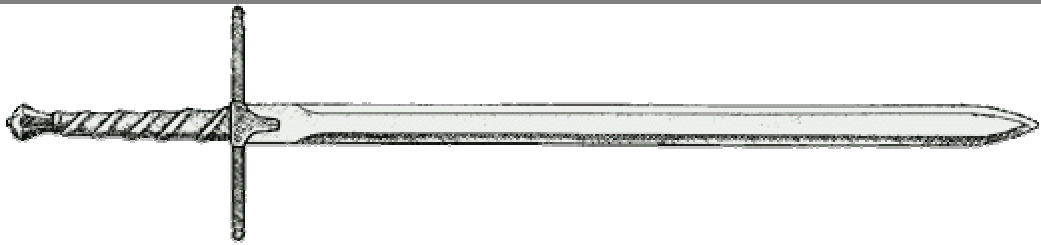


# The Order Of The Sword Of Saint Jerome

## For Call Of Cthulhu



This set of pages is the result of a research work, and subsequent discussions, about one of the less known organizations in the Call of Cthulhu universe.

The Order of the Sword of Saint Gerome is briefly described in Chaosium's Keeper's Compendium, as a secretive organization devoted to the study of the Mythos on behalf- originally - of the Catholic Church, and today of its devious and paranoid masters.

Five short paragraphs is all we get.

And yet, those five paragraphs are extremely suggestive.

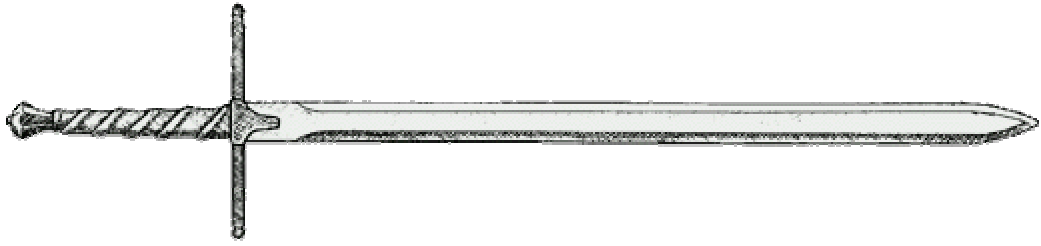


The following pages will not reveal how a 5th century Saint, patron of Translators and Satirists, came to be involved with the Mythos.

On the other hand, the **Order** itself will be dissected for the edification and instruction of keepers and players alike. **Theories** about its birth and official demise will be offered. **Symbols** will be discussed. The seat of the Order's **Library**, and part of its contents will be revealed. The **inner workings** of the Order, its aims and some of its chief members will be detailed.

All for the sake of the game.

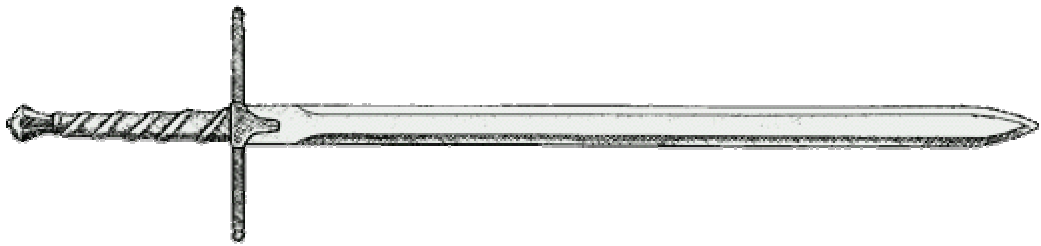
The nearby buttons will lead you to the appropriate files - note that they are presented following the order in which the general research was developed.



And as we are rather serious about our games, time is come to give credit where credit's due:

- **Keith Herber** dreamed up the Order in the first place.
- The **Delta Green List Members** started the discussion and kept it going
- The **Emerald Hammer Crew** asked for some Order involvement in the Roman Chapter
- Some of this material was tested on live members of the **Tuesday Evening Team**.
- **Chaosium, Inc.** holds the rights to the Call of Cthulhu RPG and its supplements, including the Compendium.
- The gentlemen at **Pagan Publishing** created Delta Green.
- The **Catholic Church** has nothing to do with all this, but still has all of our respect - this is just gaming material and it was not our intention to offend anybody's sensibilities.

All references to real events or persons - if not with a clear satirical intent - are unintentional.



- This document is dedicated to the members of the **Strange Vistas Volcano-Jumping Team**.

# The Monastery

According to the Keeper's Compendium, the secret base, command center and most important the seat of the famed Library of the Order of the Sword of St. Jerome is somewhere in the Alps, in a monastery.

I always placed the secret base of the Order on the top of Monte Pirchiriano, that's in the Alps all right, halfway between Italy and France, on the south side of Susa Valley.

Why there?

- on the top of the mountain stands one of the most ancient (no less than 1000 years old) monasteries in the Alpine area.

- the monastery is dedicated to St. Michael (archangel, wielder of the sword and banisher of the dragon)

- despite its highly strategic position (as it dominates the best communication way between two nations), the monastery was never occupied by passing troops - even if it was object of a cannon barrage in the 17th century. Not even the nazis got there, as the Vatican put its foot down hard.

