

BROTHERHOOD OF ANGELS



ANGELS PENITENT

CHAPTER NAME:	The Angels Penitent
FOUNDING:	Unknown, circa M.36
CHAPTER WORLD:	Sheol
FORTRESS MONASTERY:	The Tower of Silence
GENE-SEED (PREDECESSOR): ...	Dark Angels
KNOWN DESCENDANTS:	None known

This document has been produced specifically as a result of a competition held at the Dark Angels Forum of the Bolter & Chainsword Forum aimed at enhancing the WH40K experience for Dark Angels players. The only intent was to encourage participants to develop the background history of their DIY Unforgiven successor chapters.

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I hope that this document encourages even more hobbyists to let their imagination soar and their creativity be unshackled.

Shadow Guard
Keeper of the Fortress
Published 2014

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KNOWN DESCENDANTS:	None known

There is no such thing as innocence, merely degrees of guilt.

The Angels Penitent are proud of being successors of the Dark Angels, of having the geneseed of the First Primarch and the First Legion. But their leaders know that they are also part of the Unforgiven, and the sin of their ancestors is a heavy load on their shoulders, a load that they are sworn to alleviate with blood and fire, with devotion, prayer and suffering.

The Chapter is an spiritual brotherhood, even more so than other Legiones Astartes. They are, to the last one, warrior monks and mystics, whose life is ruled by a constant and exhausting regime of prayer and penitence of the soul and the flesh, destined to purge all sins that they and their ancestors may have committed against the Emperor, specially the Great Sin of Luther and the Fallen Angels, which the Angels Penitent are sworn to hunt and redeem no matter the cost, even if millions of Imperial citizens are left to die in the process. To the Angels Penitent, the souls of their stranded brothers and the honor of the Chapter are more important.

Second Litany of Battle of the Angels Penitent

We are the Sword at His right hand.
 We are the Fist of His retribution.
 We are the Hammer of His vengeance.
 We are the Scourge of His punishment.
 We are the Chains of His conquest.
 We are the Banner of His victory.
 We are the Instrument of His will.

ORIGINS

As is the case with many other Astartes Chapters, the exact date of the foundation of the Angels Penitent is a mystery. Nobody knows the circumstances of their creation, although the consensus of experts puts it in the vicinity of the terrible times of the Age of Apostasy, a turbulent period of revolts, apocalyptic cults and anarchy. That would put them between the Thirteenth and Twenty First Foundations, none of which is exactly auspicious. However, some data vaults and archive-spires on remote worlds contain far older registers of military forces with similar iconography and names: “Angels of Penitence of red and black”. Some Imperial historians think that these are mere coincidences, but others argue that the Chapter may have inherited the livery and name of a long lost Chapter, maybe destroyed during the Cataclism of Souls. Still others propose a link with the mysterious Angels of Wrath, pointing towards the names and symbols inscribed in some of the oldest relics of the Angels Penitent. Nobody knows for sure, except maybe the Inner Circle of the Unforgiven, or not even they, because the mists of history, legend and lie can blur even the most certain of truths.

According to the legends told in the vaults of the Tower of Silence, during or just prior to the Apostasy of Vandire, a Librarian, or, in some versions, a Chaplain, of the Unforgiven had a vision in which he was granted the Apocalypse of the Lion, a complex revelation in which the Primarch encouraged his sons to repent and do penance with fire and blood, not only for their sins, but for those of the entire Galaxy, and imparted a secret doctrine, only to be revealed to the highest tiers of initiation and enlightenment in the chapter. To this day, only the Inner Circle of the Chapter has access to the tome, and so the Angels Penitent were born both as a Space Marine Chapter and as an initiatory cult, a mystic sect dedicated to the gradual ascent through the mysteries of the Revelation of the Lion, and the Great Work contained within its pages: the Rectification of the entire universe.

Early Times

There is no doubt that during their first centuries, the Angels Penitent were a fleet based Chapter, as are many of the Unforgiven. The Chapter wandered the stars aboard their single Battle Barge, the Implacable Angel, scourging traitors and sinners according to the prophecies of their Chaplain-Librarians. The records of this time are scarce and fragmentary, or accessible only to the high command of the Chapter, and so the only sources of information are relics, battle honors and legends wrapped in myth and allegory, or the mentions that other Imperial authorities made of them. One of the earliest is a complaint to the High Lords from the Imperial Commander of Zoar, denouncing extreme civilian casualties and infrastructure damage caused by the Angels Penitent in their support of the Governor’s forces in putting down an heretic rebellion. Similar complaints came from the Governors of Heshbon, Jezer y Ekrom, showing that, in an early time, the Chapter had gained himself a reputation for merciless and bloody punitive operations against revolts and heretics.

It is known by local registers that, in Shechem, a squad of the Chapter descended upon some ancient ruins in which a heathen cult had entrenched itself, massacring the pagans and claiming the site as their own, despite the protests of the Imperial Commander. There are no more references to the Chapter in Shechem for a century, suggesting that they neither recruited neophytes, nor had any contact with the local Administratum; then, suddenly, the Angels Penitent bombed the ruins and left without a word. To this day, the population of Shechem consider the ruins a cursed place, and never come near them. Maybe this incident has something to do with a mysterious bust of a Space Marine, a relic of the Chapter in a distinctly Shechemian style typical of Pre-Heresy times.

Sheol

The wandering years of the Chapter came to an end when they found Sheol. According to some, it was a prophecy, a vision from the Lion himself, that commanded them to claim it as their new homeworld. Others think that it was all superstition, the interpretation made by zealot and mystic Chaplains of completely random facts that added up to being slightly similar to a vague prediction. Since the prophecies are closed to all except the Inner Circle, it can be only speculation.

Probably, what the Angels Penitent saw in Sheol was the opportunity to redeem sin. The world had been, in times past, a center of worship and piety, but in the chaotic times of the Age of Apostasy, an heretic cult had taken control and submerged Sheol into the mud of heathenism. They claimed that, since the Emperor suffered in the Golden Throne for the sins of Mankind, every sin was automatically forgiven, and so they were free to do as they pleased. Of course, in a short time the planet fell victim of civil strife and was divided between hundreds of constantly-splitting cults. The Angels Penitent could never tolerate such deviancy, such disrespect for the eternal suffering of the Emperor, and declared that they would cleanse Sheol and redeem it to be their Homeworld.

In a fateful night, all ten Orders of the Chapter descended upon Sheol, as if the skies themselves burned with rage. The city of Sarnath, a metroplex of sub-hive status with fifty million inhabitants, was bombed from orbit as a warning, while speakers fixed to the frames of Thunderhawks and Storm Eagles screamed hymns of penitence and punishment. Drop pods released squads of Angels Penitent, whose fire, precisely aimed, massacred hundreds and thousands with a cold rage that imprinted in the collective memory of Sheol for generations. In the first hour of the assault, all the leaders and demagogues of the major cults were dead, but the Space Marines continued routing and decimating the population and burning temples and fortresses for almost three days.

The Supreme Grand Master of the Angels Penitent at the time, Commander Mehujael, decreed that the population of Sheol must cleanse their sins by serving the Emperor and the Chapter. Thousands more were executed as expiatory sacrifices, while others were sentenced to work in the construction of the Tower of Silence, the new Fortress Monastery of the Chapter. Mehujael ordered also that each noble family in Sheol were to deliver their first-born son to the Angels Penitent, to be made a new Battle Brother, serf or servitor, as the Chapter sees fit.

It is likely that, were the times different, such actions would have garnered the Chapter the censure and complaints of the Administratum, and even the Inquisition, as it did in other campaigns through the ages. However, Sheol was an isolated world, and the times were dark and turbulent. When, centuries later, the wider Imperium knew of the fate of the planet, it was too late, and the Angels Penitent were firmly established as Lords of Sheol, and it was deemed more practical to simply accept the status quo. Only in one thing took the Imperium offence about the Chapter.

The Trial of Aralu

The Trial of Aralu marks the first time the Angels Penitent made real and open contact with the Imperium, and it was through an Inquisitorial investigation. In their zeal for uprooting heresy and apostasy around the Imperium, some Inquisitors took notice of the Angels Penitent and their secrecy, a trait that, while not at all unusual, was suspicious because of the almost cult-like manner in which they handled the governance of Sheol. There were rumours of religious police and persecutions, and of the Space Marines interfering too much with the spiritual affairs of their domain.

Inquisitor Cornelius Shetach petitioned the Chapter for a “supervisory visit”, but was denied. This enraged the Inquisitor, which brought the case directly to the Sector Courts Temporal. When the Chapter again refused to appear before the Court, a warning was issued by Cornelius Shetach himself... and a fleet taken from the naval assets of the Gehenna Sector. Only then allowed Supreme Grand Master Hananiel the “visit” of the Inquisitor, who descended with its retinue in Cinvat, the civilian port of Sheol. This was taken, and intended, as a slight, because the Tower of Silence had by then a fully functioning spaceport.

Moreover, Shetach and his retinue reported a less than collaborative attitude by the Battle Brothers of the Angels Penitent. Most of the Tower of Silence was “unavailable”, as were the most important archives of the Chapter, and the Space Marines answered only with monosyllables, if at all. The Inquisitor left the planet unsatisfied: although he had found no guilt nor malpractice, much less heresy, in the dealings of the Chapter with their world, he felt that there was something wrong, something strange with the Angels Penitent. Maybe it was only frustration caused by the arrogance of the Astartes. However, Shetach was not satisfied, and soon found something that he considered highly irregular in the Chapter.

The Angels Penitent were summoned again by the courts, but this time it was an special court made up of Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus, Ecclesiarchal representatives and, as tradition dictates in these matters, three Chapter Masters of the Adeptus Astartes, namely those of the Avenging Sons, Knights of the Raven and Doom Legion. The meetings were held in the Sheol System, in a barren world known as Aralu, for which the affair was known as the Trial of Aralu. Shetach accused the Angels Penitent of potential contamination, as their Chaplains were also psykers, who devoted their time to the tasks of Librarians as well as spiritual guides. The Inquisitor argued that, as psykers were prone to corruption and inherently dangerous, it was unwise, to say the least, to let them watch over the spiritual well being of their brethren. The debates in the Consistorial Court took almost thirty years. Both parties were heard, even with the complaints of the Angels Penitent, who said that the Ecclesiarchy had no right at all to sit judging them, and that a great many Inquisitors were, in fact, psykers, and so the point of the proceedings was moot on itself. According to legend (as actual records are since then long lost) before the Court testified even Prognosticators of the Silver Skulls and representatives of other highly psyker Chapters, and also Inquisitors and members of Chapters vehemently opposed to the psyker mutation. Finally, some say that with the advice of some of the Unforgiven, eager to deflect the gaze of the Imperium away from their own, a consensus was reached.

