

SKYREALMS of Jorune

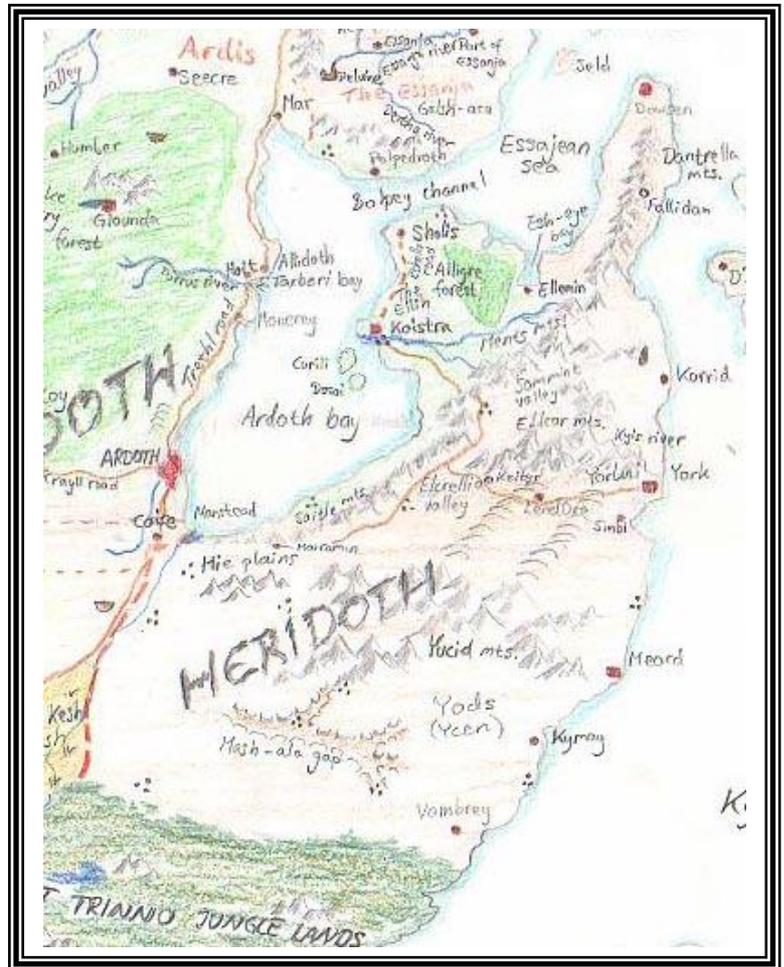
Heridoth

- Realm of lost glory and civil strife -

By sholari James
and
Edvard Majoros

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Geography	2
3. Flora and Fauna	3
4. History	5
<i>Timeline</i>	10
5. The People	18
<i>Mash-ala</i>	18
<i>Sholians</i>	18
<i>The Dow</i>	19
<i>Ellcor</i>	20
<i>Kan Lenkhas</i>	21
<i>Yorkni</i>	21
6. Religions	22
<i>Dowism</i>	22
<i>Coralli</i>	24
<i>Children of Lenkha</i>	25
<i>Other religions</i>	25
7. Languages	26
8. Law and Order	26
9. The Rulers of Heridoth	26
<i>Sholian Sagedom</i>	26
<i>Land of the Yorkni</i>	29
<i>The Dow</i>	29
<i>Kan Lenkhan Cities</i>	29
10. Towns & Cities	30



INTRODUCTION

The realm of Heridoth is far from a united nation. Three separate cultures and a number of smaller tribes and religious differences have always created borders between people. Having been the battle ground for several international skirmishes and countless internal civil wars, Heridoth is today far from its glorious past.

GEOGRAPHY

Heridoth is actually a great peninsula with many mountain ranges criss-crossing the land like towering spines. Most notable among these are the yellowish Dantrella Mountains to the north and the towering snow-capped Yucid Mountains to the south. The warmer central Ellcor Mountains are renowned for their lush valleys and softly wind sculpted cliffs.

The countless valleys between Heridoth's many mountains both protect and isolate the villages and towns situated there. The lifestyle of the high valleys is slow and peaceful compared to that of the western and eastern coastal lowlands, where the most important cities and people reside. Temperatures are lower in the higher mountain vales and might even receive snow on cold crith days. The lowlands are more humid and warm, especially during mullin, when temperatures can differ greatly between Koistra and the Sommint Valley.

The calm Ardoth Bay to the west provides western Heridoth with lush green fields and open, brushy forests. Countless streams and rivers flow down into the bay past numerous villages and small fortified towns.

Glistening white beaches dominate western Heridoth's coasts, while the northernmost peninsula has a rocky cliff coast with sandy coves. The coast of eastern Heridoth is a mixture of dried plains, beaches and thorny brushes to the south, lush forest in the central region and cliffs to the north. Treacherous reefs dominate the entire eastern shoreline, behind which rests a multitude of small coves and bays.

To the northeast lies the dense Aligre Forest with its famous towering World Trees, worshipped by the Coralli as immense servants of Arath. Apart from this forest, Heridoth lacks any other densely forested areas.

Most rain falls in the foothills of the various mountain ranges, primarily in the western and eastern parts of Heridoth. This leaves central and southern Heridoth dry, especially during Mullin and Eris. The dry, desolate plains of southern Heridoth are especially painful during the peak temperatures of the Mullin days and the climate is very similar to that of Sobayid in Burdoth. Numerous sand-covered ruins from the long lost Mash-ala culture litter the plains as silent reminders of a long lost people.

The glass plains of Yods are beautiful to the east, where the nutritious soil sparkles beautifully and black sharba vegetation dots the area. However, in the inner reaches of the plains the eyes of unwary travellers might be severely damaged from the blinding light of midday that reflects off the rocks.

The great Mash-ala Gap of southern Heridoth was once a great riverbed. The sheer canyon sides rise up more than 2 km from the canyon floor. The Gap still holds bountiful thorny vegetation as water can be found underground. Quite a few yorkni tribes reside in the area, living off the bountiful flora and fauna in the otherwise barren plains. Shantic ruins can be

found in the canyon and among the cliff sides. Some extend several kilometres into the cliff sides. Some rumours state that these ancient cities were built by the vanished Mash-ala people. While this is not true, evidence can still be found of some human adapted dwellings among the ruins. The shantic cities of Mash-ala were most certainly the influence for the advanced Mash-ala culture.

South of the dry plains lies the steaming Trinnu Jungle Lands. A rapid drop delivers travellers to the hostile jungle which is frequented by the yornkers for its bountiful natural resources. Cleash have been seen as far the Trinnu coast but the yornkers see them as little more than interesting and dangerous game. Only the jers seem to know exactly how big the cleash threat really is.

Several islands dot Heridoth's coasts. Most notable of these are the greater islands of Nayine, D'Lang, Curili, Dosai and Seld. Although mainly Coralli or Dow inhabit these islands, they officially belong to Burdoth or Dobre after the Energy Weapons War. Only Dosai remains under the control of the Sholian Sagedom. Like the mainland, the eastern islands are mountainous with lush forests and streams.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Mountains - Most of the flora and fauna resembles that of Burdoth. Tall pine-like trees and tumbernaw vines dominate the hillsides. Other trees, large bushes and great fungus fields dominate the more moist valleys. The higher slopes are covered with various lichens and sometimes the semi-animal roving mosses.

Dothobider herds range the mountains, as well as the six-legged Gauss Horses. Talmarons and duradon can be seen sailing on the warm winds hitting the mountain ranges from the west or the east. A great multitude of Frelic can be found among the mountain valleys, as well as wolves.

The many caves and hollow, gnarled trees are abundant with loosh and thyrins, the latter frequently used throughout history as winged messengers for their ability to find their way home over great distances.

Northern Cape – The land around the yellow Dantrella Mountains is rocky and hilly. However, watered terraces provide the Dow with many fields and the green, rain soaked hills provide their cattle with endless pastures. The trees along the peninsula tend to be smaller and more thorny compared to the lowlands to the south. During eris and mullin rain pelts the mountains and the eastern and western lowlands. Biting and itching vurrut flies are a common scourge during this time, as they search for hibernation ponds amid the many watered fields or rock pools.

Among the caves and small coves of the cliff coast can be found many large poidill lairs, which are a nuisance to fishermen and their nets. Shellfish can be found in abundance along the cape, as well as the popular bebbic fish.

Western Coast – Most larger animals have long since retreated from this heavily inhabited area. However, smaller lowland dothobider still run freely among the fields and wooded areas. Long legged spawa birds stalk the many streams or water filled fields for fish of all kind, including the vicious, swarming leopard fish.

Humans have greatly introduced the thombo, lothern and bochigon to these parts and the paddocks of these dominate the landscape in many places. Also the durlig fields are a common sight between rivers and wooden copses.

An exception to the above is Aligre Forest, which is very similar to Glounda Forest in Burdoth. Aligre Forest has towering trees ridden with moss and is teeming with wildlife. All bigger animals are gone from Aligre Forest, but a multitude of smaller animals reside here, which cannot be found elsewhere in Heridoth. Most famous are the huge, scaly World Trees worshipped by the Arath priests. Small villages and temples are built amid their gargantuan branches and the upper canopies are separate ecological systems, thriving with various insects, pibber and birds.

Eastern Coast – The land here is more rugged and uncultivated. The further south one travels, the more dry and desert-like the landscape becomes. The many smaller gatherings of trees are often wind torn or bent near the coast, as the Kymay Sea can generate great storms. Dothobider can be found, but not in great abundance. Duradon can sometimes be a nuisance in the northern parts around Korrid and are often attracted to the talmaron pens of the Yirga Skyrealm over York.

The Kymay Sea provides the people of the region with a wide variety of fish of all sizes and colours. However, the fishermen of the deeper waters often report sightings of the great shadows beneath – the sammoril. Many tales exist among the fishermen of entire fishing fleets being consumed by legendary DharSammoril.

The many reefs hold many poidill lairs, although few grow as large as those found along the northern cape.

The eastern coast is sometimes also plagued by the fierce, tribal salu who journey there from Hobeh or the West Trinnu Jungle Lands to raid fishing villages. Rumours abound of the wild salu using various sea monsters as their pawns.

Southern Plains – Tumbleweed bushes roll over the scorched plains and dust storms can pick up great momentum and surprise the unwary traveller. However, many pockets of thorny scrubs and trees can be found all over the area and at places where water gathers.

Great flying hoards of granthix beetles sometimes swarm the region for food in late eris, blotting out the sun with their multitude. The dry southern plains are also the home of the two-legged, seemingly headless birds known as Jaggars. These large birds can reach tremendous speeds and are often caught with nets or bolas by the local yorkni tribes who favour their tender meat.

