

Newsfax, Turn 1 (start of 401 CE through the end of 404 CE)

As made traditional, here is my egocentric attempt to impress/nauseate you with music listened to while working on the turn:

- www.radiok.org
- Blue Oyster Cult - eponymous
- Recoil - *Bloodline*
- Tarnation - *Mirador*
- Machines of Loving Grace - *Machines of Loving Grace*
- Björk - *Debut*
- Shonen Knife - *Let's Knife*
- The Sisters of Mercy - *Vision Thing*
- Sixteen Horsepower - *Sackcloth n' Ashes*
- compilation - *Sirens of Song: Classic Torch Singers*

Generally eastward starting with ...

Central Asia

Hephthalite Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Kiliciler

Diplomacy: Sogdiana (P), Otarsh (NT), Issyk-Kul (FA), Dzungaria (F), Ferghana (T), Quba (A), Kyzl-Kum (UN)

The Khan was not pleased at the faith practices of many of his subjects. So he decided to do something about it. Despite his well-known skill at negotiations, Kiliciler took a large part of his army, marched into devoutly Manichean Sogdiana and spent an entire campaign season tearing down churches, executing priests, and generally promoting the worship of Tengri. Needless to say, this did not endear him to the locals, who rose up against him.

Sadly for them, their leaders were clerics, their warriors farmers. The rebels were easily slaughtered, the survivors now sullenly given to the sacrifices and rituals of the steppe.

Pleased, the Khan marched into the Kingdom of Khwarzim. The shah, one Bostam, raised his troops and bravely marched to face the Hephthalites in battle. In a running battle over several weeks, the defenders were hunted down to a man, the shah taken back to Bactra in chains. These people were also forcibly converted to the worship of the sky, sun, and moon, and reverence of animals.

Yet more happy and proud of his abilities, Kiliciler returned to the land of the Sogdians to ensure their fidelity to the new faith. The expected array of atrocities ensued.

After sacrificing four horses and several slaves to Tengri, the Khan returned to the embrace of the

Khanum. And as in all else, he was successful, as she was shortly thereafter seen losing her dinner. Once more, the Khan smiled. "Suffering is the price of a happy nation," he told the Khanum at a dinner in her honor. She was not seen to smile at this.

Juan-Juan Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Sho-luen, Khan

Diplomacy: Beshbalik (F)

The Khan sends his son, Ogodei, to woo the noble clans of Beshbalik. With an offer to wed the princess of the local khan, the deal is cemented. Sadly, the young lady dies in childbirth. Ogodei is, however, unimpressed by events, and before 404 is over a little girl is born to the late princess' chambermaid, Qalia. The heir to the Great Khan claims the child as his own, much to the consternation of both his father and the folks back in the mountains and forests of Beshbalik. Qalia is quite pleased - she knows a good situation when she sees one.

Sho-luen is nearly as active, and sires a son on one of his concubines. The baby, however, begins coughing violently after birth and is soon lost. The Khan is however unconcerned, and in fact spends much of his time trying to beget another child. His evening "activities" and his continual sending and receiving of frontier reports left no time for the oversight of his Chinese bureaucrats. Inevitably, they took the opportunity to drink tea, gossip, and sneak peaks at the concubines. Life was good.

Kushan Empire

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Kapisa II, Kidarite Shao

Diplomacy:

The Kushans pay little attention to affairs of state, and are content to harvest, pray, and gossip.

Oghuz Turk Realm

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Sonqur

Diplomacy:

The Khan decides to hone his falconry skills, much to the dismay of the local rodents.

Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom of the Aza

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Gur-Laq

Diplomacy:

Little news emerges from the frigid wastes of this realm.

China

Chinese Buddhism

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Lo-Wang

Diplomacy: Shentung (AB), Houma (CH), Shensi (MN), Honan (CH), Pienching (CH)

Members of this order wandered the countryside and cities, founding temples and preaching to all with ears to hear. Shensi was especially active, where efforts were made to actually convert people. The Master from India, Kumarajiva was greatly displeased at events in the Eastern Ts'in lands, and left that degenerating land for calmer towns in which to continue his translation of various texts, including the Chu Ron and Junimon Ron.

Chinese Kingdom of Annam

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

King Ma Yueh

Diplomacy:

See *Eastern Ts'in*.

Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master

Diplomacy: Yu Chang (CH), Ling Ling (CH), Ts'ang Wu (CH), Yu-lin (CH), Jiangxi (CA)

When he learned that an Eastern Ts'in army was heading into Tsainan, the Master sent an emissary to Emperor An Ti, asking his mercy towards their temples. This he granted, though they were fortunate not to have many monks in the cities of Lu or Kuang-ku (see *Eastern Ts'in*).

Monks were dispatched to Kwangsi and Lingnan, and temples were consecrated in various places. Interestingly, many of these were in cities, where the people are to be found, rather than the traditional isolated mountaintops.

The monk Li Chan organized the construction of a Grand Temple in Jiangxi, much to the cheer of the local faithful. By contrast Ko Chao Fu was utterly unsuccessful in garnering any support for small temples in Wu and Chin An. His piety was apparently not adequate to inspire worship.

Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

K'ung Ti, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

The emperor signed documents right and left, confiscating lands, transferring titles, and otherwise pushing through his ambitious road building project. This enriched many merchants, but left the nobles grumbling, including those not in the rights of way. Further, An Ti ordered the retraining of thousands of imperial troops, with varied success. Generally the empire and its leaders were put in motion on a vast scale. Reports from imperial agents in foreign lands were, however, not encouraging. The emperor was

put into a rage, ordering the execution of his Minister for Barbarian Affairs, Lu Xun. Fortunately for the latter, his beheading was delayed by a sudden freak snowstorm. Heads cooled, and Lu Xun resumed his post.

The odd snow was remarked by the imperial astrologers, as was the sudden appearance of a small comet and a new star. Fearful of the emperor's wrath, they did no more than urge caution to An Ti, though the omens were far more dire. Despite these portents, refugees were successfully settled in many places, including the usually intractable Annam and Jih-Nan.

Against these events, messengers from the rebellious provinces of Southern Yen were received at court with nods and small smiles, and then dismissed. An Ti was overheard to say, "It is ancient wisdom that a traitor may never be trusted." Certainly An Ti was not one to trust others easily. Kongming, the Imperial Chamberlain, opined that one might trust a rabid dog on a leash, or a hawk in a cage. The emperor, however, merely glared at his advisor from across the room. Kongming touched his neck possessively before retiring from his lord. He knew An Ti was choleric by nature, and did not appreciate public disagreement, and barely tolerated advice of any kind.

Thus it was with interest, but not surprise, that a congress of military men, leading merchants, and great landholders heard their emperor say, "We shall show these barbarians that there is no withstanding the power and majesty of the Middle Kingdom. The dogs of Southern Yen shall be made an example!" The men - and a few women - in the great hall rose in acclamation, though a few eyebrows were seen to rise in amusement. Given the sad condition of the Southern Yen "state" few viewed this as a particularly bold act.

Nonetheless the nation was at war, and troops were mustered in their hundreds and thousands. This mass was directly commended by the emperor himself. The stress of managing the logistics quickly took a toll, and soldiers noted the new grey hairs on his head.

Columns of troops tramped along the roads and trails into Tsainan just as winter began. The omens were favorable, and in fact the weather was clement. The defenders, expecting an attack from either their former overlords the Southern Yen, or their new neighbor the Marquis of Kuang-ku, were taken strategically unawares. Local troops were redeployed, but it was too late. The **Battle of Lu Shan** saw the local troops defending a high ridge near the famous Daoist retreat, surrounded by thousands of swarming enemy archers and crossbowmen, light horse, and the remainder of the army. When the ballistae and catapults were moved into position, the Duke of Lu realized the hopelessness of his situation and fled with a few retainers for the sanctuary of the shrine. After the slaughter, to a man, of the militia, he slipped out under cover of darkness to his home city.

The Duke managed to elude imperial scouts, who had already set up heavy patrols within a few *li* of the remains of the walls of Lu. The once-proud city had never recovered from its humbling at the hands of the Hsien-pi decades before. The new warlords had forbidden the rebuilding of defenses or, in fact, much of anything. Now another army was about to reap the harvest of that policy.

The imperial heir, Prince K'ung Ti, rode within earshot of the crumbling main gatehouses. He was armed barbarian-style, lance and bow, lamellar body armor lacquered in black with gold characters, his guard similarly clad. Within the gate stood the Duke. He had sent his wives and four children out via a concealed postern gate, and now faced the enemy alone. The weather had turned that morning, and a misting of cold rain now filled the air.

Seeing the single opponent, the horsemen rode to within a javelin-throw of the gate.

"Yield, and you may be spared," bellowed the prince.

"As fares my city, so fare I,"

The prince sighed. I don't have time for this, he thought to himself. But ... No, and he sighed once more at the battle between duty and honor. Setting his jaw, he raised his left arm, then lowered it. His guard, and himself, pulled bows from their cases, knocked arrows, and let fly.

The Duke's ancestral armor was inadequate to the task, and he fell backwards into the mud. The rain lifted, and a thin sunlight peered through the clouds as the Imperial army's foot guard advanced past his corpse and into the city. One of the soldiers at the rear took the time to drag the body off to the side of the road.

The prince watched the sack of Lu with little joy. By the time the heavy horse had set pitch alight in the city he was already riding off to the northeast.

That winter saw the resettlement of a multitude of refugees in Tsainan. All of these had fled the fear, death, and hunger caused by the barbarian onslaught in the north, many years before. They were understandably delighted, though the more introspective among them were disturbed at the displacement of fellow Northern Chinese, oppressed by the Hsien-pi until lately, once more under a foreign yoke.

Liu Hsia, Marquis of Kuang-ku, listened to the stories from the west with concern. Or, rather, alarm. He was not alone. Thus it was easy to convince many landholders of Shantung that the smart move was to retire within the walls of the city with their belongings and workers. Most, however, chose to remain and rely on their kinship with the invaders for salvation.

Hard on the heels of the southern army came legions of settlers, more displaced Northerners returning to a home, though not their original ones. They were welcomed by the locals, who were glad of the chance of peace at last.

Peace is, of course, a relative term.

The first assault on Kuang-ku came at dawn on the twelfth day of the investment. Imperial guard units, both foot and dismounted horse, lead the charge under a screen of archery and artillery. The siege engineers had worked diligently to extend their trenches to within an arrow-shot of the walls in multiple locations. Troops poured forth from these, while others advanced behind mantlets. The missile fire and sheer numbers proved too much for the defenders, who were unable to turn back more than a few of the scaling ladders.

The Marquis could see the way of things, and ordered his best ballista crew to aim at the Imperial banner. This had been steadily advancing, and was now just inside the walls, beyond the ruined gate. The emperor was at the point of a wedge of guard pressing on a shield wall of defenders. An Ti towered over the defenders, his famous sword, Red Jade, powerful arm separating heads from necks and arms from shoulders. The militia could not resist him and soon were falling back in terror.

Despite the rain of missiles both small and large, the city artillerists managed to shoot several spears in the general direction of An Ti. Several actually entered the panicked ranks of militia. But one managed to strike the Master of the South near the left shoulder, knocking him forward and pinning him to the shield of one of the defenders, the aged Gu Huang, a veteran and now a fishmonger. The old man took

advantage of his enemy's pain and struck him in the neck with his spear. A roar arose from the ranks of the militia, and they advanced a step.

The imperial guard's initial shock was rapidly replaced with rage, and they fell upon the city men with silent ferocity. The body of An Ti was rapidly recovered, and was quickly with the bodies of Gu Huang and his compatriots.

An Ti was beloved by his troops, if not their commanders. When the rumor of his death at the hands of a fishmonger spread throughout the army, the men chanted "An Ti! An Ti!" as they redoubled their efforts. The Kuang-ku militia died to a man, as did their families, their Tibetan mercenaries, everyone. The city was sacked repeatedly then burned to the ground. Where a stone remained upon another, it was cast down. Only when the troops were exhausted did the carnage cease.

The head of the Marquis was later recovered, next to the artillerists he had commanded.

