

Newsfax, Turn 2

(start of 405 CE through the end of 408 CE)

Note: You are encouraged to submit text for inclusion in the newsfax, which may satisfy your need for propaganda, creativity, or fun.

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

- www.radiok.org
- Tool - *Opiate*
- Little Feat - *Waiting for Columbus*
- Sneaker Pimps - *Becoming X*
- Black Flag - *My War*
- Ramones - *Rocket to Russia*
- Al Perry and the Cattle - *Cattle Crossing*
- The Sundays - *Blind*

Generally eastward starting with ...

Central Asia

Hephthalite Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Kiliciler

Diplomacy: Ferghana (F), Issyk-Kul (F)

Missionaries were sent into the cities of Boqara and Bactra. These extolled the virtues of Tengri the Sky-Father, Nachigai the Earth-Mother, and the spirits *yer-sub*. The city folk regarded these men and women, clad in hides and furs and talking with rustic accents, with a mixture of amusement and horror: amusement at their obvious naiveté, and horror at what the shamanic effort represented.

For indeed, the Khan was a busy man, a man of organization. On leaving the city of Bactra to the sullen cheers of weavers rounded up for the occasion, he camped among the shrubs and rocks for several nights, cloistered in a felt tent with a number of shamans, *enarees*, and counselors. After an evening in a close tent with fuming sacred seeds and flowers of various kinds, Kiliciler emerged with a vision.

His cousin Bulang was named High Shaman of the new religion of Steppe Shamanism. Bulang shared with his clan-brother the nature of a compulsive organizer, and quickly moved to set up shop in Talas (see *Steppe Shamanism* below).

Pleased with his vision, the Khan moved quickly to convert the Sogdians of Kara-Khitan at swordpoint. The Manichean priesthood preached resistance and sacrifice, and a rebel army arose. Or at least it tried to. The *minghans* of horse archers seemed able to smell disloyal villages, many of which were left smoking shells filled with bodies, the nomad warriors grinned through their mustaches at the small precious items and attractive slaves slung over horses.

By the end of 406 the army of the Khan moved from the farms and qanats of Kara-Khitan and into Maracanda. The citizens there had heard tales from refugees, and when the *dasturs* urged them to uphold the *gathas* these same priests were rounded up and presented before the Khan for his pleasure. The armed struggle was short, brutal, and the locals were soon singing the praises of Tengri in converted agiaries. Or at least so it sounded to the Mongol-speaking shamans. Prayers to Umai were remarkably similar to those to Anahita in Maracanda.

Not content with temporal affairs, the Khan commanded a reorganization of his ministers along Persian lines, leading the *ilkhans* to burn lamps far into the night. More power was thus concentrated in his hands, leading to grumbling among some of the *darughachi* and *bahadur*. But as they valued their lives, these dared not oppose the Khan.

Steppe Shamanism

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Primate Religious Authority)

Bulang Sechen, High Shaman

Diplomacy:

Setting up shop in Talas, Bulang realized what a monumental task was set before him. But with the help of all the *yer-sub* he knew success was without question.

Kushan Empire

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Kapisa II, Kidarite Shao

Diplomacy: Gandhara (PT), Kapisi (UN)

A new son brought joy to the royal household. He was especially appreciated as several other infants of Kapisa did not make it to their first birthday. The *mihr* of Kapisi died of a flux one late autumn day in 408 AD, and the city burghers decided to back a new leader who would pursue a more independent course. Otherwise life was quiet among the valleys and peaks of the Kushan realm.

Oghuz Turk Realm

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Sonqur

Diplomacy: Ghuzz (A), Saksiny (P)

The khan weds a Ghuzz princess, drawing those Turks into his orbit. Known for her skill at both hunting snow leopards and weaving rugs, the new khanum saw her first three children die in infancy. More death was seen when the Kama Bulgar khan passed away during a *kvass* drinking bout a moon before midsummer, at the tender age of 29. Factions immediately began wrangling, and after several duels and a poisoning the khanate went independent.

The khan of the Ob clans, by contrast, died in a hunting accident and was peacefully succeeded by his nephew.

This did not put Sonqur in his happy place, and the people of Saksiny were treated to a visit. After a short campaign across the grasslands of the countryside and the rich farms in the Volga delta, the local lords - a mixture of Alans, Huns, and Turks - were all either killed or captured, their palisades burnt and pulled down, their families hunted down like animals and killed in the fields.

One side effect was effective control of the hidden landings and tiny ports at the mouths of the Volga, ending piracy in area waters. A less favorable one was the undying enmity of a few survivors of the purges. One of these, a teenage boy who had disguised himself in the loose robes usually worn by aged widows, sprung up and buried a knife in the neck of the khan's cousin and heir, Yosef. The boy was captured, and on the death of the prince he was beheaded.

Juan-Juan Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Sho-luen, Kha-Khan

Diplomacy: Tanu (A), Altai (F), Zaysan (EA), Wusu (FA), Dzamin Uud (UN)

The Kha-Khan of the Juan-Juan took a different approach from that of the rebel Hephthalite nation to the west. Rather than crushing opposition under the hooves of his army, Sho-luen decided to grant greater autonomy to a Mongol and a Turkish tribal sub-federation (see *Eastern Mongolian Kingdom* and *Eastern Turkish Kingdom*).

At the same time, more governmental power was aggrandized to the center. As in Transoxiana, this caused substantial controversy.

Not enough, however, to dissuade a number of khans from joining under the horsetail banners of the Juan-Juan. The Altai khan indeed gave over his daughter, Shilen, to wed the kha-khan's son Ogodei. Together the nominally happy couple travelled to the local court in Wusu, where the new princess gave birth to a daughter. Shortly afterwards, in the later summer of 406, Ogodei had a spasm while falconing with some of the local lords. Taken back to the yurt, he awoke blind the following day. Back at court, he suffered another attack, trembled, and then was still. The very next day, the Khan of Dzamin Uud, Kitbuqa, fell into a ravine while hunting, broke his leg, and died at the young age of 28. The young khan's family decided that given all the changes in the realm they would just as soon leave it, and they did so at the annual *kural*.

Almost a year later *ilkhan* Toghrul fell ill with a fever and quickly died. These were troubled times in the khanate.

Eastern Mongolian Kingdom - Juan-Juan Sub-Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Khan Juchin

Diplomacy:

As part of the Juan-Juan imperial reorganization, a number of Mongol clans were given autonomy. This includes the regions of Shangtu, Ch'in, Hsiung'nu, Wudah, and Tari-Nor. Some of the younger gur-khans grumbled at the poor lands their new kingdom held. But the elders merely pointed south and smiled, shaming the lads with the traditional prospect of their peoples.

Eastern Turkish Kingdom - Juan-Juan Sub-Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Khan Altketin

Diplomacy:

Similarly, a Turkish realm was created within the Juan-Juan confederation, consisting of Ayaguz, Uigur, Henyitin, Tamarin, and Kerait, the home of the royal clan. Altketin already has his eyes gleaming at the prospect of yet more power within his grasp ... All this while pledging an oath of *anda* forever to the Juan-Juan.

Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom of the Aza

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Khri'brin

Diplomacy:

Gur-Laq began to look with interest to the troubled provinces of the empire. But getting his clans in line for action proved more difficult than he at first thought.

Such were the diversions of the leader of the clans when in the spring he took ill. Convulsions and fever tormented him, and after four days Gur-Laq died at the age of 41. As he had no children, the nation was thrown into turmoil at the prospect of the younger brother, Khri'brin, becoming khan. The Tsinghai khan would not stomach this, and sent a messenger to court with a broken jar, signalling his rebellion. Bayan Kapa also left the kingdom

The new khan gathered the troops, made them pledge *anda* to him, and left things as they stood.

China

Chinese Buddhism

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Lo-Wang

Diplomacy:

A minor scuffle over doctrinal matters in various translations of holy texts from India occupied the entirety of the Master's time.

Chinese Kingdom of Annam

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

King Ma Yueh

Diplomacy:

Ma Yueh knew that everyone and his brother had declared themselves "Emperor of China," to no great effect generally. Thus he wisely aimed a bit lower. The self-declared king invaded Korat, rapidly wiping out opposition before moving on to the greater challenge of Nan Chao. Quite aside from the military aspects, attacking a province held - no matter how nominally - by a claimant to the former Eastern Ts'in throne produced political challenges.

As is well-known, the people of Nan Chao are a rebellious and unruly lot, and consequently the Han garrison was always large and well-lead. Thus it was that the Annamese army found itself facing not peasants with weak bows and fire-hardened sticks, but over 6000 regulars, many in fortified positions, many green, but all well-armed with crossbows, halberds, or spears.

Opposing Ma Yueh was the young general Cheng Pu. Looking over the enemy dispositions, the king could see his enemy had studied the classics. But so had Ma Yueh. He placed a force of archers before a set of fortified position in the valley of the Yuan river. In a wood one *li* to their rear he hid a large force of armored and light horse, flanked by various foot troops.

The crossbowmen advanced at a walk, and were quickly exchanging shots with the enemy. After a few minutes they turned and ran pell mell for the river, leaving the field. Cheng Pu sent his raw halberdiers and spearmen, along with some hundreds of supporting missile troops, out to pursue the archers. The enthusiastic men marched at double speed out from the palisades towards the mob of Chinese Annam men nearing the river. Suddenly a yellow flag waved from the wood edge, and the fleeing archers turned and began to shoot at their pursuers, who pulled up and began to mill about.

Exploding from the wood edge were nearly a thousand heavy horse and double that number of light cavalry. They covered the distance to the now-terrified enemy in what seemed like no time at all. Despite some attempts at defense, the infantry were surrounded and wiped out to a man in less than an hour.

Seeing this display, Cheng Pu threw himself from the observation tower onto the stony ground below, dying instantly. A small party of officers approached the king and placed their swords at his feet, and performed a proskynesis in the dirt. Ma Yueh knew honorable men when he saw them, and bid them take up their swords and former positions. In these days of changing loyalties, one dared not trifle over past injuries.

Thus Nan Chao came into the hands of Chinese Annam, though the city of I-chou remained under local control.

Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master

Diplomacy: Wu (CH), Hupei (CA), Hunan (CH), Ch'ang-sha (CH)

After much prayer, the Master decided that Ghangde would be the host of a new religious complex. To be built on a grand scale, the spirits of the Tao Immortals are purported to dwell within the beautiful province of Ghandge. This wilderness region, bordered on two sides by mountain ranges and another by a Dongtung Lake, is perhaps the most beautiful, serene place in all of China. Blessings and healings have long been attributed to several sites, and the promotion of the new constructions by the many lesser masters has lead to a steady increase in pilgrims to this region.

Ko Chao Fu shrewdly distributed aid to more than one party in the succession war in the Middle Kingdom. His mission is, after all, a broad one to the people.

Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

K'ung Ti, Emperor of China

Diplomacy: Sung China (C)

Pacing in his tent, K'ung Ti waited for the roads to clear. Already, Funiu, Hubei, Hwai had revolted, and his army was trudging through Tsainan at a pace that to him seemed as slow as pressed rice. How many more rich provinces would split away?

"Calm yourself, brother," said Wu Ti. Among his young staff and brother princes, only Wu Ti showed the calm resolve of their father, his wide brow unmarked by material concerns even when damp from sword practice. Though still a teen, he provided a keel for the ship of war rowing for the pretender's city.

"So you say, so you say," was the reply. "Our snake of an uncle! What might he be doing to our capitol even now? Must we destroy the city in order to save it?"

Laughing, Wu ti said, "You will make a poor immortal, I think. We will attack as we must, kill as

needed, and suffer when it comes to us, so that the Empire might be reunited. The war is against Chaos, brother. Never forget that."