- the monastery is famous for its great collection of ancient books (sadly closed to the public)



The area is well known for its long history of uncanny happenings, so much so that nearby Mount Musiné (ancient Mons Asinarius), right in front of Mount Pirchiriano, is the object of much study from assorted crackpots as an occult power center/ufo landing base.

It must also be noted that while an highly isolated spot, and extremely easy to defend, the St. Michael monastery has all the advantages of being in the sticks while being fairly close to civilization (about 40 minutes driving from Caselle International Airport).



Considering it occupies the whole peak - imagine three large four/five-floors buildings plus a cathedral set around a largish square - plus various subsidiary buildings (today ruins) scattered down the side of the mountain, the place is big.

Some highlights on the structure's history could be interesting.

- According to tradition, Mount Pirchiriano was used as a fortified base by the passing troops of Emperor Charles Magnus in the 8th century. The summit of the mountain probably housed an observation post.

- In the mid 900s Giovanni, the Bishop of Ravenna, sensing that the end of the world is close at hand, decides to leave all mundane things behind and goes looking for a suitably isolated spot for a bit of ascetic activity. Reaching Susa Valley - about 700 kms from Ravenna - he first sets his sights on nearby Mount Caprasio, but Saint Michael himself soon steps in and with a little persuasion (which includes a host of flying creatures that by night move the building materials from one mountain to the other)

convinces the former Bishop that Mount Pirchiriano is a better place.

● About ten years later, Hugh lord of Auvergne (or is it Averoine?), to pay for his many sins is offered a choice by his friend Pope Silvester II - either seven years of exile, or building a monastery. He goes for the second, and, having discovered the Pirchiriano area thanks to Giovanni's shack, buys the whole mountain from the Dukes of Turin and builds a great monastery. The place is manned by a particularly strict group of Benedictine monks - whose upper echelons normally come from Auvergne.



● The place prospers. In 1120, the architect Nicolò (already employed by many Italian lords) is called to redesign the whole structure. He does, adding to the monastery a wealth of esoteric and occult symbols, including the "Porta dello Zodiaco" (Zodiac Gate) of the new cathedral. The symbols are the usual (?) odd mix of Christian and pagan stuff. The library is renowned in all of Europe. Among the many frescoes adorning the place, we can find one of Sword-wielding, book-holding St. Brigid.



● All goes for the best till 1622.

In this year, pope Gregorio XV suppresses the monastery - for no known reasons - and the last three remaining monks manning the premises are forced to leave.

A few years later - apparently with the pope's leave - the French troops use the monastery as a target for gunnery practice on their way to the siege of Turin.

● The place is left alone on its mountain till 1827.

In this year, marquis Massimo d'Azeglio (later one of the key characters in the Italian Independence, and almost

certainly a member of the Freemasons and the Carbonari), while on a tour of the Alps "discovers" the remains of the monastery and spends a few weeks drawing pictures of the place. He publishes his drawings in a book (1829) and starts a movement to rebuild the structure. In less than a decade the place is refurbished under the aegis of the King of Savoy and given to the Rosminian monks - a group close to the Savoy dynasty.

And this is more or less it.

● According to some sources, the monastery in which is set Eco's "The Name of the Rose" is inspired by the San Michele monastery. In particular the semi- allucinatory description of the church's gate is an accurate - if baroque - description of the already mentioned Zodiac Gate.

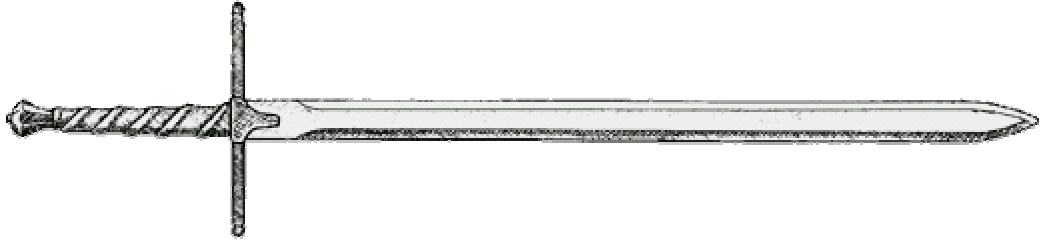


## Structure of the Order

Reading the Keeper's Compendium, we find out that the Order of the Sword of St. Jerome is said to be commanded by a monk living somewhere in an Alpine monastery. If we use St. Michael here in the Susa Valley - as discussed inearlier - the guy's probably a Dominican or a Rosminian, even if the structure was originally part of the Benedictine network.

All these orders are perfect for the job - their rules are based on hard work and study, they share a history

of library building and preservations (Benedictines), active faith support (Dominicans) and teaching (Rosminians).



## The Order of the Sword of St. Jerome

St. Jerome never had a sword in the proper sense.

The iconography sometimes portais him beating his breast with a stone, and the stone as a symbol of the whole Order is a suitably metaphoric icon: it's humble and unassuming, zen-like in its semplicity - the ideal monk's device - and yet it can be used as an offensive tool - it's just a matter of knowledge; it carries no signs or writings or crests of any type, and therefore it pays no allegiance to wordly powers.

