

The Priory of Scions - Revised July 2005

Credits: Anton Delbarre, Richard Czerwonky
with additional contributions from Scott Coutcher, Stephen DiPesa, Wendy Misuinas, Trish Pettinati,
Steven Scheldeman, and Christopher Joseph Walsh.

Players are asked to remember this document represents the beliefs of the Priory of Scions in the World of Darkness. Keep that in mind while reading, and direct questions to your NST or the AAMST Mortals.

Introduction

The primary purpose of the Priory is to make sure that the forces that are instrumental in the End Days are well-documented, and to be certain its members are prepared to play their role in the establishment of God's kingdom on Earth. To this end, the Priory of Scions studies and documents the occult, working to discover which forces will be most important during the end times and how these forces will work against each other.

The Priory of Scions also protects the descendants of Aaron and David, since these are the 'messianic lineages.' The Priory believes it is responsible for leading these lineages to an age where they will bring forth the Messiah that will establish God's kingdom on Earth. It secretly helps and protects members of these families and works to keep them in the public eye, and in positions of power and influence.

The Priory of Scions is *not* a religious order, though its members are indeed monotheists who work towards a common religious cause. There is not, however, any uniform or established faith or doctrine within the organization.

History

The Sion Origin

In ancient Sion, the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem led two schools, one for boys and one for girls. The purpose of these schools was to preserve the sacred, messianic lineages of Aaron and David. The priests that ran these schools were men who could trace their ancestry directly back to one of those two men. As a sign of their sacred duty to continue the line of their ancestor, these priests were known by angelic titles and names.

Children born to one of these pure bloodlines were educated in the Temple schools. Boys were groomed and educated to prepare them to fill important roles in society. Girls were groomed and educated to become good mothers, so the pure lines would continue.

When a young woman reached maturity, she was impregnated by the angel of her line. Once a child was conceived, these young women would enter marriage to a man selected by the Temple school. Because the girl was no longer a virgin, and carried another man's child, grooms were rarely influential figures. Instead they were pious men of modest means and good character, who saw the responsibility of raising a son or daughter of the Angels as a great honour or as a good investment, since "their" first born was destined for an influential role in society.

When the virgin Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel, she became pregnant, and Joseph took her as his wife. The child she carried was Jesus.

Birth of the Rex Deus

Having survived the Herodian purge, Jesus started his education at age seven in the Temple school in Jerusalem. He was an excellent student and was chosen to represent his ancestor-lineage as one of the Angels. He moved to Nazareth and took a woman of his ancestor-lineage with him as a mate. She would be remembered by the name Mary Magdalene.

At age 30, a fellow Essene (Nazarene), John the Baptist, convinced Jesus to leave the Temple school and begin public preaching. During this period it was known that he had romantic dealings with Mary Magdalene.

Jesus preached for three years, and as he preached he began to build a following of people who believed strongly in his spiritual and political message. His followers plotted to overthrow Roman rule and reclaim the Holy Land. They organized themselves into a movement, with Jesus as their spiritual pillar. For their political pillar they chose Jesus' half brother (son of Joseph and Mary), James the Just.

When Jesus was crucified, leadership fell to a triumvirate of James the Just, Peter, and John the Apostle. Paul, however, took it upon himself to spread Jesus' spiritual teachings, believing that Jesus was the Christ and Messiah of the Jews. The Triumvirate had Paul arrested, but the roots of Christianity had already taken hold. (See the *Book of Acts*).

According to Scionite documents, under the Triumvirate the movement became an influential organization. This would not last for long; Paulite extremists, retaliating for the arrest of Paul, murdered James the Just in front of the Temple. This led to a public outcry, and the start of the first great Hebrew revolt. To save the "pure lineages," the movement secretly evacuated large groups of Angels and students from the Temple schools to Greece. From Greece they scattered throughout Europe, adapting to local monotheistic beliefs and customs so as to hide their Jewish ancestry.

During the first and second Jewish Revolt the Judaic peoples were massacred by the Romans in one of the greatest genocides in history. The root of all Judaic movements had been destroyed, leaving only foreign followers and some diaspora-groups. The gentile followers of Paul composed accounts of Jesus' life based upon Ebionite sources, but took great pains to differentiate themselves from Judaism so the Romans would not see them as Jewish rebels, especially since they worshiped Jesus, who had been executed as a rebel.

This European group of survivors named themselves **Rex Deus**, believing themselves to be the protectors of the bloodlines that will bring forth the Messiah of David and Aaron, who will one day establish the kingdom of God on Earth. The Rex Deus families became the leading families in Europe, passing on their secret orally among a select few of their progeny. These select few call themselves the **Scions** (the heirs), and they lead the Rex Deus families up to this day.

Some of the current Rex Deus families:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| - de Bouillon | - St Clairs of Roslin | - the Counts of Champagne |
| - Hapsburg | - St Clair de Neg | - the Counts of Fontaine |
| - Brienne | - St Clair de Gisor | - the Counts of Anjou |
| - Joinville | - the Lords of Gisors | |
| - Chaumont | - the Lords of Payen | |

Lexicon:

Rex Deus refers to the families collectively. It also refers to a person who has one parent that is a Rex Deus. **Rex Deus Scion** is only used when both parents are Rex Deus, and when the child is taught the secret family history. Thus, a child with two Rex Deus parents who is not aware of the secret oral history is not considered a Scion. Thus, all Scions are Rex Deus, but not all Rex Deus are Scions!

