

## Phase ii: Elucidia

After the prologue, the reveal.

An experiment. To the Death Guard and Word Bearers, this was the Graven Reach and it's people. A backwater – of scant importance, but close enough to the main battle-lanes to be accessible. In this respect we can at least understand the cold logic and reasoning of the Demonithaugers, logisticians and endymionologers of the warmasters underlings.

An experiment.

The orphan marines of the First and Last were selected as the site of the final part of the ritual – the ritualised destruction of their base at Terminus station and the estimated nine hundred thousand human souls sacrificed that was successful.

A Demonic Engine emerged from this wanton act, and the mocking laugh of the ruinous powers echoed through the nebula. A Mhara Gal Dreadnought, unholy combination of technological brilliance and demonic arcana. We know that Lorgar had been attempting to achieve this result, with varying degrees of success in other areas, but we believe that this was the most successful rendition so far.

Your faithful scribe was permitted, under the tightest of supervision, to read intercepted communications from Morvidex Thricebane, and along with his malevolence the exultation of his tone is unmistakeable.

This much we knew already – many inquisitors have traced the origin of these foul machine-creatures to the Graven Reach – along with tantalising fragments pointing towards the idea that this was not the final goal of the expedition. But what my studies have revealed are the complex chain of events that unfolded in the Reach as a result, both before and after this event.

Elucidation may come in many forms, some of them unlikely, and knowledge, in its travels along to the wise, may have strange carriers.

One such is Vehemantus, the Red born. Blinkered by the Butcher's nails he may have been, driving his rage and bloodshed onwards, and his eventual fate as a drooling puppet of the Lord of Skulls is well known, yet it was his actions that shone the light of truth to the warlords of the Graven Reach.

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In the early part of the Nebula War the Death Guard and Word Bearer force that entered the Reach cut across the lines of conflict. Concerned with their own mission, that seemingly did not involve control of the Reach, or turfing out loyalists, they were allowed a degree of strategic control that allowed them to make substantial progress, and even gather allies, in the shape of the mystical warriors of the Thousand Sons, led by Hekath Tolok.

However, events were shortly to change this situation.

The coup at Asphodel had given Ma'Ta's mercenaries control over many of the levers of power in the region, including manufacturing and supply bases. But the escape of the three Magos from the coup had left his position strong but shallow, and so Ma'Ta bolstered his position by gathering some of the smaller forces of the Reach under his umbrella. It is a matter of conjecture how the Iron Hands of Atrax allied with the renegades, but what is almost impossible to understand is how Magos Ma'Ta managed to persuade the maddened World Eaters of Vehemantus to fight for the orderly administration of the Graven Reach.

We may never know why this occurred, but what we can know are the results.

One of the missions the World Eaters warband undertook was a raid on the Death Guard. This was an enormous success, and Vehemantus brought back both captives and records.

Perhaps the knowledge was dragged from the minds of tortured Death Guard marines, spat through broken teeth and drooling mouths, the torment too much even for their psycho conditioning to withhold. Perhaps, more prosaically, augur records and other records may have been pieced together. But regardless of their source, the contents of this information shook Ma'Ta to his core.

It is clear that this knowledge revealed an existential threat to Ma'Ta, and perhaps the entire volume of space.

As with so much that occurred in the war, both in the Graven Reach and across known space, we do not know the precise information Ma'Ta received, but on receipt of it the entire focus of the mercenary operations changed. It is certain that Ma'Ta believed categorically that the emergence of the Mhara Ghal was not the conclusion of the incursion, and there are some intercepts that suggest the tainted dreadnoughts were merely a proof of concept, that the final aim of the Word Bearer's might include far larger demonic engines, necessitating commensurately larger rituals and sacrifices.

Meetings with representatives of the XXth Legion must also have occurred, as the Alpha Legion forces led by Argus also fought in this series of actions.

These two factions might be loosely termed as the Lawful – the mercenaries of Ma'Ta, their militia, the Alpha Legion of Argus, the Iron Hands of Atrax, the Wrathborn of Vehemantus and other assorted groups, and the Warmaster's Hand – the Combined Death Guard of disgraced Enoch Durer and the Word Bearers, along with the warp born Thousand Sons.

This leaves us with the group that are often known as the Angels of the Reach. The popular histories have this coalition of loyalist forces faithfully fighting for the people of the area. But this reputation belies the facts.