Rebellion of the Generals

While at the front troops rallied around the prince, and acclaimed him as the new emperor, the rest of the empire was less impressed with K'ung Ti. Least impressed was his uncle, General Tsu Ti, who had been left in Chien-k'ang to hear pleas of landholders, sign papers, and generally manage the Empire in the absence of An Ti. Once the permanence of his departure became clear, Tsu Ti decided that he, and not that brat nephew, was the true heir.

Tsu Ti declared his dismay at the brave death of the emperor and the young prince, and then his sad duty to take the reins of government in hand. As he heard this news, the simultaneous plots of General Wang Xi were stopped by his arrest and swift execution on charges of treason against the new emperor of the **Southern Ts'in**.

News of the death of Wang Xi sent shivers down the spine of K'ung Ti. He was relieved that his four brothers, including the twins, were safely in his care. Now they were orphans - albeit with the Imperial Army behind them - he vowed to care for them as his father would.

Another reaction was that of the Da Wang of Chekiang, Count Hsia. As soon as the news of his lord's death reached him, he decided that his troops were needed at home. With their breath fogging in the late autumn dawn, his men mustered in one of the many plazas of the city. Ordered into units, they began to march for the south gate of Chien-k'ang and home. Lacking even a garrison beyond the men on the walls, General Tsu Ti could not force the imperial ally to stay.

Force, however, was not the only way. Tsu Ti boldly rode his horse up to the head of the column of Chekiang men and Count Hsia. Without a word, the General held up his hands. In one was a small bar of gold, in the other a bag of moderate size. The two men stared at each other for a moment. The Da Wang of Chekiang laughed loudly, rode up to Tsu Ti and quickly snatched the coin from his hand. Facing his troops he yelled, "About face! We're staying."

In his tent near the village of Minchiang in Honan, General Ma Ch'in considered his years of service to the emperor. Did he not deserve better? Was not his family prominent? The general called in his staff, and announced his desire to restore peace and prosperity to the nation - under his leadership. Next, he ordered the seizure of the Minister of Personnel, Count Liu, who was busy dealing with various secret

agents and diplomats. The Count been working on his own scheme for turning his connections with the world of subterfuge into a bid for the Empire.

Ma Ch'in had neither trust nor love for Liu, and beheaded him with the general's own sword. He then cursed his location, close to the capitol, but still many *li* from the center, now controlled by Tsu Ti. Life in the **Sung Empire** would be "interesting."

Late in 405 the news of events to the north reached General Ma Yueh far to the south. A steadfast supporter of the dynasty, he initially declared his intention to march on the capitol, to assist the prince, and to restore order and harmony. More news about the fire of rebellion quickly ended his pronouncements. Ma Yueh began to think how many *li* lay between himself and the capitol, and decided that declaring the **Kingdom of Chinese Annam** in the far south would be the best way to ensure safety and prosperity for his troops.

(For who controls what, please see the updated control list.)

Khanate of the Hsiung'nu

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Bulinger, Khan of the Hsiung'nu

Diplomacy:

The leader of the once-mighty Hsiung-nu has several of his palace eunuchs executed on evidence of a complex plot involving a concubine, a flower arrangement, and a Sogdian rug merchant. On top of this, locusts swept across many fields in the summer of 403, causing much distress among the peasant farmers. The khan took no note, of course.

Korean Kingdom of Koguryo

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Kwanggaet'o, the Great

Diplomacy: Bandao (A), Silla (C), Cheju'Do (UN)

Having expanded his kingdom, Kwanggaet'o takes it easy. With remarkable ease, the Great King essentially swaps some amount of silver and silks to the Yamato for an unimpeded claim to Silla and title to Cheju'Do. He then read with some amusement their engagements with the wild Emishi.

Later Liang Kingdom

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Lu Kuang, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

The emperor attempts to emulate a great Chinese strategist by training his women as soldiers. The results were immortalized in the comic play by Gu Hsin, "The Flaming Watercress." Master Gu was forced to flee to Yuan-ch'uan after the opening night performance. Apparently barbarian emperors are not often possessed of advanced senses of humor.

Lu Kuang's other attempts at governance were more successful. His son and heir, Lu Ssu, however, became ill with a periodic delirium, sweating, and general malaise beginning in the autumn and lasting until the next spring. The young man is now recovered, but his speech is slurred. The shaman journeyed

far into the astral plane, but was unable to mollify the host of spirits besetting the prince.

Later Ts'in Dynasty

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Yao Hsing "the One-Handed", Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

General Tian was happy his grandfather had left the frozen wastes of Tibet. While proud of his Aza heritage, the young man knew he owed everything to the emperor. Thus he was surprised, alarmed, and a bit amused when during the muster period for the spring campaigning an aide brought forth a short slim man who spoke with an accent. The man, who introduced himself only as "Cao", would only speak with Tian in private.

Waving off his one guard with a complex handsign, the general let the man speak:

"... and the emperor would be most gracious in his rewards, in exchange for, ah, certain acts on your part."

"Is that so? Exactly how gracious, worm?"

The envoy shuffled his feet and once more rubbed his tongue against something small and hard in his mouth.

"Sir, he leads the mightiest empire under Heaven. Who can say where his beneficence would end?"

With this Tian smiled a little, clapped his hands and rose to extend a hand to his guest. As he did so, several armored guards piled into the tent and held the man.

"I would say my emperor's graces are unmatched. You will soon be hoping for them."

Turning to a guard, he said, "Wen Ho, his mouth. Now!" The soldiers forced open the mouth of Cao, Ho reached inside with mailed fingers, and a small white ball was produced.

Tian said, "Hmm. No easy escape from this world." After a tight smile he added, "You will beg for one soon enough. Ho, take him, and bring my horse." The man thrashed a little, then allowed the guards to walk him out.

So talkative was this "Cao" that rather than ambushing Tian on his way to the emperor, the Viet hit team was themselves surprised at their camp in the trees. Their green silk tunics did not turn the silent crossbow bolts of the general's guard in the early morning sun. The southern barbarians were so imprudent as to each have a copy of their contracts with the Eastern Ts'in Commanderie of Barbarian Affairs, and a short list of contacts. These last were found and beheaded.

Yao Hsing was amused at the embarrassment of the ambassador from An Ti when the head of one of the contacts was brought forth during a dinner for foreign emissaries on the New Year. He quickly fled the party, but the host let him go. He was far more interested in chatting up the guests ... And in preparing for his campaign.

Armies gathered, generals mustered regiments and trained fresh units, and allies girded for battle and gathered rice and meat for the march. Meeting in Shensi, they moved with their right anchored on the Huang Ho into Houma, where Duke Bai and his troops joined them. Vowing death before dishonor, they crossed the Later Yen border into Hopei (see the *Later Yen*).

Later, as the disheartened Ts'in army trudged through Houma, Bai declared his joy at the liberation of his lands, and renounced his loyalty to the Toba. Chagrined at his inability to protect his own fields and villages, Yao Hsing accepted this obeisance and moved on. He had more urgent business (see the *Toba*

Wei). Indeed, thousands of refugees found their way into Shensi escaping the horrors of the Toba in Huang.

Later Yen Dynasty

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Mu-jung Ch'uei, Emperor of China

Diplomacy: Yen (F)

Mu-Jung Ch'uei and his brother, Mu-Jung Shen'qu, dreamed happy thoughts of romance with doe-eyed Chinese maidens, weddings, strolling hand-in-hand through the tawny grass of a high summer sunset. But the path of love can be a stony one, catching the toes of those looking to the Sky Father for a happy heart. And thus it proved for the newly-literate Later Yen.

General Bailao Qu'li rode into the sullenly obedient land of Hopei at the head of 2200 horse. Checking on the new fortified outposts at crossroads and other important places, the general noted the well-fed peasants, the clean villages, and the overall health of the province. It was easy to see why the emperor had decided to make these rich fields his own, and the chain of fortified points now ensured a virtual chokehold on the local populace.

At the small city of Yanggu, Bailao Qu'li halted for the night. Inviting landholders and monks from around the region, he declared the emperor's intent to bring the joy of his enlightened rule to every corner of Hopei. The more headstrong at the table flushed, yelled oaths, and stormed from the room. These were quietly collected as they left. Their heads were seen decorating the town gate the following morning. Those more circumspect attendees were allowed to return to their estates and temples.

Word of this "outrage" spread rapidly, and before the next moon a rebel army had formed around Count Lu Su. He was not known for his martial skills but was pleasing of appearance, well-dressed, with smooth skin and wide-set eyes. The force marshalled was well-equipped and numbered nearly 4000 men.

Lu Su's advisors recommended the force remain near Yanggu, where forage and water were plentiful, and await the "barbarian" onslaught. After the first week of hearing reports of from the countryside of the establishment of tax-collectors, the Count decided to chase down the enemy. In order to lure General Bailao Qu'li into open battle, the Count first attacked one of the crossroads forts so hated by the people. Unfortunately this particular post had been warned by Bailao's scouts and was well-reinforced, arrows stacked to the roof. On the third evening, with thousands of militia encamped at random around the small yet stoutly-walled place holding perhaps a few score armored troops, Bailao attacked. His armored horse emerged from the moonlit woodedge, formed ranks, each unit with its supporting light horse archers, and a half-*li* before breaking into a charge.

The Hopei militia was hopelessly unprepared, those on watch either asleep or semi-conscious after a night of rice wine and gaming. Some few escaped into a nearby march, but were hunted down by the fort guards and several hundred horse archers. A few dozen Yen riders were injured, mainly by night-time accident, and a handful were slain outright. Thus was Hopei pacified by the emperor's troops. That ruler was, however, not the only ruler to covet these rich lands.

The Ts'in troops crossed the Hopei border in the late summer of 401. At their head rode Emperor Yao Hsing, aided by his brother, Prince Shek Hsing, General Tian "the Loyal", and their vassal Duke Bai of

Houma with his men. The vast host headed east along the Huang Ho in several columns.

As soon as the border was crossed, Prince Mu-Jung Shen'qu was notified, and he roused his captains to action. Saddling up, they raced south from Bao Ding at the head of mass of horsemen. Before the slow-moving columns could begin their attacks on the strong points in Hopei. Especially sluggish were the advances of Duke Bai. His militia were always the last to break camp and the first to pitch tents for the evening, and were regularly seen hitting up the peasantry for chickens or pigs. The Duke himself, a man many hands tall yet slender as bamboo, was more interested in collecting samples of the local wine varieties than in keeping good order among his men.

The prince's horse archers contacted the enemy in the late spring of 402, engaging in inclusive skirmishing over a period of days across many *li* of muddy plains. The scattered strong points slowed the Ts'in, but this was largely countered by the emperor's army, whose sappers helped the crossbowmen and artillerists to close the range on these outposts before the armored men stormed them.

In the midst of these operations came word of the Toba Wei's incursion into Houma. Despite the pleading of his lord, Duke Bai would not stay, and his troops marched back to Houma to save their lands (see the *Toba Wei*).

Fighting raged across the province and thousands of peasants fled the ravages of soldiers, especially the light horse of both sides. The refugees crossed the Huang Ho - which was unusually placid for the season - into Honan and safety.

The **Battle of Linqing** saw the more mobile troops of Prince Mu-Jung Shen'qu drawn up against the much more numerous mixed army of Emperor Yao Hsing. The nearly 40,000 Ts'in formed a line opposing the 10,000 Yen, who had anchored their line and few pieces of artillery on and within the walls of the village of Linqing. The Ts'in troops were suffering from poor supplies due to Yen control of roadways and canals courtesy of their forts.

