

## **Newsfax, Turn 3**

### **(start of 409 CE through the end of 412 CE)**

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

**Note:** At the bottom of the newsfax is a rules hint, usually a choice nugget right from the GMs rulebook.

What I listen to while processing the turn. It may explain a lot ...

- KUOM - [www.radiok.org](http://www.radiok.org)
- Frank Black - *eponymous*
- Cocteau Twins - *Treasure*
- Motorhead - *No Remorse*
- Mike Oldfield - *QE2*
- The Who - *Live at Leeds*
- The Sundays - *reading, writing and arithmetic*
- Bauhaus - *The Sky's Gone Out*
- Carl Orff: Antal Dorati & Royal Phil. Orch. - *Carmina Burana*
- Frank Zappa - *Apostrophe'*
- Frank Oz et al. - *The Muppet Show*
- Tony Scott - *Music for Zen Meditation*
- The Chemical Brothers - *Dig Your Own Hole*
- Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys - *Orange Blossom Special*
- Toxic Reasons - *Independence*
- The Seldom Scene - *Recorded Live at the Cellar Door*

*Generally eastward starting with ...*

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## **Central Asia**

### **Hephthalite Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Kiliciler*

Diplomacy: Maracanda (EA), Sogdiana (A), Turgay (EA to Balkash), Gurgan (FA), Turkmen (T)

The Hephthalites continued their program of oppressing Zoroastrians and Buddhists under their rule. While many complained about their priests being interrogated, beaten, and having building permits denied, most were happy to escape an outright pogrom.

Many peoples came under the sway of the Great Khan. Some joined willingly, as in Sogdiana, others indirectly, as the Turgay tribes, and yet more transferred from Persian rule (Turkmen). Some nobles grumbled about the nature of their "conquests" in these years, but times were good and nothing came of it. The Ilkhan Akhulili, who handled the negotiations over Turkmen, was seen at most of the parties in Ctesiphon for some months, working hard to overcome the natural antipathy between the Persians and those from the traditional source of evil, Turan.

What caused more annoyance was the foundation of a city, Dashovuz, among the subject farmers of Khwarzim. Kiliciler's heir Akhshunwaz had as much trouble keeping the shepherds and farmers out of the new city as he had keeping the nomads within the city.

## Steppe Shamanism

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Primate Religious Authority)

*Bulang Sechen, High Shaman*

Diplomacy:

The shamans were at something of a loss as to what to do with their new primacy. Their nomadic heritage was not strong in any tradition of organization except royalty and force.

## Kushan Empire

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*Kapisa II, Kidarite Shao*

Diplomacy: Gandhara (PT), Kapisi (UN)

Kapisa II spent many happy hours hunting snow leopards.

## Oghuz Turk Realm

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Sonqur*

Diplomacy: Nogai (A), Uze (EA), Kama Bulgar (UN), Chorasmia (NT)

The wind on this chill spring morning whipped the horsetail standard held next to Sonqur as he sat in the saddle on a low hill. Below him a ragged line of Saksiny peasants formed a darker line heading off to the east. A large village - or rather its corpse - smoked just downwind, and the breeze carried to the Khan the occasional sound of weeping and shuffling feet. He smiled, nodded to his shieldman, and headed off for the next village. Perhaps these worms who dig in the dirt would be good for something after all.

The Khan and his lackeys then rode off to the courts of several tribes and attempted to gain their allegiances. While the Kama Bulgar were still upset over the death of their beloved khan while Sonqur was his liege, others were more receptive. The realm's few scribes were rapidly overwhelmed keeping track of the growing and changing khanate, and in some cases just gave up entirely.

## Juan-Juan Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Anakai, Ilkhan and Regent for P'ulochen, Prince*

Diplomacy: Koshang (UN), Wusu (A)

When the khan of the city of Koshang was killed in his prime in a village fire just beyond the walls, the city leaders decided his pro-Mongol posture was not getting them enough concessions, and decided to leave the Juan-Juan federation. The kha-khan was not terribly concerned as he had ordered his capitol to be expanded to make up for the expected loss.

But even this wise ruler could not anticipate everything.

While visiting the tents of the Wusu, Sho-luen caught a sudden high fever. Before the sun set on the following autumn day, he was dead. An electric thrill went through the empire, and riders flew between winter camps from Lake Balkash to the Amur River. While the Wusu khan supported the

heir, P'ulochen, and drew closer to the Khanate, forces worked to spin the realm out of control. The first things to be lost were thousands of Chinese-style taxation records, and few mourned them.

After a few days, it became clear that nobody wanted to take charge of the situation. It was then that the 10-year-old aunt of the prince, Princess Hara, decided to act. Over-ruling the objections of the family, she sent messages to khans throughout the land urging they respect the great work of Sho-luen and stay the course.

Hara's plans worked, and by the spring thaw the Juan-Juan Khanate was once more functioning. Anakai, head of the newly-expanded bureaucracy and a man trained in Confucian principles in his youth, was named as Ilkhan and Regent for the young prince.

## **Eastern Mongolian Kingdom - *Juan-Juan Sub-Khanate***

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Khan Juchin*

Diplomacy:

After presenting the Khan with a beautiful baby daughter, the Khanum fell ill with a wasting disease that sapped all her strength. The baby spent most of her time with the wet nurse, as the mother lingered between life and death. A council of shamans sent one of their most promising younger members to make an astral journey and guide the woman back to life. But fate deemed otherwise, and on a stormy March night when the doctor and patient were alone in the sweating tent, guards ran off when "a light like the sun" came from the small yurt. In the morning the tent was found to be empty, the small floor covered with ash.

Juchin took this as an omen, and soon enough the late khanum's chambermaid gave birth to a healthy son, claimed by the khan as his own. Some were dubious over his interpretation of such an omen, but the results silenced his critics.

While his now-motherless children were in their minorities, the Khan named his brother, Temujin, as his heir.

## **Eastern Turkish Kingdom - *Juan-Juan Sub-Khanate***

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Khan Alptketin*

Diplomacy: Uigur (A), Ayaguz (T), Tamarin (A), Henryitin (F)

The death of the khanum in childbirth had little noticed effect on the khan, who immediately went travelling. His smooth tongue and excellent knowledge of local politics lead to many clans joining the sub-Khanate, especially appealing in these troubling times.

## **Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom of the Aza**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Khri'brin*

Diplomacy:

The khan rested from his exertions.

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# China

## Chinese Buddhism

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Lo-Wang

Diplomacy:

While Daoism made great strides, struggles over Mahayana text translations kept back the progress of Buddhism.

## Chinese Kingdom of Annam

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Ma Yueh*

Diplomacy: Chiao-Chieh (F), I-Chou (PT)

The city of I-Chou, its citizens a polyglot of Nan-Chao, Han, Pyu, Viets, and many others, found itself surrounded by the army of Ma Yueh. Permanent encampments, vigorous pickets, and well-placed entrenchments were rapidly built outside the thick walls of this important regional center.

After three moons had passed, and the rice stores began to run low, the lord of the city and the guild masters considered their options. On the one hand was the fact that they did not want to submit to anyone, period, such were the independent-minded folk trained from birth. There was the hope that the Emperor would bring this upstart king to heel and give them relief. This was so unlikely, and the pleasant offers of Ma Yueh so enticing, that the elders decided to allow the king through the gate, and bided their time.

To celebrate, the king took as his concubine one of the most famous of the city's courtesans, the mysterious and alluring Lady Cai. He took up residence in a hastily-vacated villa, and in a few years he had a new baby daughter to claim. While failing to really win over the Nan Chao - a hard task - some nobles in Southern China began to look upon Ma Yueh as a possible counter to the growing power of the northerners.

## Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master*

Diplomacy: Chiang Hsia (AB)

The efforts of many priests and tutors managed to convert Kwangsi and Lingnan entirely to Daoist concepts. At the other end of the range of effort, Master Li Chan oversaw the organization of an abbey in the city of Chiang Hsia. While the locals admired the years of effort on the part of the priest, only a few prominent local families took the Daoists seriously.

But in most of China, chaos ruled. The strong oppressed the weak, though here and there Ts'in loyalists yet held out against the growing private armies of the landed gentry. Yet, in Ghang'de province, finishing touches were being put on a complex of temples, dormitories, and classrooms called the **Temple of South Heng Shan**, on the shoulder of South Heng Shan mountain, a holy place. Pilgrims are already coming here, to learn, to worship at individual sites dedicated to each of the Eight Immortals, and to work.

Two such "pilgrims" were not entirely willing, and were little interested in their spiritual lives. Rather, they were thankful for their presence on this plane in any location. Tsu Ti, former Emperor of China (in name), and his best general, Liao Hua, found themselves with new haircuts and wardrobes at South Heng Shan. Strategy and scheming were directed towards painting walls, weeding, and latrine duties. Several hundred temple guards oversaw their work, and maintained general order in the compound.

## Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*K'ung Ti, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Taiping (F), Kiang'si (F), Chiang Hsia (F), Hupei (F), Hubei (F), Southern Sung (F)

A flood of missionaries travelled village-to-village throughout Szechwan, and due to their sheer youthful enthusiasm, the handy printed Daoist precepts with the tasteful red covers, and a local corruption scandal among the Buddhist priesthood, managed to convert large numbers of people to the Daoist path. The example of the emperor in sparing his enemies was well-received among the people, who chose to take it as a sign of wisdom and forbearance, and not a token of weakness and nepotism.