It would not be surprising should it be discovered that Order members and "friendlies" carry a small river pebble - possibly of the distinctive Val Susa blue-green serpentine stone - as a charm/identification symbol.

The Order of the Sword of St. Jerome is - if we are to believe the Compendium - the Religious equivalent of Delta Green: a former legit structure, later disbanded and keeping in activity against orders.

This clandestine situation influences the structure of the Order that, contrary to lawful orders, can't keep schools and train its own, and can't get any form of funding through the official channels.

St. Jerome not having a school of its own, it has to head-hunt suitable candidates wherever they spring up. We have already discussed the fact that the hardcore of the Order should be formed by Benedictine, Dominican or Rosminian fathers.

● **The Rosminian Ascetic Order** was founded in the Ossola region (Piedmont/Lombardy, on the Italian-Swiss border) in 1828 (they were approved by the Vatican in 1839). The Rosminian Rule emphasizes "passivity", and is also one of the few Rules that allow members a form of private propriety. They are also bound to provide any kind of service required by the local Bishop. The Rosminian order is quite active in Italy and in England - where it promoted a return to Christianity - and has missions in Ireland, North America and Africa. Rosminian Schools are often seen as the thinking man's alternative to Jesuit schools.

● **The Dominican Order** deserves quite a few books by itself. They were founded in 1215, on a Rule emphasizing poverty and dedication, as a means to fight heresy (and the Cathar heresy in particular). Later they were given the responsibility for handling the Inquisition - their black and white uniform becoming a distinctive sign. They spread as missionaries to the whole known world. Their schools formed characters of the calibre of St. Thomas Aquinas. The rule has been substantially the same this last 700-odd years.

● **The Benedictine order** - the term is not proper, as they act as a confederation of monasteries - is most famous for its book-preserving activity during the Dark Ages and today for its continuous activity preserving and restoring ancient tomes. Founded in 529, they underwent various transformations and changes - the most recent being the one imposed by pope Leon in 1893, that brought back to Rome the control of the structure. The order was given a missionary characterization by Pope Pius XI and is today present worldwide with Monasteries, Pories and Colleges.

I've been unable to trace recent data about the number of fathers in these orders.

Data from the early 70s are

Dominican - 8000 members

Rosminian - 800+ members

Considering the expansion of the orders and the contraction of the vocations, these figures are probably close to the current ones.

A 1% participation to the St. Jerome conspiracy would mean about 90 guys, plus all the others head-hunted in other orders.

The number is more than sufficient, considering that in my working hypothesis the Order is just the administrative head and archive of a larger setup.

The funding issue is more controversial, but here the Rosminian might come in handy, with their allowance for private propriety.

The matter should be investigated further.

## **Activities.**

The two main activities of St. Jerome - according to the scant sources available - are data gathering and the coordination of field operations.

About data gathering, all we know is

- a . the Order had (has?) access to the Vatican Library Z Collection
- b . the Order has a secret base in the Alps (possibly already identified) and
- c . such base should hold a collection of Mythos related books (inference).

It is reasonable to imagine that at least part of the Z Collection material was duplicated by the Order in its heyday, chiefly for security purposes - the Z Coll books can't be checked out, and yet Order operatives needed a handy reference in their activities.

Part of the work of the order this last 100 years might as well have been the painstaking reconstruction of the no-longer accessible Z Collection tomes by collation and cross-referencing of notes, partial copies and such.

No wonder the guys are supposed to be half mad (more on book-handling later).

To this patchy but fascinating collection, we can add any other book or artefact recovered since the official disbanding of the Order.

The coordination of field operations will be covered more extensively when I'll touch upon the Executive arm (the Knights) and the Friendlies (the Longa Manus).

Here we can postulate a central decision-making organism - based in the Monastery - and local area administrators, probably attached to legit institutions in administrative or teaching positions.

## Studying the Mythos

Considering the level of hazard that comes maintaining and studying a Mythos library, a way must be devised to (relatively) protect the sanity of the students while keeping study a practical activity.

This is not the Miskatonic Library we are dealing with, or the Z Coll, where the lone student of uncanny stuff goes once in his lifetime to have his mind messed up big time, but where otherwise the books rest in the lonely darkness of their shelves. We are dealing with the fundamental tool of the Order: a knowledge database. Having the researchers go mental all of a sudden is bad for business (and Delta Green should know - read the history book).

Monastic tradition offers a handy tactic, at least where Major Tomes – the real Sanity Blockbusters - are concerned. By comparison with the Necronomicon, the scribblings of Edward Derby are lightweight and can be handled by the lower ranks.

A single father adopts a single tome, devoting his life to the study, transcription or translation or research of the same, and to the training of his successors.

When facing the Mythos, the Fathers Librarians can simply gather around a table and brainstorm over the latest field report, passing the photos and the pretzels around the table as they talk it over.

While sitting in on one of these sessions would surely be an experience worth remembering, the overall loss of SAN of this practice is probably gentler than the one suffered by a single researcher cross-referencing a handful of major tomes.