The king lead the first charge, at the head of his household *minghan* of armored horse, troops armed after the fashion of the Aza. His men swept up the slope with him, flanks guarded by skirmishing crossbowmen and horse archers, right at the prince's banner. His men, armed similarly (both sides' commanders descended from Hsien-pi conquerors), waited in silence until the advancing corps reached a distance of two hundred paces. Dismounted archers then rose up along the ridge line behind the horses, advanced a few steps, and loosed several arrows each. This took down many of the foot, and disordered the ranks of the advancing horse. Mu-Jung Shen'qu waved his arm, and his men countercharged into the ranks of the enemy. A swirling melee ensued, neither side able to gain the upper hand, weapons for the most part causing few wounds. The prince saw the gold and black-lacquer helm of the Ts'in emperor and pushed his guard towards that banner. Shen'qu let out a shrill yell and pushed his dark horse to race ahead of his guard. Laying about him with a double-ended Chinese halberd, he came to the enemy khan. In the Aza tongue they both knew from birth, the prince said, "The Mu-jung now claim your clan!" The emperor retorted, "Not while my hand yet holds steel," and attacked the prince with his favorite weapon, a steel axe. Shen'qu parried, his horse stepped back, then he chopped down with his halberd. The bright edged sliced between the lamellae of the emperor's gauntlet, severing the hand above the wrist. The armored hand flew threw the air and was snatched up by a newly-arrived Yen guardsman.

The Ts'in guard leapt to protect their lord, and the two commanders were swept away from each other in the chaos. Rumor of the emperor's wound spread like bad coin, and the Ts'in fell back down the slight

slope to their supporting troops.

Prince Shek Hsing decided on a more cautious approach, and ordered a general advance. General Tian was ordered to dismount his heavy horse and send his entire corps against the village flank. This succeeded, and the village was left a smoking ruin by the afternoon.

By then nearly every man in the Yen army was dead, wounded, or exhausted. Shen'qu could see that his only hope was to close with the enemy, whose superior numbers were wearing down his own men via sheer archery volume and depth of formation. Gathering his remaining troops, he charged down the slope with the sun at his back.

Shek Hsing was surprised at the move, and hastily ordered his flanks to pull in. But it was too late. The Yen heavy horse burst through the spear-armed militia and into the rear of the Ts'in line. Panic immediately spread from that point, and the militia threw down their weapons and ran for a nearby hill to their rear.

The Yen army was however in no position to sweep across the enemy rear and instead contented themselves with a quick looting of the camp before riding down the road and away from the battle. The large Ts'in force could only watch them trot away, as its commanders tried to rally their men, and men tried to rejoin their units. Shek Hsing was relieved that the Yen had been ground down to only a few thousand survivors, and that his elder brother would apparently survive the loss of his right hand, yet cursed his unwieldy army's inability to obliterate the enemy. The prince, however, was anxious to quickly reduce the province so that the army could deal with the Toba Wei. Others in the command staff grumbled that they ought to retire immediately to deal with the barbarian incursion, but the prince was most insistent they retrieve his brother's hand - and their honor - to which no argument could be made.

The next months saw the war turn into a series of sieges, as the Ts'in sought to bring their superior engineers and artillery to bear on the problem of logistics. Fortified Yen positions were reduced one-by-one, while Prince Mu-jung Shen'qu lead raids on enemy supply trains, pursued night attacks, and generally made life miserable for the Ts'in. Shek Hsing was usually ready for these, and slowly the Yen position deteriorated.

The Sky Father, however, has a cruel sense of humor. With only a couple thousand troops remaining, Shen'qu decided to take a chance, and was considering an assault on the enemy commander. His small army moved closer to the Ts'in army HQ, horse archers riding far and wide in a screen to find it. One evening, after his usual plain meal with his captains, a guard stepped in, wide Tibetan face split with an uncharacteristic and somewhat frightening grin. Shen-qu rose and opened his mouth to demand an explanation, when one of his scouts stepped into the tent with a bound figure. The prince's mouth stuck open, as the guard announced, "It is my honor to present to you Shek Hsing, Prince of the Later Yen." Then, for the first time this moon, the Mu-jung prince laughed.

As it happens, the Ts'in commander had decided to do some scouting of his own. Taking a horse and two guards he decided to act on his hunch that the Yen force was, in fact, sneaking up on his army. Sadly for him, he was correct. They were surprised by a squadron of enemy heavy cavalry while spying on the camp - posting a watch proved prudent yet again.

The capture of their prince, the wounding of their emperor, and stories of horrors from back home, were all too much. After some negotiations, the Ts'in agreed to retire, and the Prince agreed to return the

emperor's hand - but not his brother. The invading army fell back to Houma, defeated but not dishonored.

Mu-jung Shen'qu spent much of the remainder of his time in Hopei mourning the loss of so many comrades - and falconry.

These dire events did not stop the Marquis of Yen (the province) from promising his own daughter to the emperor, another success for Bailao. The very young Lady Wang rode by carriage to the emperor, and a year after the wedding - which featured both prayers in Chinese and various supplications to Tengri and the fertility goddess - the couple was blessed with a baby girl. A year later came a double blessing, twin sons. The bliss of domesticity and charms of his new bride so transfixed the head of the Mu-jung that he proved singularly inept at the management of the Empire. The result was an increase in tax farming, rumors, and a precipitous decline in revenues.

Southern Ts'in Empire

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

Tsu Ti, Emperor

Diplomacy:

See Eastern Ts'in.

Sung Empire of China

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

Ma Ch'in, Sung Emperor

Diplomacy:

See Eastern Ts'in.

Southern Yen Dynasty

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Quzan, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

Quzan enjoyed the imperial lifestyle. The best food, the best horses, the best women; all of these he took aplenty, while at the same time taking care to look after tax collection and the proper treatment of ambassadors from distant lands.

One thing Quzan did not enjoy was entertaining the Chinese nobility. They were not of the steppe. They had not hunted with their clan on the clan-unclesteppe, forming the wide crescent driving game ahead until the circle closed, bringing deer and rabbit home to happy children. Writing. Bah! The capture of several would-be assassins had not improved Quzan's mood, especially when each had confessed that An Ti, Great Emperor to the south, had hired them.

The execution of Liu Guangde, son of the Marquis of Kuang-ku, was the final outrage to these Chinese. The rash young man had asserted the freedom of his city too much, expressed his disdain for the barely-washed Northerners too freely, for Quzan to ignore. On the advice of the palace eunuchs, each with his own agenda, the lad was marched outside the yurt of the emperor and beheaded before the next watch.

Reaction across the small realm was swift. Every city and province revolted, save Shantung, where the swift execution of plotters and a few village massacres sufficed to cow the locals. First to revolt was the father, Liu Hsia, Marquis of Kuang-ku. The Marquis' father had agreed to nominally acknowledge the barbarians as overlords when they rode up to the walls after the last dynasty crumbled. Liu Hsia had even accepted a garrison, though a Chinese one, on conditions.

Thus nearly everyone in the city cheered when independence was declared. Walled and prosperous with trade, Kuang-ku feared little. The garrison was approached on the night of rebellion, and its Chinese commanders agreed to serve under the Marquis in order to rid themselves of their Mongol overlords.

Further, the Marquis sent runners to several mercenary captains. All but the Tibetans derided his offers. The Aza commanders had a long and unpleasant history with most Mongols and were more than happy to take up lance and bow against their ancient foe, all on the mere promise of silver coin.

Meanwhile, Lu and Tsainan had revolted as well. The Duke of Lu initially approached Kuang-ku with an offer of allegiance against the barbarians. The Marquis, with a walled city and numerous troops both native and mercenary, let the emissary from Lu know he needed no help. "We are enough, here. Go home and tell the Duke we love him little more than the smelly Quzan."

The reputation of the Liu family was long-known, puffed by their thin connection with the old Han emperors. So the Duke had also sent a messenger south, to the Eastern Ts'in Emperor An Ti. The rebels were not to be pleased at his response (see *Eastern Ts'in* results).

Quzan learned of the rebellion in the middle of a feast, the fifth grand dinner this month. The crescent moon was low in the winter sky when the flap to the immense heated tent opened.

"Lord ..."

"Wenxiang! What do you mean, stopping these dancers?! Such a navel as that was not meant to be still, you old dog. Answer me, while you yet have a tongue."

The family retainer showed no fear, long used to Quzun's gift for hyperbole.

"Would you have me speak now? I fear my news may still that navel for many moons were it to hear this news."

"Let us walk, clan-uncle."

Against the advice of Wenxiang and the other advisors, including his son the Prince, Quzan decided to act swiftly against the strongest foe, the Marquis of Kuang-ku. The commanders of the thousands and the hundreds mustered the armored cavalry, the horse archers, and the Chinese foot and artillery. These quickly, if irregularly, marched up to the outer defenses of Kuang-ku. Wenxiang was reminded of just why Quzan's father had not ventured to assault the city, but kept his doubts to himself. He knew his lord's forbearance had limits.

The peasants had entrenched around the city, and the small fleet had closed the port to most traffic. Regardless, Quzan was not pleased with the progress over the summer. No weak points had been found in the defenses, and sappers were repeatedly turned back. This was not the war he enjoyed, riding against the enemy, covered in metal with lance aimed at the heart of his foe - but sticking a golden point into a sweetmeat and chewing slowly was consolation enough for his boredom.

Thus he was reasonably comfortable when a lieutenant was ushered in with the disturbing news that the

city appeared to be on fire. Rushing outside into the cloudy, moonless night soon revealed to Quzan that the fire was in the port district - or, rather, near it. The Marquis had sent fireships against the blockade, along with his own small force of armoured boats, and had utterly destroyed the Southern Yen ships.

The barbarian king raged to the sky for a moment. He turned from the distant glow to shouts away from the city, and the familiar sound of horse hooves.

It was the Aza, lancers behind and within a screen of horse archers and followed by skirmishers slitting snoring throats. Suddenly a roar grew from the city as the two landward gates dropped and the enemy poured out, screened by scores of heavy Chinese cavalry, cruelly double-ended lances lit by the glow of a hundred torches. This light was immediately aided by flaming giant arrows launched from ballista on the walls.

A few balls of fire were lofted in response before counter-battery fire and advancing troops eliminated them. While the Southern Yen army poured out of tents and mounted horses, the pressure from front and rear proved too much. The Tibetans showed no mercy, tying scalps quickly to saddle horns and belts. The Chinese of Kuang-ku were only marginally less brutal, piling heads marked with tokens for later registration.

With a couple hundreds of armored guards, the emperor and the prince cut their way through the Tibetans and rode pell-mell for their court yurts. Many wandered away, many lost horses in the darkness, and many were taken by enemy archers.

Quzan and his son rode up to the complex of steppe tents and small buildings that constituted the government. The Mongol nobles dismounted their blown horses and walked up to the tents cautiously. It was too quiet. When nearly inside the complex, one of the youths paused, resting on his lance, to look up at the flaming light poles. Each was crowned with a severed head - the nearest was that of a boy somewhat younger than he. The mass stopped, murmuring as one. Then a thousand voices cried out, and Tibetans and Han charged out from the tents.

Quzan watched helplessly as his son and heir, riding away just ahead of him, suddenly sprouted three arrows from his neck and back and toppled. With Wenxiang and a few dozen nobles he rode on. At an ambush the next day Quzan took a hand-ax in the leg and had to be tied to his saddle as they escaped. Burning with revenge, he now makes a living providing security to merchants (see *Mercenary* listings).

Following their complete victory, the Tibetans and Chinese divided the spoils from the Southern Yen treasury, and the Marquis smiled broadly. His troops mopped up outlying garrisons and soon replaced the Mongols as overlords in Shantung, accepting tribute at spearpoint. The Liu ancestors would be pleased.

So happy was he, in fact, that he sent a rider westward into Tsainan, carrying an offer of cooperation to the Duke of Lu. The Duke, however, continued preparations for an invasion from the east, and returned the messenger without prejudice. Trust was a precious commodity these days, and rare among the ranks of the rebels.

What little there was would soon prove altogether misplaced ...

Toba Wei Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Toba Kuei, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

Having declared himself to be an emperor, Toba Kuei decided it was time to act like one. Troops were marshalled, drilled, and supplied. Most of the foot were left behind to be more intensely trained. The emperor would be assisted by his cousin, Prince Lai Hsiang, his brother, Prince Tao Wu-Ti, and General Jyh-Houng.

As the vast host marched from Yun into Shan'si, the provincial governor met the emperor at the border with gifts, as was customary. The next day, the chief of the Toba began to complain to his Chinese doctor, Zhou Tai, about a how hot he felt despite the season. Within the watch Toba Kuei ordered a general halt, and retired to his wagon. Fever, chills, cramps, vomiting - the sounds and smells from the tented vehicle alarmed the command staff and guards.

