

The Order of Reason

... God the Father, the supreme architect, had already built this cosmic home we behold, the most sacred temple of His godhead, by the laws of His mysterious wisdom.... But, when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a work, to love its beauty, and to wonder at its vastness. Therefore... He finally took thought concerning the creation of man.

— Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, "Oration, on the Dignity of Man"

Assistance Most Rare

Without tools and philosophy, man is a fallen angel. To remain worthy of God's trust, a person must reach out to the sacred patterns left by God, embrace them and illuminate them for others. Because those ideals were corrupted by a sea of greed and sin, God has withdrawn His favor; to the Daedalean magus, the Grand Design He left behind is the key to salvation.

When the earliest Sacred Artisans uncovered the secrets of fire, languages, agriculture and trade, humanity moved beyond supplication and hope; while others stood in the rain and begged God for help, craftsmen and kings answered their prayers. A Sacred Artisan does not place himself above God, but takes up the Lord's tools and becomes His apprentice. The Grand Design, therefore, is a sacred trust.

It's also pretty cool, especially by the wretched standards most people endure. A Daedalean character is on a mission; to help himself, he carries guns, slender swords and marvelous machines; he ministers to the sick with mighty potions and flies through the air in glider wings or hot-air balloons. By medieval standards, what he does should not work. But it does... quite well.

No one epitomizes the spirit of the Renaissance like a Daedalean magus. Knowledgeable, sophisticated, dedicated and restless, he or she steps boldly out of the Middle Ages and holds a lamp to illuminate the Path. To this virtuoso, God crafted His Creation by precise rules and calculations. To understand them is to enter God's workshop and join Him at the craft.

Spheres of Influence

- **The Arts:** Artistic sophistication is the goal of all aspiring gentlefolk; thus, the humanities — philosophy, literature, logic and the fine arts — are breeding grounds for new ideas. By working allegories, symbols and classical ideals into their work, Daedaleans of all persuasions entrance their audience and spread their message. That audience is hungry, especially among both the newly rich and the titled nobility.

- **Courts:** With their wealth, sophistication and innovative ideas, many Guildsmen are welcomed by monarchs and merchants alike. This allows the Order to influence policy (openly and covertly) across the known world.

- **The Church:** Staunch allies of the Catholic Church, the Gabrielites find themselves fractured during the late Reformation; until then, however, this Convention rides into battle, constructs hospitals, hunts witches and sways the Vatican with open purses, bared blades, peerless theology and, of course, miracles.

- **Lodges:** On the local level, skilled tradesmen flock to build cities and seaports; there, Craftsmasons, Artificers and Seekers establish lodges, where they spread the gospel of good work, teach advanced techniques, and carouse after hours. Every lodge combines sanctuary, school and tavern; this appealing combination makes it a natural magnet for working folk.

- **Secret Societies:** During the Dark Ages, Artisans had to keep low profiles and preserve their skills. Their lodges remain covert to this day; after all, wisdom has many enemies. While the Ksirafai are the real masters of intrigue, the Craftsmasons, Gabrielites, High Guild and Celestial Masters work through a variety of secret societies — the "true" Masons, Templars and Orders of the Rosy Cross so revered by would-be occultists.

- **Universities:** The battlegrounds for new ideas; some lodges operate within established universities, while others are universities themselves.

Ranks

The Order's hierarchy is fairly strict. Although it's possible to buy yourself a title, you'd better be ready and able to prove your worth! Daedaleans do not tolerate fools or incompetents — the Great Ideal is too important to be for sale.

- **Brother/Sister:** As yet un-Enlightened, the Brethren provide labor, messages, alliances, funds and military might. Although treated with respect, Brothers and Sisters are lesser members of the Union.

- **Apprentice:** Pupils with talent, these young folk train hard for six years; each New Year's Day, a new secret is revealed and a new test is required. The final two tests require mystick ability; an apprentice who fails these exams joins the Brethren instead.

- **Mediator:** A graduate of the six tests joins the low-level willworkers, and begins to learn *Ars Praeclarus*.

- **Resplendent:** An accomplished Daedalean must pass five additional tests; if he succeeds, he gains this renowned rank and assumes a degree of respect within the Order.

- **Lodge:** A place rather than a rank, the lodge might be a guildhall, seaport, library, hospital, castle or school, depending on the needs and goals of the local Magistrate.