It was decreed, and the Chapter reluctantly agreed, that no more were the Angels Penitent to award the holy rosarius and confide the spiritual guidance of their number to psykers; however, they were allowed to maintain close ties with the Reclusium and use the skull mask and title of Chaplains. Only one psyker was to possess a rosarius and preside over rituals, but that was only the Grand Master of Sanctity of the Chapter, head of both Reclusium and Librarium, and those rituals were to be officiated in practice by a non-psyker Chaplain.

The 41st Millennium

During the millennia following the humiliation of Aralu, the Angels Penitent continued with the normal operations of a Space Marine Chapter. They made ties with other Imperial authorities, if only to remain supplied and battle-ready, but, as usual with the Unforgiven, those relations were maintained with a certain coldness, in a manner that implied only business and kept all but the Unforgiven themselves away from the affairs and secrets of the Chapter.

Many times during these millennia were the black and red of the Angels Penitent to be seen with the green of the Dark Angels, the silver of the Guardians of the Covenant, or the solid black of the Angels of Vengeance, but some say that the bone-white of the Angels of Absolution was much less seen. There are rumours of conflicting philosophies between both Chapters, and a mutual dislike barely contained. Truth or not, the Angels Penitent took up the duty of restoring the honor of the First Legion, and a handful of the Fallen went through the shackles and blades of the Tower of Silence, some of them to be taken to the Rock, others to be redeemed in Sheol. To this day, one of the holiest relics of the Chapter is the rosarius of Interrogator-Chaplain Mahraspand, with the only black pearl ever earned by the Angels Penitent.

Outside their genetic duty, the Angels Penitent remained also active in the Ultima Segmentum, battling the ever-present foes who menace the future of Mankind. Eldar, Orks, pirates, and, in the 41st Millennium, Tau and Tyranids all have felt the holy wrath of the Angels Penitent, but their specialty has always been the culling of heretics and revolts, cults and uprisings. The hearths of the Angels Penitent fill with rage and cold hatred when confronted with treason and heresy, and their fleets and task forces deal swift and brutal retribution, up to levels that have been called excessive even in the Imperium. Whole worlds have been burned or slaughtered, and even when the rebellion is put down and the disloyal armies surrender, it is often needed to officially reprimand the Angels Penitent for them to stop the killing. Killing always methodic, cold and heartless, not filled with the rage and bloodlust of the Black Templars or the Flesh Tearers, but with holy chants and clinical precision, because the Angels Penitent actually take pity of their foes: in their eyes, killing them is cleansing their sins with fire and saving their immortal souls.

Selected Battle Honors

Assault to Hive Zhartan

One of the first recorder collaborations between the Chapter and the Imperium took place in the first half of M.37. The Angels Penitent on board the Battle Barge Expiation came to the world of Taranis answering an astropathic distress call to find a world embroiled in rebellion. However, as it will be the case in the future, the synergy between the Chapter and its allies was less than perfect. Master of the Sixth Order Tahariel met with the Imperial Guard and Navy Commanders only until he could gather all useful intelligence; then he withdrew to his Battle Barge, declaring that his Angels would fight in their own terms.

Even before the astonished commanders had reached a decision on what to do now, the Expiation was positioned in a geosynchronous orbit over Hive Zhartan, where the rebellious council had their meetings. A rain of fire ensued, followed by drop pods which delivered six squads of the Sixth Order to the Spire. In less than three hours, all members of the council and their families, around two thousand people, were captured alive and taken to the Planetary Commander throne hall, empty since the “revolutionary execution” of the last one. The Angels Penitent fortified themselves there with help from additional squads, and then, while the rebel forces tried to cross the blockade into the Throne Hall, they began executing the prisoners with short and precise bolter fusillades, all the while broadcasting the scene to the entire planet via the media equipment of the Throne Hall. To this day there is in the Librarium a fragment of video, the grainy image of a brown-robed marine calmly drawing his bolt pistol to put down an agonizing woman and his months-old child. The rebellion surrendered five hours later. The Imperial Commanders had not yet reached a common decision by then.

The Devastation of Sacrifice

Maybe the best example of religious zealotry, mysticism and belief in omens of the Angels Penitent is the tragic story of Sacrifice. In the third century of M.39, the Strike Cruiser Lion's Vengeance found herself adrift in the warp and ended near an uncharted world: a natural paradise, full of pristine waterfalls, green pastures, lush tropical jungles and beaches of white and black sand, with elegant towers and spires of white stone rising between the trees. Soon it became apparent that the Lion's Vengeance had discovered some kind of barbarian Eldar world. Master Urim of the Fifth Order took it as an omen: the Emperor and the Lion had taken him there to purge that world and conquer it for Mankind, just as they themselves did during the Great Crusade.

Without a second thought, Urim ordered an orbital bombardment. Millennia-old towers were shattered, priceless natural landscapes blasted to glass and dust in mere seconds. Sending an astropathic call for occupation forces of the Imperial Guard and colonists, he set to conquer what little was left of the world. Drop pod assaults, Thunderhawk strafing runs, and orbital bombardments fell one after another over the few settlements that were not totally destroyed, or over the columns of refugees. Although more than a few Angels Penitent died in ambushes and counterattacks, when the first Imperial Guard troop ships broke warp into the system a month later, an entire civilization had been cleansed for the Imperium. That was not the end of trouble, however. The Space Marines were preparing to leave when bad news came. Suddenly, extermination camps were being attacked and the prisoners released, and human colonies were being cleansed to the last child. White and green figures were seen, swift as a wind of blades, circling the new settlements.

Such barbarity could not go unpunished. The Angels Penitent disembarked again and began a cat-and-mouse campaign with Biel-tan forces that took six months, and didn't fare well for the Chapter. Both sides radicalized: the Imperium began to use Eldar prisoners as meat shields, and the Eldar put more interest in massacring civilians than in fighting the Space Marines and Imperial Guard. The planet was more a bombed wasteland than a prize now, but both sides continued out of hatred and spite. When the most important river in the southern hemisphere was polluted to a degree that made the fields unworkable, Master Urim had a revelation: the Emperor didn't want only the sacrifice of a few Eldar barbarians, but of the entire world. He gave the order of total withdrawal of the Imperial forces and colonists, and, despite heavy losses, waited until the last transport broke warp and Biel-tan considered itself victorious. Then he used cyclonic torpedoes to burn the very atmosphere of the planet, rendering it uninhabitable, and destroying it utterly before leaving, considering himself triumphant. To this day, that planet is known to the Chapter as Sacrifice: a sacrifice of xenos scum and human suffering to the Emperor.

The Massacre of Nibiru

The Massacre of Nibiru is one the most recent defeats suffered by the Chapter, and it is among the most tragic. In the final years of M.41, the activity of the Red Corsairs and their allies in the outskirts of the Maelstrom Region registered a sudden increase, and so, the Chapter set to protect its ancient Recruiting Keep of Nibiru, in the Karthargo Sector. Nibiru is a feudal world, where the warrior nobility organizes tourney every century to choose the aspirants that will be sent to the Chapter, and has no modern military capabilities of its own, only horses and lances. Supreme Grand Master Akatriel decided to send the entire Fourth Order to the sector for protection, not only of its source of recruits, but also of the, albeit small, gene-seed repository in Nibiru. However, the Fourth soon found itself surrounded and outmaneuvered by an enemy who seemed to know their every movement. Patrols were ambushed, listening posts disappeared, and sudden attacks diverted the Order's forces away from the real danger.

All that became apparent when Master Nisroc found himself with only fifty marines in or around Nibiru, twenty deceased, and thirty spread around the Sector in individual squads. Suddenly, the skies filled with corsair ships, and Nisroc had to use his half an Order as a defensive force against a much more numerous band of renegades. Nibiru was scourged for a hundred days and nights, with the Angels Penitent pinned to the location of the gene-seed repository while the corsairs could go about the planet as they pleased, pillaging and burning, and killing the Angels piecemeal when they made small patrols or tried to reach an usable spaceport. Elsewhere, the Angels Penitent were being hunted in their individual squads and overpowered by sheer numerical superiority.

None of the Fourth Order survived the ordeal. The gene-seed of Nibiru was lost, as was that of all the members of the Order, although Nibiru was left alone once the pillage ended, and may be able to provide its tithe of youngsters in time the next century. Grand Master Akatriel decreed a hundred and one days of official mourning, and quickly reconstituted the Fourth with squads taken from the reserve Orders. The new Fourth Order, known as the Reborn, and its Master Kushiel, formerly of the Seventh, had made a vow of revenge against the Red Corsairs, although nobody they can do will restore the stolen gene-seed of the First Legion.

First Litany of Hate of the Angels Penitent

Our sacred duty is to kill,
Through hate are we saved.
Our sacred art is extermination,
Through hate are we saved.
Our sacred end is holocaust,
Through hate are we saved.

Organization

The Angels Penitent follow a pattern of organization very similar to that of the Dark Angels and other Unforgiven Chapters, although with some peculiarities born of their history and traditions. Some of these differences are obvious to all, but others are hidden, there only to be seen by those with the required level of understanding in the initiatory circles of the Order. The company structure of the Chapter is fairly standard: ten companies, of which the first two are specialized formations, the following three are battle companies, four more are reserve units, and the tenth and last is an scout company of variable size. As with other Chapters of the Unforgiven, the Companies are usually referred to as Orders, and the Battle and Tactical Reserve Orders each have a special squad made up of veterans, those who are deemed unworthy of the secrets of the First Legion, but great warriors nonetheless. Each Order has its history and traditions, its customs heroes and rituals, that will be explored later.

The first company of the Angels Penitent is named the Sheddin Order. Its members deploy always in Tactical Dreadnought Armor, as is the custom with all the Unforgiven; however, this is a relatively recent innovation, as the Chapter has not been able to deploy a hundred suits of Terminator armor until the middle years of M41. Before that, the Chapter made heavy use of Sternguard Veterans. Nowadays the Sheddin deploy in squads of between five and ten Terminators, each with his own preferred weaponry, so it is not unusual to see combi-weapons, assault bolters, power swords and lightning claws in the same squad.