The Society of Ormus

The roots of the organization that would become the Priory of Scions can be traced back to the gnostic adept Ormesius, an Egyptian Seraphic priest, sage, and mystic, who lived in the first century. In A.D. 46, he and six of his followers were converted to a form of Christianity by one of Jesus' disciples, Saint Mark. He formed a secret society which united esoteric Christianity with the teachings about the messianic lineages. Ormesius adopted as his symbol a cross surmounted by a rose, to signify the synthesis of the new and old religions.

Ormesius purified the Egyptian rites, and reconciled them with Christianity, bringing his disciples with him. He founded the Society of Ormus, and each member wore a red cross. The Essenes of Qumran and Therapeutae joined this order in order to conserve this 'pure' form of Christianity and to preserve the knowledge of the messianic lineages. During early medieval times, the Society of Ormus relocated to Calabria (southern Italy).

Just before the end of the first millennium, the Society of Ormus succeeded in attaining the papacy. Sylvester II, who was accused many times of witchcraft and dealing with the Devil, had a very stormy reign, but he did help his small society a great deal. In 1001, he arranged with the Fatimid Caliph for a group of clerics and knights from his society to make an expedition to Syria and the Holy Land. Various historians have from time to time pointed to this as the first wave of Crusaders and just as quickly have remarked on their lack of aggressive zeal.

Al-Hakim greeted the Pope's entourage with honor and spent many weeks in Jerusalem discussing the virtues of Islam versus Christianity with them. He was so impressed by their sincerity that in 1002 the Caliph gave the Society of Ormus the use of a Byzantine church on Mount Sion for a monastery and library.

The First Priory

At the end of the 11th century, Eustace de Boulogne was one of the Rex Deus Scions. The Rex Deus Prophecies pointed at this age as the time during which the Temple of Sion had to be reclaimed. The Scions started planning a crusade and pressuring the pope, Urban II, to call for a crusade to reclaim the Holy Land.

Meanwhile, Prince Ursus was the leader of the Society of Ormus. Its prophecies (which were in part the same prophecies from the same Essene sources as those of the Rex Deus) told them that at the start of a new millennium, an heir of the line of David must reclaim the throne of Sion. So they looked for a suitable man to make king of Jerusalem.

Godefroid de Bouillon, the young son of Eustace de Boulogne, fit the bill because the Society of Ormus believed him to be a descendant of the lost line of Merovingian kings, and therefore a direct descendant of the Davidian messianic lineage. That would make him the rightful king of Jerusalem, and perhaps of the world. At the least, it would fulfill a great many apocalyptic expectations, and could be seen as the first steps toward the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

When Prince Ursus approached Eustace de Boulogne, a Rex Deus Scion, they struck a pact to share cause and knowledge. The Society of Ormus would be relocated from Calabria to Orval, one of Eustace's domains, where its members would receive instructions about how they could serve the messianic lineages. During that period of education, the Society of Ormus learned much about the Rex Deus and what had happened in the past millennium of Rex Deus activity. Eustace took it upon himself to coordinate the reform of this secret society into an order to help the Rex Deus Scions further their causes.

In 1070 a group of Calabrian monks from the Society of Ormus arrived in Orval (present day Belgium) under the leadership of Prince Ursus. In Orval they founded a monastery and received an extensive education in Scionite matters.

They called themselves the "Priory of Scions," referring to the Scions they would come to serve. The main purpose of the Priory of Scions was to become an independent organization, outside the control of the Rex Deus Scions. The Rex Deus Scions felt this would allow the Priory to further the causes of the Rex Deus families and provide protection to the messianic lineages, while reducing the risk of revealing the Rex Deus' secrets.

Godefroid de Bouillon

Godefroid was the Lord of Bouillon and Lower Lorraine under Henry V. Along with his brothers Eustace and Baldwin of Boulogne (the future Baldwin I of Jerusalem) he joined the First Crusade in August of 1096, leading an army from Lorraine, some 40,000 strong, along "Charlemagne's road," to Jerusalem.

Until the beginning of 1099 Godefroid was a minor figure in the crusade, with Baldwin, Bohemund of Taranto, Raymond IV of Toulouse, and Tancred determining the course of events.

In 1099, after the capture of Antioch, the crusaders were divided on what to do next. Most of the foot soldiers wanted to continue south to Jerusalem, but Raymond, by this time considered to be the leader of the crusade, hesitated to continue the march.

Godefroid, who had been secretly promised the title of King of Jerusalem, convinced Raymond to lead the army to Jerusalem. Godefroid was active in the siege of the city, and on July 15, 1099, he was one of the first to enter the city, which was the scene of a general massacre of Muslims and Jews.

On July 22, when Raymond refused to be named King of Jerusalem, Godefroid was elected in his place.

*Godefroid refused to be crowned 'king' in the city where Christ had died. Instead he took the title *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*, "advocate" or "defender" of the Holy Sepulchre.*

Godefroid died of the Godefroid died of plague so Godefroid's brother, Baldwin, was crowned king on December 25, 1100.

The People's Crusade

At the Council of Clermont assembled in the heart of France, November 1095, Pope Urban II gave an impassioned sermon to a large audience of French nobles and clergy. He called for the audience to wrest control of Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims. France, he said, was overcrowded and the land of Canaan was overflowing with milk and honey. He spoke of the problems of noble violence and that the solution was to turn swords to God's own service: "let robbers become knights." He spoke of rewards both on Earth and in Heaven, where remission of sins was offered to any who might die in the undertaking. The crowd was stirred to frenzied enthusiasm with cries of *Deus le volt!* (God wills it!).