In the lands of the late Southern Ts'in dynasty, however, this act of mercy gave hope to rebels, and they turned away imperial emissaries demanding their fealty. K'ung Ti was forced to take the field with his host, to make an example of Taiping first of all. The motley militia there, mostly the private armies of local lords, conscripted or lured with the promise of an easy life tax-collecting, was no match for the 40,000 man imperial army. They fled before the vanguard was more than a dozen

- inside the province. The story was the same in Kiang'si and Hubei, and in less than three campaigning seasons the Southern Ts'in lands lay in the bronze claw of the Empire. This included wall-less Chiang Hsia, and each was colonized with a mixture of young farm families and pensioned veterans, mostly crossbowmen.

Hubei, however, was different. There the populace had been irked by the large garrison and its overbearing commander, and fought tenaciously. The end result was, of course, the same: another imperial victory and thousands of colonists.

Ma Ch'in received the Ts'in general Liu Weikang graciously in the capitol of the Southern Sung. The wagonloads of rice and chest of gold went far in making the welcome heartfelt. The putative emperor had already accepted the nominal claims of K'ung Ti, and in the course of negotiations with general Liu and his aides decided that the route of An Ti was not for him.

Sadly, one moon past the winter solstice of 412, Liu Weikang returned from a visit to a local Daoist refuge with a fever. Within a few weeks the pox had claimed him at the age of 38. Ma Ch'in was so moved by the passing of one who had become his friend that the Southern Sung pledged their swords to the Emperor, and peace was restored.

On returning to Chien-k'ang, the emperor finally agreed to receive the embassy of the Later Yen. As his chief minister, Pang Tong, put it, the "craven barbarians" came to beg forgiveness and to return the provinces of Shantung and Tsainan. The Yen ambassador averred that while the garrisons had been withdrawn, the people were too terrified by the might and ruthlessness of the Mu-jung clan, and refused to acknowledge any but their suzerainty. And as the first snows bleached the hilltops, the two nations were left in this rather awkward condition - not at peace, yet not at war.

## Khanate of the Hsiung'nu

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Bulinger, Khan of the Hsiung'nu*

Diplomacy: Wu Hai (F), Lang Shan (A), Ningsia (P)

The clan was worried about their leader. His life had sunk into one dissipation after another, and he had recently taken to building and painting tiny models of horses, a sure sign of illness. Three *enarees* were sent to perform a ritual purification, and Bulinger reluctantly agreed to see them.

Three days later they emerged from the khan's chambers reeking of burnt seeds and rubbed weeds. Bulinger himself then stumbled out, chin and tunic stained with the sacred *haoma* drink whose recipe was known to but a few in these degenerate days. The next morning he began to actually listen to reports from the frontiers, and within the month was receiving ambassadors and hearing cases from his subjects.

One of his first acts was to send a messenger professing the obeisance of his clan to the Toba, and sacks of silver were sent to them. This raised eyebrows, as the Hsiung'nu were not given to such things. What caused eyes to pop was the effort begun to farm in the Ordos, the traditional grazing lands of the clans. The khan managed to assuage most of the nobles, but noises about "going native" and "Sinicization" were often heard around the campfires after full dark had come.

Efforts to convince the Chinese of Wu Hai thus met with great success, while the nomads of Lang Shan were at most willing to use their *minghans* on behalf of the khan. The singular fact sparing the reputation of the khan was the promise of the province of Ningsia as reward for loyalty (see the *Toba Wei* below).

## Korean Kingdom of Koguryo

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Kwanggaet'o, the Great*

Diplomacy: Bandao (A), Silla (F)

Kwanggaet'o bent most of his efforts to winning friends, laying aside the sword for the moment. The Emishi, however, were written off, as a fleet raided their shipping. None was seen and the crews returned to port more than a bit disgruntled at having sailed about for years with no booty to show for it.

Worse yet was the reception in Bandao given Buddhists priest in their colorful robes. So badly-conceived was the missionary effort that the few Buddhists in the region stopped their public observations, and many were hounded out of their communities into neighboring provinces.

## Later Liang Kingdom

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Lu Kuang, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy:

There was little news from along the Silk Road, though persistent sightings of evil spirits in the sands east of Turfan kept credulous children alarmed and caravan masters amused.

## Later Ts'in Dynasty

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy:

Yao Hsing hoped for a respite from attacks by his more barbarian neighbors. This was not to be (see *Toba Wei*). The emperor was pleased that his cities held out against the crude barbarians, but knew that without food from somewhere his cause was doomed. His ambassadors throughout the Middle Kingdom pleaded with emperors, khans, and kings for aid, from armies to a few boats of rice.

Finally, the destitute Duke Bai of Houma passed from this plane on Christmas Day 412, just before lunch, a victim of consumption and famine. An itinerate Persian Christian by the name of Shapur was arrested by the Chang'an militia, accused of witchcraft, and after some weeks locked up in a keep was beheaded on the Tuesday before Lent.

## (Hou) Later Yen Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*Mu-jung Ch'uei, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Chi (F)

With a reaction similar to a princess finding she had stepped into a newly-fertilized rice field, Mu-jung Ch'uei decided to withdraw his garrisons from Tsainan and Shantung (see *Eastern Ts'in*). The emperor was not, however, happy at this challenge to his power, and ordered his armies to ravage the land before withdrawing.

More dangerous still was the announcement by the emperor that, if they were to rule Chinese the Mu-jung would need to abandon the faith of their parents and follow the Daoist path. Despite the inroads made by native culture within the clans, several traditionalist nobles were outraged. Thanks to the vigilance of Imperial Brother Mu-jung Shen-qu, a conspiracy was uncovered before it could be hatched. The gang of four traitors, lead by Imperial Uncle Mu-jung Bai'quo, were presented with evidence before the clan leader. Unlike the weak Ts'in, the Yen judgement lead to beheadings before the sun had set, and before the week was over the siblings and children of the conspirators had been hunted down and dealt with similarly.

As might be imagined, the citizens of Chi were both happy that their rulers accepted the enlightenment of the Daoist path, and anxiety when Bailao Qu Li, named "the Scythe" for his rapacious harvest in Tsainan and Shantung, appeared with his fleet and army around the city. His smooth tongue and imposing reputation convinced them that the future lay with the Yen. The silk-and-silver clad soldiers left several contrasting impressions on the city fathers, all of which pointed in the direction of obedience to the empire.

## ~~Southern Ts'in Empire~~

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*Tsu Ti, Former Emperor*

Diplomacy:

The imperial uncle has a new path (see *Daoism Temples* above).

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

(Daoist Civilized Component Nation)

*Ma Ch'in, Sung King*

Diplomacy:

Ma Ch'in drew close to the Empire (see *Eastern Ts'in*).

## Toba Wei Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Toba Kuei, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Shensi (P)

The Emperor felt good as he sat a horse a few *li* from the Great South Gate of Chang'an, capitol of ancient China. A low din could be heard over the charred suburbs of the city as thousands of his Han subjects entrenched at strategic locations, each work crew overseen by a whip-bearing nomad on horseback.

The journey here had been as fulfilling, the result of years of planning, attacks, and diplomacy. Houma, fallen a few years past, was in his grip, and Shensi, the enemy homeland had lain open to his troops, who were nonetheless under orders not to loot the rich towns and villages - at any rate not yet. The remnant Later Ts'in army had fled in boats and similar insignificant Chinese machines, running into the city and preparing for a siege. Toba Kuei chuckled. Let them hide, for without food they would be forced to surrender before two moons had come and gone. He was confident that cooler heads on the other side of this gate would accept his offer of leniency, allowing him the opportunity to reside in the Imperial Palace - or what was left of it after a century of invasion, civil war, and brutal intrigue.

Also, he had received the *anda* of the once-mighty Hsiung'nu, and an army under Prince Lai-Hsiang was busy securing Ningsia as the price of Bulinger's fealty (see *Hsiun'nu*). The bags of silver had summoned in Toba Kuei that same warm feeling he had when torching his first Han village many years ago.

That pleasant recollection faded over the next hundred days as the city had refused to yield. Sending the head of Shek Hsing, the Ts'in heir, over the walls on what his astrologers had deemed a propitious day had no effect. Neither did sending the head of his chief astrologer, but it made Kuei feel a bit better regardless. It appeared that the Later Ts'in fleet had been good for something after all, as by night small boatloads of rice and other supplies had been smuggled into the city from friendly downstream ports. Not much, but enough to keep the resistance alive. Enough to give them hope for aid from Chien-k'ang, Pienching, or any other capitol.

And indeed, as 412 drew to a close and a light layer of snow made the scarred walls of Chang'an appear yet taller, the emperor waited still for the message of surrender he wanted so much. Perhaps Tao Wu-ti had been right about the need for a naval blockade. Further, the Hsiung'nu had not bothered to actually send any of their own *minghans* to watch over the land of Ningsia, requiring Lai-Hsiang to sit there.

## Western Ts'in Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

*Mu-lien, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy:

Mu-lien, alarmed at events to the east, bestirred himself and began to arrange for the defense of his little empire.

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## South East Asia

### Cham Kingdom

(Hinduism Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Bhadravarman, the Great*

Diplomacy:

Unrest in Vijaya was put down quickly by the city garrison.

### Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Pendravarman*

Diplomacy:

Pendra passed his days in art and literature at court. This did little to prepare him for the unprovoked onslaught from the Khmer (see *Khmer Kingdom of Funan*) ...

### Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*Korn Danh II, the Great, King of the Mountain*

Diplomacy: Nakhon (T), Andaman Islands (A), Johor (A)

Residents of Oc Eo and Tacola were so annoyed with the swarms of *bhiksu* begging, and praising Vishnu loudly, that they drove them out of town. Local Hindus either left, or stopped their public worship, and the temples were left nearly empty.