Dharmee and croffin are also common in many areas of the southern plains, as well as the deceptive Talen Fields. The latter are often marked by passing travellers.

Southern Desert – The southernmost part of Heridoth is extremely dry and barren, with black rock jutting like rotting teeth towards the clear blue skies. Despite the barren appearance, the desert holds much life in the form of harns, wild herds of bochigon, suma lizards, dharmee and desert loosh. Much spores and fungus grow in subterranean caves or tunnels, which harn are attracted to.

Among the great black rocks jut great sturra hives made of regurgitated mud and rock. Some of these pincer-insect infested pillars can reach a staggering 10 meters in height and are hundreds of years old.

Trinnu Jungle – The wet and wild jungle is not a safe place for any human. With most vegetation being poisonous or irritating to the skin or nose, habitation in the small clearings is painful. All the great predators, such as the mandare, corondon, mantibra, kocrébon and

dreglamon are represented here, as well as most of Jorunes other nasty creatures, such as the alatus, farg, and giggit. Tarro sometimes venture out of the jungle to harass and steal from settlers living along the cleared jungle fringes. Other horrors, such as the cleash make life very hard for the few that have chosen to settle so far from their neighbours north of the desert.

HISTORY

The history of Heridoth is intimately linked to its neighbours Burdoth, Dobre and Anasan. Natural disasters as well as major political actions have always reverberated through these lands. Despite its powerful neighbours, Heridoth has a proud history. In later years the expansions of the Burdothian provinces and the much later Energy Weapons war, scarred Heridoth forever.

Starting as simple survivor communities of the human-shantic war, the people of what was once to become Heridoth suffered from much shantic attacks as well as plagues and famines. When the first records of the neighbouring Sobayid Tribes in southern Burdoth were written around the Age of Monsters, they spoke of barbaric tribes in the east who constantly plagued them. Nothing seemed to have survived from the original Terran Colonies and the four main tribal groups, the Dow, Sholians, Yorkni and Mash-ala were forming their cultural identity. Many feuds and raids took place between these people and the area to be known as Heridoth was very unsafe.

However, out of darkness of barbarism rose a refined culture known in legends and rare historical texts as the Mash-ala culture. Clearly influence by the Ca-Tra shantas of the area, the Mash-ala were said to have been blessed with great wisdom and a realm of bounty. The Mash-ala left behind great temples and two large stone cities around the great Mash-ala canyons before they caused the great ecological disaster that destroyed their culture overnight. The Mash-ala must have been swallowed by the neighbouring Sholian and Yorkni cultures after their cataclysmic end.

The more civilised Sholians lived in the western vales of Heridoth, while the Yorkni were a nomadic warrior culture that lived along the eastern shore. These two cultures long fought over lands and fertile valleys. Despite this, a great deal of cultural intermingling took place as these two people soon shared the same pantheon.

Caught between these two warring cultures were the Children of Lenkha. Once outcast mutants from the Age of Monsters, the followers of the powerful and mysterious Lenkha mutant, who had been trained by shantic Mash-ala priests, founded walled cities to protect themselves and ply their trades. The persecutions of the Children of Lenkha never ended and continue to this day.

In the north, the Dow people established a stable culture revolving around the city of Dow-sen around 800 PC. The Dow differed greatly in language and culture from the Sholians and Yorkni and suffered much raids from the troublesome Yorkni tribes.

As the Sholians, Yorkni, Kan Lenkhas and the Dow prospered, united realms started to appear and the first reference to the area as Heridoth was noted in records. The Sholian kingdom was founded in the twelfth century and existed peacefully alongside the Dow of the northeast.

The thirteenth century was the advent of foreign subjugation. The aggressive Essajeans conquered the Dow and started to raid the Heridothian coasts viciously. This led to a greater organisation of the Yorkni tribes, the election of a sage to lead them and the fortification of

their coastal cities. Many wars were also fought between the Essajeans and the Sholian Kingdom who desperately defended its coasts. The Sholian capitol of Sholis was burnt many times and finally moved to the more easily defended city of Koistra.

Not until the fall of the corrupted Essajeon Theocracy, could the Dow once again briefly enjoy cultural and religious freedom. However, the now powerful Sychillians, who had defeated the mad Essajeon Priest-King, soon assumed control over the former Dow subjects. Although not as oppressive, the foreign rule of northern Heridoth continued. With the threat of the Essajeans gone, the now much stronger Yorkni and Sholians began warring over territories, as the Yorkni expanded westward into central Heridoth.

Even if a truce was temporarily met, this all changed when the ramian started establishing colonies in Sillipus. The ramian armadas crippled the Sychillian Navy and the Dow saw their chance to overthrow their Sychillian rulers. But just shortly after the Dow declared their long sought for independence, the Sholian Kingdom and the Sage of York moved in for the kill. Believing the Dow to be weak, the rivalling nations wanted the northern territory of Heridoth for themselves. The Dow, however, proved to be hardy warriors and were driven by a strong desire for a nation of their own after centuries of foreign rule. The initial invasion attempts therefore turned into drawn out wars – a time that became known as the Blood Years. The bitter wars were fought along the borders of these three nations for more than 100 years. In the end, the Dow kept their freedom, while the Sholian Kingdom overran and burnt York after beheading the Yorkni Sage. The northern territories of the Yorkni would not regain their territory from the Sholians until 400 years later.

The Kan Lenkhas, who were once again caught in the middle of the fray, came out stronger than ever. Their three walled cities became havens for mercenaries and traders and their economic influence grew in Heridoth.

In 2500 PC the ramian threat from Sillipus could be clearly felt. Ramian ships frequently raided the eastern coast of Heridoth from their holdings in eastern Anasan and were a great menace to the Dow and the Yorkni. A combined force of volunteers from Lundere and the Sholian, Yorkni and Dow trading fleets finally drove the ramian out of Anasan in 2623 PC. The ramian presence in the area had after nearly 400 years finally been broken. Several fortified cities were then built along the coast and settled by Heridothians and Burdothians. These provided eastern Heridoth with the buffer they needed against the expansionist ramian of Sillipus.

Spared the ramian raids, the following centuries saw the rise of the Sholian culture in eastern Heridoth. But the Sholians soon found rivals in the west in the form of the Sobayid and Ardis Sagedoms. The terrible Battle of Dharkesh in 2512 PC finally put a lid on the conflict, leaving the border area between the realms barren and littered with unmarked graves.

Under King Harkin Matterton, the Sholian Kingdom grew to its greatest expanse. Drawing advantage from the Thanterian invasion and later liberation of Sobayid, the King drove his forces deep into Sobayid and secured land along the Krayll road in Burdoth. Most of southern and central Heridoth, as well as a large part of Ardis now belonged to the Sholian Kingdom. Even if the Burdothian land gains were lost within that same year, this symbolised the ascendance of power and greatness of the Sholians and their Coralli pantheon of gods. King Matterton declared himself Sage of Heridoth and a proud line of rulers would follow him. Heridoth as a realm has never been as great as during the Matterton line of Sages. Culture became refined and great monuments as well as cities were erected to herald their glory.

But with great glory and wealth came great corruption and internal struggles for power. After disastrous governorship of York, the Yorkni rose up and freed their old capitol from the Sholians. To preserve stability in Heridoth the Sholian Sage forged an alliance with the Yorkni to defend the eastern coast.

At the turn of the millenium the crugar nations drove eastwards and started their prolonged invasion of Burdoth. During this time Mishane Matterton inherited the Sholian throne from his father. But when he and his family were assassinated by rivalling Whitehand Houses, his younger brother Shandane Matterton was forced to ascend the throne. Never destined to rule the great realm, Shandane had studied the sciences, and according to rumours – shantic wisdom among the Ellcor Mountains, instead of rulership. Driven by his ambitious mother, Shandane proved to be an excellent strategist both on the battlefield and on the political arena. Within his first three years as a Sage, he had played out the Whitehand Houses of the Wheel against each other and crushed all opposing forces within Heridoth. Ever popular for his wisdom and justice, Sage Shandane also participated in all battles of the realm personally. To the soldiers he became a myth still in his lifetime.

When Ardoth was in flames and at its knees from the crugar invasion, Sage Shandane came to the rescue. The well organised Heridothian forces with their strong bochigon cavalry drove the crugar out of Ardis and Shandane was welcomed as a hero when he rode into Ardoth. He established Sholian control over the powerful city and most of the region, but refused to take the title Sage of Ardis. Instead he declared himself the Chell of the city, only claiming to govern it during its rebuilding.

Shandane had once again, and somewhat against his will, expanded Sholia to its greatest extent.

While Shandane was known for his wisdom and just decisions, his mercifulness and leniency against his enemies became his undoing. By sparing his enemies he showed how gullible he was and soon the Whitehand Houses of Sholia and Ardis, as well as the Klades of Ardoth conspired against him. Within three years they turned his relaxed rulership over Ardoth against him and incited a popular revolt against a leader that was better than the city had ever experienced before. Instead of using force, Shandane simply chose to leave the Ardothians to their destiny, ever respecting their free will.

This sealed his fate, as some of his generals and several of the Houses of the Wheel saw this as a sign of weakness. In the following seven years Heridoth was torn by civil war as the Wheel split and Whitehand Houses were pitted against each other and against Sage Shandane. The greater cities of Sholia warred and lay siege to each other in turn. Sage Shandane finally died after the battle of Sholis from the feared Bochigon Dung Disease. It was said that his last faithful general fell while defending his body and that shantic sholari came to claim his copra from his enemies. He was the last but also the greatest of the Sholian Sages. None would ever follow him.

As Sholia was plunged further into chaos, the Yorkni and the Dow saw their chances to expand their territories. The Dow conquered much land along the northwestern coast of Heridoth, while the Yorkni pushed westward into central Heridoth.

In 3113 PC the ramian returned in great numbers. Great ramian armadas attacked most of the coasts of the northern realms. The Anasan coast was occupied for more than thirty years and once again eastern Heridoth suffered from countless raids.

Some stability was gained in Sholia, as the Wheel was once again united, this time by the effort and political power of the seven Coralli priesthoods who gained votes in the Wheel.

The power to rule the Sholians had now been shifted from the Whitehand Houses to a loose alliance of Whitehands and priests.

As a new massive crugar migration pushed eastward across the Doben-al at the end of the thirty-fifth century, political fires flared in the Wheel as Sholia thrashed in her final death-throes. A great civil war finally erupted between Sholis and Koistra, which symbolised the two political camps of the Wheel.

As the Ardis trading fleets also suffered from this conflict, Dharsage Khodre Allonkarb sent forces to back Koistra at the urge of his cousin Yan Gizer Tarsory. When the Ardothian support troops were slaughtered by their supposed Koistran allies, Khodre Allonkarb moved all his forces into Sholia to establish control. Swiftly ending the drawn out conflict, Khodre Allonkarb gained control over Sholia and set up an Ardis-dependant government.