After this speech, Peter the Hermit, a member of the Priory of Scions from the monastery in Orval and personal tutor of Godefroid de Bouillon, began a tour of France and Germany, preaching the merits of a crusade as he went. Peter's speeches appealed not only to trained knights, who usually followed their princes and kings on crusade, but to labourers, tradesmen and peasants. It was these untrained and disorganized folk who followed Peter most eagerly to Constantinople in what became known as "The People's Crusade" or "The Crusade of the Poor People." Soon swarms of poor knights, peasants, vagrants, beggars, women, and children were on the move; a People's Crusade of paupers and adventurers, all fanatical in their zeal to free the Holy Land. They marched well in advance of the armies of the kings and princes of Europe, which were slow to muster.

The mobs were gathered into five large armies. The principal army was led by Peter the Hermit, who quickly emerged as the leader of the People's Crusade, collecting at least 15,000 (some sources say 100,000) crusaders as he marched overland from Flanders to Cologne. His army pressed through Sofia and Philippopolis and marched past Constantinople, where they joined forces with Walter the Penniless. The two armies then marched on to Nicomedia where they set up camp. Their numbers were later bolstered by the arrival of survivors of the German Crusades, as well as crusaders coming by ship from Italy.

As an inexperienced leader, Peter had trouble maintaining discipline among his unruly troops, and he returned to Constantinople to seek assistance from the Byzantine Emperor, Alexius I. The Emperor refused to commit troops to a crusade, but one of his most talented commanders, who went by the name Tafur, offered to take charge of Peter's military campaign. Tafur was an Italian knight of Norman descent, and as a youth he had fought in Calabria. A Rex Deus Scion of lesser influence, he now lived in Constantinople. In addition to leading Peter's army, Tafur would become the forefather of the Paleologus lineage, the last dynasty to rule Constantinople.

While Peter was in Constantinople, his armies decided to go raiding. During these raids, the bulk of Peter's forces were slaughtered by the Turks. Of an estimated 20,000 crusaders, only 3,000 survived by escaping to a small, half-completed coastal fortress near Kibotos (Civetot), where they were rescued from the sea by Emperor Alexius. Walter the Penniless was killed in the fighting.

Thus ended the People's Crusades, although Peter the Hermit and a number of its survivors joined forces with the new bands of crusaders arriving from Europe under the command of the great Kings and Princes.

The First Crusade

Though there were four Rex Deus armies that left for the Holy Land, it was only Godefroid who renounced his fiefs, sold all his goods, and made it apparent that the Holy Land would be his domain for the remainder of his life. Godefroid did this because he had been secretly selected by the other Rex Deus commanders to become Governor of Jerusalem.

Peter the Hermit, who had become the spiritual leader and saint of the 'army of beggars,' appointed Tafur as his military commander. When Tafur first saw the army of beggars wandering without a leader, he laid aside his arms and the clothing he wore and traded it for sackcloth and a scythe. He became an ascetic for whom poverty had a great mystical value.

Tafur received the epithet 'King' from his followers because of his noble birth and his charismatic leadership. With Peter as his adviser, he laid down rules for the army and began molding them into a true fighting force. Not long after 'King Tafur' had assumed the leadership of the peasant army, its soldiers began calling themselves *tafurs*.

King Tafur soon became a man whom even the crusading princes approached with humility and reverence. It was King Tafur who performed the coronation of Godefroid de Bouillon. The Muslims, though they faced the crusading barons fearlessly, were terrified of the tafurs, whom they called "not Franks, but living devils."

In each captured city the tafurs looted everything they could lay hands on, raped the Muslim women, and carried out indiscriminate massacres. The official leaders of the Crusade had no authority over them at all. When the Emir of Antioch protested about the cannibalism of the tafurs, the princes could only admit apologetically: "All of us together cannot tame King Tafur."

When Godefroid de Bouillon was to become King of Jerusalem, the leaders of the Crusader armies chose King Tafur as 'the Mightiest One' to perform the coronation. He performed it by giving Godefroid a branch of thorns in memory of the Crown of Thorns, and Godefroid did homage and swore to hold Jerusalem as a fief from God and King Tafur.

When the crusade ended, King Tafur would not see Jerusalem abandoned, but pledged to stay with his army to defend the new King and his Kingdom. He and his tafurs were no longer mere beggars, but respected soldiers, enriched by the spoils of war. They became the first guards of the monastery on Mount Zion.

In 1099 a delegation of the monks left the monastery in Orval to help Godefroid secure his position as King of Jerusalem. In return, Godefroid helped them with the restoration and fortification of the monastery on Mount Zion, that had been given to the Society of Ormus by the Caliph Al-Haqim. It was christened *Notre Dame de Sion* and it became the home of the Order of Sion, which was founded by the monks as a public cover for the secret activities of the Priory of Scions.

In the period immediately after the First Crusade's conquest of Jerusalem, the only sources of spiritual authority in the devastated city were the remaining religious communities, foremost among them the Order of Sion. Peter the Hermit was held in such high regard that he was left in charge of the city while Godefroid went on to defeat the Egyptians at Ascalon. Placing Peter in charge meant that the Priory of Scions was actually in control of Jerusalem.

A few years later, Peter returned to Liège, where he established an Augustinian monastery at Neufmoustier (Huy, Belgium). In 1110 when the abbey in Neufmoustier was completed, the remaining Priory members in Orval left their monastery and moved to Neufmoustier. Peter died in his new abbey in 1115.

By the middle of the 12th century, the Order of Sion had monasteries and abbeys in Palestine (Mount Carmel), southern Italy (Calabria), and in France (Orleans, Bourges, Paris, and Troyes). The Order of Sion occupied Notre Dame de Sion until 1291 when it was overwhelmed by the Muslim onslaught. When the monastery on Mount Sion was abandoned by the Order of Sion, its link to the Priory of Scions started to fade. The link would be severed completely after the cutting of the elm at Gisors. By the 17th century the Order of Sion was completely absorbed by the Jesuits.

