



# **SUPPORTING CAST**

## **Maestros of the Red Sand**

### ***for Transhuman Space***

**by Eric Funk**

As long as there have been nomads on Mars, there have been Romani among them. Still called "gypsies" by some, (although less commonly so because of the popularized "Gypsy Angels" in the Belt, see p. DB88), they travel the sands, trading live entertainment, news, and services for tools and supplies. Some call them "windies" or "wanderers," although these labels can also be applied to non-Trucker nomads. This situation has not changed that much away from the hustle and bustle of the urbanized Marinaris basin. The smaller communities are Isolate for different reasons, and are often supplied at irregular intervals. Between these colonies is where the Romani ply their trade, always in motion. Some plant trees and seeds wherever they make camp or vow to make minimal impacts on the environment. A few "windies" even vow never to visit the same port twice. All who choose to carry the name "Romani" hear the call of the open road.

### **Relations**

Members of the Trucker's Guild get along splendidly with the wandering Romani, each group helping the other whenever they can (see p. ItW59). They help spread warnings and felicitations regarding people of note, thus they have a greater weight in the Martian Reputation network (see p. TM15). Interests rarely clash, and a few individuals purport to be of both groups. The Arab nomads have a cordial relationship with the Romani, as they are foremost merchants while the gypsies are primarily entertainers and craftsmen. From time to time the Romani have worked for favors from the Millionaires of Mars, passing word of areas that should be kept clear for duels, thus simplifying the work of security forces.

Ironically, the Romani now serve as a cultural link between the estranged European settlers on Mars (see p. ItW47). At each town, they share stories, language, and pass along hand-made items and artifacts as well as keeping up with the technical trades the EU citizens are famous for. Craft items include knitting, painted eggs, alcohol, and cheese. As long as the Romani obey local laws as they visit, the governments of Rust China and USA Mars tend to ignore them. Local law enforcement, on the other hand, often conducts "Customs Inspections" in conjunction with trusted Romani contacts to prevent smuggling, especially by those pretending to be Romani. Several Triad operations have been disrupted in this fashion. If it continues, then all Romani may soon gain an Enemy.

### **Tools**

Mars Hawks are a common sight in Romani troupes, acting as stealthy scouts, as well as relays in hilly terrain (see p. ItW112). It's not unusual for Romani to wear Wearable (or have Implant) Virtual Interface units. Thus AI Allies/Dependants are also common. Beyond that, they often have access to most of the Expedition gear from pp. TS 151-153.

Many use variants of the Martian Heavy Rover (see p. ItW101) with solar panels (28kW on Mars, see p. ItW134) to travel continuously during the day at about 20 mph, or to move at full speed at improved fuel efficiency. These solar cells can recharge the power cells in 2.8 hours when parked. Some vehicles sport short-range lasercomms on the sensor turrets for private communication.

## **Martian Romani Template [75 points]**

**ST** 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [10], **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 11 [10].

**Primary Advantages:** Andraste [14], Charisma +1<sup>1</sup> [0], Cultural Adaptability [15], Eidetic Memory 1<sup>2</sup> [9], Language Talent +2<sup>1</sup> [0], Musical Ability +1 [1], and 10 cp in Absolute Direction [5], Absolute Timing [5], Appearance [varies], Charisma [5/level], Fashion Sense [5], Improved Eidetic Memory [+9], Pious [5], or Voice [10].

**Background Advantages:** Ally [varies], Ally Group (Romani) [varies], Contact [varies], Patron (Romani Troupe) [varies], Reputation [varies].

**Primary Disadvantages:** Congenial [-1], Discipline of Faith (Romani) [-5], Dreamer [-1], and Xenophilia [-5], and -10cp in Attentive [-1], Compulsion [varies], Curious [varies], Extravagance [-10], Imaginative [-1], increased Chummy [by -4], Gregarious [by -9], or Xenophilia (Strong) [by -10], Vow [varies].

**Background Disadvantages:** Dependent [varies], Enemy [varies], Reduced Wealth [varies], Reputation [varies].

**Primary Skills:** Bard M/A IQ [2], Bardic Lore M/H IQ-2 [1], Merchant M/A IQ<sup>1</sup> [1], Pop Culture (Mars) M/A IQ-1<sup>1</sup> [1] (see p. BD125), and 2cp in performance skills such as Filch (P/A), Fire Eating (P/A), Fortune Telling (M/A), Juggling (P/E), Musical Instrument<sup>3</sup> (M/H), Performance<sup>1</sup> (M/A), Poetry (M/A), and Sleight of Hand (P/H).