Sure, the old boys are pretty rattled, but still have a relative grip on reality.

Their Faith possibly shields them from the worst losses.

Each Father Librarian will most likely be around 60 - this is a logical assumption considering the time spent as a religious and/or as a friendly before being recruited, the training time, and the time spent to achieve a good knowledge of the Tome he has been given. The study has to be slow to dilute as much as possible the shocking value of the text.

Also, any friar worth his salt would spend in prayer about twice the time spent reading the Necronomicon, after each sitting.

The FL are probably residents of the Secret Base and do not see any active fieldwork.

### Trainees

Each father librarian is assisted by two trainees, the senior and the junior - the former being the proper pupil, while the later works more as a common assistant and possibly being shared among two or more Librarians.

The trainees have the double duty of assisting the father while learning from him, and keeping an eye on the old bird should he start babbling about summoning great Shub-Wankalot.

The atmosphere of veiled distrust is a taste of what's to come, and the guys develop quite a bit of experience at judging character (hence the psichology rating of the Librarian).

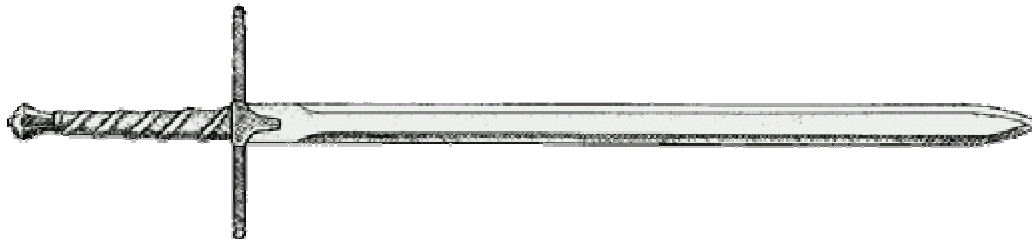
In some instances, trainees can be former friendlies that proved their worth and knowledge on the field. The practice of promoting field operatives to the post of Librarian is probably frowned upon by the hard-liners, as a field operative has probably seen enough not to stay focused on a single tome/subject.

The trainees reside at the Monastery for periods of time, and are granted a certain mobility that the Librarian lacks. In this sense they can be useful appendages of the father in his data gathering activity -

even if friendlies should be employed in this function.

When the Librarian joins the Good Sheperd, the senior trainee is given the position, while with time the junior, after a thorough debriefing, will be sent back in the world as area coordinator or given a job as a consultant to the Knights. Two new trainees are appointed.

The systems therefore grants a continuous study of the Mythos, and sees also to the technical training of both specialist librarians and generic members of the order.



## The Knights of St. Jerome

The iconiography of St. Jerome includes a tamed lion, as a symbol of restrained, or controlled strenght. The Lion is an apt crest for the Knights of St. Jerome, those that face the Mythos in the wide world. It must not be confused with St. Mark's Lion, which is winged and often found in the Mediterranean area as it was the symbol of Venice.

The Knights are those full-time members of the order that operate in the world to collect data and to react - or coordinate reaction - wherever the Mythos surfaces.

The term "Knights", therefore, must not give any false impression: while it is true that this branch of the Order does include military trained personnel (see later), this is not an exclusively fighting entity.

For the Order, an old tome secured in the Monastery (and no longer at large with the power of corrupting human souls) is a battle won against the forces of darkness.

Some thought must also go to the Mythos/Satan connection.

The Order is clearly informing the Mythos into Christian orthodoxy, and therefore its members place much more stock in the power of prayer than the average Mythos investigator. While this somehow makes the members of the Order more resilient to SAN loss, it can lead to extremely unpleasant consequences.

## Military Element of the Knights - The Missing 25

No data are available at the moment about the original Knights of Our Lord, the original noble guard charged with the security of the Pope and disbanded in 1801

Currently, the Vatican employs two military units for its security purposes.

● **the Pope's Honour Guard** - created by pope Pius VII in 1801 as a replacement for the aforementioned Knights, this military unit has also operated under the denomination of *Guardia Nobile del Corpo di Nostro Signore* (Our Lord's Noble Bodyguard), and Noble Pontifical Guards. The first duty of the Honour Guard is the protection of the Pope in all circumstances (religious ceremonies excepted). No accurate number is available for this unit, but it is traditionally composed by the cadet sons of the first noble families in Rome.



The Honour Guard does not supply the Order with manpower - the members are generally considered too unreliable. It is on the other hand possible that the Order infiltrated the unit as a way to keep an eye on the Pope.

● **The Pontifical Swiss Guard** - officially formed in 1505 by pope Giulio II (but the practice of employing Swiss mercenaries dates from the early 14th century), the corp counted a few hundreds of men till the reformation of the service in 1914, and later reductions in 1959. Their duty includes the guarding of the gates of the vatican City and the security service in the Pope's antechambers.

The official setup of the force is: 4 commanding officers, 23 non-commissioned officers, 2 drummers and 70 guards.

