

Order of Thoth

Introduction

It is with great trepidation that I accepted the aid of the mages in this endeavor. Long I thought them to be delvers into dusty tomes, muttering obscure phrases to achieve the most meager of our lady's miracles. However, throughout my service in Ghinor they have proven to have powers beyond the wildest imagination. Many mages have the belief that they are above other folks because of their access to knowledge long gone from mortal ken. I have faith in the Red Maiden, but I fear that we have allied with those that are kin to demons. I urge you most strenuously your Eminence to keep a watchful eye on these mages.

*-Elder Avinor in a letter to Bishop Naven of Ghinor.
4172 BCCC*

I stand here on the docks of Isselmere, breathing in the salt air and marveling at the number and diversity of the courier ships. From City-State, Modron, Tlan, Lenap, Nome, Tula, and Ghinor they come bearing their messages, troves of lore, and mages on errands of importance. I toiled for fifteen years in Master Loginus laboratory. I learned the arts of our Order. But it was not until today, looking out from the docks, I truly felt the power and might of my Order, the Order of Thoth

*Magus Holinard
4342 BCCC.*

Overview

The Order of Thoth is the most powerful of the Magical Orders. Their knowledge of the *Shield of Magic* gives them a singular advantage in confrontations with rival magic-users. Founded in the wake of the fall of the Ghinorian Empire, two thousand years ago, they spread to nearly corner of the Wilderlands.

Known as mages, they organized themselves into conclaves. A conclave is a small group of mages living together for mutual protection and sharing resources. Mages usually locate the conclave in the wilderness but a few are located in the major cities of the Wilderlands. Tula the Wizard's City has been under the rule of the Order of Thoth for several hundred years. It was once the Imperial capital of the Ghinorian Empire. Every 10 years a Grand Conclave meets in Tula. At the Grand Conclave decisions affecting the Order are made and a Archmage is elected to see that they are enforced.

Conclaves

Conclaves can have from six to over two dozen mages in residence. They consist of a complex of buildings, living quarters, laboratories, a common library, and other facilities. Most conclaves have a small staff of servants with living quarters and facilities for them. In the larger conclaves this staff can grow to the size of a small hamlet. Servants include domestic staff, cooks, general laborers, and guards. The larger conclaves will use the surrounding fields to grow food and take on many of the aspects of a feudal manor.

All conclaves appoint officers to deal with day-to-day administration. Typical positions are the Seneschal in charge of supplies and maintenance, and the Custodian in charge of maintaining the library and laboratories. Beyond the appointment of officers, the organization of the conclave varies. A council of all the mages in residence rules most conclaves; with the offices elected on a yearly basis. A smaller number are dominated by one or two mages that effectively control the conclave.

History

Ancient Past

The Order of Thoth originated in the Ghinorian people and the Church of Mitra. Among the many tasks the church of Mitra dedicated themselves to was academic study. This included the study of how to manipulate mana otherwise known as magic. By the time of the Ghinorian Empire, two thousand years ago, the magic-users of the Churches developed a system of three dozen rituals organized into six levels of spells. As the Ghinorian Empire grew in size and power, both the Ghinorian people and the Church of Mitra grew in arrogance and intolerance. Magic-users who dared to learn from other traditions were branded as heretics and where either killed or forced to go into hiding.

The fall of the Empire and the rise of the Order of the Thoth

A thousand years ago the Ghinorian Empire collapsed in the midst of civil war and barbarian invasions. The Ionian barbarians swept through. The Ionian barbarians were led by Andros the Great who crowned himself Overlord and established the Ionian Empire. After an attempt to support an Imperial Pretender, Andros destroyed the Church of Mitra in Ghinor. This is known as the Great Harrowing.

After the Great Harrowing, Overlord Andros invited magic-users from surrounding lands into his court. Many hedge magic-users who were persecuted by the Church of Mitra, came out from hiding and began to live openly. The first century of Ionian rule was a golden age for magical learning and innovation. It was during this time the ability to memorize spells was developed.

The later decades of the Ionian Empire saw the land wracked by civil war as warlord fought warlord. Magic-users were forced to pick sides and fight. Many took the opportunity to raid other magic-users. This ended when the sorceress Dara was granted a vision by the god Thoth. She assembled nine of the most powerful magic-users of the day and formed the First Conclave in 3811 BCCC. The First Conclave wrote the Code of Thoth and established the Order. The first conclave also developed the *Shield of Magic*. This gave them a singular advantage over rival magic-users.

The Early Days of the Order

Conclaves multiplied throughout Ghinor and throughout the old colonies of the Empire like Modron, Kalnala (Tarantis), Caelam (City-State), Tlan, Lenap, and Nome. It attracted magic-users from outside of the Ghinorian culture and they built conclaves outside of the borders of the old Ghinorian Empire.

In 3926 BCCC, two hundred years after the fall of the Ionian Empire, the old imperial city of Tula was in chaos as its tyrant's rule collapsed. The city fathers invited the Order of Thoth to come and restore order. The First Conclave of the Order of Thoth agreed to do this. Tula has since become the center of scholarship for the order and known as the City of Wizards.