But when the crugar poured into Burdoth, led by their prophetic leader Chaln Dolcha, Ardis once again came to its knees. With the countryside burning and people fleeing eastward, the armies of the Burdothian provinces were scattered or crushed.

It was at this time that the thriddle decided to show the Dharsage what they accidentally had found when attempting to solve the warp equation - earth-tech caches left behind by human ancestors.

With the powerful new arsenal Khodre Allonkarb drove the crugar from Ardoth's walls and cleansed the provinces of Burdoth. While doing this he assumed direct control over the liberated provinces and then continued to drive the crugar westward across the Doben-al. Busy liberating Khodre and reinstating its ruler, Khodre Allonkarb did not return to Burdoth until two years later.

Cementing his reign over the Burdothian provinces, Khodre Allonkarb also found the Dobren League in control of Heridoth's eastern coast and entering Sholis. The combined forces of Dobre and Lunderere had initially come to the aid of Ardis, but had found themselves repulsed and threatened by the new and frightening power arising in Ardis. In an attempt to thwart the expanding Ardis, they had taken control of the Dow and eastern Heridoth.

Filled with confidence and with a powerful energy weapon arsenal at his disposal, Khodre Allonkarb would not permit this. Once again moving his forces into Heridoth, the Dharsage of Burdoth continued the Energy Weapons War against his former allies, the Heridothians, Dobrems and Lunderans.

The Dow people, forced to fight for the Dobren League against Khodre Allonkarb, suffered great losses at the Battle of Elcrellia as they were mowed down by energy weapons. However, at the Battle of Sholis, with the Dharsage's troops against Dobren forces, neither side was successful. The Burdothian forces started realising that, while the heavy energy weapons were a great advantage, they required great amounts of energy cells, which were quickly being depleted. The smaller sidearms did not make a large impact upon the battles which tended to turn into swift hit and runs.

After the destruction of Doosah, a Dobren supply base, the Dharsage's second attack on Sholis was finally successful. In the prolonged siege and battle, Sholis was largely destroyed.

In the later years of the war the Maustin Caji resurfaced, allied with Dobren League. They sunk the famed energy weapon transport ship the Camder at the mouth of Esheye Bay and joined in the battles against the Burdothian troops with their feared dyshas.

The war escalated as more Burdothian and Khodren forces were brought into the heart of Heridoth. War finally deadlocked in the Sommint Valleys.

This was the turning point of the Energy Weapons War and Khodre's forces started to lose their grip in Heridoth. The forces opposing him were too great and his energy weapon arsenal was not growing quickly enough. As the Burdothian earth-tec Iscins had not yet divined the

use of tec-gens, the Burdothians did not have adequate energy cells to sustain the war. Several battles continued to rage in Sommint Valleys which were rapidly being turned into desolate battle grounds unlike any seen before.

Khodre knew that he couldn't win the war in Heridoth as things stood. It was temporarily a lost cause and he started looking for a way to bring his forces out of Heridoth without losing everything he had gained.

Through the brilliant negotiations of the thriddle, the Klein-Khodre Accord finally ended the Energy Weapons War. As a result, Burdoth, the Dobrens and the Lunderians had to relinquish control of Heridoth. The battle-torn land was to be left to the Heridothians.

When the Ardothian Council was established to oversee Burdoth's foreign affairs, a seat was granted to a Heridothian emissary. This was to ensure that Heridothians would be able to influence Burdoth and prevent it from attacking Heridoth again. In reality however, many fractions of war-impooverished Heridoth saw greater benefits in supporting Burdoth in the future Council meetings.

After the war, the broken forces of the Dow, the Sholian cities and the Yorkni tried to gain control over their unruly population and the numerous roaming bands of condrij that ravaged the realm. Truces were agreed upon cities were repaired. With the economic aid and support of the klades, the Wheel of Sholia was reinstated and the Sage of York ascended the throne of York. This gave the klades influence both in Yorkni towns and in the Wheel, which now had become an unstable coalition of Whitehand families, priests and klades.

But no help ever came from the Burdothians or the Dobren League when the people starved in the coming Crith. The Heridothian resentment against their neighbours grew.

Finally, in an attempt to gain popularity, Khodre Allonkarb sent supplies to his former allies in Koistra and Sholis to halt the great Crith Famine. He also relocated several Burdothian and Heridothian refugees by force to Sillipus to ease the burden upon the ravaged lands. Sillipus had been cleansed from ramian by the Dobren League but the Dobrens did not remain in Sillipus and let the refugees fend for themselves in the new lands. These resentful refugees would later become the plague of the Kymay Sea as they became pirates that preyed upon Burdothian and Heridothian ships with the aid of the returning ramian.

When the thriddle were expelled from Ardoth for their alleged treason during the Energy Weapons War, several fadris relocated to the larger Sholian cities in western Heridoth. These fadri had a great impact upon the education level of an entire generation of Whitehands and rich kladesmen. Many thriddle fadri still remain in Sholia, Koistra and Dowsen today to continue their education of Heridoth's finest.

Heridoth was spared from the ramian invasion of Burdoth and Dobre in 3472-74 PC.

After the great constellation of 3497 PC, which caused great destruction in Dowsen and Koistra, the ramian and human gire of Sillipus started raiding the vulnerable Yorkni cities. Some of these raiders travelled far inland to cause much grief among the poorer villages of central Heridoth. Even if the ramian presence was not as great as in Burdoth, where the full scale invasion was launched, the Heridothians had much more trouble ridding their lands of this scourge. Still today the beacon towers regularly light their fires to warn the populace of approaching ramian ships.

Today Heridoth has repaired some of the damages from the Energy Weapons War, although the Sommint Valley still remains dotted by ghostly ruins and desolation. The great realm still remains divided into three main fractions; the Dow, the Sholians and the Yorkni.

The Dow are led by the Five Exalted of Dowsen. The Yorkni are led by their Sage who resides in York. The Sholians bicker and argue among themselves in the Wheel, consisting of representatives of the Whitehands, Coralli priests and klades.

Border skirmishes take place yearly as the Dow and Yorkni push toward the remains of the Sholian Sagedom. Despite the seasonal hostilities and post-harvest raids, the three people trade frequently and somewhat peacefully with each other, while the neighbouring realms shake their heads in confusion.

Heridoth's only external problems are the ramian and human pirates of Sillipus and the growing cleash threat of the trinnus. Savage salu might sometimes raid their coasts and drifting companies of condrij might cause problems when passing towns or villages.

In the Sholian Sagedom there seems to be unrest again. The stable balance of Whitehands, priests and kladesmen in the Wheel seems to have shifted in favour of the priests, at the expense of the Whitehands. Preparing themselves for trouble to come, the Whitehand Houses are swelling the ranks of their troops and hiring condrij from the surrounding realms. Western Heridoth may once again become a battle field and place of grief.

TIMELINE

250 PC (date approx.) Ardoth is established as a fishing village.

400-600 PC The Age of Monsters. A major alignment of Jorune's moons causes mutations among mainly humans, including boccord, muadra and trarch. Some mutations did not breed true and eventually died out. Hundreds of monstrous mutations create a fearful response in common people and public persecution and execution of mutations begin. First destruction of Ardoth by massive tidal effects of alignments.

500 PC (date approx.) Sobayid tribes established in Sobayid. They are not united but share a common belief in individual Star Gods whom every tribes claims ancestry from.

(date approx.) The mysterious towns of the upper Ellcor Mountains in central Heridoth are built by the equally mysterious Ellcor Culture.

570 PC In Thantier and Gauss Valley visibly mutant children are killed at birth, while muadra and boccord children are driven away or murdered at puberty. In Ardoth mutant children are allowed to grow; boccord establish their value as hunters and fishermen. Muadra are considered small or weak humans, not mutations.

600 PC (date approx.) The human Mash-ala Culture is established in southern Heridoth. It becomes known in legends as a lush paradise of peace and prosperity and the wisdom of its shantic Ca-Tra seers.

- 620-800 PC A series of plagues sweep through human and Iscin populations. Restoration gains from the pre-plague era are almost lost. Civilisation returns to primitive levels. Several cities rise, flourish and are wiped from the planet by contagion. New standards of hygiene determine the survival of whole populations.
- 683 PC The multi-limbed mutant Lenkha rallies other mutants from the Age of Monsters in Heridoth. He leads them away from prosecutions and founds small community which will later evolve into a people, the Kan Lenkhas (“The Children of Lenkha”), who will wander the realms of Heridoth seeking business where they can find it. Lenkha’s uncanny and ability manipulate isho has never been seen before by humans and he attracts the attention of Ca-Tra priests.
- 700 PC (date approx.) The first small towns are founded in central Sobayid by the Sobayid tribes. The Sobayid tribes also start slashing along the outskirts of the Trinnu Jungle Lands to create more fertile areas.
- 866 PC The city of Dow-Sen is built upon the ruins of an original colony blast site by the Dow people returning down from their refuge among the Dantrella Mountains. The Sacred Order Preservers first start recording Dow history. This is year 0 in the Dow Horoscope Calendar.
- 935 PC City of Sholis founded in Heridoth.
- 1000 PC The Sobayid tribes abandon their earlier settlements in central Sobayid and move to the more fertile southern lands, as the encroaching Sobayid Desert creeps closer.
The Ellcor Culture disappears and its towns among the Ellcor Mountains are left empty.
- 1100 PC (date by tradition) The Mash-ala culture in southern Heridoth disappears nearly over night as extensive logging and slashing enables a great bushfire to ravage the lush lands for four years. After this the land is barren and turns into dusty plains. The people of the Mash-ala Culture are assumed to have been swallowed by the surrounding Sholian, Sobayid and Yorkni Cultures. Strange ruins with many shantic influences and the haunted Mash-ala canyon is all that they leave behind.
(date approx.) The yorkni population explodes as refugees of the Mash-ala culture settles among the yorkni fishermen.
- 1200-1700 PC Famines and rot plagues begin. Will continue intermittently for next 500 years, reducing the growing population of human, Iscin, mutant, and lamorri races.
- 1280 PC The Sholian Kingdom is founded. It exists peacefully alongside with the Dow Culture for a long time.
- 1340 PC The Essajeans conquer the Dow people of northern Heridoth and become fierce rivals of the growing Sychillian Culture. The two cultures start exploring the seas and try to compete with the already powerful Jaspian Trading Houses.