Pope Paul VI further unofficially reduced the force in the late 60s of an unaccounted-for 25 units - 25 trained men (one commanding officer, 4 noncommissioned officers and 20 troopers) that are still in the official regulations of the force but do not serve in the Vatican City.

This brings us to

### **The Missing 25**

Actually recorded as "reserve" for administrative purposes - the Twentyfivers act as the armed force of the Order of St. Jerome. In the last 30 years the effective number of men thus employed has fluctuated freely over and under 25. While normally recruited through the same channels that bring the Swiss Guard in Rome, the Missing 25 are doing without all of the ritualistic elements of their legit counterparts, opting for a profile that is as low as possible.

Note that this element can play - and in fact did play through the Order history - a significant role in the psychological makeup of the 25; to compensate the lack of visible prestige that defending the Head of the Church clearly give to his Guard, the Missing generally emphasize their role as elite force doing the Lord's bidding - a dangerous attitude indeed.

Their service is considered - rightly - stressful to say the least: it features all the restrictions and hardships of the regular Swiss Guard service, plus all the contingent problems that a delta Green operative can easily imagine.

While candidates are screened for obvious unbalances before being offered a position, the strong self-image, coupled with all the other sources of stress, can bring some of these men close to the edge. While not cliched religious fanatics, fanaticism can be a professional hazard for the guys.

Duties of the corp include

- Guarding the Monastery - 5 men are regularly stationed at the Monastery, rotating on three weeks tours of duty.
- Escorting Field Operatives - depending on the gravity of the situation and mission, a maximum of three men can be detached to act as bodyguards for externally operating Order members (see following section)
- Ultimate Response - in extreme cases, a maximum of ten men can be given carte blanche in Mythos sensitive operations (see later).

The sheer value of a small corp of dedicated, trained men that are also full fledged members of the conspiracy cannot be stressed enough - even if all Twentyfivers are ready to sacrifice their lives for their ideal, the loss of each of them is a grave loss to the Order.

A ten-men team with a support team of three or four Pilgrims plus a few assorted friendlies is the kind of strength that the Order would put in the field facing something like Innsmouth.

It is not surprising at this point that little or no account of the Missing 25 activities are available.

## **The Other Knights - Pilgrims**

With the term Pilgrim is generally indicated a full member of the order that operates outside of the Monastery.

The name comes from the fact that the guys go where the Order sends them.

The number of Pilgrims is comparatively small - less than fifty individuals is a reasonable guess.

The role of Pilgrims is generally that of area coordinators; their contact with the Mythos is not commonplace, as they can act through a wide network of (largely unknowing) friendlies.

Friendly handling and data discrimination are therefore the main duties of the Pilgrim, so that a single man can take care of a relatively large area.

Should a friendly unhear some kind of important fact, data or activity, the Pilgrim's course is generally:

- assessing the situation
- informing the Monastery
- follow up the facts in person unless different orders are issued

The final aim is to determine the nature of the threat, cauterizing it as fast as possible (more on this later) while acquiring all the documentary material available.

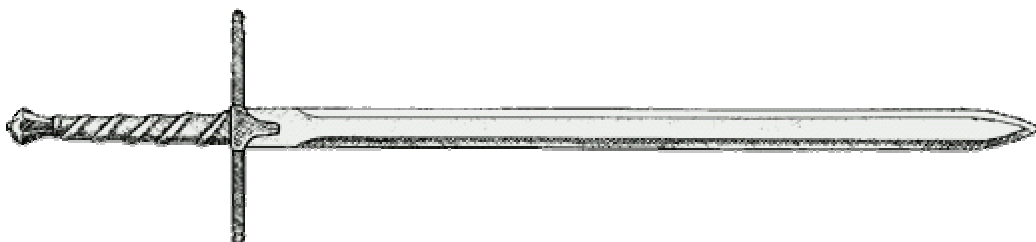
In other words, Pilgrims are not exclusively desk-bound bureaucrats, even if the bulk of their job is handled from behind a desk. Typical positions for St. Jerome Pilgrims are: university or seminary teachers, members of the Bishop's staff, coordinator for humanitarian organizations, consultants with publishing houses or media agencies, spiritual counselors to well placed characters.

While on field mission, Pilgrims are allowed to carry a sidearm - generally a hold-out gun handled at the basic level.

Should the situation require it, Pilgrims are allowed to ask for support, in the form of more specialized researchers or troops.

Both requests are generally frowned upon: the Pilgrim should be authoritatively placed enough in the local community to be able to avail himself of local support without attracting undue suspicion.

In terms of troops, a single Twentyfiver is generally considered enough to handle normal cultist occurrences: the Order line of action in this sense is simply assessing the cult's activity, collecting data and then fixing things so that the local outhorities, once informed, will take care of the problem without coming in contact with Mythos evidence.



# Pawns of the Order

St. Jerome carries a skull and an hourglass in his iconography - while Longa Manus does not have any kind of symbol, both are significant tokens; for a LM operative, the outlook is grim and the hours are numbered.

"Longa manus" both means "long arm" and "cat's paw".

The Longa Manus project is part of a renovation plan brought to the Order by one of its latest and most active members - former Salesian priest and maverick father Ludovico Sabatini - and redesigns the traditional friendlies community.