The second company of the Chapter are the Hashmalim Order, and they operate in a very similar way to other Ravenwing-type formations, operating all of the motorized assets of the Chapter: bikes and attack bikes, Land Speeders of every variant, etc. As usual, they deploy in various patterns of squadrons composed of a mix of bikes and Land Speeders, and, when needed, operate the very few Land Speeders Tempest that the Chapter holds in its Armory.

Each of the ten Orders of the Chapter has a Captain, who, as is usual among the Unforgiven, goes by the title of Master of the Order, and is surrounded by a retinue that includes an Apothecary, a Standard Bearer, a Paladin of the Order and a veteran sergeant. Each Order has also permanently assigned a Chaplain, which for the Sheddin is an Interrogator Chaplain. The Hashmalim sometimes receive a regular Chaplain, and sometimes an Interrogator Chaplain. The Chaplain assigned to an Order sometimes is referred to as Chaplain-Confessor or simply Confessor.

Other departments of the Chapter are also standard, and have only minor variations with respect to the Codex Astartes and usual practice. The Armoury operates the tanks and aircraft of the Chapter, including those Land Raiders not assigned to the Sheddin, Predators, Whirlwinds, Vindicators, Razorbacks, Thunderhawks, Storm Eagles and Caestus Assault Rams, and also hold some spares of Rhinos, Land Speeders and bikes. As usual, the brothers who work in the Armoury, and some of those assigned to the Chapter Fleet, are trainees in the art of the Techmarines, the masters of the secrets of the Machine who operate the Forges of the Chapter. The Apothecarion is also standard, and has, as usual, a compliment of Rhinos specially converted to act as ambulances.

The Librarium and the Reclusium of the Chapter maintain close ties, as close as the Trial of Aralu allows. The organization of each mirrors the other, as both of them split from a common ancestor; so, when a Battle Brother is selected to become Chaplain or Librarian, he receives the title of Subdeacon, usually while he is still an Scout. Then he can either leave to become a normal battle brother (unless he is a psyker, of course), or ascend to Deacon, which in the case of psykers is the equivalent of a Lexicanium. Then he is made a Archdeacon, similar to a Codicier, and finally a Chaplain or Librarian, which in other Chapters would receive the title of Epistolary. All Archdeacons in the Librarium receive the full secrets of the Chapter, but only a handful of the best Chaplains are ever considered to become Interrogator-Chaplains, as befits the Unforgiven.

Each institution is headed by a Master: the Master of Chaplains, who usually is given the simpler title "Reclusiarch", and the Master of Librarians. However, neither of them are part of the High Command of the Chapter; instead, they are both subservient to the Grand Master of Sanctity, usually, but not always, a psyker, which represents both before the Inner Circle. The Grand Master of Sanctity receives also the title of Guardian of the Apocalypse, because it is his duty to guard, read and study the Apocalypse of the Lion. It is said that only a psyker could obtain all the meanings and nuances of the tome, and so, when the Grand Master is not a Librarian, he must choose an adjunct with psychic power, to be bestowed the title and responsibility of Guardian of the Apocalypse.

Other Grand Masters of the Chapter gather to form the Inner Circle or High Command: the Grand Master of the Domain, whose responsibility is the administration and logistics of the Chapter; the Grand Master of the Fortress, charged with the correct handling and security of the Tower of Silence and other outposts and keeps of the Chapter, and also the defense of Sheol; the Grand Master of the Fleet, responsible of the void-faring assets of the Angels Penitent; the Grand Masters of the Apothecarion and the Forges; the Grand Masters of the Sheddin and Hashmalim, and the special title of Grand Master at Arms of the Chapter.

The Grand Master at Arms is the second in command of the Chapter, at the right hand of the Supreme Grand Master, whereas the Grand Master of Sanctity is his left hand. His duties include the supervision of all matters military, being a sort of go-between linking the Supreme Grand Master with the Grand Masters and Masters of the Orders; he is the heir apparent of the Chapter Master, regent of Sheol and the Angels Penitent, and supreme champion of the Chapter, as he is also the nominal leader of the Chapters Honor Guard, a five-strong unit of highly revered Terminators, considered the most perfect warriors of the Chapter.

Titles

The Angels Penitent made a heavy use of titles and honors, both with attached responsibilities and merely as badges of achievement. As with other Chapters, many of these titles are assigned directly to the Company Masters and Chapter Grand Masters, but also to other high officials of the Chapter, including Honor Guards, Interrogator-Chaplains and Librarians. Most of the titles carry with them a symbol of office, usually a livery collar with a badge or symbolic medalion.

Not all the titles are in use at the same time, and some of them have laid unused for centuries until some Supreme Grand Master has decided to bestow them, or a prophesy or portent has recommended its revival. Most are sinecures, as the real work is usually done by Chapter serfs with minimal supervision.

The only title that is always in use is, of course, that of Master of Recruits, always in possession of the Master of the Tenth Order. Closely tied is the title of Master of the Holy Tithe, whose responsibility is to collect the children of Sheol to be tested by the Chapter and hold records of which noble families have already tithed their first born. The Seneschal of the Chapter assists the Grand Master of the Domain in the economic administration of the Chapter, and also receives and lodges the rare envoys of other Imperial institution and handles most of the Chapter's diplomacy.

Other titles are mostly ceremonial. The Master of Rituals is charged with supervising the protocol of the great ceremonies that took place in the Assimularum and the Chamber of the Spiral. The Warden of the Gates has the task of receiving, twice daily, the reports of the Watchers of the Gates, a brotherhood of Chapter serfs that opens and closes the gate of the Tower at dawn and dusk. The Keeper of the Seals guards in sacred reliquaries the seals of the Supreme Grand Master and the Chapter itself, and the Keeper of the Sacred Standards possess the keys to the chamber where the Chapter standards and some sacred banners are held in stasis, whereas the Master Flagellant has a key role in the annual Great Flagellation ritual.

The title of Sword Bearer is bestowed almost always in an Honor Guard, only rarely in a Order Master. Its role is following the Supreme Grand Master or the Grand Master at Arms to certain ceremonies, carrying their sacred swords of office; a related title, the Standard Bearer of the Supreme Grand Master, carries not the Chapter Standard, but the personal banner of the Chapter Master. The Chapter Standard, known as the Black Angel, is borne by the Ancient of the Chapter, the Standard Bearer of the Angels Penitent, always a member of the Honor Guard.

The Guardian of the Catacombs, usually a Chaplain or Librarian, supervises the Faceless Ushers, serfs that guard some passages and secret doors in the bowels of the Tower; the Master of Chains receives those of the Fallen who are delivered to the Tower of Silence, and binds them with shackles of adamantium blessed by the Grand Master of Sanctity and anointed with holy oils. The Master of the Hunt, usually the Master of the Hashmalim, has the duty of summoning task forces before their departure to exhort them to pursue and kill their prey, blowing once the Horn of Rudra to mark the beginning of the hunt, and also, in secret, must nominate the leader of a given hunting party when the prey is one of the Fallen, and conduct a sacred ritual in which the Horn is blown three times.

Some titles are exclusively bestowed on Chaplains or Librarians. Among the Chaplains, one of the most important is that of Guardian of the Relics, who keeps the keys to the Vault of Relics and is responsible for their safekeeping and conservation. The Penitentiary* is an Interrogator-Chaplain, tasked with hearing the confessions of the Masters and Grand Masters of the Chapter. The Magistral has the responsibility of overseeing the spiritual instruction of the neophytes, including the new recruits and the scouts, and so is usually the Confessor of the Tenth Order. The Chaplain-Rector of Sheol is the liaison between the Chapter and the mortal authorities of Sheol, and is usually a senior Chaplain who is deemed unworthy of elevation to Interrogator-Chaplain.

The title of Master of the Inner Sanctum is bestowed only on Interrogator-Chaplains, and carries the guardianship, not of a physical sanctum, but of the very soul of the Chapter; it is his duty to watch over the entire Chapter, and specially the Inner Circle, to ensure its purity, and to ritually dispose of those whose minds break under the weight of secrets and shame. Usually, the Master is also the Reclusiarch. The Master of the Unseen Ceremony is also an Interrogator-Chaplain, and his duty is similar to that of the Master of Rituals, but only in the secret gatherings of the Inner Circle: the Liturgy of the Mysteries, the High Mysteries, and the Rituals of Damnation and Absolution, among others.

The Librarians receive also exclusive titles. Some are purely administrative: Chief Archivist, Chief Communications Officer, or Chief Analyst of the Strategium, but others are ritual. The Keeper of the Black Key holds the means to enter the Forbidden Library of the Chapter, who contains not only heretic texts, but also the meticulously archived confessions of the Fallen and the transcripts of their questioning. The Keeper of the Mysteries holds in his memory all the secrets that the Chapter never puts to pen and paper: the secret sins, the mysteries, the legends of the First Legion, the rationale behind the most obscure rituals, so that, even if all burns around him, the soul and secrets of the Chapter may be safe. For that reason, each Keeper has a Second Keeper, a pupil who he teaches gradually its secrets.

The Reader Priest keeps the knowledge of the ritual languages of the Chapter: the old language of Caliban, the highly metaphorical Language of Angels, and the battle-cants and ciphers. Is his responsibility to make sure that the formulae are copied and transmitted faithfully, and that there are no errors in the sacred books. The Mystagogue guides the psyker Neophytes in the long path to become Deacons and, in time, true Librarians. The Master of the Veil, it is said, receives intelligence reports of a network of agents and spies deployed around the galaxy and filters them seeking for clues about the Fallen; but maybe that is only a rumour, and his duties are merely ceremonial.

Some titles are utterly mystic. The Whisperer in Darkness is literally a prophet, a Librarian who meditates in the Chamber of the Oracle, searching for predictions and illumination in the currents of the warp. The Guardian of the Threshold stands guard in front of the Gate of Mysteries, in the deepest catacombs, and uses his powers to search the very souls of those who wish to enter, allowing only those strong and pure enough to bear the revelations that lie beyond the Gate.

There are, finally, titles reserved only to those who have knowingly taken part in the Hunt for the Fallen, those who had followed a certain clue, hunted a Fallen Angel with a name or a title, not a mere rumour. Those who had taken part in such an endeavor are known as Brothers Redemptor. And those who had succeeded, those very few that had managed to capture one of the Fallen, are known by the lofty title of Knight Redemptor.

