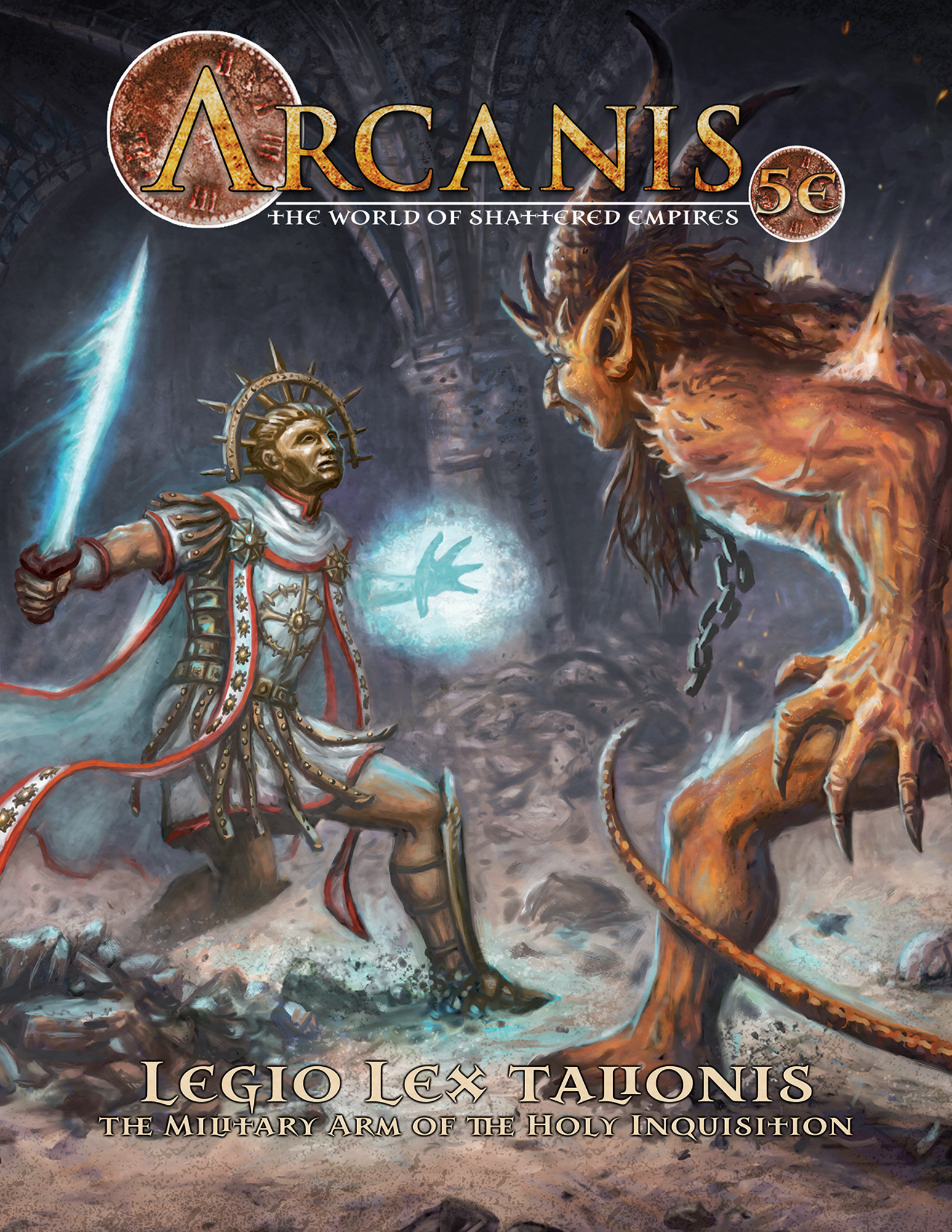




ARCANIS

THE WORLD OF SHATTERED EMPIRES



LEGIO LEX TALIONIS

THE MILITARY ARM OF THE HOLY INQUISITION



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THE LEGIO LEX TALIONIS



Admired and feared in equal portions, the Legio Lex Talionis is the military arm of the Coryani Inquisition, bound to seek out heretical cults and purge their corruption from the Empire and the rest of the Known Lands. By its nature and its long standing association to the Coryani Inquisition the legionnaires of the Legio Lex Talionis are devoutly pious, some would say obsessively so, to the Mother Church of Coryan. Though they venerate the Pantheon of Man as a whole, it is Illiir in His aspect of the Bringer of Light that the legion takes as their patron deity.

HISTORY

A staple in battles that determined the course of history and the fate of millions, the Legio Lex Talionis' reputation as an unbeatable force and an indefatigable protector of the citizens of the Empire is second only to that of the Legion of Vigilance. Its origin, far off in the past during the time of the Imperium of Man, was far humbler.

Imperium of Man (circa – 3700 I.C.)

The Legio Lex Talionis, known also as Legio IV as it was the fourth legion founded during the years following the inception of the Imperium of Man, was originally created to act as the policing force in the nascent nation's territory. The legion's name means the *law of retaliation* where the punishment of a crime was meted out in like kind upon the convicted. Long before the laws of the land were codified and a formal legal system was implemented, justice was quick and brutal. Squads of the legion were sent to the far corners of the realm acting as judge, jury, and executioners. In the territories they were assigned, their word was law. The head of the squad, usually an officer of the legion, would hear grievances and dispense swift justice.

Due to its duties, viewed by the aristocracy as banal and thus inglorious, the legion lacked the prestige enjoyed by others, such as the Legion of the Black Sun or the Legion of Radiant Glory. Due to this perception, none of the members of the illustrious val families joined its ranks. This lack of divine leadership, common in many of the other legions of the time, served to relegate its influence and power.

This lack of stature in the eyes of the Imperium's leaders only served to spur its magistrate-general, K. Prohascus, to ensure that his legionnaires' actions were beyond reproach and that they not only accomplished their assigned duties, but succeeded beyond expectations. The magistrate-general personally traveled from settlement to settlement, sometimes located in the most dangerous or inhospitable regions of the Imperium's frontier, to not only hear grievances, but often to dictate law. Normally, laws and edicts were handed down by the Imperium's bureaucracy, but the fledgling nation's lawmakers were slow in addressing the legal needs of populace outside the safe bounds of the First City. Magistrate-General Prohascus' rulings quickly gained renown for their fairness and clear presentation. The val families may have ruled from the First City, but it was Prohascus' word that was law in the surrounding lands. His body of rulings, known by many as the 'common law' was eventually adopted by the Imperium's legislature, laying the foundation for its judicial system.

As the Imperium pushed its boundaries further into unknown lands, the legion's duties were eventually expanded to protecting these frontier settlements from all foreign dangers. Although they frequently faced inhuman creatures and inimical intelligent races, the legionnaires were rarely called upon to fight as an entire military unit, working instead in small squads. This changed when the Imperium became embroiled in a war that required the marshalling of all their military might.

The People of the Moon (circa – 3600)

In the generations that followed its founding, the Imperium's borders expanded rapidly and quickly abutted other, older civilizations. To their amazement, they discovered other humans had settled in the surrounding regions, humans that had not arrived with the Gods to this continent. These people, identical in all ways to them except for certain examples of unique eye and hair colors, were savage and primitive compared to the citizens of the Imperium. Scholars quickly named these beings the Savosh to further differentiate themselves from these barbarians. The humans of the Imperium regarded themselves as Mandai, or True Men.

As is the way of people when their cultures clash, skirmishes and small-scale battles erupted sporadically. Eventually, a delegation of Savosh whose lands were being encroached upon made their way to the foot of Mount Dagha and petitioned for peaceful solution before all out war became inevitable.

Calling themselves the People of the Moon, these Savoshi worshipped a deity who they never named but referred to as the Three That Are One. Settlers from the Imperium found numerous stone sculptures, crudely crafted, resembling a head with three faces, apparently the representation of this

god. The people themselves went about naked but for a cloak or a utility harness, their sense of modesty and propriety sorely lacking in the opinion of the Imperium's citizens.

Once clear that the small delegation wanted to negotiate, the Emperor sent the holy Hierophant of the Pantheon to treat with the savages, accompanied by three members each of the Legion of Vigilance and the Legio Lex Talionis to protect the high-priest in case this meeting was a ruse. What happened next was preserved for posterity by a centurion of the Legio IV in a letter to his superior.

"They stood before us, over a dozen savages, resplendent in their emerald cloaks and wearing naught save leather sandals. I trembled, barely containing my rage as their leader, a priest they said, growled in their dog-like speech about the verdant moon being the home of their deity, the Three That Are One. His barks echoed into the metal mask he wore over his head, a grotesque thing made of gold and fashioned with three faces, each pointing in a different direction.

"When the holy Hierophant told him that the verdant moon of Veridis was the Paradise of the Gods and that the Pantheon dwelt there, the barbarian joked saying that the moon was large enough for all gods, just as these lands were vast enough for all to live upon. I could take no more and was about to unsheathe my blade when Hippolochi, general of the Legion of Vigilance, beheaded the beast with one stroke. We fell on the brutes like wolves and though we numbered but six, we bathed in their blood and plunged our Imperium into its first war since the founding. Glory be to the Gods! Glory be to the Imperium!"
— attributed to Tithonicus Calanike, Centurion of the Legio Lex Talionis

The war against the People of the Moon lasted but a few years, as the legions of the Imperium hunted them down and either killed or enslaved the barbaric Savosh. At the forefront of the brief war, the Legio Lex Talionis quickly distinguished themselves on the field of battle, singing hymns to the Gods while their enemies fell before them, like wheat to a scythe.

Though they continued administering justice and safeguarding the border afterwards, the Legio IV became a common sight on the battlefield, garnering glory and triumphs for themselves and the Imperium.

War of Empires (-2247 I.C. to – 2159 I.C.)

After whetting its blade on numerous barbaric tribes and inhuman races, the Imperium's borders finally stretched far enough to collide with the two other major human empires on the continent, the Ossarion and Myrantian Empires. By some horrible stroke of luck, the two foreign powers began attacking the Imperium's holdings in the west and the south. Along with every other military asset the Imperium could call upon, the Legio Lex Talionis was ordered to blunt and roll back the invading forces, specifically those cities and settlements in its southern regions.

The invaders from the south were the Myrantian Empire, an ancient people who were well-versed in the art of war, augmented by a mastery of dark sorcery. Alongside the military forces, a group of disconnected cults led by sorcerers known as the Necromancer Lords waged war upon the soft underbelly of the Imperium. These cults consisted of fanatical worshippers of bizarre and frightening deities whose very essence were so hostile to humanity that they left wide-spread madness in their wake.

While the Legio IV was involved in numerous battles during the eighty-eight year conflict, one of the most notable battle was the legion's defense of Palanzur (the ancient name for modern-age Panari) in – 2235 I.C. elements of the legion were forced marched by their commander when word arrived that a massive forces was slowly grinding towards that hoary city. Arriving weeks ahead of the rest of the legion, a cohort consisting of approximately four hundred legionnaires began setting defenses and manning the inadequate walls of the city. Though they'd hoped that the rest of the legion would arrive before they made contact with the invaders, inclement weather prevented the rest of their comrades-in-arms reaching them in time.