Korn Danh and Saru, his bride, travelled to Nakhon and were entertained at the court of the king. Seeing the royal pair, he was convinced to willingly pay tribute - but no more, as a Funan spy had been discovered in the royal fishing boat. The "King of the Mountain" was naturally disconcerted, yet left Nakhon having made a friend. Or so he said. Regardless, Korn Danh was happy to get home, and happier still to have Saru present him with two daughters.

Similarly, the heir Norodom Huoth sailed to Tacola, and from there to the forbidding Andaman Islands. He was able to convince the clan chiefs to use their pirate fleet in the service of the famous king Korn Danh, and to lay off the booty for a bit. His mastery of the sea was becoming well-known, and the Mallacca pirates left Prince Huoth and his fleet alone. More friends were made in Johor, where the petty lords of coast pledged their men, elephants, and boats to the Khmer.

But while pleasantries were exchanged and babies held, elsewhere life was harsh. Lord Var Dhara, assisted by the Ligor king Gridha Sayee, Saha Yaduveer, and the Perak king Nghor Kheiu made ready the army for a grand expedition. The fleet of Gridha Sayee took up positions near the Mekong delta, turning back all shipping, or at least attempting to do so. Meanwhile, the main army marched through

farm, field, and jungle into Surin, while the Perak force moved up the coast to meet with them later in the campaign.

The elephants, maiden guard, spearmen, and sundry cavalry and light troops marched along the Mekong and crossed the frontier into the Chen-La homeland across from **Don Khong**. There they camped for a day in a clearing, some soldiers swimming with the dolphins near the island. This idyll was broken the following day by a scout's announcement that the Chen-La army was marching south and would be upon them by the following evening. Also, some of the men swimming further across the river and onto the vast island had not returned, frightening the remainder away from the apparently friendly dolphins.

Lord Var Dhara readied his troops, making sure the cloth padded armor was clean and strong, spears sharp, and elephant mahouts alert. True to reports the enemy appeared the next afternoon, appearing to be more than half the Khmer numbers, but in poorer order and dress. Anchoring his right flank on the river with shielded archers, Dhara put his elephants and spearmen in the center, most of his horse on the left, and a small reserve of maiden guard on horse and foot. The Chen-La force of around 10,000 advanced with a similar deployment, their leaders as with the Khmer on elephants thickly covered with archers.

The northerners inexplicably retired to make camp, and both sides spent a restless night. The heavy rain did not improve spirits, but the dawn was clear except for seasonal river mists. At sunrise the Chen-La force began to advance, and Yaduveer moved the center up to meet them. With a cheer the defenders charged into his line, spears and shields pushing, elephants seeking each other out as worthy opponents. The lines halted, then began a push and prod in the slightly cool morning air. A charge by the Funan horse on their left caused the Chen-La cavalry to rout back to regroup behind their own center, and the victorious cavalry paused to dress lines for a charge into the foot's exposed flank. Dhara smiled from his post on the right, expecting to sweep his enemy from the field. The sounds of blows struck mixed with cries of pain and joy, and punctuated with belows from the elephants created a pleasing harmony in his ears, the music of martial glory in creation.

Suddenly he heard noises from his right. Unseen in the mists, dozens of boats had slipped around the island and unloaded hundreds of enemy onto a few concealed riverbanks free of brush, and these were now pouring into the Khmer rear. Dhara sent his small force of maiden guard with their sharpened *ph'kaks* to hold them off and ordered a retreat. The scrum in the center, where the Khmer had been slowing pushing back the Chen-La foot, switched to a fighting retreat as now the invaders moved toward their rear. Saha Yaduveer's elephant went down in the fight, and his guard had to drag him away, leg broken in several places.

The Funan army limped home, only their superior horse keeping them from being chased down and defeated in detail. Lord Dhara smoldered like hot bronze, wanting only another chance at the vile northerners.

## **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: Malayu (NT)

Malangavarnam, his brother, the heir, and scores of other fishermen were suddenly killed in a storm at sea. The sole claimant to the throne was the infant son of the heir and a concubine. After a few weeks of heated discussion, the child's uncle Lord Sripanasan was named regent until the lad was of age. Just then, ships from Sabara appeared in the tiny port at Malayu. Discussion followed, and the local elders were soon convinced that entering the Gupta sphere had advantages, but not just yet.

## Pyu Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Kyanzittha*

Diplomacy:

The King and his Queen, the princess of Sagaing, spent a lot of time together, and as a result were blessed with several children. This good news contrasted with the war brewing between the Chen-La of Land and the Chen-La of Water. Kyanzittha read the reports, listened to the wealthiest merchants, and fretted a bit.

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## Japan



## Emishi Lords

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Ashitaka*

Diplomacy:

With the loss of so many, Ashitaka ordered Lady Moro to resettle her people in the ravaged landscape of Toyama. The remainder of the people marched across the mountains into Kwanto, where they rested before negotiating their passage home to Akita via Nigata. Sadly for them, the Yamato felt no need to rest, and were in no mood for forgiveness (see >*Yamato Japan*).

## Yamato Japan

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

*Nintoku, Kima of Wa*

Diplomacy: Kwanto (EA)

Many days of secret negotiations between Nintoku and the ambassador of King Kwanggaet'o lead to an agreement on lands, trade, and other matters. This contrasted strongly with the Kima's efforts to promote the Shinto faith, which only alienated a large number of citizens. Following on the heels of the death of Oda Nobunaga, known to the court as *Happy Flower*, who ironically was felled by the pox just as spring began, the heaping of misfortune was enough to make most men retire.

But Nintoku was not "most men." He ordered the liberation of Kwanto, fresh troops were raised, and Prince Ojin, Princess Jingu Koga, and Soga Tomomochi marched them across Aichi and up the coast. When the van sent back word that the Emishi horde was essentially milling about, Ojin ordered his men to encamp immediately. Jingu railed at this decision, accused him of cowardice and numerous other faults both personal and anatomical. Ojin waited for the outburst to subside, and at her first pause for breath quietly said, "We sharpen the sword, lady," then smiled.

The Emishi encampment sprawled on either side of the **Edo** near the shore. Smoke from evening meals rose to the sky, and the sounds of children at play and scolding mothers was faintly to be heard across the plain. Within minutes, shouts of alarm had arisen in the north as the Yamato conscript archers came into view, supported by the Miwa Guards. The barbarian archers began to muster to face them, and within half an hour men on each side were falling, shafts protruding from legs, arms, and chests. Witnessing this, the princess nodded from behind a line of bushes, and some 3000 *Uji* had their horses stand, mounted up, and on command trotted north.

Like a scythe through a rice field, the cavalry took the makeshift Emishi village completely by surprise. Hundreds of unprepared barbarians warriors fell in the first charge, while special squads were landed from the bay to fire the enemy boats pulled up on the shore. Defeat for the northerners was complete, and the bodies began to pile up one on another.

In the midst of this carnage, as the horse and foot pursued fleeing remnants with no place to run, Princess Koga ordered her *Otomi* to gather the women and children on the beach. Within a half hour some thousands of them huddled on the sand, some armed and defiant, most either busy with children or sobbing at their losses. As night fell, Ojin approached and ordered her to drive the barbarians into the sea so as not to dull their swords and spears further, or to waste arrows. The princess slowly shook her head. "No more," she quietly said. As he was about to reply, the heir noticed Jingu's hand on the hilt of her imported Chinese sword, her posture, and stopped in mid-syllable. He sighed, then nodded.

Thus it was that the Japanese gained thousands of slaves, including no small number of injured Emishi warriors. They were allowed to bury their dead, and lacking orders from the Kima of Wa continued to live in what remained of their now-charred village. The barbarian leadership managed to slip away in the night, but none feared them any longer.

Nobles in Kwanto, while thankful for the utter destruction of the barbarians, were not entirely enchanted with the Yamato, and rejoined the kingdom with some hesitation. And while he would rather have seen work continue on the tombs, Nintoku was pleased enough to see walls go up around his capitol. He had hoped to finance at least part of it through donations, but his call was rebuffed by several of the landed notables, who claimed that their taxes were, after all, voluntary donations. The kima prudently did not disagree with them in public.

And this from the society column:

*The princess' affairs of the heart worry her father, and crush the ego of all men who seek her hand. No barriers of class, breeding, or status exist for her suitors. But they are required to thrill her heart by physical prowess, be pretty boys and be better than her as a warrior and strategist, plus keep her interest with wit and culture. No winners yet.*

*Court musician Kazu comes up with some catchy tunes, plays a demon flute in jam sessions, and wonders where all the princesses are. He contemplates a tour of the mainland to gain some royal groupies. His head banging during performances causes wall repair firms and the paper industry of Aichi to bloom.*

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# Western Europe

## Alamanni

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Arbogast, Rex*

Diplomacy:

Jovinus the tribune felt sweaty despite the chill of the barbarian king's "court" at the village of Orolaunum. Arbogast seemed amenable to accepting a large number of *solidii* in exchange for quitting Gaul for Hispaniae, and the king's scribes were reading and signing nearly every piece of vellum placed on the table. Thus the atmosphere indoors was pleasing to one intent on getting these Germans to leave.

The world outside the cramped town hall, however, gave a different message. Yes, the bundled women and children were packing up wagons and handcarts, the men busily chopping wood to create more transportation, and the smiths working hard producing fittings. All of this activity told Jovinus that Belgica I, where his father had taught him to ride so many years past, would soon rejoin the empire.

