight Preceptor rank and severe penance. If Piety reaches 10, no

extra benefit is obtained. However, if Piety remains at 10 for a considerable time, the Storyteller may decide to reward this excellent behavior with an extra Humanity point or Faith point.

## **HUMANITY**

Humanity points and checks are conducted in the same manner as Vampires. However, with the Church Knights there is a link to the Piety system.

The main difference with Piety is the seriousness of the offense that causes a check. Humanity is linked more to serious crimes, such as those outlined under the Ten Commandments.

When a check calls for a loss in Humanity Points, a corresponding loss of five Piety Points occurs. With any increase in Humanity, Piety is also boosted by a maximum of five. If a novice or knight has a humanity of less than five, they are immediately expelled from their Order.

## **DEFINITIONS OF CONDUCT**

Each of the following outline the rules of conduct knights and novices must adhere to. The Ten Commandments affect Humanity Checks, while the Seven Virtues and Seven Deadly Sins affect Piety Checks.

### **Ten Commandments**

First and foremost, a knight must uphold God's commandments as given to Moses at Mount Sinai. These stand above The Rule, The Code and the Seven Deadly Sins - even though they were themselves derived from the Commandments.

Any breach of the following must be dealt with the complete removal of Grace points and Piety Points. The offending knight must be banished to a remote monastery, where he must demonstrate an extraordinary degree of penance if the favor of God is to be restored to him. Many offenders end up serving Penance for life.

1. Thou shalt not have any other Gods.
2. Thou shalt not worship any idol.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor.

### **The Seven Deadly Sins**

A knight's Piety can be measured against the Seven Deadly Sins. Offences in any of these categories will cause a Negative Piety Check, with failure resulting in a drop in Piety status and incurring the penalties inherent in such a loss.

Punishment can be dealt out in several forms. Most often the offense can simply be punished through a Piety Check, with a Difficulty Level determined by the Storyteller. Serious offences can result in several Piety Checks (the number determined by the Storyteller) - and thus the potential to lose a number of valuable Piety Points.

In other cases, a knight may lose specific Gifts, Prayers or Rituals until the knight recognises the sin he committed, apologises - and then serves an equal amount of time in penance.

The appropriateness of a punishment should be determined by the nature of the sin.

#### Pride:

One of the most common offences. Becoming too enamoured with one's own powers and abilities is punishable by loss of those same blessings. Knights must remember that their powers are not their own: rather, they are blessed as being a vessel for God's will. Their success is not due to their own actions - but to God's. To frequently calling upon divine aid when simple diligence and courage would suffice is taking God's favor for granted. This is a serious form of pride - as the power's divine source has been forgotten. In every-day life, knights may also demonstrate pride through behavior including haughtiness, excessive self-satisfaction, conceit, arrogance and egoism. Apart from losing Piety Points, suitable punishment usually includes the removal of the object of pride or setting the character's ego in its place - all of which can be determined by the storyteller.

#### Covetousness:

Coveting what is not a rightful possession is a typical human failing. Covetousness is usually related to emotional matters, such as wistfully desiring something out of immediate reach (such as a Faith level of 7, instead of 5). More insidious behavior such as selfishness and avarice come under this category. Trying to use Holy Powers for one's own purposes demonstrates a severe breach of the tenets of The Rule and Faith.

#### Lust:

This has obvious connotation for Monks. Having to suppress passion is an important component of a knight's sacrifice to gain favor in the eyes of God is a vital component of reaching the status of knight, as determined by the Rule. Failing to do so results in a loss of this favor. Apart from lechery, lust includes the excess of almost any passion. Knights must demonstrate self-restraint, though there are times in which suitable demonstrations of loss, remorse, compassion etc are appropriate. In some ways lust overlaps with Covetousness and Gluttony, as all reflect unwholesome desires and urges.

#### Anger:

Vengeful violence when patience, charity, mercy and forgiveness are called for demonstrates a failure under the terms of the Rule and the Code. There is no place for unfettered rage in the Militant Orders, nor for subliminal hostility or continuous provocation.

Animosity and ire also fall under this category. Demonstrations of great self control and restraint are to be encouraged. The severity of their rage or animosity must be reflected in the Difficulty Level of any Piety Point Check - as well as the consequences of their actions.

#### Gluttony:

As a warrior-monk, self sacrifice is a basic requirement. Waste, greed and longing goes against this rule of behavior. Over consumption of an item, be it food or ammunition, is a wanton display of wastefulness. Gluttony is usually linked to acquiring material possessions and any longing desire to obtain an object. An example may be an excessive desire to own a particular weapon. Covetousness relates to matters emotional and religious.

#### Envy:

Undue jealousy over a companion knights rewards, powers or status is an insidious sin that would affect most knights at one stage or another. Such a failing can be demonstrated through spiteful behavior, rivalry and begrudging respect. Knights should be made to understand that God's favor is demonstrated to different people differently. Humility is a key virtue if a warrior-monk is to remain pious. Piety check's should be accompanied with a role-play rebuttal or other suitable punishment.

#### Sloth:

Avoiding the instructions and duties of one's Order is a serious offense. Any body of knights is only as strong as its weakest link. If a knight avoids his designated chores, punishment can be doled out by his comrades according to the Rule. Carelessness, Apathy, passivity, lethargy, failure to take appropriate action - all are sins under the banner of Sloth. Avoiding serious events - such as battle - will result in loss of all Piety Points and trial before a Chapter of Knights.

## REWARDS

### The Seven Virtues

While Piety can be lost, so can it be gained. Knights striving to increase their favor in the eyes of God can, through the following Virtues, gain status - and therefore power. A good demonstration of any Virtues will call for a Positive Piety Check. If the roll succeeds, an extra piety point is gained. However, if a knight's Piety Level is below that of his Faith Level, only Penance can restore lost Piety Points.

#### Faith:

A knight must demonstrate faith (as reflected in the Faith points system) that his God will look over his actions and protect his soul. If a knight hesitates overmuch when planning to use a Holy Power because he fears a major botch, then he is demonstrating a lack of assurance in God's word. However, when succeeding in a roll which has a high probability of failure, rewarding his faith with a Piety Point would be appropriate.

The knight must demonstrate a sureness in his belief in his everyday behavior, a certainty that the Divinity does exist and an unshakeable belief in God's favor, under whatever circumstances.

#### Hope:

An inherent optimism about the fate of God's children on earth needs to be demonstrated. Allowing oneself to become despondent and fall into despair over the power of evil shows a lack of hope. A knight lives in expectancy of revelations of God's will and favor - this is why the success of miracles result in an immediate boosts to the Faith level. Through hope, attributes such as trust and confidence are spawned. Continuous examples of a hopeful attitude (though not over-optimism) should be rewarded with Piety Points, though despair has an opposite effect.

#### Charity:

As reflected in The Rule and The Code, a generosity of spirit is required to make a knight's worship complete. Along with the more obvious "giving" aspect of charity, behavior such as benevolence, compassion and tolerance are vital elements of this most wide-reaching virtue. On-going displays of such behavior should be rewarded through Piety Points. Thoughtlessness or deliberate acts of nastiness ought to be punished.

#### Justice:

Justice is the demonstration of fairness and equity in the judgements made in everyday life. But for a knight it goes beyond this narrow definition. Natural justice can also be affected by a knight's own integrity and uprightness. If a knight lies or conceals the truth, he is committing an injustice. This can pose interesting dilemmas - sometimes the truth is not the best thing to say!

#### Fortitude:

This relates to a knight's steadfast resolve to see God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Despite the hurdles encountered, a knight must demonstrate tenacity and determination to get the job done. Such perseverance should be rewarded: giving up to easy, punished.

#### Prudence:

Demonstrating a high degree of common-sense and forethought can save a knight from a lot of trouble - even if things go wrong.

Cautious calculation shows a knight is taking everything he can into account before an action is taken or a decision is made. If a decision turns out to be wrong, and the knight has acted prudently, then he should not be punished for the event. If it goes wrong because of a lack of consideration and judgement - a Negative Piety Check must be made.

#### Temperance:

Knights must be humble, seeking Holy Powers only when necessary and to serve the needs of the Order and the Church. By sincerely striving to avoid using their Holy Powers, knights can gain favor in the eyes of the Lord. This demonstrates a strong respect for his religion and a regard for his God's desire to limit intervention upon this earth.

But Temperance goes beyond use of powers. A knight must demonstrate the virtues of humility, self control, abstinence and modesty in all their behavior. Clear-cut examples of such behavior, or merely a string of good performance, can be rewarded by the Storyteller by granting a Positive Piety Check.

## **PENANCE**

Knights who lose the benefits of their Faith or Piety may make a penance to regain them. The remorseful knight must seek solitude, such as a church or monastery, and devote himself to meditation, study and private prayer - begging forgiveness with a humble heart. Penance includes publicly announcing to all companion knights the nature of his sin, and explaining what will be done to prevent such an offense occurring again.

Correcting one's actions can be an important prelude to Penance - though not always necessary. If a knight sins by punching a hole in the wall in frustration after a vampire escapes, the Storyteller may require the knight pays for and organises the repair. (To make this even more demanding, the Storyteller does not have to tell the knight what it is he has to do before his Penance takes effect - let him figure it out for himself. Never forget, True Faith makes harsh demands upon its subjects.)

**Piety:** Piety can be gained or restored through a Piety Check when a knight displays an act of one of the Seven Virtues. A Positive Piety Check (Piety Points rolled with a Difficulty Level determined by the Storyteller against a Faith Level number of successes) can reward the knight with an extra Piety Point. If the Positive Piety Check fails, he simply gains no benefit.

However, if Piety Points have fallen below the total number of Faith Points the benefits of the Virtues cannot be gained (Not to mention, its impossible to roll Six Successes with only Five Dice!). In this situation, only Penance can restore lost Piety.

Penance will restore one Piety Point per day - only if it is under conditions of true repentance in uninterrupted prayer, usually conducted in a monastery or another private place of worship. Interruptions automatically removes the Piety Point that day's worship was intended to restore - so it is best to leave a penitent knight alone.

Serious or repeated offences may extend the period of penance and can result in permanent loss of powers. The Storyteller may also give a knight a particular task to complete before penance is granted such as correcting a wrong he has committed, a worthy act of charity or a simple apology.

Penance cannot restore Piety to a level greater than Faith. Further good works outside of Penance are needed before Piety grows higher than Faith.

**Faith:** Loss of Faith is in some ways more severe than a loss of Piety. It represents a measured loss of belief, trust and adoration of God. Therefore, restoring a lost Faith Point is a much more difficult task. However, restoring a lost Level is not as hard as gaining new Faith Points. Thus a knight can undergo penance to restore the lost Faith - and not wait until he has sufficient Experience Points to re-purchase a level. Penance of Faith will require Faith x 2 weeks of prayer and charity. The Storyteller may, however, require a clear act of belief and faith in one's God before returning his Faith Level's Holy Powers. These restored Faith Levels cannot surpass the highest Faith Levels previously obtained.

**Humanity:** Penance cannot restore Humanity levels.

{For example: A Templar Knight Captain is running through a garden party in hot pursuit of his quarry. Instead of dodging past a group of young ladies, he decides to barge on through. This action causes one of the young debutantes to fall in a pond, ruining the dress she could not really afford and severely embarrassing her in front of her male friends. This action - Sloth - warrants a Negative Piety Check: he could easily have attempted a dodge. (If he had bothered to do the right thing, it would have automatically negated the need for a Negative Piety Check - even if he failed the dodge - as the accident was no longer a case of Sloth.) The Knight Captain has a Faith Rating of Five and a Piety Rating of Five. The Storyteller gauges the severity of the offense at a value of Three (out of a maximum of 10). Therefore, the Knight Captain must roll Five Successes (Faith Rating) greater than Three (Difficulty Level) with his Piety Dice (in this case, Five) in order to avoid losing a Piety Point. The Knight Captain fails the check, and must lose a Piety Point - reducing him to Piety Four. This new Piety Level is one point below that acceptable to his Faith Level of Five. His guilt and self-admonishment would prevent him from receiving the benefits of any Positive Piety Check and automatically cause him to fail any further Piety Checks. The Templar removes himself to a chapel for a day of prayer and repentance. However, at the end of that day he still feels remorseful (his Piety has not been restored - as it should). He realises the only

way to satisfy his guilt is to find the debutante, apologise to her and pay her the cost of the spoiled dress. After two days of searching and obtaining a blushing acceptance of his apology, the Templar once again feels the comfort and security of Gods favor return (thus, Piety Points are restored to the Level of his Faith). Now, he can once again serve as an effective member of the Militant Orders.}

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## The Measure of Grace

"Non nobis Dominie, non nobis, sed nomine tuo, da gloriam. Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

- Templar motto, recorded at the Council of Troyes, 1128

The measure of Grace is the yard-stick against which a knight's Holy Powers can be measured. Grace is the sum of Faith + Piety. Both Faith and Piety are fluid ratings which can be affected by performance and behavior. Thus, a knights actions can influence his spiritual strength.

A knight who breaks The Rule or one of the Seven Deadly Sins must undergo a Piety Check. If the check fails, and he loses a rating of Piety, he also loses a point of Grace.

{For example: A Teutone sergeant with a Faith rating of six and a Piety level of seven has a Grace rating of 13. During the course of his investigations, the knight is curt and rude to a drunken hermit begging for money. This is an un-charitous act and calls for a single Piety Check (against Faith rating). Upon failing the Piety check, he loses one Piety Point. This reduces the sum of Faith and Piety by one - thus reducing his amount of available Grace Points. This loss of Grace Points will affect the total amount he can expend upon the Gifts, Prayers and Rituals. A loss of Piety to below one calls for serious disciplining. The aberrant knight must be banished to a monastery and stripped of his rank until he proves he has atoned for his sins.}

A loss of Faith points has a similar effect. A knight who botches a major prayer twice or more in succession must lose a point of Faith. This, of course, also reduces the number of Grace points available. But more importantly, it also reduces the number of Gifts, Prayers and Rituals the knight can select from (Holy Powers can be tied to Faith Levels). A knight whose Faith falls below Five must seek instruction from an Abbot and seclude himself in a monastery until his Faith returns. His ability to use Prayers and Rituals is also stripped away, though the Gifts remain until he has no more Faith.

## EXPENDITURE

Grace points are the measure of the blessings conferred upon a knight, translating to game players as how many points are available to be expended as Prayers, Gifts and Rituals. As the sum of Faith and Piety, the pool of available Grace points is strongly linked to a knights behavior and belief.

This way, their powers and behavior cannot be taken for granted. A knight must remember always that he is not only a warrior - but also a monk.

The T rating before a Gift, Prayer or Ritual designates the number of Faith Levels required before that Holy Power becomes available. The numerical rating (say, 7) specifies what number of Grace Points must be expended to initiate the Holy Power. Thus a TTT Prayer (5) would reduce the total immediately available Grace Points from 13 to 8 (However, he must have a Faith Rating of at least 3 before he can attempt the action). Using a Holy Power does not affect the Faith or Piety scores. Grace points can be expended until there are none, and the knight must retire for private prayer to allow regeneration of his Grace points.