The emperor did not, as usual, see the wisdom in these words, and was delighted when the province of Anhui was entered in the spring of 405. What awaited him a week later was less pleasing. An army of well-trained horse, foot, and engines faced them across the **Chi River**. The opposing commanders were the pretender Tsu Ti, general Cheng Du, and the renowned commander Liao-Hua, coordinating the defense from Chien-K'ang by semaphore and runners.

The huge imperial army was, however, quite up to the task. Swarms of rough-terrain troops advanced left and right, securing the fords on the enemy flanks before the heavy troops across the river at the bottom of the shallow valley. Tsu Ti's front line of interspersed cavalry and armored crossbowmen took a toll on the advancing imperials, but were overwhelmed to front and flank within an hour. The commanders and some of the remaining troops fled the pursuing horse, and the victorious army held the field with the loss of only a few thousand effectives out of an army exceeding 100,000 men.

Screening the fortress of Quanjiao, the vast force closed in on Chien-K'ang, though it failed to encircle the capitol. A small force of boats and river ships was sufficient to keep the place supplied from across the Yangtse. Unable to starve the capitol out, the Emperor decided on a siege, and lines of approach were quickly dug to move this forward.

It was at this point that three remarkable messages were brought to K'ung Ti on the same day. The first was that scouts had found an enemy leader wishing to defect. Brought before the makeshift court within a red silk tent far beyond stone-shot of the opposing walls, general Cheng Du had little to say. When asked why he wished to change sides, he only proffered a soiled letter.

It was from his younger brother, Cheng Pu, garrison commander in Nan Chao, urging him to remain loyal to the imperial line, and to support K'ung Ti to the fullest. When the Emperor had put the letter down, the general said, "Your brilliant victory over Tsu Ti convinced me that you had the mandate of Heaven, and I did not follow the other commanders into the capitol. I am now before you, my lord, pleading only to assist you in correcting my mistake with my small abilities." Cheng Du bowed his head.

K'ung Ti smirked and said, "And you are now to be trusted, eh?" Before he could continue, Wu Ti interrupted him. "In these times, one must forgive," the young prince said. Looking at the general, he said, "I will vouch for this one, brother. He will not leave my side. Please spare him. A sword in our hands is one less for the enemy."

And so Cheng Du came to assist in the siege of Chien-K'ang, under the eye of one of K'ung Ti's aides, because later that day another messenger arrived at court. While the first had been ruddy cheeked and smiling after a quick run in the summer's heat, this one walked as if wearing iron boots. He handed a scrap of paper to the chamberlain and stolidly waited near the door.

The sad news was the death of Wu Ti, killed when a load of catapult stones he had been overseeing suddenly came loose from its wagon and crushed him. The Emperor, in a rage, had the engineers and sutlers attached to the failed vehicle beheaded on the spot, then called for Cheng Du to come forth. "As my brother called you his friend, you will be spared," he said. "But you will lead tomorrow's attack on the western gate. Either you will enter the city, or your head will be mine." He dismissed the general with a wave and laid plans for the attack. Whether tears would come he knew not, but the city would be his!

After this blow, the post rider arriving later that night was received without alarm, despite his ominous news. A Yen army had crossed the Huang Ho with scores of boats and thousands of troops, intent on conquest in Shantung and Tsainan. K'ung Ti heard the report, but was not listening, and dismissed the court as it ended. Everything in its time, he thought (see *Later Yen* below).

That night, as the Emperor set flags to the northern mansions of the Void and the Wall, his light troops approached the walls with bows and light spears. Cheng Du and his picked force of armored men approached the Green Gate along a small ravine he knew well. As the sky brightened from the east, a barrage of the wall began from the Eastern Ts'in lines. Large stones and spears smashed into the walls, splinters occasionally pinging off helmets of Cheng Du's men. Another force, mainly light archer volunteers from Szechuan, ran up to the gate and tried to force it open with a number of logs and iron bars. Many quickly fell to shooting from the parapets, and dropping their loads they began to flee.

From the postern came a number of men eager to prove their mettle in hand-to-hand combat, racing down the road. Cheng Du nodded, and several men raced from the ravine and up to the door. Yelling a password, they were admitted. The general counted to ten, then ordered an assault on that same door. When the defenders made to close the small portal, the Eastern Ts'in troops already inside began hacking at them from behind, and the door, then the main gate, were opened.

K'ung Ti nodded soberly, and ordered more engines brought forward to clear the walls flanking that gate, and further troops sent to that sector. His brother, as usual, had been correct about the rebel general. Had he seen his own fate, and moved to ameliorate the loss? The emperor shook his head and rode forward to see the battle more clearly.

Within the city, the Eastern Ts'in troops steadily expanded their control from their breach at the Green Gate. A sudden counterattack lead by the pretender himself caught the disorganized entrants off-guard, and thousands fell in the lanes as they milled about. Tsu Ti had ordered many stone-throwers concealed on these streets, and their shots killed or wounded handfulls of men with each stone.

It was then that prince Zhang Ti, heir to the throne, brought up his guard and many of the Eastern Ts'in engines. Set up near the gate, they managed to silence a number of the enemy machines, and the fresh troops, lead by the prince, charged the banner of the pretender. A Southern Ts'in crossbowman hidden on a rooftop managed to send an arrow through the armor of the Prince, who slumped among his guards.

Alarmed, Cheng Du rallied his few original men with the cry, "To the Prince!" and they clattered up to him in their battered armor. Just in time, they arrived to find Zhang Ti still breathing and in serious danger of capture. The general organized a hedge of spears and halberds as the prince was carried away to the rear with an arrow protruding from his back.

Above the melee, Tsu Ti happened to see Cheng Du among the enemy lines. Enraged at his betrayal, the pretender ordered his guard forward into the mass of points. The Eastern Ts'in ranks countercharged, and the two forces met with a shout and an loud clanging. Cheng Du saw his opportunity to prove his loyalty to the emperor, and personally charged into the enemy ranks. His inspiration caused his men to rally, and very quickly the lane was filled with bodies and fleeing foes.

The general turned to give an order to regroup, then whipped his head around. Was that ...? He leaped over a few bodies, then pulled another still-groaning enemy soldier off another pile. Under him, stunned, was Tsu Ti himself. Cheng Du laughed to the sky and pulled the man out. Truly the gods were smiling upon him today. He ordered the pretender trussed, gagged, and sent to the emperor for

his pleasure.

Rumor of the capture spread throughout the city and both armies. Before the day was over, Southern Ts'in general Liao Hua, who had repelled numerous attacks all along the wall, surrendered. The Daoist priest aiding the Southern Ts'in, Yi Ji offered himself up if the enemy would agree to spare the few hundred civilians crammed into his offices for safety.

Before the next moon Chiang Hsia, Chien An, and Wu abandoned the pretender's cause, but did not join another faction, preferring instead to wait for events to further reveal the fate of the empire. The garrison in the fortress of Quanjiao also decided that the winds had changed direction, and surrendered. The Da Wang of Chekiang, Count Hsia, quickly abandoned his positions in Hupei and marched his troops home to await events.

Spending only a few sleepless days in the capitol, K'ung Ti marched on the heavily-fortified province of Hupei. His brother was left in the capitol to recover from his wound, and to oversee the government while the war continued. As it happens, the defense of Hupei was poorly lead, and after dozens of strongholds had been reduced after fierce fighting, the remainder were abandoned, their garrisons attempting to slip out to rebel-held territory. But the pickets of light horse, and especial the few hundred Mongols, were quite effective, and many heads were returned to the main camp.

The leaders of Chiang Hsia listened to the reports of the imperial army with no small fear. Yet their loathing for the leading house keeps them from submitting when the emperor's herald reads them his proclamation of "lenience." The gates are shut, and the intact body of the messenger is flung far over the city walls.

Before the spring of 407 is over, it is the city leaders who are flung to their deaths from the few remaining covered walks on the wall. The emperor makes a short tour of the streets and plazas, past ruined houses and shuttered windows. Neither pleased, happy, nor satisfied, K'ung Ti is relieved to at least feel that his anger is banked. Thus the city is not treated to wholesale fire and sword as the emperor's carriage leaves.

While strife and death took center stage, the Taoist sage Mi Zhu was sent by the emperor to convince the Sung "Emperor" Ma Ch'in (late of the Eastern Ts'in army) to, as Lao Tsu might say, "Imbibe the elixir of Inner Alchemy," and rejoin the empire. At Pienching, the sage was introduced at court, and there he remained for the next several years. Though not particularly interested in spiritual matters, Ma Ch'in was no fool, and took the opportunity to delay the imperial army.

After the fall of Chiang Hsia, the veteran general listened more closely to the priest's words. In the end, he decided that, yes, K'ung Ti had the Mandate of Heaven, but that the role of the Sung within the Han sphere was as yet undetermined.

Khanate of the Hsiung'nu

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Bulinger, Khan of the Hsiung'nu

Diplomacy:

With the pressing business of consulting his astrologers and caring for his hunting birds, Bulinger found himself quite without time for the mundane matter of governance.

Korean Kingdom of Koguryo

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Kwanggaet'o, the Great

Diplomacy:

The Great King rested on his laurels - quite comfortable, really.

Later Liang Kingdom

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Lu Kuang, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

There was little news from along the Silk Road.

Later Ts'in Dynasty

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy:

Yao Hsing awaited the next blow to his little empire. He did not have to sit still in Houma for long (see *Toba Wei*).

On return to the ancient capitol of Chang'An, the emperor began to receive reports of unrest in the provinces. Chinling, Han Tung, and Shantung, never happy under his rule, sent the Ts'in advisors packing. The city of Pan decided to leave the empire, preferring to test the open waters rather than stay in the defenseless harbor of the Later Ts'in. Long-suffering Huang sent a deposition of refugees to declare their love for Yao Hsing, despite his lack of any troops to protect them.

Later (Hou) Yen Dynasty

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Mu-jung Ch'uei, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

The head of the Mu-jung considered the Toba Wei. They neither planted nor did they sow, and yet their harvest was glorious. Not to be outdone, he ordered greater military effort. Indeed, rather than kicking a weak neighbor, Ch'uei decided that the greater glory lay in conquering the greater enemy.

Thus on a crisp clear spring morning in 405 a force of boats carrying horse and foot crossed the Huang Ho. There was no opposition, as the people were still rejoicing over their liberation from the chaos of barbarian rule and political strife. Their fate, however, was to once more feel the sting of the northerner's lash. By the spring of 406 Tsainan and Shantung were entertaining Yen garrisons, and general Bailao Qu'li was able to cross the cold waters and return home with reports of victory.

Of course Ch'uei was pleased. However, unlike general Bailao he had not seen firsthand the crumbling and charred ruins of the once-mighty cities of Lu and Kuang-ku. The general made sure that his family had their overnight bags packed, and had passage to Kogoryo pre-paid. He suspected that taunting a rhinoceros was not the path to peace, and was relieved that the beast was otherwise occupied (see *Eastern Ts'in* above).

Southern Ts'in Empire

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

Tsu Ti, Emperor

Diplomacy:

For Tsu Ti, the good life of servants, concubines, acrobats, and all-you-can-eat pork ended far too soon (see *Eastern Ts'in* above). By the autumn of 408 only Kiang'si and Taiping remained loyal to his cause.

Sung Kingdom of China -*Tributary of the Eastern Ts'in Empire*

(Daoist Civilized Component Nation)

Ma Ch'in, Sung King

Diplomacy:

The wily general decided that perhaps the gods were indeed with the bigger brigades, and nominally accepted the embassy of the Eastern Ts'in emperor. Thus he is now a king only, and awaits developments, not to say the imperial army.