And yet they smiled too much, these Germans. For a people contemplating a trek of a thousand miles the prospect did not only lack terror, it positively energized them. From what little he knew of barbarians the prospect of transhumanance might be enticing - especially to a land free of harsh winters - but the level of enchantment abroad was puzzling and alarming.

The tribune sighed. Soon enough they would be someone else's problem, he thought. With the last papers signed and the gold handed over, he saddled up and lead his small company of *equites* and attorneys back to Augustodunum.

The following day the horde began its long march south. Spring was barely more than a rumor, and the roads often muddy, but the Germans trudged on in their thousands. Arbogast and his guard rode on ahead, checking with the locals they could find - or more accurately chase down - as to which province they were in. When they were told that Parisii had been entered, the news spread quickly, and despite their burdens the barbarians cheered. For they are a tricky lot, these fair-haired brutes, and can split infinitives and parse sub-clauses with the best of them.

Prince Otto kept the wagons moving south, while the king ordered and lead raiding parties far and wide. Manor houses were sacked, churches pillaged and desecrated, women and children carried off, and villages burned. Cattle and sheep in the hundreds were herded to the always-moving line of wagons.

As the last German warrior left a wasted Parisii, the owners of those manor houses and their tenant farmers held many heated torchlit meetings. Roman officials were either co-opted, forced to flee, or in some cases stoned to death by angry mobs burned out from their homesteads. If the empire was their shield no longer, they would not hold up that shield with the strong arm of their taxes.

Their lust for loot and blood temporarily sated, the barbarians continued on through Cubia, Lemoviccia (where the local *Dux* tried to channel the Germans through the poorest lands), Lacetani, and Saguntina. Nearly every cart held at least one precious item wrested from some wealthy Gallo-Roman magnate, and nearly every wagon had at least one new cow, sheep, or goat tied to it. Thus only those few who had missed out on the action in Parisii, or youths with more time than sense, formed raiding

parties.

Crossing the Pyrenai Montes and other hardships focussed their minds on more practical matters. A hush of wonder overcame the thousands as they walked the beaches of Lacetani, felt the warm air and calm sea, and tasted the fruits of the trees. Many of the priests of Wotan took heart from this, claiming that the gods had delivered them living to a land superior by far to what worshippers of Christ would only see after death.

In 412 the horde entered Carthaginensis, attacked and subdued the place. Thousands of Germans settled on expropriated land, usually taking over manor houses and becoming instant lords. Given the rate of taxation under the emperor, many welcomed the change, and were relieved that the province would escape the now-legendary looting inflicted on Parisii. The king set aside customary practice and enfeoffed nobles personally, assigning lands with the aid of Roman scribes taken into his administration. Few dared question Arbogast's arrogation of power given the land of plenty - and land of light snows - into which they had been lead.

Corduba was rapidly surrounded, isolated, and its submission demanded. The mayor met with Arbogast, saw the thousands of well-armed barbarians, noted the minimal state of his city's defenses, swallowed, and invited the king to lunch. Corduba thus fell to the Alamanni, who were surprisingly well-behaved, this being the only Roman city most had been allowed to enter. Thus by Christmas of 412 the Ibero-Roman natives attended mass in the chapel of Corduba while Arbogast, Otto, and several men and women of the court looked on at the invitation of Bishop Paulinus. A few days later, he suffered through a pagan ceremony in a copse some miles from the city. The bishop knew that it was mainly up to him to ensure that nothing like the massacre of Goths in Constantinople hit Corduba - he knew who would be on the sharp edge of the sword.

So popular were these and other measures by Paulinus that entire clans submitted to baptism, and by the end of 412 nearly the whole of the migrated tribe recognized the supremacy of the Dead God. The royal clan was somewhat taken aback at this.

## **Kingdom of the Alans - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Xerxes, Shah*

Diplomacy:

Noting that the Huns were on the move, Xerxes was more than happy to accept submission to the emperor in Mediolanum.

## **Angles and Jutes**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Aethelred*

Diplomacy:

Aethelred decided to spend more time with his family ...

## **Asding Vandals - *Societas Imperii***

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Godegisel, Rex Vandalorum*

Diplomacy:

The piety of Godegisel, who is rumored to have once passed up the chance to kick a dog, set an

example for the Vandals to hew closer to the Arian Christian message. With this the royal family kept close to home, which resulted in a number of children enlivening the place. Queen Heletradana was especially surprised to be blessed with a son at her somewhat advanced age.

The young Gaiseric was made a prince on his 17th birthday, and received a choice sword of ancient Sarmatian make. Despite the general good cheer, the peasantry and warriors were restless, hearing the news from beyond the Danube. Most cared little for Honorius, and less for Huns in general, but knew they were missing out on loot and glory.

## **Burgundians**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gundioc, King of the Burgundians*

Diplomacy: Swabia (F)

Backchannels report that Gunther the Outcast decided to work for the Suevi as a chance at fame and glory - and he was a bit bored, all in all. He married a Suevi lady of the court, and she produced twin sons.

Gundioc the King decided that the party was over in the Western Roman Empire and that, for now, it was time to return home across the Rhine with what loot had been gathered. There was no resistance marching through Germania I, and many clans were resettled in the Alamanni's old home of Swabia by late in 409.

## **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:

Donald took up singing and dancing, at least partially to keep the female "immigrants" from Gaul entertained.

## **Franks**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Clodius, Rex*

Diplomacy: Belgica I (PT), Germania I (P)

The Alamanni ceded Belgica I to their Frankish brothers before trundling southward. Hearing rumblings of a major invasion on Roman soil in the east, Clodius and his son decided to try to break through back across the Rhine through Germania I. The warriors were mustered and trudged back to the Rhine. Unsurprisingly there was no resistance, even when the Franks, short on supplies, looted the last of the herds and grain in the province.

## Frisians

(Arian Church Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Jenze Wolfsen*

Diplomacy:

Durc ordered the squalid coastal village of Vlaardingen expanded into a center for trade and culture. It remains squalid, but is larger, which pleased the king. The various machinations of the king to increase his Saxon realm went well, further increasing the joy at court.

This was not, however, to last. Despite the best efforts of his doctors and priests, Durc fell victim to a minor epidemic of the pox on November 4 of 411. His achievements were not cast into the flames of revolt, however, and his younger brother Jenze was acclaimed king by the nobles. With the world south of the Rhine in turmoil, the Frisians and their Saxon brothers were in no mood for strife at home.

## Lombard Kingdom - *Societas Imperii*

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Autharii, Rex Lombardorum*

Diplomacy: Lausatia (P)

With the assistance of a thousands of Siling Vandals, under their Prince Hunneric, the Lombard heir Aistulf marched into Lausatia. Roman coins from the Frisians changed hands, and the two armies began to reduce the region to submission. Fear and anger over the betrayal of their lands fueled a widespread revolt. The rebel army was put down with substantial loss, a garrison installed, and the two princes marched back to the new city of Meissenburg to celebrate.

## Pictish Tribes

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Talorg Mac Aniel, King of the Cruithni*

Diplomacy:

On the day after Easter 409, the King of the Cruithni and a few of his clansmen rode up to Whithorn monastery. The sky was unusually clear, the air unseasonably warm, and he was in a fine mood. Nicol the Druid had informed him the omens were good and his cause was right, and so he had decided to close this Christian enclave. Allowing it to remain, the elders had informed him, had probably cursed his efforts against the Romans, acting as a weakening infection of the Cruithni.

So it was with some surprise that as he approached the somewhat run-down looking compound a small crowd of locals was milling about the entryway.

"What's all this, then?" cried Talorg to the mob as reined in. None dared speak up, so he nudged his bay horse forward slightly. A forest of farm tools instantly materialized over the shoulders of the people, some of them rather large lads, and they blocked his advance.

"Here, out of my way. This blight," as he gestured toward the encircling ditch and small wattle buildings, "must be cleared out."

A smallish young woman with long black hair, a baby on her back, and a small scythe in her hand, shouted back, "Blight? What do you know? These folk in here may be Romans, but they cured my baby's cough, made me this blade, and are good neighbors. We liked Ninian, right?" A low murmur of assent rose, but only barely, above the singing birds in the bushes downslope.

"Well, I, um ..." was the best retort Talorg had at hand. His handful of mounted men would have a tough time beating these locals into the mud, and in any case that was not the way the Pictish king

managed such things.

And with that the royal entourage turned about and rode off. The small crowd did not cheer, but instead grunted (though one man did grin slightly) and shuffled off to their chores. Some time later a priest showed his face in the chapel doorway. Ninian smiled, and the following day saddled his mule for the journey north.

As a final insult, Talorg's wife Lilyth died in childbirth, along with the baby.

## **Quadi Clans - *Tributary of the Hun Empire***

(Arian Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Vitalianus*

Diplomacy:

The Quadi received the request from Khan Uldin with some equanimity. While the prospect of loot was attractive, the fact that the Huns would be the real power irked many of the larger landowners. Vitalianus, however, was most acutely aware that the 70,000+ Huns and Goths would be marching through his villages, and a refusal to join in could, at the very least, lead to some "uncomfortable" discussions. The king thus mustered his warriors, though a full migration was not considered prudent, and his host marched westward (see *Empire of the Huns* below).

