

The Marotians

Background

People

The Marotians are the least imposing physically of the civilized peoples. They tend to be shorter and thinner than their tribal brethren, although they have much more variation in skin, hair and eye color.

Marotians tend to dress as fashionably as they can afford, and they tend to measure others by their knowledge of current events and fashion. Their clothing and jewelry are gaudy, and they tend to dress in bright colors with lots of pointless layers, padding and accessories.

They tend to favor things which look good over things which work well, and they are prone to misjudge style for substance. Even in the fighting arts, they choose to use rapier and dagger rather than heavier swords. Very few Marotians are skilled with the bow, but more know the crossbow. They do not usually wear any armor other than leather. It is considered a sign of weakness to hide behind even a simple shield.

History

The origins of Marotia are veiled in secrecy and only a handful of academic and political leaders know more than what is given below. It should be noted that only the Marotians have a "state history"; the other civilized people basically have only one version of their history.

In the State history, Marotia was one of two powerful countries located on the continent of Marotia. When the change came, their leaders took them into the mountains for safety from the growing threat of the Changed world. Despite pleas from the Emperor, the other kingdom scoffed and refused to join the Marotians. Since that time, the other kingdom has returned to the forest, while the Marotians have flourished, proof that they should have taken the Marotians advice to begin with.

Culture

The Marotians are obsessed with knowledge and culture, especially their own. They consider themselves to be head and shoulders above the rest of the people of Torok by dint of their superior intelligence and lifestyle. They feel only slightly threatened by the Forest below, although very few of them would ever willingly enter it. Their primary rivalry is between cities, guilds and clubs, the maintenance of all of which are more important to them than their empire. While outsiders identify them all as Marotians, the Marotians identify themselves as Dalishites, Marovians, Scientists, or by some other geographic or social distinction. They rest secure in the knowledge that their empire is safe and therefore they move on to other goals.

Marotians believe that ability should be the judge of a person's worth, not birth or any other factor (although in practice, friends in high places can be quite handy). Every Marotian strives to identify one area at which he can excel and become a master. For some Marotians this means the study of a science or craft while others devote themselves to more martial activities. Marotians favor the use of fencing weapons and firearms as both provide more testimony to skill than claymores and bows.

Government

The Marotian empire is composed of four cities, each of which is presided over by a Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor is assisted in his task by the "Council of Eight", eight men selected for their skill at specific arts and known as ministers. Although formally the cities are united under the Emperor of Torok, unofficially there is a great deal of competition between them, mostly for the limited resources available. In dire emergencies, the emperor could force two cities to trade, but that has not happened in almost fifty years.

The eight ministers of each city act as advisers to the lord mayor and can, by a three-fourths vote, overrule his decision. The ministers and their duties are:

War - Generally considered one of the least important of the ministries, this one is appointed by the Emperor and is often a political puppet. Unfortunately, since all appointees of the Emperor serve for life, there is little that can be done to replace a bad minister of war. In theory, the Minister of War gathers intelligence about external threats to the city and the empire and trains troops to counter them. In practice, there is little threat to the empire itself and so the minister of war usually has only his household guard to command. He frequently relies on the other ministers for his threat assessments as well, making him largely redundant.

Trade - The Minister of Trade oversees all trade agreements with other cities and other races. He can impose and collect taxes as needed and relies on the Minister of Security to provide him with troops to collect taxes if needed. He works with the Minister of Travel to regulate who can enter and leave the City.

Magic - The Minister of Magic oversees magical activity within the city and provides the council with advice on the latest developments in magic. He may also read occasional portents to determine the city's future.

Religion - The Minister of Religion works with the Minister of Magic to regulate magic, but he also oversees the relationship of the city with the gods. He leads many important civic ceremonies and arranges for appropriate priests to preside over other ceremonies as required. He too is sometimes called upon to divine the future.

Security - The Minister of Security is responsible for protecting the town from internal threats. He oversees the town guard and is expected to know about and resolve any criminal activity in the town. He also works with the Ministers of Travel and Trade to keep smugglers to a minimum.

Science - The minister of science oversees scientific activity within the city. He has control of licensing and of a good deal of funding so that most researchers must cooperate with him. In some cases, he may have a network of spies working for him who track renegades in his own city as well as the efforts of other cities.

Travel - The minister of travel issues permits for people to enter and leave the city. He also has charge of maintaining some of the trade routes from city to city, a task he shares with the ministers of war and trade.

Crafting - The minister of crafts acts as the guild leader for all craftsmen in town. It is his job to see that their interests are represented and to make sure that they are paying requisite fees and licenses. He is frequently in charge of relations with the dwarves, who may be the primary crafters of a city.