If a knight is low on Grace points, is in a desperate situation and needs to call upon a Prayer with a higher requirement of Grace than he currently has - he may call upon a miracle. The chance of success is 2 per cent per Faith level, plus any modifiers the Storyteller decides are warranted. (As per the Miracle rules in the chapter

Religious Powers). A successful miracle will have an unpredictable end result - as it will be an act of God - as well as raise Faith by one Level.

## **HOLY GROUND AND RELICS**

The True Faith Rating ascribed to Holy Ground and Relics can be added to a knight's Grace Point Score (Faith+Holy Ground + Piety). It has no effect on Piety Checks or the Holy Powers directly linked to a knight's individual Faith Level - it only supplements the powers of The Gifts, Prayers and Rituals. Once a Ritual, Gift or Prayer is used, taking advantage of the Holy Grounds Faith Rating, the Holy Ground must lose one level of Faith. If the object is no longer a focus of community worship, it will lose one Faith Level, per knight, per time it is used. Places of living Worship can regenerate their Holy Ground rating after a major service is conducted there (such as Sunday Mass). The moral of the story is not to attack a Church Knight on his own ground.

{For example: A Hospitaller Knight Sergeant is all that remains of an ambushed combat team sent into what appeared to be an abandoned country town. Fleeing for his life, he seeks refuge in the ruins of a church. This had been a very pious community before degradation had made living in the area untenable. As a result, the ruined church has a Holy Place rating of Three. The Knight Sergeant, his own Faith rating being Five and his Piety Six, can add the Holy Ground rating of Three to his available Grace Points (Faith + Holy Ground + Piety = expanded Grace Points). Thus the knight is given greater strength with which to defend himself. However, the knight's excessive fear warrants a Negative Piety Check. The Faith Level of the Holy Ground has no effect on the knight's personal relationship with God, therefore it must be Six Piety Dice rolled against a Storyteller determined Target with Five Faith Level successes needed. The young knight succeeds the Check. Seeing a vampire approaching and successfully struggling against the affects Holy Ground, the Knight Sergeant jumps up - determined to sell his life dearly. He yells his war cry "Christi Imperat" (using the Word of Power Gift which costs 3 Grace Points). This reduces his available Grace Point pool from 14 (Faith Five+ Holy Ground Three + Piety Six) to 11. The Word of Power requires a Charisma & Faith versus the vampire's Humanity as the target roll. The Holy Ground's Faith Rating must be added to the Knight's Faith Level for this action (Charisma Three, Faith Level Five, Holy Ground Three versus vampire Humanity Target Six). His cry succeeds in frightening the vampire, causing the creature to make a Rotschreck Check. The Check must use the knight's Faith plus the Holy Ground's rating as the level of difficulty (thus, Eight) under the p199 Vampires Rotschreck difficulty table. In this case, the effect on the vampire is similar to that of being exposed to direct sunlight. The vampire flees in a raging state of panic. Round one to the Knight Sergeant. However, the abandoned church's Holy Ground rating has been reduced to Level Two.}

## **REGENERATION**

Grace Points return to the Faith + Prayer sum total at the rate of one Grace Point per hour of worship or meditation. Thus, a knight with Faith Five and Piety Eight would need 13 hours of quiet meditation if all 13 Grace Points were expended. If only one or two points have been used, these can be restored during the normal morning and evening prayers. If the knight is resting on Holy Ground, the location's Faith Rating acts as an automatic boost - giving them an initial surge of Grace Points equal to the site's Faith Level.

## **Granting the Blessings**

"Ere the moon has climbed the mountain, ere the rocks are ribbed with light,  
When the downward-dipping tails are dank and drear.  
Comes a breathing hard behind thee, snuffle-snuffle through the night,  
It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear!"

- The Song of the Little Hunter, Kipling

The ability to use the Blessings is directly tied to one's Faith, as shown through the links with Piety and Grace Points. Many powers also only come available once a Knight has gained a particular level of Faith - demonstrating the necessary degree of understanding and acceptance of God's will.



But these Blessings are not granted without effort upon the Novice/Knights behalf.

Novices, during the lead-up to their Initiation, are taught Three of the Gifts by their superiors. Which of the Gifts these Three are is determined by the Chapter, based on what will serve the Order the most and what Faith Level the Novice has. Once the Novice has been Initiated, he is then taken away and taught in secret the Order's own particular Gifts.

Knights, during their Investiture Ceremony, receive instruction on a further Three Blessings. These are once again chosen by the Chapter, and can be a mix of both Gifts and Prayers - limited only by the Knights own Faith Level.

Once a Knight or Novice earns a Faith Level in game-play, they become eligible to learn more of the Gifts or Prayers. The supplicant must approach the leader of his Chapter, usually a Knight Preceptor, petitioning him for the honor of further theological training in the nature of the Blessings. If granted, the Novice or Knight is usually sent to an out-of-the-way monestary to study the ancient Canons of the Order. Whether the supplicant learns the new powers or not is determined by a dice roll.

Take the Faith Level of the Blessing and use this to represent the number of months necessary to learn the ability. The character must then make an Intelligence + Occult roll v the Blessings Faith Level. The number of successes represents how many weeks may be taken off the study time.

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## The Gifts

"Instinctively I moved forward with a protective impulse, holding the Crucifix and Wafer in my left hand. I felt a mighty power fly along my arm, and it was without surprise that I saw the monster cower back. . . "  
- Bram Stoker, Dracula.

## THE GIFTS

These are abilities that Knights are able to call upon at any time, they are generally boons which allow the Knight to be aware of and deal with the Supernatural forces of Darkness. Gifts apply to all members of the Militant Orders at all times.

Any member, be he novice or knight, is given these abilities as a sign of Gods favor. The strength of many abilities do vary with Faith, and others may only be granted with particular Faith ratings. But they are still Gifts.

Expenditure of Grace Points is often required - though not always. Sometimes the warrior's Faith is all that he needs to empower his Will or Word with an ability. These are the only supernatural powers that a Novice has access to. Only Investiture as a Knight gives a character the status to learn the Prayers and Rituals.

All of the powers outlined under White Wolf's Faith Table system are regarded as Gifts. Gifts are enacted at will, and a maximum of two Gifts can be used per turn.

## General

Bless. (3pts + 1pt per Willpower expended)

A knight may use this power to strengthen another mortal's will or body. It cannot be used upon oneself. With the expenditure of Willpower the knight can ask for the following blessings. It must not be forgotten that a knight's blessing is but a channel of God's will. If the prayer is made in frivolous or unnecessary circumstances, it will not be granted. Willpower and Grace point expenditure still occurs, however.

T At the cost of one Willpower the knight may grant one Willpower for an hour.

TTT: At the cost of one Willpower the knight may grant one Willpower for a day.

TTTTT: At the cost of one Willpower the knight may grant one Willpower permanently.

TTTTTT: At the cost of three Willpower the knight may raise one attribute by one dot for one hour (this can raise an attribute over five).

TTTTTTT: At the cost of three Willpower the knight may raise one attribute by one dot for one day.

TTTTTTTT: At the cost of three Willpower the knight may raise one attributes by one dot for one month.

TTTTTTTTTT: At the cost of five Willpower the knight may raise a mortal's attributes by any amount with an effect for up to one day.

Bless is restricted to one use per individual per day.

Danger Sense: (0) By Jamie Seidel

Each occurrence of this power is a direct gift from God. The knight's Faith Level determines how much information he can extract from the warning - usually given in the form of a brief vision or a voice in one's head. A knight must roll Perception + Alertness if he is to comprehend the interruption of his thoughts.

TT Detect danger - imminent and in vicinity.

TTT Detect danger direction - imminent and in vicinity

TTTTT Detect danger degree - imminent and vicinity.

TTTTTT Detect nature of danger - can be distant.

TTTTTTTT Predict danger - not near or imminent.

Light of Truth: (5) By Simon Miles

This power allows the knight to generate a small sphere of pure white light that will hover above his head for the remainder of the scene, or until willed to disappear. The light has a number of effects, depending upon the Faith of the knight and the nature of the viewer.

T Simple Illumination

TTT Illumination. Vampires find the light unpleasant. Faithful find the light comforting. Dispells Obfuscate one.

TTTTT Vampires will flee unless they make a humanity roll (difficulty is Faith level). Ghouls find the light unpleasant. Dispells obfuscate three.

TTTTTTTTT Vampires as above but attacks are at -1 dice. Ghouls as Vampires above. Wraith's will flee unless they make a willpower roll (difficulty is Piety level). Dispells obfuscate five.

Pain Block: By John Snead and Sarah Link (1pt per level of damage)

You can overcome pain through force of will. You may ignore the die penalties to actions from taking damage to the Hurt or Injured wound level. The damage from wounds greater than this is unaffected as it represents loss of bodily capacity due to injury.

The damage is still there, only the effects are temporarily removed.

Faith 1-5: Ignore non-aggravated damage from hurt (if Faith One) to crippled (if Faith Five).

Faith 6-10: Ignore all non aggravated damage, plus one level of aggravated damage (if Faith Six) to five levels of aggravated damage (if Faith 10).

T Wakefulness: (2) By John Snead and Sarah Link

You can remain awake without penalty for extended periods of time. To remain awake an additional 24 hours you must make a Willpower roll with a difficulty level of 6. Each additional day awake requires another Willpower roll, with the difficulty level increased by two each day. It is impossible to stay awake more than 3 additional days with this ability. If this roll is failed you must sleep within an hour, if you botch you must sleep within 1 turn.

TT Battle-Cry: (4) By Jamie Seidel

By reciting a word of particular significance (such as a battle cry), a vampire can be forced to make a Rotreschreck check. For Templars this word is likely to be "Bauseant!" (For Glory), the Teutones "Desperta ferre!" (Iron Awake) and the Hospitallers "Christi Imperat" (Christ Rules!). Using this power the knight is required to roll Charisma & Faith versus the vampire's Humanity as the target roll. A success causes the vampire to make a Rotreschreck check (using the Courage Roll Chart with a difficulty equal to the knights Faith Level, p 199 Vampire). No willpower can be expended to save vs Battle-Cry.

TT Hide Mind: (4) By John Snead and Sarah Link

Your mind has been finely tuned through your religious instruction. Your perception of the spiritual plane allows you to hide your mind from probing. A successful roll of Wits+Subterfuge will hide your mind from all forms of magical, psychic, and supernatural probing. This ability may be used at will and at the first inkling that probing may be going on. If the block is successful, anyone who knows of your location (such as someone who can see you) will notice a blank where your mind should be. A determined effort to probe further they must succeed in a roll of Perception+Subterfuge vs your Wits+Subterfuge.

TTT Heightened Senses: (5)

Equivalent to the Vampiric Discipline Auspex Level One, except that this Power does not allow you to see through vampiric Obfuscate (Vampire page 93). This Power is useable at will but does not include the Auspex danger sense ability.

TTT Holy Armour (4) By Chris Plaice

By concentrating for a round, a Novice is able to charge his/her armour with his/her faith. This effectively adds 2 points to the armour rating without penalty to Dexterity. Note. The user must be wearing armour and in a combat situation for this power to work. It lasts for one "bout" of combat.

TTT Self-Healing: (6) By John Snead and Sarah Link

This ability may be used once a day. You must Meditate quietly for at least 15 minutes, and then may make a Stamina+Medicine or First Aid roll, with a level of difficulty equal to the number of body levels you have lost+2. Each success achieved on this roll restores one health level. These levels return at a rate of one per turn after the meditation is over. This only applies to non-aggravated wounds and if the character rests one turn per wound level.

TTTT Sword of Light (4) By Chris Plaice

The Novice/Knight channels his power into his sword causing it to glow with an eerie cold flame. This flame causes aggravated wounds to enemies of the wielder. Friends are not effected by flame or sword while this power is active. The user must have the sword in hand and be in a combat situation to use this power. It lasts for one "bout" of combat.

## **Order Specific: TEMPLARS:**

T Eidetic Memory: (2)

(Equivalent to the 2 point Merit, The Werewolf Players Guide, page 19). This power is only activated when the Knight specifies they wish to do so.

TT Visions (0) By Jamie Seidel

A character can see flashes of events around him while he is asleep or deep relaxation - such as prayer. These perceptions are in the form of visions, full of images of events and things that may affect the knight. However, they are often hard to interpret. The knight may dream about any event that may have a serious impact on their existence - at the storyteller's discretion. Each level of Faith the knight has represents one specific fact he can glean from the vision.

TTT Sign of Power: (3) By John Snead and Sarah Link

By making a specific and complex sign with your hands you can cause any opponent to be stunned for the next full turn. You roll Manipulation+Intimidation with a level of difficulty equal to your target's Willpower. If you succeed your target is stunned, if you fail they are unaffected. Using this ability costs one Willpower point per target you are attempting to affect with a single action, and it can only be used successfully once a scene on a given target.

It can only be used if the target is within 5 yards, is looking at you, and can see your hands. Non-targeted observers are unaffected. However, the Sign's effects are very subtle, and if your target or any observers fail a Perception+Alertness roll (difficulty 7) they will be unaware that you did anything and are unaffected by the sign. If he succeeds the Perception + Alertness roll, he is stunned.

## **Order Specific: TEUTONES:**

TTT Hounding: (5) By John Snead and Sarah Link

If you are following a target (which can be either an individual or an object and) can make a Perception+ Alertness roll with a difficulty level equal to 8 each success allows you know in what direction the target is, an (very) roughly how far away for 6 hours, even if you cannot perceive the target at the time. Once this ability has worn off to use it again you must again have the target in sight. This ability only works on beings who are human, part human (like Garou), or once were human (like Vampires).

TTTT Stunning Touch: (7)

You are taught special pressure points and methods of non-lethal combat. If you can either strike a hand to hand blow which does damage before soak is rolled, or touch your target on the skin, you may make a Perception+ Medicine roll vs their Stamina+Dodge. One or two successes when touching a limb will paralyse the limb you touch for the rest of the scene, three or more successes touching the target anywhere allows you to totally paralyse your target for the entire scene. Using this ability costs one Willpower point.

## **Order Specific: HOSPITALLERS:**

TTT Intervene (4) By Jamie Seidel

The character has the ability to intervene in an aspect of a subjects life. A wayward son who is drinking too much can be spoken to - and he will listen! The final act of will remains the subjects. System: Roll Manipulation + Empathy against the target's Willpower.

TT Clear Sighted: (2)

(Equivalent to the 3 point merit, The Hunters Hunted, page 61).

TT Glow of the Kindred (4) By Deird'Re Brooks

All Kindred within the character's line of sight glow with a pale light - even if Obfuscated. System: Upon concentration, Roll Perception + Empathy against a 6.

