

# DARK MAGENTA

## The Autoquill is Mightier than the Sword

*Charters, texts and mandates in Inquisitor*

By Joseph Garvin

*It is said that the Libraria of Terra contain as many books as there are souls treading its holy ground, and even they are dwarfed by the massive datastacks and Long Term Information Storage Facilities of the Cult Mechanicus on Mars. Not for nothing is it said, both by the Imperio-Cogniticians of the Mechanicus and by the Imperator Scriptor movement of the Ministorum, that words are the nerves of the Imperium, as human flesh is its life blood and faith is its strength. The most treasured texts of all are the High Apocrypha, which describe, often in the vaguest and most metaphorical of terms, the early history of the Imperium, from the Great Crusade to the end of the Scouring. Original copies are said to be held in the Household Librarius that once, ten thousand millenia ago, served as the Emperor's personal library. The Ecclesiarchial High Library holds, within a stasis field and guarded by fifty Sororitas, the original Diary of Saint Sebastian Thor, though this book, unlike the Apocrypha, is found in facsimile form in shrines across the Galaxy.*

The Imperium is an empire ruled by laws and tradition, and the universe it inhabits is one shaped by ideas and words. In an Inquisitor's line of work, they will often come across a book or scroll which can be, if used correctly, as effective as any bolter round or las burst. Some of these directly grant powers beyond those of a normal human. Others are a guide to areas of knowledge hidden or unfamiliar to the majority of the Imperium's subjects. Still more are declarations and commands handed down by the highest and most secretive masters of the Imperium to their agents, authorising them to do whatever is necessary in the pursuit of justice, or at least in the pursuit of fulfilling their orders.

There are many other kinds of books, scrolls, texts, pamphlets and other written works that cover the Imperium, but for the purposes of the *Inquisitor* game, they are divided into two rough types. The first are "Texts" – books, scrolls, dataslates and other such things which, with sufficient wisdom, can be used as a guide to an unfamiliar skill. The second are Mandates, which are documents setting out the responsibilities and rights of an agent of a more powerful individual. The most famous type of Mandate is the Inquisitorial Mandate, though other agencies can hand out their own documents, including the Adeptus Mechanicus, the Ecclesiarchy, and Rogue Traders.

### Texts

Texts include both the mundane, such as medical guides, phrasebooks for interstellar travellers describing the most common languages other than High and Low Gothic, and technical guides, and the sinister and often unholy books that can grant sorcerous powers. In game terms, all have a Difficulty rating, similar to the one used for Psychic Powers. However, as these books do not test one's will (or those that do, do so over a longer time, and in a different, potentially more dangerous way) but instead one's intelligence, instead of testing against Willpower, the character tests against Sagacity. Use of a Text is not in itself a Risky action, however some Texts, especially the Dismal texts, are Risky.



**De Arte Daemonica** – This ancient scroll is rumoured to date to an age when Mankind was still reaching out among the stars. However, most scholars believe it to only date from the Age of Strife. Written on smooth flexiplas with gilt inlay, it is in itself a work of art. However, even a brief examination of its contents reveals that it is an unholy work, speaking in open terms of the fusion of human and daemon.

The *De Arte Daemonica* grants the Impervious Daemonic Ability when used, for one turn per five points or part thereof the test is passed by. If the Sg test is failed, the character instead loses D10 from their Toughness. Difficulty 10.

# DARK MAGENTA

**Aurora Consurgens** – The *Aurora Consurgens* originates on the world of Dunraz, where a secretive storm-worshipping cult persisted even after its conquest by the Imperium and three thousand-year transformation into a minor Hive World. This book was carefully copied by each High Priest from their master's copy, and each copy was destroyed on the death of its owner. However, a few copies are known to have been stolen, sold or simply disappeared.

This Text grants the Storm of Lightning psychic power. It's use is a Risky action, and if failed the character is stunned as if hit by a Shock weapon, with no Toughness test possible. Difficulty 5.



Sergeant Darendi is here preparing herself for an assault on the fortified city of Decihaust, during the Xeronite Purges. Though her master was at the time under suspicion, the mandate that she has been granted, titled *An Inquisitorial Mandate for the Destruction of the Foul Heretics of Decihaust, granted with due honour and solemnity to Sgt. Darendi*, entitled her to partake in the battle.