The Excavation

In 1099 Godefroid de Bouillon died of the plague and his brother became the King of Jerusalem. This posed a serious problem for the Rex Deus Scions as Baldwin was not a Scion and knew nothing about the Rex Deus or the messianic lineages.

Under Godefroid, and at the request of the Rex Deus, the Priory of Scions had started looking for a treasure that had been placed under the Temple of Jerusalem by the Rex Deus forefathers. Since the birth of the Rex Deus, all of its knowledge had been passed on orally from Scion to Scion, so after a millennium, the knowledge that each Scion believe to be 'the truth' differed greatly. They all agreed that with the turn of the millennium they had to reclaim Sion and that important things were to be done, but they were not sure what those things were. So they decided to look for the treasure their ancestors had buried beneath the Temple before they fled during the Jewish Revolt.

This treasure was a collection of tomes, artefacts, and riches left by the Angels of the Temple school. When Baldwin took the throne, he did not want any such activity on the holy Temple Mount, because he feared the repercussions if the Vatican were to hear about such sacrilege. The Scions were powerless. They could not reveal the secret to him, because it was against their traditions, but they could not go against the orders of the King.

In 1113, a new opportunity was created. A group of Christian knights formed themselves into a new order, the "Sovereign

The Tafurs

"Perhaps some might think that these men were not useful for the general good, and that he could have fed others with what he was uselessly giving to them.

But no one can describe how useful they were in carrying food, in collecting tribute, in hurling stones during the sieges of cities.

They were better at carrying heavy burdens than the asses and mules, and they were as good at hurling projectiles as the machines and launchers.

Moreover, when pieces of flesh were found among the pagan bodies at Marra, and elsewhere, during a terrible famine, a hideous rumor circulated widely among the pagans, that the tafurs eagerly fed upon the corpses of Saracens.

To circulate this rumor among them even more vividly, the tafurs carried the battered corpse of a Turk out in full view of the other Turks, set it afire, and roasted it as if the flesh was going to be eaten.

When they learned what had happened, thinking that the charade was real, the Turks grew even more afraid of the fearlessness of the tafurs than of the crusade armies."



Military Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta,” or in short, the Knights Hospitaller. The Knights Hospitaller was the first religious order of military knights. The creation of the Knight Hospitaller inspired Scions Hugh de Champagne and Hugues de Payen, because the concept of a religious military order was the perfect way for the Scions to regain access to the Temple. Ordinary religious or military groups had been banned by Baldwin from making camp on the Temple grounds, but the Scions reasoned that Baldwin could not have any ground for refusing a military order of the Church.

In 1114, Hugh de Champagne and Hugues de Payen travelled to Jerusalem to persuade Baldwin to allow them to post a small contingent of knights to protect the highways for pilgrims. They proposed to him that their “Knights Templar” should be stationed on the site of Herod’s stables, where they could not be seen from the road. This had the secret advantage of giving the knights access to an underground level where they could excavate directly into the subterranean vaults where the treasure was hidden. To their surprise, Baldwin rejected the proposal.

Undaunted, they turned their attention to Baldwin’s cousin, who would one day be his successor. This potential king, also named Baldwin, had been a Muslim prisoner-of-war for four years and had far more radical ideas than the current king. In 1118 Baldwin I died of natural causes, and his cousin was quickly crowned Baldwin II. Within weeks, nine knights were stationed in Herod’s stables, and they started their excavations. They found the treasure and used its riches to finance the Order of Sion, the Knights Templar and the Cistercians, an order led by Bernard de Clairvaux of the Rex Deus. The Cistercians built many gothic cathedrals in Europe, and Bernard de Clairvaux wrote the laws of the Templar Order and convinced the Pope to acknowledge the Templars as a military order.

The Order of Sion and the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon (as the Knights Templar were officially known) were one organization unified under the common leadership of the Priory of Scions. The two orders were led by a Grandmaster, who always was a member of the Priory of Scions.

Cutting of the Elm at Gisors

In 1188 AD King Phillip II of France and King Henry II of England (with his heir Richard the Lion Hearted at his side) met on the sacred field at Gisors. This site in France was where kings had come for centuries to debate, forge alliances, and do battle. A huge elm tree in the middle of the sacred field was the central symbol - an ancient tree thought to be almost 800 years old at that time, so huge that nine men joined hand to hand could not encircle it.

Phillip and Henry, both Rex Deus Scions, were not on good terms; war between England and France was in the air, and Henry was making a claim on France. Phillip informed Henry that the elm would be cut down. Phillip wanted to cut the elm at Gisors, ancient symbol of genealogical branching and direct continuity of the Rex Deus lineages, as a statement to Henry II: “Go away, France is mine!”

Henry and Richard planned to defend the elm. A battle ensued: Richard was wounded, and the French army stormed the field with superior manpower while the English fled and took refuge in the nearby chateaux. Phillip chopped down the elm and retained France for himself. Henry returned home and ruled England, passing it on to Richard the Lion Heart, followed by Henry’s second son, John. The outward visible symbol of the vine transplanted from the

Holy Land was no more.

After this incident the Order of Sion elected Jean de Gisors as Grandmaster. Jean de Gisors was not a member of the Priory of Scions, and with his election the Order of Sion and the Knights Templar were no longer under the same leader. That day the Priory of Scions lost its grip on the Order of Sion, and thus lost much of its influence in France. The Priory retained control of the Knights Templar, however, and through them was able to hold onto some of its influence France, and all of its influence in England, where the Order of Sion had no foothold.