## **Roman Christian Church**

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Innocent, Bishop of Rome*

Diplomacy: Parisii (UN), Saguntina (UN), Lemovicia (AB), Neapolis (AB), Sardinia (CH), Balears (CH), Saguntina (UN), Carthago Nova (CH), Carpetani (CH), Emeritanus (AB), Emerita Augusta (CH), Histria (CH), Pannonia II (AB), Illyria (CH), Salonae (CH), Dalmatia (CH), Naronae (CH), Moesia I (CH), Viminium (CH), Savia (CH), Apulia (CH), Brundisium (AB), Lucania (AB), Sicilia (CH), Malta (AB), Carthago (MN), Aeduia (CH), Menapia (AB), Strathclyde (CH), Highlands (CH), Hebrides (CH), Orkneys (CH), Shetlands (CH), Agder (CH), Norway (CH), Halland (CH), Kopparborg (CH), Uppsala (CH), Smaland (CH), Tarraconensis (CH), Cluniensis (CH), Cantabria (CH), Lucensis (CH), Brigantium (CH), Leon (CH), Scallibatinus (AB)

Innocent considered the losses to the church along the Alamanni line of migration and sighed heavily. Ironically, he had hoped to evangelize among the Alamanni to help them understand their neighbors in Belgica I, yet could only find solace in the fact that this province at least was spared the barbarian's greedy rampage. Clearly the Lord was asking more of His Church. A time of testing was at hand, and the Bishop of Rome privately prayed that these were not in fact the End Times prophesied centuries before.

Yet more trials were to come (see the *Empire of the Huns*), when the faith of millions would be put to the test of fire and sword. At least in Britannia the church had held up (see *Pictish Tribes*), and Bishop Ninian allowed himself a small prideful feeling. This was offset by the record of Zosimus, who founded new abbeys and monasteries in Italiae, only to have them sacked when the barbarian host swept through. This prompted a short book by Zosimus, who detailed the suffering of the people, and described the Huns as "demons and devils" who drove their Gothic and Germanic lackeys on with whips and scourges to yet greater outrages against God and humanity. Most of the remainder of the work describes how schisms in the Church had led to Uldin as a punishment from the Almighty.

In a timely move, the Church formed the *Corps Helvetica*, so named by the German deacon, Renoldus, in charge of the new Holy Office of Churchland Security. His manners are a bit rustic, and his Latin is usually beyond vulgar, but as a retired centurian from the Rhine *limes* he was uniquely qualified for the post.

Missionary work in Lorraine and among the Alamanni converted tens of thousands in short order. Innocent was greatly pleased at this development, and resolved the Church would remain embodied in the people, as the Empire seemed to be failing it. Efforts in Africa to support Augustine met with rather less spectacular results: not surprising, given the longstanding power of the Donatists.

Too young, Bishop Sebastian died in September of 412, the victim of a cough which began when working in Legio among the old soldiers there. They were not receptive to having a new church, but his passing in Scallibatinus induced the founding of a great abbey, his remains placed under the chapel altar. Another Holy Person, Marcella, was caught on the roads outside of Aquileia and tortured by a band of Ostrogoths seeking the source of her obvious wealth. When they learned she had given nearly all of it away to the poor and the Church, some sneered, some paused, and one in frustration ran her through with his spear.

*The Bishop Meropius Pontius Paulinus of Nola continues to stand forth as an example to the wealthy Romans by his conversion to Christianity and an ascetic life. The former Governor of Campania has turned his back on worldly ways by venerating the tomb of the 3rd century martyr St Felix. The letters of Bishop Paulinus which celebrate the value of Christian friendship have caused a sensation throughout the Empire by drawing many citizens to study his example.*

## **Saxon Kingdom - *Societas Imperii*, Frisian Vassals**

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*Hengist, Rex Saxonum*

Diplomacy: Rugia (UN)

Prince Aesc paced in his small room. Though a prisoner, he was nonetheless the heir to the throne, and thus entitled to a bed, hunting trips, and other advantages. But Aesc was tired of his rebellion, tired of the endless stream of Arian priests yammering at him, and tired of his captivity. By the autumn of 409 he had been baptized and was travelling with Hengist to a meeting with Wig, his putative regent - and Hengist's brother-in-law.

Where the Este flows into the Elbe, a council was held in November. Wig, the Regent, was concerned for his own lands, as well as wishing to free his charge, Prince Aesc. A few days of negotiation is all it took to reunite the Saxons, lubricated as it was with beer and Roman wine. Wig was reasonably happy with the outcome, which assured that his infant sons would be assured the rank of prince in the newly-enlarged Saxon realm. The strenuous efforts behind the scenes of Osburga, concerned to keep her family and people united and strong, pushed the men together on many of the destabilizing issues.

Horst, the Warleader of Rugia, was disgusted with this new affront to what he considered honor, and renounced his allegiance. Others soon considered rebellion when a combined Lombard-Vandal army invaded Saxon (and thus Frisian) lands in Lausatia, while the Frisian king ordered all warriors to stay at home. This confusing move, combined with defeat the following year of Roman armies in Italiae, lead many to consider Christianity a faith weak in arms, if strong in other aspects.

Turbulence reached into the Saxon royal family itself once more. Osburga began suffering from a wasting illness early in 412, and by the 12th of May she was dead, leaving motherless her twin sons. Wig mourned a wife, Hengist a sister, and the tribe a leader.

## **~~Saxon Kingdom of Holstein - *Societas Imperii*~~**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Wig, Dux Holstein, regent for Aesc, Rex Saxonum*

Diplomacy:

The Regent for the True Saxon King, ally of the emperor in Mediolanum, was pleased when his wife Osburga, the sister of Hengist, presented Wig with twin sons. Such an omen from the gods, he thought, must be good. But the Romans had little time for their nominal ally, left twisting in the winds of barbarian and imperial politics (see *Saxon Kingdom*).

## **Siling Vandals**

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gaiseric, Rex*

Diplomacy:

The king oversaw the building of a new capitol, Hunneria, with much fanfare. Assistance was given to the Lombards (see *Lombard Kingdom*), though many warriors wondered why they marched down the Elbe instead of across the Alps to either aid - or loot - the Empire.

## **Suevi Kingdom**

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Agnar*

Diplomacy: Venetia (F), Pannonia I (P)

The Suevi planned to march into Pannonia I (see *Empire of the Huns* below) via a slightly different route from their homeland of Bohemia. Thus the peasants and their chattels were gathered for the long journey. After a few weeks on the trail, King Agnar called a meeting of his nobles and announced that the new lands would be apportioned by him alone, with the advice of the church and the consent of Uldin the Hun.

Many of the gathered lords were outraged. The "consent" of a Hun? A king deciding without their approval? Hrothvek the Fair quickly became the leader of this faction, and called Agnar to a duel. At first the king was reluctant. Victory may only drive the others to more subversive measures, and a loss would, well, best not to dwell on that. But the gleaming eyes and flushed faces of the assembled leadership fairly cried out for a rapid end to this strife. The king called for his swordbearer, and the men headed out the door into the chill spring air.

A space was cleared from before the dirty cloth pavillion, torches were lit, and arms checked. All agreed that this would not be the usual gang warfare, but individual combat. A *thiudans* himself in the past, Hrothvek was tall, with a curly yet well-trimmed beard of ginger-colored hair, and high cheekbones. Despite his long marriage to a distant cousin of Agnar, a suspicious number of children were ginger-haired. Despite rumors of his philandering, Hrothvek remained popular, hunted well, and owned many cattle.

Agnar, by contrast, was neither tall, fair, nor well-loved. He did have, however, a charismatic gleam to his eye, and despite the scattered grey locks in his beard was still the match of most men in the tribe. Agnar had won respect in his youth by single-handedly defeating three Roman frontier guards while falling back from a botched raid into the suburbs of Castra Regina.

Both men wore captured Roman cuirasses, helms in the Gothic style, and round shields gaily painted. Hrothvek carried a rather large ax, while the king used his favorite treasure, a longsword all the way from Persia, complete with a golden scabbard. The encircling crowd moved back excitedly as the two men walked to the center. Noblemen, and some women, hoped and feared for an epic combat, silver flashing as some bet on the outcome.

Agnar calmly paced forward, shield raised. Hrothvek shifted from foot to foot, moving his shield slowly about. The king continued forward and, gauging the moment took a last large leaning step and swung his blade in an up-then-down motion that some in the audience missed entirely, his gait timed to throw most of his weight behind the blow. Hrothvek's head flew a few feet and landed with a small thudding sound on the packed mud, and it was over.

The other putative rebels begged forgiveness, or fled into the dark woods never to be seen again. Clemency was granted by Agnar, a husband found for the new widow, and the tribe continued marching south after some delay. In this way are dynasties assured in these troubled times.

Within a moon a few Huns joined the thousands moving on through Austria to direct them along the best paths and watering places. The locals were not sure what to make of the moving mass, nor of their transfer from Alan overlordship to bondage to the Hun. Most continued to plow and herd, hoping the armed men would leave them alone. But the Suevi were destined to encamp in Austria until 409, when more Huns arrived with the signal to advance (see *Empire of the Huns* below).

## Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Flavius Honorius Augustus*

Diplomacy: Parisii (UN), Alans (EA), Africa (T), Numidia (T), Vettonia (UN), Cluniensis (UN), Tarraconensis (UN), Lacetani (UN), Tarraco (UN), Saguntina (UN), Zirid (C)

Timotheus, comes rerum privatum, had great success among the Alans. These barbarians feared and loathed the Huns, and sought yet greater protection under the leaves of the Roman tree, proving that the Latin way had appeal to at least some among the unlettered. To that end subsidies were sent to various Germans north of the Rhine.