Iggulim

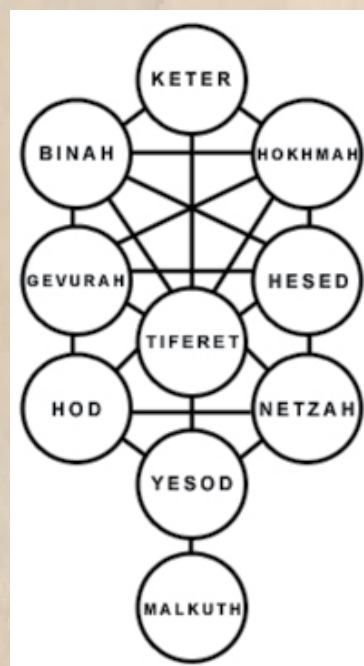
Iggulim means “circles”, some say that in the language of Caliban, and some that in an obscure language of Terra, dead for millennia. That is, nonetheless, the name that the Angels Penitent give to their secret organization, the lodges of mystery and initiation that reproduce the Deathwing-organization of the parent Chapter. Its mission is to preserve the secrets of the Chapter, to keep an eye on the very battle brothers of the Angels Penitent to judge their readiness for said secrets, and of course, to search, pursue and make repent the Fallen.

Every member of the Angels Penitent belongs to the Iggulim, although the majority of them do not know that fact. There are three Circles, each one divided into three Choirs, and a fourth, the Inner Circle, the only one whose members know the full extent of the secrets of the Chapter. Usually the Circles are known by their numbers, but they have ritual names: the Third Circle is that of the Misraim (“Restricted Ones”), the Second, the Iyrim (“Watchers”), and the First, Elohim (“Powerful Ones”), while the Inner Circle members receive the title of Kedarim (“Those Who Ordain”).

In turn, each Choir is divided between three Sephiroth, except the First Choir of the Misraim, in four, and the Kedarim, with only one. The fourth Sephira of the Misraim is known as Malkuth, the Kingdom. When a new Battle Brother is received in the Chapter, unbeknownst to him, he is placed in the Sephira Malkuth, and receives the title of Angel of the Kingdom. When he ascends, he, unknowingly again, chooses a Pillar (Kavim): most of them are part of the Pillar of Temperance, and receive the title of Knights; those who are initiated as Chaplains walk the Pillar of Severity, and are named Priests; and the Librarians take the Pillar of Mercy, and are known as Magisters.

The Pillar of a Battle Brother sets which Sephiroth he will be part of; so that, although there are ten Sephiroth, a given Space Marine never takes more than four, five if he reaches the Kedarim. Each Sephira has its own myths, legends and allegories, that are revealed to the brother when he is ascended. In the Pillar of Temperance, the Sephiroth are Foundation (Yesod), Judgment (Tifereth) and Faith (Keter); in the Pillar of Severity, Splendor (Hod), Severity (Gevurah) and Revelation (Binah); and in the Pillar of Mercy, Eternity(Netzach), Vision (Hesed), and Wisdom (Hokmah). When a brother reaches the Inner Circle, he receives the revelations of its only Sephira, that of the Mysteries, and leaves his Pillar, to be known only as Lord.

The names of Sephiroth, Pillars and Circles are combined to form titles that the brothers of the Chapter use in secret ceremonies and coded communications, in which seldom are used the formal titles of the Chapter. So, a member of the last Sephira of the Second Choir of the First Circle, in the Pillar of Temperance, shall be known as a Knight of the Faith of the Second Choir of the Elohim.



The system of Iggulim allows the Chapter to monitor its members and handle the gradual revelations of the truth through allegory, myth and metaphor. Only those of the Elohim know of the Great Secret, although most of them know of the Iggulim before the revelation of the sin of the Dark Angels. Usually, the Chapter does not simply give information and secrets, but only hints and metaphors; only if the Battle Brother is able of reaching for himself the revelation is he approached, his suspicions confirmed, and he is elevated to the Elohim.

Usually, the rank in the Iggulim translates to rank in the Chapter, as is usual with the Unforgiven, but that is not always so. Some of the Elohim remain with the ranks, working undercover among their Brothers. These are the Nehemot, the Whisperers. The Tempters. They probe the minds and wills of their brethren, judging for the Inner Circle the strength of their souls, searching for those who would follow orders, even without knowing the motives, those who would sacrifice everything for the honor of the chapter and the cleansing of sins. The Nehemot identify also those who would rebel, those too weak to handle the truth, those who cannot keep a secret, and mark them to be weeded out, or at least never allowed to rise through the ranks. They are the real secret police of the Chapter, the eyes and ears and whispering tongues of the Inner Circle, the Lords of the Mysteries.

Fleet Assets

Despite being a homeworld-based Chapter, the Angels Penitent have a substantial fleet. Their ships patrol deep into space, searching not only for the Fallen, but also for opportunities to cleanse their sins with fire and blood, to save Mankind from itself, even if that means killing the body to liberate the soul.

Currently, the Chapter maintains three Battle Barges, although only two of them are fully operative. The most ancient, the Implacable Angel now serves as a shield for Sheol and a living shrine for the Chapter; it has been centuries since she last broke warp, and it is doubtful that she ever will again. She is nominally the flagship of the Chapter Fleet, and the personal transport of the Chapter Master. The other two barges are the Penitence and Expiation. The Penitence is nominally the personal ship of the Grand Master of Sanctity, and is a cathedral as well as a ship, cavernous and gothic, long and elegant, and crowned with a winged lion. The Expiation, in turn, is rather small and compact, a clenched fist painted bone-white, austere and brutal, the flagship of the Grand Master at Arms.

Besides the Battle Barges, the Chapter owns eight Strike Cruisers and one Vanguard Cruiser. The Strike Cruisers are rarely assigned to an Order; instead, they are used to support task forces and temporary deployments, and rotated frequently. The Strike Cruisers have the names of Emperor's Mercy, Unshakable Faith, Lion's Vengeance, Avenging Fury, Scourge of Sheol, Sword of Salvation, Justice of Mehujael and Spirit of Punishment. The Vanguard Cruiser, whose task is scouting for rumours and intel on the Fallen and transporting secret task forces, is named Silent Hunter.

The Cruisers and Barges are supported by around twenty rapid strike vessels, divided between seven squadrons, although they usually are deployed independently to carry small detachments and maintain communications between outposts and keeps. The names of the squadrons are: Spears of Sheol, Dark Hunters, Hounds of Sheol, Storm Knights, Storm Hunters, Void Raiders and Swords of Absolution. Between them they deploy two Nova class frigates, nine Hunter class destroyers, three Storm class frigates, and six Gladius class frigates.

Recruitment

The Angels Penitent recruit primarily from Sheol, their Homeworld, by two basic means: the Holy Tithe, who forces each noble family to deliver their first born to the Chapter, and the Trials of Ascension, held every generation across the planet. The Trials provide the bulk of the new Battle Brothers, as the Holy Tithe can not guarantee that the offspring sacrificed to the Chapter is particularly strong or suitable. Actually, the Tithe is at most an outdated tradition, maintained only to keep the population in submission: most of the children of the Tithe end up as serfs or servitors.

The Trials of Ascension are as brutal and savage as usual among the Adeptus Astartes, and tend to left hundreds of dead children for each "winner" who is selected for screening. This screening is both genetic and physical, and of course psychic and spiritual. The aspirants are subject to every manner of tests of character, searching for the strong will, the deep sense of honor and shame, and the mental fortitude that is needed to become one of the Unforgiven.

However, the Chapter is not totally bound to Sheol. In the wandering years of the Angels Penitent, they established some Recruiting Keeps, all in all, around a dozen, in a very irregular line which leaves the Segmentum Solar and interns into the Ultima Segmentum. In these keeps are held also Trials of Ascension staged by serfs and representatives of the Chapter, usually only once every century. The selected aspirants are then shipped to Sheol to begin their training and implantation.

Livery

According to the Epistle to the Penitents, the colors of the battleplate of the Chapter have very specific meanings, so that the mere act of donning it is symbolic, a manifestation of spirituality and the mission of the Chapter.

The armor, including that of the two first Orders, is pitch black, symbolizing the soul tainted by sin, mourning for the Master of Mankind, and the implacable determination of the Angels Penitent. It is also reminiscent of the black of the Chaplains, symbol of their service and calling, and of course of the original black of the Dark Angels. The armor is sprinkled with dark red: the wristlines, the shoulderpad trims, the centerpiece of the backpack, and the ridge of the helmet. The red symbolizes the blood that cleanses sin: in the wrists evokes the shackles of sin, and in the shoulders and back, the weight of shame. The red helmet ridge is a reminiscence of the blood of a sacrificial victim, sprinkled in its head for atonement. Of course, all this meanings and nuances are only gradually revealed to the battle brothers, when the time is right and they have ascended enough through the Iggulim.

Sergeants and officers paint red, not the center of the backpack, but the exhaust vents, symbolizing the double load that they carry: theirs, and that of their less enlightened brothers. Some sergeants paint red the entire helmet as per the Codex Astartes, though that is personal preference, and not an official Chapter policy.

Usually, the chest Aquila or winged skull is painted red, but there are no regulations, and is equally frequent to see then in gold, silver, bone white or stone grey. Other markings are painted red or white, according to personal preference, although red is more common. These markings include the squad type markings in the right shoulder, squad and company numbers, names and slogans. Many Angels Penitent inscribe their armors with litanies and hymns taken from the sacred texts of the Chapter, or with other personal markings with symbolic meaning: swords and wings, lions, skulls, towers and angels.

As is the case with the Dark Angels, each Order of the Angels Penitent has a badge to wear in the left kneepad. The Third Order wears a solid red kneepad; the Fourth, a vertical red line; the Fifth divides the pad in two halves, the upper red, and the lower black. The Sixth uses a horizontal line, and the Seventh, a diagonal one, from upper left to lower right. The Eighth Order wears a red chevron, and the Ninth, a X-shaped cross. Nor the Tenth, nor the first two Orders have kneepad badges.

The squad and specialty markings (Techmarines, Apothecaries, Chaplains and Librarians) are standard. The most common style is that of the Dark Angels: a double-headed horizontal arrow for Tactical, an stylized explosion for Devastators, and so on, although it is not unusual to see Ultramarine-style vertical arrows and inverted chevrons. The Fourth Squad of the Third Order have the special privilege of wearing a red lion's head, instead of the tactical arrow. Techmarines and Apothecaries usually retain the black and red livery of the Chapter, and only use hints of white and rust-red to mark their allegiance. The most divergent are, of course, the Librarians.

