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The Alexandria III Incident

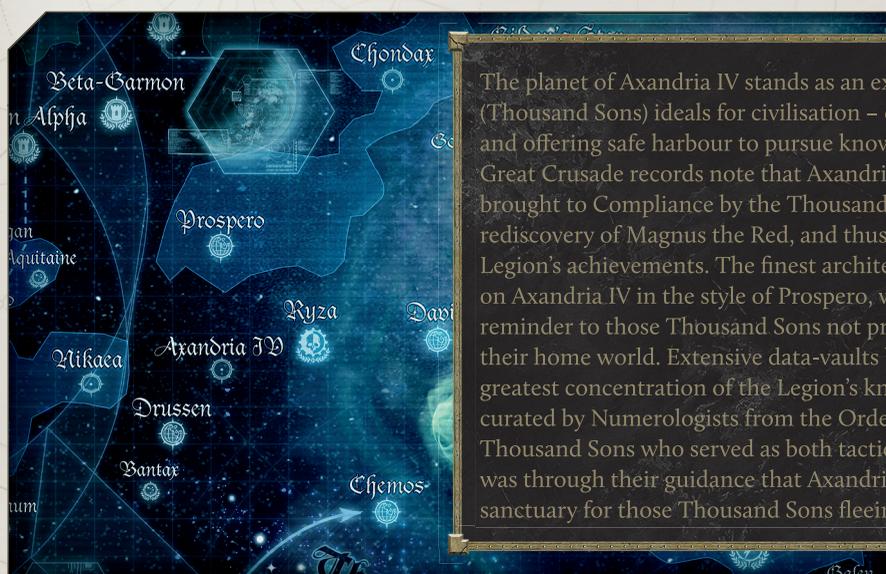


EXEMPLARY BATTLES OF
The Age of Darkness

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The Axandria IV Incident

As the Age of Darkness ground ever onwards, the fires of war would spread throughout the entire galaxy, consuming everything in their path. Armies and worlds were reduced to nothing more than ash, in many cases leaving no one alive to bear witness to the sacrifices made or the atrocities committed. During this time, each Legion employed unique formations to prosecute their own style of war, whether by choice or through necessity, making use of unconventional, often abhorrent, tactics and weapons. Many of these formations would be lost during the dark years following the Horus Heresy, their traditions wiped out and the last stockpiles of their weapons exhausted. Some, however, have been preserved in these records, that future generations may learn of the terrors unleashed upon the galaxy by the Emperor's turncoat sons and the valiant heroes who stood against them.



The planet of Axandria IV stands as an exemplar of the XVth Legion's (Thousand Sons) ideals for civilisation – one centred around erudition and offering safe harbour to pursue knowledge without persecution. Great Crusade records note that Axandria IV was one of the first planets brought to Compliance by the Thousand Sons Legion following the rediscovery of Magnus the Red, and thus served as a symbol of the Legion's achievements. The finest architects had laboured to raise cities on Axandria IV in the style of Prospero, which now served as a bitter reminder to those Thousand Sons not present at the devastation of their home world. Extensive data-vaults beneath the earth housed the greatest concentration of the Legion's knowledge outside of Prospero, curated by Numerologists from the Order of Ruin, a sub-sect of the Thousand Sons who served as both tacticians and combat artificers. It was through their guidance that Axandria IV was transformed into a sanctuary for those Thousand Sons fleeing the Imperium's censure.

Classified within Imperial records as 'The Axandria Incident', the conflict fought on Axandria IV during the Horus Heresy remains one of the few existing reports of the Thousand Sons at war during Horus' rebellion. Following the devastation of Prospero and the near-total eradication of the Thousand Sons – estimates vary but all conclude that at least three-quarters of the Legion's strength was wiped out when the Emperor's wolves descended on Prospero – the operational capacity of the Thousand Sons was severely limited. In a manner similar to the Loyalist Legions shattered at Istvan V, the surviving elements of the Thousand Sons are noted to have formed warbands that coalesced around key command figures and which varied in scale from individual demi-companies to near-chapter strength groupings, with few instances of recorded communication

or coordination between these far-flung groups. Lacking both manpower and materiel, these disparate warbands pursued seemingly idiosyncratic goals largely divorced from the wider civil war, with warriors of the XVth Legion reported active on both sides of the conflict. As many of the XVth Legion operated on the fringes of the war, little was recorded of their actions, with extant records noting a particular focus on acquiring knowledge and artefacts, often in direct opposition of lore culling operations undertaken by Imperial agents. Planets that played host to such conflicts were rarely the objective of either force and were often left ruined and abandoned, their carcasses left to be picked over by raiders and pirates. On Axandria IV, the Order of Ruin worked to reconstruct a measure of what was lost at Prospero, safeguarding such artefacts and rebinding wayward Legionaries into a cohesive force.

