



The Top 23 Illuminati of the Millennium

"By including such names, the list . . . could not but appear suspect."

-- Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*

The global odometer is getting ready for its most dramatic flip in, well, a thousand years, causing an upsurge in eschatological cultism, mindless panic, paraphysical tension, and eye-catching lists. This particular sample of the last-named symptom signposts a handful of figures whose machinations, struggles, and snares made the last thousand years what it Secretly Is Today. (Enterprising GMs can use this as a "hit list" for time traveling conspiracy-smashers, a "who's who" for some out-time Conclave of the Unknown Superiors, or a jumping off point for historical cabals in historical or modern *GURPS Illuminati* campaigns.) This list has a few ground rules, the first of which is this: It's wrong. Pretty much by definition, the true Top 23 Secret Masters (much like history's greatest forgers) are ones that we never heard of. So, with that caveat, I threw strict historical accuracy to the wind and selected two from each *INWO* Illuminati group, plus two Templars, plus the original Player To Be Named Later. The envelopes within the envelope, please . . .

The Society of Assassins

Hassan ibn al-Sabbah (1034-1124): The Old Man of the Mountain, bosom friend of poet Omar Khayyam, put the capital "A" in "assassins." Actually, he put the whole word "assassin" in "assassins," thanks to his habit of using hashish to drug his "hashishin" into ecstasies of easily-brainwashed loyalty. His Order of the Assassins thus begins the tradition that spawned drug-crazed serial killers and CIA mind-controlled "lone gunmen."

Pyotr Ivanovitch Rachkovski (1860?-1920?): Mysterious head of the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police, in Paris. Played a double game throughout his career, both creating revolutionary sects and taking credit for infiltrating and destroying them. His machinations forged the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, killed the Tarot specialist and magus Papus, and no doubt involved him in the Black Hand plot that killed Franz Ferdinand and launched World War One. With that kind of résumé, he might be Illuminati, too.

Shangri-La

Milarepa (1052-1135): Former black magician and practitioner of hideous corpse-eating cults in Central Asia (possibly, thus, a Servant of Cthulhu), Milarepa turned away from the left-hand path to follow the lama Marpa. He no doubt brought Shangri-La some much-needed occult

muscle, and vital information on the doings of Those Outside.

H.P. Blavatsky (1831-1891): Shangri-La's most successful missionary, spreading the word of the Nine Unknown Masters of Tibet hither and yon throughout the Western world. Former circus trick-rider and medium H.P.B. founded the Theosophical Society after receiving "spirit communications" from the Hidden Mahatmas, leading to Indian independence, British weakness, and the rise of mystical racism in Europe. Whoops.

Knights Templar

Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153): That's *Saint* Bernard to you, buddy. And no smart cracks about the big dogs and the brandy, either; that's hidden Egyptian Anubis-worship concealed in the snowy Alpine fastnesses. St. Bernard (the "Thaumaturgus of the West") wrote the Templar rule, chivvied Europe's sacred geometers into an orgy of Goetic/Gothic cathedral-building, called the Second Crusade, and transcribed St. Malachy's prophecies for the next millennium of popes.

Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460): Grand Master of the Knights of Christ (that's Portuguese for "former Templars"), seeker of the Kingdom of Prester John, brother-in-law of the founder of the Order of the Golden Fleece, no doubt somehow involved in the secret Templar colonies in America and the Piri Re's Map -- no wonder he never found time to leave his tower at Sagres. Columbus, da Gama, Vespucci and other, secret voyagers, carried his Knighthood to places that his cartographers never put on the *official* maps.

Servants of Cthulhu

Ludvig Prinn (1220?-1542): The only author of a primary Mythos grimoire to live (if that's the correct term) in this millennium, Ludvig Prinn made his *De Vermis Mysteriis* (*The Mysteries of the Worm*) a tribute to Nyarlathotep, ghouls, and other Things That Go Bump In The Crypt. The former Flemish knight turned horrible necromantic prophet and creepy immortal met a well-deserved, and too-long-delayed death at the hands of the Inquisition during the persecution of the Beghard heretics.

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947): The man called himself the Antichrist, fed and pimped his buddies to demons in North Africa, talked to a mysterious entity Aiwass in Cairo (where Prinn also learned his dark lore), crucified a toad, fragmented the Golden Dawn, and conjured up the Loch Ness Monster. Plus, one of his disciples translated the *Necronomicon*. In paperback.

Gnomes of Zurich

Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464): Not content with holding the financial scales of Italy (and thus of Europe), Cosimo *Pater Patriae* also sent agents to forgotten monastic libraries to obtain rare and ancient texts. His family sponsored the magus Ficino who translated the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Adept tradeoff?), the explorer Vespucci who named America (powerful kabbalism), and the artist Botticelli who secretly designed the Tarot and headed the Prieuré de Sion. His descendants included four popes, a smattering of dukes, and the witch-queen who brought forks to France and patronized the jam-cook and psychic Nostradamus.

William Paterson (1658-1719): This Scottish banker and Freemason founded the Bank of England, which (as we all know from Lyndon LaRouche tracts) caused the Industrial Revolution, the Opium War, the American Civil War, the Russian Revolution, the Beatles, and the Chicago

Fire. Nobody quite knows why he tried to found a colony in Panama with a swastika flag.

