

The Benevolent Gentlemen of Saint Attis

Don't believe the name: every word in "The Benevolent Gentlemen of Saint Attis" is a lie, with the possible exceptions of 'the' and 'of.' Explaining why will take some unpacking, however. In reverse order:

- 'Attis' should actually be 'Apollo-Attis,' an obscure hybrid Roman deity from the Second Century AD. Apollo-Attis, at least in the form worshipped by the Benevolent Gentlemen, is a remarkably bloodthirsty god who demands regular sacrifices in exchange for good crops, skill with the arts, and victory in both diplomacy and war; there is also a considerable amount of ancillary worship of the Magna Mater, in her more the-thirsty-knife-feeds-the-harvest aspects. Apollo-Attis is also depicted as being fairly vicious, petty, and prone to answering minor slights with divine wrath.
- 'Saint' is absurd, of course, on several levels. The Benevolent Gentlemen began as an English upper class social club in the mid-1750s, and even then it was deemed politic to make the public face of the group ostensibly Christian. The 'truth' is revealed to initiates only after they've joined the club, gotten fully

integrated into it, and noticed that there are quite a number of drunken orgies for an ostensibly Anglican institution.

- 'Gentlemen' obscures the fact that the group -- in flagrant contrast to the Masonic traditions that the Benevolent Gentlemen have stolen from over the centuries -- has always offered full membership to women. Of course, there is a sharp distinction between women *members* of the group, and the disposable flesh acquired and discarded in the course of the Benevolent Gentlemen's activities.
- As for 'Benevolent?' They simply are not. The Benevolent Gentlemen are, in fact, precisely as evil as is efficient for them. If, for example, human sacrifice gives good value for the effort, then they will engage in it; if it is not, then they will not. Morality is irrelevant.

Further characteristics of The Benevolent Gentlemen of Saint Attis are dependent on the campaign. If there are no magic or supernatural activities going on in the game world, then the Benevolent Gentlemen are 'merely' a vicious cult of Western elites who carefully indulge their tastes while still avoiding the attention of law enforcement. They mostly avoid actual murder, not through some sort of

ethical code but because it's difficult to hide too many bodies before somebody notices; they likewise limited themselves to financial trickery and fraud, because those crimes are easier to cover up. These Benevolent Gentlemen are legitimately nasty, but also vulnerable to a well-planned campaign to take them down. They are **not** the Illuminati, in other words.

In campaign worlds with supernatural or magical activities going on (including things like Weird Science or Psionics or Illuminated Lore) then the Benevolent Gentlemen very well may be members of the Illuminati, or dupes of it. The more that they can get away with, the more that they will; the only limiting factor there will be the exact nature of Apollo-Attis. If Apollo-Attis isn't real, then the leadership of the cult will probably be a festering snakepit of contradictory long-term goals and plans. If Apollo-Attis is 'real,' but demonic, then the leadership will be a good deal more organized, and probably deeply in thrall. And if Apollo-Attis is exactly that -- a hybrid Greek god partaking of the worst qualities of both -- then it almost certainly is planning to take over the world, and the top level of the Benevolent Gentlemen is a cadre of castrated fanatics* dedicated to making that happen.

Resources: money and facilities. The Benevolent Gentlemen has its main chapterhouse in London, with branches in Calcutta, Delhi, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, New York City, Philadelphia, and Singapore (the group carefully avoids Washington DC). Its members are rich, with diversified portfolios and little tolerance for sloppy behavior. The 'mundane' version of the cult ranks in terms of power at somewhere between a city government and an American state's governor's office: more Illuminated versions have considerably more oomph.

*This is the only scenario where one can expect castration to be at all common among members of the Benevolent Gentlemen, Attis-worship or no.

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