Toba Wei Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Toba Kuei, Emperor of China

Diplomacy: Houma (PT)

Toba Kuei was pleased as he rode through Huang at the head of his army and clan. It was late summer, and his eyes took in the abandoned and scorched villages, wrecked paddy walls, and burned orchards. With time, he thought, this land may come to look as it should, filled with grass for my horses.

By the following spring, his army had entered Houma, and was somewhat surprised to find Yao Hsing "the One-Handed" and his Later Ts'in army opposing their advance. Conferring with his staff one hot and humid evening over rice wine, the gathering agreed that they were not impressed with the opposition, and that their own Chinese troops should take the brunt of the fighting.

A light but steady rain turned the southern slopes of **Xicheng Shan** treacherous. The enemy army was arrayed with the mountain at its back, flanks screened by woods, and small stone throwers dispersed before the armored spearmen in the center. Distracting Yao Hsing's center with horse archers, Toba Kuei sent his crack light troops through the woods to his left. When they made contact with the Later Ts'in flank, the emperor ordered a general charge of his heavy infantry - all of whom were veteran Han troops - supported by his Turkish lancers.

Pressed to front and flank, the local troops broke and ran immediately, seeking shelter up the mountain and into the wood. But these were already held by yet more Toba Wei troops, and were cut down as they ran. Only the leadership, who had wisely (as it happens) held their command tent well to the rear, escaped, first to Ch'ang-tzu, and then upriver to Chang'an.

Leaving a strong garrison under Prince Lai Hsiang, the emperor made a leisurely progress through his new tributary on the way home. Although that weasel Duke Bai had escaped, Kuei held his lands and family. A particularly pliant nephew was determined to be suitable, and was set up as the local vassal.

Western Ts'in Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Mu-lien, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

While not admitting it, Mu-lien was afraid. He wondered when the Toba Wei would begin to hit his small nation.

South East Asia

Cham Kingdom

(Hinduism Barbarian Open Empire)

King Bhadravarman, the Great

Diplomacy:

The king tried to enjoy life, at the urging of his counselors, but found the hole in his spirit difficult to fill.

Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

King Pendravarman

Diplomacy:

Pendra passed his days in art and literature at court.

Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Korn Danh II, the Great, King of the Mountain

Diplomacy: Tamara (F), Perak (A), Kataha (EA)

The Great King decides that he needs to oversee his realm. Thus Prince Norodom Huoth goes on a charm offensive. In Tamara he promised to increase the size of the city. In Perak he offered himself as a groom for the poetic-if-plain daughter of the local king. And in Kataha he wooed the city with his sheer magnetism. He was in each case successful, and was by 407 the happy father of a tiny girl. Tamara also became majority Hindu in the process.

The fishing and smuggling village of Thorn Sap in Siam was suddenly set upon by royal engineers, priests, and workers. Soon the place was reorganized, given a King's Charter, and new streets were laid out. While some bemoaned the loss of critical habitat, most rejoiced at the prospect of trade, entertainment, and security.

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:

Malangavarnam spent a great deal of time playing the new dice game from India, chess.

Pyu Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Kyanzittha

Diplomacy:

The court of Kyanzittha was unable to attract the sages, singers, and philosophers necessary to truly shine.

Japan



Emishi Lords

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ashitaka

Diplomacy:

Ashitaka reached into the water, grabbed the stem of the plant, and pulled. While he was a king, these few moments in the wild, even to find his own *wasabi*, were worth the slight loss in regal appearance. Since his vision in the woods some years ago, his nobles were more tolerant of these journeys.

He smiled, wondering how many of them even knew the names of their food preparers. Basket full, he bowed to the cold stream and praised its produce. As he lifted his head to leave, he saw a small white child just across the rivulet. No, it was not a child, he thought, as its little face rotated like a slow water wheel. A closer examination made Ashitaka suddenly hold his breath, eyes wide. A tree spirit, then. Just as he realized what was happening, the figure did a slow backflip into the woods and quickly disappeared.

A sign, surely, he thought during the short ride back to camp. But of what? Good luck in war? Children? Calamity? Or was this an omen without meaning?

The Emishi army travelled the length and breadth of the realm. The king ordered that the people were to gather in Akita before the final push south. Though some doubted the wisdom of leaving their mountains, fields, and woods for the "better life" in the south, few denied their lords request, and they did gather in their thousands. Lady San and her sons welcomed them, and when the horde passed on

into Toyama and the wasted lands of Lady Moro the people saw the pain caused by the Yamato army, and were by turns fearful and outraged.

In the spring of 406, just as some of the bare branches in the mountains began to put on their green garments, the Emishi moved into Yamato province. With the fleet covering their approach, the thousands trod on or near the shore, planning to pass through **Tsuruga**, whose villagers had long since moved out of the way of this human tide.

Scouts returned in the evening and reported that Tsuruga was now a walled village bristling with Yamato soldiery. After consulting with Lady San Ashitaka ordered a general halt - in the case of this army that meant stragglers would be brought up to form a rough front, screening the fortified village and stretching to the foothills.

Dawn saw the thousands of Emishi families in a roughly barricaded position in the wooded foothills, which served to provide a secure counter to the Yamato-held Tsuruga. A mob of archers, many with hastily-built mantlets, surrounded the landward palisade of the port, with some nobles in support to their rear. Reaching from them up to the woods was an assortment of archers, some with swords drawn up in an approximation of ranks, a total of around 20,000 armed Emishi with another 40,000 cranky mothers, children, and the elderly.

Facing them was a Yamato army of only about 10,000 effectives, lead by Crown Prince Ojin. In command of the large contingent of *uji* horse was his sister, Princess Jingu Koga, at the head of her maiden guard. The army was the Chrysanthemum Banner, arrayed in Korean-fashion with the conscript spearmen in ranks separate from the cavalry, who held the flanks. A large contingent of settled Emishi crept through the woods on the right (east) flank. The troops were in rather thin ranks to match the barbarians' frontage, but Ojin was not overly concerned. Man-for-man his troops were better, of course, than this rabble facing him. But there seemed to be so many of them.

The action opened with a challenge. Lady San of Nigata sent a man forth with the demand to meet the princess in single combat, so that they might not miss the opportunity of determining the name of the finest warrior in all Japan. Her elder brother forbade such a practice, but his staff began to grumble that to deny this barbarian wench her due would make the rankers feel they were bested by her. Sighing, he agreed to his sister's demand for blood.

As the shadows of the foothills shortened, the two champions trotted into the no-man's land between the lines. Jingu Koga reined in, pulled out a scroll, and began reciting a poem in Chinese on the sweetness of life. As the sing-song tones reached the ears of the advancing San, she muttered, "Oh, now I'm scared," kicked her horse into a gallop and knocked an arrow.

The princess gracefully replaced the scroll in its case, prodded her horse into motion, and prepared to shoot at her same-age opponent. The next several minutes were later recorded by the poet Amari in his famous work, "Point Dance," as the two challengers exchanged arrows and guided their horses this way and that, alternately pulling up, galloping, or turning quickly to avoid points and feathers. Lady San was the first to realize the futility of these maneuvers, and stuffing her bow in its case drew her sword and charged.

Retaining her composure, Jingu Koga let loose one last shot before drawing her sword. Due the closing range her arrow found its mark in San's lower leg, but soon enough they were at blows. Each stroke by one was blocked by the other, ripostes turned away, as the horses snapped their teeth as the opportunity arose.

Every throat yelled encouragement to the combatants, who could only see a blur of blades and slowly turning mounts. The two women broke off for a moment, panting after the effort, both horses and riders worked into a lather. A dozen meters or so separated them when Jingu Koga nudged her horse forward. To her surprise the steed fairly leaped at the enemy rider, allowing the princess to get an unblocked stroke at her opponent's head. Lady San's Korean helmet partially blocked the blow, but she immediately faded into unconsciousness.

The princess jerked her horse to the right and raised her sword to take off the head of the barbarian. She had however turned too rapidly and her saddle strap slipped on the sweating horsehide, sending the young woman to the ground. At the sound of that fall, San's horse perked up and raced for the Emishi lines. Distance concealed the vile oaths from the princess as she stood and wiped the mud from her embroidered tunic. Then, suddenly smiling, she vaulted into the saddle, turned and bowed to the Yamato lines. The conscript spearmen erupted into screams of approval, and the entire line surged forward of its own.

With a fresh horse Jingu Koga rode towards the sea, taking command of the stronger flank's cavalry. As Ojin sent runners left and right to dress his advancing lines, the horse charged the Emishi archers between them and Tsuruga. Like boiled rice between two stones, the barbarian archers were crushed, a few survivors squeezing out the sides. Alarmed at this development, Ashitaka finally succumbed to the entreaties of his staff. Fire arrows, long-prepared, began to rain down on the pallisade, both from the rude siege lines and from the port, where the Emishi fleet lay at anchor. Flames erupted at once from behind the high walls, and men began to emerge from a gate on the side facing the Yamato horse. Many of the warboats pulled into the harbor and disgorged sword-wielding nobles onto the one dock and wide beach. Swarming inland, these quickly overwhelmed the defenders and the Emishi were in control of Tsuruga. They were however soon forced back out into the harbor as the flames approached them. Scores became lost in the small town's narrow lanes and were felled by smoke and flame.

Now that the port was held by neither side, Ashitaka ordered a general advance, and the two lines closed rapidly. Scores of Yamato spearmen fell to archery, but soon were up against the barbarian swordsmen who had worked their way to the front. Unseen by these were Jingu Koga's cavalry, who had reformed themselves away from the flaming ruin and now charged into the flank of the barbarian line. Hundreds fell in a few minutes before Lord Tatari finally brought up his reserve archers to threaten the now-disordered cavalry. Horses blown, the princess ordered her command to fall back.

To the surprise of nearly everyone, the sun had set, and each side retired to their own camps. The entreaties of the wounded on the field filled the night, as the smoldering town cast a faint blood-red glow upon their final moments. This scene, and his appraisal of the numbers remaining to the barbarians caused Ojin to order a withdrawal of the Chrysanthemum Banner that night. The horse screened the move, but they need not have bothered. The Emishi were in no condition to follow up their shallow victory - they held the field, but at what cost?

After a few weeks the Emishi began an advance south towards Naniha. After their bloody victory, the barbarians spread out across the landscape, raiding peasant farmer pantries and under only loose clan control. They were in no mood for subtlety. The counterattacks began a month later. Quick strikes by forces of a few thousand horse supported by light troops on foot and some infantry riding double slowed the advance to a crawl. The usual result of a given attack was the annihilation of the specific Emishi troops who were targeted. Winter came on, with the migrating horde taking shelter as best it could.

Jingu Koga lead a night assault on the migrating Nigata tribes, who were lead by the Lady San, in the spring of 406. Yamato horse had captured all the barbarian scouts, and an hour after sunset the circle closed on the camp. Fire arrows appeared out of the wood near the tents, followed by thousands of men with swords. Despite her protests, Ojin had ordered his sister to put all the Nigata to death, and the slaughter continued until dawn revealed the magnitude of the carnage. Individual warriors, and the elderly and children in heaps, littered the field, some in the smoking ruins of occupied buildings, others in charred tents and wagons.

The body of Lady San was found that afternoon next to a pile of small bodies. The princess ordered the body of the Lady laid to rest in a stone cairn, and herself engraved the barbarian's name on a stone at the top. The other tens of thousands of remains were piled and burned before the corps moved on.

By the end of the year the Emishi had been chased back over the mountains into Toyama. With the death of nearly all its peasants and nobles, Nigata dissolved into chaos and left the realm.

Yamato Japan

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

Nintoku, Kima of Wa

Diplomacy: Aichi (F)

The mission of Soga Tomomochi to Aichi was a complete success, and after many years the local lords agreed to fully acknowledge Nintoku as their master. The Kima of Wa was pleased at this news - at least one of his plans had gone right. With his troops ready for the expected barbarian assault, he had hopes that his honor would be preserved (see *Emishi Lords* above).