The cutting of the elm at Gisors did more than just split the Templars off from its parent order, it defined the boundary line between two Rex Deus lineages: the Plantagenets on one side, supported by the Templars, and the Capetians on the other, supported by the Order of Sion. The division between these two lineages eventually produced not just the destruction of the Templars by the French King, Philip III and his puppet Pope Clement V, but also led to a long and bloody feud between the two Rex Deus lines: the Hundred Years War between France and England.

Rise and Fall of the Templars

During their time of activity, the Knights Templar became known for more than just their skill as soldiers and their piety. They became bankers, diplomats, and power-brokers. An elite few even became scholars, attempting to translate Hebrew Old Testament texts (such as the Book of Maccabees) into the vernacular. Charges of heresy and disloyalty dogged them from as early as the early 12th century. Some of this undoubtedly arose from envy; as the bankers of Europe, the Templars acquired quite a formidable stash of gold.

As the influence of the organisation grew, the Priory of Scions was experiencing more and more difficulty controlling the Templars.

One of the problems the Priory faced was the influence of unknowing, ambitious Rex Deus members who worked against the plans of the Priory in order to further their own goals. In such cases, the Priory refused to work against the Rex Deus (as that would defy its own purpose) and so the Priory became powerless. But still, that could not explain everything...

In 1307, on Friday, October 13th, King Philip the Fair ordered the arrest of the Templars on the charges of heresy. He was after their wealth, having already seized the assets of the Jews in his realm a year earlier. Legal inquiries ensued, and Grandmaster and Priory-member Jacques de Molay was thrown in to prison on charges of heresy.

In 1312, during the Council of Vienne, the Pope (who was in Philip's pocket), dissolved the Templars as a religious order. Finally, in 1314, after refusing to renounce his claim of innocence, Jacques de Molay was burned at the stake in Paris as a relapsed heretic. That day, the Priory of Scions abandoned all ties to the Templar Order.

The Templars endured different treatment after the dissolution of the Order -- in some countries, they were hardly bothered, while in France they suffered torture, harassment, and vigorous persecution. Outside France, the charges were viewed with disbelief. The King and Pope did not outlast de Molay by long; both died within months of de Molay's execution.

After the death of de Molay, the Priory discovered the diary of Roncelin de Fos while saving Templar archives from French persecution. Roncelin was a 13th century Templar of Cathar ancestry. At some point, Roncelin had begun forming clandestine “cells” within the order, spreading heretical teachings and initiations. The Priory had been unaware of this internal virus, which is why De Molay went to the grave protesting his innocence - he truly had no *knowledge* of heresy within the order. This cellular structure is still present in organizations that claim to descend from the Templars, like the Freemasons.

The Sundering

In losing the Order of Sion and the Knights Templars, the Priory had lost its two most important tools for helping the Rex Deus. All it had left was knowledge; now that its influence had waned, it lacked the means to secretly follow the actions of all Rex Deus members and Rex Dues Scions. The Priory also lost track of several important documents, adding to those lost in the Templar purge and the Gisors incident.

The Priory members realized that their organization had failed horribly and that they had to adopt a new modus operandi. In 1320, for the only time in history, all the members of the Priory of Scions gathered in a formal convention. During this event, which came to be known as the Sundering, the Priory decided to pursue a policy of diversification of influences and resources. The members created a formal structure for the different Scionite monasteries and instituted the system of ranks so as to prevent a second Roncelinian incident. Henceforth the Grandmaster Scion and his Monasts would lead the organization, giving information to the lower ranks on a strict need-to-know-basis.

It was during this convention that the Priory reaffirmed its commitment to the protection of the Rex Deus and the Scions, and instituted the policy of secrecy through information, operating on the principal that the best place to hide the truth is in plain sight. The members undertook several other reforms over the course of the year, reforging the Priory and finding new zeal for its cause.

The measures instituted during the Sundering still stand today and they have guided the Priory through many hardships that proved fatal to other secret societies. Because of the measures concerning diversification, secrecy through information, and the institution of ranks, the Sundering is the end of the Priory of Scions timeline. After the Sundering, the history of the Priory as a whole becomes too fragmented, vague, and localized to be able to speak of one overarching timeline for the organization. There are a few events, though, that influenced the entire Priory.

The Round Table

The Priory of Scions heard about the formation of the Round Table and approached the Circle of Hermes. After some discussion between the two societies, the Circle of Hermes invited the Priory to the first meeting of the Round Table in New York City in 1947.

The Priory joined the Round Table because it had suffered losses in the war. Its resources were strained and it needed the added security that came from cooperating with other secret societies as they all worked together to rebuild. The Priory remains the most opaque organization in the Round Table, though not many people realize this since the Priory reveals so much false information under the guise of truth.

The Priory sends two representatives to the International Round Table each year. The Monastic Councils decides by consensus who will serve. Tradition dictates that one representative is selected from Europe, and one from North America, but that has changed in recent years.

Hoaxes

Following the policy of ‘secrecy through information,’ the Priory of Scions has woven a web of hoaxes to obscure its true form. Over the course of centuries, it planted strange fragments with false and sometimes even ludicrous information, pointing to the most incredible, non-existent conspiracies. They created a climate for the power-hungry and the occult-crazed to start up secret societies which the Priory of Scions could try to influence.

The Priory never controlled such a hoax since it did not want a clever mind tracing it back to them, but they did indirectly influence some of those societies to further its own cause.