Each lodge is designed for ritual significance by Craftsmasons, and functions as a Cray and Covenant (see Chapter IV) for its members. Nonmembers must pay dues or perform services to take advantage of the lodge's facilities. In addition to a vast number of lodges, each Convention (except the Ksirafai) has one or two Guildhalls, the "heads" of the organization.

- **Facilitator:** A traveling Resplendent skilled at politics and languages, the Facilitator conducts messages, performs intrigues and implements plans for her Convention. While many of the upper ranks within the Order are held by men, women seem to dominate this level.

- **Magistrate:** A supervisor with mystick skills, a Magistrate facilitates work and communication within his lodge.

- **Honestus Resplendens:** A powerful and highborn Daedalean might become a prince within the Order. Very few commoners ever achieve this rank.

- **Resplendent Maximus:** A member of the Inner Circle. Only 14 Daedaleans hold this rank at the same time.

Internal Politics

Order is, of course, essential. Everything, theoretically, has its place — even the woman, the stranger and the infidel. By putting a common goal above old prejudices, the Conventions utilize the genius within each member and direct it toward a single purpose.

At the top of the hierarchy, the 14 Maximi of the Inner Circle meet in a single heavily fortified tower, designed according to special geometric principles. In early days, the Circle met in Brittany; a few close calls during the Hundred Years' War convinced the Maximi to move their headquarters to Langudoc (the old tower still functions as a fortress). Both towers are bleached white, ringed by triple keeps and guarded by small but powerful armies. Each of the six Conventions has two Maximi — a man and a woman; two untitled Ksirafi report to the Circle, but do not attend.

Each Convention has 20 Honori, each overseeing a district; within each district, that Honestus is essentially a prince, answering only to the Circle. Some of these men (rarely women) are accomplished magi, others are simply adequate magicians but good politicians.

A series of Magistrates mind the lodges, ports, castles and hospitals spread across the known world; at the "lodge" level, a group of Resplendents, lesser Magistrates, Apprentices and Brethren attend to local concerns — usually a combination of trade, education, moneylending, fighting and invention. In the Far East and Turkish lands, the hierarchy is essentially the same, though distant cultures employ other titles.

Discipline depends on the Convention and local Magistrate; generally, minor infractions are punished by chastisement, demotion and hard labor; major failures



might earn branding, torture or exile, and betrayal is a death sentence. A chastised Daedlean has her research seized and distributed throughout the lodge; a censured lodge is put to the torch.

Human nature being what it is, of course, this “order” works better in theory than in practice. The Conventions have been at odds with each other since Day One, and the strange gender and religious politics within the Order heighten the tension. Sessions inside the White Tower are contentious indeed; even local lodges have their discipline problems and rivalries. Trade guilds constantly find themselves tangled in each other’s business, while inventors and military commanders try to outdo one another as a matter of pride. On the whole, however, the Order works better than any other government on Earth — a feat facilitated by magical Viasilicos (see Appendix), mail networks and messengers who keep communications open across vast distances.

The real schism lies in the ideological rift between Gabrielites, Craftmasons, Guildsmen and High Artisans. The Gabrielites seek a single Church, and dislike the liberal policies within the Order; the Craftmasons champion the common folk and hard work; the Guild wants to build a new, cosmopolitan world through trade and wealth, while the smiths secretly prize innovation over everything else — even God. While these factions squabble, the Cosians and Ksirafai keep to themselves,

following private agendas; the Void Seekers and Celestial Masters form a tight bond and eventually unite as one Convention, but keep many discoveries secret from the other groups. Although the Order continues to prosper, its inner alliances, rivalries and treacheries eventually have dire consequences....

Future Fate

Let us, instead, concentrate on reaching a rational, sensible, civilized agreement which will guarantee a world fit for science, progress....

— The Honorable Mr. Jackson, *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*

The next five centuries are wildly successful for the Order of Reason. With their foes in disarray, the Conventions ride the rising tide of science and rationality. By the 19th century, they stand astride the majority of the world. That pinnacle, however, is achieved over millions of bodies and the corpse of the Order’s Grand Ideal.

Out of the best of intentions, the Craftmasons have created a monster. Even now, it’s beginning to get away from them; in 1670, they will be betrayed and exterminated by an alliance of the Cabal of Pure Thought (itself dissolved in the late 1830s), the High Guild and the Ksirafai. This last group then conducts a purge of all records mentioning the Craftmasons before melting further into the shadows.