**Secondary Skills:** Acting M/A IQ<sup>1</sup> [1], Area Knowledge (various) M/E IQ+1<sup>1</sup> [1], Area Knowledge (various) M/E IQ+1<sup>1</sup> [1], Orienteering M/A IQ-2 [1/2], Survival (Martian Plains) M/A IQ-2 [1/2], and 1/2cp in one of Mechanic (Specialization) (M/A) or Animal Handling (general or Mars Hawk) (M/H).

**Background Skills:** Philosophy (Romani) M/H IQ-3 [1/2], and 1cp in unarmed skill(s), such as Karate (P/H), Judo (P/H), Boxing (P/A), or Brawling (P/E), 1cp in ranged weapon skill(s) such as Guns (P/E) or Beam Weapons (Electrolaser) (P/E), and 1cp in improving these skills, or in a melee skill such as Short Staff (P/H), Knife (P/E) or Tonfa (P/H).

**Cinematic Skills (B175):** Detective! or Music!.

**Languages<sup>1</sup>:** Cantonese M/A IQ+1 [1], English M/A IQ+1 [1], Romani (native) IQ+2 [0], and 1cp in one or two other Language(s).

<sup>1</sup> Includes bonus for Cultural Adaptability

<sup>2</sup> Historically Learnable, see p. F128 (4e)

<sup>3</sup> Includes bonus for Musical Ability

## Example Character:

### Piedro Momiji a.k.a. "The Maestro of the Sands" [100 points]

If one were to enter any small Martian town and ask the local entertaining community about "an old Romani," they will know someone like that. No one will know exactly when the wanderer arrived on Mars, but it has been a long time. Some say that he served in a military, while others claim that he was part of a relief force. All agree that such a man as Piedro has a good sense of humor; he is difficult to anger. As a guest, he will eat any food presented to him, as long as the hosts eat the same food without needing biomods. His watch and assorted scars have various tales regarding how he acquired them (some conflicting, but all are entertaining and educational). Unfortunately, his old age is catching up to him, starting with his fortitude and hearing, although the latter is still as acute as an ordinary man's. His nanomods are gifts from just a few of the people whose lives he has touched over the decades. His NAI, "Bastien," has been in his VIG for years, and can play accompaniment if needed, but is otherwise mute. It is an evolved "CG Faraday" (see p. PF57), with Music and First Aid skills instead of Piloting and Sensor skills.

**The Truth:** Growing up in China as the only child of European parents, Piedro was exposed to a number of cultures as they were moving from city to city. He became an outspoken student during the time when Mars was seen as a penal colony. After arriving on the Red Planet, he set out away from Chinese territory and discovered he liked to travel. As such, he has never returned to the Chinese cities of New Shanghai and Haiyuan. Although his Andraste biomod was not of his own choice, the freedom it brings is cherished by his people.

**Quotes:** "I'm getting too old for this sort of thing."

"That is a story that began a long time ago, on a planet far, far away . . ."

"In the light of the many moons man hath wrought and afix'd in the heavens . . ."

"Real communication is done in person!"

Piedro appears as an older man with tied-back shoulder-length gray hair, and a well-trimmed beard (both often stained with Mars-dust). He usually wears a bardic tunic, baggy pants, two golden ear rings, and carries a silver pocket watch (Mars time) in his breast pocket and a smile on his face.

*Information is in Mars units; Terran units are in parentheses.*

**Apparent Age (years):** ~32 (60)

**Approximate Age (years):** ~43 (80)

**Height:** 5'11"

**Weight (lbs):** 57 (150)

**Race:** Human, European, mixed.

**Handedness:** Left

**ST** 9 [-10]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 9 [-10].

Dmg: 1d (thr), 1d+1 (sw) (Boxing); Speed 5.25; Move 8 (5) (See p. ItW 33); Dodge 5/6 from Boxing; Parry 8 (Boxing).

***Advantages:***

Ally (AI, Bastien, Always, 75cp) [0]  
 Charisma +2<sup>3</sup> [5]  
 Cultural Adaptability [15]  
 Eidetic Memory 1 [9]  
 Independent Income (Music Royalties) [5]  
 Language Talent +3<sup>3</sup> [2]  
 Musical Ability +3 [3]  
 Reputation (Wise and Honest +3, Small Class, Always) [5]  
 Reputation (Good Musician +2, Large Class, Sometimes) [3]  
 Voice [10].

***Disadvantages:***

Bad Back [-25]  
 Delusion (Not hard of hearing) [-5]  
 Discipline of Faith (Romani Tradition) [-5]  
 Hard of Hearing [-10]  
 Secret (Exile) [-5]  
 Skinny [-5]  
 Xenophilia (Strong) [-15].

***Quirks:***

Attentive  
 Imaginative  
 Responsive  
 Removes ear rings before a fight  
 Tries to avoid real-time electronic communication [-5].

