

## **APPENDIX B. WORLD PRIMER**

This is Crossroads. For your own reasons, this is where you have chosen to live. Maybe the life in the settlements was too difficult for you. Farming and fending off the many enemies the settlements encounter didn't leave you enough time to pursue the things that interested you. Perhaps the hustle and bustle of the big cities of Tangel, Barulis or Sarth left you feeling drained. Or maybe their politics didn't agree with you. The smaller towns may have been nice, but even after the drought, not everyone gets along. Maybe that girl's father just didn't like your sort, or your father wanted you to marry that boy you just couldn't stand. Maybe you're just waiting to get hired on to the next trade caravan that comes through, or you've decided this would be an ideal location to set-up your own caravan. Whatever your reasoning is, this is where you are. No matter where you came from, there are certain things that everyone in Ashriya knows. Here is a brief explanation of the political and geographic regions of Ashriya.

### **CIVILIZATION**

**Derrickham:** A kingdom lead by Derrick Calpol, Derrickham was formally established in 56 AR. The main city of Derrickham is Crossroads. The other major areas are The Garden, the Outpost, and Derrickham Keep, the home of King Derrick. The exact borders of Derrickham are unknown, partly due to the nature of the surrounding Glibben Wood.

**Crossroads:** The settlement of Crossroads was founded in 40 AR. It was established by a trader named Ezgart, who decided to set up a tavern and trading post in a location that would make travel easier for all. Others came to settle as time passed, and the settlement is slowly beginning to grow. Crossroads is the only known settlement in the Glibben Wood. Just on the western fringe of the Wood, no one is really sure why the Glibben allow this town to stand, but no one is complaining.

**The Garden:** A farming community just outside of the western edge of the Glibben Wood managed to survive on the fringe of the Wild Lands for many years. When the Karo-ya attacks grew too strong, they sought protection from Crossroads and are now part of Derrickham. They are lead by the former ambassador from Crossroads, Titus.

**The Outpost:** This town formed at the southern mouth of the passage through the Glibben Wood. Long renowned for its lawlessness, the Outpost joined Derrickham in 57 AR, through the political maneuvering of Highlord Sorrenson. It is yet to be seen if the town will be cleaned up at all, but there are still regular reports of highwayman attacking caravans outside of the Outpost.

**Tangel:** The current ruler of the southern city of Tangel is King Tasamid IV. The people are unsure of his aims or goals, but believe he could lead the Commonwealth to greater glory than they ever dreamed of. The city had prospered under the leadership of the former ruler, King Lusic III, who founded the Commonwealth. Sitting on an underground spring, Tangel has maintained a strong hand in Ashriya for generations. Sharolia and Krasslig joined the Commonwealth to further establish their place in society. Totansville had joined the Commonwealth shortly before its destruction.

**Sharolia:** One of the smaller towns of the Commonwealth, with his ten-year term as the Leader of Sharolia expiring in 62 AR, Lavolius Karamaxig, a Haroc merchant, has been making political moves to strengthen his small town's power. The rumor mill believes that he is talking to

representatives from other towns. Some say he believes that it would cement Sharolia's position in the growing Commonwealth, while others believe he may be trying to move Sharolia out of the Commonwealth and establish a new union with other towns.

**Krasslig:** When the drought broke, many merchants came to Krasslig to make use of the facilities created by Togar Krasslig, an Elven furniture maker of great repute. As the trickle of Krasslig Kill grew into a river, more merchants and craftsmen made their way to Krasslig. Togar's son, Emblar, has been running the politics and economics of the town as his aging father continues to work on his craft. The town is now thriving as a center where caravans come to supply themselves with wares, while trading food and supplies from other towns.

**Barulis:** A thriving northern city run by a council of 9, lead by the council elected Speaker, Lorander, Barulis began a policy of aggressive annexation ever since the mid 20's AR. The first town to join the Barulan Empire was Singo, followed a few years later by Tamecht. The majority of diplomatic or commercial contacts for Singo and Tamecht must go through a Barulan official. The elite forces of Barulis are known as the Water Guard and are often sent to quell disturbances or defend any of the Imperial areas against intruders.

**Singo:** A quiet town to the northeast of Barulis, Singo has been growing steadily under the watchful eye of Barulis. They are predominantly a farming people who wish only for peace and live quite simply. No specific ruler leads the people of Singo as they defer to the Barulan Overseer.

**Tamecht:** To the southeast of Barulis, Tamecht grew into a popular trading spot for many of the people of Ashriya. They would often travel to Tamecht to sell their wares and avoid dealing directly with Barulis. Not much has changed, though the Barulan Overseer is now present on a daily basis and all trades are taxed with the proceeds going back to Barulis to aid in the defense and growth of the Empire.