- 1350-1450 PC The Essajeans raid the eastern coasts of Heridoth and the Yorkni people suffer greatly. The Yorkni start organising themselves under chieftains and start fortifying their coastal towns.
- 1500-1800 PC Many wars are fought between Essanja and Sholia. The Essajeon fleet constantly assails the Sholian coast from their ports in Essanja and north-eastern Heridoth. During these wars the city of Sholia is destroyed more than once.
- 1674 PC A sage is appointed by the Yorkni to rule them. York becomes the sage's seat of power.
- 1746 PC After an internal struggle for power and numerous minor slave rebellions the Sajja priests take over the task of ruling Essanja. They elect a Priest-King and start introducing strict religious rules. Subjects who do not worship Sajjanis are killed or exiled.
- 1759 PC The capitol of the Sholians is moved from Sholia to the more easily defended city of Koistra. This places their capitol out of the Essajeans reach.
- 1818 PC The Priest King Hejjorcis IV of Essanja terrorises the surrounding lands. He is a religious zealot and insane, only further cementing the stereotype of the pious Essajeon Priest-Kings. His Sajja priests relish in human sacrifice to their god Sajjanis and many slaves are taken from Ardis and Lusail. Common hatred for the insane Priest-King leads to a war on two fronts with Sychill and Ardis.
- 1819-1820 PC Slave revolts break out in Essanja and the slaves manage to retreat into the highlands of Essanja and keep the territory.
- 1820 PC Sychillians unite under King Pekail the Tall against the threat of Essanja and the growing influence of the sage of Ardis. He declares himself Sage of Lusail. All of present day Lusail is secured during the first year. The Kingdom of Essanja is conquered with the help of the free nation of slaves in inland Essanja. A series of naval battles take place along the coasts of northern Burdoth and Essanja as the Sage himself moves his main armies over the Accaptas Mountains in a daring campaign. The Priest-King of Essanja is killed and his priests routed. The Sajja religion is banned forever along with human sacrifice.
- 2000 PC The Yorkni Culture starts spreading inland and soon come into conflict with the powerful and expanding Sholian Culture. As the two cultures have similar dialects and the same pantheon of gods, an alliance and truce is soon agreed upon.
- 2200 PC Moon alignment creates enormous tidal disturbances in Burdoth. Many coastal cities destroyed for first time. Ramian invasions into Sychill and other coastal cities come at the same time.
- 2150 PC The ramian of Sillipus start organising and intensifying their raids upon eastern Anasan. They make seasonal camps for shirm-eh harvesting along the eastern coast of Anasan.

- 2240 PC Due to the ramian raids in the area and the weakening of the Sychillian fleet, the Dow people revolt and cast off their foreign Sychillian rulers in northern Heridoth. The Essanja province remains part of Lusail but gains more sovereignty.
- 2240-2350 PC The Blood Years. Sholia and the Yorkni try to seize the land of the now freed Dow people in northern Heridoth. The Dow people viciously defend their new-won freedom. Many battles are fought along the borders of these three realms.
- 2250 PC After the weakening of the Sychillians, the Ardoth trading fleet gains access to the Sychill Sea and the Kymay Sea. Ardisians start trading with Vucia, Dobre, Jasp, east Heridoth and Anasan. Ardis monetary influence increases.
- 2348 PC The Sholian Kingdom takes the city of York and the coastline between the Ellcor and Yucid Mountains. The sage of York is beheaded, but a new line of sages start ruling the Yorkni from Meard.
- 2383 PC The wandering Kan Lenkhas of Heridoth have over the last centuries manage to hoard tremendous amounts of wealth through their not always so legal businesses over the realm. These gypsie-like people are the descendant of mutants from the Age of Monsters and sometimes a mutant strain will appear. They are scorned by all, but their services often used. With their wealth they build two great cities in the barren eastern parts of the Elcrellia valley.
- 2450 PC Skirmishes begin between Sholia, Ardis and Sobayid. Territories, allies and reasons for the wars shift violently over the next centuries.
- 2500 PC The ramian start raiding Heridoth from Sillipus and their holdings along the east coast of Anasan. The ramian threat of the Kymay Sea is now seriously concerning the Dow and the Yorkni.
- 2512 PC The Battle of DharKesh. One of the greatest battles in Burdoth's and Heridoth's history. It leaves Sobayid without any land claims to the Ardoth Bay and places Sobayid outside of the tiring conflict of the area. It also puts the lid on the Ardis – Sholia conflict for 80 years.
- 2551 PC Imperial armies from the Holy Coronian Empire march across the See'iss Desert in one of history's most daring campaigns. They reach Sobayid and quickly lay siege to the towns along the fringes of the East Trinnu Jungle Lands. The Cavran Plateau is quickly taken as the Sobayid tribes cannot withstand the heavy infantry of the Thanterians and their efficient siege warfare. Within six years Miedrinth and the rest of Sobayid falls to the Thanterians. The Sage flees into the northern desert to hide among the free tribes.
- 2589 PC The Hidden Sage of Sobayid allies with Ardis to drive out the hated Thanterians from Sobayid. Soldiers of Gauss, allied to the Ardisians, also join the conflict.
- 2595 PC Taking advantage of the Thanterian invasion of Sobayid, the Sholian King Harkin Matterton takes land between the Thanterians in Sobayid and the Ardisians after a successful offensive. This leaves him in control of southern

parts of Ardis along the Krayll road. The Sholian kingdom now encompasses most of southern Heridoth, from coast to coast. King Harkin Matterton declares himself Sage of Heridoth and founds the Sholian Sagedom. A great line of Heridothian sages are to follow him until Shandane. Later that year, the sage of Ardis retakes the land conquered by the Sholians.

- 2599 PC The Sholian Sage Harkin Matterton forces the fortified cities of the Kan Lenkhas, Lendûra and Keityr, to swear allegiance to him. They do so and receive formal guardianship over the West Road that leads through the Elcrellia Valley. The cities of the Kan Lenkhas also start serving as neutral markets for the Sholian, Yorkni and Dow traders. The wealth of the Kan Lenkhas keeps increasing but so does their ancient fear of persecution.
- 2623 PC The ramian holdings of eastern Anasan are retaken by the Anasani with the help of Lundera volunteers and a great trading fleet from Sholia, Dow and Yorkni. The east coast of Anasan is heavily fortified to prevent further ramian attacks. People, mainly traders, from Heridoth and Burdoth emigrate to these new towns.
- 2704 PC Laindra Elayn travels west from Heridoth. Upon returning home, she carves images of peoples and animals she saw. Her work sparks a renaissance in Joruni exploration.
- 2798 PC York is liberated from the Sholian Sagedom. The sage of the Yorkni reinstates York as the capitol.
- 2933 PC Crugar tribal nations have reached Burdoth and start invading the Gauss Valley.
- 2935 PC Crugar driven out of Gauss Valley. The main bulk of the crugar start slipping into Burdoth south of the Gauss Valley.
- 3004 PC Crugar harass the northern tribes of the Sobayid as their scourge takes them eastward along the southern rim of the Glounda Forest.
- 3007 PC Crugar invade Ardoth. Sage Shandane of Heridoth brings relief to Ardoth and helps drive out crugar forces, then establishes Sholian control over Ardoth.
- 3010 PC Shandane expelled from Ardoth by popular revolt.
- 3017 PC Several small battles occur between cities in the Sholian Sagedom as the Ardisians take the conflict to Heridoth. Shandane dies in the battle of Sholis and it is the end of the original line of Sholian sages that started with Harkin Matterton.
The Dow people pushed southward along the east coast of Heridoth and conquered the Sommint valley and all lands east of the Ellcor mountains as far south as the Kyis River.
- 3120 PC The Wheel (once advisory body of Sholia) is instated as a ruling forum for the Sholian Sagedom. It is the coralli priests who take the initiative to stabilise the region. In return they are granted voting rights.

- 3113 PC Ramian from Sillipus raid Anasan and Heridoth and occupy parts of Anasan's east coast for nearly 30 years.
- 3418 PC Crugar, led by Chaln Dolcha, start a mass invasion/assault across the Doben-al. The drive is slow.
- 3431 PC A civil war begins between Koistra and Sholis, with strong sentiments in Ardoth as fighting affects Burdothian sea trade. It is the final blow for the dying Sholian kingdoms. Khodre sends troops to back Koistra at urging of his Heridothian cousin, Yan Gizer Tarsory.
- 3432 PC Burdothian support troops slaughtered by their supposed Koistran allies. Prince Khodre commits more forces to end the fighting in Heridoth in what has become a drawn out engagement. He sets up a Burdothian-dependent government with families from both Koistra and Sholis.
- 3433 PC Some Crugar raiding parties start pouring into Thantier from the north-east. Once again, they are no match for the Skamaan, Coronians and Firlance Knights. The main bulk of the Crugar invasion continues eastward.
- 3435 PC Crugar invasion picks up momentum. The humans of Gauss hear of the crugar's crossing of the Doben-al. The woffen and bronth of the valley begin recon into the Doben-al.
- 3436 PC Crugar invasion reaches Gauss Valley. Forces split north and south as crugar pillage Burdoth. Lusail, Sobayid and Ardis under siege (Essanja is safe). Prince Khodre turns his attention to this incoming assault too late to prevent the crugar approach on Ardoth.
- 3437 PC Chaln Dolcha crosses Liggit Mountains. Crugar invasion makes it as far as Ardoth. Old walls are overrun. City is cut off except by sea. Darthis Torran, chell of Ardoth, killed in the attack. Rhan Harsri appointed chell by Prince Khodre. Energy weapon rediscovery: result of warp progress of thriddle. The Sallecia, a salu chausis from Tan-Iricid, arrives in Ardoth Bay bearing energy weapons from secret Earth-tec cache site. Humans drive crugar from walls and start north/south expulsion of crugar, north through Lusail and south through the Sobayid. The dharsage conquers the provinces of Lusail.
- 3438-3445 PC The Energy Weapons War.
- 3441 PC Carissey changes name to North and South Khodre. Khodre returns and forms Ardoth Guard to protect Ardoth. Khodre and Ardothian forces return to Heridoth to find Dobren League in control of Heridoth's eastern coast and entering Sholis. With a powerful energy weapon arsenal at his disposal, Khodre will not permit this. The Dow people, forced to fight for the Dobren League against Khodre Allonkarb, suffer great losses at the Battle of Elcrellia as they are mowed down by energy weapons. Energy weapons placed in hands of drenn and kesht in the military. These sidearms indicate great prestige, but are more for self defence than outright military advantage; heavy weaponry such as laser

turrets and blaster rifles make the greatest difference in large scale combats. Power cells are in short supply, and Khodre has no portable source of renewable energy to tap. Pistols cannot be resupplied; energy must be conserved and used for the large-scale weapons.