Standing between the onrushing horde and the defenseless citizenry were arrayed a few hundred poorly armed and trained militia, a few dozen holy warriors of the Order of the Verdant Champion, and four hundred legionnaires of the Legio Lex Talionis. Throughout the eighteen days of the siege, the Myrantian war engines tore down swaths of Palanzur's defenses, leaving the legionnaires with little choice but to fill the gaps in the city's walls with their dead, mortared in place with blood. On the nineteenth day, the defenses were breached and the city sacked. The last few legionnaires and one holy champion alive at the time were captured and impaled, as the enraged Myrantians discovered that while they battled the legion, the inhabitants were being led away through the vast cavern and tunnel system underneath the city.

When relief finally arrived, they found that the Myrantians had already left with what spoils they could carry, yet they found few citizens killed by the invaders, as the legionnaires purchased the time for their escape with their lives. So moved was the elderly prince of Palanzur, Charun val'Dellenov, that he had the bodies of the impaled defenders dipped in gold and ordered them placed as eternal defenders of his tomb. Sadly the tomb and their golden protectors were lost when Palanzur was sacked again a dozen years later by the Ossarion Empire.

The Massacre at Erbo River (-2167 I.C.)

As the war wore on, chewing through two generations and threatening a third, the citizenry of the Imperium demanded a resolution, either through a decisive victory or suing for

peace. Not even the rumored presence of the valinor Manetas, the Pride of Illiir, could calm the nerves of the people living in the outlying territories where the war raged on.

Bowing to the will of the people, and fearing rebellion from within the military, a new commander of the legions was chosen. High General Tantalus val'Assanté, was considered a brilliant officer whose unorthodox battle tactics more often than not led to great victories over the enemy. His detractors however, often credit the fickle smile of the Goddess Larissa than any actual tactical genius. Proposing that the armies of the two unaligned invaders be drawn to the same battlefield where the Ossarions and the Myrantians would turn and annihilate one another, he assured the Imperator and the Hierophant that an end to the war at hand. His advisors, the generals of four of the five legions he would lead into this battle, dissented vocally and strenuously. The head of the Legio IV, General Alaxion, argued so vehemently that the High General's tactics bordered was madness that Tantalus ordered him publicly flogged.

To better bait the trap, the High General positioned his legions with their backs to the Erbo River, seemingly cutting off the Imperium's forces' retreat should his plan fail. Things seemed to go according to his plans as both the Ossarion and Myrantian armies approached, but while the two enemy forces kept an eye on the other, they refused to engage in battle, instead turning their wrath on the five legions. The battle quickly turned into rout as the Imperium's forces were overwhelmed. Fewer than one hundred of the five thousand legionnaires survived to report upon the massacre. Not among them was High General Tantalus val'Assanté who had the good sense to die in battle.

Bending the Knee to Perfection (-2159 I.C.)

With rumors that the destruction of the legions at Erbo left the capital of the Imperium vulnerable to attack, and riots erupting in the First City, the valinor Manetas appeared above the First City declaring that divine rule had returned to the Imperium, and killing the Imperator and the Hierophant upon the steps of the holy Temple of the Pantheon in suitably grandiose fashion. Alighting upon the blood splattered steps before the astonished assembled citizenry, the valinor declared himself both Imperator and Hierophant, until the children of the Gods were safe once more. The first to bend the knee were the val'Assanté, followed closely by the val'Virdan, but stepping forth from the assembled citizenry were a score of legionnaires from the Legio IV, survivors of the Massacre at Erbo River. These soldiers, led by their general who was blinded in the battle, climbed then steps and knelt before the divine being, the first legion to do so. In an act of benevolence, the Pride of Illiir restored General Alaxion's sight. This miracle cemented the valinor's beneficence among the citizenry and the loyalty of the Legio Lex Talionis.

The Reign of the Divine (-2098 I.C.)

With the religious fervor inspired by Manetas, the War of Empires was eventually won and the Reign of Perfection began. While many prospered in the subsequent period of peace and plenty, some began chaffing beneath the yoke of the tyranny imposed by an immortal being. Among them was an Illiirite priest by the name of Colliex val'Assanté. The aged holy man was respected throughout the Imperium for both his wisdom and knowledge of the scriptures written in the Holy Canticle. The priest argued that then Gods left Arcanis so that humanity could find its own way and that the presence of the Pride of Illiir warped the destiny set forth by the Gods.

So influential were the priest's words that they eventually reached the Holy Emperor and he was invited to state his case before Manetas. There, Colliex argued his points, citing long passages from scriptures, and giving an oration said to be so elegant and clear, that it moved the perfect being to sit forward, entranced by the priest's words. At the end of his discourse, the elderly priest looked hopefully to the valinor, hoping that his words had moved the being to see that his time to end his reign had come.

The assembled worthies, heads of the various val families, military attachés, and other politically powerful members of the imperial court, found themselves holding their breaths to hear the next words from the emperor's lips. He simply said, *"But I don't wish to leave,"* and passed a glance to a score of members from the Legio Lex Talionis, who at this time not only oversaw the adjudication of civil matters along the frontier, but ecumenical crimes as well. With a snarl, the men fell on the old man, stripping him of his holy vestments and, using a nine-tailed barbed whip, flogged the man to death before the shocked assembly. A cruel smile appeared upon the valinor's lips, as an errant drop of blood struck cheek, prompting him to remark cryptically, *"So dies the first martyr to the rebellion."*

The End of Perfection (-2065 I.C.)

During this period of time, the val'Assanté began insinuating themselves within the Legio IV, not only as officers, but common legionnaires fighting shoulder to shoulder with the common man. For their part, the men and women of the Legio Lex Talionis were gratified to see that their devotion and dedication to the Imperium was finally recognized and accepted the favored of the Eternal Emperor as one of their one.

This turned out to be part of the long term plans of the val'Assanté and other val families to overthrow Manetas and return rule to humanity. While val served in the legions, they usually did so in command positions, never as part of the rank and file. To succeed in their insurrection, they would require either for the legions to assist or be neutralized. The fact that the fanatical val'Virdan already commanded the

most renowned legions and enjoyed a position of power that allowed them to act with impunity, required the backing of the rest of the legions if they had any hopes of success.

When the time came to move against the Eternal Emperor, the ranks of the Legio Lex Talionis became embroiled in their own civil war, with those still loyal to valinor turning against those siding with the rebels. These loyalists, outnumbered and outmaneuvered, were butchered in pairs or small groups.

In the end, the legion was purged of fanatics and with the end of Manetas's rule, the Legio IV was once again seen as faithfully serving the interests of the Imperium of Man.

The Destruction of the Legio IV (-1800 I.C.)

After the end of the reign of Manetas, the Imperium slipped into a slow decline, reveling in their new-found freedom and the excesses afforded to them from being the undisputed masters of the continent. In the aftermath of the revolution, the val'Virdan were seen as the embodiment of the oppression of the divine regime, and were castigated, forced to serve as slave-soldiers for the Imperium.

This single act, more than any other, led to the destruction of the Golden Age of Man as a young man rose to take the mantle of Nier's Sword of the Heavens, the avatar of the God of Flaming Destruction's vengeance. As the children of Nier swept across the continent and making their way inexorably towards the First City, many of the val families began to panic, as the declarations of doom were issued against those that stood silently by, tacitly guilty due to their inactions as the entire val'Virdan family was enslaved. The val'Assanté were particularly fearful of their retribution as it was one of their own, the Emperor Menokum val'Assanté, that passed judgment upon them.

While the Legion of Radiant Glory, long a bastion of val'Assanté military might, traveled east to face the avatar of Nier, Leonydes val'Virdan, a few squads of the Legio Lex Talionis were tasked with protecting the fleeing men, women, and children of the val'Assanté as they found refuge in a backwater town known as Midea Triduana, which would centuries later be known as Old Coryan. The rest of the legion remained behind and, though all other legions had fallen to the unstoppable Nierites, went off to face the Sword of the Heaven's armies.

On a cold morning, the Legio Lex Talionis, carrying their holy altar of Illiir and the standard of the legion before them, met the Warriors of the Cleansing Flame on the Plains of Nersae, defending the pass into the Blessed Lands. In a battle that lasted but an afternoon, they were utterly annihilated. Never one to pass a chance of instilling fear in the enemy, Leonydes ordered the seven thousand enemy legionnaires killed that day crucified on either side of the road through the pass and on towards the First City. For leagues, the corpus of the Legio Lex Talionis acted as testimony to the futility of standing against the fury of the children of Nier.

Destroyed, their standard and altar lost, but for a handful acting as protectors of the val'Assanté in the middle of nowhere the first incarnation of the Legion of the Law of Retribution faded from memory and so it would remain for almost two thousand years.

Reformation (82 I.C.)

The reformation of the Legio IV came about by accident, as all mention of that and much else of the Imperium of Man was lost during the long and benighted Shadow Age. The location of the First City, long believed a mythical place, was discovered by a group of scholars and archeologists known as the Emerald Society. While the main body of the Society explored the ancient metropolis, smaller groups worked in other select locations, including the areas around the pass connecting the far reaches of the empire with the Blessed Lands.

During the excavation work, a group of diggers came across the remains of a battlefield buried beneath many feet of earth. Along with many artifacts, such as pieces of armor and weapons, pitted and blacked with corrosion, the workers found the battle standard of the Legio Lex Talionis, still clutched in the skeletal embrace of a legionnaire, pristine and unblemished. Due to other Imperium standards recovered, scholars were aware of the fact that these standards, regardless of age, were nigh indestructible, due to some manner of manufacture lost and buried along with that glorious civilization.

The current emperor of the time, Eladru val'Assanté, immediately spared no expense to reconstitute the legion, as doing so had long been seen as bringing blessings upon the ruler's reign. With a core of val'Assanté seasoned officers and a thousand legionnaires, the minimum required by Coryani law for a legion to be recognized and inducted into the Roster of the Valorous, the new legion faced a new quandary. Researchers revealed the original purpose of the legion as law givers in the frontier territories, but that function was now administered by Nierite judges, who were loathe to relinquish their duty to a group of Illiirites.

Instead, the Legio IV was commanded to defend the borders of the empire, prosecute its wars against its enemies, and provide a sense of security to the region where it was posted. The legion was ironically stationed in the city of Panari, just in time to witness a critical event.

The Corruption of Panari (86 I.C.)

The Legio IV had barely time to settle into their new assignment before the city of Panari, along with Nagar and Kofan, fell almost overnight, to the cultists following the nightmarish Thousand Eyed Man. Seeing flames erupt across the ancient city the legionnaires, bivouacked just inside its walls, sprang

into action, marshalling its full force against all the horrors the cult brought to bear. Dozens perished, sacrificing their lives to hold back the maddened hordes so that the rest might reach the city center where the governor and the rest of the val'Dellenov family had barricaded themselves.

