



School of Hard Knocks

The Schola Progenium in Inquisitor

by Robey Jenkins

Dating itself back to the very foundation of the Imperium, the Schola Progenium is one of the Imperium's most subtly influential organizations and the very bedrock of its elite. The exact moment of its foundation is impossible to determine, but even while the Emperor still walked amongst mortals, charitable institutions existed to select and train promising youths for service in the Imperial Army and the other burgeoning structures of government.

In the Imperium of the forty-first millennium, these many institutions have long been subsumed into a single network, maintained by the Ecclesiarchy and offering the very highest standard of Imperial education and almost guaranteed access to positions in organizations as varied as the Ministorum, the Commissariat, the Adeptus Arbites, the Adepta Sororitas or, of course, the Inquisition.

Individual scholae can vary hugely in size from a few dozen progenii and a couple of masters, up to mighty citadels, teeming with countless students and whole companies of drill abbots. Regardless of size, each schola is a functioning monastery, with a Master Abbot or Principal at the head of a team of dedicated monk-teachers who will tend to specialize in one or more areas of education. Exactly which disciplines are taught will depend upon the capabilities of the teachers, which can tend to be rather eccentric, especially in the smaller scholae.

The youngest progenii may be any age, from infancy upwards, and many scholae double as orphanages and nurseries for the children of Imperial servants. Indeed, to be the orphan of imperial servants is widely considered automatic justification for a place in the nearest schola. However, most scholae are also open to the children of wealthy local families in return for appropriate donations - although these are often accompanied by elaborate "orphaning" rituals in which the parent family formally cuts all legal ties with their offspring.

The lives of progenii are hard and disciplined from the moment of their arrival. A strict hierarchy applies within the student body and a system of privileges and punishments prepares the young progenii for their harsh and demanding futures. Nevertheless most alumni look back nostalgically on their education as the most rewarding and peaceful time of their lives.

Senior students are expected to be self-directing, focussing on studies in areas that will be relevant for their apportioned future career. So a senior student destined for the Adeptus Arbites may spend up to two years studying the Lex Imperialis, even if no expert teacher is available. At the conclusion of their studies, they are then expected to join whichever organization they are deemed to suit best.

PROGENII AND THE INQUISITION

Officially, the Ecclesiarchy has the first pick of the talented students, which partly explains why so many

progeniae end up in the Adepta Sororitas. However, an understanding has long existed that the Inquisition may take whichever students catch their eye. Oddly, when Inquisitors visit scholae, the very best students are often inexplicably absent on field trips or laid up in the infirmary.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Inquisitors begin their careers in the Schola Progenium. Those that are ear-marked by the drill abbots for possible service as Explicators tend to be those of a questioning, argumentative nature, whose insatiable curiosity and incisive intellect may make them unsuitable for disciplines that demand absolute certainty, such as the Ministorum or the Commissariat. In addition, some Progenii are recruited directly by Inquisitors who visit a schola in search of a new acolyte. Often an Inquisitor will visit the same schola from which he was himself recruited and some scholae have been known to display engraved boards showing a direct descent from Inquisitor to Acolyte to Inquisitor through seven or more generations of alumni. As a result, it is common for scholae to enjoy a degree of favour and protection from elements within the Inquisition.



Truants

Despite the best efforts of the drill abbots, however, not all progenii are content with their lot or prepared to accept a future dictated to them by their monk-teachers. Escape from a schola is rarely an easy task. Even when barred windows are breached or high walls scaled, the scholae are often based in isolated or dangerous locations - deep in ice-clad mountains, surrounded by parched desert or even in the lifeless rock of a mighty asteroid. Unsuccessful escapers will be punished harshly before being subject to an intense process of re-education that ensures that only rarely will a subsequent attempt follow.

Some rare and exceptional individuals do, however, disappear from the confines of the schola. No doubt, most die in their attempts and their bodies are simply never found, but others make it and these rare few often find their ways into criminal fraternities, mercenary bands and Rogue Trader entourages, where they can hide from the Ecclesiarchy's agents and use their skills to find wealth and adventure.

The Inquisition takes a deep abiding interest in Truants as they are either highly capable, motivated survivors, suitable for recruitment; or else they are dangerous heretics and potential traitors who must be eliminated before they can spread their hate and lies.

PROGENII CHARACTERS

Life in the Schola is tough and not everyone survives the experience. One of the first lessons a progenius or progenia will learn is how to make an improvised knife. The second lesson will be how to skilfully conceal it about his or her person. As a

result of encounters between knife-wielding progenii, it is not unusual to see progenii with facial scars or even the occasional bionic eye (rarely better than average quality). Other bionic limbs are very unusual, though.

Students under instruction will only rarely have unsupervised access to ranged weapons or equipment, but senior students may be permitted to carry a pistol or basic weapon in order to increase their familiarity with the weapon. These will always be common weapons and they are unlikely to have any reloads.

Truants may acquire any combination of common weapons and, depending on how long they have been on the run and how successful they have been as outlaws, they may even have a rare weapon or two. As survivors who know how to plan effectively, they will invariably have multiple reloads for any weapon carried.