News of this was to reach Terra as the Ruinstorm faded and, unable to countenance any attempts to revive the XVth Legion, the Sigillite dispatched a new Censure fleet to bring Axandria IV to ruin, slay its defenders and eradicate any proscribed knowledge they harboured. Commanded by Arascid Nassau, a Custodian bound to the Vedias-Alph Sodalities of the *Warders of the Vaults of Rython* and unknown in Imperial records until the Battle for Tizca, the force was reminiscent of that which had fallen upon Prospero; Legio Custodes, Sisters of Silence and Legiones Astartes bound together into a single force. In 012.M31, this fleet descended upon Axandria IV, breaking apart the orbital defences and disgorging swarms of drop ships, some bearing the clenched gauntlet of the Imperial Fists Legion and others black-liveried, adorned with symbols of the Emperor's own bodyguards. Their target was Jinirya, capital city of Axandria IV, and the night sky was soon lit as Imperial Fists Xiphons clashed with the militia air squadrons that rose to meet them, whilst Fire Raptors levelled entire city districts, severing communications networks and obliterating air defences. Through the haze of burning, collapsing buildings came the Loyalist drop ships, warriors disembarking into the streets of Jinirya intent upon the gleaming pyramid at the city's centre. Known as the *Sinsilanita* – best translated from the Prosperine tongue as *'The Peak Which Reaches Beyond'* – the pyramid was the heart of the Thousand Sons' power on Axandria, operating both as a garrison for the XVth Legion and a repository of lore, with subterranean data-vaults constructed beneath it that guarded knowledge the Imperium sought to eradicate.

Necro-cortical records depict the running conflicts fought through the streets of Axandria IV, as the Loyalist forces pushed towards the *Sinsilanita* without pause. Reports indicate no Thousand Sons were present during the opening hours of battle, the defence of Jinirya instead left to the planet's militia. Accustomed to minor policing actions rather than full-scale conflict, the streets soon ran thick with blood as Imperial Fists strike forces swept aside the hastily constructed defences, obliterating platoons in carefully prepared crossfires or crushing them beneath the tread of armoured spearheads. A veil of terror settled upon Jinirya as the noose closed on the city's defenders, their lines pushed back to the vast marbled plaza that surrounded the *Sinsilanita*. In the pyramid's shadow, the last of Jinirya's defenders were slain by flashing power glaives and roaring chainswords, until none but the Emperor's servants still drew breath. Imperial vox-interceptors captured repeated calls for aid from the government of Axandria IV to the Thousand Sons garrison within the *Sinsilanita*, but all were met with silence, the XVth Legion's warriors bunkered behind the defences constructed within the pyramid's interior, awaiting the Loyalists' assault.

The first Imperial warriors to enter the *Sinsilanita* marched over the shattered remains of the pyramid's doors, broken open by Rapier batteries, trampling the relief they once bore depicting the Emperor bequeathing knowledge upon an ignorant humanity. Dozens fell as a torrent of weapons fire rose to meet them as Thousand Sons Legionaries, garrisoned in the grand foyer behind an intricate network of barricades, sought to repel them. When this first push wavered, Arascid ordered his own warriors forward in support, a pair of shield-bearing Legio Custodes Contemptors smashing barricades asunder and scattering their foe with sweeping blows. Defences broken, the Thousand Sons began a fighting withdrawal into the surrounding hallways, leaving the Loyalists as rulers of broken grandeur; marbled floors marred by bolter fire, the detritus of barricades and shattered statues that had depicted Axandria IV's most erudite of mind.

The battle for the grand foyer was just the first in a series of skirmishes fought within the pyramid in the days that followed, as the Loyalists pursued their foe through hallways, chambers and catacombs that descended into the depths of Axandria IV. Imperial Fists recon squads launched probing assaults into the structure and were met with intricate defences overseen by the Order of Ruin, psy-arcana melded with traditional fortifications to deadly effect. Barricades warded with kine shields forced the invaders to charge through fire to reach their foe blade to blade; psy-mirages concealed squads of Thousand Sons that would strike at the rear of Imperial lines, and Numerologists, protected by retinues of chainsword-wielding warriors, directed Castellax-Achea into battle, the automata weathering the heaviest of firepower the Loyalists could bring to bear in the confines of the pyramid. Each new psychic threat required the anathema presence of the Sisters of Silence to combat, spreading them thin throughout the pyramid. The Sisterhood warriors proved targets of import for the Thousand Sons, with Legionaries bearing black-painted shoulder pads charging recklessly at their foe, falling upon Sister cadres with no care for their own lives. Losses amongst the Loyalists mounted yet they pushed ever deeper. For three days, unceasing battle rang out through the lower levels of the *Sinsilanita* as the Loyalists sought to eradicate every trace of the Thousand Sons and their legacy.