Settlements

There are currently four cities and three outposts in the Marotian empire, each of which is slightly different in flavor than the others. These differences are caused by rivalries with other cities and by local variations in available products. In general, the older cities are better established and more important to the empire, but not everyone would agree.

Marovia - the capital city and the seat of the empire. With nearly 5,000 citizens and another 1000 transients, this is certainly the Mecca of Marotian civilization. The best Marotians always make their way here to prove their skills against their equals. Few Marotians are happy being the big fish in a small pond. Ruled over by the emperor himself, the capital is unquestionably the most important city in the empire.

Dalish - the second city of the empire, located only a day's travel away by balloon, the Dalishites consider themselves the up and comers of the empire. They believe that the Marovians are staid in their ways and bound by politics. There are about 2,500 people in Dalish, most of them native-born.

Garleth - the Garlethians are the third city of the empire, but they are not as important as they once were. They were established primarily as a mining operation to retrieve the rocks which make hydrogen. The discovery of another process to make hydrogen has left them as a backwater. There are about 500 citizens and more depart every month.

Farvoia - the Farvans are residents of the empire's fourth oldest city, nearly three days travel from the capital. They have a more lawless reputation than most cities and their 1000 citizens frequently encounter members of other races. Of the four cities, their citizens are the most respectful of the other civilized peoples.

Crossroads - the most famous of the outposts, Crossroads is actually built on platforms in the Forest. Although the Marotians claim it as their own, the Wanak had much to do with its construction and are commonly found there. Crossroads is the place to go to find things that might not be available anywhere else, whether legal or illegal. The outpost has about 200 permanent residents and at least that many transients at any time. It has a rich blend of cultures and is as close to a melting pot as the world of Torok can come.

Relic - This outpost has a serious archeological bent, a science not well-liked in the halls of Marotian academies. The population is small, but it is composed of a nearly equal mix of Marotians and tribals. This is the outpost where one is most likely to meet a member of the K 'Pak people.

Technology

Marotian technology is the best in the world and their craftsmen are second only to dwarves in their skill (and only in some areas). They have developed airships with lift by helium and propelled by pedal-driven fans. Their culture has progressed beyond the use of metal armors and they are in a late renaissance state of technology. Some Marotians have even discovered black-powder and weapons based on gunpowder are becoming increasingly common. Their medical knowledge, while no rival for modern medicine, is decent, and their doctors actually heal more patients than they kill.

There are several fields of study in which Marotians are on the verge of breakthroughs. In some cases, the breakthroughs are made and the acceptance is forthcoming. Currently, many Marotian scientists are working on the development of new flying ships, improving hand guns, and counteracting the effects of the change. They also have a smaller desire to create new food sources and to enhance the efficiencies of those which exist.

Arts

For the Marotians, art is like a contest. Wealthy Marotians compete for the best artworks and the best artists. Many nobles have one or more artists on retainer, giving them the first chance at new works. Marotians are also interested in collecting pre-Change artwork (although it is technically illegal to own such items); other collectors specialize in the works of a particular artists or group of artists (like Wanak).

Musically, the Marotians are fairly advanced as well. While ballads and other accompanied music are still popular, the current craze is for instrumental compositions involving groups of 6 or 8 musicians at a time. Dancing is also very popular and the ability to dance well often stands one in good stead socially.

Leisure and Recreation

Marotians pursue a wide variety of recreational activities, from spectator sports to studying. The most popular game in Marotia is Kehlal, a chess-like game for two players. Marotians are also fond of duels (as long as they aren't too bloody), and many fencing academies spar each week in a variety of informal leagues.

The most popular recreational activity in Marotia though, is gossiping. Every Marotian loves to know the business of every other Marotian, even if they don't know that person. 'Ille goal is to know as much about as many people as possible, so you can present the image of knowing at least something about everything.

Fashion

Marotians spend a good deal of their time on fashion, and men and women both dress in bright colors with gaudy (by other races standards) jewelry. Most Marotians try to buy at least one new item of clothing each month, and the wealthy sometimes buy new clothing every day. Any rich man will have a personal tailor, and all but the poorest Marotians will have a relationship with a local tailor.

Marotians consider it very important to be on the cutting edge of fashion all the time, and what is fashionable changes at least weekly and sometimes more often. Likewise, Marotians are very concerned with hair and hairstyles. Depending on the week and the city, men should have their hair long or short with or without beards, mustaches and goatees. Women's hair is usually long, but it may need to be up, a simple fall, bound, braided, etc.