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## **The Prayers**

For we brethren of the Rosie Crosse, We have the Mason word, and second sight, Things for to come we can foretell aright . . .

- The Muses Threnodie, Henry Adomsan, 1638.

## **THE PRAYERS**

Sacred formalised beseechments of God's intervention on this earth. Each of these Holy Prayers call for a specific power. If the supplicant has a great enough Faith, sufficient Grace Points and their need is just and true, then the Prayer will be answered and the Blessing granted.

Only one Prayer can be used per turn, with no Gifts (even with God's Speed)

Prayers are only available to Invested knights of the Orders. Novices are restricted to the Gifts.

## **General**

TTTTT Exorcism (5) By Simon Miles

This prayer allows a knight to break a Wraith's Fetters, dispelling them from the physical plane. This is done by Faith v Wraith's Willpower. Each success reduces the Wraith's Fetters by one.

### TTTTT Fear of God (3)

Over time an individual may be instilled with the fear of God - though not necessarily faith. A knight may instill fear in a ghoul or corrupt mortal, insuring assistance in investigations and infiltration of Kindred society. Fear of God does not apply immediately, but time increases effectiveness and reliability. The knight must roll Charisma + Leadership (difficulty target's Willpower). Installing fear takes time, the amount of which is determined by the Storyteller. Typically, the number of successes must amount to between five to 10 times the subjects self-control before complete success is achieved. Only role playing reveals the extent of success.

### TTTTT Resist Magic: (5) John Snead and Sarah Link

If you spend one Willpower point, and make a Stamina+Occult roll with a level of difficulty equal to the level of the spell, ritual or Thaumaturgical path+2 You may instantly cancel the effect of any magic directed against you or anyone or anything you are directly touching.

### TTTTT Shatter Bonds (5) By Deird'Re Brooks

Surgically obliterates any bonds the Knight desires to remove. Emotional ties, Dominate, Presence, etc. This effect is permanent. A Blood Bond could be weakened by this effect, but only temporarily (any number of successes will only cause the loss of 1 blood bond). System: Roll Manipulation + Leadership against the target's Willpower. Each success removes one emotional tie, mystical control or other item of emotional attachment.

### TTTTTT Aura Enhancement (5)

The grace of God allows the astral auras of other being to be perceived, indicating their moods, identities and levels of hostility. This power also allows the recognition of people with True Faith, vampires and lupines. Experienced uses of aura can even recognise mortals such as the Magi and witches through the patterns of their aura.

Like the vampire Auspex Aura Perception, a knight must make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 7). The Storyteller may do the roll openly or concealed. Each success indicates how much of an aura is seen and understood. A both indicates misleading information.

1 success Can only distinguish the shade (pale or bright)

2 successes Can distinguish color

3 successes Patterns can be recognised

4 successes Subtle shifts can be detected

5 successes Can interpret all auras.

Use the Vampire © Aura Colors chart (p159) for details.

### TTTTTT Forgive Ghoul (7) By Jamie Seidel

At this level of absolution, a knight may break the hold of a vampire's blood over a ghoul whether they desire it or not. Use a faith v willpower roll. The mortal, once free of the powers of vampiric blood, may make up their own mind as to their future. If the ex-ghoul deliberately seeks out its previous master, it is damned.

### TTTTTT God's Speed (5)

The old blessing "God Speed" given to departing friends has meaning to knights. This blessing is specifically to counter the celerity of vampires - a power which gives them great advantage over most mortals. Like celerity, a knight may perform extra actions in a turn without penalty. One extra action is allowed, and the entire dice pool can be used for each action.

Unlike vampires, a knight must spend half-an-hour in prayer before using heightened speed. After the prayer, a knight can wait up to six hours before God's Speed expires. Because God's Speed is an act of faith, it will draw the equivalent of one faith point per turn it is used.

Thus a knight with faith 7 can use it for 7 turns. The knights inherent level of Faith remains - but Grace Points have been consumed.

### TTTTTT Spiritual Savior (10) By Jamie Seidel

Here a knight can potentially save a repentant vampire's soul, but not its body. Many vampires with high humanities would willingly die to escape what they have become. This drive is the basis for the search for Golconda, but the knights offer an alternative. The vampire will be dealt with humanely, killed in a method as

painless as possible with great respect. Upon death, only the vampire's mortal life will be considered upon judgement day.

TTTTTTT Tongues: (15) By John Snead and Sarah Link

This ritual allows the Knight to be able to speak any single language for the duration of the prayer. The duration of the spell as rolled for the duration ability. It takes 10 minutes to cast, and uses one Willpower point.

TTTTTTTT No Past (10) By Deird'Re Brooks

The character leaves no traces for Psychometry to read. The only information available is that the item was held by a mortal. This ability extends to other means of viewing past events, such as higher Auspex levels or magic or other similar means. System: The Knight rolls Manipulation + Stealth. If a Kindred with Auspex 9 or better handles the object, she rolls her Perception + Empathy and must exceed the user's successes.

## **Order Specific TEMPLARS**

Psychometry (12)

Through touching an object a knight may sense information regarding a person, place or event - as long as that object bears some importance to the subject. Perception + Empathy can be rolled with a difficulty of 8. A botch indicates a false reading occurs, although the character believes it was correct.

TTTTT You get a vague impression of recent activities involving strong emotions involving the object or occurring in its immediate vicinity.

TTTTTT In addition to the above, a snapshot quality image of the subject can be seen in the minds eye.

TTTTTTTT You can understand what the event was about and the number of people involved. If concentrating on the objects owner, information about the subject (such as age, emotional state, personality etc) can be gleaned.

TTTTTTTTT You can clearly visualise the event or the actions of the individual for the past 24 hours he was near the object.

TTTTTTTTTT You can understand the context and unspoken goings-on at the event and gain a clear insight into motives and plans of an individual the last time they were near the object. Also get a reflection of the individuals current location.

TTTTTT Inspire Obedience (4)

While holding eye-contact, a knight may clearly instruct a subject on a task. Complicated suggestions can be made, with either an event or a word acting as a trigger to spur action. Careful wording is vital, as the character will try to distort the spirit of the command if possible. For example, a knight may "suggest" an aggravated boyfriend should leave the room for half an hour. The suggestion cannot force a subject to do something against their innate nature. Only one suggestion can be made at a time.

A knight must roll Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty is Willpower of target). The number of successes determines how well the suggestion is implanted. Less than three suggestions would prevent a strange-seeming command being carried out. Less than five successes results in a successful suggestion, unless it would harm the subject. At five successes, almost any command would be obeyed.

## **Order Specific TEUTONES**

TTTTT God's Strength (5)

This blessing has only been granted to the Teutonic Order. It allows superior strength and physical coordination. It allows knights to oppose vampires with Potence in physical combat on equal terms. Strength and ability in weight lifting, running, jumping and force are enhanced. A knight's rating in God's Strength provides automatic successes on nearly any Strength Roll. In melee and brawling combat, the automatic successes count on the damage roll. The Prayers lasts for the scene, or 15 minutes.

TTTTTTTT Heroic Action: (15) John Snead Sarah Link

This ability allows you to raise any relevant attribute to superhuman levels (equivalent to an attribute of 8 as defined in A World of Darkness: Mummy, pages 27-29) for the purpose of accomplishing a specific extended action. Examples of actions are: "rescue the people from this burning building", "destroy the opponent I am now

fighting", "convince this crowd to take action (whatever action you persuade them to take)", "find any computer record of this woman". You can perform no other action until your Heroic Action is complete (if forced to interrupt a Heroic Action, the attribute enhancement does not apply to the performance of any other actions). This ability can only be used when the desired action can be attempted immediately. To perform a Heroic Action, you must spend all Will power points but one. The enhancement lasts as long as is necessary to complete the action, but for no longer than one scene. When the action is complete, you must roll your one remaining Will power die against a difficulty level of 8 to remain conscious.

## **Order Specific HOSPITALLERS**

### **Healing Hands.**

This is an extremely important blessing, considering knights and novices are mortals. While the blessings of God's Gifts and Prayers assist in humanity's combat against the Kindred, it does not remove their mortality. With the expenditure of One Willpower a knight may heal health levels of suitable mortals. Those with low humanities, who have been excommunicated or are otherwise condemned by god will receive no benefit from the act - though the knight will still lose the appointed number of Grace Points. Healing Hands cannot be used more than once per day, per wound.

TTTTT: Raise the health level of a mortal by one level per 2 Grace Points expended. One Willpower point must be expended per use.

TTTTTTT: Raise the health level of a mortal by one level per 1 Grace Point expended, restore one level of aggravated wounds per 2 Grace Points. One Willpower point must be expended per use.

### **TTTTT Comfort (5) By Deird'Re Brooks**

With this ability, the Knight can calm someone, make them feel safe, warm and otherwise taken care of - even under the most dramatic of circumstances. System: Roll Charisma + Empathy against the subject's Willpower if unwilling, otherwise 6.

### **TTTTTT Forge Bonds (8) By Deird'Re Brooks**

Strengthens existing positive bonds (love, friendship) and causes those who are neutral to be better disposed to those around them. System: The roll is made using Charisma + Empathy. The number of successes indicate how long the effect lasts. It will make enemies neutral and open to diplomacy.

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## **The Rituals**

"Templars are supposed to have been learned magicians, rich and powerful not so much because they were well endowed with Church estates as because they enjoyed a hidden knowledge and hidden practices"

- Murdered Magicians, Templars and their Myths

## **THE RITUALS**

Includes items such as Holy Water (aggravated damage, Faith roll made from the Faith of the user, not the consecrator, with the number of successes being the amount of health loss to the vampire target).

A normal item, such as a sword, can be blessed and given particular abilities and powers permanently. Rituals can also prepare a knight for battle, can excommunicate a being from receiving the benefits of God's grace, and give the rites of Holy Absolution to a repentant vampire.

Rituals only need to be understood by one member of the group conducting it. The initiator of the Ritual must contribute the highest number of Grace Points toward enacting that ritual.

The right to learn a Ritual can only be earned through game play, or be awarded to ranking knights at the discretion of the storyteller.

## General

Calling the Restless Spirit: (12 Faith Levels present, 15 Grace Points spent)

With this ritual, the supplicant may speak with someone who has died. Roll Intelligence + Occult (diff. is targets willpower)- The caster needs 2 successes for the prayer to work. The ritual must be held within 10 ft. of the corpse. If trying to contact a wraith, the caster must be in that wraiths haunt - the body is irrelevant.

Ward: By Jamie Seidel (15 Faith Levels present, 21 Grace Points spent)

The presence of at least 15 Faith Levels is needed in an half-hour ritual to create a warding against evil. Thus, knights would be able to establish a room-sized ward to protect themselves from the ethereal planes and repulse evil - such as vampires or lupines. This ward will remain in place for as long as at least one of the casting knights is there - with no maintenance. Once the knights leave, the ward will dissipate within half an hour. Any Kindred/Lupine who come into contact with it must make a Courage (8) roll or flee in Rotschreck. This Ward operates as Ward vs. Kindred.

Extend life-span: By John Snead and Sarah Link (80 Faith Levels present, 84 Grace Points spent)

This ability allows you to prolong your life. You must roll Willpower, with a difficulty of 8. Each success on this roll allows you to ignore aging for one year. However, you age a minimum of one year between rolls. For example, if you roll 3 successes 4 years pass and you only age one. At the end of this time you may roll again. Failure means you age normally for the next year, with no repeats until that year is up, and a botch means that you age two years in the space of one.

Red Mass: Jamie Seidel & Adam Grey (90 Faith Levels present, 120 Grace Points spent)

A truly repentant vampire can be saved from its fate, and be returned to a normal life. This is the dream of many vampires, as they realise physical immortality is true hell. But, like Golconda, it is incredibly difficult to obtain. As described in the chapter Ministering to Vampires, the repentant vampire must be presented to a full Chapter of knights with the Grand Masters in attendance. The vampire may either be restored to mortality or it can remain as it is. If mortality is restored, the ceremony must not be interpreted as a forgiveness of sins. The newly restored mortal's soul is yet to be judged - it has simply been given another chance at life.

Excommunication: By Jamie Seidel (90 Faith Levels present, 120 Grace Points spent)

A full Chapter of senior Knights may bring down the curse of excommunication upon any mortal, Kindred or other. Many of the curses within excommunication already apply to vampires, but would be new to mortals. Holy Ground resists their presence, plants wilt at their touch. The ecclesiastic blessings have no effect, nor do the benefits of Holy Powers such as Bless and Comfort. Whenever the excommunicated one is near one of the Faith, he is beset with guilt and loses a point of Willpower for the duration of the scene. When dealing with God's children, the excommunicate has the effects of their Charisma and Manipulation reduced to only one. Only true repentance and sorrow can convince the Chapter to revoke the curse, which must be conducted in a ceremony with the same level of Faith Points and Grace Points as the initial ceremony.

Bless Item (X Faith Levels present, X x 2 Grace Points spent)

A Chapter of Knights can band together to bless an Item with True Faith. The rating of the object will be equivalent to the total Faith Level of the attending Knights divided by 10. Therefore, 12 Knights amassing 80 Faith Levels can grant an object with 8 Faith Levels. The purpose must be real and necessary. Remember, God does not look kindly upon wastage of his Blessings if other means suffice. This power includes the production of Holy Water, St George's Oil, etc.

Holy Graal: By Chris Plaice (15 Faith Levels present, 30 Grace Points spent)

The Knights invoke this power by pouring 500ml of holy water into a chalice or goblet. (A unique item dedicated to the Knight during his/her training. They then perform the ritual over the water. Anyone drinking from the chalice is healed of all normal damage or one aggravated damage. The chalice provides enough healing



fluid to heal Charisma + Medicine (difficulty 7) times. A point of Willpower must be expended to invoke this power.

# Appendices

by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)

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## Appendice 1: Issue Weapons

"How does one kill fear, I wonder? How do you shoot a spectre through the heart, slash off its spectral head, take it by its spectral throat? It is an enterprise you rush into while you dream, and are glad to make your escape with wet hair and every limb shaking. The bullet is not run, the blade not forged, the man not born; even the winged words of truth drop at your feet like lumps of lead. You require for such a desperate encounter an enchanted and poised shaft dipped in a lie too subtle to be found on earth. An enterprise for a dream, my masters!"

- the Marsden Archive.

### Phase Motion Detector:

This compact, hand-held unit detects minute disturbances in the air and, through the collection of this and other data, works to sense movement within 100 metres. Contacts are displayed as blips on the screen, with a beep that increases in volume as the contact gets closer. Direction, movement and sometimes contact mass can be determined. When used on a vampire under the discipline Obfuscate, this device aids the hunters by letting them make Alertness rolls as if they had one dot of Auspex.