The Grand Conclave

In its first centuries, the Order was a loose organization bound by the Code of Thoth and the sharing of the Shield of Magic. Seventy-five years after taking control of Tula the First Conclave began to view themselves as guardians of the Order. They attempted to institute a system of tribunals and inquisitors to investigate violations of the Code of Thoth. In 4,000 BCCC two dozen of the most powerful mages outside of the First Conclave banded together and journeyed to Tula. They managed to disable, subvert, or in some cases kill members of the First Conclave. Within a year, the power of the First Conclave was broken. In the First Conclave's place, a Grand Conclave of all mages was summoned to Tula. At the first meeting of the Grand Conclave it was decided to make it a permanent institution and meet every 10 years. Maglon, from the Conclave of the White Star, was made the first Archmage.

Demonic Corruption and the First Magewar

The next major test of the Order came 90 years after the establishment of the Grand Conclave. The conclaves of Lenap were active in attacking the Order of the Viridian Eye and the Viridistan Empire for their association with demons. During this conflict many of the Lenapian conclaves turned to the use of demons themselves. They became corrupted. The Grand Conclave of 4090 BCCC condemned these conclaves and declared the first magewar. The conflict took six years to fight and ended in victory for the Order.

The Great Crusade and the Ghinorian Wars

Since taking control of Tula, the Order of Tula played little part in the conflicts of the Ghinorian Successor states. By the end of their first century of ruling Tula, the mages established a series of buffer states around Tula's territory. Afterwards they intervened only when the balance of power was threatened.

In 4153 BCCC a crusade was called in the Ghinorian Colonies to liberate the Ghinorian homeland. Duke Ceris landed on the shores of Ghinor and ignited the First Ghinorian War. He did not succeed in liberating Ghinor but was able to create a small Principality and an alliance. Since then the various realms in Ghinor have fought three more wars.

These wars have caused nothing but trouble for the Order of Thoth as they had to intervene directly in many of the conflicts to preserve Tula's independence. To compound their troubles the wars have drawn the attention of the Set dominated Empire of Thule. This has brought the presence of the Order of Set into Ghinor. The Ghinorian wars have dominated the recent Grand Conclaves to the detriment of handling issues and problems in other lands.

Salm-Lorin

In 4280, Salm-Lorin became the leader of the Guild of Arcane Lore in the City-State of the Invincible Overlord. Taking advantage of the Archmage and the Grand Conclave focus on the Ghinorian Wars, he used his position to take over the City-State and crowned himself as Overlord. The period between 4287 and 4348 was known in City-State as the Tyranny. In 4320 the Grand Conclave condemned Salm-Lorin and authorized a magewar. With the aid of the Order of Thoth, the Tharian Horse Lords were able to conquer City-State. Salm-Lorin killed himself in 4348 by throwing himself off the highest spire of the Cryptic Citadel.

Recent Events (Present Day 4452 BCCC)

The Order of Thoth is facing new challenges as it enters its 6th century of existence. Many mages believe that Order is starting to stagnate. With the collapse of the Viridistan Empire in 4436 BCCC mages have been establishing conclaves through the old imperial territory. The older conclaves worry that demonic artifacts left behind by the Viridians may corrupt them or that they will be involved in the civil war currently being waged. This will be a major issue at the 4460 Grand Conclave.

The Skandian based Order of Thor is coming into increasing conflict with the Order of Thoth. Alongside their Viking compatriots the rune-casters have taken to raiding conclaves around the Winedark Sea. These conclaves have united and have begun a magewar against the Order of Thor, striking back at them in the homelands of the Skandians.

The fears of a Fifth Ghinorian war dominated the Grand Conclave of 4450 BCCC. Archmage Donovan was elected to another ten year term with a mandate to continue working against the Order of Set. The Archmage Donovan has proven adept at giving magical aid to Tula's allies. Outside of Ghinor many conclaves are resenting the attention being given to the Ghinorian Wars.

There is the worrying encroachment of magic-users from the eastern realms. Little known, they seem to be taking an interest in the affairs of the Wilderlands for the first time. These enigmatic wizards often display powers that defy the limits of magic.

In the western desert lands a threat has risen with the rise of the cult of Horus. The followers of Horus display extreme antipathy to mages, and are growing in strength among the desert tribes. As Lenap borders the western desert, the conclaves there are the most concerned about the cult.

The Order is concerned about the rise of the Church of Set in City-State. Based out of the Hellbridge Temple they control one duchy already. The recent natural death of the Overlord has thrown City-State in turmoil as various factions vie to see who is to be the next Overlord. It is rumored that the Hellbridge Temple has control of several of these factions. Because of the legacy of Salm-lorin many of the rival factions do not trust the Order of Thoth. The situation has left the Order with few allies in City-State. Also troublesome are rumors that the old Overlord had a hidden conclave of mages loyal to his family alone. All attempts at scrying have failed.

Code of Thoth

I will not use my art to the detriment of any member of my order.

I will hold no secret from my brothers, sharing my knowledge to benefit the Order's power.

I will tithe the time and arcane power to benefit the Order.

I will not give aid to Demons Lords or their servants.

I will hunt, strike down, or summon aid against any those condemned as renegades by my Order.