- 3442 PC Battle of Sholis, with the Dharsage's troops against Dobren forces, gets underway. Neither side is successful. The destruction of Doosah, a Dobren supply base. The Dharsage's second attack on Sholis is successful. Thriddle discover three caches of Earth-tec which they do not report to Khodre.
- 3443 PC Destruction of Polpedroth in Essanja by Dobren forces. Maustin Caji resurface, allied with Dobren League. Sinking of Camder by Maustin Caji at mouth of Esheye Bay. War escalates as forces are brought into heart of Heridoth. War deadlocks in Sommint Valleys.
- 3444 PC Khodre's forces start to lose their grip in Heridoth. The forces opposing him are too great, his energy weapon arsenal is not growing quickly enough, and he does not have adequate energy cells (his Earth-tec Iscin have not yet divined the use of tec-gens) to sustain the war. Battles continue to rage in Sommint Valleys. Khodre returns to Ardoth, and marries Esilla Jaimare Cartan. Harsri driven from office; Marshill Cardis installed as chell. Khodre knows that he cannot win the war in Heridoth as things stand; it is temporarily a lost cause. He looks for a way to bring his forces out of Heridoth without losing everything he has gained. Khodre meets secretly with Klein Ko-Trid on island of Curili. They discuss basis of a settlement whereby the dharsage gives up Heridoth and Doben-al and allows muadra back into cities; in exchange Heridoth becomes a neutral zone to all sides.
- 3445 PC Klein-Khodre Accord and end of Energy Weapons War. Khodre is to relinquish control of Heridoth, Doben-al, and direct control of other Burdothian provinces, although he will still lead the realm militarily. In addition, he must allow for muadra living within Burdoth and the confines of Ardoth's wall's (although not necessarily within the citadel). In Khodre's favor, Dobrens and Lunderians must also give up any claim to Heridoth; that land is to be left to Heridothians. The Ardothian Council is established with representatives from Dobre, Gauss, Heridoth, Lundere, Lusail, North Khodre, the Sobayid. South Khodre, and Tan-Ircid, with observers from Temauntro (although the crugar still aren't quite sure why they've been asked to participate in the affairs of Burdoth.)
- 3446 PC Refugees of Burdoth and Heridoth relocated to Sillipus by Khodre. Dobrens leave island only months before. New Sillipus residents left to fend for themselves (though they are not worse off than they had been in their homelands).
- 3490 PC Backed by Bishop of his new found Pluran religion, the sage of York attacks the Kan Lenkhas in an attempt to increase his dwindling wealth. The city of Lendûra falls to the yorkni and the sacred artefacts of the Kan Lenkhas are stolen. When an assassination attempt to the sage's life is revealed to originate within the Pluran Church, the sage casts out the plurans and is forced by the

Sholians and the Dow to a truce with the Kan Lenkhas whom are given back their city and their relics.

3497 PC Great storms and a huge tide sweeps over the coasts of Burdoth, Heridoth and southern Dobre during one of the most powerful lunar constellations in centuries. Great destruction is caused in Salam'arine, Sydra, Ardoth, Dowsen and Koistra. Astrologers and Doompriests foresee the destruction and herald the end of the world.
Ramian from Voligire invade Burdoth, while ramian gire and human pirates raid eastern Heridoth, travelling far inland.

THE PEOPLE

Three main cultures thrive in Heridoth. The long subjugated Dow, the wild Yorkni and the proud Sholians. But there are and were also other, smaller, tribes of people, such as the Kan Lenkhas, the Ellcor and the Mash-ala who have made an impact upon the diverse cultural identity of the realm.

The *Mash-ala Culture* of southern Heridoth flourished between 600 PC to 1100 PC. It is mentioned frequently by the scribes of Sobayid and the Sholian kings and sages. According to legend it was a beautiful and peaceful realm on the edges of the Trinnu Jungle lands in what was to become Heridoth. Two great cities filled with peace joy and bountiful food housed a culture that became known for its shantic influences. Shantic architecture and Ca-Tra temples have been found by iscin among the ruins of the cities and scrolls speak of the wise shantic seers aiding the rulers in their decisions.



The Mash-ala Culture is an enigma as it ceased to exist over night. Over-extensive slashing and burning of the jungle led to one of the greatest ecological disasters of the area as the whole area was consumed in a raging forest fire that lasted for a full year. After this the land was laid bare to the elements and slowly turned to dusty plains. The Mash-ala survivors must simply have been swallowed by the Sholian, Yorkni or Sobayid cultures after their downfall. The Mash-ala ruins have been pillaged for countless centuries in search for treasure or building material. Close by, the eerie Mash-ala gap, a great canyon holds haunted shantic ruins that often have been associated with the Mash-ala Culture.

The *Sholian Culture* has always been one of Ardis great rivals. Human survivors settled along the fertile west coast of Ardoth Bight and founded the city of Sholis in 935 PC. The population grew rapidly, especially after the downfall of the Mash-ala culture in the south. In 1280 PC the Sholian kingdom was declared and lived peacefully alongside the Dow people of the north, with whom it traded. Sholians had a pantheon of Gods with different properties and who ruled or influenced the world according to when their realm(moon) was strongest in the sky. This religion called Coralli was shared by



the Yorkni. Between 1500-1800 many wars were fought between Essanja and Sholia. The Essanjan fleet had already conquered the Dow people in northern Heridoth and constantly assailed the Sholian coast. During these attacks the city of Sholia was destroyed more than once. Finally, in 1759 PC the seat of power shifted to the more easily defended Koistra. Although the king ruled from Koistra, Sholia always rose from the ashes of its destruction. After the Essajeans came the Sychillians, but these were not as aggressive. When the ramian started attacking the Sychill coast, the Dow rose and declared themselves independent. Hardened by war Sholia immediately tried to conquer the Dow and northern Heridoth. Also

the Yorknin tried to push northward into Dow territory. The years between 2240-2350 were known as the Blood Years as wars between the Dow, Sholia and Yorkni tore the countryside apart. Although borders shifted every year, the Dow held on to their territories in the end.

In 2450 to 2500, Sholia found itself also fighting Ardis and Sobayid along the southern parts of its borders (close to the DharKesh marshes). The great battle of DharKesh in 2512 PC, where the three armies clashed, put a lid on the conflict for over 80 years. However, after this the age-long conflict and rivalry between Sholia and Ardis began. This conflict would last more than 400 years and the prejudice and rivalry from this time can still be felt today.

In 2595 the sholian king Harkin Matterton declared himself Sage of Heridoth and founded the Sholian Sagedom. He had managed to take advantage of the Thanterian invasion of Sobayid and snatched land from Ardis along the Krayll road. The Sholian Sagedom is at this time at its greatest, spread between the coasts of central Heridoth and encompassing most the south-western parts of Heridoth, as well as southern Ardis. At the end of 2900 PC, the great Sholian Sagedom was threatened by greedy keshts, lusting for power. The aging Sage Niis Matterton left the Sagedom in the hands of his son Mishane. Fate would however put the Sagedom in the hands of Mishane's younger brother Shandane, after Mishane and his family had been assassinated. Shandane was a brilliant scholar and unwilling ruler. But under him the Sholian Sagedom would flourish once again. His charisma, brilliant diplomacy and mastery of politics would enlarge the Sagedom to its old and greatest borders. Through alliances, social changes and brilliant military tactics, the Sagedom once again united. The Sholian Sagedom had a brief moment of pride and glory parallel to that of the old days, before it plummeted into chaos and disunity. Shandane's undoing was his liberation of Ardoth from the crugar invasion in 3007 PC. He left Ardis to the dharsage of Burdoth, but peacefully claimed the title of Chell of Ardoth. His grand plans for unity and two united strong realms in the Ardoth Bight was spoiled when Ardisian and Sholian keshts and klades turned against him. The great dynasty of Sholian sages died with Shandane in 3017, when the combined forces of Ardis, Gauss and Sobayid pushed the Sholians back all the way to Sholis.

After this several ruling families held the throne through marriages and pacts. It was during this time that the royal families of Ardis and Sholia started to marry to establish alliances. The final blow to the Sholians was the civil war between Sholia and Koistra that started in 3431 and led to the Burdothian occupation and the Energy Weapons war. Since this day, the Sholian Culture has been in decline and is threatened by the Dow and Yorkni cultures.

The **Dow Culture**, or Dow people, of northern Heridoth are descendants from two colony sites with large Asian populations. The Asian features are still today visible among the Dow people and their language, Dow, is derived from Chinese.

The Dow were a peaceful people who worked hard to build their great terraces upon the Dantrella Mountains. Their culture was homogenous and effective and scribes of the Sacred Order of Preservers first started to record their history in 866 PC when the Holy City of Dow-Sen was built upon the ruins of the colony blast site. This was regarded as year 0 of the Dow Horoscope Calendar that was to become famous all over Heridoth and Burdoth. The Dow soon found themselves under attack from the fleets of the Essajeans. Around 1340 PC, Essanja had conquered the Dow and fortified the city they referred to as Dowsen. At the end of 1800,



the Essanjans and their cruel god Sajjanis had become symbols of hate and oppression, as the number of human sacrifices increased. When the greatest slave rebellion in history took place in Essanja as a result, it quickly spread to Dowsen and Fallidan in Heridoth in 1819. The Dow fought for their freedom, but found new masters taking over from where the degenerated Essajeans had left off. The Sychillians arrived and made themselves the new masters of the Dow in 1820 PC.

The Sychillians treated the Dow much better than the Essajeans had ever done. Neither did they take any slaves among the Dow. Their Tolamuun religion of star-gazers was heartily embraced by the Dow as it coincided with their beliefs in the divinity of the moons. The Dow perfected and enhanced the Tolamuun religion. It was blended with the Dow belief in incarnation of the soul through the eight cycles, or realms, of life among each of the moons and the living world (the planet/Jorune). A great caste of seers and star-gazers started to grow among the Dow and under the supervision of Sychillian high priests in Dowsen. At the end of 2100 the Dow seers and astrologers were considered the most accurate predictors of human future and the state of the world. The envy of the Sychillian astrologers grew steadily.

In 2240 PC (1374, according to the Dow Horoscope Calendar) the Dow people managed to break free from the Sychillians, as ramian attacks had turned their attention and main fleet elsewhere. The Sychillians were cast out and the harbours of Dowsen closed. During the Blood Years that followed the Dow became hardened and found great use for the reinforcements of their cities that had been made by the Essanjans and Sychillians.

After the Dow had cemented their borders they established trade with the Anasani the Dobrens. Most of the populace remained humble and simple folk, following the predictions and horoscopes given to them by their monks. The Dow Culture became very stable and defined during the centuries after the Blood Years and many great works of literature and art were created in the realm.

After the death of Shandane in 3017 the Sholian Sagedom dove into chaos and the Dow people pushed southward along the east coast of Heridoth. They conquered the Sommint valley and all lands east of the Ellcor mountains as far south as the Kyis River.