### Thermal Detector:

A small cylindrical unit that instantly measures skin temperature and silently reports the data to the user. It can be installed in the tip of a cane so as to call little attention to itself as it is quietly pressed against a suspected Kindred. This is one of the most effective ways of telling who is, and isn't, a vampire. Kindred with the virtue "baby-face" and those who have just fed are not detectable by this method.

### Vid Cam and Suntorch Unit

This is a combination of an ultra-compact video relay unit which gives real-time images on a small screen, and a high-power suntorch. As it is a video device, it is not affected by vampire Obfuscate. These devices can record details of individual vampires, as well as giving range and direction data to the person wielding it. The sun-torch attached to the base of the unit can be used to severely wound the vampire within the camera's field of view. The damage is determined by the range of the vampire from the unit.

### Personal Telemetry Relay:

knights have built into their black stalker uniforms an data collection and relay unit, offering 180 degree coverage from their left shoulder epaulets. Along with miniature microphones, all movements are recorded via satellite navigation and monitored by a microwave receiver unit up to 1km away if the action takes place within a building of heavy construction, 4km if in a normal building or 8km if in the open. Personal body signs are also transmitted in tandem with sound and temperature data.

## **Heckler & Koch MP2000**

Designed to the specifications supplied by US Navy SEALs and British SAS anti-terrorist teams, the MP2000 is an attempt to integrate the best features of all the different variants of the MP5 in one handy package. The retractable stock lies flush with the stock when folded to eliminate any projections. When broken down, the MP2000 is as small as the MP5K, and can be concealed in the same suitcase manner. The new vertical forward grip makes for easier point-and-shoot ability with the stock collapsed - as well as a stable fully-automatic firing platform. The suppressor is removable, unlike the SD variants of the MP5. Sights can be switched from standard to silenced modes to allow for the differing ballistic properties.

\* Church Knight MP2000s are blessed and contain an holy cross moulded into the pistol grip. This prevents vampires from easily using captured weapons. The MP2000 (Special) is also capable of firing tracer shells along with silver tipped bullets. These guns are fitted with LS45 laser aiming devices, which have a range of 450m at night and 50m in broad daylight.

Cartridge 9x19mm, 40rpm/120/875, 30/60 round removable box magazines, Weight 3.9kg as 60round mag, Length 55/65cm, 14.9 barrel length. Accuracy 20m, body 0.99, hand 0.99, bullseye 0.96; 100m body 0.99, hand 0.85, bullseye 0.47, 200m body 0.98, hand 0.61, bullseye 0.27; Difficulty 7, Damage 2, Rate 21, Capacity 30/60, Concealment T, Range 40.

## **WA-2000**

This is one of the few guns built from the start as a sniper rifle - not as a modified service weapon. The compact bullpup layout rifle is extremely accurate. The barrel is buried in the heart of the gun, everything around it acting as a support. The barrel is fluted, to cut down of vibration and add strength. The calibre of the weapon is easily changed by removing the barrel. A thumbhole grip allows it to be used by either left or right handed operators. A muzzle brake cuts down recoil without affecting accuracy. A folding bipod is unusual in that it can travel along the rail above the barrel to adjust a given situation. The gun can accommodate a wide variety of sights. Even the magazine which has two sets of formed guide rails to align the round with the chamber, protecting the projectile from damage. Rate of fire 18rpm, cartridge 7.62x66mm, velocity 980ms, 6rnd magazine, weight 8.3kg, length 90.5cm. Accuracy 100m all targets 0.99; 200m bullseye 0.93; 400m hand 0.98, bullseye 0.74; 600m hand 0.93, bullseye 0.59; 800m head 0.98, hand 0.86, bullseye 0.49; 1000m head 0.96, hand 0.80, bullseye 0.39, 1200m head 0.93, hand 0.74, bullseye 0.36. Damage 58/.5

## **Glock 18a**

A lightweight, plastic pistol with a very high rate of fire. The plastics are not impervious to X-Ray detection, but are not magnetic. This modern weapon is becoming a favorite among the world's special forces, replacing such guns as the High Power in the SAS.

Calibre 9mm, Difficulty 7/8, Damage 2, Rate 19, Capacity 17/19, Concealment J, Range 20.

## **Heckler & Koch G11**

Caseless ammunition, where the propellant acts as the binder for the bullet and primer, is the main innovation in this remarkable weapon. Eliminating the casing saves the weight of the extraction and ejection system, as well as the reduced weight of ammunition. The development of a solid heat resistant propellant made this weapon

possible. The firing mechanism is centred around a cylindrical breech block that rotates to align the round with the barrel. The cross-section allows the rounds to be closely packed with no wasted space into the 50 round inline magazine, set along the barrel in line with the barrel making a streamlined weapon. The new design allows a firing rate of 2000rpm, with a three round controlled burst fired with the last round leaving the barrel before the firer can react to the recoil. This allows a high accuracy rate. When full-automatic mode is selected, this represents a firing rate of 600rpm. Its bullpup layout allows greater accuracy under full automatic firing. Magazine 50round, weight 4.2kg, length 75cm, 40rpm/200rpm/600rpm. Fletchette 30/0.41. Assessment 3.6cm at 300m, three shot burst. Accuracy at 50m, 0.99 at all sizes; 150m, head 0.99, hand 0.99, bullseye 0.97; 250m, head 0.99, hand 0.99, bullseye, 0.88; 350m, head 0.99, hand 0.99, bullseye 0.79; 500m, head 0.99, hand 0.96, bullseye 0.66.

## **Jackhammer M3-A2 (or USAS12)**

This is an automatic-fire shotgun, allowing bursts of 20rpm, 40rpm or 240rpm. A 10 round removable drum magazine cassette is available, but a 20 round custom modification is becoming available to the knights. The gun weighs 4.7kg fully loaded, with a length of 78.7cm. The round is a 42g shell containing 12x3.6 shot. Designed to take standard or modified shotgun shells, the jackhammer has a bullpup design for ease of use. A gas-firing and dispersal system prevents the gun from overheating as in other automatic shotguns. The inline design and bullpup operating system for the jackhammer give it good control on full automatic fire.

Range is up to 50m. Body accuracy at 10m is 0.94, hand 0.48, bullseye 0.2; Accuracy at 30m body 0.58, hand 0.19, bullseye 0.07; Accuracy at 50m, body is 0.4, hand 0.12, bullseye 0.04. USAS12 (3round burst capable), Calibre 12guage, Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 6, Capacity 10/20, Concealment N, Range 20.

## **Slinger AC2-M7 Dart Gun**

The Militant Order's own technicians developed this weapon, filling a need for a timber-dart projectile weapon that is handy, easy to use and accurate. The dart pistol fills the gap between a manual crossbow and a pistol. This weapon has a canister behind the pistol grip that contains high-pressure air, used to sling small wooden darts up to 50m range. The air canister contains enough charge for 4 full-strength shots, with 2 half-range shots after that. It can be recharged by detaching the hand-grip on the barrel, and using it as a pump. Pumping for 2 minutes replenishes the full charge (30sec pumping for 1 full-charge shot). Accuracy 10m, body 0.99, bullseye 0.93, 50m body, 0.99, bullseye 0.42.

## **Dart Knife T186**

This is a wooden-spike throwing knife based on the unconventional Chinese T86 pistol-knife, developed by the Church Knights own armorers. the single-edged blade has four deep grooves, two on either side, tho allow passage of the wooden spikes fired from a mechanism in the weapons grip. to fire the weapon the knurled hinge at the front of the grip is rotated to the left, which can be done with the thumb in firming hand, uncovering a red dot and unlocking the trigger. the trigger extends below the weapon and is pulled by the normal finger with the thumb of the firing hand braced against the upper pivot of the trigger. With the arm extended and rotated with the wrist up, the sights on the grip can be used but the weapon is intended for very close range. The end cap of the grip contains the firing mechanism and is unscrewed for reloading. The blade is itself coated in hardened silver, giving it the dual-purpose of aggravated injury against werewolves. This dart-knife is a standard piece of equipment, to be worn at all times - even in civilian clothing - in case of an emergency.

Cartridge-dart. 6.7mmx 17mmR, 4rnds in 3 seconds, weight loaded 0.46kg, length 26.2 overall, blade 14cm. Range 50m 0.99 body accuracy, 0.33 bullseye. Faith points can be assigned as in an inverted form it appears as a Christian cross.

## **Armbrust Anti-Armour Weapon**

This 67mm calibre HEAT weapon has reflex optical sights with a range of up to 500m. Shoulder fired, the 6.3kg recoilless rifle can penetrate 30cm steel, with a 5m blast radius. Each shell weights 1kg, and can be fired at ranges up to 1500m. Penetrative range is 300m. Overall, the weapon is about 85cm long. The Armbrust is the only anti-armour weapon which can be fired in a confined space. Its sound signature is that of a pistol, and its flash is negligible. Most other weapons sound like a cannon and produce a flash like a small sun!

Accuracy at 50m, body is 0.9, hand is 0.44, bullseye 0.18, Accuracy 150m, body 0.54, hand 0.18, bullseye 0.06; Accuracy 250m body 0.37, hand 0.11, bullseye, 0.04; Accuracy 400m body 0.25, hand 0.07, bullseye 0.02.

## **Crusader Sword**

Cutting off a vampires head is one of the few sure ways of killing a vampire. A sharp blade, such as a sword, is standard equipment on all knights. Embellishments such as silver edges or blessings can add significantly to a blade's usefulness. This ancient weapon has a true saint's relic (generally a bone of some kind) embedded in the hilt. Others are weapons borne by saints themselves, or other holy warriors of significance (such as King Arthur). Its reversed hilt and crosspiece counts as a consecrated holy symbol serving as a channel for the Faith miracle which ignites the holy blade when used against vampires and other unholy creatures. Wounds caused by the blade, when held by one of the Faith Numina, will be aggravated wounds. While wearing the blade, the hunter receives the Virtue Iron Will. When the Faithful prays for a miracle, add one extra Faith die to the roll if the sword is held, cross up, during the prayer. It is a Medieval Broadsword as per the Players Guide rule: three foot long with a nine-inch hilt, requiring a strength of 2 to carry, 3 or better to wield. Difficulty for this particular weapon is 7, though it does Strength + 5 damage (aggravated). The weapon radiates a aura of Faith that is quite discernible to all Kindred through Auspex (it appears as golden fire) and at close range (5 feet) it causes Kindred to sweat blood.

As many such swords are old, Kindred seizing the blade would take damage from it as normal, but would shatter the blade with three successes on a difficulty of 7, if they used Potence, difficulty of 8 if not. Any major blows to the sword itself (strikes against it versus difficulty of 7) will shatter the sword (treated as if it had three health levels).

Such swords are large and ungainly, and is impossible to completely conceal unless one wears a large trench coat. Many of these swords seem to have a mind or their own, wanting to bite Kindred flesh as they did in the middle and dark ages.

\* For the Church Knights, these swords are often weapons handed down within their families. Swords which have been lost by their bloodline are maintained by the Orders, and awarded to new recruits of notable abilities. Not all of these swords need Holy relics - their extended service in the hands of the Faithful against vampires and evil being enough to make them Holy items within themselves.

## **Oil of St George**

This oil causes fire which will not burn the Faithful. Fires spread by the oil will burn structures, as will mortals without Faith. Vampires subtract 2 dice from their resistance roll against this flame. The oil is especially blessed, and is costly for mercenary vampire hunters.

\* The knights carry the Oil in small pressure canisters that can fire spurts of the Oil up to 10m. An igniter can either fire the oil as it exits the jetgun, or afterwards. It is about 10cm long and can be inconspicuously attached to a utility belt.

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## **Appendice 2: Killing A Vampire**

"A vampire who has only been half-killed because the killer has run away in panic is a thousand-fold more dangerous than an ordinary vampire."

- Vampire, a Complete Guide to the Undead, Manuela Dunn Mascetti, 1991.

## **FINAL DEATH:**

Though vampires are no longer mortal, they still face the possibility of final death and damnation. Inflicting aggravated wounds on a severely injured vampire is the most common way in which he can be extinguished. If a vampire has no Blood Pool or Health Levels left, and sustains an aggravated wound, he is utterly destroyed. Sometimes Final Death results in the complete and rapid disintegration of the body, and within minutes all that is left is a pile of ashes.

Weapons that cause aggravated damage, explosions, fire, certain vampiric diseases and decapitations are other ways vampires can be extinguished.

## **WOODEN STAKES:**

A stake is a broad definition, encompassing crude pieces of wood with sharpened points, timber-tipped spears, crossbow bolts, arrows and bokens (Japanese practice swords) with sharpened tips. Anything made of wood that can penetrate a vampire's heart with enough force (5 successes) can immobilise one of the undead. Crossbow bolts, carefully aimed, can be most effective, as the hunter doesn't have to get close to the prey.

## **FLAME:**

Fire can come from many sources, such as spray cans, matches, cigarette lighters and flamethrowers. Fire does aggravated damage to vampires. Dragonbreath shotgun shells and tracer rounds have been developed for firearms to produce aggravated damage.

## **WORDS:**

Any weapon with a blade over 3ft can be used as a sword. The special manoeuvre of Lunge allows a character to attack an enemy up to five yards away. The difficulty is 7 and the damage is Strength +4. No dodging is possible for the character making this manoeuvre, before or afterwards. The best way to use a lunge is against a character that is charging you. A lung will enable the character to attack the opponent before the opponent can attack.

Cavalry Sword: A straight blade of 3ft in length, with a serrated section on top of the blade near the hilt. Difficulty 6, Damage Strength +4, Ability Melee, Weight 3-4lbs.

Medieval Broadsword: A simple sword with a 3ft-4ft straight blade and a long hilt. Quite heavy for their size. Difficulty 6, Damage Strength +5, Ability Melee, Weight 5-10lb.

Two Handed Sword: A great-sword has a blade from four to six feet long and a hilt of one to two feet long. Needs six feet clearance above and to the sides of the user. Difficulty 5, Damage Strength +6, Ability Melee, Weight 10lb -15lb.

## **ARCHERY:**

Roll Dexterity + Archery with a difficulty of 8. The maximum range of a bow is the minimum Strength for the bow multiplied by 30. Arrows can cut many styles of bullet-proof armor - like kevlar.

Small Bow: 30lb. Minimum Strength 2, Range 60 yards, Damage 2 (-1 die per five yards), Weight 10lb,

Large Bow: 60lb, Minimum Strength 3, Range 90 yards, Damage 3 (-1 per five yards), Weight 15lb

Compound Bow: Minimum Strength 3, Range 180 yards, Damage 3 (-1 per five yards), Weight 15lbs

Extras: Bow sights decrease difficulty by one for aimed shots.

Silencers eliminate the twang, difficulty 10. Releases, lets arrow fly cleaner, increase skill by one and increase difficulty of hearing the twang by one.

