

DIOMÍN: STATE OF THE NATIONS VOLUME ONE THE GADIANTÍ AND HEARTHOM

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INTRODUCTION

*“Suppose I take a spurt, and mix
Among the wilds o’ Politics —
Electors and elected
Where dogs at Court (sad sons of bitches!)
Septennially a madness touches,
Till all the land’s infected.”*
- Robert Burns (1759-1796)

It is a fine thing to write a world. Trouble is, you are never truly finished. This is what we discovered when we wrote the Diomin Worldbook. There was so much left to tell — so very much that we left out. The only answer was to keep going; to delve deeper into each individual nation and tell you what lurks within their borders, within their scheming minds, and within their collective psyches.

What you now hold in your hands is an experiment. Rather than having the three original authors (Hyrum Savage, Chad Cunningham, and Chris Miller) write out the races, we posted a missive on the website, asking what sorts of things people wanted to see in a book of this kind. Once we received a response, we called up some of our favorite gamers and asked if they’d each like to take a race, flesh it out, and then share it with the rest of the world. Most of them were wary, and rightfully so. This was no small undertaking. The outline for the book weighed in at twenty-one pages, providing a daunting task to resolve, but the more we talked, the more they were drawn in.

Finally, after months of revision, hacking, arguing, and burning the midnight oil, we are proud to present this; the first of three volumes about the races of Diomin. Even though the races we outline here are based in our world, we want to emphasize that these races can be used in any world you like, or any world that you, yourself, create. Take them, use them, enjoy them, and above all, make them your own.

Christopher T. Miller
VP of Product Development
Tuesday, June 26, 2001

PREFACE: The Political World

*Politics is the art of looking for trouble,
finding it everywhere,
diagnosing it incorrectly
and applying the wrong remedies.
- Groucho Marx*

As nations age and grow in populous, the relationships between the people within tend to become more complex, as does the relationship between nations that share a world. Growth continues and borders begin to touch, sometimes causing a friction that will burst into flame unless lubricated with soothing words and brotherly deeds.

Perhaps it is simply human nature that oily words and inflammatory deeds are more common than those that would quench the fires of war. Perhaps then, it is that Peace is the goal, but conflict is ever the journey. In any case, we tend to find that the political and diplomatic situations between nations are a fascinating thing. They draw the imagination, the passions, and the intellect in a way few other pursuits do.

The pages in your hands display the portrait of a young world experiencing the first blush of true, continent-spanning political action. Since the Sundering, when the Gods fought and the Arak were split, there have been a great many wars. Each has always been isolated, usually just between two countries, never involving any more of the others. For the first time in the history of the world, the six major nations of Diomin are beginning to venture forth and have begun to interact with more than just their immediate neighbors. Trade agreements have been established as treaties are being drafted for the first time amongst the nations, making this a perfect time for spies to find greater employment. It is a dynamic time, one that is rife with potential conflict, where the slightest wrong move could set the whole of the world on fire.

We urge you to read on and discover what makes the nations unique. Learn how they feel about the others, and how the each nation reacts to one another. Take on the roles of the Gadianti Robber and the Hearthom Trader, and then look at the world with new eyes. Most of all, watch your back, friend, for not everyone is what he or she appear to be.

CHAPTER ONE - The Gadianti

May every day after today bring us good hunting. May every step we take be in the blood of our enemies.

—Jitaaz, first Voice of the Mother

OVERVIEW

The Gadianti are formerly members of the Tiger and Jaguar clans of the Arak, though they disdain being called by those names now. They prefer Raash and Zhuush, respectively, the names given them by Akish when she merged them with their former clan totems.

They are a race of Evil, practicing rites of sacrifice on an almost daily basis. They experiment on the innocent, making it standard practice to enslave the weak and those that they have captured in raids or in battle. Their ultimate goal is the domination of no less than the whole of Diomin.

Ecology

Gadianti Physiology

The Gadianti are a race that embodies feline power. They present as a merging of humanoid and feline traits, either Tiger (Raash) or Jaguar (Zuush). They are upright and lithe, giving them a sleekness and quickness of movement. Their bodies are covered in fur patterned from their totems, which helps them to stand strong in all but the most extreme weather. Because of this, Gadianti will usually not wear more than a loincloth, unless armored or wearing ceremonial robes.

A Gadianti's height is roughly equivalent to a standard human, although slightly shorter. On



average they stand around 6'0", but range from 5'4" to 6'2". Female Gadianti are only slightly smaller, averaging around 5'10", and ranging from 5'2" to 6'0". Their eye color ranges as well, much like a Human, from the deepest azure to the most vibrant amber and beyond. The major difference being that they are slit in a fashion similar to felines, allowing for exceptional vision at night.

All Gadianti have retractable claws within their hands and feet which are usable as weapons and add 1d3 damage on top of normal unarmed damage (1d3+Strength modifier). As well, members of the warrior caste (non-warriors do not train for this ability) can, on a successful Pounce (See appendix three), rake with their feet for 1d4 points (plus Strength modifier) from each foot. Wearing boots or other footwear negates this ability. Gadianti warriors gain this feat at first level as part of their training (a new Gadianti warrior character does not need to expend a feat slot to obtain Pounce).