By the end of the third day, the halls of the *Sinsilanita* no longer echoed with the bark of gunfire and the screams of the dying. Those Thousand Sons that still lived had retreated into the data-caverns in the lowest depths of the pyramid, the final repository of all knowledge gathered on Axandria IV. A set of blast doors barred the Loyalists' way, designed to withstand void-grade munitions and further augmented with psy-arcana runes inscribed by the Numerologists of the Order of Ruin. Nothing the Loyalist

strike forces within the pyramid wielded proved capable of breaching such defences, yet before alternative solutions could be formulated a new threat presented itself. In orbit, Imperial fleet sensors registered disturbances in the Warp, correlating with the ætheric bow wave of a fleet inbound to the Axandria system. Minutes later, a new fleet broke into real-space, a haphazard flotilla of warships and escort vessels consisting of void craft registered to Thousand Sons Expedition fleets during the Great Crusade.

Subsequent events are shrouded in much confusion. Orders dispatched through vox-relays from Arascid on the front lines to the Imperial fleet in orbit note the Custodes' determination to continue his assault upon the data-caverns, ordering the deployment of heavy weapon squads to break open the blast doors and expose the Thousand Sons hidden within. Meanwhile, the Imperial fleet moved to engage the XVth relief fleet, both sides vying for control of high orbit. Almost simultaneously, dozens of reports of psychic phenomena manifesting amongst the navigators and astropaths of the Loyalist fleet were recorded; such phenomena was most commonly reported as visions of dead worlds overseen by multi-coloured carrion birds, or shadows detaching themselves from dead men and walking upright. Beneath the *Sinsilanita*, the doors to the data-caverns ground open of their own accord, unleashing a haze of acrid smoke from within; from this strode several hundred warriors of the Thousand Sons, armour unblemished by conflict, a cabal of Sekhmet Terminators at the fore.

The strength of foes that emerged from the caverns proved unexpected for Arascid and his warriors, who had estimated that no more than two hundred Legionaries of the Thousand Sons had survived the preceding days of conflict; the spike in psychic phenomena upon the arrival of the XVth Legion relief fleet suggests the employment of psychic means to deploy reinforcements into the heart of Axandria IV. Regardless of origin and means of traversal, the sortie of Thousand Sons from the data-vaults drove back the cordon of Legio Custodes and Silent Sisters. Once more, the tactical acumen and preternatural talents of the Numerologists proved instrumental in the success of the Thousand Sons, for they had walked future paths and laid contingencies should their warriors need to break out from the pyramid. Hidden passageways allowed Thousand Sons strike units to range ahead of the bulk of their forces, sowing confusion amongst the Loyalists and obscuring the position of the advance. Deadlier still were hidden Castellax-Achea that burst free from voids within the pyramid's walls; though few in number, their sudden assaults reaped a deadly toll upon the unsuspecting Loyalists. Outnumbered and outmanoeuvred, Arascid's forces mounted a fighting retreat, leaving a trail of fresh corpses adorned with yellow livery and gleaming auric to join those slain during the assault on the pyramid. Within two hours, the Loyalist forces were pushed into the plaza surrounding the *Sinsilanita*, assuming defensive positions amongst the shattered defences once manned by Axandria IV's militia.

The Thousand Sons charged forth from the rubble-strewn entrance of the *Sinsilanita* en masse, trading fire within the Imperial Fists and Legio Custodes as they sought to secure the plaza. Ruined vehicles and shattered barricades provided only minimal cover for the Loyalist forces, paling in comparison to the kine shields of the Thousand Sons that wavered only in the presence of the Sisterhood. As the lines clashed, the howl of drop ship engines filled the air. In orbit, the Thousand Sons fleet had driven back their foe and despatched transports to retrieve their battle-brothers on the surface. Assailed by ground forces, the Loyalists could do little to prevent the XVth Legion drop ships landing within the plaza. Post-battle reports archived by Null Maiden Kannita Yel make note of the ring of Legionaries formed around the Numerologists, accompanied by scores of augmented serfs carrying mem-columns between them. These Legionaries – who threw their bodies upon the swords and spears of any who approached those of the Order of Ruin – bought time for the data-stacks to be loaded onto the drop ships, swiftly followed by the surviving Thousand Sons. Several hundred XVth Legion warriors escaped the surface of Axandria, and though scores were abandoned along with the twisted, burning hulks of transports they had intended to board, the XVth Legion's fleet left with its prize. Axandria IV now belonged to the Loyalists, yet Arascid held no pride in this, for the data-caverns were discovered to be scoured of all records they once held, the contents carried to safety by the Order of Ruin. The Thousand Sons had fought a battle of preservation and only time would tell of the danger such a victory posed to the wider Imperium.