**Daboran:** Nestled into the southern mountains of the Great Maw, a group of Haroc established a town during the drought to keep themselves out of the affairs of the rest of the world. With less of a need for water, they managed to horde what they could and trade it with others to add to the wealth of their city. They managed to collect a quantity of pre-drought artifacts and Ritika made inventions, which have made their town both comfortable and secure. They are very wary of outsiders, though it has been said that there are members of other races who live comfortably within the town. Caravans are often allowed into a specific area once a month for trade.

**Sarth:** Luso D'Sarth was known as a man of tactical genius and a strong arm. He was able to form a town out of a small settlement north of Daboran and just east of the Dragon's Maw. In the past year, the politics of Sarth have become quite strange. Luso has been issuing commands from his bedchamber and refuses to see any but his son, Sammis who then carries them out. Because of its location on the western fringe of the Wild Lands, Sarth is not a common stopping point for all but the most adventurous of traders. Formerly sending caravans to Crossroads on a semi-regular basis, trading for many of the best weapons, components and pickled vegetables that merchants can supply, they have recently closed their borders.

**Jast:** Once a town on the fringes of society, Jast was the first political body to establish ties with the Necropolis. Learning that they had nothing to fear from the Undead citizens, the people of Jast became the focal point of trade with the gigantic undead city and has flourished while the

Necropolis still stood. Jast is currently ruled by Sarth, who overtook the city after the Necropolis fell. Some rumors state that the annexation occurred with threat of arms, while others tell that (former King, now Lord Governor) Irwin Efficks willingly joined Sarth in fear that Barulis would follow the Undead refugees to Jast and destroy that city as they had the Necropolis.

**The Ruins of the Necropolis:** The ruins of the city of the undead lies in the farthest northern reaches of the known land, to the west of the Poison Sea. Once a well-ordered, wealthy city, the Necropolis was destroyed by Barulis in 57 AR. The undead of the Necropolis have fled throughout Ashriya and apparently lost what self-control they once had. The formerly civilized undead of the drought, have given way to fearsome hordes of twisted, maniacal living dead and scattered remnants of civilization searching for a new home.

**Alshambra:** Built on the ruins of the Dagon city of Totansville in 60 AR, Alshambra is ruled by King Laithe Sambrosa, a Vampyre who has declared Alshambra to be a haven for all undead, and is openly welcoming to anyone who wishes sanctuary. As Totansville was once a part of the Commonwealth of Tangel, those in Tangel believe this land should belong to them.

**The New Ilkasik Empire:** Founded about 51 AR, by an army from another world known as Ilkasik, the New Ilkasik Empire has grown to include races of Ashriya as well as those from Ilkasik. Led by Emperor Nakinishi, the N.I.E. has its base in the southwest of Ashriya and a force currently sitting at the opposite end of Ashriya by the base of Vidra's Passage.

**Settlements:** Throughout all of Ashriya, there are numerous settlements of people, which are independent and have a low population. Some increase in size and power while others simply disappear. Most adventurers who are not from a major city or town have a home settlement where they keep supplies or where their families live.

**Nomads:** In the time of the Dry Days, many of the people of Ashriya felt it was foolish to settle down and watch your supply of water dwindle, so they would constantly be on the move, taking what water they could and moving on. A strong warlord, who would exact tributes from any weaker groups his or her tribe came across, would lead the tribe. In the present day, few of these nomadic groups still wander Ashriya as the major cities extend their control and the Black Tower has risen in the Wild Lands.

**The Black Tower:** First discovered in the middle of the Wild Lands in 51 AR, very few know where the Black Tower came from. Rumors say that one of the strangers who came from another world built it. Wherever it came from, there are hordes of undead and beast creatures circling the tower on all sides.

**Merchant Caravans:** Since the Great Change, merchant caravans have been the main source for commerce and communication on Ashriya. Though there are some who are willing to travel in smaller groups, caravans provide greater protection for all who journey within. As Ashriya primarily has a barter economy, the caravans will often carry a wide variety of items with which to trade.

## **GEOGRAPHIC AREAS**

**Wild Lands** (central Ashriya): In the midst of the established societies of Ashriya lies the untamed wilderness of the Wild Lands. In this place, hordes of tribal cannibals live off of one

another and those who are foolish enough to attempt to shorten their trade route by traveling through this inhospitable region. Those who have managed to escape the cannibals, survive the lack of drinkable water and cross the Wild Lands have reported even great dangers, which exist in the form of monsters great and small. Few make the trip twice or are able to form coherent sentences after one trip.