In other news, we have the following from Nintoku:

"The Land of Nihon is sorely beset. The rising sun has shown calamity, not our usual good fortune. Irrigation works of a 100 years have been swept away by the unthinking, rapacious barbarians of the North.

We are a peaceful nation of rice farmers, fisherman, and traders. rice patties, letting pedigree grains of a 1000 cross-breeding become rice cakes gulped by untrained and unappreciative palettes.

Ojin, as my son and heir, you will command the Chrysanthemum Banner. Princess Jinga will assist you. Together you are charged with the defense of the nation, and the smiting of our unworthy foe. Ojin, you are the future Kima of Wa, and you hold that future in your hand. I command you to WIN. I will remain here to prepare Nihon for the struggle to prevail, and to assist you. Nihon did not seek this war, for we love to trade with all. The ending of the war, however, will be of our choosing."

And as well ...

News release: Naniha, Nihon: Toho Bussan Kaisha Ltd filed for bankruptcy after Northern barbarians killed the entire production work force, destroyed the entire irrigation system of the firm's rice patties in Kwanto, and stole the cross-breeding stock of Toho Research Farm. Toho Calhikari (the 6th generation of Toho Bussan's sons to lead the firm) stated "We worked so hard to make our firm the best. Now we are ruined. I will atone to the ancestors for my failure to arm my workers." His ritual suicide the next day made a deep impression on the populace of Nara.

Western Europe

Alamanni

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Arbogast, Rex

Diplomacy:

The winter passed too slowly for Arbogast. His ale, meat, and bread did not satisfy him. Hunting through the snow did not bring the thrills and focus of the past. Several trips to the Rhine brought some relief, as he was able to see Roman lands just across the ice floes. When this ice cleared, he was already working on routes, logistics, and tactics. He would not be denied again, he swore.

The people of Swabia were mustered and told that they would be moving south. A few grouched about this, but most knew that their future would be brighter across the Rhine - assuming they survived the trip.

From Worms, the gathered barbarian host, numbering around 150,000, began marching for the great river one moon past the spring equinox festivals. Crossing on boats and rafts, picked warriors stormed the *limes* at several points and established beachheads for the rest of the force. From these the three main armies, Alamanni, Frank, and Burgundian, spread out across the landscape of Germania I. One by one, fortified manors, newly-walled villages, and rebuilt palisaded forts were reduced with fire and sword. By fall it was clear that no relieving force was going to appear (and in fact Frankish reinforcements crossed into Germania I late in the year) and that the barbarian losses were tiny compared with the number of sacked strongholds, so the remainder of the fort commanders surrendered, many swearing fealty to the Germanic host.

With the onset of winter, the barbarians settled into the countryside, living off the produce found there, plus what grain and flocks had come with them. The leadership deployed their warriors with an eye to meeting the inevitable Roman response. The city of Trier, and the legionary fortress at Moguntiacum, were placed under a loose cordon but were otherwise ignored, the barbarians clearly unable to organize effective sieges of either place, and perhaps understand the importance of walled positions. In any case, the Germans found this frontier province no longer the fertile land of grace seen in their previous incursion.

And indeed, the real power in the West, Flavius Stilicho, Magister Militum per Gallias, watched events around Trier with great interest. His force had been gathered at Augustodunum just before the first snows fell, and decided to wait for spring rather than risk a winter campaign in Germany - even Latin Germany. Stilicho had over 70,000 men at his back and was confident of eventual victory. When the sun passed through the First Point in Aries, the legionaries, *auxilia* of various sorts, *equites* (mainly masses of *equites sagitarii*), and divers soldiers marched up the road towards Trier. The troops passed the site of Julian's great victory over the Germans two generations previous, and Stilicho used this to rally his troops under the chill grey skies of spring.

By June the Roman army had begun pushing German warriors from the recently-fortified town of **Noviomagus**. The light horse were especially at separating out individual small warbands, surrounding them, and then annihilating them. Then the auxiliaries began attacking the town walls, and were surprised to be facing Roman-outfitted men speaking German and Latin. After a day and a night, Noviomagus fell, and Stilicho was already making his next move as the sun set.

At dawn a runner arrived at the command tent with the news that there were barbarians on all sides. The Magister Militum per Gallias felt his blood chill at this news, and snippets of veterans tales of the Adrianople debacle floated in his head. But he despatched these with a will and began to send scouts to see the enemy dispositions. His Master of Horse was brought in and queried as to why the enemy, almost entirely mobs of foot, could surprise an army with thousands of light horse. Sweating, the officer replied that the Prince had issued no orders regarding pickets, and standard orders for light horse were, well, weakly written. Stilicho realized that he had never before tried to single-handedly manage such a large army, and his stomach sank at the thought.

The Frankish army lead the assault on the Roman camp just after sunrise, with the larger Burgundian and Alamanni forces completing the encirclement in echelon. This boxed in the *equites sagittarii* and rendered them far less effective. By noon the Franks had been thrown back from the Roman camp, and more warriors fell to horse archery in pursuit. Both armies then paused, with some light skirmishing continuing into the evening as bravos from each side - but mainly the Germans - sought personal glory.

The following morning it was the turn of the overall German commander Prince Otto of the Alamanni to be surprised, as the Roman army had issued forth from its camp and was marching on his position. Stilicho had realized that a prolonged siege of his camp would be a poor use of an army dominant in cavalry. Thus he resolved to punch a hole in the barbarian circle, pour his horse through it, and roll up the enemy flanks.

That was the theory.

The Burgundians and Franks quickly collapsed in on the quick-marching Latins, then slowed as equites ranged up and down their fronts firing into the dense masses of warriors. Nearly every arrow felled a warrior, since most of them were protected only by a shield of variable quality. Stilicho ordered the foot on either flank to charge in order to avoid the slowly advancing Germans. The pressure was too much for the Alamanni, who fell back fighting. The Roman Prince ordered the flank troops to not pursue, but to fall back to cover the left and right.

And not a moment too soon, as the Burgundians and Franks smashed into the quickly reformed auxilia having pushed the horse out of the way. There the slaughter was tremendous, and in many places entire centuries went under to swords, spears, and axes. But always the lines would somehow reform, flex, and press back on the disordered barbarian ranks. By nightfall the Germans had fallen back and were marching away towards Trier. Nobody followed them. Stilicho was far too worried about counterattack and ambush to order an active pursuit. Some 15,000 Roman troops lay dead or wounded in the fields around Noviomagus. The Prince knew that his army had suffered a Pyrrhic victory, and he also knew that he had to use this army to drive the Germans back across the Rhine. Returning to court with an intact enemy in Gaul might give his enemies just the fuel for the fire of his immolation - literally, not just his career.

Meanwhile, a Frankish army under Crown Prince Merovech had marched into Germania I, wintered there with his father Clodius, and in the spring into Belgica I. Though no legion troops held the province, a substantial force of latinized Germans and retired legionaries paid by the major local landowners mustered to oppose the barbarian force. Despite the efforts of the mercenary captain Severus, his troops were not up to the task in either numbers or quality, and fled their posts on mere rumors that the enemy were in the area. Severus went under, defending the large fortified house of the magnate Salacius. Having secured the province Merovech settled down to enjoy the fruits of victory - and the grape. The local people found the barbarians far less barbarous than had been feared, some few - none of them large landowners - even agitating in their favor.

Thus it was that the defeated German host had a ready refuge. For while the rest yearned to go home, the Alamanni king would hear none of it. The barbarians fell back to Belgica I, and once more dared the Romans to come and get them. The army of Merovech was vigilant at keeping their retreating comrades safe from any possible pursuit, and a defense was quickly established in the captured province.

In the spring of 407 AD the remaining legionaries and the rest of the army crossed into Belgica I. Near the town of **Aquae Granni** waited the German army. While the previous year both forces had been of roughly equal size, now the barbarians clearly outnumbered the Latins. And while the mass of light horse quickly managed to control the countryside to either flank, the hard core of the barbarian force was very large, thousands of shields in myriad patterns facing the Romans.

Within the day, the armies faced each other in two lines. Otto had placed the rear of his polyglot force on Aquae Granni and the Alamanni families, who had put up a hasty defense of wagons and tree limbs. As the enemy light horse began to pick at this formation, a great roar arose from the German ranks, and they charged at the Roman center. Stilicho was surprised at this tactic, since leaving a prepared position with enemy horse to your rear was something even barbarians avoided. A general counterattack was ordered, the measured pace of the Roman lines contrasting with the onrushing front of the trotting German nobles in the front ranks of the other line.

The Roman line dissolved across most of its length. Knots of auxiliaries found themselves surrounded and many of these went down under the tide of cheering Germans. Tired nobles fell back to be replaced with fresher if poorly equipped warriors to continue the carnage. At one point Stilicho found himself trading sword-strokes with two of these youths, but dispatched them easily before some of his auxilia palatina contingent came to his rescue. Fortunately the light horse broke off harassing the women and elderly, and began peppering the rear of the German formations. Stilicho mounted his horse and rode from left to right of what remained of his line, ordering a fighting retreat. Many equites fell to Alamanni arrows or were surrounded by lightly-armed barbarian youths with poor complexions and worse attitudes.

This was partially successful, and by nightfall the Romans had fallen back to their previous night's camp. The place seemed strangely empty, since only around half of the men who had quartered there that morning returned to sleep on the same ground - those that could sleep, that is. A few priests moved from tent to tent, giving last rites to the dying, and what comfort was to be found in scripture to the rest. Despite their exhaustion, thousands of light horse patrolled outside the pallisade, keeping emboldened Germans at bay.

Most of the barbarian host had meanwhile dissolved into a cheering mob, Franks and Burgundians and Alamanni exchanging greetings and smiles before looting the bodies of Roman troops, capturing stray horses, and pillaging abandoned wagons.

The remains of the Roman army fell back to Trier. A summons from Honorius's court for the immediate presence of Stilicho was delayed, and finally he averred, saying that he needed to stay and monitor the barbarian force in person. This was not well-received back in Mediolanum, but the emperor was not of a mind to press the issue just yet (see *Western Roman Empire*).

Kingdom of the Alans - *Civitate Foederatae*

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Xerxes, Shah

Diplomacy:

The shah decided that the course of his fathers was wisest, and took his people across the Danube and away from the inexorable Hunnic advance (see the *Western Roman Empire* and the *Empire of the Huns*).

Angles and Jutes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Aethelred

Diplomacy: Skane (EA), Halland (EA)

Aethelred, and his young son and heir Hengist, headed into Upper Scandinavia to look for friends. Despite their insistence on bachelorhood, they managed to bring new lands under their sway. It did not escape notice that the local pirates kept their boats away while the Angles' fleet was filled with warriors.

Asding Vandals - *Societas Imperii*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Godegisel, Rex Vandalorum

Diplomacy: Rugians (A)

Wagons of grain arrived in Alba Iulia from across the Danube, much to the joy of the people. More worrisome was the arrival of thousands of Rugians at the frontier (see *Rugians*).

Burgundians

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Gunther, Rex Burgundorum

Diplomacy:

Several gold *solidii* can have an amazing impact north of the Rhine. Thus it was that these and silver *miliarenses* brought down Gundioc - after a fashion.

A rumor spread over the winter that the loss to the smaller Roman force the previous year was preordained, that opposition to the Emperor was futile, and that Gundioc and his anti-Latin policies would have to go. This gained traction among many veterans as they discussed "men's things" over sour beer in smokey hovels.

Matters came to a head one February 14, as Gundioc was ambushed on his way to the outhouse by several well-armed lads. But the king of a barbarian land did not get that position through Socratic dialog, and dispatched the brigands, though it was a near-run thing. He managed to beat out of one of them that his little brother, the Crown Prince, had paid for the deed. Aware of the general growing unrest, he saddled up with a few retainers and went on a "visit" to the Suevi court.