ELITES

In the XVth Legion, responsibility for the maintenance of wargear, void ships and war machines lay with the Order of Ruin, a sub-sect of mystics that formed one-third of the Legion's 'Red Orders'. High-ranking members of the Order were commonly referred to as Numerologists and, in addition to performing the role of Techmarines, they were also known for possessing considerable tactical acumen.

The formulation of logistics and battle plans was a key responsibility of the Numerologists and one they took to with fervour. Of particular note was the almost preternatural speed with which the Numerologists could develop new plans to counter enemy movements and relay orders to one another. Extant records note that XVth Legion battlegroups containing Numerologists could react to changes in tactical plans with fluid synchronicity with one another, even when separated by hundreds of kilometres, a phenomena no doubt linked to the practice of powers that would eventually damn the Thousand Sons.

0-1 THOUSAND SONS NUMEROLOGIST CABAL..... 130 POINTS

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Numerologist	7	5	5	4	4	2	5	2	9	2+
Life Ward	7	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	7	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 Numerologist
- 4 Life Wards

Wargear

- Bolt pistol
- Achea force axe (Numerologist only)
- Servo-arm (Numerologist only)
- Chainsword (Life Ward only)
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Artificer armour (Numerologist only)
- Power armour (Life Ward only)

Dedicated Transports

- A Thousand Sons Numerologist Cabal may take a Legion Rhino Transport as a Dedicated Transport. As a Dedicated Transport this does not use up an additional Force Organisation slot, but its points cost must still be paid for as part of the army.

Options

- The Thousand Sons Numerologist Cabal may include:
 - Up to 5 additional Life Wards.....+10 points each
- The Numerologist may take a:
 - Cyber-familiar..... +15 points
- The Numerologist may take one of the following:
 - Master-crafted bolter..... +5 points
 - Magna combi-weapon..... +10 points
 - Minor combi-weapon..... +5 points
 - Volkite charger..... +2 points
 - Plasma pistol..... +10 points
 - Graviton gun..... +20 points
 - Flamer..... +2 points
 - Plasma gun..... +15 points
 - Meltagun..... +20 points
- The Numerologist may exchange his Achea force axe for a:
 - Thunder hammer..... +15 points
- One Life Ward may take a nuncio-vox..... +10 points
- One Life Ward may take an augury scanner..... +10 points
- One Life Ward may exchange his chainsword for one of the following options:
 - Power weapon..... +5 points each
 - Power fist..... +15 points each
- For every five models in the unit, one Life Ward may exchange his bolt pistol and chainsword for one of the following options:
 - Rotor Cannon..... +5 points each
 - Volkite caliver..... +10 points each



Numerologist Order

The Numerologists of the Thousand Sons were members of the Order of Ruin who served in a similar role to Techmarines in other Legions. Additionally, they were noted for their tactical acumen, working to devise stratagems and influence the flow of battle. Much of their success can be attributed to the psychic abilities of the Numerologists, who employed both divination and telepathy to predict enemy movements and effortlessly relay such changes to their allies. Forces accompanied by a Numerologist moved with preternatural awareness, picking apart targets with ruthless precision.

A model with this special rule gains the Psy-synchronicity Psychic Power and may not select a Minor Arcana from those presented by the Prosperine Arcana special rule.

Psy-synchronicity (Psychic Power)

At the start of the controlling player's turn, a Psychic check may be made for a unit that contains one or more models with this Psychic Power, using the highest Leadership Characteristic among those models. If the Check is successful, a model with this power gains a geo-locator beacon until the end of the turn. In addition, up to two friendly units composed entirely of models with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule with one or more models within 6" of any models using Psy-synchronicity gain a bonus of +1 to their BS during the Active player's Shooting phase, so long as models with this Psychic Power do not make a Shooting Attack in the Shooting phase. If the Check is failed then the unit suffers Perils of the Warp.

Life Warded

Commonly deployed with rear elements of the XVth Legion during the Great Crusade, Numerologists saw frequent service on the front-line during the Horus Heresy. To minimise risk, many went to battle with Life Wards sworn to protect their charge no matter the cost.