Politics

Another favorite Marotian activity is politics. They love the intrigues involved and pride themselves on knowing who did what to whom and why. Most Marotians have no idea of the real politics of their kingdom or city; instead they believe the rumors they hear. Most of the rumors are not so much politics as infighting. The various ministers of a city don't always agree with each other and some of the leading merchants and citizens of a town may also have their own ideas.

Rarely, true politics will escape the council meetings, and everyone will know what's going on. In these cases, the council members are usually quick to find the source of the rumor and stifle him or her (sometimes permanently).

Societies, Orders & Groups

The Marotians love to join clubs of all kinds. This is probably a side effect of their social mobility — without distinct classes, they are inclined to band together based on common interests or desires to promote social stability. Some of the types of clubs and associations a Marotian could join include:

Academies - an academy could be the place where a character learned a particular Skill or where he continues to learn it or serves as a professor. The skill involved could range from fencing to astronomy. Members of different academies may have strong rivalries or alliances with other groups devoted to the same ideals. They frequently have contests to pit the skills of one academy against those of another.

Social Clubs - basically, these clubs allow Marotians to spend time with other Marotians with similar ideas about religion, politics, or race relations or just at-similar points in their careers. Social clubs are not as prone to rivalry as other clubs, although they do sometimes debate or even despise other clubs.

Schools - Schools are similar to academies except that a school usually provided the Marotians with basic training. Even if no longer active in the school, loyalties may remain and the school may leave a mark based on its own style.

Guilds - guilds are groups of people practicing a specific trade. They aren't the same as academies because their members generally earn a living plying the skill involved. Members of rival schools or academies could be members of the same guild.

The names of these organizations are highly variable. Academies and Schools tend to name a specific aspect that defines them (The Heliocentric Order of Astronomers) or the name of their founder. Guilds usually name the skill without much fanfare, and social clubs tend to have flowery and often bizarre names.

Many of these organizations provide services to their members. Social clubs tend to have clubhouses or taverns at which members can drink cheaply or stay for short durations. Guilds and academies may help members find work or training. Fellow members will often look the other way or offer a hand up to members of their own clubs, especially social groups.

Religion

The Marotians pay homage to a pantheon of only six gods, although there were once more. Over time, they have combined several gods and forgotten or forsaken others. They are not a very religious people in general and tend to treat their church as a social club as much as anything else. They do still observe certain civic ceremonies and rituals, but these are valued as much for the time away from work as for any true religious observance. Only about ten percent of all Marotians involved in the clergy can cast any spells at all; for the rest, the clerical life offers a chance to study and grow and to live a life as prescribed by their church. The gods of the Marotians are:

Dwyer the Defender - the leader of the gods. His spheres include leadership, law and the safety of the common people. He is venerated at two annual festivals and is said to have personally guided the ancient Maro to their current location. His priests dedicate themselves to the defense of hearth and home and to the making and sometimes enforcing of laws which keep people safe.

Cahalla the trickster - the god of nature and the change. He is seen as an enemy of the other gods who conspires against their works and must be placated. His priests are pitied for it is their job to question the way of things. Sometimes they make great scientific breakthroughs, but most often they are just annoying.

Salatra - Salatra is seen as the patron of humanity and the arts. She is the wife of Dwyer, and she helps him by creating new technology and discovering new ways of doing things. She is sometimes associated with Cahalla whom some say she had an affair with, but this is denied by her priests. Her priests are scholars, dedicated to the creation of new ideas and technologies, whether practical or not. They run many of the academies of Maro.

Kravak - the mountain king is actually a dwarven god venerated by some of the peoples of Marotia. They have changed him to be the brother of Dwyer and to have a more human guise. He is the provider and the maker, the master craftsman and farmer. His priests are craftsman and farmers and scholars of such techniques. Many of them are guild members.

Lydia - the air mistress is also the goddess of mystery. She represents the element of chance which is not good or evil but simply is. She is associated with Cahalla, some say they are married, while others claim they are brother and sister. Her priests are few, and they are dedicated to travel and to the study of weather.

Gades - the earth mother. Still regarded as the queen of fertility, the goddess of life and of love, she is seen as having been duped by Cahalla into welcoming the change. She is believed to be the wife of Kravak who would do anything to restore her former glory. Her priests are expected to serve as midwives and officiate at marriages. Her favor is invoked at the beginning of things and when one is in need of love.