**The Glibben Wood** (in the east, west of the Mists): In the final 50 years of the drought, a forest was discovered in the eastern portion of the known lands of Ashriya. How this immense forest could have remained undiscovered for so long or survived the Dry Years is unknown, though there is much speculation. Although this was considered a good sign, people quickly learned the Glibben Wood was inhabited by numerous races of intelligent creatures, whom seemed to have a magical quality about them. All were forbidden to cross through this forest until Ezgart's father established contact with them and opened his own personal caravan route through the forest.

**The Poison Sea** (in the north): Throughout the drought, the Poison Sea existed, taunting all who inhabited Ashriya. Not only was there an abundance of water there, but hideous monsters ravaged all who came near the shore of the sea. Those few who managed to get to the sea and take water back with them quickly found that the water was deadly to all who drank it. Even the purification of the greatest alchemists and mages couldn't make the water potable.

**Purity Lake** (south of the Poison Sea): Although it is clear that the water from Purity Lake stems from the Poison Sea, some process takes place between the two bodies of water which not only makes the water of Purity Lake drinkable, but also makes the ground around the lake particularly fertile. This has proven to be a huge boon for Barulis and Tamecht, which are situated along the lake.

**The Dragon's Maw** (in the west): The western mountains of Ashriya have long been a source of fear and wonder for the people who gaze upon it. Only the town of Daboran has managed to survive within the mountain range and Sarth is the only one willing to live in its shadow. It is said great beasts live within the mountains that no being would want to encounter even if they were willing to try to fight through the extreme colds of the only passable areas in the heights of the mountains. Few have tried to venture over the mountain range and none have ever returned.

**The Dead Zone** (in the southeast): nothing survives in this barren land between the Desert of Dread and the Mists of Durasis. Not even plants manage to survive. Every now and then, a foolish adventurer will try to penetrate into the Dead Zone, but none have ever returned.

**Desert of Dread** (in the southwest): The world still hasn't completely recovered from the drought and much of the world was like this desert a while ago. The greenery is slowly gaining ground and some settlements have popped up on the border as people have found some items buried in the desert sands from days before. The adventurous are willing to journey a day or two out into the desert, but find nothing but more desert. Those who go further are never heard from again.

**Mists of Durasis** (in the east): One of the few tales to survive the drought tells how a great ritualist named Durasis "left for the east" to explore with a small group. He returned ten years later, looking as if he had been away twice that time. Without a word, he and three strange looking men who came with him began a ritual, which lasted for more than a month. At the completion of the ritual, the mists began to grow and soon spread from north to south as far as

any could see. Durasis and the foreign men entered the mist without a word and were never seen again. To this day, no one knows what lies beyond the mists and those who have ventured to find out have never returned.

**Vidra's Passage** (in the northeast): Many explorers have attempted to chart as much of Ashriya as possible. It has only been since the end of the Great Drought that a concerted effort has been made to map the land, since previous maps are either destroyed or no longer applicable. In 49 AR, a young cartographer from Tamecht, named Vidra Jack, happened upon a space between the Poison Sea and the Mists of Durasis where a canyon actually stretches under the mists. Not knowing what was beyond, she declined to explore further, but the government of Barulis appears to be extremely interested in this new discovery.

## **PEOPLE AND CRITTERS**

**The Glibben:** The Glibben are a mystical race who are found primarily in the Glibben Wood. Though there have been rumors of Glibben throughout the ages, they had never been seen in a concentration, nor their existence confirmed, until the Glibben Wood was found. There are even more types of Glibben than there are of the common races of Ashriya. Some Glibben are never seen, but their touch is felt in many ways. Glibben have been known to be extremely curious, mischievous, friendly, mean, passive, hostile, helpful, etc. In other words, you never know what you'll get from a Glibben.

**Gitchee:** The most common of the Glibben, the Gitchee are found in all parts of the Glibben Wood where people have wandered. They embody all characteristics of the Glibben as a whole, so one can never anticipate the actions of a Gitchee.

**Dai'Haav:** Since the Glibben Wood sprang up in Ashriya, those who travel by or through it have found themselves ruthlessly attacked by a creature of great power. He has decimated groups who travel through, but there have been numerous stories of lone travelers who have come upon the creature, frozen in fear and watched it walk right by them. Few have ever claimed to kill a Dai'Haav and those who have are generally known to be liars and drunkards.

**Grey Messengers:** Throughout all records of Ashriya, there has been mention of the Grey Messengers. They are commonly considered to be messengers of the gods, channeling the will, and sometimes even the voices, of the gods to the people of the land. Few are foolish enough to strike at them, but those who do suffer the consequences for the rest of their lives if their lives aren't immediately taken. The Grey are often merely stand and watch the goings on of the world and it is thought that they are sending their knowledge back to the gods who can see and hear through the Greys' eyes.