## **HEAVY WEAPONS**

It is unlikely that weapons of this calibre will ever be used, but there are instances when it is possible. If the nation where the Hunt is taking place is wracked by civil war, has weak government or wide open spaces, such weapons can be used without notice. The powder of a home-made black-powder bomb of 10lb can blow a crater 10ft deep by 20ft radius - larger than the average room. Aircraft bombs usually contain 50lb to 1000lbs of more potent explosive.

One medium sized artillery shell can level half a block of stone houses, shatter windows for five blocks.

A .50cal machine gun bullet retains lethal force after completely passing through a house. Such machine guns fire about 600 rounds per minute.

Military grade heavy weapons are almost always illegal for civilian use. Perhaps only collectors can legally own a disarmed heavy weapon.

## **GRENADES:**

Fragmentation Grenades: A fragmentation grenade has a damage pool of 12 dice if it goes off in your hand. For every yard between the grenade explosion and the character, reduce the damage pool by one die. Weight 0.6lb, size 6in x 4in cylinder  
Concussion Grenade: Has a dice pool of 8 if in direct contact. Reduced by one die per yard distance. Has a debilitating effect on Vampires with heightened hearing. Weight 0.5lb, size 6in x 4in cylinder.

Smoke Grenade: Emit a dense cloud of white or colored smoke. There is no blast. The cloud will fill a 10 by 10 yard room in one minute and will last 10 minutes in still air. Weight 0.6lb, size 7in x 5in cylinder.

White Phosphorus: Generate a temperature of 2700F when they explode. Has a 12 dice pool for direct contact, reduced one every two yards. This is aggravated damage because of the flame. Sets most flammable material alight. Weight 0.6lb, size 7in x 3in cylinder.

## **EXPLOSIVES:**

High explosives are regulated by state and federal permits and licenses, although anyone can buy the basic ingredients. Every point of an explosive's blast power is worth 1 die per lb of explosive. Each explosive also has a specific type of detonator.

Dynamite: Also called TNT, it is nitroglycerine stabilised in charcoal. Dynamite deteriorates over time. Blast Power 3, Detonate by fulminating primer, Can burn as an emergency flare.

Plastique: Plastic explosive is manufactured in various strengths. It is similar to modelling clay in consistency and is extremely stable. Most military explosives are plastique. Blast power 1-20, Detonate by primer only. It is safe enough to cook on .

Primacord: Also called instant fuse. Primacord is an explosive manufactured in string form. It is used to detonate widely separated explosives at the same time. It can also be wrapped around an item as a main charge. Blast power 5, Detonate primer only, Will not burn.

**Napalm:** When it burns, it clings to whatever it is burning. The only way to remove it is to scrape it off. Roll one die to determine how much of the body is covered by napalm. Roll that many dice in the damage pool every turn for 10 turns. Contained in canisters with a small charge to spread it out (6-10 blast power). Blast none, Burns like crazy.

## **SUPPORT WEAPONS:**

Provide heavy or sustained firepower and require a separate skill of either Heavy Weapons or Artillery to use. Machine guns are the only exception, requiring the Firearms skill.

Holding and firing any weapon listed as normally requiring a tripod requires a minimum Strength + Potence of 6.

**LAW:** Light Anti-tank Weapon, a disposable, one-shot rocket and launcher. The launcher is a tube of about 2.5ft and about 4in in diameter. The rocket is about 14in long. Difficulty 7, Damage 12, Range 200 yards, Weight 5lbs.

**Stinger:** A shoulder fired anti-aircraft missile with a heat-seeking guidance system. This is a fire and forget weapon. This weapon (and the LAW) produce back blast, with a 2yard danger zone directly behind the user. Damage of the back blast is four dice of aggravated damage. Difficulty 7, Damage 14, Range 2miles, Weight 25lb

**Grenade Launchers:** The M79 grenade launcher looks and operates like a stubby shotgun with a 2in diameter barrel. The grenade explodes on impact. There is no magazine and this weapon fires one shot, then must be reloaded. Difficulty 6, Damage grenade, Range 400 yards, Weight 6lb

**Flame Thrower:** A backpack carries tanks of napalm and a hose connects to a rifle-like launcher. More modern versions of the weapon used by the Church Knights have a canister directly under the barrel, removing the need for hoses. The old version weighs 50lbs with three tanks. Each tank allows five minutes of constant spraying. The Church Knight's weapon only has the equivalent of half a tank. Difficulty 6, Damage as napalm, Range 60yards.

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## **Appendice 3: Sword Combat**

- Re-used with permission from Highlander: The Gathering by Hank Driskill and John Gavigan (csc086@cent1.lancs.ac.uk)

"... such are they whom God chooses for himself and gathers from the furthest ends of the earth, servants from among the bravest in Israel to guard watchfully and faithfully his Sepulchre and the Temple of Solomon, sword in hand, ready for battle."

- St Bernard of Clairvaux

The sword is the traditional weapon of a Knight. The reasons for this are fairly simple - the sword is the oldest weapon with which you could efficiently decapitate someone, and the first vampire hunters would have used them. Until relatively recently, the sword was the main personal weapon. It's only within the last few hundred years that we have begun using guns, and you can't chop a vampire's head off with a gun. In fact, not counting the battle axe, there still is no practical weapon which can decapitate someone in a duel.

To a Knight, a sword is more than just a piece of steel. It becomes an extension of their body - they keep it with them most of the time, and it becomes an old friend. There are no hard and fast rules for weapons as regards weapons difficulties and damage, etc. A rough guide is that the bigger and heavier sword is, the harder it is to use, but the more damage it inflicts. The Katanas are all Difficulty 6, Damage: Strength + 5. But the two-handed sword is Difficulty 7, Damage: Strength + 6, being, as it is, both heavier and more difficult to use. A Sabre is Difficulty 6 and Damage: Strength + 4, reflecting that it is normally used with only one hand.



Knights may choose between the type of blade, but the weapon itself must be standard Order issue. No elaborate or "fashionable" weapon would be allowed under The Rule. The weapons are obviously finest quality steel or alloy, perfectly balanced and crafted - though without ornamentation or identifying mark.

## Stage One: Initiative

In normal combat, the combatants will try to be the first to attack, in the hope of inflicting damage first. However, in sword combat, things work a little differently. Sometimes, one combatant may elect to try and surprise the other, by ambushing them and attacking them before they have a chance to draw their weapon. In such cases, use the normal rules for Initiative and Surprise.

With sword-duels, the round takes on a new meaning - Basically, a sword combat round is the length of time it takes for one person to attack the other. This system splits sword combat up into a series of bouts. A bout is a series of rounds, during which there is no pause in combat. At the start of a round, both players roll for Initiative. Then they announce what their actions are going to be. Because sword combat is reactive - ie. you don't know what you're going to do until your opponent has done something - the player with the higher Initiative must announce what they intend to do first.

Normally, the player with the higher Initiative will decide to attack, and, if so, his opponent must either defend or dodge. Alternatively, the character with the higher Initiative may decide to either do some other kind of action, such as leaping onto a table, or they may decide to wait and see what their opponent is going to do. If they do either of these things, combat has basically stopped, and they must begin another bout.

A bout begins with both combatants facing each other, weapons at the ready. It is up to the players themselves who actually moves first and initiates combat. Once one of the combatants announces that they are attacking, both players make a standard Initiative roll - Wits + Alertness, against a target number of four. However, instead of deciding who acts first (as this has already been decided), the difference between the two combatants number of successes achieved is added to the dice pool of the player with the higher Initiative.

Example: Connor and the Kurgan are facing off. They circle each other for a few minutes, before Connor makes an attack. He rolls Wits (3) + Alertness (4), and gets 6 successes. The Kurgan rolls Wits (4) + Alertness (3), getting four successes. Thus, Connor gets an extra two dice to add to his Attack roll.

After this initial round, Initiative is rolled as normal, but, its role during the bout is slightly different than the one it has in normal combat. The character with the higher Initiative gets to act first, presumably attacking, and the other person must defend. Both players make their respective attack and defence rolls and that combat round ends, and the combatants roll their Initiative for the next round. The following modifiers apply:

- The use of God's Speed confers an extra Initiative die upon the Knight using it.
- The person who Attacked during the last combat round gains an extra die to add to their Initiative roll for this round.
- If a combatant successfully repelled an attack by his opponent in the last round (ie. by getting an equal or greater amount of successes on his defence roll than his opponent got on his attack roll), then he also gets an extra Initiative die.
- For every three successes by which a combatant's attack/defence roll exceeds his opponents roll, they gain an extra Initiative die.

These rules may seem very complicated right now, but will become clearer later on.

## Stage Two: Attack

To reflect the complexity of sword combat, and the fact that it's not just a case of hacking at the other person until one of you dies, I have adopted the following list of standard sword- fighting manoeuvres from the rules for Klaive-duelling in the Werewolf Players Guide. They are split up into two types - Attack manoeuvres and

Defence manoeuvres. Normally, the attacker will choose an Attacking manoeuvre, and his opponent will choose a Defence manoeuvre, in an attempt to counter it, but in some cases, the nature of the Attack manoeuvre will only allow the defender one option. For example, if an attacker decides to try and disarm his opponent, his opponent must decide to try to hang on to his weapon. He has no other choice.

One dot in the Swordsmanship Skill represents one attack and one defensive skill learned. They must be specified.

- **Normal Attack** The attacker attempts to wound his/her opponent, rolling Dexterity + Melee, with the Difficulty specified by the weapon used.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Weapon Difficulty

Image: The warrior simply tries to wound his opponent by dint of speed and skill.

- **Feint** The attacker rolls Manipulation + Melee for his attack roll, with a difficulty modifier of +3. This attack may not be parried - it may only be dodged.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Weapon Difficulty + 3

Image: With a lightning-quick motion, the swordsman attacks first high, then low, slipping around his opponent's guard, and moving to hit a vulnerable spot.

- **Disarm** The attacker rolls Dexterity + Melee, resisted by Dexterity + Melee from their opponent, both rolls difficulty six. If either combatant rolls three successes or more above their opponents successes, they disarm their opponent, and their weapon falls to the ground. If you botch this roll, you automatically drop your own weapon!

Type: Attack

Difficulty: 6

Image: With a quick movement, you catch your opponents sword and it drops out of his nerveless hand, onto the ground.

- **Great Blow** The attacker commits themselves completely to a devastating blow (but not a blow to decapitate their opponent). They roll a normal attack roll, with a +2 to difficulty. Although a Great Blow cannot be parried, it can be dodged. If the attack succeeds, the attack dice are doubled. However, the attacker's difficulty for their Initiative the next round is 5, not 4, and they have a +2 to all Defence difficulties during the next round also.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Weapon Difficulty +2

Image: You bring your sword back and fall forward, lunging at your opponent. Heedless of the danger, you throw your body forward, your sword serving as the tip of a monstrous battering ram - you.

- **Target Blow** Roll Perception + Melee, the difficulty number is your opponents Dex + Dodge. If successful, the number of successes add to the number of damage dice done by your weapon. Optionally, you may elect to target a specific area - See the table below for details of Difficulties and effects. This blow can be parried or dodged as normal and is often used to start off a bout.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Opp. Dex + Dodge

Image: You try to hit a specific part of your opponent's body. You hold your blade up, and strike, attempting to bypass your opponent's defence to strike your target.

- **Parry** The combatant must roll Dexterity + Melee against their weapon's normal difficulty. Each success on this roll subtracts from one attack success made against the parrying warrior.

Type: Defence

Difficulty : Weapon Difficulty

Image: The swordsman brings his weapon to bear, holding it steady and catches the force of his opponent's sword with his own.

- **Riposte** This manoeuvre may only be used after the one who wishes to use it has successfully parried a blow. This manoeuvre is a Strength + Melee roll, the weapon's difficulty serves as an attack roll. This sort of attack may not be dodged, though it may be parried, and if successfully parried, this attack may also be riposted.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Weapon Difficulty

Image: You parry your opponent's strike. Klang! With catlike speed and grace, you bring your sword around his arm, hoping to catch him off guard.

- **Caught Steel** Roll Strength + Melee versus a difficulty of your opponent's Dexterity + Melee. If successful, you lock swords with him for a short interval, during which you struggle with him before your blade and his can be freed (he can do no damage this attack). If you receive more than three successes on your roll, you manage to put him off-balance for the following round, adding one to the difficulty of his Initiative roll.

Type: Defence

Difficulty: Opp. Dex + Melee

Image: You lock steel with your opponent. "So, Highlander, we meet again!" You struggle for a moment, then the fight sparks again.

- **Decapitation** This is an Aimed Attack at the neck, requiring a Perception + Melee versus a difficulty of your opponent's Dex + Dodge. To decapitate, you must reduce your opponent to one level past Incapacitated.

Type: Attack

Difficulty: Opp. Dex + Dodge

Image: With fluid-like agility, you swing your sword around, and, before your opponent can block you, your blade slices through his neck, and his head falls to the ground.

This is by no means meant to be an exhaustive list of all the possible manoeuvres, but more a guide to help Storytellers decide the types of rolls and difficulties which should be applied to various manoeuvres.

#### Aimed Attack

\* Hands/Arms - Difficulty +3/+2, Damage: A Wounded result means the hand/arm is broken and any weapons in that hand cannot be used; if the hand is holding a sword, it is dropped. A Crippled result means that the limb is sheared off.

\* Legs - Difficulty +1, Damage: A Wounded result means that the limb is broken; the penalties to the Dice Pool apply to any activities requiring running. An Incapacitated result with a sharp weapon means the limb is cut off.

\* Chest/Torso - Difficulty +1, Damage: The character will have the air knocked out of his lungs on a Wounded result (stunned for the turn), and his ribs broken on a Mauled result (must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, each turn to keep acting). If the Knight is attacked from behind, and the result is one more than needed to Incapacitate, then the spine is broken, and his lower body is paralysed.

- **Dodging** On some occasions, it may be necessary to dodge a blow rather than parry it. On these occasions, the target rolls his Dexterity +Dodge against a target number of six. The successes on this roll are subtracted from the successes of the Attacker. If the attacker's successes are eliminated, the target manages to dodge the blow.

### Stage Three: Resolution

Damage is resolved as normal - The attacker rolls the Damage dice pool for that weapon, against a target number of six, each success causing the target to lose a health level. The target makes a Soak roll, rolling his Stamina (difficulty 6) and subtracting his successes from his opponent's.

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## Appendice 4: Myths and Legends of the Orders

"Kings, emperors and nobles used to rule the world, today I see sovereignty held by the clergy by means of robbery, treachery, hypocrisy, violence and preaching. . . They are anxious to make the world theirs. . . "

- Peire Cardenal of Le Puy, 1229, in Atlas of the Crusades, Jonathan Riley-Smith

Each of the three Militant Orders, knights Templar, knights Teutone and knights Hospitaller, have an air of mystery surrounding their traditions, purpose and history. None more so than the Templars.

The knights Templar have been a favored subject of "History Sleuths" throughout the 1980s. The best seller lists have featured books such as Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, The Temple and The Lodge, The Sword and the Rose etc. All have put forward interesting postulations about the Militant Orders true role, often delving into Arthurian and Grail legends.