In Gaul, however, reports of Alamannic depredations arrived every week, yet Honorius refused to send an army to deal with what he termed "heathen criminals" at court. In transferring garrison troops about the Gaul, Flavius Sarus, praefectus praetorio Galliarum, wrote of the anger and suffering in Parisii before the locals revolted. Coming behind the trail of the Germans, Olympius, Imperial quaestor, called for an investigation of the terms signed with the barbarians, and the hapless Jovinus was arrested and shipped off to Mediolanum in chains. His carriage was guarded lest the mob provide a more rude form of justice than Roman law. And Paulus, comes sacrarum largitionum and bishop of Genua, held special masses in Lacetani which, though spared the sword of the Germanic plague, was filled with plebes fearful for the future and their souls.

Galliae and Hispaniae were not the sole regions where lamentations could be heard. In the imperial court itself safety was at a premium. Olympius brought charges of treason against several members of the emperors entourage, Jovius and Constantine, on the basis of several letters from various agents from Constantinople and the testimony of one Priscus Claudian of Ravenna, the go-between. As the conspiracy unravelled, the two suspects were put to the question and under "extremities" revealed the names of a dozen more men and women. Within a month the lot of them had been either garroted, beaten to death, or beheaded, and many of their families were sold at the slave market along with their belongings. Several associates of Olympius ended up high bidder on appreciable lands had by them

for something like a long hymn, if not a song.

More substantial was evidence brought against Priscus Attalus, praefectus urbis Romae, and despite protestations he was also put to the question later in the year. While the evidence against him was unconvincing to many, Honorius approved the banishment of Attalus. And at last Priscus Claudian himself came to a bad end, found floating in the Ticinus, his body caught in thick reeds.

His remains were found as part of a sweep for other missing persons. Various obscure Theodosian family retainers had not been seen in some weeks. Then, on Maundy Thursday of 409, news came that a dozen men with swords and bows had attacked an outlying building in the Imperial compound in Mediolanum, had slain a number of officials, and then escaped under cover of a fire. An investigation revealed little, but it was noted that Honorius was never again seen without at least two Praetorians in the vicinity.

More unrest was caused in Africae, as imperial garrisons attempted to close several Donatist chapels and investigated their priests. Africa and Numidia saw sporadic revolts in the larger towns, and several tax collectors were run out and their records burned.

To save costs and build a warchest, Honorius stopped imperial subsidies for labor required to maintain a large fraction of the *via* crisscrossing the Empire, in particular those along the northern frontier. After substantial grousing, most places organized to perform maintenance in order to keep the flow of trade goods and produce into cities. But the burden was heavy, and local merchants and landowners were not sure how long they would be able to provide the coin and labor required.

But disturbing rumors from across the Danube and *limes* to the west were what kept Flavius Honorius Augustus awake late into the night. Various barbarian tribes were on the move, and the emperor ordered his magister militum, Stilicho, to come up with a plan for dealing with the coming storm. The Flavius quickly ordered men to mass in Aquileia for retraining to meet the threat from the north.

Gratianus, praefectus praetorio Italiae, was busily drilling troops in Aquileia when word came that the Huns and their minions had invested Carnuntum (see *Empire of the Huns*).

Once Mediolanum was invested by the Khakhan, many parts of the Empire bestirred themselves, spurred in part by the brutal march of the Alamanni unopposed into Hispaniae and stories brought by ship from Aquileia. A strip of provinces across northern Iberia then down the Mediterranean coast revolted outright, preferring to see to their own defense - and incidentally to avoid the imperial tax burden.

## **Dalmatia - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Fulvius Thalassius, Dux Dalmatia*

Diplomacy:

The heroic exploits of the Dalmatian comitatensis and milites was followed closely by their families (see *Empire of the Huns*).

## **Damnonia - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Dux Damnonia*

Diplomacy:

Grain sent by the rest of the empire helped to avert a crisis as several members of the Latin ruling

classes agitated for independence. The few citizens involved, mostly from one family, were rounded up, tried, and executed in Isca on the public pier under the authority of Thomas Lucillian, Dux Damnonia.

## **Gallaecia - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Carpus, Dux Gallaecia*

Diplomacy:

The moment seemed ripe, with the revolt of a swath of Iberiae, for Lucullus to declare himself Rex Gallaecia. With a few supporters he moved to purge the local comitatenses and milites of officers he knew would turn on him. Not all of Lucullus' staff supported his move, and two tribunes sent word to these commanders of the treason-in-progress. Lucullus was apprehended and with his cronies was put to the question to determine the extent of the conspiracy. After a week of interrogation, they were all strangled in the legionary camp, and Carpus, one of the two loyal officers, was named acting *dux*.

## **Lemovicia - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Appolonius, Dux Lemovicia*

Diplomacy:

News from Italiae spurred unrest among the landed classes, but the steadfastness of Appolonius, Dux Lemovicia, and a few small yet strategic deployments of comitatenses held them in check. His prudence in avoiding the Alamanni, and in restraining the locals from revolt, won plaudits among supporters and skeptics.

## **Sardinia et Corsica - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Hector, Dux Sardinia et Corsica*

Diplomacy:

In a now-familiar story, the *dux* attempted a coup, only to fail when word reached loyal officers. He was quickly executed and replaced with Hector, a prominent member of a local shipping family.

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# **North Africa**

## **Donatist Christian Church**

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Archbishop Emeritus*

Diplomacy:

The authority of the Emeritus continued to erode. This of course only made the faithful more zealous.

## **Moorish Kingdom**

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheik Abdul Al-Kasurga, Son of the Sirocco, Pathfinder of the Tribes*

Diplomacy: Zirid (UN), Senegal (PT), Arguin (PT), Songhai (HM)

Following the announcement that the Berber people would be migrating to the Land of Gold and Water, the Niger River, there was grumbling from top to bottom. Many saw this as just another

example of al-Kasurga's lust for power, an attempt to further centralize governance. Others were pleased at the thought of following the German example and conquering rich lands to the south, not to mention leaving the Roman sphere, with their churches, bureaucrats, and - worst of all - widespread literacy.

Opposition was fiercest in Zirid, where the Latinized nobility had no intention of leaving their family connections with Carthago and Roma, access to the amphitheater, and good wine. These revolted entirely at the thought of a long, dirty, and smelly trek into a dangerous and unknown land. A "praefect" was chosen from among the first family, and they petitioned Honorius to join the Western Roman Empire. While the paperwork was being filed, they were granted a client state status.

Al-Kasurga's general, Abarug, was already leading 10,000 men, plus another 1200 horse- and camel-mounted mercenaries from neighboring tribes, along the coastline. The king of Arguin, of course, interpreted this as an invasion bent on conquest, and mustered his 2500 warriors to oppose the Berbers. These were overwhelmed, defeated, and exterminated, with the loss of some camel scouts to an ambush. Thereafter, Abarug's advance continued unopposed until he reached Senegal.

King Zucholin was unimpressed with the Berber victory many leagues away, and gathered his warriors to keep out the alien invaders. At small loss the locals were crushed under hoof, heel, and pad, and Abarug's force continued on into Songhai. The Songhai king, Mansa, at first followed the method of his neighbors in dealing with the strangers, allowing merchants to sell them supplies and arranging for their direction down the Niger River.

His attitude changed when reports arrived that the northerners were raiding villages and carrying off people, food, and treasure. Warriors came to his palace from around the realm, and soon nearly 7000 armed men were gathered and hunting down the Berbers. The two armies soon faced each other along the banks of the Niger, each with an anchored flank and cavalry on the open wing. The Songhai charged almost immediately, lead by the yam fate-fate with their swords and shields covered by archery from the massed yam baka. Abarug sent a runner to his left, and soon his light horse were overwhelming the Songhai horse, though the king's guard cavalry held up well before going under. With their flank collapsed the remainder of the troops fell back to the thorn boma guarding their camp. Abarug then sent in his elite archers, who picked the defenders off the low ramparts, torched the boma, and charged into the panicked mass.

Songhai belonged to the Berbers, who began the long process of enslaving the people. A fraction of the Songhai managed to escape upstream, downstream, and across the Niger. Sudan and Jenne were so enraged at the behavior of al-Kasurga's men that they declared war on them, though they were not emboldened to actually take on the northerners. But the refugees were agitating for more serious action, and began to gather their resources, arm themselves, and prepare to free their friends, villagers, and lands. The name "Abarug" itself became a curse most foul, and Berbers began to appear in the local demonology, though not in a major way.

In the spring of 412 the sheik himself, at the head of his people and some troops, arrived. They immediately settled in the farmlands of the Songhai, often with the previous owners now reduced to working the land for their new masters. Al-Kasurga organized the founding of a new capitol city, Mopti, on the Niger. The Berber state on the Niger was looking permanent, stable, and prosperous on the straining backs of its newly-acquired workforce.

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# Eastern Europe

## Arian Christian Church

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Vandalarius, Pontifex ipseque Primas Gothicus et Germanicus*

Diplomacy: Parisii (UN), Pannonia I (UN), Venetia (MN), Holland (CH), Vlaardingen (CH), Achaia (CH), Korinthos (CH), Thessaly (CH), Thessalonica (CH), Europa (CH)

It was with no sense of irony that Vinitharius cursed the Alamanni when word came of their torching of churches in Parisii. But worse was to come in northern Italiae, when houses of worship were stripped of anything of value by Huns who "overcame" the objections of some Goth and German leaders, to say nothing of the outrage of Bishop Cameron as he saw congregations torn apart - literally, in some cases.

Pontifex Vinitharius travelled in the old Greek lands and cities, preaching the Gospel after the fashion of Arius. Overseeing the raising of an arch in the narthex of a small church in Europa, the pontifex was struck by a brick. Due to his advanced age (76) the internal bleeding could not be stopped, and he died in the second watch that night.

