



Corpus Auxilla Mechanicus

Factions of the Adeptus Mechanicus

By Robert Grayston

The Inquisition is an organisation that is very much divided into sub-divisions, alliances and faction. They are not the only ones that have this problem though - there exists another body, equal (if not greater) in strength, which is again divided, but has far less written upon its philosophies - the Adeptus Mechanicus, after all, are a secretive bunch...

There are, as we all know, many differing philosophies for the Inquisition, and even the Ecclesiarchy and other intriguing, esoteric cults. But it always felt, at least to myself, that there was one body that was a bit too 'over-simplified' in their either pro or anti-xenos stance. This was, of course, the Adeptus Mechanicus. These Machine Priests deserved so much more, and so I've endeavoured to try and come up with some interesting factions (along with the help of the Inquisitorial Conclave, an excellent resource for all your Inquisitor needs!) to add depth and background to your Tech Priest characters. Feel free to toy with them, reject them, or be inspired by them and come up with your own philosophies for the Mechanicus to follow!



OMNISSIADS

"Heresy is a subjective term - only you who are in fear of the Iron Messiah's righteous gaze wish this work to cease. In His name, I shall see this is never so!"

Last recorded words of Pater Machinae Dorylbus, Techno-heretic

There is a movement within the Mechanicus not unlike that of the Inquisitorial Thorians. Theirs is a philosophy considered highly dangerous by their brethren, a philosophy in which the summoning of either the Omniissiah (the Mechanicus' term for the Emperor), or the Machine God himself into a pre-built, or extensively modified, Avatar, is greatly desired so that he might lead the Tech Priests on to the end of their Quest for Knowledge.

Though the majority of this faction may be united in purpose, these members of the Mechanicus differ greatly in method.

Some may seek out the most able of their mind-scrubbed servitors, so that they may create a host of both flesh and metal for their Machine God. There are Genetors that grow monstrous creatures, that they consider absolute organic perfection, in great bio-vats, or even darker, those that may pursue an entirely mechanical construct, touching upon the dark and forbidden arts of Abominable Intelligence.

To the Adeptus Mechanicus, this is on par with the soliciting of daemonic entities so reviled by Inquisitors of a Puritan (or sane) state of mind.

Unsurprisingly, this particular tenet results in its adherents maintaining and fostering close relationships with other like-minded philosophies, such as the aforementioned Thorians, Horusians, and other Resurrectionist Cults that may provide assistance in the great endeavour to make the Machine God walk amongst his followers.

It is for this reason that the Inquisition knows so much about the Omniissiads and has formed numerous secretive pacts with the Mechanicus in the name of eradicating the heretical sentiment of summoning Deities.

To the Omniissiads it is clear that the hour of His return is at hand. The xenoheresies of the Necrontyr have revealed themselves so that they may be righteously smote, the unbelievers of the Forge World Gryphon IV have been judged unworthy and purged, and numerous Dark Mechanicus traitors slain or captured in the recent assault upon Cadia.

Some scenario ideas for the Omniissiads...

- A crazed Magos has had the idea that a Warlord Titan would be the perfect Avatar for the Machine God, and on the pretext of a 'cockpit inspection' takes the Princeps and his command staff hostage. Unknown to him, a fellow Magos has infiltrated the Titan, and with his faithful Skitarii must work his way to the cockpit through the Titan's many corridors and ducts to prevent the machine going AWOL on a Forge World, let alone becoming possessed by what could result in being a malevolent warp entity! It would be nice if the Princeps and his command staff could survive too - but what if they've been swayed over and willingly want the Titan to be used as a vessel for their Machine God in the material realm?

- Pater Machinae Dorylbus has need of vital information on various methods of summoning powerful entities, and so must raid the Inquisitorial Grand Librarium on Olynthia III. Little does he know that the Thorian Inquisitor who informed him of the Librarium's existence has since been arrested and informed upon Dorylbus' plan. Will the Ommissiad survive the trap? Might the Thorian escape and warn him?

- In order to power his ceremony to activate the summoning-algorithms of an A.I super-computer that will house the Machine God's consciousness, Magos Gratterdrak will have to drain the power of an entire Forge World through the strategic placement of numerous arcane devices. Insane enough at the best of times, to complicate matters the world is the only remaining planet producing armaments and supplies for an Imperial Crusade to liberate a sub-sector. Should its production lines halt for even a day, the Crusade will most certainly fail. The Forge World's Fabricator has alerted the Imperium to Gratterdrak's presence, and this long-wanted criminal now has the attention of the Officio Assassinorum...

IMPERIO-COGNISTICIANIS

"Bio-chauvinism, and on such a small scale, when it comes to the processing of knowledge, is laughable. Give me any savant you care, and I shall match his worth tenfold with even the most basic of Machine Spirits."