Fighting alongside the children of Saluwé, the legion inexorably won back the city, block by block, seemingly putting down every citizen of the Queen of Cities. When the relief legions arrived, along with scores of holy inquisitors and Sarishan-Sorcerer-Priests a month later, the city was mostly pacified and back under the control of the val'Dellenov. Noting their efficacy in dealing with the heretics, the surviving elements of the legion, a mere six centuriae, were ordered to march to Nagar.

Nagar, a sister city to Panari, also lay in the grip of the Cult of the Thousand Eyed Man. Unlike the Queen of Cities, Nagar had been fully in the grip of the madmen for weeks, and they fought to retain every inch of it with a complete disregard for their personal safety, acting more like ravening lunatics than insurgents. With every building wrested from their cold grip and every blood-soaked street taken, the atrocities perpetrated by the cultists seared the minds of sane men. With the Sarishans stymied by their inability to bind and banish the hellish creatures roaming the embattled city, it was the legionnaires that were forced to face these horrors, protecting the inquisitors as they destroyed the otherworldly creatures.

The toll on the Legio IV was great, losing a full four centuriae in Nagar, yet still they preserved, insisting they accompany the holy inquisitors to Kofan, where the fires of the last insurrection remained unchecked. So impressed by their dedication and piety, the Inquisitor-General, a Nierite by the name of Temerus val'Virdan, refused to allow the remaining legionnaires to be reassigned to the other legions, as was the practice of the time. Instead, he declared that the Legio Lex Talionis would act as his personal guard for the duration of the expedition. This rankled the Legion of the Cleansing Flame's general, also a Nierite, but she could do little to countermand such an order.

In contrast to the barbarity witnessed in Nagar, the emptiness that greeted them in Kofan was even more unsettling. As the legions marched through the streets, nothing stirred and even the wind seemed loathe to move through the city. Upon reaching the Governor's Palace, only the commanders of the legions accompanied the inquisitor-general into the audience hall. What they saw there blanched the hardened soldiers to core. Arranged in diabolic sigils and signs were thousands of pairs of eyeballs and upon the wall, written in blood was a message addressed directly to the Patriarch of the Mother Church of Coryan. What the communication conveyed was never known beyond the people in that room and the holy Patriarch, who upon hearing it, promptly resigned his position.

The Battle Against Heresy

From that time forward, the Legio Lex Talionis consistently confronted various types of heretical groups during their military service. During the Deliverance of Abessios, the legion fought alongside the Legion of Dark Majesty and the Legion of the Barbed Lance, legions sponsored by the temples of Sarish and Neroth, respectively. While the other two legions dealt with the Myrantians, the Legio IV confronted the heretical cult of Tzizhet of the Many Limbs. They hunted many infernal cults, such as the one worshipping a demon that lingered since the Time of Terror known as the foul Be'mouz, She of the Webbed Skin, and a cult venerating the devil-king Logirro, the Dismemberer.

These confrontations strengthened the mind and resolve of the legionnaires, granting them insight and wisdom on how best to detect and cleanse a population from the blight of heretical malignancy. Over the years these encounters led to the legion working closely with the Inquisition, earning their respect with every successful purge. This led to bad blood with the legion that officially acted as the dedicated protectors of the Mother Church, the Nierite Legion of Searing Purity, whose officers exploited every opportunity to politically assassinate the Legio IV, with little success.

The Nierite Coup (374 I.C.)

During a relatively peaceful and prosperous period of the Coryani Empire's history, the Nierite general of the Legion of Searing Purity conspired to overthrow val'Assanté rule by assassinating the patriarch and the emperor in one fell swoop. Though thwarted by the Legion of Vigilance, this betrayal threw the Empire into turmoil. In its aftermath, the beloved leader of the Mother Church, Patriarch Hulantin val'Assanté, lay dead at the hands of the traitor Nierite general, Erdul val'Virdan. The emperor, Marellius val'Assanté, ordered the Nierite's execution and disbanded the Legion of Searing Purity, its name struck from the Roster of the Valorous.

With the exiling of the Nierites, the Mother Church was left without its protector. The newly anointed patriarch had been a priest enrolled within the auxilia of the Legio IV and knew first hand of their piety and fierce devotion to the empire and the Gods. Conferring with the various pyremen, the heads of the temples of the deities, they agreed that their religion would be safe in the hands of these devout warriors. Thus in 375 I.C., the Legio Lex Talionis was formally inducted as the military arm of the Mother Church, and by extension, the Coryani Inquisition.

The Might of the Inquisition

As the *Defenders of the Faith*, the legion found its ability to protect the lands and citizens of the Empire curtailed, sidelined as the Coryani war machine engaged the Khitani Empire's encroachment on the First City or dealing with

incursions from the Ssethregoran Empire to the south. Given its new duties as protecting the patriarch, pyremen, and the high priests of the various temples as well as purifying the souls of those tainted by heretical teachings, the number of active legionnaires was reduced from a high of five thousand to one thousand soldiers and officers.

Acting in small units known as *inquisitorial tribunals* consisting of four to six legionnaires and priests, they ferreted out various plots by subversive groups, such as the Brotherhood of Man and the Mourners in Silence, but also ensured the religious compliance of groups such as the Altherians when their lands and people are annexed. Slowly the legion began to exert more and more control over the inquisition, as val'Assanté from both organizations conspired to enhance their power within the empire, given their loss of the imperial seat to the val'Dellenov family when that family gained the Alabaster Throne. This new dynasty purged many of the scions of Illiir from the imperial court and bureaucracy, leaving only the inquisition as their last bastion of influence.

Seeing the power of the throne slowly drive the val'Dellenov aristocracy madder with each successor, the inquisition kept a low profile during the Second Coryani-Khitani War. As the empire began to buckle under the Khitani attack, the inquisitor-general quickly regretted this decision as news reached him of the death of the holy prophet Becherek in the far-off province of Canceri.

The Rendition of the Prophet Becherek (767 I.C.)

One of the consequences of the betrayal of the Nierite general Erdul val'Virdan, was that the worship of Nier was proscribed in the heart of the empire and banished to the benighted province of Canceri. The temples to War God were bricked up and only a small shrine in the Temple of the Pantheon was permitted. The worship of Neroth also fell into disrepute due to a terrible plague that was spread throughout the empire by a heretical cult known as Blight Bearers. To the average Coryani, it seemed that everything associated with the Cancere was tainted and a curse. Over the years, the various cities, towns, and villages dotting the interior of the empire refused to allow the worship of the deities associated with Canceri: Nier, Neroth, and Sarish. Those who paid homage to those Gods were run out of town, beaten, or ironically burnt alive.

Eventually, the Mother Church paid less and less obeisance to these three, until it seemed that the Pantheon of Man had been reduced from twelve to nine deities. A priest named Becherek from Canceri began to agitate the populace, eloquently stating that if the people of the empire continued this disrespectful practice, the empire would suffer calamity and strife as it never had before. He urged the Patriarch to immediately reinstate religious services for the three or the Gods would certainly show their wrath upon them.

So popular was this priest, that the native Cancereze hailed him as a prophet of the Gods, and openly spoke of secession should the Mother Church not accede to Becherek's demands. For his part, the priest knew that such talk would only serve to inflame the ire of the Mad Emperor Quron val'Dellenov and the people would suffer for it. Unfortunately, the Cancereze, while embracing Becherek's message, paid more attention to radical self-proclaimed apostles, twisting the prophet's message to serve their own self-interests.

Just as he feared, the Mad Emperor bristled at the notion of secession, especially as the empire was embroiled in a life-and-death struggle against the Khitani. Before the inquisition could act, Quron sent a full centuriae of the Legion of Radiant Glory to capture Becherek and bring him to the capital in chains. During the arrest, a mob surrounded the legionnaires, demanding the prophet's release. A young and inexperienced centurion cut off the priest's head and tossed it to the mob saying, *"If you wish to keep your Prophet, then have him."* The shocked crowd erupted into a blood crazed frenzy and tore the legionnaires apart.

Confraternity of the Just Death (962 I.C.)

The loss of Canceri was taken as a personal failure by the inquisition and the Legio IV. While seen by many as cruel and uncaring, it is the odd member of the organization that does not genuinely believe that their actions not only safeguard the purity of the Coryani soul, but that they act to cleanse those corrupted by heresy. The belief that the empire simply abandoned thousands of the God's Children to dissolution in the bottom of Beltine's Cauldron deeply afflicted them.

In a bid to help save the innocents trapped and forced to venerate the Gods of the Dark Triumvirate in a depraved and sacrilegious manner, the inquisition initiated several clandestine operations deep in the heart of the Theocracy of Canceri, but they all met with abject failure. Somehow the adjurers, the Cancereze version of the inquisition, quickly ferreted out their agents.

An opportunity arose when a Milandisian, Theomund val'Holryn, and his missionary work in Canceri came to their attention. Theomund founded the Confraternity of the Just Death, a monastic order that preached to the Cancereze the truths of the Holy Canticle as taught by the Mother Church and not the twisted version propagated by the priests of the Dark Triumvirate. This Illiirite order was very small, no more than a handful of members, until his death while proselytizing to Nierites, who stoned him to death. Upon his canonization by the Mother Church, the order he founded grew in number. These selfless missionaries visit prisoners awaiting execution, making one final attempt to save their souls.

The inquisition found that they could slip in one or two specially trained legionnaires as new members of the order without drawing the attention of the Cancereze adjurers. These infiltrators reported on troop movements, friction between

the three ruling val families, and basic information gleaned from gossip, personal observation, and final confessions of the condemned. Though many of the Confraternity of the Just Death perished during the occupation of Nishanpur by the Swords of Nier, the missionaries eventually returned to the selfless tasks, along with members of the Legio Lex Talionis.

Coryani Civil War (1027 – 1030 I.C.)

Since becoming permanently attached to the Coryani Inquisition, the Legio IV found itself protecting the empire through investigation rather than upon the battlefield. This changed when Emperor Calceustus val'Assanté executed the Patriarch of the Mother Church in public upon the steps of the Temple of the Pantheon. Declaring himself both the head of the state and the church, Calceustus plunged the empire into a grueling civil war.

For reason unclear to the rank-and-file, the Legio Lex Talionis marched along side other loyalist legions to put down the various northern cities in rebellion. The legion participated in numerous battles, including the brutal Sacking of Sulpecci, the Campaign of Cafela, and the disastrous Battle of Enpebyn. With each subsequent engagement, the Legio IV advanced to a more commanding role, becoming the favorite of High General Dorjan val'Mehan. However, it was their Inquisitor-General's action at the Battle of Solanos Mor that cemented their reputation as the legion most dedicated to the cause of the emperor.

Battle of Solanos Mor (1029 I.C.)