Dr. Zhou was heard to debate with the imperial shamans. Finally, the doctor poked his head out of the tent and summoned Tao Wu-Ti.

"We must camp here," he said.

The prince could say nothing, but his expression darkened.

Zhou Tai went on. "It is not certain, but we agree this may be the Pox. The path for your brother is to stay here, treat him, and hope for the best."

"What!" yelled Wu-Ti. Heads turned in his direction, then quickly turned away, fingers adjusting armor or tack. Whispering, he continued, "Doctor! Halt an entire army? Do you know what that means? What if word gets out? There will be a panic. The entire campaign may stall."

Tai whispered intensely, "Dammit, I'm a doctor, not a strategist! You figure it out. I have enough trouble keeping these steppe quacks on our plane of existence. Just do it!"

With that he shut tent flap in the face of the prince, who turned about as if slapped.

The army made camp right there. After the first few days, word somehow spread that the emperor had the Pox. That evening, soldiers began to slip out of camp - or rather, they tried to. The guards were tripled and watched the tents of the army, rather than the dark countryside, and few if any escaped. Only the calm presences of the leading men kept the army from rising in mutiny, but keeping order proved difficult.

A whole moon passed, and the army began once more to grow restive. A small city had sprung up next to the camp, filled with sutlers, merchants, gamblers, and, mostly, women of ill repute. Rumors of the assassination of Toba Kuei spread. A committee of junior officers approached the command tent one evening, intent on learning the truth. Two of them were, after much "negotiation" allowed into the emperor's tent, to which he had been moved after the fifth day. They left, shaken, and let the men know that their emperor was indeed alive. That night, men all over the encampment prayed for their lord's recovery, to be able to die an honorable death in the saddle.

The following day, the body of the provincial governor was found in a tree. The body was carved with the sign of the imperial family, a message to all, and a reassurance that justice would be done.

Over the next few weeks he recovered enough that Zhou Tai and the shamans agreed the emperor could be moved back to Tai. Thus the army broke camp, at last, and marched to the capitol. Thus the entire campaigning season was lost.

Meanwhile, news from the south caused great excitement over the winter. The emperor, his face now marked with a handful of large pockmarks, decided to jump back into the saddle. Fully recovered, he did indeed vault over the rump of his horse, to the spontaneous cheering of his men, and the horde once more advanced into Shan'si, past the ruins of what came to be known as the "Imperial City."

While the emperor of the Later Ts'in was recovering from his own distress, the Toba army crossed the frontier into Houma. Duke Bai raced home to find thousands of cavalry horses already foraging on his rich lands, guarded by thousands of well-armed soldiers. It was too late for his men as well. Within a few days, his small army of 1400 militia was surprised, surrounded, shot to pieces, and then overrun by Toba armored cavalry. He was also attacked in his tent one evening by a black-clad assailant. Fortunately the frequent alarms had caused even the indulgent Bai to sleep in a cuirass, which blocked the knife stroke. The struggle brought guards, and the assassin was killed.

Eventually the Duke was dragged before Emperor Toba Kuei, who demanded his fealty. Valuing his life, Bai agreed to pay tribute, and swore to do so (see the *Later Ts'in*).

The Toba army moved on into Huang. The province was peaceful, loyal to the Later Ts'in - and entirely undefended. Following the Dao of the nomad, the region was looted. No militia formed to resist this, but when the army of Jyh-Houng set to enslaving the people, a multitude of outraged nobles and peasants mobilized to oppose him. Resistance was of course futile, and the disorganized bands were slaughtered as they arose. A few score Toba were slain in ambushes, and enraged horsemen took to wiping out entire villages, sparing neither the high nor the low, male or female, babe or crone. After sacking a town, the troops would march a dozen *li*, hide, and wait for those who escaped to return. A day or two later the horsemen would once more fall upon the grieving survivors, killing or enslaving them. Long queues of rope-bound peasants bewailed their fates as they marched with the army through mountain passes into Shan'si and a life of servitude.

Having slaked their thirst for blood, loot, and flesh, the barbarian marched home. In their utter disregard for Huang, they did not even bother to leave a garrison to watch over the depopulated landscape, so that the land - and the few people left - reverted to the Later Ts'in.

Western Ts'in Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Mu-lien, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

In a classic case of inappropriate use of technology, Mu-lien's technicians combine a waterclock, crossbow mechanism, and a large bell. The concubines and eunuchs are not amused, but are unable to work around this annoyance. It was certainly better than marching in a Toba slave coffin.

South East Asia

Cham Kingdom

(Hinduism Barbarian Open Empire)

King Bhadravarman, the Great

Diplomacy: Vijaya (F)

As the balmy air gently ruffled the silk tied around his head, Bhadravarman reflected that life was indeed good, and that he was blessed by Shiva. His beloved queen struggled, somewhere, in childbirth, and soon he would have an heir, or a beautiful girl.

Thus it was that on a late autumn day a runner came upon the king as he strolled the beach, surf occasionally lapping at his toes. The child was lost, his wife dead.

Guards carried him back to the palace. For the next two years he threw himself into efficient government, speaking little. His talents in this area proved prodigious, which was fortunate for the kingdom. The tragic end of the queen shook the faith of the people - perhaps Shiva would not smile upon the kingdom.

At the wedding in 405 of his cousin and heir, Prince Khac Ba Hoang, to a very young princess of Vijaya, the king noticeably perked up. Thus the day was indeed a happy one for all. Certainly the nobles as a whole cheered the discomfiture of the Chinese.

Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

King Pendravarman

Diplomacy:

Some street venders in the sleepy capitol of Sresthapura gossip that they have seen the king, dressed as a peasant, shopping for herbs and cooking utensils.

Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Korn Danh II, the Great, King of the Mountain

Diplomacy: Kedah (EA), Ligor (A)

In tune with the air of romance in the region, Prince Norodom Huoth sailed to Kedah with an offer of marriage to the local king. He happily agreed, and sent his daughter off to wed the reknowned Korn Danh. Also impressed were the nobles in Ligor, who were thinking less fondly of a life of near-piracy.

Kingdom of Tarumanegara

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

King Purnavarnam

Diplomacy:

Purnavarnam spent a great deal of time fishing at the end of the dock.

Malayu Kingdom

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

King Malangavarnam

Diplomacy:

The king has taken to wearing saffron robes on holy days. This, and the time spent with his Indian religious advisor, Chatravitta, has begun to concern his generals.

Pyu Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Kyanzittha

Diplomacy: Sagaing (T)

The saga of Romance in Asia continues ...

The uncle of the king, prince Nagarjunakonda, travelled to the wilds of Sagaing to woo the local chief's council. The painting of Kyanzittha was passed around to the women sitting in the second circle, as the prince recounted to honor, piety, and bravery of his king. The women began to giggle, and kept repeating "Gali" and laughing.

Several moons later, during a dinner hosted by the Pyu delegation, the dancers were shooed away, and a covered cage wheeled in, as large as a bull elephant. With a flourish by one of the chiefs, the red silken covering slipped down to reveal a beautifully-carved hardwood cage. Within the cage sat a woman with long black hair - down to her ankles - surrounded by several chests, dishes, and other sundries. She turned to face the prince, who had walked up to introduce himself. Her appearance was not unpleasing, more mature than the usual crop of teenaged princesses he had brokered in the past. But when Nagarjunakonda and his translator approached the cage to greet her, she balled her fists at her sides and screamed.

No ordinary scream, it set the prince's teeth on edge, hair on end, and ended with the room in total silence.

She screamed again. And again. After a few more heartbeats the cage was rapidly covered. The woman became silent, and the room was wheeled away.

The only child of the dead king, she had been "possessed" by the spirit of her late father. Or a tiger. Or a demon. Nobody was quite sure, and due to her status she was accorded all possible care. But Sagaing would be happy to pay tribute to the Pyu king if he would take her off his hands in a respectful manner.

Over the next couple of years, the prince worked with the princess, praying to the Mother Goddess for help. At one stage, he made the mistake of opening the cage door. After breaking his leg, inflicting numerous cuts, and seriously injuring four stout local warriors, Gali was returned to her home-on-wheels. With time, Gali went from screaming to whimpering. Nagarjunakonda took this as acceptable, and returned with her to Sri Ksetra.

After a quick wedding to the young, shy, and rather alarmed Kyanzittha, the pair retired to the palace rooms. Guards and staff were amazed when the king and new Queen emerged hand-in-hand, smiling, garlands of flowers around each neck. The old women who washed the floors laughed together, then resumed mopping after a stern glance from the royal chamberlain.

Japan

Emishi Lords

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ashitaka

Diplomacy:

The tall trees allowed no wind to disturb Ashitaka as he knelt by the dark pond. Here he was also unperturbed by court rumors and concerns about the Kima of Wa. The debate at times became heated, with those looking to the future arguing that the nation to the south was a threat to be dealt with, sitting on rich lands, and those looking to the past countering that to leave the forests would turn the people as soulless as the Yamato peasantry, and that the wilds would always prove their refuge. Thus he had come to this quiet place, to make offerings and see what the spirits of the trees, water, and rocks would say.

A slight breeze moved a lock of hair on his forehead, and he looked about. Standing on the water was an enormous antlered elk looking to the right. More remarkable was the figure astride the animal, an old woman in white robes, white hair, and even her skin slightly glowing in the tree-filtered skylight. Her grey eyes moved right to look down at the king. She smiled, and from under her robes pulled a bow, tossing it to Ashitaka. He sprang to his feet and grabbed it, marvelling at the bone-like staff and white silken string. Tiny gold figures could be glimpsed wriggling all along its length.

The Face of the Lady then filled with anger, and her eyes gleamed with a deep purple fire. Her lips moved, yet no sound came from them. Rather, a deep voice seemed to come from all around the king.

"Cleanse this land!" bellowed the voice, while the Lady's lips moved long after the sound ceased.

Her face stilled, eyes returned to greyness, and she smiled once more. As he watched in alarm the elk and the woman melded into one, shrinking quickly to a bright blue spark that caused the king to raise an arm to shield his eyes. The "star" hovered for a heartbeat then dropped like a stone into the water, leaving no disturbance on the surface. Ashitaka followed the dimming glow with his eyes as it quickly sank through the water, falling to an impossible depth before winking out.

And so it was that the Emishi marched past Bandai Mountain to take the Province of Kwanto from the Kima of Wa. Several ragged columns marched past Lake Inwarashiro, while a fleet of leather-hulled boats moved down the coast. A small force of mounted archers rode ahead, most on horseback, the rest on the more traditional, if less trainable, elk. (see *Yamato Japan*)

Yamato Japan

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

Nintoku, Kima of Wa

Diplomacy:

Nintoku was concerned. This island was big, but was it big enough for two peoples to share? He had his doubts. A few strongpoints were hastily constructed in Kwanto, and an army of archers was formed under the Fuji banner and lead into the province for its defense, under the capable command of his son,

Prince Ojin, and Soga Tomomochi. Most of this light force was, ironically, composed of "civilized" Emishi. The Chrysanthemum banner remained in Yamato to await developments as the Kima issued orders and generally assured the nation of adequate tax revenue. He also oversaw the start of the grandest tomb construction seen yet, huge monuments to be built on the plains of Nara as testimony to the might of his reign, and the favor of the gods. A string of unusually cold and dry summers and harsh winters in the south did not impress the peasantry with the wisdom of tombs as a manner of propitiating the gods. Neither did the progress of the several military campaigns.

Ojin and Soga drove their men up the coast and, after paying courtesy calls on the local nobles, began to set up lines of defense and communications throughout the region. They were determined that this northernmost outpost of civilization, no matter how thinly held, would stand - in the hope that the natives might be coopted into the realm.

One of Ojin's *uji* rode up one early summer evening with a not-unexpected report that Emishi were seen, in force, moving along the coast road. The troops were readied and marched to the sea ahead of the line of march. The prince picked a place to defend, a scattering of hills near the shore, with plenty of scrub in which to conceal his archers. His picked men were placed on the left flank in an existing pallisaded outpost, the sea to his right, near the village of Shioya.