Gadianti have tails similar to that of their former totems, which helps in their balance and is a factor in their racial Dexterity bonus of +2. Should a Gadianti lose his tail, his balance is changed and the bonus lessens to +1, until either his tail is magically restored or the warrior learns to compensate for the difference in their balance. This takes a length of time equal to the raising of 1 level or 3 months, whichever comes first. If a Gadianti has a Strength or Dexterity of 17 or higher, they can use their tail in an almost prehensile way. They are able to direct their tail in a deliberate fashion, though not able to pick up anything with it heavier than half a pound, and then only if the object is easily held, such as with an attached ring that the tail might loop through or such.

Those who have a prehensile tail are able to use a weapon known as a tihss, which means 'sting' or 'stinger'. The tihss is essentially a cap or clip that attaches to the end of the tail and has a needle set at the end. It deals only 1 point of damage (with no modifier due to Strength) on a successful hit (multiple and off-hand weapon penalties apply where applicable), but is usually coated in some kind of poison, depending on the preference of the user. The tihss comes in many shapes and styles, from rude cord and wooden contraptions to works of fine metal, and the style reflects the image of the user. Tihss are often worn as a fashionable accessory, even if the wearer hasn't the Dexterity to wield one as a weapon.

There are no physical differences between Raash and Zuush, other than their markings and subtle, cosmetic differences in their physiology. The only real differences between the two are cultural. Zuush, as their former Jaguar clan once was, are ruthless and bloodthirsty, and range from Chaotic Neutral to Neutral Evil (averaging at Chaotic Evil). Raash, on the other hand, are more controlled and tactical, and tend to run between Lawful Neutral (rarely) and Neutral Evil (averaging at Lawful Evil). Straight Neutrals are almost never found and are considered deviant from the Path. Those who show good tenancies are on a one-way trip to sacrifice and/or slavery.

The Mother's Merging of the Gadianti with their totem animals had some effect on their instincts. Other than an instinct for the hunt, the Gadianti also have an instinct to breed. This instinct has led to a policy of promiscuity among their people, and the concept of family was lost. To compensate for this, children are raised in groups, according to caste:

PRIEST CASTE

Children of priests are raised within the halls of the temples, by the priests themselves and their slaves. No one but those who raise them will ever see them until their 10th year, when they are deemed ready to be among the populous.

WARRIOR CASTE

After birth, the children are given over to the state and raised in what are called rearing grounds. There they are educated and trained to prepare them for their next step, becoming warriors.

SLAVE CASTE

Slaves are born and raised among their own, and are not carefully looked after unless their owners deem it warranted. They are kept healthy at a minimum of effort; they are not to be wasted, but efforts are not to be wasted on them, either.

Gadianti typically have 2-3 cubs at a time, and the gestation period is around 6 months. Maturity and adulthood begins at 13 or 14, and one that is lucky enough to each old age will typically reach 80 before passing on.

The Gadianti urge to breed also involves other races; males are encouraged to mate outside their race whenever possible. Due to their altered physiology, offspring produced from

mating with a non-Gadianti are usually hideous malformed beasts. These come in the form of mutated semi-Gadianti, amorphous things that die soon after childbirth if not before, or occasionally some monster or other foul creation. There are no patters to what might emerge. Gadianti males will often mate with non-Gadianti female slaves, who are tagged separately from the other slaves (see Slave Caste, page 12). Their offspring, if not useful in some other way, is sent to Adma for experimentation, alive if possible. Males will mate with non-Gadianti on raids just for the sheer pleasure of it, as well as the breeding of chaos in other lands. Women who birth these foul things have a 25% chance to live though the birth. Attempting to interfere with the pregnancy doubles the chance of killing the mother, unless Cure Disease and Dispel Magic are both used during the process. These spells are expensive and hard to come by in more remote villages, so the usual choices are either to kill the female before the ordeal or take chances with the pregnancy.

History/Legends

The following story, translated, is recited to all Gadianti cubs before they sleep, until their 10th year on the Path. The beginning stanza has become a common motto and war cry among the Gadianti.

We are the fire of the hunt. We are the quick breath of the hunted. We are the blood of the slain.