Inquisitor-General Aeneas val'Assanté, general of the Legio Lex Talionis, showed no mercy as he ruthlessly pressed the offensive against the rebels in the dwarven enclave. Nevertheless, the rebels fiercely defended the stronghold, denying High General Dorjan from claiming his prize of bringing the blasphemous oracle Elandré val'Assanté, the so-called Voice of Illiir, back to the capital in chains. The invasion degenerated into a building-by-building combat with the dwarves and their rebel allies falling by the score in their homeland's defense. The fierce fighting resulted in the loyalists narrowly being defeated, their mounting losses requiring them to make an orderly retreat from the mountain fastness.

Among the hundreds of Solani dwarves slain was their ruler, King Noen. The dwarves took solace in the fact that the king's essence would reside with his soul shard, safely ensconced in the Chamber of Final Repose until the day Illiir's curse was lifted and all the dwarven souls could find peace in the afterlife. Sadly for the Solani, their king fell behind the lines of the invaders. In an act of pure spite, as the Inquisitor-General passed the bloodied corpse of King Noen, he used the nigh-indestructible butt of the legion's standard to smash the soul shard and grind the pieces to dust, staring at the defenders across the battlefield as if daring them to stop him. Aeneas later remarked that the wailing of those dwarves made the sting of the retreat bearable.

The Purge From Within (1030 I.C.)

For their part in failing to take dwarven enclave, the Legio IV was to be punished by stripping them of their position as the military arm of the Mother Church and exiled to the city of Sicaris in the Hinterlands, the furthest outpost of the empire. Fate intervened when the capital of the province of Cafela, Savona, began to drag its feet in support of the empire against the rebels. The Legio Lex Talionis, along with several other loyalist legions, were sent to bring the city back in line.

It was during this battle that the truth behind Emperor's Calceustus' ruthless actions, deeds the hedonistic ruler once seemed incapable or interested in pursuing, was revealed. The divine valinor Manetas, freed from his millennia long imprisonment, had impersonated the young and handsome emperor, secreting the broken body of the true ruler of the Coryani Empire in an oubliette.

When news of this reached the Legio IV, high ranking officers turned to the inquisitor-general and expected to be told that to join the rebel legions. To their surprise, the inquisitor-general smiled and said that their duty lay in following whomever sat on the Alabaster Throne, be they mortal or divine. Those that protested were quickly silenced, their bodies disposed of like refuse, but the news had already spread. For the first time in their history, a schism ripped the Legio Lex Talionis asunder, with the entire sixth centuriae branded traitors and an order issued for their immediate execution. Calling themselves the Black Sixth, the legionnaires allied themselves with, but never formally joined, the rebel forces in toppling the valinor from the Alabaster Throne.

At the final battle for Grand Coryan, Inquisitor-General Aeneas and his loyalist legionnaires confronted the members of the Legio IV during the attack. Upon the battlements Aeneas perished under the blades of the Black Sixth. In the end, the Pride of Illiir was banished and those siding with the divine being after knowing the truth, were executed as traitors to the empire.

The Current Year (1073 I.C.)

Under the rule of Emperor Scipio Aemilianus val'Assanté, the empire has enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. For the Legio Lex Talionis, reformed and purged from past deeds performed during the civil war, they continue to enjoy a place of honor as the military arm of the Coryani Inquisition. Infernal cults and other heresies still worm their way through the vast Coryani Empire and the Legio IV continues their sacred duty in ferreting them out and purifying their corruption, all in the name of safeguarding the soul of the empire.

ORGANIZATION

The modern incarnation of the Legio IV is inextricably connected with the Mother Church of Coryan, specifically with its inquisitorial body. Never the less, it is a separate body and though some of its titles differ from those normally used by the Coryani legions, they follow the same organizational structure and traditions, for the most part.

Hierarchy

The legion is commanded by a general, known as the inquisitor-general, who is assisted by a command staff comprised of a tribune, a legatus, and a high priest of Illiir. The head centurion of each of centuriae form the legion's *council militaris*, but this hardly ever occurs in practice, unless in the unusual circumstance of the entire legion being fielded in a war.

Beyond this core of officers, the Legio IV has the standard number of lesser officers, such as optios, quartermasters, medici, and the like. The lowest rung of the legion is also its greatest strength, its legionnaires. Though a thousand soldiers are the minimum requirement to form a legion, once registered upon the Roster of the Valorous, the number of soldiers within its ranks fluctuates greatly, depending on financing and duties required of it. Should the Legio Lex Talionis be called to war now, the most it could muster would be four centuriae and a handful of auxilia. Though underpowered, four hundred legionnaires is more than enough for the duties the Legio IV currently is currently assigned.

The Legio IV's Distinctive Armor

As with other legions, the legionnaires of the Legio IV wear lorica segmentata when going into battle. However rather than the standard color palate and red cloak used by most legions, the Legio Lex Talionis' color scheme closely resembles that used by the Illiirite clergy. This is undoubtedly done on purpose to not only show the close ties between the two organization, but to loudly proclaim their purity in the eyes of the Mother Church and the Empire.

Common legionnaires wear a white cloak along with a helmet and attached white colored face plate. Officers and other high officials' face plates are made of silver. Psionic inquisitors attached to the Legio IV wear stylized lorica segmentata adorned with discs commemorating campaigns against heretical cults that resulted in their soul remaining uncorrupted from the encounter. Their face plates are brass in color. Lastly, the helmets worn by priests have a golden face plate and are sometimes adorned with a halo, representing the light of Illiir.

Inquisitor-General

The inquisitor-general plays a key role in the workings of the Coryani Inquisition, working closely with the grand inquisitor. Though technically the general answers to the Defender of the Empire, the overall commander of the Coryani military, in practice it is the grand inquisitor that gives the legion their assigned duties. These assignments range from acting as an honor guard for high ranking priests to investigating reports of heretical activity. Rarely are these singular tasks ordered by the head of the inquisition. Instead, it is the head Illiirite priest assigned to each *centuriae* that issues the orders.

The inquisitor-general does have command over the disposition and manner in which their assigned tasks are distributed and executed, though in practice the general often delegates this to their *legatus*. It is only when the legion is engaged in a military campaign or confronting a dire heresy that threatens the empire that the general exerts his total mastery over the legion. It is their expertise and stratagem that leads the legion to complete victory or utter defeat.

Legatus

The *legatus*, or *legatus legionis*, serves as the second-in-command to the inquisitor-general and is in command during battles where the inquisitor-general is not present or unable to perform their duties. This differs from most other legions where the *legatus* is the undisputed commander over that body and answerable only to a high general, the defender of the empire, or the emperor. Due to the inquisitor-general's duties to the Coryani Inquisition, they may not be available to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the legion. With few exceptions, the *legatus* leads the legion during military engagements not overseen by their superior.

Tribune

The *tribune*, or *tribune militaris*, is normally an officer's rank below that of the *legatus* but above a *centurion*. This officer acts as an aide to the *legatus* or is assigned specific duties or tasks as needed. This position is usually held by young scions of the patrician *imperialis* or patrician social class of the empire. In the case of the *Legio IV*, this rank is always held by a *val'Assanté*. The number of *tribunes* in a legion varies widely, though five to six is usual.

One of the *tribunes* in the *Legio IV* is designated the *tribunus pio* who acts as the liaison with the priests attached to the legion. *Tribunes* are normally assigned to interact and command the various *auxilia* of a legion. Here, the *tribunus pio* only assumes a leadership role when the priests are involved in combat situation.

Praefectus Inquisitorus

When a squad, or *contubernium*, is tasked with investigating or eliminating a heresy their commander, usually the squad's leader known as a *decanus*, is a specially trained soldier known as the *praefectus inquisitorus*. Besides the usual rigorous combat training received by all legionnaires, this soldier is instructed in theology, investigation, history, the signs of various cults, and other cultures. Towards the end of their schooling, they are taught a small number of *cants* to provide protection against the threats they will face and eliminate them.



This officer has the power of life and death as it pertains to the heresy being confronted. The prefect may order executions, and even the razing of a settlement to prevent any further tainting of the populace. While the size of the population center they may deem unclean is never specified, in practice anything larger than a village or small town requires the authorization of the legatus. The use of this authority can be reviewed by a superior officer and if found to have abused their power, the prefect may be condemned to death.

Priests of Illiir

Officially assigned to the legion as an auxilia, the priests of Illiir have a special place in its hierarchy. Though never granted the authority to command legionnaires in battle, the priests have extraordinary influence and authority when investigating a heresy. It is their extensive knowledge of the many blasphemous cults and foul denizens of the Abyss and Hells that cause even the most battle-hardened centurion to defer to them. When a cult is ferreted out, the priests may condemn the members as heretics, but cannot order their purification as only the praefectus inquisitorius may pass a sentence of death.

When the legion is called out to war, it is the priests of Illiir that carry forth the altar to that deity, blessing the legionnaires about to engage in battle and igniting the religious fervor that simmers just beneath the cool demeanor of every member of the Legio Lex Talionis. When necessary, they will call upon the power of Illiir through their holy chants to protect the soldiers or send their enemies screaming back to the pits.

It is important to note that these priests are not part of a Holy Champion order, but rather members of the clergy attached as needed to the legion. Holy Champion orders act as knights of their sponsoring temple, defending it and acting as an extension of its will.

Legion Standard

The Legio IV's standard is the original one forged during the first century of the Imperium of Man. Through a process now long forgotten, the metal pole and cross bar, along with its long cloth banner were created, treated, or enchanted to be practically indestructible. The symbol of the legion, a sunburst imposed upon two crossed swords is wove onto its white banner. While the material may become stained, no sign of tearing or mending can be found. Sitting upon the cross bar is the symbol of the Imperium, the rurick, a circle with the sigils of the twelve deities that make up the Pantheon of Man on a pedestal. On the pedestal is inscribed the number IV, signifying that it was the fourth legion founded.

When inducted into the Roster of the Valorous, the book within which can be found every legion pledged to the Coryani Empire, a falcon with its wings outspread was added to the standard. Copies of the standard were then created with the number of the centuriae embroidered on the bottom of the banner.

The legion standard represents the its honor and prestige and losing it in battle is not only considered an ill-omen, but disgraces all those who fought beneath it. Given its importance, one would think a standard would never be taken into battle, but this is not the case. The ancient banner so inspires the legionnaires, who fully believe that the soul of the legion is embodied within the standard, that going to war without it is unthinkable. Lives are willingly sacrificed when a battle is lost to ensure that the standard makes it to safety. While the loss of a centuriae's standard is acceptable and even honorable, especially if lost when the cohort fought to the last, the legion standard is sacrosanct.