No Wounds may be allocated to a Numerologist, regardless of the attacking model's rules or effects, as long as there is another model without the Life Warded special rule in the unit. If the Numerologist is Engaged in a Challenge then this rule does not apply. However, if the Numerologist's controlling player chooses to refuse a Challenge for a unit that includes a model with the Life Warded special rule then the opposing player loses the option to stop one model from participating in the combat.

Additionally, a unit that includes any models with this special rule may not be joined by any model that does not also have this special rule (this includes Legion Techmarines and Legion Apothecaries, which may not be assigned to a unit with this special rule unless they also have this special rule).

UNIT SHOWCASE

Shown below are some examples of the Numerologist Cabal that have been built and painted by Studio staff.

The first Numerologist Cabal uses the legs and hands of the Forge World MkIV Assault Squad with Khenetai Occult Blade Cabal torsos and arms, and the Forge World MkIV Techmarine. Both make use of the Forge World Achean Pattern Heads.

The second Numerologist Cabal is based upon the Forge World MkIII Despoiler Squad and MkIII Techmarine with the Forge World Achean Pattern Heads and a selection of upgrade parts from the Forge World MkIII Power Weapons upgrade pack.



THE AXANDRIA IV INCIDENT LEGENDARY MISSION

Breakout from the Sinsilanita

Axandria IV was a shining exemplar of the ideals of the Thousand Sons, a world replete with knowledge and a haven for scholars to explore the paths of learning. During the Great Crusade, this ensured the planet was little more than a curiosity, a destination for learned souls to visit but one that offered little of worth to the wider Imperium. Following the destruction of Prospero, Axandria IV became the most notable surviving garrison of the Thousand Sons and a reminder of the Legion's transgressions against the Imperium. Though galactic events prevented a rapid strike against the planet, it was all but inevitable that Axandria IV would face destruction, but the small XVth Legion garrison had little choice but to await the foe and prepare as best they could.

THE ARMIES

The mission presented here can be used to recreate the events that took place on Axandria IV, representing forces from the Thousand Sons breaking through the lines of the Imperial Fists and Legio Custodes. However, players may wish to vary the forces used in these scenarios to portray alternative conflicts in the Age of Darkness, using the recommended army size of between 2,500-3,000 points and the Crusade Force Organisation chart. Both armies can take a maximum of one Fast Attack and one Heavy Support choice that does not have the Infantry Unit Type.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- If using the recommended points limit, a 6'x4' battlefield will give players the most engaging experience.
- The battlefield should be set up using the Clash of the Line deployment map (see the *Warhammer: The Horus Heresy - Age of Darkness Rulebook*, page 302). Buildings and ruins should be deployed within 6" of any table edge outside the Attacker's deployment zone. The remainder of the battlefield should contain barricades, as well as small structures such as bunkers and rubble to represent a heavily fought over, fortified area.
- After terrain is placed, but before any models are deployed, an Objective marker is placed within the centre of the battlefield. Each player then deploys a single Objective marker 10" from the centre of the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers as per the *Warhammer: The Horus Heresy - Age of Darkness Rulebook*.

DEPLOYMENT

- The Defender deploys their army first, except for any units placed in Reserves, within the Defender's Deployment Zone.
- The Attacker then deploys their army within the Attacker's Deployment Zone; the Attacker may not place any units in Reserve.
- Players now redeploy any units with the Scout special rule as per the *Warhammer: The Horus Heresy - Age of Darkness Rulebook*; units with the Infiltrate special rule can also be deployed, but must be deployed within the controlling player's Deployment Zone.

FIRST TURN

In this mission, the Attacker gets the first turn, unless the Defender can Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

The game uses the Variable Game Length rules found in the *Warhammer: The Horus Heresy - Age of Darkness Rulebook*.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objectives

- **Secure the Landing Zones:** At the end of the battle, the Attacking player gains 5 Victory points for each Objective they control, and the Defender gains 3 Victory points for each Objective they control.
- **Exterminate:** At the end of the battle, the Defending player gains 1 Victory point for each enemy unit they have destroyed, including models removed as a casualty as a result of contact with a battlefield edge while Falling Back, or that are Falling Back at the end of the battle.

Secondary Objectives

- **Slay the Warlord:** If a player causes the enemy Warlord to be removed as a casualty for any reason before the end of the battle, that player scores 1 Victory point. If the enemy player's Warlord also had the Primarch Unit Type then the player that caused it to be removed as a casualty scores an additional Victory point.



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