Angel Penitent Librarians wear black, as do other members of the Chapter, with only testimonial hints of blue, usually in the greaves or shoulderpads, and in the psychic hood. Moreover, they retain the right to wear a skull mask, prompting the confusion of many a stranger. The armors of the Chapter's Librarians are also usually covered in Kabbalistic symbols, heptagrams and seals, that help them to focus and concentrate their powers.

Order Masters, Grand Masters and Honor Guards are allowed to wear in the right shoulderpad their personal heraldry instead of any prescribed markings. However, this personal symbols avoid at all costs the use of motives reminiscent of the previous life of the Battle Brother. Only the honors of battle, the experiences of a Space Marine and the traditional icons of the Chapter and the First Legion are suitable.

The Terminator suits of the Chapter are painted in the same pitch black than the power armors, but the shoulderpads are dark purple, with black chapter icons. The purple is the symbol of expiation and redemption. The Scout suits are however, totally black, without symbols or markings, as the Neophytes haven't earned yet the right to wear them. Only the sergeants carry a red left shoulderpad to symbolize their position.

As with the rest of the Unforgiven, the Angels Penitent make heavy use of tunics and habits. However, among the warriors of Sheol the tunics are not a mark of seniority or rank on themselves; all the Battle Brothers of the Chapter have the right to wear them to battle, although not all of them do it. Instead, is the color of the tunic which indicates rank and achievements. Most battle brothers wear dark brown habits, symbol of penitence and humbleness; the members of the Second Circle (nominally, Order veterans, Hashmalim and Chaplains) wear dark red, the color of the blood of martyrs and their own, sacrificed to atone for sin. Finally, the First Circle and Inner Circle members, or Sheddin, Interrogator-Chaplains, senior Librarians and Masters, wear dark purple, the color of redemption.

The Chapter icon, displayed as usual in the left shoulderpad, is a red Omega, a symbol of death and the end of things. It is both the termination of something and the culmination of an enterprise, the achievement of an arduous work, the seizing of an objective: in this case, redemption and purification of the Chapter, transcendence for Mankind, and the Rectification of the Universe itself. There are some variants of the Chapter icon. Some officials are specially awarded the Angelis Omega, the Omega of the Angels, a winged variant. The Sheddin use an Omega with a broken sword drawn through it, and the Hashmalim, a flame just below the upper arc of the Omega.

Third Order Brother



Robed Battle-Brother



Robed Veteran



Sergeant



Shedu of the First Order



Brother Captain Yama



Neophyte



Scout Sergeant



Standards

Standards and banners are extremely important to the Angels Penitent. The traditions of the Chapter prescribe heavy use of banners, some of them in battle, others in rituals, ceremonies and parades. The standards are always symbolic and have a deep meaning, usually with two or three layers that can be only properly interpreted by the initiated.

Some of these standards are merely commemorative. It is not known if this is a tradition of Sheol that was carried over to the Angels Penitent, or the other way around, but the weaving of banners and tapestries to commemorate great deeds and historic events is present in both cultures. Each campaign has at least a commemorative standard, and some great battles or similar events have their own. Most of them are stored in the Gallery of Banners in the Tower of Silence, but occasionally they are carried to battle, if the situation is somewhat reminiscent of the initial campaign. When the campaign is being guided by a respected Chaplain, it is not unusual for the Chapter to carry simple "Prayer Banners": standards of pure black or red, inscribed with hymns and prayers, with or without the Chapter icon. Sometimes the prayer is only a word: Punishment, Retribution, Expiation, Redemption, Penitence and Purification are among the most common.

The Chapter has also, of course, a Chapter Banner, known as the Black Angel and deeply revered by the battle brothers. The legend tells that, when the Black Angel is carried into battle, the Emperor himself is looking at the Angels Penitent. The standard shows a black-robed angel, with a black shield bordered red and displaying an omega; in the right hand the angel holds a sword. Between his extended wings, a double-headed eagle with a golden halo, directly over his head. With the ages, different variants have been recorded, including additional details such as flames, ruins, skulls or lions. There is always a scroll with the word "Penitenciagite", sometimes beneath the feet of the Angel, sometimes under the Aquila, in the sword or in the shield. The background is usually dark red, bone white or dark green.

Each Order has, as usual, its own standard, carrying both the symbols of its history and deeds of battle, and part of the personal heraldry of its Master. Only a handful of elements remain constant: in the Sheddin Order, a broken sword, reminiscent of the Deathwing, and usually the figure of a lion; for the Hashmalim, flames, and occasionally wheels and eyes. The Third Order also uses a winged lion, and the current standard of the Fourth, since their virtual destruction, carries a skull-faced angel. The Fifth Order uses to show a sword going through a world, in remembrance of Sacrifice.

Individual squads use standards, too, although rarely in combat. They carry the same design that the kneepad, with the squad number and Omega over the top, in black, red, or white. The Third Order uses the standard red Omega in black background, instead of the black on red who would logically seem suitable, although nobody knows the reason. The fourth squad of the Third Order, the Lions of Sheol, have a special standard: a red lion in a black background, holding the Omega between its paws, and standing over a scroll with the word "Sheol". Each member of the squad is entitled to carry a standard with the Omega surmounted by "Sheol", and beneath it, the individual marine's name.

The Terminator Squads use a different sort of standard: in a black background, a red omega, and going through it a white, broken, sword, with the squad number or name under the sword tip. The Hashmalim do not use squad standards, only guidons and pennants of black with the red omega and flame, and a white number.

All those who have the right of personal heraldry, and also Interrogator-Chaplains and senior Librarians, can carry personal banners too, with the same symbols. There are also other banners, purely ritual, that are sometimes carried by serfs into battle: mere black or red cloths with the Omega in red or black; life-sized figures of angels and winged lions, reliquaries, censers, icons, triptychs with sacred images or hymns, holy books, lanterns and torches, crucified skeletons of defeated foes or scrolls of parchment with litanies or curses.



Decorations

The Angels Penitent have, as other Chapters, an elaborate system of badges of honor and decorations. However, these are intended, not to suit the vanity of the Battle Brother, who is encouraged to humbleness and humility, but to mark both his progress through the Iggulim and his warrior abilities, to the better assessment of their superiors at a glance. Some of them aren't even real decorations, but marks of shame and penance to be redeemed. For this reason, the Angels Penitent usually wear full regalia in battle, with icons, symbols and badges turning each one into a gothic nightmare. Here are only some of the most relevant decorations of the Chapter.

Crown of Thorns: The Crown of Thorns is bestowed for deeds of great valor that carry serious injuries. By its design, it can be confused with an iron halo, because it is an iron or lead ring with spikes, but where the Iron Halo's spikes radiate out of the ring, in the Crown of Thorns they go through it. The Crown is usually worn around the head, fixed to the collar, but it can also be worn pending at the neck or waist, or can be presented as a mere ring of spikes on the helmet or wrist.

Light of the Faith: The Light of the Faith is a rare decoration, usually awarded only to prospective Chaplains, who show an ability to inspire and guide their brothers into the thick of the fray with faith and absent fear or doubt. It is a small lantern, or sometimes a metal torch, fixed to the backpack or hanging with a chain at the waist.

Censer of Purification: Awarded to those who show an unshakable determination to purge the enemies of the Emperor and the sins of Mankind and the Legion, it is a small silver or bronze autocenser, fixed to the backpack or shoulderpad, loaded with blessed oils and perfumes.

Seals of Penance: A Seal of Penance could be confused with a Purity Seal, but his purpose is almost opposite. Is a parchment litany fixed with a lead seal, placed by a Chaplain-Confessor upon confession of a sin or weakness. The scroll carries an oath to fulfill a task as penance for the sins committed, and the battle brother can not take the seal from his armor until he has achieved it. Usually, once the penance is fulfilled, the Chaplains impose a Purity Seal in its stead.

Bells of Retribution: The Bells symbolize the characteristic stubbornness of the Unforgiven, and are awarded for resisting the enemy without taking a step back. They are small iron bells, suspended from the waists or shoulders of the armor, to make known to all the Angel Penitent's foes that the First Legion is on the field.

Memento Mori: This is as much a decoration as a warning: remember that you will die, and do not be excessively proud of your achievements. It is given to those Battle Brothers who risk their lives regularly, and even so, manage to survive time and again. It takes the shape of the skull of a servant of the Emperor, usually a Chapter Serf, enshrined in a ceramite reliquary, to be welded to the armor. Gazing daily at the skull, the Battle Brother is supposed to remember that he, also, will some day be no more than bones and ashes.

Angel of Death: The Angel of Death is awarded to those Battle Brothers who excel in the very task the Emperor set them to: to carry death to His enemies. Most veterans carry it, as it is awarded when a certain number of enemies is taken down. The award is a ceramite angel, hooded and carrying a sword or scythe, which is placed atop the backpack, or melded to the greaves, chestplate or shoulderpads.

Angelis Omega: An award given only to officers, the Angelis Omega is a winged chapter icon, to be worn in the left shoulderpad. It is awarded to those who have led a very successful campaign with a minimum of casualties for the Chapter.

Lion of Caliban: The Lion of Caliban is given to those veterans who have completed the Secret Pilgrimage that leads from Sheol to the ruins of Caliban, and then to Terra, where they pray for forgiveness in front of the Eternity Gate. When the Pilgrimage begins, the veteran is given an iron winged lion, to be covered in gold once the journey is completed.

Keys of the Secrets: The Keys of the Secrets are not as much a decoration as a badge of rank. They are big and heavy iron keys, silver plated, and each one opens one, and only one, of the secret doors and vaults of the Chapter. Only the Supreme Grand Master has the complete set, and only the Grand Master of Sanctity could judge when to award a new key to a member of the First Circle. Of course, only those of the Elohim have these Keys, and only they know what is their purpose.

Beliefs

The Angels Penitent are a highly mystical Chapter, that maintains a decidedly esoteric outlook of reality: for them, everything has at least two layers of meaning, everything is symbolic and transcendent. A defeat is not a defeat, is a sign of weakness of the will or taint of the soul. A victory is not a victory, is a step on the ladder of redemption, a cleansing of sin and shame in fire and blood. A random warp event is not a natural phenomenon, but a terrible omen.