**Compendicum Mutus** – One of the few Dismal Texts to have its origins in the Ecclesiarchy, the *Compendicum Mutus* was intended to give Witchhunters the power to directly combat their opponents instead of relying on penitents and psyk-slaves. However, it was found that the Warp could corrupt even such a holy purpose, as many within the original group given copies later turned to gross heresy and treason.

The *Compendicum Mutus* grants the ability to Nullify to non-psykers

**Musaeum Dismalis** – Savant Morat Korten served the Scholastica Psykana with honour for nearly a century before an encounter with an unholy text twisted his mind, driving him from the Emperor's light into the arms of a cabal of sorcerers. Under their instruction, he compiled many of the methods he had learned for combating Daemons loose in the Materium. Though Korten had not learned the intensely difficult rituals of banishment, he had learned enough to give those sorcerers an edge in combat with their fellow heretics.

The *Musaeum Dismalis* grants the Confound Daemon psychic power from the Thorian Sourcebook. Difficulty 10.

**Psuedomonarchia** – There is no single object as defining of the minor warp-dabbler as the *Psuedomonarchia* and its

brethren. They are simple texts compared to those compiled by master sorcerers, such as the *Fifth Grimoire of Asuxohi the Silverhaired*. Rather than giving insight into the ways of the highest of Daemon Princes and Greater Daemons, they give control over the minor powers and fauna of the Warp.

Use of the *Psuedomonarchia* allows the user to launch a Warp Spirit at an enemy. One character in line of sight and within a number of yards equal to twice the amount the Sg test was passed by is attacked as if assaulted by a Combat-Skull. The Warp Spirit can remain in the material universe for only a short time, and so is gone by the end of the round. The Combat-Skull counts as Daemonic for the purposes of Wards and other special anti-Daemon equipment or special abilities. Difficulty 15.

**On The Mystic Art of Machina Operatus** – The *Mystic Art* is a common enough text on starships, frontier worlds, and other places where either machines are ever-present or Techpriests are mostly absent. A guide to the use of the most common technologies available, such as basic combustion engines, las-weaponry, and simple cogitators, the *Mystic Art* is couched in such ritual language as to make any extraction of a basic rule from its instructions almost impossible.

*On The Mystic Art* gives +10 to Sg when working with STC type machinery. This would not include Archaeotech or Xenos technology, but would include most Imperial vehicles, engines, weapons, doors, etc.

**Imperial Medic's Handbook** – Only the *Imperial Infantryman's Primer* and the great religious texts are more widely distributed than this book. Written by leading teachers within both the Order Hospitaller and the Adeptus Medicae, the *Handbook* is found in the baggage of almost every Imperial-approved medic, doctor or surgeon.

When used by a character with the Medic special ability, it grants an additional +10 to recovery tests. The book isn't clear enough to be a replacement for proper medical training, but does confer +5 to recovery tests.

**The Dialogous Scroll** – Though the Imperium has a theoretical official language in High Gothic, the vast majority of its subjects speak various derivations of Low Gothic, some nearly unrecognisable, and some worlds are dominated by populations who have yet to abandon their original language. The Orders Dialogous of the Adepta Sororitas are the Imperium's premier translators, and a much prized possession among those who travel among the outer edges of Imperial space is a *Dialogous Scroll*, a combination theoretical text and phrase book. Though called a scroll, its normal form is a dataslate, as the complete files would require a small library to transport.

The *Dialogous Scroll* gives a +10 attempt to communicating with any human or character speaking a human-derived language, with an additional +10 to any language derived from High or Low Gothic.

*Though some books are printed in the trillions of copies, such as the Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer or the Seven Demonstrations of Imperial Divinity, some exist only in small numbers, and are shrinking all the time. In some cases, such as the various Apocrypha, these losses are tragedies, microcosms of the Imperium's vanishing*

# DARK MAGENTA

knowledge, burned away by war, madness, and time. In others, they are mysteries, such as when it was discovered that every known copy of *Homo Sapiens Ad Astra*, an instructive text by the great writer *Velronius*, had vanished at some point since 403.M38. Still others are the subject of intentional campaigns of destruction. Several religious orders exist only to destroy books considered heretical – though the definition of heretical can sway from the *Dismal Texts* to books considered to contain insufficient references to the Emperor's holiness and divinity.