Some of these theories refuse to go away, and more pieces seem to fall into place all the time. These may have potential for a storyline.

## **Knights Templar**

The Sonja letter (Internet, Aug 6, 1993) briefly outlines one of the more interesting theories associated with the Knights Templar - that of an extended bloodline of Jesus Christ.

The storyline is basically this. Mary Magdalene and her child (Jesus' progeny) flee Israel because the political situation for Jesus' immediate family was too hot. Jesus' brother (Judas Thomas) was leading the war against the Romans. Because the concept that several of Jesus' disciples were Zealot resistance fighters (indicating he was possibly one of them himself) did not go down with the passive message trying to be pushed by the early Christian Church, Judas Thomas' (Jesus' twin brother, a Zealot warrior priest) identity was split and most references to the Zealoti removed. This included the watering down of the importance of Simon and James - also prominent Zealots. The gospels written by Judas Thomas and James were deliberately destroyed or drastically edited by the Church before the 8th Century.

There was apparently a dispute among the disciples, the mystics under Paul and the Nazarean Party under James. Some evidence exists that Paul was outcast by the other disciples because he was trying to attach messianic qualities to Jesus, who the rest of the disciples "knew" was simply the "Messiah" - King-Priest of Israel.

The upshot of the situation was that Israel was "destroyed" in the AD70s. Before this time many Jews left the country for safer parts, including Alexandria in Egypt, Greece, Rome and southern France. Allegedly, Mary Magdalene (possibly Jesus' wife) ended up in southern France with Jesus' son, along with Cathar Jews who believed Jesus to be a prophet-king.

The Templars, upon the capture of Jerusalem in the 1100s, apparently discovered some remaining copies of the "heretic" gospels, and traced the movements of Magdalene. The knights apparently took the family's bloodline (or grail) into their own protection. Known as the Merovingian's, the family had spawned a line of French Kings often associated with mystical happenings and arcane power. Some say the Templars, now known as the Priore de Sion (Rock of Sion - the Temple), still guard Jesus' descendants - and working hard towards the unification of Europe!

It is because of the Templars association with the Cathars (the descendants of the group which included Magdalene) that the Order fell out with the Pope.

There is strong speculation that many of the authors of various Grail and Arthurian sagas were either strongly associated with the Templars, or were Templars themselves. Some say the legends were a secret way of perpetuating the "true" story of Christ. The Church had been suspicious the Templar "heresy" for some time, but the jealous French King Philip IV used it as an excuse to try and grab their property. While the Order was disbanded, no convictions of heresy were ever made. (Both the Pope and Phillip IV died within a two months of

the death of the Grand Masters execution. Historical legend claims the Grand Master "cursed" them both, but it is also possible Templar contacts within each household poisoned them.)

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Temple did not dissolve after 1314. While hundreds of Templars were captured and put before the Inquisition, only a few were full knights. The ratio was something of 1 knight per 5 Templars, the bulk being Sergeants and support staff. Only 1 in 20 of those facing the Inquisition in France was a knight - and in the UK, none were knights. The whole treasury department disappeared, along with the entire Templar fleet. Nevertheless, the Order obviously broke up over the years because it was hard to manage such a huge organisation secretly. While many Orders such as the Spanish knights of Christ were formed by the Templar remnants, evidence suggests the "pure" core survived in Scotland - a country not inclined to pay any attention to the Pope.

#### MYTHS:

Take any Arthurian or Grail legend, shake it, and out will fall a pile of Templar propaganda. While often apparently purely fanciful, they may conceal grains of truth relating to particular issues or philosophies.

1) One legend that has been researched (The Sign and the Seal) relates to one of the Templar's greatest dreams - finding the Arc of the Covenant. The first thing the Templars ever did was to excavate the site of the Temple of Jerusalem, and many other areas. While they never said what they were after, the Arc is a good guess. It appears the Templars followed the trail of the Arc into Ethiopia, where a small group of dedicated (and unforthcoming) monks even today jealously guard what is possibly the Arc of the Covenant. The Templars, possibly unable (or unwilling) to gain the powerful and destructive icon for themselves, established a chapterhouse in Ethiopia to keep an eye on it.

2) Another refers to a little half-completed chapel in middle- of-nowhere France. Known as Rennes le Chateau, it is believed this little place was where much of the treasure of the Temple of Jerusalem was hidden by the Templars. Maybe it was even their own treasury - or it had some other significance. Whatever the case, one of the Chateau's priests was very interested in solving several mysteries about the Templars. After researching designs on various cathedral walls and windows, unusual historical paintings and some hidden parchments in the Rennes le Chateau church, he suddenly became very rich.

Complicating the story is the fact that Rennes le Chateau is in the dead centre of an ancient grid of "power lines". Multiple geometric designs (ranging from a near-perfect pentagon formed by natural? mountain peaks to clusters of towns and even standing stones) use the area as its focus. It obviously had strong pre-Christian, pre-Roman significance - similar to the Nazca lines of America.

3) The mystery of Rennes le Chateau may be linked to the theory that the Templars were guardians of the Sacred Geometry. Mathematical and engineering abilities were looked upon as miraculous in the ancient world, even in Medieval Europe until the Renaissance. Mathematicians, architects and engineers were regarded as wizards etc, a fact perpetuated by their secrecy about their valuable art. People like the architects of the great pyramids and the Temple of Solomon were given god or prophet-like status. The modern day Freemasons trace their ancestry back to the architect of the Temple, who was murdered by jealous co- workers. This "society" of architects was either strongly associated with, or part of, the Templars. Legends of ancient power abound - some hinting at the strange geometry of the standing stones throughout Europe, others of an almost "Atlantean" technology.

4) Another legend refers to the disappearance of the Templar Fleet. One book, the Sword and the Grail, claims that the Templars actually colonised the New England area of the United States 180 years before Columbus. This was done by the Scottish Templars and Prince Henry St Clair - the Navigator. Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland, built more than a century before Columbus, clearly shows ears of corn and aloe cactus - items unique to the Americas. Mayan legends in Central America talk of a pre-Spanish Conquests visit by a group of friendly white men, who gave them several technologies similar to European techniques of that time. Unfortunately most of the Aztec documentary evidence of this "visit" was destroyed by the Spanish Inquisition.

5) One persistent rumor is that the Knights Templar were the custodians of the Shroud of Turin. Scientific and historical evidence places the shroud's origins in the east of Turkey, just above Lebanon. This area was at one stage under the influence of the Templars who built several fortresses there. It appears the Byzantium Church revered a cloth with Christ's head upon it - the only part of the shroud visible when folded. What happened to it is uncertain. Either it was taken to Constantinople for protection (and stolen when that city was looted by Crusaders) or it was lost before then. When the shroud was revealed once again in late medieval times, it was by the de Charney family - a member of which was Geoffrey de Charney, the senior officer who was burnt at the stake alongside Jacques de Molay. Some say it was placed in his family's protection the night the French king arrested the Templars. Speculation also attempts to explain the charges laid against the Templars by the Inquisition. One of the main charges was worshiping the image of a head - baphomet. Maybe the Templars' secrecy to protect the holy relic backfired, and the rumors arose from their own ranks!

## **Knights Hospitaller**

Because the knights Hospitaller have been in continuous existence, the opportunities for legend have not arisen - either because members have remained secretive because of the Order's survival, or because the Order has been able to stamp out any fanciful (or true) mysteries before they have taken hold. However, there are rumors based on their unique position within the World's diplomatic society.

1) The worldwide network of medical care units, ambulance services and disaster relief teams - combined with the diplomatic status offered to the Order (who still insist that Senior knights must be able to show a coat of arms dating back 300 years proving direct male lineage) - make them an ideal network for intelligence work. The hospital and medical services are often placed strategically in areas of crisis (such as Northern Ireland). Membership extends from medical staff and ambulance drivers to important political and financial officials. Rumors have it that the Hospitallers are closely linked to the Vatican Intelligence Service - a role similar to that of the Crusades. Other rumors have it that the knights are used as a link between the Vatican and the CIA. The knights actually have a world-wide award for counter-intelligence work. Those who have received this award include the head of the West German Secret Service and several high-ranked CIA operatives. Most of the CIA directors since the 1940s have become knights of Malta, as have many American diplomats. The extent of their actions is not known, but much of the credit for peace efforts in Central America has been quietly given to Hospitaller operatives.

## **Knights Teutone**

The Teutonic knights fell into disfavor after the Order was used for propaganda purposes by the SS during World War II. As a result, not a lot of modern popular literature has delved into the background of this Militant Order. What little there is of it is mostly focussed on the modern Nazi era and a brief, skeletal description of the Order's role during the early Crusades. Accurate analysis appears confined to academic literature.

1) Heinrich Himmler conceived the SS as the reconstituted Teutonic knights: *Deutschritter* - modern equivalent of the white-mantled knights with black crosses who had spearheaded the earlier Germanic drive into Russia. The original, pre-war, SS was a strictly recruited, organized and ritualized unit. The elaborate and mystical induction ceremony was obviously reminiscent of the Teutones' chivalric investiture. Candidates had to show a pure Aryan family tree dating back at least 250 years for general recruits, 300 years for officers. Each candidate had to undergo a religious-style novitiate before he was accepted into the Order. Much of the SS insignia and runic inscriptions were based on masonic and Teutone patterns. SS itself was meant to be based on the Sig rune, the rune of power used to denote the lightning-bolt of the storm gods.

The true Order at this time was obviously driven underground. Apart from genocidal racist behavior, the SS's rituals included conceiving children on the gravestone of prominent historical figures, marriages which were little more than Aryan orgies, and other mystical ceremonies. Himmler instigated an Order of the Round Table with 13 knight officers. Its headquarters was in Wewelsburg, near Paderborn, in West Germany. Although never completed, this town (centred on a modern castle) was supposed to become the SS capital. The town and castle's

architecture was based on the numbers 3 and 12, the significance of which is not known. Himmler often spoke of Sacred Geometry, "earth magic".

Interesting links have been drawn with the "old school" army officers who were involved with the plot to assassinate Hitler. Apparently, the leaders were members of noble families with histories of association with the Teutones. This may have been a desperate attempt by the remnants of the Order to cut the Fuhrer's career short.

The link with the SS provides scope for many of the mysterious activities of WWII to be utilised, ie the collection of mystical books and artifacts, as could the disappearance of many of these valuable historical objects after the war.

2) The Jesuits, the largest Clerical Order of the Catholic Church, are believed to have either styled themselves upon, or branched from, the Teutonic knights. This could have occurred with members of the Teutonic Order forming a new group once its leaders converted to Lutheranism. The extent of the association is unknown, but may provide another opening.

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## Appendice 5: The Temple and the Occult

"Since the occult world is a continuum which in many ways defies time and space, the Templars are not in this view mere carrion for university professors to feed on, but a living tradition of hidden knowledge which may be shared by the elect"

- Murdered Magicians, the Templars and their Myths.

### CATHARS

From the start, the Templars had a strong relationship with the Cathars. Many members of this "heretic" religion had donated broad reaches of lands to the knights, and it is possible one of the 9 founders may have been a Cathar.

The fourth Grand Master was undoubtedly Cathar and many recruits came from the southern regions of France where the religion was strongest.

The Templars remained neutral during the Albigensian Crusade - an attempt to exterminate Catharism because of its direct conflict with Catholicism. Cities were razed and thousands massacred. Rumors emerged that the Templars had actually helped hide Cathar treasures, as well as protect many prominent families. It was during this time that the first allegations against the order was made. Pope Innocent III, upset that the knights had refused his order to join the attack on the Cathars, berated them for un-Christian behavior and accused them of necromancy.

The Albigensian Crusade (the Templars refused to refer to it as a crusade, they repeatedly insisted the only true crusade was to invade Israel) actually increased the numbers of Cathars among their ranks. In some preceptories, more officers were Cathar than Catholic.

Through their contact with Islamic and Judaic cultures, the Templars had absorbed many ideas and ideals alien to the orthodox Roman Christianity of the time. Templars often employed Arabs accountants and secretaries, they learnt to speak and write the languages and financial exchanges were commonplace.

Philip IV of France hated the knights independence and wealth (he had also been rejected by the order as a recruit - and he owed it money). He may have used this tolerance for other schools of thought as an excuse to bring about the Order's destruction. Undoubtedly, the almost open links with the Eastern cultures exposed Templars to occult thinking. It would have been in the knights interests to at least find out about such rites, rituals and beliefs in an effort to "understand one's enemy". How much of this secular information was gathered -

and even adopted - is pure speculation. All the Order's books were burnt at the instruction of the Grand Master shortly before Philip IV moved to have all the knights in France arrested.

Links have also been made to the Johannite (or Mandaean) heresy, which denounced Jesus and a false prophet and acknowledged John as the true Messiah. The Templars undoubtedly came in contact with this sect.

## **MASONIC RITUALS**

By the eighteenth century, many Masons were claiming their rituals and beliefs were descendants of the rites performed by the knights Templar. Many of these claims are preposterous, but an equal amount may actually have been maintained through the Order's survival in Scotland - one of the most Masonic places on earth.

By 1798, the era of romance, many legends were attributed the knights with mythical powers. They were supermen with awesome arsenals of arcane powers and knowledge. They were called occult adepts, illumined alchemists, magi and sages, master masons and high initiates.

The Masonic link may have significant relevance. Much of the suspicion against the knights was brought about by their superior technical skill. While the knights themselves were generally uneducated, those within the Order who were specialists (such as architects) had much more advanced knowledge than their civilian counterparts. Much of the learning of the Greek and Roman philosophers, mathematicians etc had been lost in Europe during the dark ages. But the Arabs were not so stupid. Some of this information was captured with the Spanish Crusades after the fall of the Templars. But, much information suggests the Templars had gained much of this knowledge through their interaction with the Arabs - and then kept it for themselves.

The greatest engineering feats of their time, the first Gothic Cathedrals, can be directly attributed to Templar involvement. The ignorance of the general populace (and even nobility) often attributed such works of engineering to magic.

## **OCCULT ALLEGATIONS**

Rumors that circulated Europe after the sudden arrest of Templars and the suspension of the Order included the supposed worship of a devil called Baphomet. The rumors said Templars prostrated themselves before a bearded male head, which spoke to them and invested them with occult powers. (However, the rumor said that witnesses of these ceremonies were never seen again) Other vague charges were layed against the Order, including teaching women how to abort, obscene kisses at the induction of new recruits and homosexuality. Even during the actual Inquisition, none of these allegations were substantiated.

The most serious allegation was that the knights ritually denied Christ. The ceremony is said to have involved, trampling, spitting on and defecating on the cross.