Current Assignment

The Legio Lex Talionis is currently stationed in Grand Coryan though its *principia*, or headquarters, lies just outside the walls of the capital, as ancient laws proscribe any legion other than the Legion of Vigilance be stationed within the city's boundaries. Besides serving as the barracks for the legionnaires, the legion's principia are a multi-story series of buildings, and house trophies won from its many battles, as well as a library of scrolls and tomes listing the legion's great deeds as well as the they enemies vanquished. In the center of the main building is a private temple to Illiir that serves only the legionnaires. It is here that many come to be blessed before going to war, or to cleanse themselves after purging a heretical cult.

Traditions and Customs

As with all organizations that have continuously existed for hundreds of years, each legion developed their own unique customs and traditions.

Greetings: When meeting another legionnaire within their same rank, they will address each other as brother, but woe to any legionnaire that greets their centurion or any higher officer in such a familiar manner.

First Blood: A common tradition in the legions, when raw recruits are about to embark on their first engagement against the enemy, whether in war or in purifying a heresy, a priest will slice their thumb and dab the blood upon the forehead. If possible, a sorcerer-priest of Sarish or any other priest performs this task. If none are available, the legionnaire's centurion will be substituted.

Night of Penance: A curious custom unique to this legion occurs on the 20th of Shades, the date of the death of Colliex val'Assanté at the hands of the legion during the age of the Imperium. On the evening of that anniversary,

the legion parades through the streets of Grand Coryan, solemnly flanking a group of twenty legionnaires who are self-flagellating themselves bloody. The junior most members of the legion precede the assemblage handing out sweets and other confections, including the occasional silver piece, to ensure that there is a large crowd to witness the procession. Few if any of the observing crowd know what the pageant represents or why it is carried out, but they turn out for the gifts and a chance at a silver coin.

The twenty legionnaires are chosen by lot, don a hideous masks, and wearing only a thin white robe, march through the streets self-mortifying unless they collapse in a bloody heap. This is not viewed as a punishment, but rather an honor, as they are expunging the great sin committed by their legion in the dim past. Curiously, the ones chosen are never members of the val'Assanté family.

Purification Ritual: Before engaging in an investigation against a heretical cult, all those involved will undergo a purification ritual to prepare them for the coming ordeal. This ritual involves fasting, prayer, mortifying the flesh by receiving twelve lashes, and finally bathing in holy water. Should the members of a squad encounter a cult they will undergo the same ritual upon their return.

Those members who defeat an other-worldly creature worshipped by a cult, such as an infernal or another powerful being, such as an oviante or avatar of the Thousand Eyed-Man, and survive the encounter, are branded upon their right breast with an Illiir sunburst. This honor is only bestowed once and is viewed as a symbol of the recipient's bravery, piety, and purity of spirit.

Tattoo: As with all the legions, a pair of tattoos are placed upon the upper arms after serving for five years or surviving their first battle. Upon their right arm is placed the symbol of the empire, the falcon of Illiir, wings outstretched and talons ready to rend. Upon the left is inked the symbol of the legion. For the Legio IV, this is crossed twin gladii superimposed by a sunburst. Officers of the rank of centurion or higher may have enchantments woven into their legion tattoo.

Allies and Enemies

Every legion can count on another to aid them against the enemy, but not every war is waged upon the battlefield. High ranking officers of the legion must engage on the diplomatic front in the imperial court and cultivate allies, as well as inevitably gain rivalries. The Legio IV has had to contend with the Legion of Vigilance since almost its founding. Part of this animosity is envy and stems from the fact that while it is the first legion, literally Legio I, it is bereft of its original standard from the Imperium. The Legion of Vigilance vehemently protested the Legio Lex Talionis' elevation in status when it was attached to the Mother Church, and engendered a deep rift between the two legions.

Conversely, their relationship with the Legion of Radiant Glory can be categorized as a friendly rivalry, where glory garnered in battle is lauded over the other in good humor. When this legion was decimated during the uprising in Abessios in 1025 I.C., it was the Legio IV that assisted in recovering their legion standard. For restoring their honor, the legion swore a blood oath to someday repay the Legio Lex Talionis in kind.

As the military arm of the Mother Church of Coryan, the Legio IV can call upon the full resources, influences, and power of that organization when needed. Besides the contingent of Illiirite priests permanently attached, the legion has called upon the other temples when faced with specific threats. When facing an infernal cult, Sarishan sorcerer-priests temporarily join the legion. A case of non-demonic possession, Beltinian exorcists aid them, and so on. Even the Illiirite Holy Champion Order, the Order of the Harbingers of the Dawn, have joined the Legio IV in purging the city of Escoban of the Cult of the Thousand Eyed Man.

The Orthodoxy is a secret society within the Mother Church of Coryan whose agenda includes recombining the disparate temples now under its umbrella into one unified church as it was during the glory days of the Imperium of Man. This society counts many of the higher ranking officials of the inquisition and the Legio IV as members, and the legion as a whole as sympathetic to their goals, for the most part.

As far as enemies, the legion has countless, from heretical and infernal cults to the blasphemous practitioners of Canceri's Church of the Dark Triumvirate. The dwarves of Bealak Gempor, the so-called Reavers, so offended the legionnaires that the legion has expended considerable resources in an effort to find their home. Although this enclave of dwarves despise humanity and are seen as an implacable enemy, the enmity towards them stems from an incident over a century in the past. A squad of the Legio IV stumbled upon one of the Reavers outposts and found within a replica in miniature of the Temple of the Pantheon, complete with blasphemous versions of the Pantheon. Statues to Illiir the Cuckold, Saluwé the Whore of Yarris, Nier the Crazy, Hurrian the Timid, and so on. This display so incensed the legionnaires that they destroyed the foul replica and razed the underground outpost.

Legion's Principia and Other Holdings

The Legio IV's principia or headquarters is located outside the walls of Grand Coryan. The central portion, a multi-story structure with a temple dedicated to Illiir in its center, is surrounded by other, smaller buildings.

Due to its close association with the Mother Church and the inquisition, the legion's members also have knowledge and access to various safehouses and caches throughout the empire and beyond. These caches, marked by a small sunburst for identification, contain everything from weapons to food and clothing. Safehouses can be used for lodging if it is necessary to remain anonymous or, if in unfriendly territory, as sanctuary.

One unique safehouse is the Dark Gathering inn, located near the Trade Gate of Nishanpur, the capital of the Theocracy of Canceri. Given that Nishanpur has strict laws governing the possession of weapons and other contraband, those owning such items may have them securely stored in the inn. Unbeknownst to many, the inn was established by a family member of a condemned prisoner who was ministered by the Confraternity of the Just Death. After the execution, a family member was converted to the beliefs of the Mother Church and a member of the inquisition within the Confraternity turned him to their cause. Funneling money and other resources, the inn was built and became a safehouse for members of the inquisition and the legion, when needed. Over the many decades of its existence, the inn has remained undetected for what it is by the Cancerese authorities, mainly because it never takes overt actions against their rule. The inn is primarily used as a clearing house for information, making sure messages are clandestinely delivered to and from the agents of the inquisition.

Having an Inquisitor in the Party

Some players may be concerned about having an inquisitor within a party of diverse characters with different religious or philosophical backgrounds. What should be remembered is that inquisitors and the members of the Legio IV are not frothing-at-the-mouth zealots looking to burn anyone whose beliefs are contrary to their own. The Mother Church has not called for a crusade against the Milandisians for breaking away, nor have they done so against the elorii, kio, or any of the peoples who venerate lesser spirits. The purpose of the inquisition is to destroy those who worship blasphemous beings, such as infernals, or heretical cults revering twisted aspects of the Pantheon of Man.

When playing an inquisitor or a member of the Legio Lex Talionis, it is important not to take the concept and push it to the far extremes. A role-playing game is a cooperative endeavor is meant to be a fun experience. Playing a mad-dog, ultra-conservative inquisitor looking to brand everyone a heretic will most likely destroy that fun experience. Your moment to shine is when the party uncovers that cult of Tzizhet that is corrupting the people of the settlement. That is when the others will turn to you and seek your guidance in how to purify the blasphemous sect.

Secrets of the Order

Every organization has secrets, from small personal ones to truly ruinous ones. The Legio IV is no different. Below are listed two such secrets that would certainly tarnish the legion's reputation and even lead to the execution of certain members.

Loyal to Manetas

There exists within the Legio IV a core group of officers and select legionnaires that believe that valinor, specifically the Pride of Illiir, should rule over mankind. These officers, val'Assanté one and all, claim direct descent from those that bent the knee to Manetas when he first appeared over the First City millennia ago. When trapped by the ancients, they desperately tried to find and release the divine being from his imprisonment.

When, in the modern age, he took the reins of power in the Coryani Empire, this group immediately facilitated tightening Manetas control over the empire, indifferent to the misery and countless deaths the civil war it precipitated caused. Among these loyalists to the valinor was Aeneas val'Assanté, the inquisitor-general of the Legio Lex Talionis at the time. At the final Battle for Grand Coryan, most of the inner circle were slain, though a small handful managed to escape and avoid detection.

The Heretical Hoard

Many of the cults purged by the Legio IV possess some sort of tangible, unholy item linked to the foul being they worship. The laws of the inquisition require that all such items be handed to the inquisition for proper disposal, if possible. For those objects too large, cumbersome, or for some other reason impossible to transport, the legionnaires are commanded to destroy it utterly.

While many rightly assume that all items handed over to the inquisition are annihilated, the majority are stored away in a vault deep beneath the inquisitorial tower, adjacent to the Temples of the Pantheon. There, guarded by a select honor guard of legionnaires of the first centuriae, a veritable hoard of blasphemous objects fester, some being studied, others held in reserve for a cataclysmic event to require their use. None but a handful know of the existence of this cache, let alone what it contains.

Within this collection of unique items are two that those loyal to Manetas most covet – the crown of the first among the host of valinor and his shining blade, a weapon seeming made of entirely of light. Secreted away when the Pride of Illiir was banished to the Abyss, two relics remained behind. The first was knocked from his perfect brow by a blow from the heroes that confronted him. The second, the long blade of incandescent luminance, tossed aside as the divine being dug his fingers into the marbled floor of the palace as he was dragged raving into the Pit.

DRAMATIS PERSONA

Within the core of the Legio IV are over four hundred legionnaires and officers, with several score more in the auxilia and support staff. Below are just four such members that the Heroes may encounter in their interactions with the Legio Lex Talionis.