During the Energy Weapons War the Dobren League broke the Dow and invaded them in 3440 PC after several tactical manoeuvres isolating the Dow cities from each other. The Dow people suffered greatly during the energy weapons war when their armies were forced to fight for the Dobren League against dharsage Khodre Allonkarb's troops armed with the new found earth-tec artefacts. At the disastrous battle of Elcrellia in 3441 PC, the Dow lost 2/3 of their army to the Burdothians. After the Dobrens had left many Dow cities had been devastated by energy weapons or Heridothian neighbours taking advantage of the resultant destruction. Many of these Dow refugees relocated to Sillipus when the island opened up after the Dobren League had cleansed it of ramian.

Among the Ellcor mountains can be found the mysterious ruins and old terraces of the **Ellcor Culture**. Villages and towns have been cut into the mountainside in high valley overlooking the Sommint valley. Iscin believe these towns were built by the Dow around 500 PC, but the Dow have no knowledge about them. Its inhabitants seem to have vanished or abandoned their dwellings around 1000 PC. The architecture seems to be of early Dow origin, but legends among the Sholians speak of Thunder Gods



living there and overseeing mortals. Sacrifices of food and live animals were made on the slopes of the mountains by the early Sholians. Only the Dow herders that sometimes seek shelter in the ominous ruins have seen the strangely accurate depictions of energy weapons carved upon the walls. They could have made a connection to the discovery of earth-tec if they had not been simple folk without any deeper knowledge of this. The ruins harbour an ancient secret.

The *Kan Lenkha Culture* (“Children of Lenkha”) consists of two city-states of mutated survivors from the Age of Monsters. Most of these people only suffer random mutations every third or fourth generation, but have constantly been hounded and used as scapegoats.

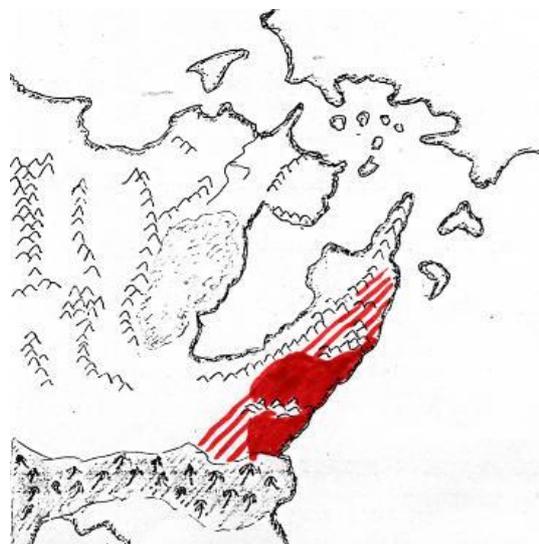
Accused of being freaks by most humans these people drifted around what was to become central Heridoth, much like gypsies of old Earth. By unknown means they accumulated great wealth and finally managed to settle in two towns in the barren eastern parts of the Elcrellia valley in 2383 PC. To these town the Kan Lenkha priests brought their most holy and



secret relic, the Soul of Lenkha. This artefact is in reality a Lih-Shyee holding the copra of a mutant called Lenkha, who had managed to rally the mutants in 683 PC. Lenkha was supposedly a multi-limbed mutant of tremendous power. At this time his isho mastery was mostly unknown among humans. Evidently he must have roused the interest of the shanta to have his naull captured. Either this or, he taught himself how to use the ancient shantic artefacts. Legends among the Kan Lenkha mention mighty shantic priests in Mash-ala that trained Lenkha himself and sent him out to save his people. The Lih-Shyee now holds his memories and his followers can tap into his well of knowledge and in a way converse with him during sacred communions.

The towns of the Kan Lenkhas attracted more unwanted humans and soon grew into cities. Because of their fear of persecutions the Kan Lenkhas fortified their cities and always tried to remain neutral traders between the Dow, the yorkni and the sholians. Their control over the great Western Road, its protection and taxation placed more money in their coffers.

The *Yorkni Culture* of south-eastern Heridoth started out as villages of simple fishermen along Heridoth’s eastern coast. The population probably exploded as refugees from the Mash-ala Culture sought refuge there. The Yorkni were simple folk that did not organise themselves under chieftains until Essajejan ships started raiding their coast between 1350 to 1450 PC. The yorkni towns of York, Simbi, Meard, Kymay and Vambrey were fortified and the yorkni held out against the Essajeans. In 1674 PC a sage was appointed to rule the yorkni. The old town of York, with its distinct skyrealm hovering over it, became the seat of power. In 2000 PC,



the Yorkni Culture started spreading far inland. The Yorknian expansion westward and south-westward soon created a conflict with the powerful Sholian Kingdom and later the Sholian Sagedom. Except for a few small skirmishes a truce and an alliance kept the Yorknins out of Sholian interests. Trade started between the Sychillians, Sholians and the Woffen mariners of Anasan. The Yorkni pantheon of gods resembled those of the Sholians, and soon priests of the various deities had spread among both of these cultures with only minor religious problems.

After the Sychillians lost their hold on the Dow, the Yorknins tried to take the southern parts of Dow territory for themselves. The time known as the Blood Years (2240-2350 PC) turned Sholians, Dow and Yorknins against each other in a series of cruel wars. The Sholians came out victorious while the Dow managed to keep their territories. The Sholian Sagedom had conquered the Sommint and Elcrellia valley along with the city of York and its coastline between the Ellcor and Yucid mountains in 2348 PC. The Yorkni Sage was beheaded but a new line of sages appeared among the Yorknins. They ruled from Meard until York was liberated in 2798 PC.

In 2500 PC, Ramians started to raid Heridoth's east coast from their new colonies in Sillipus and their holdings in eastern Anasan. The Yorknins were again forced to defend their coastal cities fiercely. The final resolution to the problem came with the organized military power of combined Sholian, Dow and Yorkni trading fleet that helped the Anasani to liberate their eastern coast.

After the fall of the Sholian dynasty of sages in 3017, the Yorkni Culture has once again expanded to its old boundaries. Today, Yorkni, along with the Dow, wrestle with the remains of Sholia for control over Heridoth. After the Energy Weapons war battles between these fractions take place yearly in war-torn Heridoth.

RELIGIONS

Three main religions exist in Heridoth. The strong temples of the Coralli gods, worshipped by both Sholians and Yorknins; the peaceful and contemplative Dow stargazers; the outnumbered Children of Lenkha.

Dowism

A belief in the incarnation of the souls of humans and some other intelligent creatures through eight distinct realms or worlds. These consist of the seven moons and The Living World itself (Jorune). All the eight realms have special traits and reincarnation through them is dependent upon one's deeds and moral life in the previous world. Some creatures are bound to only two realms (like the Cleash, Scarmis, Ramian, Croid and most animals), one of the moon realms and always the Living World. After each life they return to their realm of creation. All creatures will always return to the Living World every other time they are reborn. Cleash, Croid, Scarmis, Ramian and most animals are limited to two. Corastin, Crugar, Trarch, Blount, Salu and Acubon are limited to four. Woffen, Bronth, Tologra, Thriddle and Thivin are limited to seven. Humans and Shantas can attain all eight, but humans only rarely attain the Enlightened Realm.

Yawin (Jorune) *The Living World*

Life and death struggle. A broad middle plain of existence. All creatures can come here. A base World and a clouded, confusing place where the Grand Design is hard to detect, temptations are many and memories of previous lives are clouded. All realms try to influence the Living World by revealing parts of themselves and sometimes by sending souls to help or lure the souls there. Humans are created here.

Dau-rey (Launtra) *The Primal World*

World of primal, blind desires and instincts. Creative realm of most animals and destiny for souls that have been lustful or primal in nature and deeds. Brings ignorance and often rebirth as animals to the Living World or Rage world. Scarmis, crugar, blount, tologra

Geiling (Desti) *The Rage World*

The world of rage, war, hatred and dispute. Warriors are in great danger of ending up in this realm if they do not stay pure of the rage of war and vengeance. Condrij who enjoy battle are doomed to this realm of fighting and conflict. Cleash and ramian are created here.

Taowin (Tra) *The Paradise World*

A place of beauty, plenty, tranquillity and reward for those that have lived morally good lives and made no transgressions upon other souls. No souls are born here, but many strive to be reborn there. Cannot be reached by Crugar, blount, salu, acubon or trarch.

Naomeng (Gobey) *The Suffering World*

A world of hard toil and often fruitless efforts. Destiny for souls that are slothful or who have never worked towards improving theirs or others lives. Life is a struggle here and souls leaving this world are hardy and true survivors. Croid, trarch, salu and acubon are created here.

Soo-pan (Du) *The Compassionate World*

A place of warmth, friendliness, love and family bonds. Social souls come to this world. Deeds of compassion are often referred to as “experience from Soo-pan”. Corastin, thivin, bronth, woffen and thriddle are created here. Cannot be reached by Crugar, blount, salu, acubon or trarch.

Eybay (Ebba) *The Sensory World*

World of superb senses and vigilant guardians. From this world souls can oversee the Living World and watch over it. All senses are improved and vigilant, guardian souls come here. Shanta are created here. Cannot be reached by Crugar, blount, salu, acubon or trarch.

Huzai (Shal) *The Enlightened World*

A mystical world of great insight and worldly, as well as spiritual peace. The Grand Scheme is understood here and the end of reincarnation can be reached by coming to this world. Only by living morally correct, in peace and in understanding the Meaning of Life will one reach this world. Many shanta come to this world and know the way here. Only very few enlightened humans (often monks) manage to be reborn to this realm. Some (often shantas) choose to once again enter the cycle of rebirth in order to guide other souls to Huzai. Many normal people are however content to reach the Paradise World, instead of struggling to reach Enlightenment. Can only be reached by shanta and humans.

Much of the Grand Design and the future of every soul and the Worlds can be seen through the movement of stars, planets and the cycles and appearance of the moons. The Dow people had always had a great belief in stargazing, fortune telling and general astrology. The study of the moons was especially vital for determining their wills and the ways of reaching them. Their base religion survived the oppression of the Essajean Sajja priests and when the Sychillians and their Talamuun astrologer priests came, the Dow embraced the new religion. Instead of converting the Dow blended the two religions into what it is today. Soon, the Dow seers, astrologers and the Dow Horoscope Calendar were considered the most accurate

predictors of human future and the state of the world. Religious strife was common in northern Heridoth during most of 2200 PC, as Sychillian High Priests envied and fought the more popular but peaceful Dow monks. When the Dow people freed themselves from a thousand year occupation of foreigners in 2240 PC (1374, according to the Dow Horoscope Calendar), dowism bloomed. Today there is a great caste of seers and star-gazers in north-eastern Heridoth, eastern Anasan and Sillipus. Some of the monks have taken to travelling the world, seeking insight and spreading their wise worlds in return for rewards of food and shelter. Dow monks and seers are welcome in most realms except for eastern Thantier and Sychill.