The Longa Manus men and women are not Order members. They are not into the details of the conspiracy, they do not know about the structure organization or background, they are not entitled to any kind of support or protection apart from those that are given to the operation - in other words, St. Jerome supports and protects "the mission", not the operatives.

They can be employed as scouts and explorers, low-sensitivity data retrievers, observers, correspondents, baits and decoys.

Longa Manus operatives are alone.

Their part-time job does not entitle them to a symbol, a weapon or a pension plan.

Only God will look after his own.

The range of talents available to the Order is enormous: from academical staff contacted through catholic Universities to criminals scouted by prison chaplains (themselves unknowing friendlies), any kind of service can be obtained.

The group operates through a network of innocuous looking favours exchanged, University or privately-funded research projects, small coercitions and - rarely - mercenary services.

A distinction is probably in order at this point, between plain friendlies and proper Longa Manus operatives.

## Friendlies

For all practical purposes, with the term "friendly" will be labelled a contact or source of information of the order whose involvement with the Mythos is minimal, and whose role is chiefly passive. They are connected with the Order Area Coordinator, pass their informations along to him and act (if ever) upon his instructions (see below).

Friendlies are the passive sensors of the Order - the ones that pick up the curious factoid, the weird news bit or the uncanny confession, and report it back (to a pen friend, to a regular chess adversary, to a direct superior, to the confessor).

Friendlies are seldom if ever required to play an active role in an Operation; they could be asked, as a small personal favour, to hold for a few days a box of hardware that two young German-accented guys will pick up, or to fix two rooms in a small hotel and a rental car for a friend of a friend that's passing through, but nothing more.

The actual number of Order friendlies cannot be guessed at, nor can be guessed their placing and position.

This is theoretically a low risk job.

## **Longa Manus**

To qualify for the Longa Manus tag, a friendly has to see active service and survive, and be available for another go. Note that the actual Mythos knowledge of a friendly should not be more than a smattering, a vague awareness that not all is what it seems, but little else.

Many years of trial and error have shown the Order that the ideal set-up for a first-line investigative team is a two-men unit, a character with the right academical background and another with more mundane skills, including the ability to fight back.

While Area Coordinators are constantly on the look-out for prospect Longa Manus recruits, the testing of the operatives and the final decision rests on the Monastery, and on father Sabatini in particular - the same that will impart orders on LM teams in time of need.

On some occasions, the father likes to meet and personally assess the prospect ops, an attitude that is generally seen as a liability by the Order hard-liners - an ostile force might follow the network from the LM ops, through Sabatini, up to the Order.

According to the memorandum sent to Area Coordinators, the ideal LM man (or woman) should possess the following characteristics

- a curious mind
- an open attitude towards the world in general
- a varied culture independent of the academical background ("we do not want monomaniacs")
- an active will to work for the betterment of humanity
- a positive attitude towards the works of the Church

As it will be seen later, not all operatives stick to this "blue-eye" attitude - Sabatini is more than willing to forget insubordination, criticism or personal initiative when the payback is positive (and when the operatives are the only ones in line to pay should their attitude bring forth disaster).

## Notes On The History of the Order

Historically, St. Jerome (San Girolamo in Italian) was a Church Father from the 4th century, an extremely strict and learned man, a polemist and Church historian, responsible for the revision of the Latin translation of the Gospels and for the actual official Latin translation of the Old Testament. He also promoted female monasteries to moralize the lax (in his opinion at least) society of the time. Was an hermit in the Near Orient for a part of his life.

Typical iconographic elements of the saint are: the dove (symbolizing inspiration), the tame lion, the skull and the hourglass. a classic depiction of the saint is the man himself, naked in the desert, as he beats his breast with a stone in act of repentance in the shadow of the Cross.

All this symbols will turn in handy when detailing the Order.

We now know what the Sword of St. Jerome looks like - a chunk of rock.

The saint was the inspirator of many hermit-oriented orders in both Italy and Spain during the 14th century.



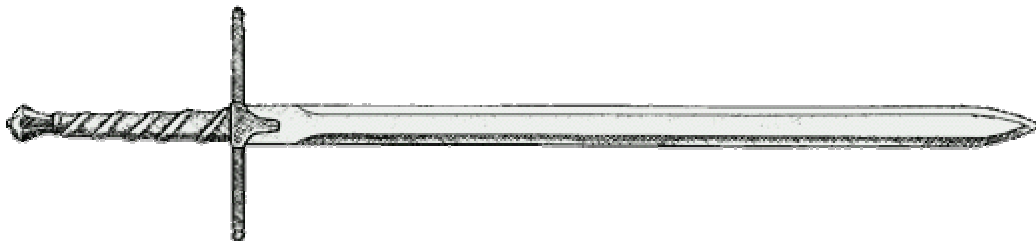
● **Spanish Hermits of St. Jerome** - a Spanish order founded in 1373 in Lupiana (Spain), disbanded in the 15th century.

Important Note: an attempt was made in 1957 to restore the Order in Segovia.