At this time the supposed leaders of this coalition – the Neikea – were recovering from heavy battles and involved in an internal battle as to their policy; The Dune Lions were busy preparing a raid deep into Asphodel territory for reasons of their own; The First and Last were crippled, driven from their bases and trying to recover from a crippling blow; and the loyalist Death Guard, wary after clashing with the Salamanders, were only just beginning their own operations within the region.

Also, I would argue that their operations during this period actively aided the Warmaster, as raids against the mercenaries of Asphodel weakened their ability to impede the Word Bearers.

Nonetheless, this is not to belittle these forces, who despite having none of the knowledge of the stakes still operated to the best of their ability, and conducting themselves as the Imperium expected.

# Battles of Elucidia

During this phase of the campaign the challenge system is in place.

Each faction takes turns in a player nominating a campaign objective they are fighting over and the battle takes place. This can be an attempt to bolster their own position (eg. A Ma'Ta mercenary force nominates a battle over the Heart of the Nebula, in an attempt to add a control point to this objective) or to disrupt another faction's objectives (eg. The Warmaster's Hands are getting too far ahead of both of the other factions, so a Dune Lion Raid might attempt to strip a Control Point from the By Machine and By Warp objective).

I would recommend an element of Roleplay in choosing your objective – using your faction alignment as a guide. I have given each army an alignment based on their character and actions. This falls on the Loyalist-Neutral-Warmaster alignment (self explanatory) and the Lawful-Neutral-Chaotic alignment. This applies to the army's attitude towards the administration of the area. Lawful would suggest they either want control of the area or it's resources, or cares about its people while chaotic suggests the opposite.

For example, The World Eater's warband of Vehemantus might be in the 'Lawful' faction, but instead of positively fighting for a lawful objective it might be more characterful for them to go and attempt to disrupt a loyalist force who are building up their own forces.

## The Lawful:

1. Ma'Ta's Mercenary forces  
Neutral Lawful Militia
2. Argus and the Severed  
Warmaster Lawful Alpha Legion
3. Atrax of the Tenth  
Loyalist Lawful Iron Hands
4. The Redborne of Vehemantus  
Neutral Chaotic World Eaters

The Lawful faction's main aim in this phase of the campaign is information gathering, working to disrupt the demonic rituals and maintaining their control over the infrastructure.

This faction starts with 1 Control Point over *The Heart of the Nebula*. As long as this faction has the same or greater CPs on the Heart of the Nebula as the other factions this allows all armies in this faction to have an addition 1 Command point for every 50 PL/1000 points of the game.

Victory conditions: If the Lawful end the phase with greater Control Points on the Heart of the Nebula than any other faction has on their objectives then this faction wins the round

### **The Warmaster's Hand**

1. Morvidex Thricebane and Enoch Durer  
Warmaster Chaotic Death Guard and Word Bearer
2. Hekath Tolok and the Durien Cabal  
Warmaster Chaotic Thousand Sons

The Warmaster's Hand continue to work at the mechanics of summoning their demonic engines. This faction starts with 2 Control Points on *By Machine and by Warp*. As long as this faction has the same or more Control Points at this objective than any other faction has at their objective this force may re-roll a single psychic dice per battle round at no cost of command points (this does not affect their ability to use a command point to re-roll).

Victory conditions: If the Lawful end the phase with greater Control Points on *By Machine and By Warp* than any other faction has on their objectives then this faction wins the round

### **The Angels of the Reach**

4. The Dune Lions  
Loyalist Lawful Solar auxilia
5. The First and Last  
Loyalist Neutral Luna Wolves, Emperor's Children and Militia
6. Neikea  
Loyalist Chaotic Salamanders

The Angels of the Reach faction are somewhat splintered and underpowered. They are building up their strength and organisation. At this point in the campaign this faction are underpowered. They start with zero Control Points on the Objective *Build a Co-alition*. If this faction has greater Control Points at this objective than other factions have on their objectives then all armies in this faction may use a single bombardment per game at the cost of 1 CP. Nominate a spot. All units within 6" of this spot roll a D6 (subtracting 1 if the unit is a character and adding 1 if the unit has 10 or more models). On the roll of a 4+ this unit takes D3 mortal wounds

Victory conditions: If the Lawful end the phase with greater Control Points on the *Build a Co-alition* than any other faction has on their objectives then this faction wins the round.