## Mandates

Issued by a person in a position of Imperial power, a Mandate is a binding charter, compelling those addressed in it, or its bearer, to fulfil certain actions or be considered damned and their lives forfeit. It also grants what powers and resources the author considers necessary and is able to provide to fulfil that mission. The most common forms of Mandate include a Mandate of Negotiation, which is carried by one of the Imperium's select group of diplomats who are allowed contact with alien or heretical forces, the Trading Charter carried by all Rogue Traders, and the Inquisitorial Mandate issued to an Acolyte by their master. A Mandate can come in various forms with the most common ones being parchment, vellum or similar scrolls, though the flayed skins of Heretics and Rogue Psykers are often chosen for the more aggressive of Inquisitorial Mandates. Other forms include dataslates, books listing the various and extensive conditions and powers of the Mandate and, for some bonded servants, tattooed text covering the head and chest.

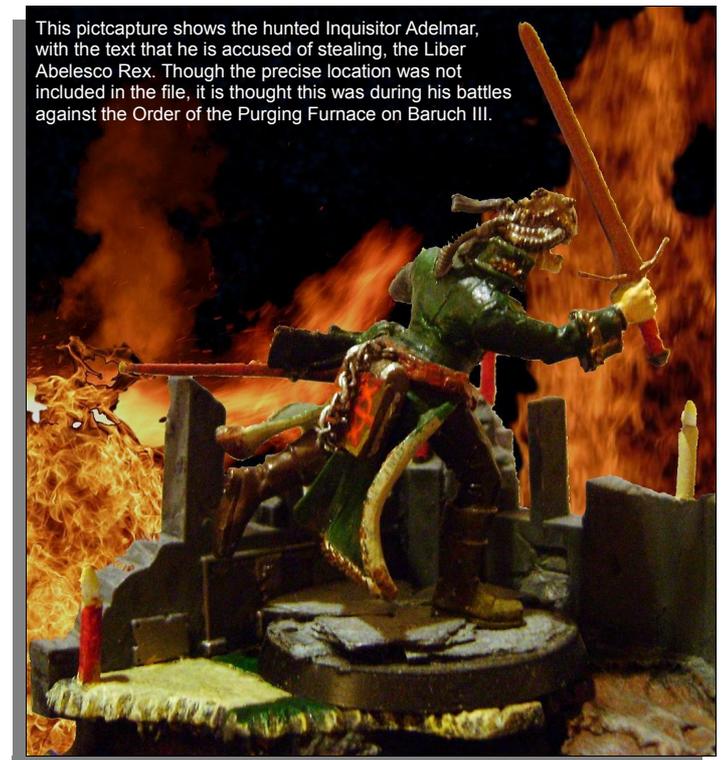
A Mandate lists a bearer, and those it applies to. Normally this simply means it affects the bearers allies or enemies depending on what it does, but in some cases the Mandate may specify those who are bound by it, and those who they are bound to capture, kill, or support. In those cases, the Mandate applies only to those listed. These Mandates are only those that have a direct in-game effect. The Mandate of Negotiation or the Trading Charter, while important, would have little in-game effect. Each Mandate has an Imperial virtue associated with it, such as Contempt or Vengeance. These aren't rules, but rather a quick way of thinking about what the Mandate represents.

**Bring the Heretic and All Who Stand By Him To Justice (Justice)** – Mandates with this or similar wording instruct their bearer to capture those listed in it, so they may be questioned and led to repentance. The authorised holder can take into custody anyone who opposes them – and to be captured by any Imperial agency is a grim fate. The bearer counts as having the *Lex Imperialis* from *The Long Arm of the Emperor's Law* article.

**The Emperor's Will Is Merciless, Let None Survive (Vengeance)** – This Mandate is often issued to Inquisitorial Stormtrooper and Execution units, or military expeditions such as Crusades. Rather than specifying certain individuals as targets, it tends to target organisations or regions. It is also, in extreme cases, the document that entitles the agents of an Inquisitor to call an *Exterminatus*. Those who carry this are made fully aware of the level of

sin and debasement in their enemies. The bearer counts as having the *Demagogue Special Ability* from the *Recongregator Sourcebook*.