On the very next morning the first Emishi patrols were spotted. These were left unmolested, and before long the main body of the enemy appeared, marching in good order astride the narrow dirt road. A morning fog haunted the tiny waves, but on the beach visibility was clear enough to give Ojin and Soga pause. Their nearly 8000 foot were facing an army of well over 20,000, the center filled with shielded men with swords and bows, the flanks with variously painted archers in more open order, and some number of mounted troops to the Yamato left. Thus opened the **Battle of Shioya** in 401 CE.

The young prince prayed to the martial spirits. The Emishi advanced in silence, when suddenly a huge drum in the center was struck. The troops continued their advance, but suddenly a hail of arrows pierced many of Ojin's men - arrows coming from the sea!

Closing on the beach and emerging from the fog were dozens of boats, each with archers loosing at will. The men on the beach ran from the sea towards their center. Then the Emishi on land let out a great cheer and charged, those in the center waving swords, lead by the Ashitaka's brother, Didarabochi. The Yamato tried to shoot them down as they came on, but after the first scattered volley it was clear that the wild men would make contact. Only scores of paces away, the Emishi prince was felled by a handful of arrows, but this did not stop his subjects from the charge - in fact, his enraged guard went from a run to a sprint, like an arrowhead themselves piercing the opposing formation.

The prince tried to hold what line he could, but his men streamed past him, fearful of a remorseless revenge from their distant kinsmen. Cursing the gods, the two commanders leapt onto their horses and galloped from the field, as it was clear the situation could not be retrieved. The unit leaders on the left also realized the situation was hopeless, and thus some hundreds were spared the slaughter on the beach, and the pursuit across the plateau.

Thus it was that a hungry and worn "army," still under the Fuji banner, came to Aichi Castle and refuge. The Lord of the place was rather alarmed that his pledging loyalty to the Kima of Wa would so soon place his home under threat. All were relieved when after a few weeks it became clear the Emishi would not sweep over this land as well.

Nintoku was none too pleased with developments, and vowed to drive the barbarians back across the mountains. Nay, to take the head of their king back home to Naniha.

Vowing to avenge this loss, the young and headstrong Princess Jingu Koga, recently returned from a tour of the lesser islands, leads the Chrysanthemum banner past Mount Haku and into Toyama. At the same time, Ojin and the regrouped fragment of his Fuji banner cross through Torii-toge and join the princess. Together they began a systematic pillaging of the villages and hamlets of these valleys. Much of the loot is then shipped to Naniha on the backs of slaves - they are the lucky ones.

Loosed by their ruler and lead by the losers from Shioya, the two banners begin to plan the next phase - depopulation.

A small group of teenagers (two boys, two girls, and a talented dog) is announced at the tent of king Ashitaka, where he learns of the Yamato riposte. Despite pleas from the king, Lady Moro insists on returning to Toyama to ensure her late husband's remains are undisturbed. Marching across the mountains by seldom-used paths, her small army arrives in time to hear of the first village annihilated by the Yamato force.

Joining up with the local militia, Lady Moro marches to her castle, settles in, and awaits reports from the enemy. She does not have long to wait, as a mass of enemy cavalry appears in the fields within the week. The ragtag Yamato force pushes these south, where the rest of the Yamato army has gathered at the smoking ruin of Kanazawa village. Here, by the sea, Princess Jingu Koga can bring her cavalry to bear, and they charge right through the militia. Hundreds of bodies litter the field after just the first charge, and many of the rest are chased down by the infantry.

Moro and her remaining troops flee north. Scores of Yamato horse are lost in an ambush in the mountains, after which the Toyama warriors are allowed to retire in unmolested. But the region was in the hands of the Yamato, and even the stern-faced matron was seen to shed a tear at the fate awaiting her people.

These peasants, however, proved far too nimble for the black-armored princess and Ojin to run to ground. A grapevine quickly arose, and small eyes followed Yamato troops from the rocks, brush, and trees of the countryside. Even the spirits of the forest would lend aid, magnifying the sounds of marching feet, or suddenly flooding streams to delay Yamato troops. Horsemen would ride up to a hamlet, only to find it deserted. Burning the place in frustration, they would ride away, and only occasionally would Ojin's vengeful veterans find a peasant on which to vent their frustration - usually over the course of an entire day.

Tiring of this game, the Yamato troops marched back to a hero's welcome in Naniha. Clearly this struggle for the homeland was not over.

Western Europe

Alamanni

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Arbogast, Rex

Diplomacy:

Fish sauce. Bah! Time to teach these Romans the true meaning of war. And so these Germans march to meet those lesser nations, the Franks and Burgundians (see *Franks*).

Alans

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Xerxes, Shah

Diplomacy:

The Alans have come far. The lack of interest from either the Goths or the Romans has begun to irk the more avaricious nobles, i.e. nearly all of them. More and more of the younger sons are joining mercenary bands.

Angles and Jutes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Aethelred

Diplomacy:

Their avaricious nature was checked for a number of years by unusually rough weather in the North Sea. The king thus spent his time hunting boar and fishing in rivers.

Asding Vandals

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Godegisel, King of the Vandals

Diplomacy: Siling Vandals (-)

The leader of the tribes began to actually attend Holy Mass on a regular basis. While admirable, this new piety did not go over well among the nobles - they knew Godegisel too well. The king also announced a treaty with the Romans. Oddly, the sutlers from the south did not find anyone to accept their tribute. Waiting for a few days in the wilderness, the special agents of the Western Emperor returned to Mediolanum. Thus the status of the Vandals outside the Empire was ambiguous - at best.

Feeling a bit vulnerable, the king decided to take the army north to visit with his cousins, the Siling Vandals. The Quadi, however, were not particularly interested in having a different horde of smelly barbarians tramping in their flowerbeds, and held them up near the border for the better part of a year. Finally Vitalianus consented to let them pass by, but shadowed the Vandal army with his own from the one border to the other. He did, however, allow the local merchants and peasants to sell their wares to the tramping warriors, thus averting what could have been a nasty situation.

At the court of Gaiseric, Godegisel paid call at the bed of the sick king. The Silings patiently listened to their cousins rant about Huns, Romans, and the amber trade, but so far refuse to join in a pan-Vandalic federation. The introduction in late 404 of that exotic remedy, chicken soup, to the Silings by one of Godegisel's Greek hired clerks provided one of the few bright points in the diplomatic effort, and

Gaiseric's health improved markedly.

Burgundians

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Gundioc, Rex Burgundorum

Diplomacy:

Gundioc, fatalist that he is, decides to throw in his lot with those lesser peoples, the Franks and the Alamanni. Their troops mass at Worms, and then head for Trier (see *Franks*).

Classical Pagan Oracles

(Classical Pagan Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Sibyl

Diplomacy:

The portents were not favorable, so the priests kept a low profile. Given the energy of the official faith, this was considered prudent.

Eire Kingdom of the Scots

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

High King Donald I

Diplomacy: Midhe (F)

Donald's nobles at court began to grumble. What was the point of having a High King who didn't organize raiding parties? Little did they know that their lord's late hours were not taken up in drunken revels - well, OK, maybe a little - but in planning a bold strike at Rome herself.

Thus it was that scores of stout boats put to sea after the last winter storm had blown across the grass, each filled with young men eager for adventure.

The crossing to Aquitania was uneventful, and the thousands of likely lads quickly secured the offshore island of Uliarus. With this as their base, they spent the early summer of 401 either sailing inland up small rivers, or marching a few days, to reach the hamlets and towns with the most loot to be had. Chavagne, Aunedonnacum, and Rauranum were especially hard hit.

Neither were the Scots content to take only silver, ivory, and gold. Carried away in lines were thousands of Roman citizens - disturbingly enough, most of these being young women and girls. By the end of the summer, Uliarus carried the laments and curses of these people, housed in temporary rude huts of scavenged materials. As it happened, a large number of the captives were Arian Christians, their villages singled out by some local Papal adherents as the being most desirable. The simple barbarians were unaware of such subtle distinctions between worshippers of the Dead God, much to the profit of a few patriotic scoundrels.

Sensing the lateness of the season, Donald and his happy crew set sail for home. The joy of success caused a great deal of talk among the boys. A couple of clans began to talk up this life, and approached the High King with a proposal. They would take some boats and return to Uliarus, there to overwinter and continue raiding up and down the coast for several years. The lack of Imperial response to their raid had emboldened them to consider this as a life.

The king, however, would hear none of it. To home, to blessed Eire, was his goal, and he had promised their mothers these mutineers would return, dead or alive. Off Penzance, the pirates finally decided to make a break for it. A few dozen boats made a break for it under cover of darkness.

Donald was ready for them. He had loyal men among the would-be pirates, and warned by a special call across the water he lead the rest of his fleet against them. The very model of the modern major, er, king, captured or sunk all but a few of the rebel *curraghs*.

Sailing back to Ulster, the boats were greeted with relief. It happens that on the day of the attempted mutiny, the ground had shaken all through the land. The priests were so upset that a man was pulled from the stockade (he had stolen a chicken) and his entrails were removed for inspection. The omens were grim, but the arrival within the moon of the Scots fleet was a great relief throughout the realm.

A far more pleasant time was spent by his son, Donald the Red, at the court of the king of Midhe. In the end, the heir of the High King so impressed the locals that they pledged their loyalty to his line, and he wed the fairest princess in all the land.

Franks

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Clodius, Rex

Diplomacy:

Spurred by the seeming weakness across the frontier to the south, the Frankish king decided to join the lesser tribes on a jaunt across the border and through the woods. Thus his warriors march to the "city" of Worms to meet with their brothers before taking up their shields.

Frisians

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Durc Wolfsen

Diplomacy:

In this new age of betrayal, Durc trusted no man, least of all Hengist, lord of the powerful Saxons. The two might be cousins by marriage, but that fact only served to raise suspicions. He set his taller twin brother Jentze to work making roadblocks of trees, setting ambush points, and generally readying the land to hold off the expected enemy (see *Saxons*).

In the summer of 404, however, the relieved and happy land of Holland was hit by a fever. Within a moon thousands of peasants and warriors had been felled, where Saxon steel had been harmless. Thus were the proud made humble once more.

Lombard Kingdom

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Autharii, Rex Lombardorum

Diplomacy:

The Lombard king proudly announces his new status as a lackey of the emperor in Mediolanum. A stunned silence ensues at court, and Aistulf motions a small chest be brought forth. Set before the

throne, he suddenly kicks it with his foot, and the box tumbles down the step, jewels spilling onto the carpet. A cheer erupts from his courtiers, though all manage to resist the urge to leap at the loot. They are suspicious of his attempts at literacy, but don't mind the imported wine.

Rebuffed by the Lausatians, Autharii returned home to the embrace of his wife and the solace of the grape. He would need that solace, as the autumn of 403 saw the death in childbirth of his wife, Gisele. After this blow, he did little, and what little government there was suffered.

Pictish Tribes

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Talorg Mac Aniel, King of the Cruithni

Diplomacy:

Drust Mac Erp's mother applied a bit more woad to his tattoo of a Roman soldier crushed under a chariot wheel. He felt good about testing the Wall of Hadrian. The weather this spring had been dry, with mists and rain only every other day, so the roads would be passable.

Thus it came to pass that on the evening of Ash Wednesday, 401, the Pictish host descended upon the imperial positions. A small fleet of boats would attempt to flank the wall and mile-houses, while the tattooed spearmen and archers would assail the fortifications. Thousands of men on horseback, or like the king on light chariots in the traditional style, would support the infantry.

The Picts never knew what hit them. A rump legion, plenty of equites of various types, and a host of pallisades behind the wall first allowed groups (one hesitates to use the term "units" here) of the barbarians to cross, then made ferocious counterattacks all along the line with their own Pictish auxilia. The barbarian host was nearly exterminated, only the speed of the horses allowing some of them to escape, boatmen fleeing to their craft only to find many blazing from Roman fire-arrows.