To the Angels Penitent, everything, including the warp, is a distorted reflection of an unknowable light, a transcendent state of which the Emperor is the most pure reflection; so, the Lion, the first reflection of the pure reflection, is the purest and highest of the Primarchs. The ultimate, mystical objective of the Chapter is not only the individual transcendence achieved through enlightenment, but the universal ascension, the Rectification of the universe, in which all comes back to the Endless Light.

With that outlook on reality, it comes as no surprise that, although the Angels Penitent profess to not consider the Emperor a god, they worship him as if he were, denying only the title. They pray to him and the Lion, they ask for forgiveness, for protection and for watching over their deeds, and hope to become his real Angels when they die, once the sin of the First Legion is cleansed. They hold that the Emperor is an spiritual beacon, the same way as, "exoterically", he is a psychic beacon for the Astronomican; by emulating him, not only in deeds, but in spiritual development, and specially in sacrifice, they aspire to enlighten themselves and transcend.

The sacrifice of the Emperor is, of course, a central element in the theology of the Chapter. They see it as a chosen martyrdom, in which the Emperor accepted an eternity of suffering to better guide his children to the Endless Light. Of course, the parallelism between the betrayals of Horus and Luther, and the "death" of both the Emperor and Lion el'Jonson do not escape the minds of the Angels Penitent: to them, both are two sides of the same coin, two reflections of a cosmic drama, a play between light and corruption, in which the light must sacrifice itself and suffer to bring salvation. Only the suffering of the Emperor (and maybe the Lion himself) keeps the exoteric reality from being totally corrupted and cut from the Light, and so, the children of his first born have no right to do otherwise: they should suffer and do penance, and honor his sacrifice with blood and pain, suffering every wound and every torture for the salvation of Mankind.

That doctrine means that the Angels Penitent consider suffering an enlightening experience, the key to experiment the Endless Light and the true revelation, and so their rituals are filled with pain, flagellation and self-deprivation, and they think nothing of inflicting hardships on civilian populations and Chapter serfs alike: with the pain comes the light, and they should not complain, but accept the teachings that the suffering brings.

Of course, the greatest suffering, the greatest pain, is the eternal shame of the First Legion, that half of their own number were corrupted and turned against the sacred oaths they had sworn to the Emperor, and through him, to the Endless Light. So, theirs, and their descendants, is the greatest penance, the most enduring suffering needed to cleanse their very souls. Until the moment in which every one of the Fallen has repented, or his soul has been cleansed by pain and an agonizing death, the souls of the scions of the Lion may not rest, and, no matter their enlightenment, may not achieve the Endless Light. So, the first step in the Rectification of the Universe and the transcendence of all of Mankind is the salvation of the very soul of the First Legion.

Most of these doctrines are, of course, hidden behind allegory, myth and secret. Only the highest tiers of the Chapter know the full extent of their mysteries. Knowledge is not only power, it is also extremely dangerous. Not everyone can handle the revelations of the Light and the teachings and prophecies of the Apocalypse of the Lion, and the mind may break and the corruption take hold of the soul. So, they hide their revelations behind metaphors and symbols, so that only when the mind itself is capable of comprehending their meaning will the truth be known.

Most of the Chapter is, however, acquainted with the notion of shame, sin and punishment, if only to justify the name of the Chapter. They are told that they must cleanse the sins of Mankind, who does not honor the eternal sacrifice of the Emperor and devotes itself to witchcraft, double dealings, carnal desires, and intercourse with xenos and witches. The very sins of their parents, the sins of Sheol, are upon their shoulders, and only with blood and death would these sins be cleansed and their souls and the souls of their parents may rest with the Emperor.

With this emphasis in the suffering of the Emperor and the sins of the fathers, the attitude and behavior of the Angels Penitent is extremely austere and ascetic. They do not allow alcoholic beverages inside the Chapter holdings, nor games, swearing or even immoderate laughter and chatting. The Chaplains are quick to chastise those who talk when they can be silent, or those that use their fifteen free minutes of each day in frivolous pursuits instead of meditation and prayer. The Emperor in His Golden Throne, as they say, has not even fifteen seconds a day of release from His suffering.

The cult of the Chapter places great emphasis in the notions of sin, penance and forgiveness. The Battle Brothers confess regularly with their Chaplains, revealing all and any sins, real or imagined, to be cleansed, usually with painful methods such as flagellation. Some even punish themselves when there is no known sin, figuring out that it is better to suffer without cause than let an unknown sin go unpunished.

Martyrdom is also a key feature of the Chapter rituals. The Chaplains celebrate services in honor of the fallen Battle Brothers after each battle, encouraging the rest to emulate them and lay their lives in the service of the Emperor. Their names are inscribed in the Book of Redemption, and their remains enshrined in the Catacombs of the Chapter. However, no individual deeds are recorded or praised, but only those of the Chapter or Order as a whole, because the Chapter, with its focus on humility and austerity, does not encourage the pride that comes with them. The Angels Penitent are waging war to do a work, a Magnum Opus for the redemption of the First Legion and the Rectification of the Universe, not to gain glory and personal satisfaction.

And, of course, the secretive and initiatory nature of the Chapter gets carried into its cult. The rituals and ceremonies of the Angels Penitent are known as the "Mysteries", and only those deemed worthy, only those that have ascended through the Sephiroth and the Iggulim can attend some of the most revered. There are rituals open to all, but there are also mysteries that are only for the Iyrim, the Elohim, or the very Inner Circle, and even rituals to which only the Supreme Grand Master and the Grand Master of Sanctity have the right to attend.

Litany of the Seven Sins of the Angels Penitent

O, Emperor, Lord of Mankind,
we pray to thee, deliver us,
Of the sin of indulgence,
Of the sin of tolerance,
Of the sin of compassion,
Of the sin of mercy,
Of the sin of doubt,
Of the sin of pride,
Of the sin of moderation,
Of the seven sins that are the death of the soul,
O, Emperor, deliver us.

Relics

The Vault of Relics, beneath the Reclusium of the Chapter, holds some of the most revered relics of the Angels Penitent: war trophies, the remains of dead heroes, and some treasures of unknown origin, but that carry a heavy significance to the Chapter, a significance that, sometimes, only the Inner Circle can grasp. These are only some of the most important of them:

The Cup of Jamshid: Of unknown origin, the Cup is a obsidian chalice, decorated with silver and what appear to be tiny fragments of bone. Some say that it was recovered from some ruins in the mountains of Sheol; to others, it was the cup used in the consecration of the Chapter. The Cup is employed in the Feast of Malediction once a year, that celebrates the founding of the First Legion, and also is used to take oaths that are considered unbreakable. Finally, it is thought that the Grand Master of Sanctity can use the cup to take auguries and see the future of the Chapter, although this is an unconfirmed rumour.

The Sword of Expiation: This is a relic sword, the symbol of office of the Supreme Grand Master of the Angels Penitent. Legend tells that it was gifted by the Dark Angels themselves to the first Supreme Grand Master of the Chapter, but, since there are no records of his identity, or even of that era at all, it is only legend.

The Reliquary of Mehujael: The reliquary holds the remains of the first recorded Supreme Grand Master of the Angels Penitent, and is considered one of their holiest relics. It is a gilded, square box, with a glass panel who shows the ashes and blackened long bones of a Space Marine; in a golden cage melded to the top rests the skull of the Chapter Master, with his name inscribed in golden letters in the forehead, and surrounded by an Iron Halo and a Crown of Thorns.

The Shroud of the Angel: Also a relic of unknown origin, the Shroud is no more than a ripped piece of white cloth, stained with blood and dust, that is guarded inside an stasis reliquary. Some say that it is the funerary shroud of the first Grand Master of Sanctity, or another great hero. Whatever the truth, is older than the conquest of Sheol, and is considered a relic specific to the Chaplains, who usually take their vows over it.

The Horn of Rudra: Supposedly the hunting horn of the first Grand Master of the Hashmalim, the Horn of Rudra freezes the hearths of the enemies of Mankind with terror whenever it is blown, or so says the legend of the Chapter. Today is only used when the Master of the Hunt summons the task forces that go to battle among the stars. It is the ripped horn of some huge beast, polished and gleaming like a black pearl, and some say that it shows no sign of human manipulation at all.

Traditions

The Angels Penitent are a relatively old Chapter, and had accumulated a wealth of customs and traditions, some of them strange or unusual, in the millennia since their foundation. Some of these traditions extend to all the Chapter, while others are exclusive of one Order or even squad. Here are to be explored only the most relevant, but there are thousands more.

One of the most important traditions of the Chapter is the taking of new names upon elevation to full battle brother. The neophytes are allowed to use their birth names trough the Scout phase, but, once they don the Power Armour of the Chapter, they must choose a new name from the pages of the *Nominis Angelis*, which gathers more than three thousand of them. With a new name, it is expected that the new Battle Brother will take a new identity and forgot his previous life and attachments. Now he belongs only to the First Legion.

Another very important tradition, one carried over from the Dark Angels, is that of the telling of stories and myths. The Chaplains and veteran sergeants tell their wards stories about the Knights of Caliban, the heroes of the Chapter, or unnamed "Angels of the Emperor". Those legends are always metaphorical, and have multiple layers of significance. A Scout will not understand one particular story the same way that the sergeant who tells it, or that a full Battle Brother who may happen to hear it. When the Scout ascends and takes a new name, new stories are revealed, and, in their light, the meaning of previous legends is illuminated and a new layer of significance revealed. Centuries later, when the mind of the Angel Penitent resounds with thousands of legends and myths, the truths behind it all may begin to reveal themselves.

This penchant for secrecy and double meaning has evolved in the bosom of the Chapter into a highly symbolic form of speech: the Language of Angels. It is usually based on the old language of Caliban, but can be applied to the languages of Sheol, or to High Gothic. Is an ever-changing cipher, in which nothing is what it seems, and the context and nuances are everything. A sermon in the Language of Angels may seem ordinary, if a bit abstruse, to the uninitiated, but to the Elohim it carries real meaning about their mission and their souls. Sometimes, a communication between the higher tiers of the Chapters seems composed only of vague images and nonsense: these are, without doubt, the most important, the real meaning hidden behind symbols and legends.

