

Gav Thorpe leafs through the *Corpus Auxilia* – the Book of Servants – and takes a more detailed look at an Inquisition philosophy: the tenets of the reincarnationist Thorians.

SERVANTS OF THE GOD-INCARNATE

CORPUS AUXILIA – THE THORIAN INQUISITORS

Inquisitors of the Thorian philosophy believe that the Emperor walks among Humanity. He chooses his vessels to do his work, as he has done since time began. The rotting carcass maintained in the Golden Throne is not the Emperor, for he travels abroad, tending to his Divine Will, instilling his power into those that have been chosen. Taking their name from Saint Sebastian Thor, whom they believe to have been such a mortal vessel, the Thorians are convinced that the Emperor yet waits for a new body to be found or created which can contain his divinity for more than brief periods of time. In essence, the Thorians strive to find or create this vessel so that the Emperor may return to lead Mankind to its destiny and conquest of the galaxy. Although in their present form the Thorians have only been part of the Inquisition's politics for a few millennia, resurrectionist factions of one sort or another have been more or less present since its founding.

THE GOD-INCARNATE

At the centre of this belief is a body of lore known as the Principles of the God-Incarnate. Scraps of this, most Inquisitors are aware of, but only Inquisitors who have proved their loyalty to the Thorian belief have access to the gathered wisdom of millennia concerning the God-Incarnate. Over the years the principles have been amended and added to, and it is widely accepted by the Thorians that the most complete version is the Hesten Manuscript, compiled by Inquisitor Hesten between 450 and 465.M40.

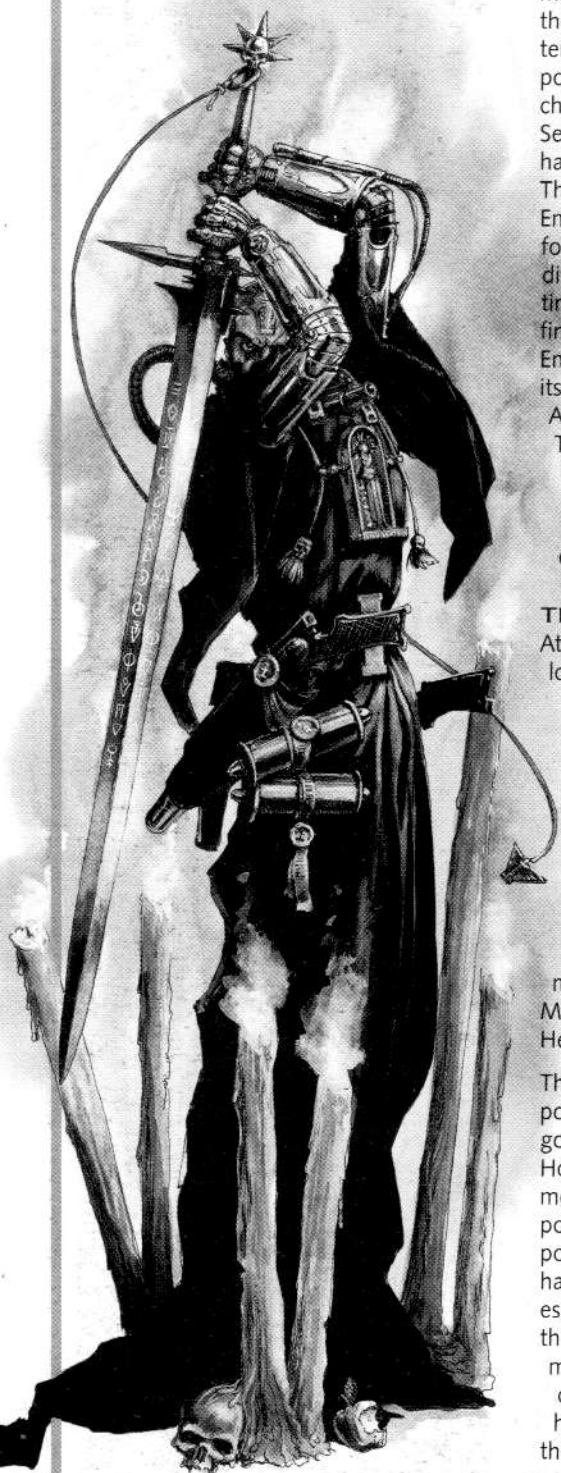
The Principles of the God-Incarnate postulate that the Emperor truly is a god; his near-death at the hands of Horus allowed him to finally shatter the mortal bonds shackling his true potential, and he ascended to the power of a deity. Like the other gods he has an existence within the warp, in essence he is the god of Humanity, and the Thorians claim they have gathered much evidence to support this. The one limitation to any god is that to have power over the physical world, they must rely upon mortals to do their

work. As first postulated by Inquisitor Damasko in 243.M32, most Inquisitors accept that to affect events in the material universe the Chaos gods, and by extension other deities, must have champions, possess worshippers, influence mortals or temporarily create physical manifestations in the form of daemons. The Emperor is in fact the greatest example of this – the galaxy spanning Imperium is merely the material instrument of the Emperor. Much of the Principles of the God-Incarnate points towards gods, and other warp entities, craving after the physical universe.