One of the most famous examples is the “Priory of Sion” hoax that started in 1956. Pierre Plantard, who was not a member of the Priory of Scions and knew nothing of the organization or of the Rex Deus, concocted this hoax for the purposes of making money. Plantard used fraudulent parchments planted by the real Priory as proof. In 1993 Plantard confessed that his Priory of Sion was a fraud. Since then all attempts at research in the field of the Order of Sion (and anything that could point to the Priory of Scions) have been scoffed at by ‘serious academics.’

The New Millennium

With the decline of monarchies and the rise of democracies, the Priory has been experiencing problems keeping tabs on the Rex Deus members. It is actively looking for new ways to keep the Rex Deus members in the public eye and in places of power and influence. It is also still trying to recover the documents it lost during the incidents with the Templars and the Order of Sion. A favourite pastime of many ‘monks’ (the informal name the members of the Priory use for themselves) is ‘weaving the web,’ planting the seeds of new conspiracies, hoaxes, and fascinating (yet untrue) theories.

The Priory works together with the Circle of Hermes and its Round Table. It sees membership as an easy source of extra information regarding Rex Deus activities. As long as the Priory can hide its agenda from the members of the Round Table and as long as the benefits of this membership outweigh the costs, the Priory will remain a member of the Round Table.

The Scionite Code

The Scionite Code is taught to novices using a short verse. Each line represents a different aspect of the Priory's goals.

*Weave the web,
protect the Elm,
Serve the King from shadows.
Keep the tie, cut the knot
With traitor Roncelin remembered.
Your canon is the Hermit's word
The wise react instead of act,
Secrecy through information
Prince's word is fact.*

Weave the web

Since the Sundering, the Priory of Scions has used misdirection as one of its primary methods of keeping itself and its purposes hidden from all eyes. Many members of the Priory spend their time planting false information and red herrings for those who seek the truth. All members are expected to take any opportunity to plant tidbits of fraudulent information (occult or otherwise), since one carefully laid strand can lead to entire webs of false information being spun, without the Priory needing to act further.

Protect the Elm

The elm at Gisors was visible symbol of the vine transplanted from the Holy Land, just as the Rex Deus have been transplanted. Protect the elm refers to tracking and protecting the families trees of the Rex Deus, by compiling information and records and searching for new methods to make tracking the Rex Deus easier. The Priory also works to prevent feuds from arising in the Rex Deus.

Serve the King from shadows

The Priory of Scions was founded to serve the Rex Deus Scions. King serves as a metaphor for the Rex Deus Scions, and shadows refers the secrecy that surrounds both the Priory and the Rex Deus Scions. Secrecy was established so that the Res Deus Scions could lead their families without interference or distraction, while the Priory could search for knowledge and information and protect the Rex Deus Scions from afar.

The goal of the Priory is to help the Rex Deus Scions gain power, fame, and riches. Priory members are forbidden from acting against the Rex Deus, and from revealing the existence of the Priory to the Rex Deus Scions. Priory members, however, are cautious not to help too much or make things too easy. If a Scion does not have to strive to succeed, if he suspects he has a mysterious benefactors, he will never develop into the person he needs to be.

Keep the tie, cut the knot

Priory members need contacts, allies, and influence among the world in order to gain knowledge, conduct research, and protect the Rex Deus. 'Keep the tie' directs members to build up their knowledge and contacts and other such useful ties. 'Cut the knot' warns them to be cautious, and to stay free of any ties that cannot be easily dissolved. Priory members must always leave a way out, and this way out must not lead anyone following the trail back to the member or the Priory of Scions.

With traitor Roncelin remembered

This is a simple admonishment to stay loyal to the Priory and its structure. Roncelin cost the Priory of Scions the Templars, one of the greatest losses of manpower and information that the Priory of Scions has ever suffered. Since that time, the leaders of the Priory have encouraged all members to voice their concerns and ideas, so that no member feels he must resort to secret cells. Members are expected to work within the present structure, even in cases of disagreement or reform.

Your canon is the Hermit's word

A member may question the word of a Hermit, but you must never disobey. Like all law, a person may try to change it, but should never break it. Even though a Hermit's decision may seem strange or illogical, the Hermit has greater knowledge of Priory secrets. The use of "canon" reminds members that if they cannot voice their concerns to their Hermit, they may appeal to the higher power of the Grand Master.

The wise react instead of act

The Priory is a passive organization because it is a secret organization. People and organizations who are watching for such things usually do not miss the clues left by action. The Priory believes it is better to stay on the defensive, choosing when, where, and how they will act. Its willing to endure small losses rather than risk the losing its secrecy.

Secrecy through information

The Priory does not reveal that it has secrets. Its members are always willing to supply information, but that information is never correct information about Priory matters. Truth should never be revealed if it pertains to the Priory.

Prince's word is fact

The Priory of Scions keeps no secrets from its Princes. When a Prince tells a members something concerning Priory business, it is accepted as a fact. Princes know why they cannot reveal certain secrets to those of lesser knowledge. As some humans go mad when entrusted with knowledge that is not meant for human eyes, many a member of the Priory has been driven mad by uncovering secrets before the time was right.