***Biomods:***

Andraste (\$14,000) [14]  
 Liver Upgrade (\$10,000) [10]  
 Tetrachromatism (\$500, see p. ItW 99) [0].  
 Nanomods (see p. TS165):  
 Artery Cleaners (\$5,000) [0]  
 Carcinophages (\$7,500) [3]  
 DNA Repair (\$10,000) [4]  
 Immune Machines 2 (\$5,000) [5]  
 Pore Cleaners (\$500) [0]  
 Tooth Cleaner (\$1,000) [0].

***Skills:***

Acting-12<sup>3</sup> M/A [1]  
 Animal Handling-11 M/H [1]  
 Animal Handling (Mars Goat)-15/9 M/H [1/2]  
 Animal Handling (Mars Hawk)-15/9 M/H [1/2]  
 Appreciate Beauty (Music)-16/10<sup>3</sup> M/V [1]  
 Area Knowledge (Marinaris)-13<sup>3</sup> M/E [1/2]  
 Area Knowledge (Martian Outback)-15<sup>3</sup> M/E [2]  
 Area Knowledge (Sinai)-14<sup>3</sup> M/E [1]

Area Knowledge (Xanthe)-14<sup>3</sup> M/E [1]  
 Bard-16<sup>3,6</sup> M/A [2]  
 Bardic Lore-11 M/H IQ-1 [1]  
 Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-14<sup>1</sup> P/E [1]  
 Boating (Powerboat)-10 P/A [1/2]  
 Body Language-9 M/H [1/2]  
 Boxing-12 P/A [2]  
 Carousing-9<sup>3</sup> M/A (HT) [2]  
 Computer Operation-13 M/E [1]  
 Conducting-15<sup>5</sup> M/A [1]  
 Dancing-12 P/A [2]  
 Detect Lies-11 M/H [1]  
 Diplomacy-15<sup>2,3,6</sup> M/H [1/2]  
 Driving (Automobile)-12 P/E [1]  
 Fast-Draw (dual remove ear rings)-13 P/E [2]  
 First Aid-12 M/E [1/2]  
 Gambling-13<sup>3</sup> M/A [1]  
 Games (LARP)-13 M/E [1/2]  
 Guns (Pistol)-13<sup>1</sup> P/E [1/2]  
 Heraldry (Martian Travel)-11<sup>7</sup> M/A [1/2]  
 Holdout-11 M/A [1/2]  
 Lip Reading-12 M/A [1]  
 Merchant-14<sup>3</sup> M/A [2]  
 Musical Composition-14<sup>5</sup> M/H [1/2]  
 Musical Instrument (Flute)-15<sup>5</sup> M/H [1]  
 Musical Instrument (Guitar)-14<sup>5</sup> M/H [1/2]  
 Musical Instrument (Lute)-14<sup>5</sup> M/H [1/2]  
 Musical Instrument (Piano)-14<sup>5</sup> M/H [1/2]  
 Musical Instrument (Violin)-16<sup>5</sup> M/H [2]  
 Naturalist (Mars)-11 M/H [1]  
 Orienteering-12 M/A [1]  
 Performance-17<sup>2,3,6</sup> M/H [2]  
 Philosophy (Aeromancy)-10 M/H [1/2]  
 Philosophy (Romani)-12 M/H [2]  
 Poetry-11 M/A [1/2]  
 Pop Culture (Mars)-14<sup>3</sup> M/A [2]  
 Savoir-Faire-16<sup>3,6</sup> M/E [1]  
 Singing-16<sup>5,6</sup> (HT) P/E [2]  
 Streetwise-12 M/A [1]  
 Survival (Mars, Desert)-11 M/A [1/2]  
 Survival (Mars, Plains)-12 M/A [1]  
 Swimming-10 P/E [1/2]  
 Teaching-13<sup>3</sup> M/A [1].

### ***Languages<sup>4</sup>:***

Cantonese-15 M/A [1]  
 English-15 M/A [1]  
 Japanese-14 M/A [1/2]  
 Mandarin-14 M/A [1/2]  
 Romani (Native) 16 [0]  
 Spanish-14 M/A [1/2].

- <sup>1</sup> Includes +2 for IQ
- <sup>2</sup> Includes +2 for Charisma
- <sup>3</sup> Includes +1 for Cultural Adaptability (other than <sup>2</sup> and <sup>4</sup>)
- <sup>4</sup> Includes +3 for Language Talent
- <sup>5</sup> Includes +3 for Music Ability
- <sup>6</sup> Includes +2 for Voice
- <sup>7</sup> Does *not* include +1 from Tetrachromatism (e.g. for sigils designed by others with this biomod.)

**Equipment:** Distributed Virtual Interface Glasses with integral compass, GPS, and Teleview ×4 (0.2 lbs, \$2,100), Medkit (1 lb, \$150), Musical Instruments, hand-made or custom 3D printer models: flutes, a guitar, and a violin.