Coralli

The Coralli are the host of gods worshipped by the Sholians and Yorkni of Heridoth. Once, the Coralli also had power throughout southern Ardis and northern Sobayid, but now the Star-Gods of Sobayid has stolen ground at the same pace the Sholian Sagedom crumbled.

The pantheon of Gods had different properties and came from seven different realms (symbolised by the moons). The gods of a certain realm would rule or influence the world according to when their realm(moon) was strongest in the sky. During these times their powers were greatest and the chances best that they would hear and aid humans who worshipped them.

Worship of the Coralli was at first done in small shrines dedicated to local gods. Small offerings of food or tokens were given to the Coralli. As the Yorkni and Sholian cultures grew, so did the religion. Mighty temples were erected to honour the Ruling Coralli of each realm and some of their more distinguished underlings. The priests became powerful and the smoke from their sacrificial burning bowls was soon seen in all Sholian and Yorkni cities. All Sholians and Yorkni must pay homage to their gods at these temples and must bring sacrifices in the form of food or goods that is consumed by fire and thus handed to their gods. The Coralli only accept human sacrifices during extreme conditions of flood, famine or other disasters and never is a man allowed to sacrifice anything else than his own kin.

The Coralli gods are believed to often interfere with the lives of mortals. Either because they favour them, they have been asked for help or simply because they enjoy the game of manipulation. The gods of one's enemy could likewise turn into your enemy if he was favoured by them. As the power of the gods waxes and wanes with the moons, Coralli worshippers worship different gods during different times of the day, month and year. Each god requires different prayers that will better suit their personality. The prayers and curses of the Coralli are well known throughout Burdoth, Heridoth and Anasan for their colourful wording and strong phrases.

Coralli worshippers have house shrines (a room) dedicated to the god that is thought to favour them especially. This god might be regional and class-bound. During certain times of the year people flock to the greater temples in Sholia, Koistra or other greater cities to attend the mass ceremonies that brings them together as a people. Many of these temples now lie in ruined cities or even in Burdoth, but still pilgrims come each year. Coralli worshippers burn their dead, so that their souls can gather in Bathor's halls and not be bound to the land where they can trouble the living.

The Coralli priesthood is still powerful and maintains a steady grip on the populace. They have specialised in different realms and different gods and are known for their lavish robes that distinguish them from each other. Some priests openly fight each other and use their worshippers as pawns.

Although many Coralli exist, these are the greatest:

Taris, Goddess of the Stars and the Mistress of the night, ruler of the Gobey Realm.

Harathor, God of the Seas, lakes and rivers, lord of the Shal Realm.

Hisigel, Goddess of Beasts, ruler of the Du realm.

Arath, God of the Lands, Forests and all things growing, ruler of the Launtra realm.

Siiris, Goddess of love, fertility, whispers and the tongue, ruler of the Ebba realm.

Bathor, God of wisdom, winds, and souls, ruler of the Tra realm.

Bellona, Goddess of war and fire. Her daughters are famine, fear and despair. Her sons chaos and murder. She is the ruler of the Desti realm.

Children of Lenkha

The people referred to as the Kan Lenkhas once roamed Heridoth in a nomadic life. They moved from town to town selling their goods and services. Crime often followed in their footsteps which led to persecutions and bad reputation. The greatest reason for their bad reputation was the fact that they were descendants of human mutants that were expelled from other human communities during the Age of Monsters. According to their legends, they rallied under a mutant or deity called Lenkha. Lenkha was trained by the wise shanta of the Mash-ala culture and gathered the other mutants or freed them from slavery and took them out into the wild to survive on their own. His powers seem to have been much like that of muadra and shantas and Kan Lenkha records accurately describe how he wove dyshas, more than 2000 years before Caji Gends was trained to weave the isho. The Kan Lenkhas no longer wander Heridoth, but have settled in two rich trading towns.

Lenkha priests keep the eternal flame lit by Lenkha alive and guard it in their holy temple of Lendûra. According to legend the mummified body of Lenkha is kept in this temple along with The Soul of Lenkha (in reality a Lih-Shyee – see *Isho Technology* essay for more details). Through this holy artefact the priests can commune with Lenkha. In reality they can glean answers to moral dilemmas or find answers to questions that relate to Lenkhas time.

Lenkha him/itself is always depicted as a blue multi-limbed humanoid of unknown gender. It was said to have had the strength of ten men, but the fair voice of a woman, with which it could enthrall all who listened.

Even though the Kan Lenkhas are descendants of mutants, only 10% of the population show any visible mutations. A mutation is seen as a blessing and a stigma shared with the great Lenkha himself. Many of the mutants born to Kan Lenkhas become priests as they can more easily understand Lenkhas will, laws and words. Shanta have always been interested in the Kan Lenkhas and Ca-Tra priests frequently visit their towns in central Heridoth. Muadra have high esteem among the Kan Lenkha and caji are said to wield the powers of Lenkha.

Sacrifices of animals, food and distorted human figures of clay are placed upon family altars to enjoy the protection of Lenkha from their enemies. Priests are consulted regarding both legal and moral problems, as they can tap the wisdom of Lenkha. The priests also try to predict when certain actions should be undertaken or how to act to avoid them. The king of the Kan Lenkhas is always surrounded by priests and must be a visible mutant. It is his sacred duty to organise his people, protect them and guard the holy relics.

Other religions

Besides the major established religions, the Heridothian towns and cities are full of minor sects or cults that are generally frowned upon or exist in secret. Examples of these are Sajja Cults (outlawed), The Auris Flame (Jaspian traders), Tolamuun (rivalling Sychillian sect), Ishara (caji isho worship), Holy Pluran Church (Newly emigrated sect from Thantier), Star-

Gods of Sobayid (along Burdothian border), Heki (salu of the ports), Doomsayers (new prophetic cult), Tekkol (outlawed ramian demon worship in eastern ports), Sharane (travelling artisans) as well as the Etton, Kerell and Sanster cults (worship/reverence of high-tech ancestors).

LANGUAGES

Although three separate cultures exist in Heridoth, most share the same language base, with some regional dialects that might be hard to understand.

Dow

The language of the Dow people is derived from Chinese, but has gone through considerable changes, keeping only the general Asian sound to the language.

Dow is written with Tung symbols from left to right, representing words or certain sounds, derived from the Chinese writing symbols, but changed throughout the millennia. The symbols are now more rounded and each symbol strives to form a circular shape.

Entren

The Sholians and the Yorkni both use this common language base derived from Colonial English, spoken also throughout Burdoth and Khodre. The dialects spoken in Heridoth are referred to as: Heridothian (dialect spoken by the Sholian people and once throughout the Sagedom of Heridoth) and Yorknin (dialect spoken by the Yorkni tribes and the Kan Lenkhas).

LAW AND ORDER

For its strict and detailed system of yordigs and cleverly devised legal system, the Dharsage's Yordig is used throughout Heridoth with only some minor changes. The Whitehands of Khodre were long exempted from some yordigs, but this has changed during the last 50 years. The Coralli priests have also officially also lost their privileges, but still enjoy them in practice.

The Dow people have their own additions to the Dharsage's Yordig in the form of moral rules called Chao, that sometimes are little less than inspiring mental quizzes or proverbs that highlight a moral problem surrounding the dispute. The very notion of having punishments for a crime that doesn't improve the criminal is one of the greater Dow moral additions to the Dharsage's Yordig and cause for many strange rulings (at least in the eyes of their neighbours).

RULERS OF HERIDOTH

Sagedom of Sholia

Although there has been no sage for nearly five centuries, the Sholians still refer to their realm as a sagedom. Kesht titles are frequently used, while the drenn title is something new to Sholia.

Since Shandane's death, the western parts of Heridoth, where the Sholians reside, have been ruled occasionally by the Wheel. The last 50 years have seen some stability again in this forum. The Wheel was originally a council for the ruling Whitehand Houses and the King (and later sage) of Sholia. As Sholia rose to power and sagedom, its cultural refinement and monetary wealth increased. This increase was mirrored in the Wheel and it became a big institution with large grounds, temples and a myriad of clerks and yordeh plying the corridors. Priests, and later klades, served as advisors and sponsors to the Whitehands and the Sage. Their influence was at first limited, but after the great civil strife following the death of Shandane their power grew.

It was the High Priests of the seven Coralli temples that brought the Wheel back together in 3120 PC. To cement their power and influence they managed to gain permanent votes in the Wheel. Each temple is ruled by a high-priest and the temples are not far behind the Whitehand Houses when it comes to intrigues, manipulation and bribery.

After the Energy Weapons War the Klades helped rebuild much of Heridoth and its markets with their wealth. In return they also demanded votes in the Wheel and were given some.

A list of the local rulers would be as follows:

Whitehand Houses

Sholis League

Amona	Ruled by Kesht Saam Amona.	3 votes in the Wheel
Akarth	Ruled by Kesht Yorsh Akarth.	2 votes in the Wheel
Bothee	Ruled by Kesht Kork Son Bothee.	2 votes in the Wheel
Sotrukkan	Ruled by Kesht Dhrvaen Sotrukkan	2 votes in the Wheel
Yardonk	Ruled by Kesht Ath´Dis Yardonk	1 votes in the Wheel

Koistran League

Tarajeen	Ruled by Keshtia Klariska Tarajeen	3 votes in the Wheel
Dokkar	Ruled by Kesht Swith Dokkar	2 votes in the Wheel
Makkelthorp	Ruled by Kesht Wordha Makkelthorp	2 votes in the Wheel
Shavannta	Ruled by Kesht Sibojenn Shavannta	2 votes in the Wheel
Harimork	Ruled by Kesht Shenjann Harimork	1 votes in the Wheel
Kebeshane	Ruled by Kesht Markin Dos Kebeshane	1 votes in the Wheel

Coralli Temples

Taris,	High-priestess Yakantha	3 votes in the Wheel
Harathor	High-priest Yelopa	3 votes in the Wheel
Hisigel	High-priestess Ya´Daria	3 votes in the Wheel
Arath	High-priest Yentrell	3 votes in the Wheel
Siiris	High-priestess Yasynputa	3 votes in the Wheel
Bathor	High-priest Yorkeed	3 votes in the Wheel
Bellona	High-priestess Yaginna	3 votes in the Wheel

Klades

"The Docks"	Repr. by Klademaster Juri Vannas	1 vote in the Wheel
-------------	----------------------------------	---------------------

Sailors

Sea captains

Rope and netmakers

Sailmakers and sailmenders

Importers, with dockside warehouses (These should go under merchants, but they refuse because they feel that their voices are easier to get heard here than with other merchants. "We are situated at the docks, therefore we belong with this Klade")

"The Condrij" Repr. By Klademaster Gorian Vullock 1 vote in the Wheel
Condrij for hire
Guards and protection services
Contract githerin
Contract Assassins and Poisoners

"The Merchants" Repr. By Klademaster Hes Wuren 1 vote in the Wheel
Clep owners (Groomers, Bakers, Perfumers, Caterers)
Market traders
Export/Import Klades (clothing, fabric etc.)
Travelling merchants
Cleaning services

"The Craftsmen" Repr. By Klademaster Tam Eleyin 1 vote in the Wheel
Armour and weapon smiths
Carpenters
Cobblers
Tailors
Papermakers
Glassblowers
Jewellers

"The Earthusers" Repr. By Klademaster Nisia Brin 1 vote in the Wheel
Farmers (Run by dharlerrin owners)
Thombo, Lothorn, Tarro and bochigon trainers
Thombo, Lothorn Tarro and bochigon breeders
Durlig harvesters
Producers of animal feeds
Pharmacologists/limilate makers

The Whitehand Houses and the Seven Coralli Temples have their own armies, while the klades have smaller security forces. This fact makes the Sholian Sagedom a bomb ready to go off if enough fire is applied in form of internal strife.