Ranks

Aspirant

Aspirants are ignorant supplicants. All they know about the Priory of Scions is that the organization is devoted to preparing the world for the Kingdom of God on Earth. They are watched carefully, and nurtured carefully, to see if they have the strength of faith and character necessary to progress to a Novice. To insure there is no bias, an Aspirant is never mentored by the member who first sponsors the individual. *Players wishing to start as Aspirants must be in the same domain as a PC member of the Priory of Scions.*

Novice (required status: 1)

Novices live in monasteries, which they may not leave without a chaperon. Novices are mostly young members of the Priory of Scions; it is rare for an adult to be a Novice, though not unheard of. A member maintains this rank until his supervising mentor determines that he is ready to be promoted. A mentor may hail from any rank in the Priory of Scions. *Players wishing to start as Novices must be in a domain with a monastery.*

Prioran (required status: 2)

Priorans are the rank and file of the Priory of Scions. They live in monasteries, but may come and go as they please. A Prioran's first duty is to research the occult and seek knowledge to further the Priory's understanding of their role in the world, presently and in the future.

Castellan (required status: 2)

Castellan is a rank reserved only for men. A Castellan administers the property of the Priory. Administering covers everything from performing maintenance and paying property tax to the physical security of the monastery. On those rare occasions when the Priory resorts to the use of force, a Castellan always coordinates the effort. A Castellan resides in the monastery he administers (as does his family, if he has one), though sometimes a Castellan must administer more than one piece of property.

Counselor (required status: 3)

Counselor is a rank also reserved only for men. They attend to the spiritual needs of a monastery. The Priory of Scions is not a religious order, but membership is premised on monotheistic belief. Counselors are broadly trained in religion in order to provide spiritual guidance to members. Life within the Priory is also stressful, and often times Priory members simply need some one to talk to. Counselors fulfill that need.

Prince (required status: 4)

Princes can establish new monasteries and induct new members, and are considered to be the tutors and exemplar members of the Priory of Scions. Princes are not required to belong to any particular priory or abbey; they are expected to travel to where they are most needed. However, the process of founding a new monastery takes time, and Princes will settle in one place temporarily while they carry out their duties, moving on only when they feel the local Priory can stand on its own.

Prince-Mentor (required status 4, prerequisite rank: Prince)

A Prince-Mentor head any monastery where there are novices. He is responsible for their education and protection. The suffix of -Mentor is granted by the Hermit who runs the supervising abbey. All Prince-Mentors together form the College Council. There are never more Prince-Mentors than there are schools for novices.

Hermit (required status: 5, prerequisite rank: Prince)

Hermits lead an abbey, and grant and strip ranks from the abbey's members.

All Hermits together form the Monastic Council, which is presided over by the Grandmaster. The title of Hermit can only be granted or taken away when the Monastic Council reaches a consensus on the matter. The number of Hermits in the Priory of Scions is always equal to the number of abbeys.

Grandmaster Scion (no required status; no prerequisite rank)

The leader of the Priory Scions, the Grandmaster Scion appoints Princes.

The Grandmaster Scion is appointed by the previous Grandmaster Scion. When a new Grandmaster Scion takes office, he must immediately appoint his successor, though he may alter his choice later on. The Monastic Council can veto the appointment of a successor by simple majority. If a Grandmaster Scion dies without a successor, all Princes are called to appear for the Monastic Council, where they must debate until they reach a consensus on who the new Grandmaster Scion will be. If the Monastic Council approves the choice by a simple majority, the person is given the office of Grandmaster Scion. If the person is not approved by the Monastic Council, the Princes must reach a consensus on a new candidate.

Dwellings

Monasteries , Abbeys,and Priories

Most of the earliest communities of the Priory of Scions (such as Mount Carmel) consisted of groups of huts collected about a common center, usually the house of some hermit, but without any attempt at orderly arrangement. Such communities were not an invention of the Priory of Scions, but mirrored the communities of the Essenes.

During the heydays of the Templar Knights, the vast wealth that was amassed was used to house all monasteries in buildings not unlike the first two monasteries at Orval and Mount Sion. After the fall of the Templars the housing of monasteries greatly diversified.

A monastery is the physical dwelling of any community of members of the Priory of Scions. Monasteries range from modest family homes to vast, historical religious estates, depending on the size and needs of the community it serves. An *abbey* is a monastery overseen by a Hermit. All other monasteries are called *priories*.

Each priory is dependent on an abbey and a new priory can only be founded by a Prince. Novices are confined to abbeys or priories run by a Prince-Mentor and are forbidden to leave the grounds unsupervised.

A priory can be as small as a residence of two or three Priorans and as big as a community for several hundred members. Its members fall under the authority of the Hermit that sent the Prince to establish the priory. A priory becomes an abbey as soon as one of its members gains the title of Hermit.

Life within the Priory

Membership in the Priory is Low Approval in European countries and High Approval in all other countries.

Members of the Priory of Scions may purchase the following Merits at half price: Resources and Retainers. Members also received one free specialization in any skill.

Imagine having to defend something that doesn't even know it needs to be defended. Having to protect something from the rest of the world and often times from itself as well. On top of that, imagine having to defend it and never expose to it that you exist. That is the life those who are members of the Priory of Scions.

While the majority of the Priory of Scions is based in Europe, the Rex Deus have traveled the world. In addition, much of the knowledge the Priory seeks has been scattered to distant points. Often times this has led to members of the Priory of Scion to travel from the land they call home, in order to set up new monasteries to begin the ever watchful existence.

To an outsider, a life inside of a monastery might seem somber and celibate, but nothing could be further from the truth. While life as a low ranking member of the Priory does come with a certain forfeiture of freedoms, this does not mean that families don't exist inside the walls of the monastery. Membership in the Priory is often hereditary. In addition, while the Priory is modeled on a monastic order, the religions inside the walls of any given monastery are not homogeneous. The members of the Priory follow many variants of monotheism.

Life inside of a monastery usually begins at a very early age, but never before age seven. Sensitive information, however, is never taught before age 12. Novices are the newcomers to the Priory of Scions who are brought into the organization after being converted to the mission that the Priory holds.