Even before the Inquisition, some said the knights were sorcerers and magicians, secret adepts and alchemists. Some of their contemporary monastic Orders shunned them, believing them to be in league with arcane powers. Much of this can be attributed to the knights greater understanding of medicine, architecture and basic chemistry and physics - all learnt from the Arabs and Jews. It is interesting to note that among all monastic Orders, only the Templars were given permission in their charter to associate with, and make deals with heathens.

Many members of the Order were burned, imprisoned or tortured. It is interesting to note that the few "confessions" that were made were only extracted under torture - and the knights almost always repudiated their confession afterward. Extremely few "clear convictions" were made by the Inquisitors, but then, Inquisitors didn't need to justify their actions.

After the Orders extinction, rumors of the Occult escalated. The Grand Master and the preceptor of Normandy are said to have cursed the king and the pope as they were being burnt alive. Within months of the knights execution, both Pope Clement and King Philip were dead.



## BAPHOMET

Baphomet - derivation of Muhammad

Baphomet - bifihimat, "Father/Source of Wisdom and Understanding"

Baphomet - gonfalon Bauseant, the battle standard of the Templars and battle cry. Bauseant, meaning "of comely appearance", or "piebald" or "standard", but likely to mean "for glory"

When subject to the torture of the Inquisition, many knights referred to something called Baphomet. There is little indication on who or what Baphomet was, what it represented or even if it was significant. It appears that it was regarded with reverence - perhaps idolatry. Sometimes the name was associated with a demonic sculpture found in some preceptories, other times with a bearded head.

The link between Baphomet and the concept of a bearded head remains obscure.

One strong possibility is that the head may be that of the Turin Shroud - a revered artefact believed to be in the possession of the Templars between 1204 and 1307. The way it was folded (it was almost never unravelled) placed the head in the most visible position. In fact, the surviving images of the Templar "head" bear a striking resemblance to the Shroud.

According to Inquisition records, a reliquary in the shape of a woman's head was confiscated from the Paris preceptory. It was hinged on top, and contained a relic of some kind. The report said "a great head of gilded silver, most beautiful, and constituting the image of a woman. Inside were two head-bones, wrapped in a cloth of white linen, with another red cloth around it. A label was attached, one which was written the legend CAPTU LVIII<sup>m</sup> (Head 58m). The bones inside were that of a rather small woman." The "m" may have actually been a misreading of the sign of Virgo. Some speculation has been made - on minimal evidence - that the head may be that of Mary Magdalene, an artefact rescued from the Cathars.

Myths involving sacred heads include that of Isis, Tammuz or Adonis whose head was flung into the sea, and of Orpheus, whose head was flung into the river of the Milky Way. Bran the Blessed in Celtic mythology also had his head severed, but it was kept alive in a magical cauldron.

According to Inquisition records, the charges against the Templars included:

in each province they had idols, namely heads.

that they adored these idols

that they said that the head could save them.

that it could make riches

that it made the trees flower

that it made the land germinate

that they surrounded or touched each head of the aforesaid idols with small cords, which they wore around themselves next to the shirt or the flesh.

These properties were extraordinarily similar to that attributed to the Holy Grail. Cathars wore sacred cords.

It is likely that many Templars did not believe in Christ, as many knights gave testimony that they only believed in God in heaven, not in Jesus. Such charges were consistent, and lend credence to the idea. But it may also simply have been a well organised conspiracy on behalf of the Inquisitors. It may also have been an internal faction split. However, the strongest argument revolves around the Shroud of Turin. The Templars were very secretive about their possessions, wealth and relics - and any information about such an item would have been distorted "through the telling".

## OCCULT KNOWLEDGE

There is little doubt that much which is now considered occult would have at least been studied by the Templars. In their militaristic way, the Templars studied their enemies closely - their customs, traditions and beliefs. Some sources claim the Templars had a large library of old documents - including the suppressed books of the Bible, old Jewish texts, Islamic doctrine, Cathar beliefs, Celtic rituals etc. This library disappeared with the Templars

treasury, probably with their fleet, shortly before the Inquisition's axe fell. No inventory of these texts has ever been found, but is said to include many occult authors.

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## Appendice 6: Other Militant Orders

Better far be cowardly and alive, Than dead, the most famous of them all. The Order of the Templars, I know well, Is beautiful and excellent and sure - But keeping healthy keeps me from war.  
- Guiot de Provins, 1316

This work only covers the three most popular and powerful Militant Orders: the Knights Templar, Hospitaller and Teutone. However, these were not the only ones.

Many Orders were spawned by the crusades, some lasting only months while others endured for centuries. If you wish to supplement the Church Knights sourcebook with re-interpretations of these other Orders I suggest you research the following:

### Holy Land Orders

- The Knights of St Lazarus
- The Hospitallers of St Thomas of Canterbury

### Germanic Orders

- The Bretheren of the Sword

### Spanish Orders

- The Knights of Caltrava
- The Knights of Santiago
- The Order of Evora and Aviz
- The Knights of St Julian and Alcantara
- The Knights of Our Lady of Montjoie
- The Order of Mercedarians
- The Knights of St George of Alfama
- The Knights of Christ
- The Knights of Our Lady of Montessa

### Italian Orders

- The Order of St James of Altopascio
- The Knights of San Stefano of Tuscany

# Campaign

*by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)*

As a follow-up to the Church Knight: The Cainite Crusade sourcebook I am trying to create a major campaign.

I intend to base it heavily upon the book : The Sign and the Seal, by Graham Hancock.

This deals with the search for the Ark of the Covenant. Historically, the Templars are believed to have searched for it themselves, and found it. Though they appear not to have moved it.

While I have copious notes from the book, converting it to a Wod setting is not terribly easy. There are several questions:

1. Why has no one else found it?
2. How would the Celestial Chorus be involved?
3. As one train of thought links the Ark to ancient technology, how would the Technocracy be involved?

Anyone wishing to spend the time and effort to help me polish up a good setting for distribution can contact me. Please keep the discussion off gm-l as there is at least one reader who is playing in a version of this campaign a friend is currently running.

# Copyright info

*by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)*

"The nosferatu do not die like the bee when he stings once. His is only stronger; and being stronger, have yet more power to work evil. This vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages; . . . he can direct the elements, the storm, the fog, the thunder; he can command all meaner things; the rat, and the wolf; he can grow and become small; and he can at times vanish and come unknown. How then are we to begin our strike against him?"

- from Bram Stoker's, *Dracula*.

## The Church Knights

"Spirits that minish heaven and earth,  
That minish the land,  
Spirits that minish the land,  
Of giant strength,  
Of giant strength and giant tread,  
Demons like raging bulls, great ghosts,  
Seven are they!  
Knowing no care,  
They grind the land like corn;  
Knowing no mercy.  
They rage against mankind:  
They spill their blood like rain,  
Devouring their flesh and sucking their veins.  
Where the images of the gods are, there they quake  
In the Temple of Nabu, who fertilises the shoots of wheat.  
They are demons full of violence  
Ceaselessly devouring blood.  
Invoke the ban against them,  
That they no more return to this neighborhood.  
By heaven be ye exorcised! By earth be ye exorcised!"  
- ancient Assyrian incantation.

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# The Sword and the Word

*by James Seidel (12 Nov 94)*

The learjet banked, jolting Brother Reuben out of his meditative contemplation. Opening his eyes, he allowed himself a few moments of idle observation before making his preparations for arrival.

This learjet did not have the plush and luxurious outfitting of many of its business-class compatriots. Rather, its spartan interior spoke of the basic but functional efficiency the Militant Orders demanded of all equipment.

One of Reuben's companions sat opposite, across the narrow aisle, absently - but efficiently - stripping down and cleaning the weapon in his lap. Two other knights sat further apart, silently preparing themselves for the mission ahead.

Reuben was the only Hospitaller among the small band of knights: opposite was a Teutone and the other two belonged to the Order of the Temple. Holding the rank of Knight Lieutenant, Reuben would normally be in command of a combat team such as this. But this was no ordinary mission.

As his mind wandered, his body remembered a tenet of the Rule which had governed his life since becoming a knight so many years ago: If a you have no other task, see to your weapons. Almost instinctively, Reuben reached to the box at his feet - lifting out the first item encountered. Automatically he began to disassemble the pistol, polishing each part before placing them separately on his lap.

Reuben turned his head to study the prayerful profile of his Templar commander: Knight Captain Thomas Threaston. The grey haired, grizzled captain was something of a legend among the Orders, being a member of the first small band of knights which had successfully hunted down and captured a vampire - presenting it as irrefutable evidence to the Synod of Malta. His presence spoke of the seriousness of the mission, though details were still thin.

Reuben's hands had completed the task of breaking his weapon down, and now automatically reached for a phial of lubricant. The small city below had not been expected to produce severe trouble. Numbering only one million, only 10 vampires were expected to be counted among its populace.

But something had to have caused the complete loss of communication with the combat team sent there a month earlier. Reuben remembered the joyful face of a young Hospitaller sergeant who had been dispatched on this, his first mission. He was almost certainly dead.

The jet banked again, this time bringing the city into view through the portholes behind the Teutonic sergeant. Reuben's first glimpse of the city was a web of glittering lights, bordered on one side by the ocean and the other by a low mountain range - the golden glow of dawn gently adorning the peaks. It was a shame that something so beautiful could hide something as evil and vile as a vampire. Assembling the gun once again, Reuben paused to look at its battered handle. While the Glock 18 was a relatively new gun, it had been used hard since being placed within Reuben's care. Like all Reuben's possessions, it did not belong to him.

With only minutes left before landing, Reuben lifted his sword from its secure packaging under a Vatican Diplomatic Seal. This seal, and that of his own Order, was central in getting the Militant Order's equipment past custom's scrutiny all over the world. This was his second sword: the first having been shattered in the grip of a vengeful vampire. Only the quick actions of his companions had saved his life that day. It was a personal tragedy, losing one's first sword. He could still remember the day when it was given to him: "Take this sword; its brightness stands for faith, its point for hope and the guard for charity. Use it well . . .".

The new blade was in all ways the same as the first - and yet it was not the same.

Testing its edge with his thumb, Reuben was satisfied with the clean part in his skin that had not drawn blood.

Reuben re sheathed the sword as the learjet made its final descent. Looking up, he saw the anticipation in the eyes of his colleagues and prayed silently for a successful outcome.

Reuben's heart lifted when he saw the chapel. The drive from the airport under dawn's early rays had not impressed him. The rust- stained hulks of abandoned warehouses and factories were the first shapes to welcome him to this new country. The imposing and blocky skyscrapers of the inner-city did little more to impress.

But the old stone chapel somehow stood in a pool of morning light. The besieging gloom of long shadows seemed incapable of storming the hallowed walls. It was not a large building, in the sense of the enormous Gothic Cathedrals, but its perfectly proportioned and suitably adorned facade spoke volumes about the faith of its constructors.

Alongside were the church's offices, guest rooms and the cloister of a convent - all built of the same pale blue sandstone. The knights had not said much to one another since their arrival. Each was engaged in their own private contemplation of this new and dangerous environment. None could shake the thought that these dark, towering glass walls somewhere contained the secrets of their missing comrades.

As the cars pulled up in front of the chapel, and the knights emerged, a sombre chime began to ring from the stunted belltower. Locals turned their heads toward the sound as they walked past. It was not often nowadays that they felt its reassuring caress.

Standing at the head of the stairs was the local Bishop - resplendent in all his official finery. Signalling to a nearby attendant, the bishop gave instructions for the knights to be taken away. They were expected to attend chapel within half an hour, in full Militant regalia.

Few places enforced this ancient but traditional ritual of greeting. Reuben felt oddly reassured that the ceremony was taking place here.

Brother Thomas led the small parade down the aisle. Reuben followed, with the Teutone and the remaining Templar behind. It was a private ceremony, attended only by the church's officers and the nuns of the convent. As the four knights walked down the aisle to their appointed places, veiled heads turned and hushed whispers danced around the hall. Few of the sisters realised what the strange, cross-adorned mantles and surcoats represented. Some identified the black habit and white Maltese cross of Reuben's ceremonial robes, but few could place the white mantles of the Templars and the Teutone with their red and black crosses respectively.

The startled murmurs fell away quickly as the Bishop turned from the altar. With the knights standing - not kneeling - he lifted his arms and gave blessing.

"Brothers, welcome to our humble city. I regret not having received your predecessors in a similar manner, and now it seems too late. Troubled times have befallen our people, but it is comforting to know the swords of the Militant Order's stand beside us."

At this, excited murmurs sprung once again from the hall - quickly silenced by the doleful glare of the mother superior. Turning toward the altar, the Bishop raised his arms once again.

"Let us give thanks to the Lord for He is truly good . . . "

Reuben waited impatiently outside the doctor's consulting rooms. Three weeks of intense investigation had revealed much about the city's accursed occupants. They appeared little worried about concealing their presence - only their identities.

Teutonic knight Karl Orselensen had quickly identified the rise of a satanic cult among the street urchins, revolving around moon and blood worship. This had provoked Reuben's greatest fears - this was no ordinary band of vampires: it was the Sabbat. Little progress had been made as to the fate of the knights. It had become quickly obvious that the local bishop had "disapproved" of the team as its commander, a Teutonic Knight Lieutenant, had been a woman.

Reuben's own investigations had located an unwitting victim of one of these blood ceremonies. Now, his international standing as a blood-disorder research scientist had gained him access to the delirious young girl, who doctors said bore unusual puncture wounds on her throat.

Her psychiatric doctor had described her as a "paranoid schizophrenic", deluded by fears of devils tracking her down for her blood. The fact that her friends had disappeared under strange circumstances had little impact on the professional's diagnosis. The psychiatric hospital in which he sat more resembled a hotel - such was the attitude towards treating mentally disturbed "guests". Reuben approved. The door swung silently open. A casually dressed nurse moved into the room, her haggard eyes betraying the difficulties of her profession.

"Dr Reuben, Sara is ready to see you now."

Reuben got up from his chair quickly, the familiar bulk of his shoulder holster brushing against his chest. He always carried it there, just in case. . . Stepping into the room, Reuben saw a pathetic sight before him. A young woman, little more than 16- years of age, sat uncomfortably in a corner. Dressed in a white smock, her pale features and limp posture betrayed her heavy sedation.

"You have 10 minutes. I'll be outside if you need anything." The nurse closed the door behind her.

Reuben glanced about the room, quickly taking in the comfortable but functional surrounds.

Moved again by the destitute sight, Reuben muttered a short prayer beneath his breath - calling upon God to restore strength to her spirit. A familiar, gentle tingle washed through his body. Reuben knew his prayer had been answered, even before the girl lifted her head and smiled - the barest hint of life sparkling again in her eyes.

"Hello . . . Sara isn't it?" Reuben barely heard the meek, breathed reply.

"Well, Sara, I'm not like the other doctors you've seen. I know what happened to you was real, and I'm here to do something about it."

Startlement lifted her head higher, though her insidious fear soon clouded her features once again.

"There's no point. They'll get you too, just like the others."

Reuben's heart bounded. "The others?"