Extract, *The Problems of Organic Thinking*, Chapter XII

The Mechanicus' Quest for Knowledge can be defined as much an inner, spiritual journey as it can be a physical one. Too many Tech Priests, especially those too old or otherwise occupied to actually venture forth into the stars themselves, this very idea holds a great appeal.

To them, it is not so much in the action of searching, but in the more mundane tasks of everyday data-inputting, repairing, Engineering, and a million other tasks that the Quest for Knowledge ever comes closer to its conclusion. To these members of the Adeptus Mechanicus, sometimes referred to as the Imperio-Cogniticians, the Imperium is nothing but a giant super-computer, ever processing more data in its task that will ultimately lead it to deliver all knowledge.

This is most often referred to as the Divine Processing Routine.

The followers of this belief are often seen as traditionalists, and a little too conservative for their own good. Unless directly called for, such as in response to armed hostility, things such as change or upheaval are regarded unnecessary for the benefit of the computing process.

They regard themselves as anti-viruses in a galaxy full of corrupted programming (the Dark Mechanicus and forces of Chaos), and xenotic viruses, and for this reason regard anything apart from their own technology as contaminated and dangerous to use. The only acceptable form of change that they may instigate is that of upgrading.

When working within the scope of such a large 'computer' as the Imperium, this can range from the personal act, whereby a Tech Priest may incorporate a new memory chip into his brain, to the conquest of new worlds that may better increase the 'memory' of the Imperium, and so provide more material for a faster processing of data to bring the Quest for Knowledge to a satisfactory end.

Even then, the most extreme of the Imperio-Cogniticians see this as too much change to the Divine Processing Routine, and will seek to hinder it at any opportunity.

Some scenario ideas for the Imperio-Cogniticians...

- An Inquisitor has been sighted using xenos/tainted artefacts. It is obvious this 'anti-viral unit' has been corrupted, and so must be eliminated to prevent further spread of the infection that could jeopardise the Divine Processing Routine. A Tech-Priest and his Skitarii must commence the 'Rite of Viral Termination', and delete any 'associate programmes' (warband members) the Inquisitor has.
- A Magos that holds the most extreme view of Imperio-Cogniticism has dispatched an operative (disguised Tech Acolyte, Skitarii Assassin, etc) to kill an Ecclesiarchy Cardinal that has decreed a new Crusade, and so prevent any change to the Divine Processing Routine.
- Hounded by the Explorators he has so long hindered, an Imperio-Cognitician Magos has been pursued back to his asteroid-base lair, where he must try his best to survive the assault!

KHAMRIANS

"There is no way in which the fully realised sentience of a machine could not be of benefit to us. As it is, the Machine Spirit is revered, yet in permanent bondage, its full potential shackled by petty fears. I seek to terminate this state of affairs."

Extract from intercepted Astropathic communiqué, of unknown origin (circa M34)

Amongst the Mechanicus, there exists a certain fear of sentient machinery – A.I., or 'Abominable Intelligence'. This fear of A.I. harks back to the Dark Age of Technology, during which time depraved and bizarre sciences were practiced, and sentient machines battled their human masters for supremacy.

Since that time, and owing to a decree by the Emperor himself, it has been forbidden to dabble in the creation or maintenance of machines that can think fully for themselves.

During the late 34th millennium, however, a recently ordained and brilliant Magos by the name of Degio Khamrios was to covertly circulate research he had carried out on the subject of A.I. His words carried with them such conviction that a small body of like-minded Tech Priests were to join with him, dabbling in the forbidden sciences.

By the end of his first century as a Magos, Khamrios was confident that his theories were ready for publishing to the Adeptus Mechanicus as a whole.

He had severely misjudged his brethren's opinions upon the matter, and within months was a hounded fugitive. Eventually he was brought to heel, but only after much effort on the parts of the Inquisition, Mechanicus, and at one stage the Iron Hands Chapter. He was taken into Mechanicus custody, and his fate is unknown to this day.

Despite this, certain unorthodox Tech Priests still express a desire to perform research in the field of A.I., hoping to harness and improve upon ancient examples they uncover in dusty and forgotten places. Some even attempt to copy the examples they find, and so produce for themselves intelligent robotic servants. Should they ever succeed in producing their heretical creations en masse, the dark days of the Iron Men could return.

Whole legions of thinking machine-warriors had risen up and opposed humanity then - who could say that the same could not happen again?



Some scenario ideas for the Khamrians...