The Sheddin, who know the Great Secret, are a sinister and closed group, even among the Angels Penitent, with dark and mysterious traditions. It is known that they almost worship their suits of armor, each one of which has a proper name and a shrine in the Armory of the Order. It is said that they gather in silence in the Basilica of the Lion for hours on end, praying without a single word and meditating in the heavy load of secret and shame they carry. Each Sheddu carries a gladius or short sword, known as Misericordia, or mercy, that is their symbol of office, and the testament of their secret oaths. It is said that the Sheddin are supposed to use it to kill themselves if they even fall from grace and dishonor the Chapter, although there is not a single recorded instance of either suicide or dishonor. Also, each Sheddu is given a sword when he takes his oath; a sword that is broken against his knee, and over which he sleeps every night, to remind himself of the Broken Sword of the Lion and the honor of the First Legion, that some day will be reforged.

The traditions of the Hashmalim have an important focus on the hunt and the knightly legacy of long-forgotten Caliban, even if only their Master knows the full story of the homeworld of the Lion. Each Hashmal is considered an expert hunter, dedicated to pursue a single victim; usually, when the battle is engaged, each member of the unit chooses an objective and makes a point of honor to pursue and kill it unaided. The deeds of the hunters are remembered in songs and commemorative standards, and it is not unusual for the Hashmalim themselves to collect trophies from their fallen quarries, to be dissected and hung in the Chapel of the Order.

The Third Order focuses its most important traditions into its fourth squad. Nobody knows why the fourth and not the first, or when or why these customs originated, but there are until today revered and held sacred. The squad has the old privilege of carrying a special standard to be borne by its sergeant, and even that each squad member may carry a simplified variant, although they only do it usually on ceremonies. Also, the squad does not use the standard right shoulderpad symbol of a tactical arrow, showing instead a red lion head that gives them their number: the Lions of Sheol.

The most revered tradition of the Fourth Order is to wear, somewhere in the armor of each and every member, the names of the ten squads, the Master and the Chaplain that composed the Fourth when it was exterminated by the Red Corsairs in Nibiru, protecting a recruitment outpost of the Chapter. Some of them even tattoo the names in their skin, as it creates an strong spirit de corps: no matter what happens, even if every last one of them is killed, their legacy and honor will survive.

In the Fifth Order, the first and second squads carry always the names of Urim and Zadkiel, the actual names of their sergeants notwithstanding , to honor the memories of the Heroes of Sacrifice.

Combat Doctrine

As befits a scion of the First Legion, the combat doctrine of the Angels Penitent combines tactical flexibility with an unflinching determination to never take a step back and resist at all costs. The battle brothers of the Chapter know that death in combat is a step in the path of redemption, and so never shy from it, but they also know that a death without meaning is a waste, and itself a sin, and so almost never take unnecessary risks or undertake reckless operations. First and foremost, they are descendants of the best tactician among the Primarchs, and the teachings of their genetic forefather are not lost.

The Chapter favors airborne assaults with Thunderhawks, Drop Pods, and Storm Eagles, taking key positions in the battlefield and using them as forward fortresses, making swift and devastating attacks behind enemy lines before returning to fortified positions, which, if the campaign isn't resolved quickly, become thorns at the side of the enemy. Only when a more advantageous position can be seized will be these strongholds abandoned.

At the tactical level, the Chapter uses a combined-arms approach, with Devastator squads and Whirlwinds providing support for Tactical squads which press against the enemy at its weakest point. For this very reason, it is common that the units are split into combat squads: one of them provides heavy weapons support, while the other engages the enemy. The infantry squads are usually mounted on rhinos or razorbacks, combining mobility and firepower; the Chapter takes special care in providing their Devastator squads the means to redeploy swiftly according to the tactical situation.

Of course, the First and Second Orders, when present, take a foremost role in the combat operations of the Chapter, as per the usual doctrine of the Unforgiven: the Hashmalim Order is sent forward as scouts and skirmishers, drawing out the enemy to be smashed by the teleported fury of the Sheddin. However, this highly tuned war machine is usually dispersed looking for the Fallen, and not all task forces can count on them.

Gene-seed

The Gene-seed of the Angels Penitent is that of Lion El'Jonson and the Dark Angels, the First Legion, the most pure and untainted by corruption or mutation. The Chapter's gene-seed has no known flaws, and all Angels Penitent develop the twenty organs that the Emperor intended.

Battle Cry

Penitenciagite!

Purificat Hymn of the Angels Penitent

Thine Angels of Death had befell them,
Thine Angels Penitent offer them to Thee
as an Holocaust of expiation,
Forgive them, they know not what they do
Let them make penance with death and blood,
and the desolation of their towers and cities.

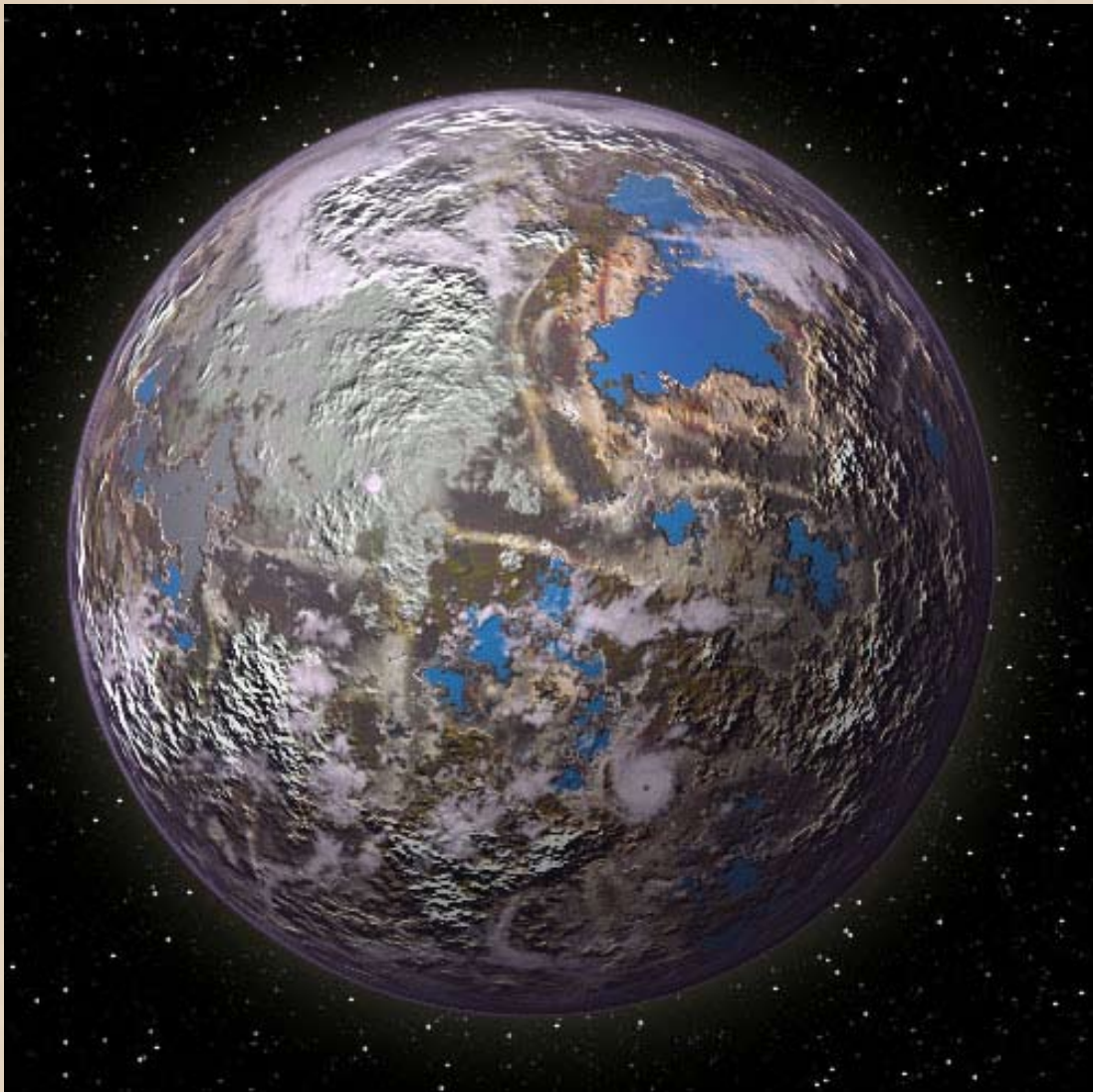
Home World

Sheol, in the Gehenna Sector of the Ultima Segmentum, is the homeworld that the Angels Penitent have “redeemed” and taken as their own by right of conquest. It is a barren world of high plains and low deserts, of howling winds and deep woods, with immense and cold oceans and mountains perpetually besieged by thunderstorms.

Once Sheol was a civilized world, were the raw products of its three continents where exchanged for riches and wealth, but these days are long gone. Now, all of the produce that is not absorbed by the needs of the Chapter is bartered in the only spaceport of the world, Cinvat, for industrial machinery and foodstuffs. While the Chapter is maintained at almost full readiness at all times, the population of Sheol, almost five hundred million souls, gets only scraps.

Cinvat, named for the bridge that, in ancient legend, linked the heavens and earth, is the only big city that remains on Sheol: a metroplex, almost a hive, with some hundred million inhabitants. Sarnath was smitten by an implacable doom almost five thousand years ago, when the Angels Penitent began their conquest of the planet, and the rest of the cities of Sheol had devolved into slums and shanty towns where only the strongest and most devout survive, while in the mountains and deserts, the hordes of uncivilized barbarians get ready to descend over the settlements like wolves in a harsh winter.

Whereas once a hundred heretic cults ruled the heathen population of Sheol, now a new form of religious mania shackles the souls of its inhabitants. The teachings of the Angels Penitent about sin, suffering and redemption had spread to the population, and now the cities and slums of Sheol are ruled by zealot cults of fanatics, flagellants and redemptionists ready to administer flame and sword to all who is not “orthodox”, that is, all except themselves. Most of these cults are mystic and initiatory in nature, something that the Inner Circle has engineered deliberately to facilitate the adaptation of the recruits. The most holy secrets and rituals are only revealed to the highest ranking members, and this is a mindset that the children of Sheol carry with them to the Trials of Ascension and the Tower of Silence.