The following day, the Roman commander, a recent transfer from the East named Probus, was brought the head of Drust Mac Erp. It made a fine trophy on the roof of the gatehouse, unseeing eyes watching the few migrants pass.

On the plus side, the new king was presented at the end of the year with a new son.

Quadi Clans

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Vitalianus

Diplomacy:

Vitalianus received many foreign visitors (see *Asding Vandals*).

Roman Christian Church

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Innocent, Bishop of Rome

Diplomacy: Malta (CH), Corsica (CH), Latium (MN), Ravenna (MN), Pola (CH), Augustodunum (CH), Narbo (CH), Genua (CH), Cubia (CH), Aquitania (CH), Lugdunensis II (CH), Coriallum (CH), Brundisium (CH), Neapolis (CH), Lucania (CH), Syracusae (CH), Caesarea (CH), Syrtes (CH),

Britannia II (CH), Maxima Caesarea (CH), Eburacum (CH), Mercia (CH), Anglia (CH), Flavia (CH), Londinium (CH), Venta (CH), Isca (CH)

The Holy Father sent forth his bishops to do good works, found sites to increase the Faith, and generally kept quite busy.

The journeys of Irenaeus proved particularly unfruitful. Attempts to found new congregations met with resistance on the part of local church leaders due to his high-handed methods. His fire-breathing methods were, however, welcomed in Aquitania, where he helped the locals maintain their churches under the attacks of the Islemen.

A more gentle approach of Jerome met with greater success. In Britain, the abbot Ninian met with spectacular success. Rumors of miracles spread in his wake, and altars he had set were said to have healing powers.

Saxon Kingdom

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Prince Aesc, for King Hengist

Diplomacy: Lausatia (C)

Late one winter evening, the wagon rolled up to Hengist's court. Several stout boxes heavy with Roman coin were unloaded in the presence of the king. Smiling grimly, he ordered the *hauskarls* at his side to move them inside, bowed to the teamsters, and hurried inside, out of the snow.

The Saxon tribes fell on their smaller neighbor in the spring of 401, moving down the coastline in their thousands into Frisian lands.

They were welcomed near the mouth of the IJssel by Durc, Jentze, and their fyrd, plus a mass of landless men and women, and a small fleet of boats out on the open meer - a total of 13,000 warriors and tens of thousands of vaguely-armed peasants. The invaders numbered over 17,000, with their own rowers facing the enemy vessels.

Despite an edge in numbers and quality, Hengist was not pleased with what he saw. The fleets were evenly matched, and would not play a role. The river was broad, yet shallow, the spring flush not having come down the Neder Rijn so soon this year. The Frisian peasants had built a rude pallisade where the river met the meer, while the other end of their line held some men on horseback. He could see the glint of steel off the enemy ranks, roughly parroting his own formations.

However he would not be able to rule, to assure his son Aesc the throne over his savage people, and may not even survive the year, were he to march away to find advantage. Thus it was that he ordered his columns to spill out into lines, his landed men with helms in the center, backed by unarmored men, and flanked by archers. He held his mounted troops in the rear to fill gaps, and then gave the order to advance, from his place in the middle of the *hauskarl*, thus starting the **Battle of the IJssel**.

Scouts with javelins raced ahead into the knee-deep water, shield high, to pelt the enemy on the far shore. These gave a few steps at the ferocity of these youths looking for some measure of acclaim. Then the Frisian ranks solidified and the Saxon teens retired through their elders tramping through the muck.

When the Saxons had come to within some tens of paces of the Frisian shield wall both sides let fly an

assortment of missiles. Handaxes, darts, and rocks clattered off large shields, a few raising a cry of pain along the line. Hengist shouted, and his line surged up the slight beach into the Frisians. The weight of numbers and initiative rocked the enemy line, and it stepped back several times in the space of a few dozen heartbeats. A few men slipped in the mud on either side and were quickly hacked to pieces by axes or swords. The king could see the enemy commander, Durc, in his characteristic golden horned helmet just to his left, and pushed in that direction.

The Frisians continued to fall back, until the rear ranks of the Saxon line stood on dry - if not solid - ground. Prince Aesc fought enthusiastically, if not particularly well, near his father. Hengist pressed his attack against the enemy king, but neither gained advantage.

The Saxon king realized that some time had passed, his arm was tiring, and more alarmingly that he and his guard were ahead of their men. In that moment, one of the Frisian nobles wielding a metal-tipped club struck Hengist in the jaw, below his helm, and he went down into the mud. He awoke, bound hand and foot, laying at the feet of his cousin Durc. The prostrate king cursed, which earned him a kick from an unseen foot, and more unconsciousness.

Later he learned that the Frisian horse had bested his on the flank, lead by their javelin-armed cavalry, and that the peasants had repulsed the assault on their fort. Both reverses left the respective flanks unprotected - they collapsed, and the Saxon fyrd had to flee back across the border. Thousands had fallen, but Hengist was cheered to learn his son now ruled.

Meanwhile, Duke Wig of Holstein treated with the warleaders of Lausatia, attempting to add it to his duchy. After a few weeks at court, the entire Lombard court appeared, making counteroffers. Many moons passed as the two sides traded barbs and practical jokes. The Lausatians were unimpressed by Saxon military prowess, yet were disgusted at the Lombard's sale of their loyalties to the Western Emperor. In the end the balance tipped towards the Duke of Holstein, but only marginally.

Siling Vandals

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Gaiseric, Rex

Diplomacy:

Plans for invasion for laid, supplies stocked, and spearpoints honed. Suddenly Gaiseric took to his bed, bedridden with a mysterious ailment. Prayers and traditional chants have not so far healed his malady, though he is up and walking. The nobles are patient - so far.

Thousands of guests arrive from the south. As is typical with family, they showed up unannounced and expected to be fed and entertained.

Suevi Kingdom

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Agnar

Diplomacy:

The barbarian king was surprised to see strange gold items brought to his court by a group of peasants. Spring tilling had brought up some bones and an assortment of strange relics, the few gold relics having spirals. Agnar was pleased, and allowed the diggers to retain half the items - after he had his pick, of

course. The next day he rode out to oversee the excavations, but little more was uncovered.

Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

F. Honorius P. F. Augustus

Diplomacy:

As in the Orient, romance was on the menu at Mediolanum. While the main course waited, a sweatmeat in the form of a Frisian-Saxon War made a fine first course at the imperial court. The best appetizers are, of course, somewhat astringent. Thus was received news of the Germans pouring across the border into Germania I just before mid-summer. Despite the outlay of some small portion of the Roman treasury to mollify various Germans and Huns, the Burgundians impetuously decided to betray their paymasters, joining with the Franks and Alamanni. Raetia I and II were not ceded to Gundioc, Rex Burgundorum, of course.

Finally Sarus, Comes Illyrici, married Galla Placidia, the emperor's very young sister, in 404, in a ceremony lead by Bishop Jerome. Also, Heraclianus was wedded to Pulcheria, her older sister. This made both men the emperor's Flavias of the month.

While grand weddings were the order of the day in the Latin homelands, in far-off Aquitania "romances" of a far less popular sort prevailed. The Scots' raids (see *Scots*) were bad enough, but the lack of either a defense or reaction on the part of the Empire was too much for nobles and priests there, who had seen sisters, daughters, and others carried off by the men from the sea. The Imperial legate was escorted to to Burdigala, and Aquitaine's large landholders set up a local government with a former Imperial Count, Eumenes the Greek, handling the administration. They were pleased to see their tax burden decrease, and extra bonus.

Disinterest was not the brief of Marcus, the Comes Britannarium, when after a tour of the island - including a check of the defenses to the north (see *Picts*) - he heard of a rising in Mercia. The newly-enlarged army in Britain had little trouble wiping out the rebels, and Marcus was sorry not to have caught the Pictish king during the campaign.

A more serious threat on the frontiers came from across the Rhine.

Newly-arrived in Germania I, Allobichus had little time to set up a defense. While he shared a joke with his staff about how different these Three Kings (Arbogast the Alamann, Clodius the Frank, and Gundioc the Burgundian) were from those at the birth of the Christian Savior, the Magister Equitum Galliarum was worried. No Roman army was close enough to aid him, and yet he dare not fall back despite the vast horde facing him. The court of Honorius held worse fates than death on the battlefield - he had dealt out enough of them to know.

Fortunately the provincial fortifications were recently upgraded, with troops to be stationed permanently with farms and families, and the stout walls of Trier would form a refuge in case of disaster. The magister had no desire to end up like the emperor Valens some three decades earlier. His horse managed generally to outmaneuver the German cavalry thanks to numbers and quality. While Allobichus was clogging the enemy advance, German supply and communications across the Rhine also proved vulnerable to raiding. But there were so many of them ... Many forts across the province fell to barbarian assaults, aided by siege engineers vaguely familiar with Roman practice.

Several squadrons of Equites Illyricani were detailed to scout the enemy, contact the frontier fortresses, and delay the barbarians. Ironically, their first job was to chase away Burgundian scouts, who had already penetrated past Trier. The laeti and militia in that fortress were terrified and bewildered to see packs of barbarian raiders move across the landscape, and peasants began to filter into the city, meagre possessions on their backs, too hurried to bring the wagons and animals.

The first leaves were turning color when Arbogast convinced his fellow warleaders to threaten Trier and draw the Romans out into a battle. The looting, while not technically permitted, had proved unimpressive, and the nobles were anxious to get deeper into Gaul. Raids from the numerous forts were sapping morale, always fickle with barbarians.

Into Allobichus brazier-heated tent was dragged one German willing to talk. Learning of the move on the fortress, the Magister moved his army to the city, facing down the road and the line of the German advance, rear protected by Trier and its outlying fortifications.

The Germans let out a cheer seeing the Roman line, women urging their men forward with various inducements, small children riding on the shoulders of their grandparents and sisters, and wagons quickly formed into circles in Gothic style to the rear.

By noon the warm autumn sun beat down on two lines facing each other, one thinner yet shinier, the other deeper yet less well-ordered. German nobles, many veterans of service in the Empire, walked up and down the front applying spear butts to the heads of many who surged forward. They were provoked by the occasional bolt shot from a Roman engine, which would split a shield and often pin it to the owner's chest.

The Allied center was taken by Frankish columns, recognized as the most fierce, if not the most disciplined. On the left was Arbogast and his Alamanni, with their families to their rear, ordered to hold. On the right pride of place was given to the Burgundians, the most numerous people, who would actually take orders from their commanders.

Allobichus could count no Legionaries among his troops. Most were comitatensis or pseudo-comitatensis, and citizen German auxilia. Their ordered ranks and unit insignia were the main difference between them and their cousins from across the river. The Magister was thankful for the two centuries of Auxilia Palatina his years at court had earned him, as he may need them to fight his way back into Trier, where the baggage had been sent. Outnumbered three-to-one, the odds did not favor the latins.

The ballistae were placed in the center, from where they peppered the Germans. Vexillations of horse were placed left and right, but more equites were on the right to pressure the Alamanni to look after their families.

Finally, a general advance was ordered by the various kings, and the German line surged forward. Youths with javelins, bows, and rocks scampered ahead, trying to chase off the similarly armed skirmishers. Feats of daring and bravery helped to induce each side to cheer, and the lines closed to contact, the Germans jogging forward at the end.

Ranks met with a roar. From left to right groups pressed forward with spears, longswords, and axes to meet the Roman line of spears and swords. It sagged, but held, as shield pushed on shield. Allobichus

nodded, and his equites on the right raced around the enemy flank, chased off the enemy horse, and ran up to the wagon laagers. Several were overrun, but the women and elders managed to chase them off.

In the center, the battle would pause in places as each side withdrew a few paces to rest and send men to the front from the rear - and the dead and wounded to the rear from the front. The barbarians fought to break into the Roman formations, but by nightfall had failed. The German *fyrð* were not up to the task this day, and the army fell back during the night.

For their part, the Romans were glad to let them get away from their now-thinned line. They held the field, and were welcomed into the city with a triumph as might have been held under Augustus Caesar himself. Nearly every man was either dead, wounded, or dead tired, and most camped out in the field, serenaded by the cries of the dying left behind in the dry stubble. The Arian Church association with "barbarians" did not help Bishop Cethegus improve the status of the church in Trier.