The towns and cities of Sholia tend to be ruled directly by any of these three fractions and much envy and rivalry exists between the most powerful cities. Most noticeable is the quiet strife between Sholis and Koistra. This strife also symbolises the two main alliances among the Whitehand Houses.

The so called "Lesser Whitehands" are in fact minor families who have served the various Whitehand families loyally. As a reward (or for pay) they are granted Whitehand status for 1-2 generations. Members of these families are often found in the House Guards or acting as money lenders, sponsors, orators, clerks or lobbyists in the Wheel. Quite often they will do the dirty work the greater Houses would not mess their hands with.

Recently the drenn system adopted from Burdoth has been popular and is supported by the klades and probably also by the temples. Many citizens, kladesmen and even Lesser

Whitehands have adopted this new title. As a reaction, many of the greater Houses have granted more Lesser Whitehand status to stem this irritating Burdothian custom. In reality the Houses greatly dislike or even fear what these titles might come to mean in the future if they become permanent. Power might be shifting.

Lands of the Yorkni

The Yorkni are still divided in great clans who take great pride in their lineage. Some leaders are still referred to as chieftains, while most city folk are governed today by keshts. Many other Burdothian titles have also been adopted, such as Chell, Lystra, Colmon etc. The Yorkni are ruled by a hereditary Sage who sits upon the throne of York. Chieftains and keshts have all sworn fealty to the Sage of York and rule in a strict feudal system.

The ruling family of Sages has been usurped many times and there is a tendency to dispose of unwanted rulers or those that demand too much clench from the fiercely independent Yorkni. In troubled times the Sage is expected to gather the military and protect his people. In peacetime he is expected to be able to control the same forces. Sages that have failed in this simple task have often found themselves and their families thrown from the Yirga skyrealm of York by the masses.

Warlords are given power in wartime to lead portions of the army. These are spread throughout the Yorkni lands during peacetime and act as overseers or yorlissen when conflicts of violence erupt. The warlords all carry the Circler of Servitude to the Sage as a symbol of his powers vested in them.

The Coralli priests of the Yorkni often dabble in politics and interfere with the decisions of the chieftains, keshts and even the Sage. They are also known to participate in battles and feudal raids between neighbouring tribes. As they are the spokesmen of the gods, it is not unusual for the people to sometimes follow them instead of their worldly leaders.

The Dow

The Dow people are not as strictly governed by religion as the Yorkni or Sholians. Instead the Dowism faith provides them with a certain moral and way of conduct that perforates their entire culture. Worldly rulers hold all the political power among the Dow, while people and rulers on a personal basis consult their Dow monks to gain insight or advice on how to act or make decisions that are somehow challenging their moral values.

The Five Exalted rule the Dow from Dowsen. These five men or women are appointed by the people and the Dow monks through their deeds and moral values. In reality, the Five Exalted tend to come from the same ten or fifteen families who raise their sons and daughters to pass the tests of the Dow monks. The Exalted are deemed to have mastered their reincarnation, at least temporarily. If they act badly or abuse the populace, the Dow monks have no problem inciting the masses against them.

The standing army obeys only the rulings of the Five Exalted, but are in fact an autonomous power factor or caste that several times have restored order or taken rulership temporarily into their own hands.

This type of rule is deemed flimsy and unstable by outsiders, but the humble Dow seem to thrive under it.

Some say it is only a matter of time before a ruling family or the army establishes its power permanently, with or without the aid of the Dow monks.

Kan Lenkhan Cities

The king of the three Kan Lenkha cities is always surrounded by priests and must visibly be a mutant. This has sometimes led to secret ritual mutilations to convince the populace. He is

appointed by the priesthood and it is his sacred duty to organise his people, protect them and guard the holy relics.

Priests are consulted regarding both legal and moral problems, as they can tap into the wisdom of Lenkha. The king however also has the power to solve economic disputes. The priests try to predict when certain actions should be undertaken or how to act to avoid them.

Kan Lenkhan officers obey the King directly and will not take orders from the priests. The small military is therefore swift and efficient to obey orders that should anyway have been sanctioned by the priests.

As the Kan Lenkhan society is very concentrated to the three cities and immediate surrounding farmlands, there is little risk of spreading the power of rulership too thin.

TOWNS AND CITIES

York

An old coastal city in eastern Heridoth and traditionally the seat of the Sage of York – appointed ruler of all Yorkni. The city is walled with a large garrison and a well protected harbour. Its most dominant feature is the Yirga Skyrealm with the sage's palace hanging close overhead. In the city can be found; the Shadowlands directly under the skyrealm (not favoured as habitation and crawling with githerin and other shy folk), the many canals, salu housings, Lowport Harbour, The thriddle Shen, Hill Town (rich residents), The Bridge (a hollowed rock pillar jutting up to the skyrealm with a great rope elevator platform) and the Fishermen's Wall (tall storage house built against cliff sides).

The Wanderers Script, ancient records found on the Yirga Skyrealm, details how a wandering pre-coralli tribe founded York and named it after fabled cities where their gods had resided.

Sholis

Originally the capitol of the Sholian Kingdom. The king of Sholia later relocated to the more easily defended Koistra after having suffered several sieges from the hostile Essajeans. Despite having been pillaged and burnt to the ground on more than one occasion, Sholis is a beautiful city. Situated close to the clear blue water of the Bolpey Channel, it is flanked by sandy white beaches and surrounded by fruit orchards. It is said that what Koistra has in crude defences, Sholis has in unearthly beauty. The city itself has many outdoor theatres and arenas that are popular among the citizens. All major roads or public buildings are decorated with numerous reliefs and statues honouring the city's glorious past.

Koistra

The realm's largest city, situated at the mouth of the Ellin River on Heridoth's western coast. Koistra has long been the capitol of the Sholian Sagedom. All power factions have representation here, although the Koistran League (see rulers of Heridoth) officially controls this city. The great institution and magnificent buildings of the Wheel are situated here.

Although the city is large and tries to mirror the cosmopolitan ways of Ardoth across the bay, it is not a beautiful city. The houses are tall and functional to hold the sheer number of people flooding to the city every year. Refuge litters the streets and the old sewer system has been modified so many times that it doesn't work properly. The city itself has long since grown outside the three walls that were built during the age of the Matterton Sages.

Most neighbouring realms have representation in Koistra, as well as the non-human races. Koistra's Great Fort, its three city walls and the Sage's Palace (now inhabited by the Tarajejan family) dominate the city.

Lendûra

A fortified Kan Lenkha city in central Heridoth. Its high walls and fort have many times saved the persecuted populace from the hostile Yorkni. A great temple holds the sacred remains of Lenkha, as well as his wisdom, personified by an eternally burning flame. Most of the Lenkha priesthood resides in this city.

As the city is situated at the crossroads between the Sholians and the Yorkni, it has long been known as a safe and neutral trading town. Even the Dow have a long tradition of seeking out business in Lendûra, who were given the right to tax all kladesmen travelling the roads, in return for safekeeping them.

Keityr

Another Kan Lenkhan town, situated in the foothills of the Ellcor Mountains. Not as well defended as Lendûra, it was purposefully built on a rock outcropping to make it more inaccessible for approaching armies. Much of the agricultural needs of Lendûra come from Keityr.

Dowsen

A major port at the very top of the Heridothian Peninsula. With the majestic yellow Dantrella Mountains as a background and the blue Essajejan Sea as a foreground, this city is naturally beautiful. Although now ruled by the Dow, the city was once the local sign of oppression, as the foreign Essajejan and Sychillian rulers would govern from behind its impregnable walls. It was the Essajejans who fortified the city and its large harbour originally, while the Dow later have tried to beautify the walls and the houses. Despite its large sea walls, Dowsen is often struck hard by the great tidal floodings caused by the moons.

Dowsen receives visitors and traders from all the northern realms, who often use this friendly port as a stopping point before (or after) passing the Sychill Strait.

Meard

Another large Yorkni city in the southeast of Heridoth. Meard's great harbour has been pillaged many times by ramian, human and salu pirates. Despite this, it is still fairly unfortified. Instead, the city and its great fort lies a kilometre further inland, where the populace retreat to in times of danger. The town of Meard is a sprawling mass, spread out among large natural rocks. The wealthiest and oldest families, as well as some Coralli priests, have built their great houses and temples upon these more easily defended rocks.

During the centuries when York was occupied by the Sholians, the sage of the Yorkni ruled from Meard.

Meard is the natural trading port for inland or jungle goods destined for Northern Heridoth, Burdoth, Anasan, Dobre or even Khodre.

Korrid

A fortified border town situated between the Dow and Yorkni. It has been owned and pillaged countless times by these two peoples, but has always risen from the ashes. Despite the often occurring hostilities between these nations, the local people have always needed a focal point for their trade. Therefore, the people of Korrid are extremely tolerant to both the Dow and the Yorkni.

Kymay

An often hot and dry coastal town named after the great flanking sea. Kymay is built upon countless pylons out in the sea, as the tide moves far inland between the great sand dunes. Sand dunes or water (depending on tide) flank this wooden town. Fish is bountiful, as well as

the corray shellfish that move with the tide. Fields and livestock are held further inland in fortified farms. The pace in Kymay is slow, especially during the hot mullin period.

Manstead

A sleepy border town between Burdoth and Heridoth. Heridoth could never withstand the might of Burdoth (nor would it wish to) and has not troubled itself with arming this border town. The residents would as a matter of fact prefer to be Burdothian, as they share little with their Sholian cousins. Even the Coralli priests are outnumbered here by other sects and have found it wise not to stir up trouble about heretics.