



ORDO FRATRIS MORTIS

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What is this?

Ordo Fratrīs Mortis is the twenty-third monthly small release for *KULT: Divinity Lost* — a tribute to Ordo Fratrīs Mortis, one of the cults featured in the book *Legions of Darkness*, published in 1993.

This folio features a quick description of the cult with added information about surgical death magic, as well as the modern occultists that follow its legacy.



Characters, locations and incidents are portrayed from the metaphorical viewpoint of the *KULT: Divinity Lost* setting.



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ORDO FRATRIS MORTIS

Anselm Höder is an Austrian physician and Death Magician born sometime around the early 1800s, known to have successfully mixed medical theory with occult rituals. His methods are rooted in studies of barber-surgeons who have existed in Europe and Near Asia since the 18th century, first developed in the battlefields of the Franco-Prussian war and then perfected in the German colonies in Africa, where he subjected the native population to endless experiments.

Höder practices "surgical death magic", a path of Death magic that mixes esoteric knowledge with science. Through surgery, the physician is able to shape the human body by transplanting body parts between humans and animals, prolong life or stave off death, draw knowledge from human suffering, tether the patient's soul while they travel to other worlds, and see beyond death.

Tubes go in and out of the patient to deliver and/or suck out chemicals and bodily fluids, organs are removed for inspection and proper carving of sigils, "physical therapy" such as shock and needling is also often used. Wounds are sutured with hair stolen from Elysium gods and rusty hooks, raw flesh is glued shut with the secretions of deceased people, oils are massaged into the body and organs until absorbed completely.

Mixed esoteric practices such as invocations and chanting, visualization, prayer, runes and sigils, protective circles, gestures, consecrated clothes, possessed tools, and more, allow the Death Magician to manipulate souls and creatures, affect other worlds and the barriers between them, and manipulate the illusion of death.

During his time in the German South-west Africa (present-day Namibia) in the 1880s, Höder was manipulated by a magician called Azwesti to summon a nepharite named Marbas. The ritual failed and Höder became Marbas' slave. Höder returned to Europe a changed man, and assumed the role as a surgeon in a hospital in Vienna. There, he continued to practice and develop his magic and gathered a few followers.

In 1894, he founded a death cult called Ordo Fratrīs Mortis, a network of Death Magicians serving Marbas. Members were recruited among older military surgeons with similar backgrounds to the founders, most of them with power and influence. Many were heads of clinical departments, chief physicians, or experts in their fields. Periodically, they gathered in a safe haven to perform sacrifices to Marbas and research new rituals.

The cult had a steady growth throughout the years and reached its peak power and size during the Great War, when they doubled in numbers and sent apprentices to the battlefields to experiment on soldiers, war captives, and victimized civilians. Then came the Second World War, and with it the ties to the Nazi war machine, which would again support Höder's fanaticism; it wasn't a coincidence that the Übermensch theory aligned with the magician's own views and past. However, despite the cult's power, lictors got in their way and many died in the war, were caught by opposing powers, fled, were sacrificed to Marbas, or met fates that have yet to be unveiled.

Modern Times

Nowadays the old Ordo Fratrīs Mortis is a thing of legends, and despite the lictors' attempts to erase his legacy, Höder's methods are still around. There are numerous theories about the cult's fall and aftermath. Some occultists theorize that Höder is dead, while others say to have uncovered passages from his old journals suggesting that he created his own purgatory. Conspiracists say that the cult is active and thriving in Northern Europe, restricting its activities to the world's elite. Others don't seem to bother with the cult itself, only with excerpts taken from Höder's encyclopedias, which are sold in obscure forums for unthinkable amounts of money, and exchanged for favors from gods or similarly powerful artifacts.

Höder's modern followers have found their ways into anonymous forums to trade knowledge and make contacts. Among them are nurses, morticians, doctors, and occultists without formal education but willing to perform Höder's rituals on themselves at home. On their path to Awakening, they often end up using their knowledge of death magic to operate illegal clinics, participate in human and organ trafficking, and cooperate with criminal factions.

LEGIONS OF DARKNESS

- ◆ *Thinkdeath [Public]:* A worldwide network of "bio-hackers" who perform self-surgery to implant alien tech in their bodies. Many are Underworld and Metropolis explorers seeking contact with the Bio-mechanical Keepers, Tekrons, and Magistrates.
- ◆ *Dead End [Private]:* An online forum whose users believe Höder is still alive, albeit trapped in Inferno. They are gathering knowledge to perform a ritual to find Höder and are considered to be "at war" with the Flakchatters. Many are involved with infernal creatures, either working for or controlling them.
- ◆ *Waste Angels [Secret]:* A cult of cannibal morticians harvesting the insides of the deceased to perform rituals that trap their souls in the land of the living. Phantoms are then used as their henchmen beyond the veil.
- ◆ *Night Doctors [Private]:* Surgeons operating illegal clinics. Most have lost their right to practice and are now tied to organ and human trafficking schemes, or reserve their service for criminals and creatures who avoid or can't access healthcare through legal means.
- ◆ *Slaves of Pain:* People who have been subjected to suffering by occultists using Höder's rituals. They are addicted to pain and come back to the surgeons to become lab rats. They willingly donate their organs and absorb patients' pains, wounds, and illnesses.
- ◆ *Mercach:* Creatures born from botched operations. The being crawls out of the victim's body soon after their death. They are vaguely humanoid creatures made of live flesh and thin skin. They fear harsh lights and seek to feed on blood and raw meat. Generally, they are willing to serve the occultists who feed them.