What most people did not realize was that Gunther was extremely upset that the plans for the next crossing of the Rhine did not include him. Without a chance to prove himself in battle, how could he gain the respect of the clan leaders? Gundioc would have had him stay at home, with the women, and organize peasant labor projects. Bah! The new king had the Roman-paid troublemakers rounded up and executed, then set about organizing the spring expedition into Germania I. The mutinous troops were swayed by the young king's arguments that he was giving them a chance to retrieve their lost honor by leading another invasion, and eagerly switched goals without a thought for their previous demands. Observers in Trier sighed at this traditional barbarian behavior, but could do little except make preparations.

When Gunther's fellow royals from the Alamanni and the Franks arrived at Worms, they did not bat an eyelash at the change in leadership or its manner. Such things were traditional, and he was lauded for his energy and courage. When spring came, the army packed up and marched south (see the *Alamanni*).

Classical Pagan Oracles

(Classical Pagan Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Sibyl

Diplomacy:

In their small numbers, worshippers continued to attend the temples of Jupiter and Minerva.

Eire Kingdom of the Scots

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

High King Donald I

Diplomacy:

After their raid on Aquitania, the Scots began to wonder where else the empire might be ready for revolt.

Franks

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Clodius, Rex

Diplomacy: Westphalia (F)

Prince Merovech paid a visit to the Westphalians, to urge them to join him in the glorious march into Gaul. After a few days in their lodges he noted their rude appointments, and boredom with his comments. The following day, he began to talk up the rich lands seen in the last Frankish journey across the Rhine, the fat cows, the fine fabrics, and the silver. This got their attention, and within a few weeks he had convinced their king to swear fealty to Clodius and send his men to join the Frankish army. Together they marched to meet up with the rest of the barbarian forces.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the ferocious Frankish warband was lead into Alsace to meet up with their brother Germans (see *Alamanni*).

Frisians

(Arian Church Barbarian Open Empire)

King Durc Wolfsen

Diplomacy:

Hengist was not worried, though most men would have been at least concerned. After finding himself a captive of the Frisians after the battle of the IJssel (see Turn 1 newsfax), and the obligatory abuse at the hands of his captors, life had taken an unusual turn. And he had Bishop Cethegus of the Arian Church to thank.

After being chained up in front of the Frisian royal stables for a week, he saw Cethegus urge King Durc treat his prisoner in a manner more fitting to his station. While not close enough to hear him, he saw the bishop gesturing slowly with his hands, first pointing to the sky, then to Durc, then shaking his head. Before the next watch Hengist found himself behind the wooden "castle" of the Frisian king being cleaned up, his wounds cleaned, and a fresh tunic and pants laid out for him.

Over the next two years many things changed in his life. The captive learned that his son and heir, Aesc, had not even inquired as to a ransom, and was now ruling as king. Hengist was not angry, as any barbarian warleader would hope his child would grow to be as ruthless and powerful as possible. But neither was he as happy as he might have hoped, and a creeping sense of bitterness came to him as he thought of home. Had he not provided for the tribe? What was missing? Certainly the Romans had not come to his aid.

So many questions, but with the good Bishop Cethegus on hand to listen and provide thoughtful answers, Hengist the prisoner slowly became Hengist the convert. It helped that the court had also come under the sway of the worshippers of what the Saxon used to call "the Dead God," with some few even wearing crosses of various sorts stitched onto belts, or as simple jewelry.

By now Hengist was no longer interested in escaping - he was more intrigued by the thought of retaking his kingdom at the head of a Frisian army. For his part, Durc was eager to do this, though negotiating the details was not easy for either of them, accustomed as they were to settling disputes quickly. Here again Cethegus showed the way, and the Saxon was willing to at least nominally acknowledge the suzerainty of the Frisian king, provided some sort of marriage alliance was involved.

And so it was that when the last winter storm had passed in the spring of 407 a great Frisian army headed up the coast towards the lands of the Saxons. Through various channels Aesc was aware of his father's imminent return, and gathered the warriors together to resist the Frisians. After a few months the two armies met near Bremen, as the Saxons had had to quick march from Lausatia, where he had just convinced the locals to join the Saxon cause. With 2000 more warriors at his back he felt ready to face his father and settle the matter of succession.

The two armies camped about a mile apart, Frisian warriors preparing for whatever the morrow might hold. So it was with some surprise that dawn saw a small party approach King Durc from the Saxon side. Yet more amazement grew when the rider in the center proved to be Aesc himself, unarmed and bound. As it happens, agents of the Arian Christians had been working among the nobles to undermine what little authority the young prince held. By the time the army had reached the invaders, the clan leadership had decided that it would be better to have Hengist and peace.

Lombard Kingdom - *Societas Imperii*

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Autharii, Rex Lombardorum

Diplomacy:

The wagons moved north from Castra Regina, and Seniachus was relieved he was not the Roman official in charge of sorting out that mess. Since moving to live with his Lombard wife, he had enjoyed the slower pace of work, more pleasant people, and fewer poisonings that went with barbarian life.

Moving along a small stream, the peaceful summer scene cracked open with the sudden sound of running horses from upslope. Stunned, the guard grabbed at their spears, but it was too late, and most were run through by what looked like Roman lancers. Only the word "no" ran through his head as Seniachus dived into the back of the wagon carrying most of the *solidii* intended for the Lombard king. He could hear the sounds of death outside the canvas, and drew a long knife, though he knew the odds were poor.

A face appeared at the back of the wagon, an *equite*, and quickly ducked away. Seniachus heard low talking, then the sounds of several men walking around his wagon. He briefly looked heavenward, seeking the Peace of Christ in what would be his last moments, then fingered the stone medallion of Wotan around his neck. Many soldiers burst into the wagon, grabbing at his arms. No great fighter, he only managed to nick one of them on the forearm before he was subdued. The soldiers tied him to a tree, then drove the wagons back down the road he had travelled, back to Castra Regina. A party of Suevi nobles hunting along the stream found him alive the next day.

Pictish Tribes

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Talorg Mac Aniel, King of the Cruithni

Diplomacy:

Following their rough handling by the Romans, the Picts turned their attention to internal matters. Which is to say that the women who had lost husbands, brothers, and sons a few years past were not about to tolerate any more such suicidal tomfoolery, and told the king as much on many occasions.

Quadi Clans - *Tributary of the Hun Empire*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

King Vitalianus

Diplomacy:

The Germans agreed to serve the Hun - for now (see *Empire of the Huns*).

Roman Christian Church

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Innocent, Bishop of Rome

Diplomacy: Tuscia (CH), Alpes Cottiae (CH), Genua (AB), Lugdunensis I (AB), Maxima (CH), Alpes (CH), Sequanorum (CH), Samnium (CH), Lacetani (CH), Saguntina (CH), Astigitanus (CH), Baetica (CH), Gades (CH), Emeritanus (CH), Lusitania (CH), Scallabitanus (CH), Pannonia I (CH), Carnuntum (CH), Slovakia (CH), Carpathia (CH), Transylvania (CH), Banat (CH), Alfold (CH), Alba Iulia (CH), Savia (CH), Aquincum (AB), Raetia II (CH), Castra Regina (CH), Novum Populi (CH), Tolosa (CH), Burdigala (CH), Aquitania (CH), Lugdunensis III (CH), Portus Namnetum (CH), Lugdunensis II (CH), Coriallum (CH), Parisii (CH), Belgica I (CH), Britannia II (AB), Deva (CH), Londinium (AB), Gesoriacum (CH), Menapia (CH), Germania II (CH), Colonia Agrippina (CH), Trier (MN), Germania R. (CH), Argentorate (CH), Lorraine (CH)

Arbogast the Alamanni king did not wish to hear a message of peace, eternal life, and sacrifice, especially from a Roman slave (see *Alamanni*). Indeed, it was only due to the intercession of the Frankish Prince Merovech that Bishop Ninian was not crucified in a field in Gaul. He and his party were instead lashed to the sides of their wagon and sent packing. A few barbarians who followed claimed that the horses stopped after a time and chewed Ninian's fetters loose. Most of these continued on with the holy man and his aides.

Later, Irenaeus founded a church in Belgica I which proved quite popular among those few who had seen or heard of Ninian's "Miracle of the Draughthorses." It was one of many small churches founded all over the empire, and a few without.

The religious brothers Honoratus and Caprasius have built a monastery on the island of Lerins on the coast of Viennensis dedicated to religious scholarship. A few whispered that the real goal was to get away from the Germans.

Saxon Kingdom - *Societas Imperii*

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Hengist, Rex Saxonum

Diplomacy: Lausatia (F)

Aesc could only hope for help from Mediolanum (see *Frisians*). Whether he or Hengist will be acknowledged by the emperor is an open question across the Rhine (see *Saxon Kingdom of Holstein*).

Saxon Kingdom of Holstein - *Societas Imperii*

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Wig, Dux Holstein, regent for Aesc, Rex Saxonum

Diplomacy: Rugia (A)

Far from the Frisians, Wig of Holstein visited with various clans in Rugia and after several years of cajoling managed to convince them to join him - er, the Saxons. His marriage to Hengist's sister, Osburga, helped his stature in the negotiations.

Various disaffected nobles came to Wig and begged his help in getting Aesc out of his predicament. Wig listened to many sides, and finally agreed to stand up in defense of the young prince. Only his new friends in Holstein followed him willingly - his troops in Lausatia had to put down a revolt there, an easy task as all their warriors had left to join the Saxon army.

Siling Vandals

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Gaiseric, Rex

Diplomacy: Bochnia (F)

After Lenten mass one March morning, Gaiseric received a messenger he had dreaded. The man was not tall, with a swarthy face covered in scars, hair greased back, dressed in skins and furs, a bowcase and a sword on his hips. The Hun spoke a Gothic tongue with an accent which would have sounded more pleasing from another source. He bid the Vandal king allow passage to the Hunnic army. Today.

No threats were made, and none were necessary, as everyone was aware the Huns were moving south. The king considered his own force, the demands of the nomad khan, and decided within minutes to allow the passage. And he heard no chastisement at court, everyone understanding that the Huns were more of a natural disaster than a people. One attempts to survive them and get past the moment, honor not being an issue.

The king of Bochnia, Jalso, viewed the Hun army parading through his lands, and quickly decided that his own independence was worth as much as a spring midge. He agreed to turn his lands over to Gaiseric and live in the relative safety of the Vandal court. He and his new friend Flavia Hunneric decided that their further travel plans had been mooted by khan Uldin and his thousands, and instead rode west.

Suevi Kingdom

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Agnar

Diplomacy:

The arrival of "king" Gundioc of the Burgundians caused some consternation. Agnar, ever the

diligent man, made the refugee royal welcome at his court.

Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Flavius Honorius Augustus

Diplomacy: Roma (F), Alans (T), Dalmatia (EA), Damnonia (NT), Gallaecia (EA), Lemovicia (EA), Luniensis (T), Sardinia (T)

Gaudentius was appointed Praefectus Praetorio Galliarum, and spent much of 405 AD directing the construction of fortifications and moving various *milites*, *comitatensis*, *pseudo-comitatensis*, and others from province to province. By spring of 407 he was ready to move Aquitania back into the empire, and perhaps show up Flavius Stilicho. At the head of 2400 light archers and woodsmen, Gaudentius marched down the road from Condevicnum, across the bridge over the Liger, towards Limonum. Taking the local road to Vindobriga, they found a force of local militia deployed facing them just outside the town. Wearing tunics of various shades, the men stirred in their ranks, spears held at various ports, many men shieldless, and skirmishers consisting of youths with javelins, small bows, and slings.