**Stand Not For the Works of The Witch (Contempt)** – Often issued by Witchhunters to their pursuit teams, this Mandate condemns the work of the Unsanctioned Psyker, and provides chants known to disrupt the ability of psykers to concentrate and access the warp. The character may spend actions chanting the text of the Mandate, with the result that any psyker within 15 yards cannot use any Concentration Actions.



This piccapture shows the hunted Inquisitor Adelmar, with the text that he is accused of stealing, the *Liber Abelesco Rex*. Though the precise location was not included in the file, it is thought this was during his battles against the Order of the Purging Furnace on Baruch III.

**Obey Him, For His Word Is Mine (Obedience)** – Granting the bearer the full power of their patron, this Mandate is issued only to the most trusted of agents. The bearer counts as having the *Leader* special ability. If they already have it, they count as having the *Ultimate Leader* ability from *'It's All in the Mind'*. If they already have *Ultimate Leader*... well, perhaps they should have moved beyond being the servant to being the master by then.

**To Surrender Is To Be Damned (Stubbornness)** – Mandates of this type have the most fearsome threats for those who fail. *Servitorisation*, *Deathmasking*, lengthy *Excruciation*, and other, darker, punishments are all common consequences of failure. The fear induced by this is such that those bound under it will go to nearly any lengths to accomplish their mission. The bearer counts as having the *Draconian Tyrant* ability from *'It's All in the Mind'* which also applies to himself and all those listed in the Mandate ignore the effects of *Fearsome* characters (though are still affected by *Terrifying* characters)

Many Rogue Trader charters are famed across the stars such as the *Lost Charter of the Phrax Family*, said to contain a drop of the most holy blood possible, that of the Emperor himself, the *Steel Charter of Agamar Strick*, and the *Occult Charter of the nameless master of the Arrowflight*, which broke the *Aethyr Barrier* in the *Yalx System*. However, the *189th Imperial Valuation Committee*

# DARK MAGENTA

determined that the total number of Rogue Trader Charters issued since the Scouring and the Establishment of the Senate was in excess of 3 million, and, given the known black market values of even limited "wildcat" charters, the value exceeded that of the total riches of the average Navigator Family. Here, again, we can see the true value of words.



Obviously, these are only a small segment of the vast possibilities for books and texts that might have an effect on your Inquisitor games – for one thing, I never even

approached the possibilities of Xenos texts or Daemonic books, possessed of their own will. Texts and Mandates can be something that sets your character on their path, or something that they earn along the way. Either way, they can bring a new aspect to a character, from a scholar who finds, hidden among dusty stacks, a forbidden text that offers great power, to a trusted agent of the Inquisition, not an Inquisitor themselves, but with almost all the rights of one. Whatever you do with them, I hope you'll find them interesting and fun!

## About the Author

*Joseph Garvin is a big fan of books – so much so, he apparently wants to make Inquisitor a, "who reads the most" contest. This apparently makes sense to him.*

### +++File Opens+++

Honoured Brethren of the Ordos Keltani

I write to you today to reject the accusations levelled against me at Conclave. It is not true that I have faked my death. It is not true that I have worked to undermine the governance of Carcosa. And it is not now nor ever shall be true that I have made a pact with one of the Ruinous Powers. I do only my duty, to protect the Imperium and to destroy the Emperor's enemies.

It is true that I led an assault on a hidden fane on Carcosa. It is true that there a daemon was summoned up by the Chamber Heresiarch. It is true that I was then forced to bind it. What would my accusers have me do? Abandon any attempt to safely cast it into the dark realm of its prison and home, simply for expedience? I would hope that I have the courage to do my duty to its fullest. I have become an Inquisitor and an Exorcist by practising the virtues taught to me by my master, those of patience, methodical thought, and persistence. I shall continue to do so, no matter what accusations are sent against me.

I have indeed retrieved a sealed text from the Librarium Occultus. However, it is not, as my opponents claim, a text for the mastery and service of the Daemonic. It is the *Liber Abelesco Rex*, which as is known by this august body, has been used in the past successfully to control even the most recalcitrant Daemon. I believe that I do have the strength necessary to master my will while I utilise this text. It may not be swift, but it shall be sure.

*Inquisitor Practical Genya Adelmarr*

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