The Tower of Silence

The Tower of Silence is the Fortress-Monastery of the Angels Penitent, a huge complex placed over the highest mesa in the northern continent of Arbuda Naraka, constructed around a mountain peak that once pierced the skies, and that now is buried beneath the superstructure of the Tower. The exterior defenses of the Tower take kilometers, encircled by a thousand-meter high wall blistering with cannons and orbital defenses. Still another wall encircles the inner courtyard; no visitor is allowed, save exceptional circumstances, to go beyond the second wall. Between the outer and inner wall there is the Tower of Aralu (whose name owes much to resentment over the Trial), where the Chapter lodges its infrequent visitors, mainly Administratum or Navis Nobilite representatives. The Tower itself is almost pyramid-shaped, with three levels of rectangular platforms, three hundred meters high each; the lowest one has a length of three kilometers and two hundred meters on each side, and the topmost, one thousand and nine hundred meters. Over these three levels rise three vertical towers: a central one, almost two kilometers high, and two side ones, seven hundred meters high. Each of the three towers is topped by the figure of an angel armed with a sword, the side ones three hundred meters high, and the central one thrice that height.

In front of the tower, a second three-tiered platform extends forward, nearly two kilometers long and one thousand and two hundred meters wide in its narrowest and topmost level. Here is the Tree of Life: the complex of ten temples, basilicas and cathedrals that compose the Reclusium of the Chapter, ordered symbolically along the lines of the ten sephirot, from the Altar of Sacrifices at the site of Malkuth, to the Cathedral of Expiation where Kether should be, and including the Basilica of the Lion, the Basilica of the Ascension of the Emperor, the Cathedral of Penitence, the Chapel of Renaissance, where the new battle brothers receive the initiation and their new names, the Basilica of Lamentation, the Basilica of Redemption, and the Chambers of Prayers and Victories. Beneath this platform are the secret chambers of the Reclusium, including the Labyrinth that each neophyte has to navigate in order to be initiated, the solitaria for meditation, and, deep into the rock, the cells and torture chambers of the Fallen, and the Basilica of Absolution when they are executed and redeemed.

In the tower itself, the three lower levels are devoted to the serfs of the Chapter: here they have their lodgings, their administrative offices, their workshops and factories, their warehouses, which hold all the resources, manufactures and raw materials, of the Chapter, and even their chapels and catacombs, and the nurseries of their children.

The vertical towers that rise over the stepped pyramid are the real domain of the Chapter. The north tower is the Tower of the Forges, where the Techmarines of the Angels Penitent maintain their Machine Temple, the automated Forges and Manufactura, which spill over to the platforms, dotted with chimneys, their foundries, refineries and laboratories. The Tower of the Forges also connects with the Spaceport. The south tower is the Tower of the Apothecarion, including surgery halls, genetic laboratories, quarantine areas, etc.

The central tower, in its lowest levels, holds the chambers of ceremonies and representation: the Assimularum, the Chamber of the Spiral, the Great Vestibule, the Hall of Knights, where the veterans of the Chapter have their meetings, the Hall of Hunters where the expeditionary forces assemble, the Chambers of Ordeals for trials of endurance and faith, the Throne Halls and audience chambers of the Grand Masters, the Chamber of Battles, the Triumphal Hall, the Chamber of the Beasts, which holds hunting trophies and alien beasts taken down by the Chapter, the Gallery of Standards, the Gallery of the Santified, where one can see the memorials to those heroes interred on Dreadnoughts, the Gallery of the Martyrs, the Gallery of Angels, with statues of every known Chapter of the First Legion, or the Chamber of the Grand Masters, with monuments to former leaders of the Chapter.

Above these levels are the quarters of the ten Orders: dormitories, shooting ranges and training areas, offices for the Masters and Chaplains, Company chapels and armories, etc. At this level is also the Librarium, including the Library of the Penitents, the Library of the Lion, the Forbidden Library, the Archive of the Angels, the Astrologium, the Cartographium, the Cogitatorium with its data-crypts, the Scriptoria and Armoria, Auditoria, and even the Tower of the Choir, where work the Astropaths of the Chapter, a slender spire that rises over the back of the angel of the Tower of the Apothecarion. Still above there is the control area of the Chapter: the Strategium, the Prefectorum, the main control center of the fortress itself, communications centers, observation halls, cartography chambers, the Consilium, where the Masters and Grand Masters gather for discussing relevant matters, the Chamber of Lions, where only the Grand Masters are allowed to enter, and the control centers of the defense systems of the fortress.

Champions of the Chapter

"Masters and Grand Masters of the Chapter"

Supreme Grand Master: Commander Akatriel, Lord of Sheol, Administrator of Punishment, Keeper of the Truth, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim, Knight Redemptor.

Grand Master at Arms: Brother Cassiel, Champion of the Chapter, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim, Knight Redemptor.

Grand Master of Sanctity: Brother-Chaplain Raziel, Keeper of the Keys, Guardian of the Apocalypse, Master of the Inner Sanctum, Guardian of the Threshold, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Domain: Brother Shahrevar, Keeper of the Writings, Master Flagellant, Knight of the Faith of the First Choir of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Fortress: Brother Vahram, Castellan of the Tower, Knight of the Faith of the First Choir of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Fleet: Brother Khordad, Admiral of the Void, Knight of Judgment of the First Choir of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Apothecarion: Brother Dumah, Healer of the Martyrs, Knight of Judgment of the First Choir of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Forges: Brother Ardwahist, Artificer of Death, Knight of the Foundation of the First Choir of the Kedarim.

Grand Master of the Sheddim: Brother-Captain Zahak, Seneschal of the Chapter, Knight of the Faith of the First Choir of the Elohim, Knight Redemptor.

Grand Master of the Hashmalim: Brother-Captain Atar, Master of the Hunt, Knight of the Faith of the First Choir of the Elohim, Knight Redemptor.

Master of Chaplains: Brother-Chaplain Dahman, Confessor of the Penitents, Master of the Unseen Ceremony, Priest of the Revelation of the First Choir of the Elohim.

Master of Librarians: Brother Ithuriel, Guide of the Illuminated, Keeper of the Black Key, Magister of Wisdom of the First Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Third Order: Brother-Captain Yama, Master of the Holy Tithe, Knight of Judgment of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Fourth Order: Brother-Captain Kushiell, Keeper of the Sacred Standards, Knight of the Foundation of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Fifth Order: Brother-Captain Malik, Keeper of the Seals, Knight of the Faith of the Second Choir of the Elohim, Brother Redemptor.

Master of the Sixth Order: Brother-Captain Hasiel, Master of the Rituals, Knight of Judgment of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Seventh Order: Brother-Captain Astiwadh, Warden of the Gates, Knight of Judgment of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Eighth Order: Brother-Captain Siamak, Master of the Chains, Knight of the Foundation of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Ninth Order: Brother-Captain Sariel, Guardian of the Catacombs, Knight of Judgment of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Master of the Tenth Order: Brother-Captain Hadriel, Master of Recruits, Knight of Faith of the Second Choir of the Elohim.

Champions of the Chapter

Commander Akatriel, Supreme Grand Master of the Angels Penitent, Lord of Sheol, Administrator of Punishment, Keeper of the Truth, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim, Knight Redemptor.

The Lord of Sheol has been the Supreme Grand Master of the Angels Penitent for almost a century, a fifth of his time serving the Chapter since he was delivered at the Tower of Silence as part of the Holy Tithe. He is an stern leader, whose face is scarred by the injuries of a thousand battles fought not only as Master of the Third Order and Grand Master of the Sheddim, but also as a member of the Honor Guard, a place only a handful could hope to earn in their lifetimes. Now he stands at the very center of the Inner Circle and the Iggulim; he is the end of the Spiral, the center of the Labyrinth. Only he knows the full secrets of the Chapter, those that the First Legion reveals only to the innermost circle.

To the Imperium, Akatriel is an austere and silent leader, that maintains other Imperial institutions at arms length, even when fulfilling the sworn obligations of the Chapter, who provides military assistance in return for war materials and supplies, as is common practice. His voice is rarely heard at the Sector courts, even through serf-heralds; when he speaks, however, everyone listens in reverent silence, as his position demands. In battle, he is a keen tactician and an accomplished strategist, whose eye to the fine workings of cause, effect, action and reaction had inclined the balance to his forces' side in more than one occasion. However, Akatriel, as other Unforgiven do, almost never meets with other Imperial commanders in the field; he only deigns to inform them of the actions his forces will undertake, usually with him at the forefront, and how they may benefit for those actions.

Brother Cassiel, Grand Master at Arms, Champion of the Chapter, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim, Knight Redemptor.

Cassiel is a veteran warrior, who ascended laboriously through the ranks with faith and sword, by sheer force of accomplishments in the field of battle. After taking the mantle of the Sheddim, he was put in the squad of then-sergeant Akatriel, forging a honor-bound brotherhood between the two men that lasts to this day, more than two hundred years later. Although the Angels Penitent do not glorify individual deeds except as a record for promotion, the sword of Cassiel has bested many a champion of Chaos and a foul xenos beast, and his tactical prowess, through not astonishing, has proven more than adequate to his rank and status. However, Cassiel is more than a warrior, as his rank in the Iggulim shows; a man with no spiritual side, without understanding of the workings of sin, redemption and faith, would never have ascended to be a Lord of the Mysteries.

The Grand Master at Arms is tall even for a space marine, a towering and imposing giant of ice-blue eyes and a stone carved face. In battle, he wears an ancient suit of Terminator Armor, reputedly the oldest the Chapter has. A sight of jet black, dark purple and golden lining, the suit is named simply "Wrath", and under the paint of the shoulderpads can be seen strange and unknown symbols of ancient provenance. Cassiel joins the fray armed with a master crafted power sword and a storm shield, eager to get to grips with the enemy, but he is known to carry also an auxiliary grenade launcher fixed to the armor, if only to maintain tactical flexibility.

Brother-Chaplain Raziel, Grand Master of Sanctity, Keeper of the Keys, Guardian of the Apocalypse, Master of the Inner Sanctum, Guardian of the Threshold, Lord of the Mysteries of the Kedarim.

The spiritual leader of the Angels Penitent, a psyker as well as a Chaplain, and the guardian not only of the holy revelations of the Lion, but of the very soul of the Chapter, Raziel is a dark and judgmental figure, whose visage is always covered by his skull mask. It is said that barely anyone has seen his face in two hundred years, and that his wisdom and advice is as raw and crude as the sacred bones that cover his features. He uses cryptic words and similes, metaphors and allegories, but he does not deliver them with the joy of a trickster old mentor, but with the urgency of a madman who cannot make himself understood. Some whisper that the Apocalypse and the warp have twisted his mind so much that he is almost incapable of thinking or talking like a normal man.



The Emperor dies for us every day.
How we dare not to do the same for Him?