Several centurions smirked, and Gaudentius confidently ordered his troops into formation and the Roman regulars advanced on the Aquitanians. When the two lines were about 40 paces apart, with arrows flying from Gaudentius's troops, a horn sounded from the town and the militia suddenly steadied their spears on the enemy. A low rumble reached the prefect's ears, and looking into the morning sun he saw scores of horses coming around Vindobriga's church and heading for his right flank. The riders were none too impressive looking, the charge not in any sort of order, but it was enough to cause the Romans to stop shooting at the militia, scores of whom now lay still in their ranks, and begin to run down the road.

The militia cheered as their nobles on horseback chased the regulars down the road tossing javelins at them or spearing them as they fled. The pursuit was not particularly effective, and Gaudentius' was allowed to flee to safety in Condevicnum. There he plotted his revenge, and once more marched down the road into Aquitania that October. This time he was met a few miles from the bridge at the border with what looked like a different force. Gone was the wavering in the ranks, and Gaudentius realized that his foe, the landowner Eumenes the Greek, clearly knew what he was about. In the taverna in Condevicnum the Roman had learned a little about his enemy - belatedly - and now had a greater appreciation of him.

Rather than await attack, the rebel force charged into the Roman archers and after a sharp conflict sent them running for the bridge to their rear. Most of them made it, but the Aquitanian horse blocked the flight of the enemy rearguard. These were cut down when the foot arrived on the scene, and only later was the body of Gaudentius found, having fallen just down the slope beside the bridge. And so Aquitania remained outside the empire, and yet more bad news from Gaul to reach the court at Mediolanum (see *Alamanni*).

Meanwhile, Bishop Timotheus, Comes Rerum Privatum, had completed the tedious task of ordering troops to change billets, and was at last headed north to Raetia II. On arriving in Castra Regina, he found a barbarian mob encamped outside the city. Fearing at first that the place was beleaguered, Timotheus quickly learned that these were Alan refugees fleeing the advancing Huns. The priest quickly shifted mental gears, and approached Shah Xerxes with a modified offer. After only a few days of negotiation the barbarian king agreed to become a *Civitate Foederatae* of the empire, with holdings in Raetia II, Castra Regina, and Austria. That last province was at most theoretical.

At a hastily-called meeting, the burghers of the city quickly fell to argument over their new status. The most persuasive arguments were those noting the withdrawal of the Roman garrison and the movements of the Hun army on their border. The city acceded, grudgingly, and the Alans had a new home. Xerxes was relieved to have solid walls around him that night. The previous evening he had discovered a man in his tent on returning from, well, um, anyway, somewhere. Fortunately several of his drinking friends entered the tent with him, and they managed to dispatch the fellow after a short fray. The assailant looked like a Goth or Alan, but the shah knew that the hand of Uldin was behind him.

Indeed, by then the Roman bureaucracy was getting used to setting up novel arrangements. Neither they nor the local magnates cared much for it, as a rule, especially in these days when barbarian armies were crossing the border seemingly at will. But enough local support was found for the idea of regional autonomy to make the emperor's will manifest. Some even preferred this approach to that of Arcadius, who seemed - in the view from Mediolanum - to simply be abandoning provinces to their own devices, a strategy much more popular with local landholders. Honorius thus created these *Civitates Foederatae* from extant imperial provinces: Damnonia, Dalmatia, Gallaecia, Lemovicia, Luniensis, and Sardinia.

The conversion of *comites* into *limitanei* continued. Most of the common *milites* were quite happy to be able to settle down and forego the expenses of maintaining the family farm at a distance, even with tax privileges. Senior staff were concerned about the loss of strategic flexibility, but the positive political aspects could not be ignored.

Finally, Roma herself was finally given an imperial governor after many years of semi-independence. This was however tempered by the Bishop of Roma raising many hundreds of soldiers from the more devout Germans and equipping them as a "Corps Helvetica" around the Patriarchal estate. They quickly became a popular attraction for visitors unused to seeing barbarians vested as *auxilia*, especial with such colorful tunics and armor.

Imperial Treaties as Read to the Senate

SOCIETAS IMPERII

We are happy to announce that every pact of Alliance between the Empire and the people of the Asding Vandals is now renewed thanks to the loyalty and boldness that they have always shown.

We besides decree that:

- The Empire shall help the economy of the Asding ally with 5 measures of Roman wheat every 4 years and, if needed, with Roman gold.
- The Imperial Army shall always get the help of the Asding warriors, in Its task of defending the peace and safeguarding the Imperial borders in the upper Danube area.
- New trade routes shall be opened, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Asding merchants.
- The ambassadors of the Asding 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 Godesigel, Rex Vandalorum, Socius Imperii.

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

SOCIETAS IMPERII

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

We besides decree that:

- The Empire shall help economically the Lombard ally with a donation of ten measures of gold every four years.
- The Imperial Army shall always get the help of the Lombard warriors, in Its task of defending the peace and safeguarding the Imperial borders.
- The Lombard ally shall always get the help of the Imperial Army in the defence of his own borders.
- New trade routes shall be opened as soon as this shall become possible, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Lombard merchants.
- The ambassadors of the Lombard people shall always have a place of honour at the holy presence of the Emperor.

-After eight years this treaty shall be revised, argued and updated by Us Honorius Augustus and both Our Saxon and Lombard allies.

-We Honorius Augustus renew Our fraternal friendship with the most eminent Autharii, Rex Langobardorum, Socius Imperii. This friendship shall be soon confirmed by a marriage between Our kinsfolk, that shall unite in the centuries Our bloods and Our destinies.

D N HONORIVS P F AVG DATA A D SEXTVM KALENDAS DECEMBRES CDIV
SOCIETAS IMPERII

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

We besides decree that:

-The Empire shall help economically the Saxon ally with a donation of fifteen measures of gold every four years.

-The Imperial Army shall always get the help of the Saxon warriors, in Its task of defending the peace and safeguarding the Imperial borders.

-The Saxon ally shall always get the help of the Imperial Army in the defence of his own borders.

-New trade routes shall be opened as soon as this shall become possible, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Saxon merchants.

-The ambassadors of the Saxon people shall always have a place of honour at the holy presence of the Emperor.

-After eight years this treaty shall be revised, argued and updated by Us Honorius Augustus and both Our Saxon and Lombard allies.

-We Honorius Augustus renew Our fraternal friendship with the most eminent Hengist, Rex Saxonum, Socius Imperii, and his son and heir Aesc. This friendship shall be soon confirmed by a marriage between Our kinsfolk, that shall unite in the centuries Our bloods and Our destinies.

D N HONORIVS P F AVG DATA A D SEXTVM KALENDAS DECEMBRES CDIV
FOEDERATIO IMPERII

MAVRORVM CIVITAS ET LIBERA ET FOEDERATA LEGIBVS SVIS VTITVR

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

-The Moors shall enjoy for ten years the right of Hospitalitas on the Zirid land, at the end of which it shall decade and, if the Moors won't leave Zirid before, all the people of Moorish descent who shall recognize Tariq Al-Kasurga as their Rex and Honorius Augustus as their Imperator shall acquire the Roman citizenship.

-No violence shall be perpetrated against those who still follow 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 pagans are majority, still every pagan shall be free to keep his own faith.

-New trade routes shall be opened, and privileged relations shall be reserved for the Moorish merchants.

-The Rex Maurorum shall have also the title of Vicarius Imperii and his person shall represent the August Emperor in Zirid.

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

Dalmatia - Civitate Foederatae

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Dux Dalmatia

Diplomacy:

Consists of Dalmatia (HM), Narona, Illyria, and Saloniae.

Damnonia - Civitate Foederatae

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Dux Damnonia

Diplomacy:

Consists of Britannia I (HM), Isca, Dyffed, and Gwynned.

Gallaecia - *Civitate Foederatae*

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Dux Gallaecia

Diplomacy:

Consists of Lucensis (HM), Brigantium, and Cantabria.

Lemovicia - *Civitate Foederatae*

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Dux Lemovicia

Diplomacy:

Consists of Lemovicia (HM) and Arvernia.

Sardinia et Corsica - *Civitate Foederatae*

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Sardinia et Corsica Rex

Diplomacy:

Consists of Sardinia (HM) and Corsica.

North Africa

Donatist Christian Church

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Archbishop Emeritus

Diplomacy:

The Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, began to truly annoy the Donatists with his convincing and funny sermons and boundless energy. A team of assisting priests sent from Roma only served to accentuate the skills and spirit of the bishop, so scorned were they while berating the crowds at the market.

Not all were, however, annoyed or filled with scorn. The Donatist monastery in the city of Hippo Regius sent the head of the order, Celestius, to hear the man who had been baptized into their faith and yet now followed a catholic path. During the whole of Lent Celestius let an acolyte perform the communion in their spare white chapel while he took notes in the back of Augustine's church. Celestius wore a colorful (to a Donatist) hooded cloak so as not to be identified.

But on Palm Sunday of 405 AD, Celestius was stopped by the armed ushers as he went to leave the chapel, and brought forward. To alarmed to protest, he was introduced to Augustine, and the two walked in the garden courtyard. They parted amicably, and over the course of the summer Celestius moved his brothers in a new direction.

The less reactionary of them welcomed the changes, and a chance to reunite the Church of Christ. Others were dubious, and when on Christmas Eve Celestius declared the order would go over to the Roman Church, there was a general uproar. The city militia had been warned, and the grounds of the monastery were quickly full of soldiers, whose ancient duty to the empire trumped whatever qualms of faith may have troubled them.

Over the next years, the monastic grounds saw great construction, funded in part by the sale of the much smaller (and less fashionable) Roman Church order property across town. Catholic brothers soon took up residence, and a great new hall was built, the new Cathedral of All Saints, in deference to the Donatist focus on martyrs. Remaining Donatists grumbled, and Roman priests were occasionally pelted with garbage at night, but the change seemed permanent.

Moorish Kingdom - *Foederatio Imperii*

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheik Abdul al-Kasurga

Diplomacy: Idjil (EA), Zirid (EA)

Kopaka of Idjil raided into Arguin, only to find the locals to be more ferocious than anticipated. After only a few months Kopaka and his men were chased out, and he was only too happy to hear al-Kasurga's message of increased authority for the Sheik. The Arguin tribes may hold a grudge, after all. Not every noble in the realm was so happy at their loss of independence, but restrained themselves for now.

Tariq was dismayed however when his favorite concubine did not emerge from the "women's chamber" after some hours. Finally, the elder midwife brought the news that the child, a girl, and the mother were both dead.

His younger brother and heir, Prince Abdul Al-Kasurga the Handsome, spent the years in administrative duties. As his office was just off the harem, he was not sad to miss the adventures of his brother. And in fact a son was born to him during the late winter rains of 408.

Abdul was especially happy about this birth, as the sheik had passed away on the morning of January 23rd. Tariq had never quite recovered from the death of his favorite, finally succumbing to a cough at the advanced age of 45.

Eastern Europe

Arian Christian Church

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Vinitharius, Pontifex ipseque Primas Gothicus et Germanicus

Diplomacy: Heraclea (CH), Macedon (CH), Attica (CH), Athenai (CH), Massilia (CH), Lingonia (CH), Parisii (CH), Lutetia (CH), Germania Rauracensis (CH), Argentorate (CH), Colonia Agrippina (CH)

Vinitharius was pleased with the outcome of his machinations in the Low Countries (see *Frisians*). Events generally seemed to be favoring the Church, with the sole exception of the Visigothic incorporation into the Eastern Empire. Good news even arrived from the barbarian isle in Ocean, where in many cases the Aquitanian captives had begun to convert their husbands and families to the True Faith.