DOMITIUS VAL'ASSANTÉ

The Inquisitor-General

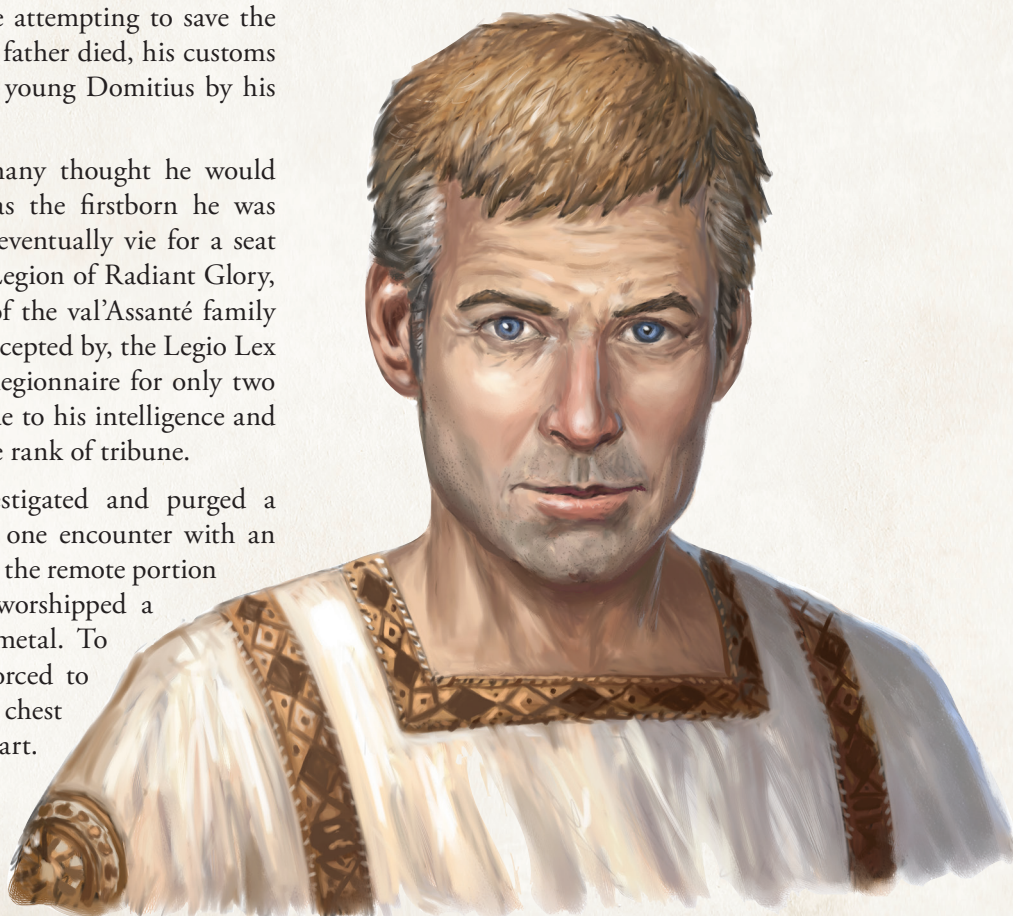
Domitius Gallus val'Assanté was born to the imperial branch of the family, being fourth cousin to Emperor Scipio val'Assanté. Afforded every benefit, luxury, and privilege available in the Coryani Empire, the temptation of simply enjoying the hedonistic pleasures offered and living a life of leisure was trap many of his cousins fell into, wiling away their formative years in a drunken haze. This lifestyle deeply offended Domitius, who instead followed the example set by his father, a driven man who died fighting the mad valinor Manetas, sacrificing his life attempting to save the empire. Though a toddler when his father died, his customs and manners were drilled into the young Domitius by his mother, who adored her husband.

Raised in a pious household, many thought he would join the Illiirite priesthood, but as the firstborn he was expected to join the military and eventually vie for a seat in the Senate. Advised to join the Legion of Radiant Glory, where the higher status members of the val'Assanté family served, he instead chose, and was accepted by, the Legio Lex Talionis. He served as a common legionnaire for only two years, rather than the usual five, due to his intelligence and military acumen and elevated to the rank of tribune.

Over the years, Domitius investigated and purged a number of heretical cults. During one encounter with an infernal cult, they found a village in the remote portion of the province of Valentia that worshipped a bloated creature made of molten metal. To finally destroy it, Domitius was forced to plunge his hand into its burning chest and rip out the infernal's corrupt heart.

The act destroyed his hand, turning it into a charred block. The priestesses at a nearby temple of Beltine managed to save his appendage, but were unable to completely restore it. Domitian's left hand remains blackened and frozen as if still clutching the creature's heart.

Upon the death of his predecessor, the Grand Inquisitor personally advocated for Domitius' promotion to inquisitor-general of the legion. He was impressed by the man's keen intellect and devotion and kept an eye on him, acting secretly as his patron over the years. Now in his fifties, Domitius has held the position for almost a decade and has led the Legio IV honorably. Over the years he's heard whispers of a secret cabal within the legion and the inquisition that worked to find a way to free Manetas, the creature that killed his father. Not knowing who to trust, the inquisitor-general has begun to search outside of these organizations for those trustworthy and resourceful enough to uncover this conspiracy and purge it from his beloved legion.



PORCIUS VILLUS

Praefectus Inquisitorus

Even as a small girl, Porcius Villus knew that there was something odd about her family, even though everyone else in the small village where they lived dressed, acted and lived the same way. Everyone was even missing an eye, just like she was. She led a simple, happy life punctuated by times of unease and great misgivings every few years when a gnome *kampania* would come to visit and trade. The other children loved playing with the visitors, as they had so very few come to town. They especially loved the sweets and stories their leader, Fleck, would regale them with, but the old, blind gnome with his empty eye sockets always terrified Porcius.

After one such visit, the adults and the older children changed. Their expressions hardened. They were no longer the kind people of her childhood, but some else. Something filled with hate and anger. They marched out of the village and never returned. It was later, when the inquisitors came, that she was told that her parents, her entire village, worshipped some blasphemous thing called the Thousand Eyed Man; that they attacked other surrounding villages and were killed by the legion. Every last one of them – dead. She remembers hearing the legionnaires and inquisitors arguing among themselves that she, and the others left behind, should be purified; that they were surely corrupted, but one inquisitor defied them. In the end, she and one other boy, even younger than her, were spared, while her home, and the rest of the villagers, were locked inside buildings and promptly set ablaze. While the rest of that day was a haze, she has ever forgotten the smell of roasting flesh.

When she came of age, she joined the Legio Lex Talionis, thanks to her adoptive father's insistence. Perhaps it was her past and the fear that she was somehow still corrupted that compelled her fellow legionnaires to treat her so poorly, coming close to *accidentally* killing her a couple of times during her initial years of training, but she persevered. She rose through the ranks, working harder than her fellow legionnaires to prove her worth and eventually was promoted to *optio* of the third centuriae.

Growing up with an inquisitor, she could not help but learn about heretics, infernals, and all the other foul creatures that threaten the soul of the empire. Noting the wealth of knowledge she already possessed, a tribune nominated her to undergo intensive training within the inquisition to become a praefectus inquisitorus, an officer who led squads against heretical cults. After another three years of instruction, Porcius began leading such a squad and uncovered a number of insidious heretics across the empire and beyond its borders.

While she now enjoys the hard won respect of her fellow legionnaires, one nagging fear remains, one that resurfaces each time she sees the reflection of that patch over her eye. Though she obsessively undergoes purification rituals, even more often than required, and has been inspected for any signs of its taint, Porcius still fears awakening one night and hearing the dark whispers of the Thousand Eyed Man calling her.

VERUS VAL'ASSANTÉ

Priest of Illiir

Verus Quintillus val'Assanté, an Illiirite priest attached to the Legio IV, is a young man in his early thirties, stout of build, and deathly afraid of the world he lives in. This was not always the case. In his youth, he, like Domitius, enjoyed a life of privilege as only a val'Assanté living in empire could. As the fifth child, there were no expectations of him ascending to the Senate or pursuing a glorious career in the legions. Indeed, young Verus thought he would grow old taking care of his family's holdings, where the greatest danger he could face was a paper cut. Sadly, the Lady frowned upon him and he suddenly found his world of luxury replaced by the austere and arduous life of the priesthood.

Unfortunately for Verus, he had the mind and temperament suited for the priesthood, easily memorizing even the most complex cants, and able to carry a sermon with his resonant voice. Verus began to settle into this life when the Lady intervened again, Her frown seemingly fixed in place. While undertaking the pilgrimage to the First City with other priests and high officials, the caravan was attacked by a tribe of gar. Verus was paralyzed with fear as the first of his fellow clergy was struck down. Then, the cants he had so easily memorized came flowing to the forefront of his mind. Reflexively, his hand followed the prescribed motions and searing beams of golden light set the attackers aflame, causing them to flee in a panic. Barely able to understand what he had done, the priests and other officials' thanks and congratulations fell upon deaf ears.

The pilgrimage canceled, the group headed back, and word of his actions quickly spread. Within a week, he was elevated in rank and transferred to the auxilia of priests attached to the Legio Lex Talionis. Verus' protestations that his actions were borne of terror and not bravery only garnered him further esteem for his humility. After joining a squad of legionnaires in uncovering and purging a few heretical cults, Verus' eyes have been opened to the horrors assailing the people of the empire from every direction. His blissful innocence ripped away, he now prays that he will not freeze at the wrong moment and get everyone depending on him killed.

CODEx OF HEROES

NEW BACKGROUND VARIANTS

Variant for Initiate of the Gods: Inquisitor

Growing up, you believed that the Empire was invincible, mighty enough to protect its citizens from any enemy. As an adult, you came to know that not all of these foes are foreign soldiers, but depraved, other-worldly beings of great power that delight in corrupting the faithful. You took up the mantle of the inquisition to battle such malevolent powers from destroying your beloved nation.

Nationality: Coryan

Race: Dwarf (from Solanos Mor), human, and val only

Religion: The Mother Church of Coryan

Social Class: Commoner class or high class

Minimum Age: 45 (dwarf), or 25 (any other)

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Religion.

Languages: Altharin, plus one language of your choice from any nation.

Literacy: You are literate.

Equipment: A holy symbol, signet ring with the sigil of the Inquisition, sealing wax, a stack of papers with stylus and ink, a prayer book, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp. Additionally, if you are a noble val, you have an adorned flintlock pistol and 10 shots of blast powder.

Feature: Inquisitor's Will

When you are actively rooting out heresy local officials in Coryan will stay out of your way, and even aid, provided what you ask for is not hazardous. Coryani priests of the Mother Church will offer you free healing and care at any temple, shrine, or other established presence of the Mother Church. You must provide any material components needed for spells.

As a member of the Inquisition you have access to the Inquisition's facilities in Grand Coryan and are welcome at all chapter houses of the Legio Lex Talionis. While in Grand Coryan or near a chapter house of the legion you can call upon fellow inquisitors for assistance, provided the assistance you ask for is not hazardous and you remain in good standing with the Inquisition. Due to your connections, when you are in Coryan the inquisition will support you at a modest lifestyle.

Variant for Veteran: Former Legionnaire of Legio Lex Talionis

"So You completed your mandatory twelve years of service with the legion with honor and are now free to forge a new life for yourself. Nice fantasy. Don't be surprised when you start receiving messages and orders "asking" you to look into things on behalf of the Empire and seeing more combat than all your years of service put together. Once a legionnaire, always a legionnaire, my friend. You're never truly out."