Adepts of Hermes

Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa (1486-1535): Agrippa took the lessons of the last millennium and codified them for this one. Without his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, there'd be far fewer books of occult philosophy. He also had a black dog, a magic mirror, and a bad experience with the Wandering Jew.

John Dee (1527-1608): Step aside, folks. This is the magus who founded the British Empire and the British Museum, protected Queen Elizabeth, started the Invisible College (which became the Royal Society and Grand Lodge Masonry), taught Shakespeare and Marlowe all they knew, talked to angels, wrote the *Voynich Manuscript*, made gold for the Holy Roman Emperor, mapped the world's magickal currents, analyzed Stonehenge and the Pyramids, invented a flying machine, stopped the Armada, translated the *Necronomicon* (whoops), and set off the linguistic Enochian time-bomb that created the Golden Dawn, Jack the Ripper, and the fall of Communism. Plus, he was the first Agent 007 of Her Majesty's Secret Service.

Bermuda Triangle

Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539-1583?): One of Dee's protégés; Gilbert learned what he could and "disappeared" in the mid-Atlantic.

Diego Martinez Pasqualis (1724-1772?): A founder of French occult and neo-Templarist Masonry, his Elect Cohen Lodge served as the nerve center for the proto-Illuminati of Enlightenment Europe. Having trained a number of successors, Pasqualis took ship for Haiti and (you guessed it) "disappeared" in the mid-Atlantic.

Discordians

Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654): You know that whole Rosicrucian thing? It was a joke. Honest. College prank. Seriously, he made it all up. You didn't really *fall* for all that about the eight-sided tomb and the secret of immortality and the alchemical wedding and the flying robes and the torch of freedom and the prophecies and the Thirty-Six Secret Invisible Masters who walk among us unseen. Did you?

Robert Anton Wilson (1932-): How many conspiracies does it take to change a light bulb? Fnord.

The Network

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716): Alchemist and Pythagorean sacred geometer, Leibniz invented calculus (so handy for those formulae) and a vastly advanced mechanical calculator. The one he showed only Newton (the one that began the German-English Masonic feud, which ended up in some degree of unpleasantness 250 years later) was even more advanced, which is why he died when he ventured into Hanover.

Ada Lovelace (1815-1852): Babbage gets all the credit, but Babbage only saw what Ada wanted him to see. Daughter of the radical Byron (one of the Secret Senate of Mankind, according to the

Illuminated poetry of Shelley), she programmed the engines which toppled thrones and steered the Mars voyagers. Ooops, you weren't supposed to hear about those yet.

The Bavarian Illuminati

Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830): Former Jesuit and colleague of Victor Frankenstein at the University of Ingolstadt, Weishaupt is something of a gimme. He's equally important as the inventor of the cell system of conspiratorial organization, avenger of Jacques de Molay, father of May Day, and impostor president of the Masonic Republic.

John Ruskin (1819-1900): Why, you may ask, is a famous art critic on the list? Because his teachings, derived from Illuminated Platonism, inspired (or *created*) Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Milner (master of the Round Table Group, and hence of the Trilateral Commission, the CFR, and other Establishment organs), Marx and Engels, the Gothic revival, the pre-Raphaelite Grail artists, the Chicago School of megalopolismantic architecture, the Fabian Society (which became the Labour Party and the British Left), and H.G. Wells.

The UFOs

Nikola Tesla (1856-1943): He came from Venus in a ship of lightning to give us free energy, antigravity, and communications with Mars. Your power supply runs on Venusian technology.

Vannevar Bush (1890-1974): And, thanks to Vannevar Bush, your computer runs on Grey technology. As the head of Majestic-12, he was able to secure Roswell tech (and later alien "cargo" trade) for America. As designer of the Differential Analyzer, MIT prime mover behind the Internet, and father of the World Wide Web, his Network connections ensured that it was put to good use.

The First And Last Man

Le Comte de Saint-Germain (1710?-1784?): He had [his own column](#), that's how Illuminated he is. Plus, in former or future lives he was all the honorable mentions: Hermetic Adept Roger Bacon, Shangri-la lama Tsong-kha-pa, Bermuda scout Christopher Columbus, neo-Templarist master Sir Francis Bacon, Discordian artist Marcel Duchamp, UFO designer of the 1896 airship, Assassin master Rachkovski (sneaky), Gnostic arms-dealer Basil Zaharoff, and Networked mechanism-builder Leonardo da Vinci.

[Past Columns](#)

Article publication date: November 25, 1999

101 *Pyramid* subscribers rated this article **3.96** on a scale of 1 to 5. Visit the [ratings page](#) for more info.

Copyright © 1999 by [Steve Jackson Games](#). All rights reserved. Pyramid subscribers are permitted to read this article online, or download it and print out a single hardcopy for personal use. Copying this text to any other online system or BBS, or making more than one hardcopy, is *strictly prohibited*. So please don't. And if

you encounter copies of this article elsewhere on the web, please report it to webmaster@sjgames.com.



[Home](#) - [Subscribe!](#) - [Current Issue](#) - [Playtesting](#) - [Chat](#) - [Advertising](#) - [Index of Advertisers](#) - [Feedback](#)