**Karo-ya:** Humans have always been the most numerous of the races of Ashriya. At some time during the Arid Years, a large number found themselves situated in the Wild Lands. Overcome by hunger and thirst, they gained strength by feasting upon their kin. Presently, the Wild Lands are filled with uncountable numbers of these cannibalistic men and women who will swarm over travelers, invade towns and settlements and even battle and eat one another.

**Ezgart:** In the final of the Dry Days, Ezgart's father, Shantor (now deceased), was a highly successful merchant. Rumors state that he had made a deal with the Glibben that allowed his

caravan passage when no others were permitted. Ezgart took over his father's business after the end of the drought, but ten years ago, decided he wanted to settle down and run a tavern. He founded Crossroads on the side of a lake and created two roads (north and south), which allow access through the Wood to Crossroads. Ezgart has not been seen for a few years and his tavern manager says that he is away on family business.

**Johnjon:** Since Ezgart's disappearance, Johnjon has made sure that the tavern continues to run smoothly and oversees the staff. He is generally helpful and friendly, but does not take kindly to those who cause harm to come to the tavern or its employees.

**Verin Kanobis:** A living legend throughout the world, Verin travels freely across all of Ashriya. He is believed to be the most pious man who ever lived, dedicating his life to the worship of not only the Nine and One gods, but also minor gods who very few have ever heard of. It is rumored that Verin is older than the drought, but has made deals with numerous gods, which have allowed him to remain vital. Verin himself does not comment on such rumors.

**King Derrick Calpol (Haroc):** Derrick's might is much more well-known than his intellectual capacity. After the disbanding of the Council of Five, Derrick worked for Barulis to control Crossroads until he declared himself King and turned on the Barulis guards who were working for him. One of the guards and a mage advisor, Kenton Sorrenson, left Barulis to join Derrick. Before settling in Crossroads, Derrick made a reputation for himself by being the first being to walk through the Wild Lands alone and live to tell about it.

**Highlord Kenton Sorrenson (Human):** Highlord Sorrenson is generally regarded as the true ruling power of Derrickham. He is the ambassador to Crossroads and has shown a willingness to listen to the citizens and help them as he can.

**Governor Liren Tyrell (Vampyre):** Liren was appointed by King Derrick to run the town in his absence. In times of trouble, the town often depends upon Liren's calm leadership to see them through adversity.

**Crossroads Council of Five:** As the town grew around the tavern, there became a need for a political body. Ezgart was never interested in governing and the members of the town selected a governing body of five. The council has been disbanded for numerous reasons. **Don Montaro (Human)** was poisoned at a feast for the town and his birthday. He never resurrected, but supposedly has been seen in the dreamworld. **Zino Bulbar (Elven)** was killed by unknown means after being lead into the woods by a young lady. He resurrected and returned to his family in Tangel. He has not returned to Crossroads since then. **Mica Tinson (Ritika)** was killed when a box delivered to him exploded on his way out of town. It is unknown who sent the box. He never resurrected. **Tristemar Sykes (Mystic):** Is the former Head of the local Mage's Guild. He no longer has any political authority in Crossroads. **Derrick Calpol (Haroc):** Current ruler of Crossroads.

## ASHRIYAN CURRENCY

Type	Color	Name	Value (Drakes)
Coin	Copper	Wyrm	1
Coin	Silver	Serpent	5
Coin	Gold	Dragon	10
Gem	Blood Red	Dragon's Blood (bloods)	15
Gem	Light Red	Ruby	20
Gem	Dark Green	Beryls	25
Gem	Aqua Blue	Sapphires	30
Gem	Yellow	Peridots	35
Gem	Pink/Purple	Amethysts	40
Gem	Light Green	Emeralds	50
Gem	Light Blue	Dragon Hearts	75
Gem	Clear (Small)	Dragon Souls	100
Gem	Rainbow Hue		500
Gem	Clear (Large)		500

## ASHRIYAN CALENDAR

APT (Annuals Prior to Turning) = Years preceding "The Turning"

AOD (Annuals Of the Drought) = Years of The Drought

AR (After Return) = Years after the return of the waters

Ers: first moon of the year

Carris: second moon of the year

Tyir: third moon of the year

Rennse: fourth moon of the year

Fyrunn: fifth moon of the year

Medrim: sixth moon of the year

Arridun: seventh moon of the year

Grenn: eighth moon of the year

Ottur: ninth moon of the year

Curnnos: tenth moon of the year

Surnn: eleventh moon of the year

Errund: last moon of the year

0 AOD Medrim 21 - "The Turning", which caused The Drought

150 AOD Errund 31 - The waters returned

40 AR - Crossroads Founded

50 AR - Game Began (in the year 2000, real-life time)

Example: February 1, 2008 is 58 AR Carris 1.