The German commanders reacted badly, took to drinking even before the Rhine was crossed, and spent a sad winter in Alsace. Losses had not been so bad, but morale was crushed, and the urgings of their nobles could not induce the warriors to cross the Rhine once more.

Imperial Treaties as Read to the Senate

SOCIETAS IMPERII

We are happy to announce that a pact of Alliance between the Empire and the people of the Huns is now established thanks to the love for peace shown by the Rex Hunnorum.

We besides decree that:

- The Empire shall help economically the Hunnic ally with a donation of 100 measures of gold.
- The Imperial Army shall not interfere in the wars of the Hunnic warriors for a period of 12 years.
- The Hunnic ally shall not pass the borders of the Empire for a period of 12 years.
- New trade routes shall be opened, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Hunnic merchants.
- The ambassadors of the Hunnic people shall always have a place of honour at the holy presence of the Emperor.
- We Honorius Augustus renew Our fraternal friendship with the most eminent Uldin, Rex Hunnorum, Socius Imperii.

D N HONORIVS P F AVG DATA A D SEXTVM KALENDAS DECEMBRES CD

FOEDERATIO IMPERII

BVRGVNDORVM CIVITAS ET LIBERA ET FOEDERATA LEGIBVS SVIS VTITVR

Whereas the people of the Burgundians free and federate use their own laws, it is here stipulated that:

- The Burgundians shall enjoy for ten years the right of Hospitalitas on the Raetic land, at the end of which it shall decade and all the people of Burgundian descent who shall recognize Gundioc as their Rex and Honorius Augustus as their Imperator shall acquire the Roman citizenship.
- Unions shall be allowed between Roman and Burgundian citizens, so that Raetia shall be infused with new vital sap, the fruits of those unions shall acquire with their birth the Roman citizenship.
- The Imperial Army shall intervene at the side of the Federate Army, if grave dangers shall menace Raetia and her people.
- No violence shall be perpetrated against those who still follow the Arian doctrine or the pagan cults, and no forced conversion. Anyway, We invite everyone who wants to know the Truth of Christ to do that freely, under the patient and lovely guidance of the Roman Pontiff.
- In the same way, never shall happen again persecutions of Roman Christian people in the regions where the

Arians or pagans are majority, still every Arian and pagan shall be free to keep his own faith.
-New trade routes shall be opened, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Burgundian merchants.
-The Rex Burgundorum shall have also the title of Vicarius Imperii and his person shall represent the August Emperor in Raetia.
-No preference, in economical or military help, shall be granted by the Emperor to the lands that obey directly to His authority, in comparison with those lands that obey to the authority of the Vicarius Imperii.

D N HONORIVS P F AVG DATA A D SEXTVM KALENDAS DECEMBRES CD

North Africa

Donatist Christian Church

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Bishop Emeritus

Diplomacy:

Emeritus has his hands full dealing with the loud and popular Bishop of Hippo.

Moorish Kingdom

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheik Tariq al-Kasurga, Son of the Sirocco

Diplomacy: Zirid (T)

Tired of years of useless raiding, Tariq decided to sign on the Imperial dotted line (see *Western Roman Empire*). In return, the government in Mediolanum ceded Zirid to the Moorish realm. A royal expedition to the new possession managed to impress the locals somewhat, though they were a bit put out that Tariq and his son, Prince Abdul Al-Kasurga "the Handsome" preferred their concubines to a their own princesses.

Eastern Europe

Arian Christian Church

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Vinitharius, Patriarch

Diplomacy: Savia (CH), Aquincum (CH), Pannonia I (CH), Carnuntum (CH), Venetia (CH), Aemilia (CH), Liguria (CH), Alpes (CH), Maxima (CH), Augustodunum (CH)

Bishop Cameron narrowly escaped with his life. His attempt at founding a church in Mediolanum (of all places) was news to the local pater, who, despite imperial pronouncements, urged his congregation one Sunday to "do something" about the heretics down the street. So it was that a mob appeared that

very night, replete with torches and mattocks, to burn the place down.

Elsewhere the Holy Spirit appeared to be at work. However, Venetia and a few other locations held new churches filled only with slaves, dregs, and malcontents, as no real citizens hewed to the Arian orthodoxy.

The Patriarch himself spent many months in consultation with the Rugian king. In the end, the king agreed to increase his people's tithing.

Empire of the Huns

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Uldin the Hun, Khakhan

Diplomacy: Khazar (F), Patzinak (F), Volhynia (FA)

The khakhan marched his enormous army into Slavic territory. Nobody came to interfere. Uldin was not surprised. Riding at the head of 50,000 horse archers makes a distinct fashion statement. Neither was he surprised at the hospitality of the voivode of Volhynia. The voivode, Wences, was unimpressed with the easily-wounded Slavic dynasty, and very impressed at how charming the Huns could be, once you get past the scarred faces, brutal habits, and general smell.

His king, however, had other ideas (see *Slavic Tribes*).

Thanks to the actions of various matchmakers, a double wedding was held in 404. Uldin was wedded to Gunver, the Patzinak Alan princess, while Bleda married the very young Simel, a Khazar Alan princess. Within a few moons after their rather sparse steppe ceremony, Simel began to "show" a bit. But late one night she cried out, and despite the best efforts of midwives and shamans, mother and child died before her 17th birthday. Bleda was heartbroken, and in a drunken fit (not an atypical state for serious thought among the Huns) took a knife to his chest and filled the wounds with ash to mark his sorrow. His several slaves were silently relieved that he had not apply the knife to them instead.

Bleda was also mollified by wagons of gold, silver, silks, and jewels pouring into the court from Rome, Constantinople, and Ctesiphon. Farmers, he thought, had so much in common with worms. At that he laughed for the first time in days, and hoisted another skull full of *kvass*.

Gepids

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Hellebich

Diplomacy:

The king spent his days hunting aurochs and wild boar, his nights drinking imported wines. But he grew bored with this life. As one of his Vlach troubadours sang to him, "He was born a rambling man." Thus when the Ostrogothic court, army, and people appeared in the Carpathian passes they were allowed into former Upper Dacia. Hellebich was intrigued with the proposals of Ariaric the Goth.

So it was that the Gepids joined the migrating Ostrogoths, happy at the chance to follow in the ways of their fathers, on the trail of adventure (see *Ostrogothic Kingdom*).

Orthodox Christian Church

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Patriarch John Chrysostom

Diplomacy: Heraclea (CH), Athenai (CH), Korinthos (CH)

The Patriarch, since his abduction and installation as archbishop of Constantinople, had alienated the wealthy with his sermons against private property, vanities, and priestly consecration fees. Only by following the advice of his old friend, Gregory of Antioch, was he able to maneuver and remain in power. Even Empress Eudoxia was put out by John's ascetic ways and populist sermons.

The crowds loved him, though many men resented his preaching on the equal need for fidelity among husbands and wives. Tons of gold objects were stripped from the walls of Hagia Sophia and used to improve the streets, sanitation, and education in the poorer parts of the great city. The anger of the mob was greatly feared at court, and worked to silence the Patriarch's critics. Close contact with the emperor was maintained by the church's Secretary General, Dioscurus, while Chrysostom and his staff established churches in several Greek cities.

Ostrogothic Kingdom

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ariaric II

Diplomacy: Gepids (F)

The king was restless, as were his people. Trapped on this rich peninsula, they knew that their destiny and greater glory lay somewhere outside the sphere of the Hun - and out from under their heel. Thus it was that the people were rounded up, the city of Cherchen sold to the Empire, and the nobles lead their clans out and on to the steppe.

By the late autumn of 401 the horde had reached the mountains at the end of the steppe. Ariaric knew from his scouts that he was indeed at the gates to Dacia, and the people cheered. The people spent the next few years in the mountains and forests, enchanted with the new setting, and the riches sent from Constantinople. A happy time was spent among their Gepid cousins and the local Vlachs and Latins.

Rugian Tribes

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Nevitta

Diplomacy:

Nevitta wandered the countryside with his drinking companions, tipping cows and generally causing trouble. Soon the royal court was bribed by villagers and minor lords to travel elsewhere.

Slavic Tribes

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Bole

Diplomacy:

Snow lay on the land as the royal bison hunting party made its way down the narrow road, horses picking their way slowly. Out of the blue sky across the small field to their right came a volley of arrows, taking the nobles entirely by surprise. Horses and men fell, those unwounded making for the woods to their left. Bole and his son, Prince Ladis, was seriously wounded by an arrow. The teenaged prince was hit in the leg, and nearly perished from blood loss, thereafter walking with a limp.

The king was pierced just below the rib cage and disabled for some months with fevers and pains. Thanks to his general excellent health he did pull through, with a renewed sense of the fragility of life. Before long the king threw himself into seasonal fertility festivals with a gusto that soon became legendary.

His *joi de vivre* was shortlived. He learned the Huns were wooing the voivod of Volhynia. The king was not known for his shrewdness, but it did not take a shamanic journey to see exactly who was responsible for the arrow attack on his family. The Huns must be resisted, regardless of their reputation. Runners were sent to the various clans and tribes, who gathered with their wagons, shields, spears, bows, and axes before the king.

The force marched into Volhynia and set up a defensive perimeter. Having camped for a few days, they spotted a few Hunnic horse archers in the distance. At once several youths took off after them, returning with news that the riders were easily chased off with a few bow shots and brandished spears.

Heartened, the Slavic army marched off toward the San River where it was suspected the Huns had made camp. At the end of a day's march they reached the water. The spring day was unusually warm, and many of the men shouldered their way to the front to cross first. About half had made it across when the first cries went up. "Huns! Huns!" rose up from the mob, as the horsemen rode over a small rise, opening the **Battle of the San**.

Apprising the situation at once, the king and his leaders took to their horses (the only Slav horses not hitched to wagons) and rode down the river bank. They managed to escape, but the clan head from Little Poland was hit in the leg by an arrow a week later, during the pursuit.

Left to their fate, the disordered mob in and near the river tried to charge the horse archers, only to be shot down. Soon the Huns were surrounding clumps of infantry, or chasing down individuals before they could reach the trees a league away. Only by floating downstream in the red-tinted water did some dozens of men manage to escape to tell the tale.

That winter a small embassy from Uldin appeared at the court of King Bole. One of the creatures approached with a Slav translator, and demanded the loyalty of Bole to the Hunnic Empire. The king had worked hard to depict the Huns to his remaining nobles as an overwhelming force of nature so as to deflect their rage at his inept leadership. Now spent, Bole could only agree to bow before the khakhan - it was small consolation that he knew he was one of many such kings.

Taifali Tribes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Vallia

Diplomacy:

Vallia gave himself over to gluttony. After several years his courtiers were alarmed that he could no longer find a horse to bear him, and began to look around for other employment.

Visigothic Kingdom

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Athaulf, Thiudan of the Goths

Diplomacy:

Nobody saw the man in the dark green cloak. Short yet wide, he had entered the house, sneaked past guards, and buried a long narrow blade in the neck of his victim.

Thus it was that Alaric, Rex Gothorum, met his end. His officers rounded up the usual suspects, but no ready answers were to be had. Alaric's second, Athaulf, was declared high leader, or *thiudan*, by the assembled lesser *reges*.

The new chief Goth faced a number of problems. First was a lack of food, now that the army and people were out of the imperial supply chain. The winter proved to be a harsh one and the mass of armed men were becoming desperate over the condition of their families. Second, this army lacked an employer. And finally this people lacked land.

Food was the most immediate need. Thus Athaulf approached the commander of the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*, John, and asked to be included at least temporarily in the army supply again. Dux John, however, was not a "barbarian sympathizer", overlooking of course the large numbers of their descendents within his own force in Moesia. He refused, and the Thiudan stormed out of the meeting despite John's attempts at calming Athaulf.

Backs to the wall, the Goths decided to take the food they needed. Athaulf decided that in order to raid the local storehouses his army would need to defeat the Romans. The warriors were mobilized and began marching for the barracks of those perceived as withholding grain.