● **Poor Hermits of St. Jerome of the Pisa Congregation** - founded in 1377 in Pisa (Italy), and approved in 1567. Disbanded in 1933

● **Hermits of St. Jerome of the Fiesole Congregation** - founded in 1360 in Fiesole (Italy), suppressed by Clemente IX in 1668

● **Jeromites of the Observation, or of Lombardy** - founded 1424, died out after 1595.



The Order of the Sword was, according to the Compendium, disbanded in the 19th century - most probably after 1861, the year of Italian Unification, which caused among other things, an order of cancellation of all monastic orders, under pope Pius IX - and survived afterwards as a secret society drawing its members from the Catholic (?) Church ranks. The Pisa congregation, being the only with an official imprimatur and the longest-surviving of the real-life groups, looks like the best prospect for fitting the bill.

A few decades discrepancy from disbanding act to actual shutting down of the operation is not so unlikely - the organization being large and complex, they probably needed time for wrapping up the whole thing: filing all the material into the Z Collection, verifying funds and possessions and all the rest.

They were also gearing the whole organization for underground operativity, so they bought time.

Now, note that 1933 was a strange year.

The Vatican signed a few years before a concordate with the Italian Fascist Regime, and as we saw in past documents (please refer to the Emerald Mirror data for more info) the Regime had its own agenda as far as the occult was concerned.

And the Regime had also a very hard to handle Ally: 1933 is the year of the great opening towards Hitler's Germany, the first sign that Mussolini is falling under the spell of the German dictator.

Any well prepared Church member with eyes to see could have been able to predict, in the early '30s, the fact that the wind was changing: in a few years, the Spanish Civil War (1936) would show that a priest's habit is not a guarantee of immunity.

One man probably did it.

If the Order of St. Jerome shuts down definitively in 1933, then it shuts down under pope Pius XI.

This marks an uncanny abundance of Piuses in the Order's history, as already Pius V, VII and IX have been mentioned in these documents and played, in one way or the other, their part in the history of the Order.

Pope Pius XI was born Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti, in Desio, in the Lombardic Alps, in 1857, a man of humble origins.

- holding a Law degree and one in Philosophy
- member of the Saint Thomas Aquinas Academy (Dominicans)
- former teacher
- researcher (1907) and then director of the Ambrosian Library (the Catholic Library of Milan), and deputy-director of the Vatican Library
- the man that opens the Ambrosian Library to extramural researchers and
- orders the re-cataloguing of the major religious libraries in Northern Italy
- Vatican man in the Poland-Russia face-off of 1919
- as bishop of Milan founds there a Catholic University

And as a hobby, he goes mountaneering in the Alps, exploring many previously unmapped areas and opening a few ways that still carry his name.

By comparison with data available Cardinal Ratti is clearly a St. Jerome man.

Head-hunted when he joined the Academy, probably, his curriculum of researches, travels and "adventuring" fits perfectly and makes perfect sense if we see him as a Pilgrim, probably one of the last generation of the Order's "cowboy" period; one of the men that are working to collect and save all that can be found before the order goes to ground.

As a pope, he is the right man, in the right place, at the right moment.

Historically, Pius XI disbanded a number of religious groups for no apparent reasons. It is today an accepted fact that he disbanded the Azione Cattolica (a politically-active lay movement) to save its members from the attacks (=physical violence, arrest) of the Fascists.

The same he probably did with the Order, enforcing the Pius IX act, to keep them out of harms way as best as he could while they quietly disappeared.

Remember, the order had been working in this sense the last few decades - they were ready, and only needed a man in a high place to cover up their tracks.

At the same time, he still helped building and reinforcing the new, clandestine Order - he increased the funding of catholic research institutes, he promoted the missionary movement, creating missions in Africa, Asia, South America - the largest missionary expansion in the Church's history - and including the veterans of the Benedectine order in the initiative.

Everything fits perfectly.

The question of how much the Vatican knows today is still open, though.

It's pretty sure that if really Pius XI was part of the conspiracy, the tracks leading to St. Jerome from the Church's side are a minimum and covered real well.

On the other hand, the Order has to have someone pretty high up in the power structure to operate at best.

What if each pontifex is informed of the Order's existence as he gets the job, all part of a big fat folder including details on the Third Secret of Fatima and about that monastery in Washington State that Tom Robbins wrote about?

The Order is supposedly commanded by a monk living somewhere in an Alpine monastery. If we use St. Michael here in the Susa Valley, the guy's probably a Dominican or a Rosminian.

Both orders are perfect for the job - both rules are based on hard work and study, both orders share a history of library building and preservations (Dominicans) and teaching (Rosminians).

## Order Members and Friendlies

### Order of the Sword St. Jerome Longa Manus Project

#### ● Father Ludovico Sabatini

Age 67, Member of the order since 1977. Former Salesian Order Member.

**SIZ 10 CON 13 STR 9 DEX 11**  
**APP 11 INT 16 EDU 19 POW 9**

**Sanity:** 55%

**Degrees:** Physics (Un. of Padova), Philosophy (Un. La Cattolica, Rome)

**Relevant Skills:** Philosophy 55%, Physics 65%, Mathematics 40%, Computer Use 35%, Library Use 55%, Accounting 50%, Debate 45%.