Empire of the Huns

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Uldin the Hun, Khakhan

Diplomacy: Levedia (F), Quadi (NT)

Having subdued the Slavs, Uldin cast his gaze at those peoples who had escaped Hunnic control in previous generations. The Alans in particular had fled to the west several decades earlier, and the Khakhan desired to have all such people bow before him.

Of course, Xerxes the Alan was perfectly aware of Hunnic predilections, and had noted with alarm the fall of the Slavic peoples. Thus in the spring of 405 thousands of barbarians approached the Danube at Castra Regina. The garrison commander, Dagalaif the Goth, marshalled his forces on the recently-thawed shore and prepared for the worse. News from Trier had just arrived (see *Alamanni*) and he knew that repelling barbarian invaders was on the menu of late.

Shah Xerxes sent his brother, Arlon, in a boat with a token guard to meet with Dagalaif. The Alan pleaded for his people, infants to crones now crowding the waters edge for a better look at the proceedings, to cross over to escape the sure oppression of the Huns. The *comes* explained that he did not have the authority to allow such a move, and that he would need to send to Mediolanum for permission. Thus the Alans set up camp and nervously awaited reports of the Huns.

Nor were they wrong, for within the week Uldin and his army had crossed into Siling Vandal lands and were heading for Austria (see *Siling Vandals*). Shortly thereafter Dagalaif received his orders, and space was made just outside the city walls for the barbarian host. The crossing took several weeks, the nomads camping in the fields of one of the local magnates. The following year their status was adjusted as regards the empire (see *Western Roman Empire*).

Some of Uldin's younger *minghan* commanders urged they follow on into Roman territory to exact a price from the Alans. The khakhan did not get to be emperor by rash behavior, and after subduing the rather dour Austrians over the winter continued his procession into Slovakia and the lands of the Quadi. King Vitalianus knew that his father's fathers had ridden in the valleys of his realm, and would not abandon the land as the nomadic Alans.

Tales from the few refugees from Austria did not inspire confidence in his ability to resist the Huns. Some Goths at his court urged resistance to the last, each burning with some buried trauma. Others, however, told Vitalianus that Uldin and his army was but a strong wind. Bend to it, and after a short time the nomads would once more wander away. With these thoughts he received the embassy from Uldin. The hideous steppe people were entertained, given gifts, and invited to tour the valley the spring court inhabited. The Huns, in turn, promised gold, protection, and survival. Vitalianus thus agreed, grudgingly, to enter the Hun empire, and swore *anda* to Uldin.

In late 406 Uldin entered the valleys of Carpathia with his vast host, hoping to subdue yet another Germanic people, the Rugians. The snows came hard that year, and when he entered the region early the next spring the khakhan found only a few peasants (see *Rugians*).

Prince Balimber, meanwhile, was getting married to the Levedia princess Satsa. With this wedding her father's Gothic warriors joined the Hun army. Satsa was none too happy to be packed off with such a loathsome husband, but was relieved to find that he at least was a generous man.

Gepids - *Brothers of the Ostrogoths*

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

King Hellebich, Chief of the Gepids

Diplomacy:

Hellebich observed the chaos and change at the court of the Ostrogoths and just took another swig.

Orthodox Christian Church

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Patriarch John Chrysostom

Diplomacy: Europa (CH), Heraclea (AB), Tomi (CH), Novae (CH), Serdica (CH), Viminicum (CH), Thessaly (CH), Dyrrhacium (CH), Naissni (CH), Phrygia (CH), Ancyra (CH)

Travellers reported hundreds of priests in Arabia, most travelling from village to village preaching the Gospel of the Good News. It was also reported that in most cases the best news the peasants heard was the sound of sandals walking down the dusty main street out of town.

Several were gathered by al-Mundir, the local *strategos foederate*, and were on the verge of losing their manhood before the bishop convinced him they were not in fact foreign diplomats. Later on, they all laughed about it in al-Mundhir's dining hall, though the priests did not tarry to enjoy his further hospitality.

Church leaders were busy founding new congregations or strengthening existing ones all over the Balkans. While on such a mission, the Metropolitan Arsakios, rumored to be the successor to John, complained of tiredness one evening and was found dead the next morning, November 13 of 405. His attendant reported seeing a smile on his face, though others disputed this. The Patriarch was seen to weep when the news came to him, and a special mass was held in Arsakios' honor. The following January saw the death of Gregory, the Patriarch of Antioch, when he fell victim at 29 to a plague which quickly swept Ancyra.

Ostrogothic Kingdom

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ariaric II

Diplomacy: Rugians (C)

Prince Athanaric spent many, many moons at the Taifali court on the banks of the Danube. With time King Vallia came to see that the Ostrogoths may be a viable counter to the growing Hunnic threat. His father's fathers had fled before the nomads, and he saw no way now to maintain his people's total independence. Thus he was willing to allow his daughter Princess Tamora to wed Athanaric, but only nominally to enter under the Gothic tent. The situation was far too fluid for such commitments. Athanaric found Tamora to be quite the distraction - and perhaps a bit too smart for his liking.

The Taifali king was further disturbed at the restructuring by Ariaric of the traditional Gothic clan government. Now more power flowed to the king, and Vallia was suspicious of this change.

It did not help matters when Ariaric ordered his people on the march, only to learn after a few days of preparation that not only would the Vandals not allow passage, but that a Roman fleet patrolled the Danube denying crossing to nearly everyone. When a party arrived from Constantinople with chests full of *solidii*, the king gave up on ever trying to understand these southerners. He did however keep the gold.

Rugian Tribes - *Brothers of the Asding Vandals*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Nevitta

Diplomacy:

The young king had but one thought - run! When word of the oncoming wild boar that was the Hunnic army reached him, he decided at once that he could neither resist such a thing, nor would he serve it. Nevitta announced to his court his decision to move the people southward, and the uproar was great. Many said he had no honor. Others claimed they would fight Uldin singlehanded. And still others quietly slipped out the door of the wooden castle.

These last were the most dangerous because they were raising forces of warriors to depose the lad. Their mistake was, however, in attempting to recruit Prince Araharius, Nevitta's uncle, to the cause. Araharius played along for a few weeks, and invited the conspirators to a conclave at his hunting cabin. In the middle of the night the sodden nobles were hauled from the cabin by loyal warriors and killed like sheep. A few days later their heads decorated the entrance to Nevitta's castle. The people began loading their belongings into wagons, and gathering their herds for the march.

Driving his people south, Nevitta could but hope that the Asding Vandals would give him a favorable reception. Whenever he doubted, Araharius assured the king that life under the Huns would be worse.

Surprisingly, the Rugian mass was met at the river Tibiscus by the Vandalic king himself, Godegisel, rode out to embrace Nevitta and welcome him on to Alba Iulia. The Vandals had been looking for allies in the region, even aligning themselves loosely with distant Mediolanum, lest they become the grain ground between two millstones, as it were.

After some weeks of negotiation mediated by the Arian Patriarchate legate to the Rugians, Father David, a treaty was arranged and, amazingly for a barbarian conclave, signed. Nevitta agreed to wed the sister of Vandal Queen Heletradana, the young Princess Gotedala, and the Vandal Prince Gunderic would marry Nevitta's cousin, Princess Ursula.

Slavic Tribes

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

King Bole

Diplomacy:

Bole was relieved to see the eye of the Hun turn from the Slavs.

Taifali Tribes - *Brothers of the Ostrogoths*

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

King Vallia

Diplomacy:

Suspicious of the Ostrogoths, yet more afraid of Uldin, Vallia agreed to put his toe under the tent of the Goths (see *Ostrogoths*).



Eastern Roman Empire

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Arcadius, Imperator

Diplomacy: Vaspurakan (NT), Lazica (FA), Lycaonia (NT), Insulae (NT), Cappadocia (NT), Libya (NT), Moesia II (FA), Dacia (FA), Cilicia (FA), Isauria (FA)

After the latest message from the Shahanshah delivered by his ambassador - something about dogs - the emperor decided to sever relations with his neighbor to the east. The diplomats were sent packing, and various jugglers, dancers, and comic playwrights were hired to take their place. In addition to the lighter aspects, defenses all along the eastern *limes* were improved.

Arcadius decided to solve his Goth problem by hiring them on a more permanent basis. Athaulf was made a *magister officorum* and his warriors more fully equipped as legionaries. Some of the senior staff grumbled at this, but none too loudly as the emperor was known to be a bit insecure regarding dissent. In any event the Visigoths proved to be in such high demand throughout the region that giving them citizenship was viewed by a few observers as something of a coup as the barbarian force marched in review before the emperor in Constantinople.

As was his brother emperor in Mediolanum, Arcadius set about a reorganization of his empire. Rather than creating large "sub-kingdoms" he simply granted more regional autonomy to existing imperial provinces. Given his penchant for control, this move confused some lords, though others noted that most of the places were of little value anyway.

Palmyra was not one of these. King George of Palmyra was thrown from a horse during a race and died, whereupon the local sheikhs decided that his heir had the right idea, to follow the trend in the empire, and leave it entirely. Arcadius was not entirely happy about this.

Middle East

Ghassanid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King John the Fair

Diplomacy:

Having liberated his nation, John took a wife and set about rebuilding his nation. His first wife, from among the Bedu, died in childbirth, but after a dispensation from the Bishop of Petra John was able to remarry, this time his cousin, Serena. Not only did she provide him with a son, Serena gave him twins, showing once again the special place this king held in both the temporal and spiritual worlds.

Kingdom of Yemen

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

King Ishmael ibn Yahsub

Diplomacy: Asir (EA)

The land of Yemen was quiet. Prince Adam managed to sire a number of children, all of whom lost mothers in their infancy.

Lakhmid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheikh Amr al-Qays

Diplomacy: Jabbal Shammar (NT), As'Summan (AW)

At dawn two weeks after Easter, al-Qays stood on a rocky outcropping of a crater just above camp. The sun was making its usual threat to come over the eastern horizon but the sheikh was not concerned this time of the year. It had been many years since he had been in the deep desert and his boyhood skills at reading the breeze, seeing through the sands, and smelling the stones returned to him rapidly. Guides provided by the kind Sheikh of Jabal Shammar had decided to stay a bit longer with the Lakhmid army, the boys treating this as something of an adventure.

The line of troops over a mile off was easy to see through the crystalline air. Negotiations with the Sheikh of As'Summan had not gone well. The tall thin man had asked for far more gold than Amr al-Qays had ever seen - perhaps more than rested in vaults in Ctesiphon itself. The eyes of the nobleman were a bit too open, the speech a bit too quick, for Amr to believe further discussions over spiced tea would prove useful.

Al-Qays nodded left, and a loincloth-clad boy ran off at once. A force of camelry was hidden in a *wadi* to the left of the enemy line. The Sheikh scrambled down the slope, vaulted into the saddle, and let his shield-bearer strap on his armor. Within minutes the Lakhmid army was advancing on the forces of As'Summan. When the two lines were less than 200 paces apart the concealed camel riders came over a low dune at the edge of the *wadi*, prompting al-Qays to order a charge. Hit to front and flank, the local warriors cried out in alarm, and most threw down their arms and fled on the spot.

One of these was the local sheikh, who was given shelter at the ever-hospitable court of Jabal Shammar. Meanwhile many of his troops were captured by the Lakhmids and treated well as they were marched off to Sawad. Ironically, al-Qays was unable to pay many of the men he had marched across the breadth of Araby, and had to send them home, where they grumbled at their treatment.

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:

A ship flying the flag of the emperor at Constantinople came into port bearing several chests of *solidii* and a few rough-looking characters in charge of them. Tewodros' chamberlain signed for them, and the emperor was quite surprised at this largesse.