Passages

Marotians do not celebrate passages in the same way as their less civilized brethren. They consider birthdays and wedding anniversaries to be personal events and each Marotian is free to celebrate them (or not celebrate them) as he or she sees fit. Most Marotians throw a big party on the 16th birthday of their children, and each spring usually finds a number of balls intended to introduce young couples, but there aren't the sort of ceremonies and rituals that the other races hold.

Playing a Marotian Character

Common Roles

Marotians fill a variety of roles in an adventuring party, depending primarily on their character class. Most Marotians consider only themselves or another Marotian qualified to serve as leader, and they will be reluctant to cede this role to any other character, especially a tribal. They are generally the best educated party members and so may prove useful in solving riddles and similar activities.

Most Marotians are poor planners in combat, content to use their abilities to overcome obstacles as they arise. In political conflicts however, they do very well. Despite their disdain for the other races, they have at least a passable understanding of diplomacy and can usually do well in negotiations and similar situations.

Adventuring Archetypes

There are almost as many reasons for adventuring as there are Marotian adventurers, but some of the most common are listed below:

Second Son — Marotians who stand to inherit little from their fathers often become adventurers. This affords them a chance to prove themselves and to gain some money and respect they might otherwise do without.

Brash Youth — As in most races, there are always those who chafe against the expectations of their parents and families. Many of them become adventurers. Most brash youth either mature into another kind of character or eventually mellow and return home.

The Quest — Some Marotians adventure in search of the glorious quest, hoping to make a name for themselves and thus secure power and prestige in Marotian society.

Curiosity — while not particularly interested in the Forest, many Marotians are keenly interested in other cities and thus become adventurers for the travel opportunities. Some of these characters are just interested in seeing the world, others are pursuing specific kinds of knowledge (fighting or craft techniques, new spells, etc.).

Roleplaying Hints

Rest assured that your character is smarter than all the others in the party, with the possible exception of one or two of the other Marotians. In all cases, you should treat the other races as being at least slightly undesirable. You are convinced that anything not designed by a Marotian is doomed to fail someday.

You are keenly interested in those around you and in what they are doing. You like to gossip and swap stories and at least half of what you say is true. Your clothing and gear are very expensive and fashionable, and you don't like to see it get dirty or marred. You are not impressed with the Forest or its denizens, although you've probably never been there.

Relations

Dwarves — you like the little runts and you're glad they're afraid of the world. You think they are obedient servants and you'd rather be with one of them than any of the other races.

Avariel — you don't understand their motivation for doing so, but the bird-men seem okay. Their flying skills make them very useful for defending your city and ship, so you can overlook their zeal for combat.

Wanak — it's just a shame they're so dumb; some of their artwork is nice and if they were a bit brighter, they might be useful as dock handlers or something.

Tribals — these plant-eating scum are going to be the end of the world as we know it. You'd rather not be near them, and you definitely don't want to touch one if you can help it.

Creating a Marotian Character

Naming Conventions

Marotians tend to have longish self-important names. Very few of them use nicknames, preferring instead their given names in all cases. Usually, their names are in two parts, a given and a surname. The surname is usually patronymic, although many Marotians travel incognito by creating new surnames. Occasionally, someone becomes known by an epithet (Sebastian the Plant-eater); about half relate to a positive quality or deed, the rest are negative.

Racial Abilities

Height: Marotian men begin at 60" tall and women at 59" tall. Both add 2d10 to determine final height.

Weight: Weight begins at 140 for men and 100 for women; both add 6d1() for final weight.

Age: Marotians begin play at 15 + 1d4 years of age. They typically live to be just over 100 years old.

Character Class

Marotians have the widest variety of character class options open to them. They may progress as fighters, mages, specialist mages, thieves or bards without limits. They may also become paladins or specialist priests but are then limited to I level. Additionally, only about 25% of them can actually cast spells (those who cannot, may spend the points normally used for spells in other areas). Necromancy and the undead are almost unheard of on Torok.

Equipment

Marotian characters have access to the weapons & armor as listed under the Renaissance (PO:C&T, 122) with the following exceptions:

- Bows, other than composite bows, are not available
- Any melee weapon of size L or speed S is considered "lower class"
- Lances are, of course, unknown.

- Armor is limited to leather or padded and a buckler shield at most.

Likewise, they have access to the Renaissance equipment list (DMG, p53,) with some exceptions as noted below:

- None of the listed animals or associated equipment are available.
- Waterborne vessels are not available.
- Ignore any weapons or armor entries on the table.

In addition, Marotians may be able to purchase flying ships and associated equipment; see the section on new equipment for details. They can also purchase most items-listed in Aurora's Equipment Guide, something other characters generally cannot do.

Marotian Legends, Heroes, Celebrities, and Landmarks