High but specialized skills in History, Occult and Management.

Cthulhu Mythos 15%

The man behind the Longa Manus project.

Charged with administrative duties for the Monastery since 1985, Sabatini has worked to modernize the Order's structure. The idea of a group of "friendlies" acting on a "need to know" basis is just one of the modernizations he introduced. Others include microfiching of books, electronic security and decentralized Order houses.

**Description:** heavy-set, rough featured (think French actor Jean Gabin).

"An old, healthy peasant dressed as a priest, with the mind of Cardinal Mazzarino and the manners of a grocerer" (major Raviola)

"A profoundly good man, kind and easy-going, but with too many preoccupations for the good of his health. Did you notice the liver spots on his hands?" (sister Claire)

#### ● Sister Claire Chavagnac

Age 35. Lay nun and researcher for the Università La Cattolica - Rome, member of CESNUR (Center for the Study of New Religions).

Father Santucci's (see Emerald hammer for further details) pet student from way back. Working in Longa Manus since 1992 (has been granted a research fund for a work on modern spurious spirituality and gets pointed in the right direction when needed). Teamed up with Major Raviola since 1994.

Not enough Mythos experience to understand it as a single structure.

**SIZ 9 CON 14 STR 11 DEX 13**

**APP 14 INT 17 EDU 16 POW 13**



**Sanity:** 85%

**Degree:** Anthropology (Sorbonne, Paris)

**Relevant Skills:** Library Use 65%, Anthropology 55%, Archaeology 25%, History 35%, Philosophy 20%, Linguistics 20%, Debate 35%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Various arts-oriented hobbies. A former Girl Scout.

**R/W/S:** English 75%, Italian 55%, German 35%, Dutch 25%

**R/W:** Latin 55%, Greek 45%, Aramaic 25%, Sanscrit 35%

**Cthulhu Mythos:** 3%

**Description:** demonstrates less than her years. Auburn air, grey-green eyes. Favors casual clothes and long skirts.

"An idealist dreaming in technicolor." (major Raviola)

"She's our diamond. Sharp, sparkling, flawless but fragile." (father Sabatini)

### ● **major (cashiered) Roberto Raviola**

Age 46. Former Cavalry officer turned "independent operator" in 1985. Officially retired in 1991 suffering a severe case of burnout after service in Eastern Africa; placed on a Vatican-funded retainer as driver by father Sabatini.

The army rank is possibly a pose. Employed as sister Claire escort and driver.

Brisk, disrespectful and cynical, he is probably running through all this out of curiosity. Started out thinking that Sabatini was "a Richelieu wannabe", but a few of the things he's seen in the last few years are forcing him to reconsider.

**SIZ 15 CON 16 STR 14 DEX 12**

**APP 11 INT 13 EDU 11 POW 9**

**Sanity:** 55% [suffers from nightmares and flashbacks about his past service]

**Relevant Skills:** Demolition 30%, Scuba Diving 15%, Parachuting 15%, Fast Talk 65%, Knife 70%, Martial Arts 45%, Driving 40%, Spot Hidden 50%.

**Any Firearm** no less than 40%.

**Preferred weapon,** 9mm gun, any make (65%).

**R/W/S:** English 80%, Turkish 35%, Afrikaans 15%, French 45%, East African Pidgin 20%

**Cthulhu Mythos** 6%

**Description:** dark complexioned and nervous looking. Favours corduroy jackets and trousers. No tie if he can do without. Slight limp (damage to the left knee).

"A pragmatist that lives in a black and white world. But his heart is in the right place, I guess" (sister Claire)

"You keep questioning my orders" (father Sabatini)

# Miscellaneous References and Documents

## The Purcell Papers

*Look, I have unwittingly infiltrated a secret order of militant Catholic monks that serves the Vatican as a combination CIA and Green Beret Unit.*

Details about the **Wildcat Creek Monastery, Catholic Society of the Felicitator** can be found in the controversial (do they come any other way) Tom Robbins 1971 novel **Another Roadside Attraction** (Bantam Books, 1990). While Robbins is certainly an acquired taste, and not exactly Lovecraftian in style or contents, anyone interested in gun-toting, kung-fu fighting, black-clad paramilitary Catholic monks - and all accessories - should give the novel a try, as it's probably the basic, definitive and only book of this kind.

Anyone having more informations about the Society of the Felicitator is asked to please contact us *privately*

## The Other Knights

*My name is Susan Donnelly and I serve an ancient Catholic Order known as the Knights of St. Jerome. We have existed, in one form or another, since before the fall of Rome.*

The Stage is a supernatural horror and conspiracy supplement for Method in Madness' fine freeform RPG system, The Window.

The Stage features the Knights of St. Jerome.

The Knights as they are featured in the supplement bear just a small resemblance to the active branch of the Order as I have extrapolated it here - the impression is that they are watching and recording, but not acting directly to influence the developing of the course of history.

On the other hand, we have only the word of one of the Knight's members for it.

She might as well have been led to believe an inaccurate version of reality.

Such things happen. A lot. In this line of work.