This helped offset many items of bad news. In Djibuti missionaries building a tiny church had been attacked by unknown persons and hacked to pieces. Then, as the campaign for Beja was getting underway, the imperial general Yostos began giving irrational commands. After hearing the general had ordered his men to carry their horse's grain so as to spare the creatures undue discomfort, the emperor removed him from command. The next day the man had to be forcibly restrained by imperial guards, and by that evening was catatonic. He was sent home, and never recovered.

The Axumite army continued on undelayed, and by June of 405 was pushing back the local scouts, though not without losses. Marching up the coastline, where most of the population lived, they were heading for the village of **Tokar**, a remarkably well-watered place some miles inland. The elephants were beginning to show signs of wear and needed a rest. In addition, small raiding parties had been harassing the Axumites from the Red Sea, boats sliding up on the beach, warriors pouring over the sides, slitting a few throats in camp, then retiring into the water. The men and animals were hoping for a respite. This remained just a hope.

Some miles south of Tokar the Blemmye army lay in wait. Tewodros saw a mixed formation of archers and light spearmen supported by some horse and camels, looking to be around half the size of his army. Tewodros ordered his line forward, his few elephants in the center supported by masses of archers and with light horse and skirmishers on the flanks. As the two armies closed, the Beja militia broke ranks and charged into the Axumite center, their king at the head, ready to avenge the outrage to his people. Within minutes hundreds of them were dead or wounded, the remainder fleeing back to the Beja line. The desert dwellers were disturbed at this, and the advance became a milling mob near where the Beja had fallen back.

At this point Tewodros ordered a charge along the line, and the two armies dissolved into vaguely organized ranks of warriors. The short, sharp clash saw the Blemmyes falling back, hundreds of men fallen on the sparsely grassed soil. The emperor was riding an elephant near the center, the better to see the fray, when suddenly his mount slumped under him as several of the few remaining Beja had got under the beast and were stabbing it with their short spears. He was thrown from the back of the animal, landing on the ground at the feet of a Blemmye noble wearing an older style Roman helmet. The man was clever enough to realize the value of Tewodros, so instead of slaying him kicked him into unconsciousness.

The emperor awoke in a tent. It was not his tent. It was not a tent of his army. The sinking feeling in his gut matched the throbbing pain in his head. King Satifal of the Blemmye sat on his left and chuckled, saying, "Welcome, guest."

Meanwhile, the Axumite army had seen their commander go down and his guard tried to retrieve him. It was too late, and the rest of the army was falling back despite the losses to the enemy force and their chaos. The captain of the guard, John, a distant cousin of Tewodros, took charge of the retirement and the army fell back to Adulis in Danakil. Yakob, the prince, became Regent and opened negotiations (in Greek) with the Blemmye for the return of the emperor. But on November 2 of 408 Yakob choked on a small fowl bone and died at the age of 32. The nation was in turmoil, but nobody thought to take advantage, and the imperial court took charge of matters of state.

Blemmye Tribes

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Satifal

Diplomacy:

Relieved to have something to do, Satifal welcomed the Axumites with sharpened arms (see *Axum* above).

Nobades Kingdom

(African Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

King Movad II

Diplomacy:

Movad II heard of the Axumite loss in Beja, laughed loudly, then stopped. Warfare in the region was serious business, and he called for his generals to review strategy.

Persia

Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Narses-Kartir, Mobedhan-mobed

Diplomacy: Asuristan (MN), Abadan (AB), Kirman (CH), Ray (CA), Ublra (CH)

The work of the dastur Namirog in Mosul was unappreciated, ignored, and widely scorned. Elsewhere converts were made on a small scale, and local agiaries went up in many places.

Kingdom of Persarmenia - Sasanian Persian Satrapy

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

King Mazdak, Satrap

Diplomacy:

The former prince, Mazdak, was a bit dubious about his new position among the Armenians, though his father had been a king. He knew well they were not the most welcoming of people (see *Sasanian Persian Empire*). As a fellow of breeding and ambition, he resolved to make the most of this boon.

Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

Yazdigerd I, Shahanshah of Persia

Diplomacy: Satrapy of Persarmenia (EA)

Yazdigerd, in his Wisdom, saw that Armenia, while an integral part of Iranian polity and culture, needed more local control. And so Mazdak, a distant relative of the shahanshah living in Van, was called to the court in Ctesiphon. There, before the Throne of Gold he knelt and was made king of Persian Armenia and Satrap of Persarmenia. While he had not sought this honor, the young man was no fool and smiled graciously at his lord. As he rode north at the head of his household *asvaran*, Mazdak had much time to consider a glorious future.

Prince Varhanin was busy in the seraglio, and a son was the result.

South Asia

Lambakanna Sinhala - A Kingdom of Chera

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

King Suravaritha

Diplomacy: Seylan (C), Kalyani (T)

Left without major duties, Suravaritha was able to enjoy life for the first time in years. In that vein, his wife, a Chera princess, provided a baby girl and the following year twin boys. In the next year, however, she succumbed during the birth of another child.

Buddhist Stupas

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Rugendra

Diplomacy:

Refugee monks from Central Asia filtered into Nepal with the support of their coreligionists (see *Nepal*).

Chera Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Gaman

Diplomacy: Lambakanna Sinhala (EA)

Lord Ichaa spent years touring the countryside, chatting up the local nobles. His message hit home, and the region decided to pay far less attention to the king of Lambakanna Sinhala.

Meanwhile, Gaman was busy reorganizing the government and the military. He often considered that his fellow king, Suravaritha, had the better deal, but that the pressure of empire forced him forward. His *kshatriya* and *brahmins* were not happy with the greater power held by Gaman, but most also saw the benefits. King Gaman was also unhappy when in the winter of 406 his wife, a Sri Lankan princess, died in childbirth, and moped about the palace for several years after.

Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Jatavarman

Diplomacy:

The mission of Lord Banabhatta to Kalyani was fairly successful. Allegiance to the central government in Lambakanna Sinhala seemed to be breaking down under pressure from competing foreign powers.

Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Chandra Gupta II, the Great

Diplomacy: Punjab (F), Edrosia (A), Pattala (A), Arakan (EA), Sabara (A), Maldives (EA)

The *maharaja* of all India continued his procession in the West, impressing all with his wisdom, demeanor, and of course large army. Similarly, his son Kamara Gupta won the allegiance of far Arakan to the empire. Also, the small fleet of general Babasaheb Ambedkar managed to avoid catastrophe just after setting sail for home, when his flagship bumped one of the other warships.

Chandra Gupta once more declared his support for other religions, while maintaining his status as head *kshatriya* in the Hindu order. He was seen, in Pattala, to pray with Jainists and Buddhists: something of a scandal, except for the emperor.

Overheard in a courtyard in Barbaricum ...

Two men, clearly merchants of the *vaisya* caste, clearly successful.

One older, perhaps a *jyesthaka*, one younger, perhaps his son?

A third man, neither local nor remarkable.

- The discussions go well then?

- Yes, very well. My sources report that in but a few short years more ships will be required, many more, and the Gupta pays well ... - But what will he pay for, that is the question we must answer.

- What has he always paid for?

- These are dangerous times, there is no room for assumptions. Get me answers. There are decisions to be made if the profits from the western venture are to be ours and not fill the coffers of Barygaza.

- And the risks? Are they worth it?

- There is always risk, captain, always. You know this, we know this, and the Gupta clearly know this.

- Why now? There is still much to be done closer to home.

- You would wait then? And what if others do not wait? Where will be then if we lag behind?

- And if we lead where none will follow?

- No need to lead, others have gone ahead, but when the tide turns the time to talk to the sailmaker is well past.

- And the *srenis*, they are united in this?

- Would I be here without their support?

- Get to it then, and we will meet again soon.

Valabhi in Surashtra

The roman stepped on to the dock with relief. Not a seaman he, but the Emperor's own legate. Around him the port bustled with activity, much of it repairs to damage that occurred when the city fell with the last of the Sakas. No matter, the garrison was firmly in control and what was clearly his reception committee awaited him. Best to get to it then.

The masons knew their trade, that was clear. Things were proceeding according to his wishes. Soon he would have a proper roman villa in the countryside, and a proper pallazzo close to, but blessedly upwind of, the harbor, at the center of what would soon be a city within a city housing many more of his countrymen.

Pataliputra in Maghada

- What do they call it again? The Red Sea? These Romans have odd names for things. No matter, are the reports promising?
- Yes lord, very much so. All is as you require.
- And the costs, they are within our means? We have not cast our gaze westward these few years past and would know what we do not yet know.
- All will be done lord. We will have allies to reach where yet we have no presence.

Hinduism

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Sahdev

Diplomacy:

Various *brahmins* debated the virtues of Sanskrit meters. After several years of this, the head of the order was observed not to rise for the evening meal, and had in fact passed away quietly while contemplating poetry. A short rhetorical struggle ensued before Sahdev took power into his hands - what little power there was.

Jain Sects

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Siddhasena, Acharya

Diplomacy:

Though few in number, the Jain continued to be respected throughout India.

Kingdom of Nepal - Gupta Tributary

(Buddhist Barbarian Component Nation)

King Biscotti Licchavi

Diplomacy: Dhera-Dun (A)

The latest Licchavi invited Buddhist priests, especially those fleeing persecution and massacre in White Hun lands, to move to Nepalese lands. Some few came and began preaching in Sikkim. Driven from there, they wandered into Bhutan, where the petty *samanta* embraced the message of *Sakyamuni* and immediately began ordering statues and temples to be raised by local workers. This led to a further fusion in the Gandharan style, and by 408 some few masons from Gupta lands had trekked up the valleys to see this renaissance.

On arriving once more in Lalitpur, the king was introduced to one of these travelling monks. This preferred no name, but with his white hair and sky-blue eyes he commanded attention regardless. When several weeks had passed, the old man made to depart, thanking the royal couple for their hospitality. Raising his gnarled staff, he suddenly struck Queen Pima in the navel with the tip. A bright light flashed and she was knocked back into the arms of one of her chambermaids, a close cousin, and passed out. Despite the guards and locked doors the old man had escaped.

In the spring of 406 Pima Licchavi gave birth to a healthy boy named Vis'vadeva, at which the maharaja gave many gifts at the temple of the Buddha. He then undertook a dangerous mission into the mountains to woo the people of Dhera-Dun. Biscotti met with success here as well.

Pallava Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

King Mahendravarma I

Diplomacy: Malabar (A)

Prince Nagaratnam began coughing over the winter, and before spring he had died. But life goes on, and King Kangavarman agreed to give his daughter, the Princess Kangavati, to be Mahendravarman's bride, thus drawing Malabar further into the Pallava fold. Vijayadurga grew to be an even more lucrative port.

Vakataka Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Prabhavati Gupta, Regent

Diplomacy:

The Regency continued, and the Vakataka were at peace with the world.

Rules Hint of the Turn

As your reward for reading this far in the newsfax here is a useful rules hint. The other goal is to let all of you know what the players who are also LOTE GMs know.

Using GP to aid actions

Throwing money at problems will, in LOTE, help you get things done, if not guarantee results. The basic formula is this:

$$\text{Bonus} = \text{square root}(GP) / 2$$

rounded up. Which is to say, the amount of benefit is the square root of the GP expended, divided then by 2 (two), where we always round up, e.g. 2.1 becomes 3.

Note that spending even 1 (one) GP - and you must spend at least that much to get a bonus - produces a +1 to your effort. Also keep in mind the behavior of the square root, which is to give a reduced benefit increase as you up the GP spent. A handy rule is that for every doubling in the GP spent you get only 41% more benefit.

Some examples:

- +1 comes from 1gp expended
- +2 comes from 5gp expended
- +3 comes from 17gp expended
- +9 comes from 256gp expended

The most common uses are diplomacy and intel. Spending money on combat is not going to have any effect - that is what AQRs are for.