News of his death spread like a flood. Various members of the ecclesiastical flotsam and jetsam held congresses, wrote scathing memoranda, and generally vied for position. One of the most serious threats to unity was the issue of the Roman Empire. Several priests whose parishes had been subject to Gothic rapine agitated for a separate branch of the Arian Church for those under the authority of the emperor. The 412 Council of Carnuntum was a lively affair. Beyond the walls was a landscape ravaged by war, while citizens within enjoyed most of the benefits of the Empire, often shipped along the Danube.

By the end of the council, unity was assured once more, and the Bishop of Castra Regina, Vandalarius, was named Pontifex.

## Empire of the Huns

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Uldin the Hun, Khakhan*

Diplomacy:

Fast riders were sent from Uldin's tent to what seemed the Four Corners of the Earth. The Quadi, Suevi, Ostrogoths, and Gepids heard the news as a father hears that his wife has begun to give birth. Mercenary bands from the Caucasus to the Alps heard the news as a woman hears the cry of her newborn. And Mediolanum heard the news as a sleepy toddler hears the breath of a wolf.

Uldin looked across the Danube in May of 410 with satisfaction. Thousands of people from all across the Hun sphere of influence were taking myriad small boats across the water to the beachhead at Gerulata just downstream from Carnuntum. The Taifali had been sent across first, in a nearly unanimous effort to send these social outcasts into the teeth of the enemy. Many were surprised that the palisades were carried by these Goths, who dismounted from their horses to cross before dawn and storm the palisades.

A few days later, the khakhan was ahorse on the plain outside Carnuntum. Looking at the stone walls, he sighed. It had been his hope that the sack of 375 and the fire of 400 had reduced the city, but it looked quite strong. Sending out orders, he rode south at the head of the vast host, mainly to avoid the road dust. This meant that thousands of Goths had to eat his dust while columns of Huns guarded the

flanks, which was as he thought fitting. And of course the Gothic mercenaries, under their warleader Onoulph the Nine-Fingered, marched just to his left, Hun and Isaurian sell-swords to his right - the khakhan knew their loyalty was to him alone.

The advance was slowed by looting, which was expected, and a large number of fortified villas and towns. Avoiding Carnuntum and its walls had caused a number of towns to stiffen their resolve and hope for the main Roman army to save them. This hope was ill-placed, for the Stilicho had other priorities and the relief of such places as Ulmus, Solva, and Matucaium was really beneath his notice. Each was stormed and sacked by hundreds of grim-faced barbarians, who after carting off women, children, and treasure usually fired the place. Ahead of the barbarian host thousands of refugees clogged the roads to Aquileia, hoping for safety with the main Roman army. Many reached the city, but many were caught on the way by Hun outriders who usually shot them down and then gleaned from the corpses what they could.

Priests of the Arian Christian Church attempted, on several occasions talking Quadi or Suevi raiding parties out of pillaging hamlets or small churches. These successes were notable, sadly, because of their rarity, and these Germans were at least as enthusiastic as their Gothic and Hun comrades.

Those buildings which were not fired were taken over by the invaders for winter quarters. Hun patrols reached into Venetia and on the Feast of the Epiphany in 411 Uldin received his first report from Forum Iulii. As with most of these, he heard of the many walls, ditches, and palisades around nearly every place in the province, a level of fortification far beyond that experienced in Pannonia. While losses in 409 had been slight, the khakhan knew that now there was a large Roman army in the vicinity.

Thus it was that in the spring of 411 news was broadcast in the streets of Roma that 350,000 barbarians were descending upon Aquileia. Bad as the depredations of the Alamanni had been in the west, stories from Pannonia were just as frightening, and backed by the number of enemy and the exaggeration in the telling, rumor spread from Eburacum to Berenice making the name of Uldin known to millions.

With the spring flowers came something less pleasant, as Goths, Germans, and Huns crossed the Natiso River and began to rampage across the land. Their efforts continued for the entirety of April, and while yielding more silver and precious objects than had Pannonia was not making the troops feel wealthy. They knew that most of the richest people had secreted themselves away behind walls, and were difficult if not impossible to winkle out therefrom.

Judging the moment, Stilicho ordered his men to march out from Aquileia and drive the invaders from the empire. The legionaries cheered at the end of their long seclusion. Many had families outside the walls of the city, and were anxious to get at the Germans and others. Individual legions, supported by large numbers of *auxilia*, *equites sagitarii*, and artillery.

In the summer-long campaign that followed, both Uldin and Stilicho felt they had the upper hand. Uldin had numbers - in the form of his various subject peoples - and mobility - in the form of his tribal horse archers - on his side, and his commanders took full advantage in surprise attacks, raids, and encirclements. Stilicho saw the large effort Honorius had placed in fortifying Venetia against just such an eventuality, and took advantage of it as well, placing troops and especially artillery in some of the larger towns to sortie against the often shocked besiegers. As well, the Romans could as heartless as the barbarians, yet more efficient. June 14 saw a column of Roman horse work its way behind the Suevi "front" and into their camp. By the time night fell, thousands of elderly, women, and children had been either killed outright or carried off.

Another Roman coup came a few days later. The 1200-strong contingent of pseudo-comitatensis and similar from the Civitate Foederatae of Dalmatia lead by its *dux*, Fulvius Thalassius, was in charge of defending the crossroads at Patavium. Early in the morning, a hundred Goths and Germans came up the Via Annia to the Aquileia gate. They rode up to within bowshot, dismounted - though several appeared to more accurately fall off their horses - and lumbered forward in a wedge formation. Not staking out their mounts, these began to wander off to graze, another odd sight.

Correctly adducing the situation, Thalassius sent several centuries quick-marching off to other gates with detailed orders. He then appeared atop the gate with a small guard. When the Dalmatians were spotted, the barbarians immediately cheered cruelly, and fired with lust charged the closed wooden doors. Archers loosed arrows from along the curtain wall and parapets, and a few of the bearded foes fell back, clutching at leg or arm. Most ignored the shafts and bore on to the gate, striking it hard - and recoiling.

By then just over a hundred Dalmatian militia stood astride the road, blocking the retreat of the barbarians and holding their horses. At a signal from the *dux* they mounted the horses, and after some time spent controlling them (where possible ...) made a charge at the rear of the milling mass of Germans and Goths. Terror filled the foe at seeing their own steeds turned against them, and they fled left and right or were ridden down near the road.

By the time the soldiery were ready to sit for a splendidly laid out *prandium* supplied by a joyful citizenry, all the barbarians were either dead or captive thanks to the Dalmatian's dogged pursuit. As Thalassius had expected, most were now suffering hangovers or were unconscious. By evening it was learned that two of the captives were barbarian princes, the heirs to the Ostrogothic and Quadi thrones, Athanaric and Gabinius. As found in a report from the *dux* to Stilicho, it seems Gabinius had, at a Hun-lead staff meeting, chided Athanaric over the failure of the Goths before the town of Pagus Laebactum, costing them two warchiefs, Frithegern and Valamir and scores of men.

Some days later, the two men were drinking together and exchanging boasts.

Athanaric: "With a thousand men I could take any of these towns!"

Gabinius: "With a hundred men I could take any of these towns!"

Athanaric: "Lad, what is the next big walled place down this road? Look here!"

Roman serving boy: "Patavium, sir, birthplace of Livy."

Gabinius: "How many warriors has this Livy?" The boy stared back with a mixture of loathing and confusion. "Never mind," said the barbarian prince.

Athanaric: "We will take this place together, and compare how many of these Roman worms each of our 50 men slays."

Gabinius: "Hey, that was (urp) my idea!"

And the rest became history. These two were bound in iron chains and shipped off as guests of Stilicho in Aquileia, who shut them up in a cell - together.

By July it was clear that neither side had gained a victory. Exhausted by the effort and the heat a mutual truce took place, though neither side officially agreed to one. Unusually hot damp weather had sapped even the Romans of energy, while Hunnic and Gothic horses were blown after even a short charge. July and August mainly saw probes, ambushes, and some skirmishing while each side regrouped, assessed losses, and collected intelligence.

One useful report came from a Roman deserter whose family had been captured on his tiny estate near Bellunum. He "volunteered" that the imperial army would form up for battle on September 1, as Stilicho's advisors claimed it was an auspicious day under the old calendar. Uldin smiled, which his advisors recognized as the joy of a khakhan with a plan.

On the last morning of August, general Georgius, commander of the Armenian mercenaries, made an attack on the main Roman camp. His 2800 horse and foot were of course hopelessly outnumbered, but their careening progress through the poorly guarded camp gate, down the streets and out again irked the army commander, Flavius Heraclianus, *magister militum in praesenti*, and he ordered a full muster in pursuit. Thousands of *equites*, *auxilia*, and *sagitarii*, by now well-hardened by the rigors of campaigning, were formed and on the march within half an hour.

As the prince rode along the **Plavis River**, he noted the terrain was covered in brush and trees in many places to either side. Heraclianus was about to order *sagitarii* to probe along the flanks when cries of alarm arose from his force. Thousands of horse archers appeared to either side, and as well the Armenians were advancing on the head of his force. He ordered his men to form up, but it was far too late. The scattered centuries were ridden down, and within an hour the force was killed, captured, or (for a lucky few) fleeing. Heraclianus had his horse shot out from under him and was captured in a bog near the river.