Dux John got wind of these developments via the usual network of agents, and quickly mobilized his own army. His plan, however, was not one of confrontation. Realizing the odds of success were poor, his plan was to march the army of *Illyricum* into *Viminicum* and await reinforcements. The troops, however, would hear none of it, and several tribunes noted that Moesia held an enormous garrison which could be mobilized. The *magister militum* sighed, and agreed to confront the Gothic army.

Outside the town of **Idimum** the two forces met on a cold spring day. The dux's troops tried to attack the Gothic encampment but were met with fierce resistance. John signalled for a regroup, which caused Athaulf to sense weakness and order a countercharge along the line. Despite the Goth's Roman arms and armor, they were not a match for the Greek's discipline and willingness to take casualties. The pseudo-comitatensis took terrific losses, but held, and the Gothic attack gradually wavered, halted, and became a general withdrawal.

Harassed by equites *Illyricani*, Athaulf took his people up into the mountains. After two weeks of cold and hunger, he realized his position was untenable, and descended to surrender. Arcadius' new barbarian policy gave him hope that his people would be neither executed nor sold. The Romans suspected treachery, and immediately put the Thiudans in irons. A quick inspection of the once-proud warriors revealed them to now be no more than refugees, though even in this condition they had nearly

obliterated a Roman army. After swearing loyalty to the emperor, the mass of troops was entered into service, and Athaulf was carted off to Constantinople.

In the end, Dux John did indeed have to feed the Goths.

Eastern Roman Empire

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Arcadius, Emperor

Diplomacy:

After leaving imperial service, the Visigoths caused a bit of trouble in the West. This was handled by local forces (see *Visigoths*) and provided a much-needed support for the Emperor's lenient policy regarding barbarian immigration.

In a complex transaction, the civilized population of Cherson was evacuated in the wake of the Gothic migration in exchange for a ship's hold full of gold, silver, spices, silks, and other treasures. The Greek-speaking refugees were naturally upset at this reversal, yet warmed to the Empire on seeing the grandeur of Constantinople from their ships' decks.

Adding to the impressive nature of the Eastern Capitol are what will doubtless be called the "Arcadian Walls" to both extend the city westward, and to provide for landward defense. Completed in record time, it makes the city nigh-invulnerable to assault.

Middle East

Ghassanid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King John the Fair

Diplomacy:

The pious king spent some time in Constantinople, pleading the case for the Monophysite faith to all at court who would listen. While admired for his earnestness, most courtiers were more interested in testing themselves against him in mock gladiatorial contests. None was able to best him with any weapon, whether trident, bow, or sword, mounted or afoot. This skill and his ability with a well-placed bribe kept him involved in the cycle of parties and receptions essential for influence.

So impressed was the Emperor that a substantial subsidy was sent back with him to Petra. While the king may have been popular in Constantinople, he was attacked by a knife-wielding *sicari* in the bazaar, who was cut down by John's Beduin guard before he could get within a few cubits of the king. Tracking down his contacts quickly turned up evidence of a Lakhmid connection.

Thus it was with small surprise that the enemy appeared in the wastes near Petra (see *Lakhmid Arab Kingdom*).

Kingdom of Yemen

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

King Ishmael ibn Yahsub

Diplomacy:

The king was relieved to find the Axumite army investing the city of Aden had departed. The ululations from the walls, and the dancing and singing, lasted long into several nights. The birth of a healthy son to Prince Adam ibn Ibrahim in the autumn of 405 was more good news, and the bris was not soon to be forgotten.

Lakhmid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheikh Amr al-Qays

Diplomacy: Meshan (F)

The detestable Ghassanids, lackeys of the Romans, were an irritant to Amr al-Qays. The Persian *asvaran* from Ctesiphon, Dariush, was silent on the issue of war, which the sheikh chose to take that as tacit approval for action, and mustered his troops.

The Lakhmid army slipped by the sheikh of Bostra, Mukatir ibn al-Muttalib, and past the Roman garrison in the Province of Arabia. In fact, al-Muttalib chased rumor of the Lakhmid force just into Arabia, where his small force was met by the Roman garrison, leading to some small confusion.

Meanwhile, al-Qays headed for the Ghassanid capitol of Petra. In his way was John and his Arab army, forming a line across the road at the heavily-fortified village of **Geia**. Despite the lateness of the hour and the heat of the early summer evening, the sheikh called for an immediate charge on the village.

The remainder of the Ghassanid army held back, letting the force of the enemy attack dissipate in the low walls, moat, and surrounding hills of Geia. It was then, as the sun was setting, that John and his cousin, prince Paul, charged into the Lakhmid army all along the line. The struggle was fierce, and the invaders took heavy losses. The loss of Geia, and the turning of the native's flank, caused king John to order a fighting withdrawal. Under cover of night nearly all the local forces retired in good order into their capitol city.

Joyous in victory, al-Qays set his men to scouring the countryside the very next day, with orders to seize anything of value. Within the week, columns of smoke were seen to rise from several settlements across the province. Many fortified places were, however, quite resistant to the entreaties of sword and bow, and held out. Thousands of refugees found their way into the capitol to escape the depredations of raiders both horse- and camel-borne.

Meanwhile, after negotiations lasting some months, al-Muttalib and his Bostran army transited the Roman province of Arabia into Petra. His valiant attempt at rescuing his liege lord from these invaders was doomed, the Lakhmids quickly halting their despoilment of the land to harass and then cut to pieces the Bostran relief force. With a few retainers al-Muttalib escaped into Arabia and then home, held onto his horse with straps, left leg rendered useless by a Lakhmid arrow.

The sheikh resumed his looting of the province, then returned to invest the city of Petra. A few trenches were dug, but for the most part the Arab army encamped at various key access ways into the capitol and

waited for hunger to do its work. Given that it was late in 404 and no Eastern Roman army had appeared to aid its vassal, al-Qays was ensured of a leisurely beleaguer of Petra.

Or was he? The Siq, the *wadis*, and various hidden rock formations gave the numerous defenders an enormous advantage. Squadrons of horse were able to come and go nearly at will, supplies filtered in, and messages filtered out quite easily. Quickly enough al-Qays realized that starving out such a place was impossible with his force, and he gave it up as a bad effort. Organizing his men, the force marched unopposed into the Hijaz, stopping at the coastal town of Modiana for supplies before heading off into the desert.

Without the pressure of an enemy army, Petra was liberated, and once more king John was cheered by crowds and feted by the nobility.

Monophysite Christian Church

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Archbishop Theophylact

Diplomacy:

The various bishops sent a flurry of messages, each filled with pointless arguments and clever invective.

East Africa

Axumite Empire

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Emperor Tewodros Ella Asgad

Diplomacy: Djibuti (EA)

Tewodros declares victory in Yemen after extracting tribute from Ctesiphon, and leaves Aden to the locals. The nobles are suitably impressed with his diplomatic skills. Further, one of the imperial concubines brings a son to the emperor, and he is well pleased. Also skilled is Prince Yakob, who woos and weds a princess of Djibuti, thereby gaining the allegiance of that land.

Blemmye Tribes

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Satifal

Diplomacy:

No news from the wastes, only the occasional cross-border raid.

Nobades Kingdom

(African Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

King Movad II

Diplomacy:

The king sires many sons. Trade with the Axum Empire to the south is opened.

Persia

Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Narses-Kartir, Mobedhan-mobed

Diplomacy: Mesopotamia (CA), Abadan (CH), Mosul (CH), Asuristan (AB), Uruk (AB)

The mobedhan-mobed railed against the lenient religious policies of Yazdigerd. Kartir then sulked, bereft of the direct ability to oppress the various minority religions.

A number of new sites were established, and missionaries met with substantial success, cheering the priests somewhat. A great agiary is built in Veh-Ardashir, across the river from Ctesiphon, with celebrations lasting for days.

Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

Yazdigerd I, Shahanshah of Persia

Diplomacy: Asuristan (F)

The shahanshah's favorite died in childbirth. Not one given to depression, Yazdigerd was later presented with a son by his new prime wife, a princess from Asuristan, and was much pleased. Prince Varhanin was also able to produce a son, and the nobles were relieved that the "expected" things were taking place.

Yazdigerd arranged resources to outfit thousands of lesser *dihqans* in full battle kit, thus ensuring his popularity. This was to be tested by his announcement of toleration of the lesser religions. Many believe them to be agents of *Ahriman* and should not be allowed. Cooler heads note their numbers, though a novel missionary approach brought converts even from among the longstanding Jewish and Classical communities.

South Asia

Lambakanna Sinhala

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

King Suravatha

Diplomacy:

Ah, the Romance in Asia continues. Lord Ichaa sailed for Anuradhapura with a bold proposal. Lambakanna Sinhala would become joined with the Chera Kingdom. King Gaman would marry a Sri Lankan princess, and king Suravatha to a Chera princess.

Amazingly, this worked, and late in 405, in Muziris, a double wedding was held, twice. One was a Buddhist ceremony, the other a Hindu marriage vow.

Buddhist Stupas

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Rugendra

Diplomacy:

The Buddhists discuss the role of the various birds in theology.

Chera Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Gaman

Diplomacy: Lambakanna Sinhala (EA)

The king fulfilled his duties and took the very young Sinhalese princess as his bride, thus expanding his realm greatly. As a safeguard, a fortress was commenced near the capitol.

Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Jatavarman

Diplomacy:

In the southern Indian contest for the biggest fortress, Jatavarman ordered a castle named "Marandya" to be built so that he might see it from his palace in the capitol. The noblemen were impressed, but the young women simply whispered and giggled behind silken veils.

Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Chandra Gupta II, the Great

Diplomacy: Gaur (F), Palas (F), Sarnath (F), Ahicchatra (F), Tarain (F), Sabara City (T), Gujerat (F), Sagala (NT), Baluchistan (NT), Lalitpur (NT Nepal), Bhutan (NT Nepal)

Many mighty works were wrought at the direction of Chandra Gupta. Wastelands were filled with small farms, provinces filled with loyal subjects, and roads and other works built, most by sending back to their farms the troops levied for the campaigns against the Saka. Small amounts of treasure provided great rewards, including lands from the Shahanshah.

But of course the mightiest works are those of the heart. And here too the emperor was not denied. The king of Gaur welcomed prince Kamara and his father, and negotiations proceeded over many weeks. Kamara was quite willing to overlook the caste-free status of the Gaur princess Harini, and a wedding

between the Hindu and Buddhist families sealed the full entry of that state into the empire. Chandra was a bit alarmed by the musicians at the ceremony, but any apt diplomat will overlook screaming men wearing beast masks, capering about.

Best of all, Harini was happy to be left to herself most of the time while her new husband shuffled papers. But she was not left entirely alone - Kamara was most pleased when his wife gave him two new baby girls.

Another mighty work was the building of a new city in Palas, Barisal. This so impressed the local king that he decided to grant the emperor all privileges and rights. Chandra Gupta continued his procession around his domains, impressing all with the glory and charm of his travelling court.

The voyage of Babasaheb Ambedkar to Sabara was slowed by unseasonable winds, forcing his small fleet to put in at Temala for several months before resuming their journey. Despite worries about pirates, they saw none on their entire trip except for the usual lot of unsavory types in the taverns and wharfs of Temala.

Biscotti Licchavi, the Nepalese king, took the emperor at his word and married into the greatest family of Lalitpur. Thus were that city and later the valleys of Bhutan gained by king Biscotti, whose life was now sweet.

Hinduism

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Diplomacy:

The Hindus discuss the role of the various fishes in theology.

Jain Sects

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Siddhasena, Acharya

Diplomacy:

The Hindus discuss the role of the various herbivores in theology.

Pallava Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Mahendravarma I

Diplomacy: Chola (FA)

Romance. Bah. Mahendravarma felt no need to rely on love to decide matters of state. And thus the king of Chola, cowed by the might of the Pallava, was induced to more fully join in the life of the realm.

Vakataka Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Prabhavati Gupta, Regent

Diplomacy:

Under her prudent leadership, the Regency of Prabhavati becomes famous throughout the land. Artists, musicians, and actors throng the court and keep the young prince well distracted.