All progenii are trained in effective use of arms, hand-to-hand fighting and unarmed combat. Common abilities for senior students will be Quickload, Dead Eye Shot, or Rock Steady Aim. In addition, senior students may have special abilities depending upon what future career they have been selected for:

Ministorum	Word of the Emperor
Commissariat	Nerves of Steel
Adepta Sororitas	Faith
Officio Medicae	Medic
Adeptus Arbites	True Grit
Imperial Guard/Navy	Heroic

No progenius or progenia will ever have psychic powers.

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Standard	50	60	45	50	60	55	55	65	70
Random	40+2D10	50+2D10	40+2D6	45+2D6	50+2D10	50+2D6	50+2D6	60+2D6	60+2D10

The profile above is for a senior student. For younger progenii, subtract D10 per year, per physical stat, and D6 per year for the mental stats.

ACOLYTE BEL FURY



After intervening to save an isolated monastery of the Schola Progenium from a genestealer infestation, Inquistrix Kang-Ju Ki was impressed with the ability and devotion of the senior student who had taken command of the small band of loyal progenii.

Belinda Fury, a scion of an established Guard family, was destined for a life in the Orders Militant of the Adepta Sororitas, but the Convent Prioris has given permission for Fury to accompany Ki as her aide-de-camp to assess her suitability for a future in the Inquisition.

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld	Speed
Acolyte Bel Fury	50	60	45	50	60	55	55	65	70	5

Abilities: Dead Eye Shot, Quickload, Leader.

Equipment, Weapons & Armour: Flak armour (chest and abdomen), armoured boots, Automatic Combat Shotgun with 1 reload, Stubber with 2 reloads, Short sword, knife.

Modelling Bel Fury

Bel is mostly based on the Lucretia Bravus version of the Enforcer pack. The only real addition to the model was the head from the discontinued Sister Repentia, but you could as easily use Barbaretta's head. I rebuilt the Repentia's hair and mouth with greenstuff and filed down 90% of the detail on the body, keeping only the knee armour, the webbing and the collar detail. I then rebuilt the torso to resemble a loose jerkin, with an Eton collar (which seemed appropriate). I wanted her lower half to reflect the fact that she was somewhat outside the schola environment, and practical armoured thigh-boots seemed appropriately rebellious.

Her arms are essentially unchanged, although I swapped the shock maul for a shotgun, mainly because Inquisitrix Ki is already a close combat expert and I wanted her acolyte to be more of a shooty type. To this I added a shoulder strap made from greenstuff. Then to her belt I added a holster for the stubber, a Space Marine knife (a short sword for a normal human) and an extra webbing pouch, just to emphasize the scouting "Be Prepared" philosophy engendered by the Schola Progenium.

Once finished, I wanted to emphasize the contrast between her staid, schoolgirl origins and her current, exciting employment, as well as hinting at her personality. So whilst she still wears her progenia's jerkin and collar (with devotional slogan and school crest on the right arm), she has a skull-shaped belt-buckle over blue jeans and polished brown thigh-boots. Her webbing is still blanched as if it were fresh from the schola's armoury, but her regulation Sororitas black hair has been dyed rebellious peroxide blonde.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robey Jenkins is a veteran of the tabletop. He runs the York Garrison Wargaming Club and recently organized the first Inquisitor Grand Tournament. In 2000 he retired from the British Army to concentrate on a career as a writer and his first short story for the Black Library will be published in the Planet Kill anthology, released on 30 June 2008.

USING THE SCHOLA PROGENIUM IN INQUISITOR GAMES

The most obvious place for the Schola Progenium is in the background of your characters. Be they Inquisitor, Rogue Trader or even vile Chaos Magus, there's a good chance that they once graced the polished corridors and dusty libraries of a schola. This may be a one-line reference in a detailed catalogue of past history, but it can set up all sorts of future plot hooks and sub-plots to your scenarios:

Enemies Reunited – Two characters who must cooperate to win a scenario turn out to have been bitter enemies in the same schola. How deep does the bad blood flow?

Old Oaths – Opposing characters in a scenario once swore a secret and holy oath to assist one another, come what may. Will they betray their cause to uphold the oath? Or will it be their old friend who is betrayed?

Stomping Ground – The broken ruins in which the scenario takes place were once the schola of one of the characters. Knowing the ground will make searching and navigating easier, but every corner holds memories, and avoiding distraction at a crucial moment will be hard work!

Alma Mater – For one of the characters, this mission is essential to the future survival of his or her old schola. Allies cannot understand the depth of the connection, but nothing can be allowed to threaten the alma mater...

Of course, if merely making the schola a part of the background or an excuse to make a complicated situation even more confusing just isn't enough for you, you can always set a whole campaign in a schola. As the influential hearts of many Imperial agencies, they make prime targets for infiltration by cultists of all stripes. And if the inquisitor sent to save the schola from genestealers, traitors and other foul heretics happens to be an old boy or girl, well, that just makes things more interesting, doesn't it?