

# DARK HERESY™

## THE LATHE WORLDS™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM  
DARKNESS OF THE 4<sup>I</sup><sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM

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# INTRODUCTION

*"Hail the Ommissiah!  
He is the God in the Machine, the Source of All Knowledge."*

—Magos-Lector Vad Kapellax,  
at the first Convocation of the Lathes

In the Imperium of Man, while technology is commonplace it is also mysterious and unfathomable. Such knowledge is the carefully guarded domain of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and has been for thousands of years. They are the Cult of the Machine God, worshipping the Emperor as their Ommissiah, the Perfect Sum of All Knowledge. Their Explorator fleets search across the galaxy for lost knowledge from ages long ago. Their mechanically augmented Tech-Priests on thousands of forge worlds strive to preserve what precious little data they retain. Both quests, though, are mere flickering candles against the oppressive darkness of stagnation and ignorance. With each century, actual understanding descends to dogma, rote instruction, and myth, as priceless knowledge is lost forever.

Within the Calixis Sector, the Adeptus Mechanicus is centred on the Lathe Worlds, and from these three planets the Mechanicum oversees its domains of forge worlds, research stations, orbitals, and even entire systems. From these worlds, precious knowledge and holy technology flow throughout the Sector, while the Cult Mechanicus carefully hoards even greater secrets for its own, inscrutable purposes.



## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

THE LATHE WORLDS allows DARK HERESY players to delve deeper into the mysteries of the Adeptus Mechanicus within the Calixis Sector. The Cult of the Machine God stretches across this region and beyond, ruling each of its worlds in the name of the Ommissiah, outside the purview of the Inquisition or other Imperial agencies. The Lathes struggle to control their domains, however, and dark areas of the Sector hide countless tech-heresies and dangerous researches.

## CHAPTER I: THE CULT MECHANICUS

The book begins with the history of the Adeptus Mechanicus, from their rise on the Martian sands to becoming the Imperium's Masters of Technology as the Cult Mechanicus discovered their Ommissiah. The Adeptus Mechanicus later established themselves within the newly won Calixis Sector, and this chapter covers their role in this region's history.

## CHAPTER II: SERVANTS OF THE OMNISSIAH

Chapter 2 introduces new Alternate Career Ranks and other options for players such as powerful weapons, equipment, and even ancient archeotech devices from millennia long ago. Players seeking to learn more of the Cult Mechanicus may adopt such roles as investigative Agent of the Lords Dragon, deadly Acuitor Mech-Assassin, apostate Malatek Tech-Priest, and more, while those seeking to oppose the spread of technological augmentation might instead choose to join the Cult of the Pure Form.

## CHAPTER III: DOMINIONS OF THE LATHES

This chapter covers the Lathes System, including the many planets and other bodies within, such as the Three Lathes and the dreaded Panopticon Orbital Station, as well as the Sector's turbulent Mechanicum factions and sects. It also features the varied holdings that make up the Lathe Worlds themselves, ranging from the prison-forge of Sheol 17 to the Heterodyne Agglomerations orbiting high above the dead world of Uziel.

## CHAPTER IV: THE LIGHT OF REASON

The final chapter takes the Acolytes into the Lathes System to investigate mysterious psychic disturbances. Their search brings them to a forgotten comet where a renegade band of Tech-Priests is engaged in forbidden research and is poised to unwittingly unleash a cataclysmic Warp rupture upon the Sector!



# THE CULT MECHANICUS

- MARS
- 
- MECHANICUM  
HIERARCHY
- 
- THE QUEST FOR  
KNOWLEDGE
- 
- MECHANICUM  
IN THE  
CALIXIS SECTOR
- 
- TECH-HERESY

# CHAPTER I: THE CULT MECHANICUS

*"Knowledge is power, and power is dangerous."*

—Unknown

In the 41st Millennium, it is said that the mighty Imperium of Mankind spans a million worlds. The vast fleets and billions-strong armies of the God-Emperor wage an unceasing war against aliens, traitors and heretics from the Halo Stars to the galactic core. The Imperium itself is a grim and uncompromising authority where any form of autonomy is the highest privilege. Among the Administratum of the Adeptus Terra, departments exist to oversee, monitor and control the countless souls within the Imperial domain. A hundred centuries of civil wars, heresies, pogroms, and coups have created a bureaucracy highly attuned to the dangers of granting too much independence to its citizens, whether they are planetary governors or lowly serfs.