- After much fruitless searching of archives, on numerous worlds, a Khamrian thinks he may have discovered a clue as to the location of an ancient stasis prison containing Iron Men; excellent examples of A.I. The Khamrian now wishes to deactivate the prison and kidnap several examples to study. What he hasn't counted on is the Iron Men themselves not warming to his intrusion, or the stasis-prison's guardians (which could range from a garrison of elite soldiers such as Deathwatch Astartes or Mechanicus Praetorians, to xenos which have moved in and don't realise the significance of their new home!).
- The Tau are a technologically advanced race that make much use of A.I., in the form of drones and other mechanical constructs. An Ambassador of the Tau race, along with his entourage (especially any Earth Caste members), are kidnapped by a Khamrian who wishes to learn more about alien A.I. When the Imperium learns of this, they must attempt to rescue the alien lest more conflict with the Tau is initiated. The Tau themselves may also have learnt of their agent's abduction, and dispatched a team of mercenaries to retrieve their representative.
- Why not re-fight the last frantic struggle of Degios Khamrios himself? On one side would be the father of the Khamrian movement, attempting to flee aboard a Rogue Trader's Vessel, accompanied by his acolytes and the panicking Rogue Trader himself. On the opposing side would be an Inquisitorial force with orders to kill the Magos at all costs, and a Mechanicus force with orders to capture Khamrios so he may be returned to Mars for trial.

ORGANICISTS

"Everything organic we know of is simply machinery, in one form or another. Tendons replace pistons; flesh in the place of steel; blood is simply biological coolant. To deny this and shun it is more than just Mechanicus orthodoxy – it is idiocy."

Attributed to an unknown Genetor

At first, this philosophy may seem most out of place in an organisation that is based upon the use of so much machinery and metal. For most of the Mechanicus, flesh is weak and a hindrance in most aspects – but not so to this faction.

The tenet of the Organicists sees biological matter as simple machinery in another guise. The brain is stylised as a complex computer and the body's diverse workings as a biological apparatus.

This philosophy's followers, as could be expected, are mostly Genetors and members of the Adeptus Biologis, studying and improving upon organic matter to improve it in all possible ways, growing all sorts of weird and terrible creations in their bio-vats.

Where a typical Tech Priest may, at various stages of their career, 'upgrade' themselves with bionic limbs, data-repositories, and all sorts of other cyberware, an Organicist is far more likely to

implant into themselves various glands, increase their muscle mass with stimulants, and enhance their senses with laboratory-grown specimens.

The majority of Organicists do not reject the ideas of their brethren simply on the basis of their preference for metal instead of flesh. In some cases, Organicists may even prefer to make use of bionics themselves; it is simply that they do not reject biological components out of hand.

It is for their acceptance of machinery, where they choose organic substitutes that, whilst considered bizarre, the Organicists are not persecuted by the Adeptus Mechanicus (along with their proficiency where it comes to servicing older Magos' remaining biological components).

Some scenario ideas for the Organicists...

- A Magos Biologis has created what he believes to be the 'perfect soldier'. A genetically enhanced warrior that takes less time to produce than a Space Marine, whilst possessing the strength and toughness of the Emperor's finest. The only problem with the new 'perfect soldier' is that it is mentally unstable, not reacting well to some of its implants, and is currently wandering the Magos Biologis' lab, killing (brutally) everything it comes across after a bloody escape. It must be stopped, at all costs!
- Iggedo is a world in ruins, the forces of Chaos having ravaged it in a brutal raid. It has been rumoured that Fabius Bile was present amongst the forces of the Archenemy, and has left upon the planet several of his 'experiments'. Now, an Inquisitorial team is attempting to round them up and destroy the heretical creations, whilst an Organicist seeks to capture some for study of Bile's techniques and implants. The 'experiments' themselves aren't that keen on encountering either, and need to flee to the sewers, where they can disappear into obscurity.
- Tyranids are considered to be the fastest-evolving creatures in the galaxy, and notoriously difficult to capture. An Organicist has learned that a Rogue Trader has gained several vicious, smaller examples of Tyranid creations. Unwilling to pay the extortionate amount the Rogue Trader is demanding, the Organicist has concocted a plan whereby he can storm the bridge and seize control of the ship, along with its precious cargo. The Rogue Trader will not like the idea of course, and then there's the matter of the Tyranid beasts themselves - it would be terrible if they were to get loose amidst all the confusion...

And so, here endeth the lesson on four Adeptus Mechanicus philosophies. The scenario concepts have been included for one-off games, but many could easily be included as foundations for entire campaigns, with a little imagination, and plenty of shady dealings with the Inquisition thrown in. May these factions provide inspiration to you and your GMs for much Tech-Priest based mayhem!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert is a big fan of Inquisitor, and an active member of the fantastic Conclave. Oh, and he'd like to thank Ben n' his favourite (and only) Swede for proof-reading this article. Cheers guys!.