## Adventure Seeds

**"So You Need a Guide?":** They have a basic map to a "Martian temple"/lost mine/crashed ship/meteorite. They need a vehicle to get there and going to a normal rental agency will attract unwanted attention.

**For a Song:** An old man with a kindly face has been asking about the group. The adventurers have a reputation for accomplishing just the thing he needs solved. In fact, he seems to know a lot of information about the abilities and resources of the group, and has a job that requires all their talents . . .

**Guanxi:** The old man's violin is broken on a PC's behalf (perhaps to save him from a mugger), and now a debt is owed, which can be repaid by finding him a new one . . . (see p. ItW 40)

**These are not the (Corporate) Drones You're Looking For:** PCs need to sneak through an area undetected, and what better way is there than disguised as Gypsies? In order for the Romani to honestly be able to vouch for them as "brothers," they will need to try to fit in early in the trip . . .

**Lost and Found:** The PCs are looking for someone, and the "wandering Gypsy" may have seen him, but the potential informant has already left. Once tracked down, he has only heard about him in the previous port of call, but knows someone *two* ports ago that had seen him . . . Of course, he/she/it doesn't have a phone number.

**Map Quest:** The adventurers are hired to chart an area to look for minerals, a lost base, or Ares Conspiracy factory. This old man has actually been there!

**Horse Races?** Due to the interference of the heroes, a Romani is hurt during a juggling competition, and can no longer race. One PC must go on in that performer's stead . . .

**Persecuted?:** A Mars Development Corps security force is leaning on a youth, but the troupe has medical supplies needed in a remote community. The heroes are asked to be in one of two places. They could wait for him to be released, and then catch up to the Troupe. The other alternative is a breakneck race across the Martian wilderness to a volatile, quarantined Isolate community.

**The Show Must Go On:** The Romani are hosting a benefit concert in a medium-sized settlement. The problem is that someone is trying to spoil the fun. While all the actors are performing (or otherwise occupied in the project), someone is setting fires and sabotaging equipment. So far no one has been hurt, but Piedro asks the PCs to find out who, and why. He hints that it would be appreciated if the culprit could be given to them to turn over to the authorities . . .

**The Wrath of the Collector:** The party is contracted to persuade a "crazy old man" to part with an antique violin, in any way that does not damage the instrument . . .

What the collector neglected to mention is that there are other bounty hunter teams after the violin. Their employers are all seeking a microchip that was secretly planted in it.

## Variants

**Horror:** Add Hidden Lore-12 M/H [2], Occultism-12 M/H [2], and Scrounging-12 M/A [1], add perhaps Unattractive [-5] and this man could be a source of information on the weirdness. If magic is available, consider the Ritual Magic paths of Knowledge, Dreams, Nature, and/or Luck.

**Pulp:** Replace the rovers with large (ex-military?) trucks, and change the transhuman skills to 1920s skills such as Languages, Accounting and Conspiracy Theory.

**Western:** A memorably sight in an Old West campaign may be cowboys encountering a colorfully painted horse (or camel)-driven wagon. Convert as per Pulp, swapping vehicle skills for Packing, Animal Handling (specialty), Veterinarian, and Teamster.

**Fantasy:** As above, but convert Guns to Crossbow.

**Space:** Fusion-powered FTL and total Life support systems mean that travelers no longer need raw resources to survive. On the other extreme, the Romani may well have ships of the smallest FTL configuration possible, so they could *live* anywhere they wanted to.

## Links

### *Pyramid*

- [Case of the Unlucky Stradivarius](#) by Jeff Siadek
- [Circus Maximus](#) by Stephen Dedman
- Fields of Mars (link to <http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/login/article.html?id=542>) (with deck plans) by James L. Cambias
- "Hummer" (link to <http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/login/article.html?id=3105>) by Kenneth Peters
- The Musical Clue (link to <http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/login/article.html?id=4892>) by David Morgan-Mar

- Noctis Labyrinthus(link to <http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/login/article.html?id=2893>) (DN: Mars) by James L. Cambias
- Transhuman Martial Arts(link to <http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/login/article.html?id=4582>) by Peter V. Dell'Orto & Werner H. Hartmann

## Links

- A Decorated Bus (link to <http://www.asienhaus.org/galerie/lkws/english/lkw.htm>)
- Evil Dr. Ganymede's Transhuman Mars Maps (link to <http://www.evildrganymede.net/rpg/th/ths.htm>) (Touted as more up to date than In The Well.)
- Timeline of Romani History 400BC to 1997 (link to <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/timeline.htm>)
- Romani History(link to <http://www.romani.org/local/romhist.html>)

## Media

- *Total Recall*

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