"Yes. You're one of them, aren't you? One of the knights?" Reuben forced down his surprise, breathing carefully before replying. "Yes I am. I am of the Order of St John, the Hospitallers. But I'd rather you not tell anyone that."

Sara looked up again, a slight hint of a smile curling her lips. "Yes. There was one of you with the others. He was nice." She looked away, her face saddened. "He's dead now, though."

A surge of sorrow welled up inside Reuben. The young knight had shown promise. "I'm sorry to hear that. He was my friend." Reuben turned, giving her a moment for her thoughts. Pulling up a chair, he sat before her, waiting for her attention to return. "Tell me Sara . . . tell me about the knights. What happened to them?"

She shifted uneasily on her seat. Reuben noticed the limpness had almost gone from her young body and color was returning to her face. He smiled inside, rejoicing in the power of his Lord. "They found us . . . mucking around in an old warehouse. We had drawn pentagrams on the floor. We'd been drinking . . . I'd thought it was nothing but a game."



As Sara hesitated, Reuben felt anger at how easily his enemy preyed upon the adventurous and naive nature of youth. He had heard this story, oh so many times . . .

"Then suddenly Brother Anthony was there. We all stopped. I . . . I was embarrassed . . . We had no clothes on. He simply walked over, put out the burners and erased the pentagram with his heel. He didn't shout or anything. We were all so shocked that we did nothing to stop him."

Reuben felt an up welling of pride for the dead knight. He had conducted himself perfectly in a situation that could easily have provoked outrage. Reuben breathed a short prayer, commending Anthony's soul to heaven.

Then, with a sob, the whole story bubbled forth. She told of how Anthony had won their support, helping them to deceive their coven as to their loyalty and compliance. Once the group of friends were invited to attend a "blood initiation rite" in an abandoned country town, the knights had prepared an ambush. It had gone horribly wrong. Sara's boyfriend had betrayed them all. She had escaped into the shadows only through a desperate diversion created by Anthony. She did not know what happened to him - or the others - only that no-one returned from the ghost town that night. Reuben led the sobbing girl from the room, giving her arm to the beleaguered nurse. He was without doubt that Sara would soon recover fully from her affliction, though the scars of memory would pain her for the rest of her life.

The cold night air chilled Reuben as he slung his sword over his shoulder, tightening the belt at his chest. The sun had just set, and the full moon had already begun its march across the heavens.

A little more than five minutes ago he had made the rendezvous with his companions at the lonely hillside road-stop. The four cars were parked in a protective circle, the knights donning their combat equipment quickly and efficiently.

His hands automatically began a re-check of his gear: spare magazine on the left forearm and right thigh - check; bayonet on left calf - check; stun grenades right hip - check; magazine pouch on rear belt - check . . .

His dark grey fire retardant suit hid the moulded ballistic plastic armor plates attached to his body.

With armor and sword, he was as ready for battle as his brethren had been in the deserts of old Outremer. Glancing around, Reuben saw the other knights had also finished gearing up.

Brother Orselensen, who would act as supportman, hefted his HK-G11 assault rifle. The burly but quiet Austrian brother's role called for strong firepower in order to support other engaged knights.

Knight Captain Threaston stood over the bonnet of his car, going over a map of the abandoned town one last time.

The Templar Knight Sergeant, Ian Dulette, was on point. He cradled the standard MP2000 in his arms, but his webbing was laden with extra items such as bolt cutters and plastic explosives. Brother Dulette was the one who had discovered the Coven was planning another ceremony at the town to mark their victory over the previous combat team. He and Captain Threaston had encountered a ghoulish creature trying to procure young victims at a parkside debutante ball. Fearing both for his life and his soul, the pitiful creature told the knights all he knew. He now rested securely under the care of a local Dominican monastery.

It would be a tough fight. It was a full moon. Somehow the Sabbat drew strength from this.

Reuben pulled on his respirator. Though cumbersome and bulky, it served the double purpose of protecting against any disruptive gasses and concealing his identity. He had worn the mask so often now during training he hardly noticed its presence. Reuben's role was that of defenceman and medic. His haversack contained most of the combat team's explosives and medical supplies. In action, it was his specific task to protect the pointsman and act as second in command.

"Alright, brothers. This is it. May the Lord look with favor upon our purpose."

Reuben slipped a magazine into the breach of his MP2000 as Captain Threaston ordered the small company into action.

It was the early hours of the morning when Reuben belly crawled into the small depression on the side of town that represented the knights command post. Sliding alongside Captain Threaston, Reuben made his gruesome report.

He had found the remains of Brother Anthony before the altar of a ruined church. The knight sergeant had perished from grenades tossed into the roofless building after slaying a vampire that had braved the holy ground. The fact that his body had not yet been removed indicated the grounds still protected him from evil, making it difficult for any Kindred to approach.

Reuben placed the fused plastic form of Anthony's automatic pistol in Threaston's hands. The blessed weapon had obviously melted itself in the hands of a vampire, preventing its use for wrongdoing.

Captain Threaston took the weapon reverently, placing it in his backpack. "He fought bravely and well. Martyrdom is his - we should all be thankful."

Threaston lifted his image-enhancing field glasses to his eyes. "We have not found the others. There are bullet holes and blast marks aplenty, though. It was obviously a fierce fight." Twisting onto one elbow, Threaston handed Reuben the glasses. "We've found the Sabbat. There's a group of twenty people sitting silently in the darkness on the east end of town. They started a chant about 10 minutes ago and lit their little incense burners. Give them another five minutes and they'll all be as high as clouds."

Reuben peered through the glasses. The stark black and white image jumping into his awareness.

"Ian and Karl are in the trees, waiting for instructions. We'll move once the blood-suckers arrive."

The town was hardly that. The small cluster of about 10 houses focussed on what was the regional church and school grounds. That was obviously a long time ago.

As Reuben lifted his glasses to the wood, his eye caught movement among the foliage about the reveller's small clearing. Six shadowy figures surrounded the glen before waiting motionless. The ritual was not yet complete.

Silently imploring God to reveal the forms' nature, Reuben's senses perceived a pale nimbus emanating from the shapes. "Captain, I think they've just arrived."

With silent speed only brought about by intense training, both knights rapidly closed the ground between them and the heathens.

Upon ducking into the cover of the trees, Captain Threaston thumbed the small button controlling his respirator mask's small radio unit. He spoke in Latin. "We go in once they approach their herd."

That was all that needed to be said.

With the help of his training, Reuben knew exactly where to expect his companions to emerge. Lifting his submachinegun, he centred the infra-red sights on the cold torso of a vampire standing within his designated field of fire.

The noise from the coven increased. The chant was becoming desperate, the participants enthralled by drug induced ecstasy - flinging their now naked bodies about in a primitive dance. Swiftly but silently, the vampires moved forward - toward their prey.

Simultaneously, Captain Threaston's weapon spat softly - three rounds leapt from the silenced and flash-suppressed weapon. Instantly the other knights followed suit. Reuben tightened the grip on his own trigger, sending two accurately controlled bursts at the two vampires within his zone. Both shapes jerked with the impact of a possible 15 9mm shells each. Both went down to the ground.

Quickly glancing around, he saw three of the other vampires were also down. The sixth had dashed into the middle of the now screaming mass of unclad bodies, grabbing two and holding them against him.

Automatically, Reuben leapt up - shouldering his gun and drawing his sword. At the edge of his perception he saw his comrades following suit.

Rushing forward, Reuben's blade flashed dimly in the moonlight. The closest of his vampires had struggled to its knees, its wounds already mostly healed. Quickly, Reuben swung his sword. The decapitated creature's head barely had time to touch the ground before it dissolved.

Dust, smoke and screams filled the night air. But the sight before Reuben stood out clearly.

The second vampire, its teeth bared and claws extended was advancing rapidly. A wave of fear passed quickly - Reuben knew what it was he faced, and had long since given his life to the Lord's service. Death would only bring him closer to God.

Quickly reaching for his thigh-holstered pistol, Reuben hesitated. Many worshippers had begun running frantically towards the town and were passing behind his quarry.

His hesitation cost him.

The vampire leapt forward at superhuman speed, its claw's raking deep scores across his fireproof suit. A brief moment of surprise flashed across the creature's face as its talons encountered the armor.

Before Reuben could react, the vampire flung a punch at Reuben's head - sending him to the ground, mind reeling. Struggling to free his bayonet, a piercing cry cut through the clearing.

"Desparte Ferre". The vampire, now stooping, ready to tear out his throat, recoiled in fear. Then its body was rent with the impact of dozens of fletchette rounds. Brother Karl had a good eye. . .

The vampire turned as if to run, but stumbled into the path of Captain Threaston instead. With the flash of a blade, another vampire returned to whence it should have been - dust.

Reuben struggled to his feet, taking in the scene rapidly. On the far side of the fire was the sixth vampire, still clutching the painted body of a woman close. Karl stood at stand-off, his assault rifle shouldered.

Brother Dulette was slumped against a tree, blood welling up from under his armor. His face was blank under the pain-reducing meditation all knights were taught as a novice. Captain Threaston was scanning the tree line, seeking a vampire which had escaped.

Reuben scrambled over to the wounded Brother and quickly examined the wound. A piece of his own armor had gouged into the flesh under his left rib-cage. Dulette's life-blood was ebbing away.

Imploring mercy, Reuben prayed in all earnestness for Dulette's life. Placing his hands above the wound, the holy tingle surged through his body and the blood flow slowed. Seeing his chance, Reuben quickly grabbed a medical kit and rapidly applied dressings and sedatives.

All this time he could hear and feel the supernatural standoff occurring behind him. But he knew his brothers could handle it, and concentrated on his task.

Finished, Reuben felt drained - his spiritual Grace was obviously wearing thin. He stood and turned to the drama unfolding behind him. Four powdery patches defiled the ground, each marking the final death of one of the Corrupt.

The vampire was in the form of a young man, decked out in all the black leather trappings of a motorcycle gang member. The unconscious form of a young woman hung limp in the vampire's grip - mercifully unconscious.

Captain Threaston made a slow display of sheathing his sword. Gradually stretching his arms out in front of his body, he spoke in a soothing tone.

"Come now. You are obviously young in the blood. There is still a chance to reconcile your soul with the Lord. Let the girl go."

"Don't give me that bullshit," came the rasping reply as it wrenched the girl's head higher. "What about the others - you didn't give them a chance to play 'confession' time!"

Threaston took a small step closer. "You were all warned by the knights who arrived two months ago."

"Yeah! We kicked their butts real fine" the creature spat. "I'll have your blood nicely chilled in a champagne bottle before this is all over."

Threaston took another soft step forward.

"Don't come any closer, man, or this girl's a rag doll." Reuben slowly retrieved his sword - his MP2000 was too far away.

The vampire saw him. Without hesitation, it moved to wrench the girl's neck.

Before it's arm had gained sufficient leverage, a hail of fletcher's ripped through the creature's face - tearing off part of its skull. The vampire went down, dropping the unconscious girl into the fire as it collapsed.

"NO!" bellowed Karl, dropping his gun and sprinting to the fire. Threaston was closer. He dived into the flames, lifting the now screaming girl out of the heat as he rolled. He jumped up, brushing the clinging cinders from his fire retardant suit. Reuben immediately ran to the girl's side, rolling her onto her unharmed front. Large charred welts extended from her thigh to her shoulders.

Karl did not hesitate. He kept running, pulling the safety cap off a flare as he ran.

The vampire was almost on its feet again, it's shattered skull miraculously whole.

Karl leapt at the creature, thrusting the spark-spitting torch at it's face. It reeled back in horror, but retained enough presence of mind to lash out with a desperate kick.

It struck Karl on the hip with a sickening crunch of bone. The sergeant stumbled, but to the creature's surprise remained standing.

Karl reached for his pistol: the vampire turned and ran. Lifting the pistol to a firing pose, the Teutone let go a full 18 round clip of 9mm shells. He saw some impact, but the creature still kept going.

Threaston charged past, his own pistol in hand.

With the vampire out of sight, Karl sprawled on the ground - a moan of pain escaping from his lips.

Reuben, seeing the girl was out of any immediate danger, went to his brother knight's side.

"I'm sorry brother, but I'm all used up." He hesitated. "I've only got enough Graal water for the other two, I'm sorry." Reuben removed a pain-killing needle from his pouch, injecting it into the crumpled hip.

Karl chuckled: "Our Hospitaller has all his ward's full. Don't worry. Leave me some time to meditate and I'll make a start on it myself." More seriously: "Bring me my gun, they may return yet."

Reuben complied before removing his rucksack and pulling out a small metal phial. Pouring some over the sobbing girls wounds, he looked on with wonderment as the blisters receded and the welts closed. God's power never ceased to amaze him.

After muttering a few words of encouragement, he moved to Dulette's side, lifting the phial to his lips. The Teutone coughed and spluttered, then fell into a deep sleep.

Threaston came jogging back into the clearing, his movement tracked all the way into the light by Karl's assault rifle.

"They both got away."

"Sire, I have come before God, before you and the brothers and sisters of this Order, and I beg and require you in the name of God and of Our Lady to accord to me your company and the benefits of the house, as one who will henceforth always be its servant and slave."

Reuben allowed himself a smile as the familiar words echoed around the old stone chamber. His stark black robes stood out among the white-clad company he was in. This was a chapter meeting of the Teutonic Knights. While not unprecedented, it was rare for a member of one Order to attend a Chapter of another.

But then, these were rare circumstances.

The supplicant before the altar had been sponsored by Reuben as a novice for his own Order. However, her skills and ambition soon proved beyond what the Hospitallers were prepared to grant women.

Her solution was simple: petition the Teutonic Knights for a "transfer". Such a move had caused quite a stir among the Orders, but Reuben - as her guarantor - had supported her every move.

It was five years after finding the emotionally bruised but determined young Sara sleeping on the steps of a foreign chapel - awaiting the return of his combat team from confronting the creatures that had done her harm.

Now, Reuben watched as the grey novitiate cloak was taken from her shoulders, and the Knight-Preceptor stepped forward with a white mantle with the Teutone's black "iron" cross. "Good sister, you are asking a great thing, for you see only the outer shell of our religion. . . "

Reuben had seen her rarely in the intervening years, though reports from her superiors demonstrated the promise of her abilities and the strength of her faith. Five years was a short time in which to complete a novitiate and gain all the skills necessary to become a knight. Reuben hoped she had learnt well, as her life and those of others depended upon it.

"Take this sword, its brightness stands for faith, its point for . . . "

A twinge of sadness intruded upon Reuben's thoughts. The blade she was about to receive had belonged to Brother Anthony who sacrificed his life in order to save hers. Reuben prayed she would do honor to its previous owner.

The ceremony drew near its close: the atmosphere charged with emotion and worship.

Sara stood before the chapter, presenting herself to her comrades. The Knight-Preceptor turned from the altar:

"Now go, may God make you worthy men."

Sara smiled.