Nationality: Coryan

Race: Dwarf (from Solanos Mor), human, and val

Religion: The Mother Church of Coryan

Social Class: Commoner class or high class

Minimum Age: 30

Weapon Proficiency: You must choose gladius for your weapon proficiency

Special: You have been tattooed with the symbol of the Legio Lex Talionis

Skill Proficiencies: Religion and choose either Athletics, Stealth, or Survival.

Languages: Altharin, Low Coryani

Literacy: You are literate.

Equipment: An insignia of rank, prayer book, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp. If you are a noble val you also have an adorned flintlock pistol and 10 shots of blast powder.

Feature: Legio Lex Talionis, Once and Forever

Once an active member of Legio Lex Talionis you continue to operate as an arm of the Inquisition of the Mother Church. You have access to the legion's principia in Grand Coryan and are welcome at all of its chapter houses. While in Grand Coryan or near a chapter house of the legion you can call

upon fellow legionnaires for aid, provided what you ask for is not hazardous and you remain in good standing with the Legion and the Mother Church. Due to the respect shown to the Legio Lex Talionis by the citizens of the Empire, you can find a place to sleep and a hot plate of food at any temple of the Mother Church or chapter house of Legio Lex Talionis, affording you with a modest lifestyle.

Optional Rules

What is Heretical?

The term 'heretic' is bandied about by the faithful of Arcanis to describe anyone who does not follow their faith and way of worship. Those who join infernal cults, worshipping a demon, fiend, or Devil King that survived the First Crusade of Light, or worship otherworldly beings that are anathema to the deities of the Pantheon of Man, such as Tzizhet or the Thousand Eyed Man, are clearly heretical to many of the people of the Known Lands. However, the term is also used to brand worshippers of the Pantheon of Man who are part of another religious body, such as the followers of the Mother Church seeing those of the Milandric Orthodox Church or the Church of the Dark Triumvirate as something unclean and worthy of scorn, hatred, or worse.

There are mechanics of the Arcanis 5E game that use the term 'heretic' or 'heretical' as a trigger for the use of an ability, feature, or spell. Some definitions are necessary for the proper adjudication of these powers. A simple way to handle this is that any opponent worshipping a religion outside of the Hero's is considered a heretic. However, if GM wishes to run their campaign at a more sophisticated level, then the following analysis can be used to add more nuance to their game. As always, the GM has final say in who or what is considered heretical.

At the most basic level, heretics are those outside your religious organization. For example, if you are a Holy Champion of Nier and your target is a Nerothian priest, the priest is not necessarily a heretic, as both the priest and the holy champion are followers of the Mother Church. Since they are both within the same umbrella religious organization, neither is heretical to the other.

To an elorii priestess of Belisarda, any human adherent of the Pantheon of Man is a heretic as the worship of the human deities is antithetical to that of the Goddess Belisarda. Likewise, a priest of Tzizhet or an oviote of the Thousand Eyed Man is heretical in the eyes of both the elorii priestess and a holy champion of the Pantheon of Man.

Keep in mind that the average Milandisian member of the Milandric Orthodox Church, while categorized as a heretic in eyes of a follower of the Mother Church, will not necessarily trigger an ability such as *smite heretic*. The hapless baker, though he tithes to the Church and observes all the prescribed holidays, is not so fervent an adherent of the religion that he would trigger the abilities against heretics. Priests, holy champions, zealots, and other fanatics for example, are filled with the power of their faith that they make suitable targets of a *smite heretic*, for example.

Additionally, abilities, class features, and spells should be analyzed to determine whether they are active or passive in the manner that they interact with heretics or heretical abilities.

For example, the *smite heretic* ability is an active one, where the Hero is channeling their fervent belief in the righteousness of their faith and are countering something that runs counter to their religion. However, knowledge that their opponent is a heretic is needed, as the ability requires the Hero to be filled with righteous rage by their target or their actions for the ability to be empowered. If the Hero is attacking a warrior who is not overtly displaying their faith or acting in a manner that would reveal them to be heretical, the *smite heretic* ability would not function. This ability cannot be used as a way of detecting hidden cultists among the populace.

Other abilities, such as the *purified mind* ability of the psionic inquisitor tradition (see below) is a passive one, which does not need to be consciously activated to protect against heretical spells. In this case, the very spell cast against the psionic inquisitor is so inherently abhorrent to the aura of faith that surrounds the truly faithful that it automatically protects the target. Note, however, that this may not work against spell casters of a different religious organization that worship the same deities as the target. Hurranic spells cast by a follower of the Mother Church and those cast by a member of the Milandric Orthodox Church are exactly the same. The categorization of either being heretical in each other's eyes is purely political, rather than diametrically opposed faiths. There are those spells that even if cast by those that worship the same deity are considered so vile by one Church that they considered heretical. Case in point are certain spells allowed by the Church of the Dark Triumvirate that are proscribed by both the Mother Church and the Milandric Orthodox Church.

These optional rules require the GM to be aware and knowledgeable of their player's characters and the opponents they face, though it does make the world seem far more 'real'. As always, check with your GM to see whether these optional rules will be used in their campaigns.

CLERIC DIVINE ASPECTS

Inquisitor – Illiirite Priest

The Mother Church trains and employs inquisitors from almost all the temples under its controls. While Illiirite, Nierite, and Sarishan priests are the most common to be trained as inquisitors, priests of the other deities from the Pantheon of Man choose to serve the Church in that role. Besides rooting out heresies, inquisitors act as spiritual advisors to those they fight beside, protecting their souls from the blasphemous creatures and ideals they hunt and purify.

The inquisitor detailed below is based around an Illiirite priest. If another type of inquisitor be desired, such as a Nierite Inquisitor, modify the Race Restrictions, the Tenets of Faith, and other details as necessary, such as weapons and armor. The inquisitor divine aspect tends to follow the restrictions listed under the appropriate cleric divine aspect.

Race Restrictions:

Dwarf (from Solanos Mor), human, and val only. Additionally, only males may become clerics of Illiir.

Tenets of Faith

All Inquisitors share the following tenets and traditions of belief in **addition** to those of their chosen deity.

Vigilance: Be ever vigilant for signs of corruption in the hearts of the faithful and those that surround them.

Inspire: Act in a manner that inspires hope and strength in the faithful, as well as to those who have not found enlightenment within the faith.

Righteousness: Seek out corruption and evil in all its forms. When discovered, strike it down.

Incorruptible: Your faith is unshakable; neither coin nor promises of power can sway you from the righteous path.

Purify: Hunt down heretics ruthlessly and without mercy, for they corrupt the pure and are beyond redemption.

Breaking Your Vows

Inquisitors must hold true to the beliefs and edicts of the Mother Church. There are times when adhering strictly to your vows becomes impossible, as situations may arise when the greater good is served by choosing the lesser of two evils. Until you receive absolution for your transgression, you may not cast any spells or use any features of this subclass.

If you break your vow to abide by the tenets, you must seek absolution from either an inquisitor or priest. You may be required to perform an all-night vigil in prayer as a sign of penitence, an act of purification, such as fasting, or any other fitting act as determined by your confessor. After completing your penance, you are given absolution. For truly dire transgressions, a quest or trial to prove your devotion to your vows may be imposed at the GM's discretion.

If you willfully violate your vow and show no sign of repentance, the consequences are more serious. At the GM's discretion, you may be forced to abandon this divine aspect, losing all its benefits.

Inquisitor

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>Guiding bolt, smite heretic*</i>
3rd	<i>Corona of radiance*, interrogation*</i>
5th	<i>Magic circle, rune of warding</i>
7th	<i>Litany of the righteous*, locate creature</i>
9th	<i>Decree of salvation*, flame strike</i>

Aspect Proficiencies

When you choose this divine aspect at 1st level, you gain the following proficiencies:

Armor: Medium armor, heavy armor, shields

Weapons: Gladius

Skills: Investigation

Hunter of Heretics

You are well versed in the history of heresies. You gain advantage on all Intelligence checks when attempting to recall heretical subjects, such as identifying the symbol used by a heretical cult, recognizing tell-tale signs of their presence, or identifying a heretical ritual.

Wrathful Radiance

Starting at 1st level, when you are hit by a melee attack you may, as a reaction, scorch the offender with divine wrath. Your attacker must make a Charisma saving throw. If they fail, they take 2d8 radiant damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma bonus (minimum of 1), regaining all expended uses after completing a long rest.

Channel Divinity: Righteous Fury

Starting at 2nd level, when you roll radiant damage, you may use your Channel Divinity to deal maximum damage, instead of rolling.

Channel Divinity: Blinding Light of Truth

Starting at 2nd level, as an action you can present your holy symbol and speak a prayer to Illiir, creating a burst of radiance powerful enough to blind the unfaithful while invigorating the righteous. You force all creatures within 10 feet that can see you to make a Wisdom saving throw or be blinded until the end of your next turn. Creatures who are faithful to the Mother Church are immune to this effect and instead gain 5 temporary hit points that dissipates after 1 hour.

Inquisitor's Instincts

At 6th level you become proficient in Insight and Investigation. If you are already proficient with either of these skills, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks with those skills instead.

Righteous Strike

At 8th level, once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra radiant damage increases to 2d8.

Wrath of the Righteous

Starting at 17th level, whenever you take the attack action you may cast a cantrip or preform a single melee attack as a bonus action.

FIGHTER ARCHETYPES

Praefectus Inquisitorus

The legions defend the citizens and territory of the Coryani Empire, but it is the inquisition that protects its soul. Those that would corrupt and turn the pure away from the Gods are innumerable and insidious. To combat these threats, the Legio IV has specially trained members within its own ranks that act as experts in identifying the tell-tale signs of heretical behavior and purifying the offenders.

Race Restrictions

Only Dwarves from Solanos Mor, human, and val may choose to be a Praefectus Inquisitorus.

Tenets of Faith

As with inquisitors, praefectus inquisitori share the following tenets and traditions of belief in **addition** to those of the Illiirite faith (See Cleric divine aspect, Aspect of Illiir pg. 66 of the Arcanis 5E Campaign Setting for details).

Vigilance: Be ever vigilant for signs of corruption in the hearts of the faithful and those that surround them.

Inspire: Act in a manner that inspires hope and strength in the faithful, as well as to those who have not found enlightenment within the faith.

Righteousness: Seek out corruption and evil in all its forms. When discovered, strike it down.

Incorruptible: Your faith is unshakable; neither coin nor promises of power can sway you from the righteous path.

Purify: Hunt down heretics ruthlessly and without mercy, for they corrupt the pure and are beyond redemption.

Breaking Your Vows

Inquisitors must hold true to the beliefs and edicts of the Mother Church. There are times when adhering strictly to your vows becomes impossible, as situations may arise when the greater good is served by choosing the lesser of two evils. Until you receive absolution for your transgression, you may not cast any spells or use any features of this subclass.

If you break your vow to abide by the tenets, you must seek absolution from either an inquisitor or priest. You may be required to perform an all-night vigil in prayer as a sign of penitence, an act of purification, such as fasting, or any other fitting act as determined by your confessor. After completing your penance, you are given absolution. For truly dire transgressions, a quest or trial to prove your devotion to your vows may be imposed at the GM's discretion.