However, there is one organisation in the Imperium that stands apart and virtually independent of the Adeptus of Terra. This organisation's red-robed agents appear on every Imperial world and aboard all its ships. It holds entire worlds beneath its sole authority, it controls virtually all of the facilities necessary for the Imperium to make war, and yet it retains unprecedented autonomy and control. This organisation is called the Adeptus Mechanicus, and it has a history fully as long and as tumultuous as that of the Imperium itself.

In an age when so much knowledge has been lost, it is the Adeptus Mechanicus that supplies technical expertise to the Imperium. The Tech-Priests manufacture and maintain a myriad of essential items, from the mightiest plasma reactors to the humblest vox sets to the Golden Throne of Terra itself. The Tech-Priests are the ones who preserve knowledge from ages past and explore new sciences for the future. By Imperial decree, every new discovery made belongs to the Tech-Priests, whether it might be a reclaimed data-vault or a salvaged spaceship.

## THE FORGE WORLDS

The forge worlds of the Tech-Priests are enormous weapon shops for the Imperium's war effort. The ships, tanks, and guns needed at the battlefronts pour forth in staggering quantities from continent-sized factories and orbital facilities. Like a beating heart, an active forge world forms a hub of activity for the surrounding sectors and sub-sectors of Imperial worlds. A constant flow of traders and merchantmen carry its production to where it is most needed, returning filled with raw materials to sate the voracious appetites of the manufactorums.

As mighty and powerful as a forge world can be, one left alone would quickly find itself in a dangerous position without the support and protection of its surrounding worlds and other forces. Without resources and manpower to draw upon, the Tech-Priests would be forced to concentrate solely on protecting their accumulated knowledge from scavengers and opportunists. Seclusion, while it might offer a forge world safety from attack, offers its own dangers. Warp storms have isolated many a forge world, causing some to develop various peculiarities, often leading to heresies unimagined generations earlier.

Protection and trade from the Imperium allow the Tech-Priests to dedicate themselves fully to their true calling: The quest for knowledge. To a Tech-Priest, knowledge is the supreme manifestation of divinity and striving for comprehension of it is an act of worship. Preservation and re-discovery of past knowledge is the most sacred act of all and a motivating spark for any member of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

## MARS

In the current age, Mars has evolved into the workshop of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Its factory hives produce the bulk of the most sophisticated technical equipment used in the Imperium. Starships and other specialised constructs are fabricated at the orbital manufactorums that spin around the equatorial belt. Ships of Warfleet Solar are based in these huge floating docks, and other vessels from all over the Imperium visit what are thought to be the largest man-made objects in the entire galaxy.

The Martian factory hives are some of the first hives ever built, and all are at least partially ruined. Some districts are well maintained, and contain many areas of new construction, while areas that are no longer in use are simply allowed to rot.

A journey through the internal travel tubes of Mars would allow a visitor to view areas of rising towers of plasteel and crystal, marking new construction on vast tracts of industrial wasteland. The travel lines weave between shining new building columns with nets of spun steel bracings like the rigging of sailing ships, to darkened older zones where broken condensation traps spill their vaporous contents and enmesh speeding tram liners in a perpetual fog. Wastelands cover vast parts of the cities, deserts of broken plasteel slabs and twisted girders, with the occasional solitary tower pointing purposelessly towards the pink Martian sky.

The beliefs of the Tech-Priests have been handed down from their earliest forebears in the form of data-stacks and illumined holo-scrolls, but sure knowledge of the days prior to their rise is fragmentary and conflicting. It is said that before the beginning of currently recorded history, there existed an age of technological marvels unequalled in later millennia. This time is called the Dark Age of Technology by archaeo-historians, and it began Man's conquest of the stars. Mars was allegedly the first planet to be terraformed in this golden age. The Red Planet was gifted with atmosphere, and its arid deserts made fertile by the titanic technological prowess of the men of those times. However, as the Tech-Priests tell it, agriculture was never very significant to early Mars. Rather its true wealth lay beneath the surface in the form of gems, minerals and metal ores.