However, what if a god could become a physical incarnation? If, as the Thorians expound, a man can become a god (as they believe happened at the Emperor's Ascension), it stands to reason that a god can become a man. This is Inquisitor Raptenstein's First Principle of the God-Incarnate: a god can become a physical incarnation. The idea of the God-Incarnate is that there will be a certain individual (or individuals) who will allow this to happen – a god could invest its power into a special mortal body and literally become a living god. It was Inquisitor Loweberg's interpretations of the Principles of the God-Incarnate that first referred to these physical vessels as avatars.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOD-INCARNATE

Without being restricted to the warp, and therefore restricted to the manipulation of crass, mortal pawns, what power would a god have? One can easily imagine that Humanity would be doomed if one of the avatars were to become an incarnation of a Chaos god. Horus himself almost achieved this, and was only defeated by an equally powerful being – the Emperor. Similarly, the idea of the God-Incarnate is not restricted to humans. Many Inquisitors, such as Czevak and Gründvald of the Ordo Xenos, believe that certain faint echoes and omens within the warp suggest that the Eldar are striving to create a new god to defeat Chaos; while a God-Incarnate of the Ork deities Gork or Mork would be terrible. However, possibly an even greater



threat to the Imperium, and the reason why the God-Incarnate is such a secret that only the Inquisition know of it, is Raptenstein's proposal that it would be possible to reincarnate the Emperor as a living being.

As far as most of the Thorian's opponents are concerned, the 'Second Coming' of the Emperor would be a very bad thing. This is quite an understandable position really, and springs from uncertainty. As Inquisitor Caetris proclaimed in his Doctrines of Disbelief:

'If the Emperor were to become a God-Incarnate, would the Emperor be destroyed if things went wrong, if the avatar was unsuitable, or the rituals went awry? Even if the transfer of power succeeded, what would happen to the Astronomican? If the Emperor were in physical form, could he be killed again, and if so would he be destroyed forever, exposing Humanity to the many perils that the Emperor protects Mankind from? Most importantly, what would be Humanity's reaction to having their god walking among them once more? I can tell you now without a shadow of doubt, the Imperium would be torn apart by war, as believers and unbelievers clashed with each other!'

Caetris then went on at great length to expand upon these views, encouraging like-minded Inquisitors to stamp out resurrectionist tendencies, leading to the secret internecine war known in the Inquisition's annals as the Caetris Schism, which lasted for some thirty seven years. All in all, most Inquisitors side with Caetris' opinion, and would rather see the status quo sustained and any chance of the Emperor returning eliminated.

THE QUEST FOR THE GOD-INCARNATE

For those who know of (and believe in) such things, it is the task of the Inquisition to seek out possible avatars and kill them or, in the case of the Thorians, control and study them. Over several thousand years the Thorians, and certain other interested factions such as the Horusians, have gathered

vast amounts of information which to them indicate possible avatars (see Signs and Portents below). Under the cover of rooting out heretics, witches and mutants, the Thorians are also searching for individuals who show signs of avatar-like properties so that they can observe, capture or, if they appear to be avatars of Chaos, destroy them.

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

The Principles of the God-Incarnate tell of the coming of the new god amidst great upheaval, strife and war. Ancient prophecies and divinations claim that the God-Incarnate's arrival will be preceded by calamitous events. For the Thorians, many of these prophecies are currently being realised, the tumultuous circumstances of recent years indicate that the time of the God-Incarnate will soon be upon the galaxy. They point to Ghazghkull's massive Waaagh! at Armageddon, the encroaching hive fleets of the Tyranids, the gradual re-awakening of the Necrontyr and other events as indications of growing turmoil and strife which herald the God-Incarnate.

Similarly, there are indicators that point towards who the avatars will be – shrouded in myths and legends as you'd expect. Much of this is obscure to the point of uselessness; 'He shall have a great doom upon his brow', 'He shall be a witch of great power', 'He shall be altered in the physical form', 'He shall be able to talk and walk with the animals' and other obtuse references. To this end, the Thorians round up all the psykers and mutants they can; to study them, to find out what might link them together and what features a possible avatar might display. Nobody knows all of the possible signs and in the centuries since the Thorians began to grow in power, there have been several false alarms, much to the chagrin of the Inquisitors who adhere to the philosophy. It is not uncommon for Thorians to be seen as scaremongers by other Inquisitors; often they are portrayed within other factions as seeing avatars wherever they look for them.