If you willfully violate your vow and show no sign of repentance, the consequences are more serious. At the GM's discretion, you may be forced to abandon this archetype, losing all its benefits.

Sanctified Weapon Bond

You may, over the course of a long rest, sanctify a weapon to act as your divine spell casting focus. You may only have two sanctified weapons at any one time. If you choose to sanctify a third weapon one of the weapons you had previously sanctified loses its ability to act as a divine spell casting focus.

Spellcasting

Beginning at 3rd level, you become a divine spell caster of Illiir. You must abide by the tenets of faith presented above and suffer the penalties listed if you break those vows.

Praefectus Inquisitorus Spellcasting Chart

Fighter Level	Cantrips Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
3rd	2	2	—	—	—
4th	2	3	—	—	—
5th	2	3	1	—	—
6th	2	3	2	—	—
7th	2	4	2	—	—
8th	2	4	3	—	—
10th	3	4	3	1	—
11th	3	4	3	2	—
13th	3	4	3	2	—
14th	3	4	3	3	1
16th	3	4	3	3	2
19th	3	4	3	3	2
20th	3	4	3	3	3

Cantrips

At 3rd level, you know two cantrips of your choice from the cleric spell list. You learn additional cleric cantrips of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Cantrips Known column of the Inquisitor table.

Preparing and Casting Spells

The Praefectus Inquisitorus table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your Spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these Spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a Long Rest. Like all divine casters in Arcanis, you prepare your spells. You must prepare the list of cleric spells that are available for you to cast, choosing from the cleric spell list. When you do so, choose a number of cleric spells equal to your Wisdom modifier + your half your fighter level. The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

For example, if you are a 5th-level Praefectus Inquisitorus, you have three 1st-level and two 2nd-level spell slots. With a Wisdom of 14, your list of prepared Spells can include four (4) spells of 1st or 2nd level, in any combination. If you prepare the 1st-level spell *cure wounds*, you can cast it using a 1st-level or 2nd-level slot. Casting the spell doesn't remove it from your list of prepared Spells. You can change your list of prepared spells when you finish a Long Rest. Preparing a new list of cleric Spells requires time spent in prayer and meditation: at least 1 minute per Spell Level for each spell on your list.

Spellcasting Ability

Wisdom is the Spellcasting ability for Praefectus Inquisitorus spells. The power of your spells comes from your faith in your deity. You use your Wisdom whenever a cleric spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Wisdom modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a cleric spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Spell Attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Spellcasting Focus

You can use a holy symbol as a spellcasting focus for your cleric spells.

Hunter of Heretics

You are well versed in the history of heresies. Starting at 3rd level you gain advantage on all Intelligence checks when attempting to recall heretical topics, such as identifying the symbol used by a heretical cult, recognizing tell-tale signs of their presence, or identifying a heretical ritual.

Righteous Blow

At 7th level once per turn when you successfully hit with a melee weapon attack you deal an additional 1d8 radiant damage. This damage increases by 1d8 once you reach 11th and 17th level.

Additionally, your sanctified weapons are considered magical weapons for the purposes of bypassing damage resistances, as long as they are being wielded by a faithful member of the Mother Church.

Faithful Execution

At 10th level, any creature you hit with a weapon attack suffers disadvantage on its next saving throw against a spell you cast before the end of your next turn.

Fury of the Righteous

At 15th level if you take the attack action and successfully damage a creature with your Divine Strike feature and choose to use your Action Surge to make an additional attack action you may use your Divine Strike ability a second time during the same turn.

War Cants

At 18th level, you can make one weapon attack as a bonus action whenever you use your action to cast a spell.

PSION TRADITION

Psionic Inquisitor

The Holy Inquisition, rightfully feared across the Known Lands, began blending psionic insight with the divine powers granted by Illiir since the earliest days of its existence. The psionic inquisitor is the ultimate expression of the combination of these two forces.

The loyalty of those chosen to serve as psionic inquisitors is unquestioned, as they are frequently scanned for the slightest sign of corruption. As their training progresses, a psionic inquisitor increases their knowledge of heretical practices, become resistant to heretical magic, and learn to immolate infernals with their own inner divine light.

While psionic inquisitors may come from any of the val families or choose as their patron deity any of the Gods from the Pantheon of Man, the most common ones are from the val'Assanté, val'Mehan, and val'Virdan families. Presented below is an Illiiric psionic inquisitor attached to the Legio Lex Talionis.

Manifesting Ability: Wisdom

Saving Throws: Charisma, Wisdom

Additional Proficiencies: You gain proficiency in Religion and one other skill chosen from those listed here. You may not choose the same skill you chose as your class' skill: Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, and Survival. Additionally, you gain Proficiency with the gladius, medium armor, and shields.

Starting Equipment: You begin play with a gladius. Additionally, instead of choosing the equivalent of leather armor appropriate to your nation, you may choose to start play with your national equivalent of chain mail armor.

Clergy of the Faith

While not clerics, psionic inquisitors are considered priests of the Mother Church. You are considered a divine spell caster for the purposes of being targeted by spells and effects, as well as for crafting items such as holy water. You must abide by all the restrictions and requirements of the Arcanum of as a cleric (see Multiclassing p. 230). Also, like clerics, you are subject to the *breaking your vows* rules found on page 56 of the Arcanis 5E Campaign Setting. If you break your vows you lose access to your rites, rituals, and all class features.

Tenets of the Psionic Inquisitor

As with inquisitors, psionic inquisitors share the following tenets and traditions of belief in **addition** to those of the Illiirite faith (See Cleric divine aspect, Aspect of Illiir pg. 66 of the Arcanis 5E Campaign Setting for details).

Vigilance: Be ever vigilant for signs of corruption in the hearts of the faithful and those that surround them.

Inspire: Act in a manner that inspires hope and strength in the faithful, as well as to those who have not found enlightenment within the faith.

Righteousness: Seek out corruption and evil in all its forms. When discovered, strike it down.

Incorruptible: Your faith is unshakable; neither coin nor promises of power can sway you from the righteous path.

Purify: Hunt down heretics ruthlessly and without mercy, for they corrupt the pure and are beyond redemption.

Tradition Power

You learn the psionic power *sensitivity to psionic impressions*. This does not count against your total powers known.

Hunter of Heretics

When you take this tradition, you gain proficiency in Arcana. Additionally, you are well versed in the ways of heretics. You gain advantage any time you attempt an Intelligence (Religion) or Intelligence (Arcana) check regarding heretical topics, such as identifying the symbol used by an infernal cult or identifying a heretical ritual.

Inquisitor's Training

Upon reaching 2nd level your proficiency bonus is doubled when making any Insight ability check. Additionally, you learn the following spells as spell expressions: *detect thoughts*, *interrogation*, and *zone of truth*

Purified Mind

Upon reaching 2nd level you become immune to *possession*. Additionally, you gain the following ability:

Focused Ability. You gain advantage on all saving throws against spells cast by heretical spell casters and warlocks with fiendish patrons.

Rites and Rituals

Upon reaching 6th level you learn how to cast a few useful cantrips as rituals. Choose three (3) cleric spells with the ritual tag of 3rd level or below. Whenever you gain a level of psion, you can learn another cleric ritual up to a maximum number of spells equal to 3 + Wisdom adjustment. A chosen spell's level can be no higher than half your psion level (rounded up), with all rituals cast using Wisdom as your spellcasting attribute. You may only cast the spells you learned from this feature as rituals, even if you later take levels in a divine spell casting class or archetype. You must provide all necessary components for these spells when you cast them.

Searing Truth

At 10th level you gain the ability to manifest *interrogation*, without expending a psionic focus a number of times per day equal to your wisdom adjustment. You regain all expended uses after completing a long rest.

Merciless Judgement

Upon reaching 14th level you can call forth a wave of psychic power that wracks the minds of the wicked. **Manifestation.** All infernals within 30 feet around you must make a wisdom saving throw or suffer 8d6 psychic damage, half as much upon a successful saving throw. Alternatively, you may focus this power upon one possessed individual forcing the possessing creature to make a Charisma saving throw or be violently expelled from its host. The possessing creature appears in an empty space within 5 feet of its host where it is paralyzed until the end of your next turn. Once used you regain the ability to use this feature after completing a short or long rest.



NEW SPELLS

Blessed Vigil

1st level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (holy oil)

Duration: Concentration up to 8 hours

A creature you touch gains a +2 bonus on Wisdom (Perception) checks and advantage on all saving throws to resist the charmed condition for the duration of the spell.

Corona of Radiance

2nd level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (holy water)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

You radiate an aura with a 10-foot radius, emitting bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10-feet. Any abomination or undead that begin their turn within the spell's aura suffers 1d6 radiant damage.

Decree of Salvation

2nd level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

All friendly creatures within 30 feet that are currently stunned or frightened instantly lose that condition.

Interrogation

2nd level enchantments

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5-feet

Components: V, S, M (holy oils)

Duration: concentration up to 1 minute

Force a creature within 5 feet to make a Wisdom saving throw to resist being affected by this painful enchantment. If your target fails their saving throw they are assailed by a constant low-grade pain, not enough to cause any significant damage, but painful never-the-less. For the duration of

the spell as an action, you may ask the target 1 question, to a maximum number of questions equal your proficiency bonus. If the affected creature refuses to answer the posed question the pain suddenly spikes dealing 1d6 psychic or necrotic damage (chosen by you at the time of casting). This damage increases by an additional 1d6 for each question not previously answered during the spell's duration. This spell does not compel your target to tell the truth, but the pain makes it difficult for them to think clearly imposing disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) checks. This spell is ineffective against aberrations, beasts, constructs, dragons, oozes, and plants.

Linty of the Righteous

4th level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30 ft radius)

Components: V, S, M (holy water)

Duration: concentration up to 1 minute

You radiate an aura with a 30-foot radius, which moves with you and is centered on you. Whenever a friendly creature within that area successfully hits with a melee weapon attack they deal an additional 1d6 radiant damage.

Rune of Warding

3rd level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5 feet (15 ft radius)

Components: V, M, S

Duration: 1 hour

You create a 15-foot-radius, 20-foot-tall cylinder of magical energy centered on a point on the ground that you can see within range. A single glowing rune appears in the cylinder's center that seems to project mirror-images of itself along the cylinder's edge. When you cast this spell choose one of the following types of creatures: celestials, elementals, fiends, or undead. If a creature of your chosen type attempts to enter the cylinder they must make a Wisdom saving throw or find they are unable to do so. While they cannot physically enter the area, they may use ranged attacks, weapons with reach, or area affect abilities to affect those within the warded area. Creatures affected by the ward may, on their next turn, attempt a new Wisdom saving throw to push through.

At higher levels. The spell's duration is extended by 1 hour for each level slot level beyond the 3rd.

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