Even for those whose parents are members of the Priory, exposure to the Priory and entry to the position of Novice does not take place until the child has reached at least age 12. Traditionally this was the age a boy came into his manhood.

A note for Storytellers and Players:

The Priory of Scions often provides a home for its members, but this does not free members from the need to seek regular employment.

The Priory of Scions is not your day job. Your job may be something you do simply to earn a paycheck, or it may be directly related to the work you do for the Priory, or it may be a job you genuinely enjoy. Priory members are free to pursue any profession they wish.

Priory members who attain sufficient rank may also pursue a family life if they desire, and membership in the Priory is often hereditary.

Though the Priory is committed to protecting the Rex Deus and its history has been intricately tied to the Rex Deus, the primary goal of any Priory member is knowledge of the occult. The Priory must learn about occult forces so that it is better able to prepare the world and protect the Rex Deus.

It is expected that many domains will have only a few members of the Priory of Scions. Plots should not be focused on the Rex Deus except in rare instances. The average Priory PC should be occupied with research, knowledge hunting, 'weaving the web,' and networking.

The Rex Deus Scions need only one eye kept on them, since the Priory of Scions is there merely to nudge them along the path to greatness, not propel them. A Rex Deus Scion's character must be left to develop independently.

Rex Deus and Rex Deus Scions are not available as PCs and are Top Approval with Global notification for NPCs!

Younger children might receive lessons to prepare them for this entry, but are not exposed to the true teachings of the Priory of Scions.

In recent years there have been some exceptions to this teaching policy. Some Prince-Mentors have grown to view age as a crucial factor in being ready to undertake a life-long mission, so in some cases exposure is postponed until after the child has completed university and had some time live on their own and explore the world.

Initiation into the Priory of Scions is a simple affair. A Prince-Mentor quizzes an Aspirant on all manner of items to test the Aspirant's faith, conviction, ethics, general knowledge of the occult, and sharpness of wit. If the Prince-Mentor is satisfied that the Aspirant has displayed enough characteristics and knowledge, the Prince-Mentor teaches the Aspirant the Scionite Code. Once the Aspirant can recite the Code, he or she is considered a Novice and appointed a personal mentor. The first task of the Novice's mentor is to teach the meaning behind the code.

Once a Novice has been initiated, they begin their studies and their work inside of the monastery. A Novice is never permitted to leave the monastery without a chaperon. It is during this time that the Novice studies and researches the Occult, Theology and History, in addition to doing research, and studying the social interactions that higher ranking Priory of Scion members are engaged in. Once the Novice is ready for promotion, the Novice applies to the Hermit of the nearest abbey, who will promote the Novice. The Novice may gain a local position, or be sent to a new location to fulfill a need.

Note: Membership in the Priory is largely (though not exclusively) hereditary. "The wise react instead of act" extends to recruitment as well. The Priory of Scions waits for the right candidate for recruitment to appear through circumstance. They do not actively seek out recruits. PCs should not be actively recruiting in game unless there are extenuating IC circumstances.

Life outside the Priory

The Round Table

"We benefit from this alliance. If this ever changes, our ways will part..."

Circle of Hermes

"And many who are now first, shall be last..."

Project Garnet

"Aliens... off course... Well, mad as hatter, but excellent allies..."

Scarecrows

"Better having loose cannons than no cannons at all..."

Vampires

"As long as they don't bother the Rex Deus, we don't bother them."

Werewolves

"If vampires exist, maybe they do too, but let the others in the Round Table find that out."

Magi

“Magi ? Illusionists, you mean... or occultists... but magi ? ...Maybe we should visit our Hermetic friends...”

Priories of Note

Orval (Belgium)

Notre Dame de Sion (Israel - Jerusalem)

Mount Carmel (Israel)

Calabria (Italy)

Gisors (France)

Lexicon

abbey: A monastery overseen by a Hermit

Knights Templar: Order of military knights founded by the Order of Sion but controlled by the Priory of Scions. The Order of Sion and the Knights Templar split in the 12th Century when tie between the Order of Sion and the Priory of Scions began to break. The Priory of Scions controlled the Knights Templar until the 14th century.

monastery: The physical dwelling of any community of members of the Priory of Scions.

Order of Sion: Founded as a cover organization for the Priory of Scions in the in 11th century. In the 12th century the Order began to break away from Priory. Over the next four centuries ties between the two societies dissolved; the Order of Sion was completely absorbed by the Jesuits in the 1600s.

priory: Any community of members of the Priory of Scions not overseen by a Hermit.

Priory of Scions: Originally an order of monks founded to independently and secretly aid the Rex Deus lineages. The modern Priory of Scions continues its mission to protect and aid the Rex Deus lineages to prepare them, and itself, for the Second Coming of the Messiah. The modern Priory is not a religious order, but it is an order dedicated to a religious cause. Members in the Priory practice Judeo-Christian beliefs, though many members depart from traditional denominations, so there is a wide variety of spiritual diversity to be found in the Priory.

Rex Deus: Lineages descended from David and Aaron. Mary (mother of Jesus) was a member of the Rex Deus. Only one parent needs to be Rex Deus for the child to be considered a member of the Rex Deus. If both parents are Rex Deus, the child is only considered a Rex Deus Scion *if* the secret oral history is passed on to him.

Scion or Rex Deus Scion: A member of a Rex Deus family that has both a Rex Deus mother and father *and* who aware of the secret history of his ancestry. Rex Deus Scions are not members of the Priory of Scions.

Sion: See Zion

Zion: The Hebrew term for Jerusalem