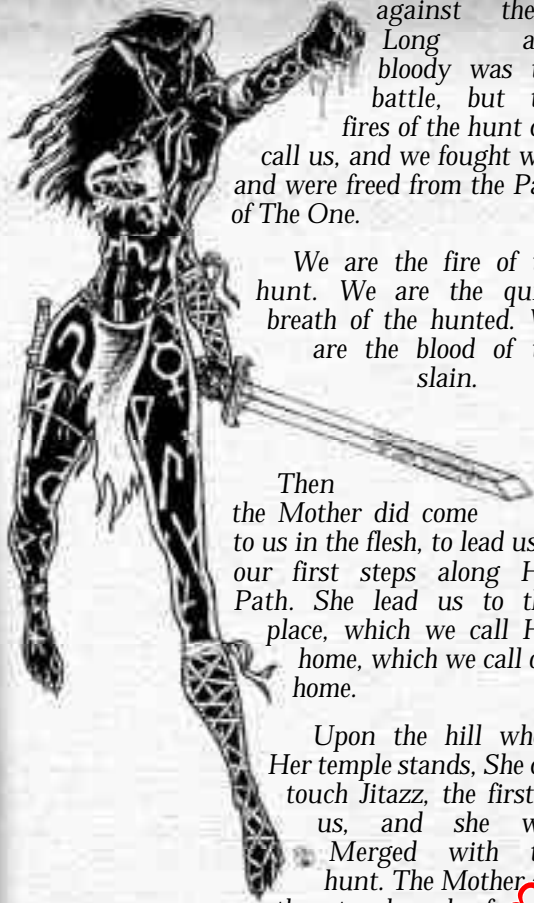
Before the Mother, we were without life. Before the Mother, we were without the hunt. Before the Mother, the Gods of Blindness made us to bow to them, and they spat upon us for our effort. We were forced along the Path of The One, forced to hear his lies, forced away from the hunt.

We are the fire of the hunt. We are the quick breath of the hunted. We are the blood of the slain.

But the Mother did come to us, speaking to us of life, of the hunt, of the Path. She did tell our elders of the truth, and Her Lantern did shine upon those lies of The One. Her lantern did show us the truth of the hunt, the truth of Her Path.

We are the fire of the hunt. We are the quick breath of the hunted. We are the blood of the slain.

The Lords of Shade did come to stand upon Diomin, cast out of the heavens for rebelling against the lies of The One. Those who chose to no longer bend to the Warriors of Blindness, did join the Lords



of Shade in battle against them. Long and bloody was the battle, but the fires of the hunt did call us, and we fought well and were freed from the Path of The One.

We are the fire of the hunt. We are the quick breath of the hunted. We are the blood of the slain.

Then the Mother did come to us in the flesh, to lead us to our first steps along Her Path. She lead us to this place, which we call Her home, which we call our home.

Upon the hill where Her temple stands, She did touch Jitazz, the first of us, and she was Merged with the hunt. The Mother did then touch each of us in turn, and we were Merged with the hunt.

We are the fire of the hunt. We are the quick breath of the hunted. We are the blood of the slain.

We are the hunters. All others are our prey.

The history of the Gadianti people, before being lead upon the true Path of Akish, is murky at best. Ancient texts speak of a time of darkness, when the will of The One and his lapdogs, the Warriors of Blindness, dominated Diomin.

It was during this time that the blessed goddess, Akish, visited among them, advising the shamans and their chief. She proffered knowledge on developing their hunting skills, so as to become more effective warriors. She showed them dangerous and frightful beasts upon which to hone their abilities. Soon, the battle skills of the Gadianti forefathers were unsurpassed, and they were the envy of all others.

This envy turned to jealousy, then to scorn, for they could not accept the beauty that was the hunt. As time passed, Akish professed to Her

chosen people that they were truly the strongest, finest warriors of Diomin, and that others were right to envy them. She told them that others would try to discredit them, for no one cares to be the lesser; they listened, and grew apart from the other clans.

Then came the time of the Sundering, when the gods warred with each other upon the very face of Diomin. Akish called upon Her people to rise and answer the call that came from within their blood, the call of the hunt. She bade them to strike back against those who would not let them be free to experience the divine nature of the kill. Those who would be called Raash, and those who would one day be Zuush, stood alongside Akish and joined in the war for their freedom.

Those who were weak with the influence of The One, who lacked a vision of the truth because of the Warriors of Blindness, fled to their cousins when they were not put down by word from Akish. Those who fought followed Akish to the south. A divine image then appeared in the sky, that of Cedron, He who leads the Lords of Shade, fighting a mighty battle with Barak, the most deceptive of the Warriors of Blindness. Barak used his tricks to best Cedron, and he sent the Lord hurdling to the earth. The lands shook, and a star fell from the sky, brought down by Cedron to stun Barak before a final blow could be struck. Cedron then disappeared, and Akish was stricken with a deep grief.

Akish then turned to Her followers and bade them to follow Her to their new land. Upon a hill shadowed by mountains, She told her people, for the first time, of the Path. She told them that the other peoples were unworthy to follow the Path, and that those who did not believe in the truth of the hunt would become the hunted. She told Her followers that they would be changed from those that they hunted, to become one with the hunt.

Akish then called forth Jitazz, she who would become the first Voice, bade her come close, and touched her with divine power. Jitazz was the first to be Merged, the first of the Raash, and was no longer connected with the peoples from which she came. Akish's power then spread to the others, and all of her people were Merged, all became Raash and Zuush, becoming reborn as children of Akish, the Mother.

There were those to which the transformation did not take well; they became deformed or mentally incapacitated. These were the first of the slave caste. Though able to breed, most all of the children of the newly formed caste were as their parents are, deformed or disabled in some form or fashion. It was assumed that something in