Word of the debacle spread when routing troops reached the camp and other Roman camps. Generals attempted to organize a resistance, but this was only partially successful. Where they managed to make a stand, some legionaries and others were able to fall back into Aquileia. Stilicho was carried within the walls, two Hun arrows protruding from his left leg. The Dalmatian *dux* used the few triremes under his command to search the coastline for troops, and saved hundreds stranded on the beaches and swamps. During one of these extractions, his marine contingent was ambushed by Suevi warriors. He managed to defeat three barbarians before being wounded by a javelin in his shoulder. His Dalmatian guard managed to drag him back to his flagship, which had waited for him on the beach, the crew pouring arrows and ballista spears into the mob of Germans.

While the Huns themselves had finally closed off Aquileia some weeks after the victory on the Plavis, the remainder of the army gave itself over to ravaging the countryside. That is, most of the barbarians gave themselves over to looting, rapine, and burning. The Suevi were happy for other reasons, having decided to settle in the fertile plains of Venetia. They left Prince Korga, who married the dark-eyed daughter of a Roman patrician, and a small holding force as the great barbarian force picked up and moved up the old Roman Road into Aemilia.

It was during the autumn harvest when the first Hun riders appeared outside Verona. The city, long at peace, had of course heard the terrifying news of the loss at the Plavis but dared not think of what that meant. No barbarians were seen for the rest of September, but reports began to arrive from merchants and refugees that the countryside was fairly covered with German, Goths, and Huns carrying off everything (and everyone) of value and destroying the rest. By October it was learned the barbarians were settling in for the winter to enjoy their spoils of war. On All Saint's Day of 411, a small party of barbarians rode up to the city gate. As the city was unwalled, this was more after the manner of an customs office with a little tiled roof. Within a few minutes the mayor and a few important citizens, including the bishop, were engaged in heated discussions with Vitalianus, King of the Quadi.

The small party was soon quartered in the mayoral palace, and within a week had left with a wagon filled with precious objects, silks, and gold. Thus were the gentlemen of Verona able to spare their city a thorough sacking at the unwashed hands of Uldin's horde, buying them off with some of the city's most prized possessions. Meanwhile, thousands of refugees clogged the Via Flaminia and into Ravenna to escape the horrors in Aemilia, now a nearly vacant landscape of snow and blackened walls garrisoned by Ostrogothic warriors picking among the ruins.

Late in the spring of 412 the host, now laden with treasure and captives, took to the Via Aemilia, quickly overcame Pons Aureoli before the bridge could be taken down by the local militia, and arrived at Mediolanum herself. Taifali and Ostrogoths isolated the city while the remainder of the army made short work of the few fortified towns such as Novaria and Modicia. By this time reinforcements had been thrown into the city, so that with its walls and guards the capitol was strengthened against assault. Uldin rode around the city, the largest he had seen since his trip to Constantinople. The khakhan knew that to slay the beast he must behead it, and to this end ordered Germans to begin digging lines of circumvallations and his Huns to establish strong pickets all round the Roman capitol.

For his part Honorius prayed that time was on his side. Various barbarians were bound by treaty to come to his aid, as (more importantly) was Arcadius. Further, Stilicho yet lived with a rump army, and Marcus in Britannia was sure to do something constructive. And yet Flavius Honorius Augustus knew that the glass was not half full, was rather more than half empty, and that the bottom of a cup often held the bitter dregs of an otherwise sweet vintage.

## **Gepids - *Brothers of the Ostrogoths***

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Hellebich, Chief of the Gepids*

Diplomacy:

Hearing the call to arms, the Gepids took their people on the long march into Italiae (see *Empire of the Huns*), to rip the still-beating heart of the empire from its chest and hang it from the Tree of Life ... Or such were the fantasies of some priests of Wotan.

## **Orthodox Christian Church**

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Patriarch John Chrysostom*

Diplomacy: Heraclea (MN), Pergamon (CA), Serdica (CH), Novae (CH), Epirus (CH)

It was with a mixture of joy and alarm that news of a progress of the Bishop of Roma, Innocent, through the Dacian provinces was received. Ecumenism is fine, thought John, but this is pushing matters a bit. Some confusion persisted as Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch, travelled to Dyrrhacium with his elderly friend Theodosius. He had orders to establish a church, but was received at the doors of a prosperous parish already in place. Annoyed, Gregory grumbled and left town the next day to start a congregation outside the city. He was more than upset when, while voyaging with local fishermen in 411, a sudden storm swamped their craft, killing him and another man. Theodosius passed away the following year.

Evangelical work in the cities of Dyrrhacium and Novae met with great success, converting the former from the Old Gods, the latter from the Heresy of Arius. The message of unity and empire from John Chrysostom's agents really caught the attention of citizens, especially in light of the barbarian atrocities in Italiae.

Patriarch John was saddened to learn of the death of his good friend and supporter, Venerius, Bishop of Milan, in 409. Venerius was old-school, ordained by Ambrose, and his remains were interred by Paulinus of Nola.

## Ostrogothic Kingdom

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Ariaric II*

Diplomacy: Taifali (A)

Uldin was not the only leader of a barbarian federation. Ariaric sent his own riders and representatives to gather tribes to his banner, and they met with success everywhere (see *Gepids* and *Taifali*). Warriors, families, and wagons all rode, walked, and trundled their way to Slovakia as part of a grand barbarian federation (see *Empire of the Huns*).

## Rugian Tribes - *Brothers of the Asding Vandals*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Nevitta*

Diplomacy:

The death of Queen Gotedala was a blow to the kingdom, and to her sister Heletradana, Queen of the Asding Vandals. The queen vowed to protect her two children.

## Slavic Tribes

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Bole*

Diplomacy:

The Slavs were relieved beyond words when the Huns both moved south, and decided not to make them come along.

## Taifali Tribes - *Brothers of the Ostrogoths*

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Vallia*

Diplomacy:

Not since at the age of ten, when he had slain a bear in single combat and thus freed himself from "marriage" to *fara* leader Eraric had Vallia felt so free. The chests of *solidii*, jewels, and silks brought by his friend the Ostrogothic Prince Athanaric were fine, and the offer to join the Huns in looting Rome combined to thrill the *thiudans* of the Taifali.

His warriors, as respected for their prowess with lance as they were disrespected for their cultural achievements, saddled up and rode back with Athanaric and Valamir, along with all the women, children, and animals. Hundreds of youths were armed and given horses, and hundreds of men who had watched the Danube frontier from palisades were also provided mounts. Not since the Battle of Adrianople had such an opportunity presented itself, and he hoped to be even more glorious than his granduncle, Farnobius (see *Empire of the Huns* below).



## Eastern Roman Empire

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Arcadius, Emperor*

Diplomacy: Attica (EA), Athenai (F), Augustamnica (F), Egypt (F)

Arcadius and Eudoxia were please beyond measure when in 409 a son was born to them 5 December. A special Thanksgiving mass was held, and a few weeks later the court passed out small gifts to street waifs. Young Prince Theodosius was of course nonplussed with the arrival of competition, er, a darling baby brother. The lad spent a good deal of time sulking and reading Sophocles repeatedly until his tutors managed to steer him towards more "suitable" authors, e.g. Livy and Cassiodorus.

Bishop Eutropius Cypriotis took a Piece of the True Cross with him to the Roman army in Antioch. This relic boosted the morale of the troops, who built a legionary chapel around it. Another disciple, Iohannes Xiphos, moved to lend aid to another imperial army, as the Church faced the threats, both spiritual and temporal, from the East. ***From Constans the Constantinoplean Crier***

*Theophylact was in the cradle of Hellenic civilisation, Athenai. So imagine his dismay at the state of the place: imperial control is minimal and there were barely any aqueducts to be found. This must be solved, he thought.*

*Firstly, the Dux re-asserted Imperial control by negotiating with the provincial and urban magnates. He believed his Empire is beginning a renaissance in which he will seek not only to re-establish our ancient civic Mediterranean culture but to improve it by overlaying the True Faith of Christ onto a proud Classical past.*

*Athenai must be a part of that - as must Attica. So, Theophylact (Greek for "God's Defender") generally wooed the mighty. While not chatting up the locals, he visits the many sites of Athens which he's only ever heard of in speeches. He took his copy of Thucydides with him and try to locate the Pelargikon. Once located, he tried to locate any pelicans who might or might not be in the vicinity. When spotted pelicans, he immediately informed the officers of the university in distant Constantinopolis. They will know the significance of this (taps side of nose).*

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## Middle East

### Ghassanid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King John the Fair, the Pious*

Diplomacy: Safajah (A)

Not only were the sheiks of Safajah impressed with Prince Paul, representing John, but Queen Serena presented the busy king with another healthy son. Truly these were good times after bad times.

### Kingdom of Yemen

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Ishmael ibn Yahsub*

Diplomacy: Madina (A), Socotra (A)

With the Axumite threat receding, the king had time to send missions to neighboring realms. This bore fruit, and trade with the Ghassanids was opened. On a more sombre note, Prince Adam's eldest daughter, only eleven years old, died of the cough in the winter of 412.

## Lakhmid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheikh Amr al-Qays*

Diplomacy:

Hundreds of prisoners captured after the battle for As'summan were welcomed into the tribe after a short ceremony. This included baptism, an oath of loyalty, and a ritual arming. For their part, the men - many of whose families migrated with them - found a better life under the Iranian umbrella.

Prince Imru al-Qays married repeatedly, yet was unable to produce a son for the family.

## Monophysite Christian Church

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Patriarch Theophylact*

Diplomacy: Augustamnica (CA), Faiyum (MN), Lydia (MN), Edessa (AB)

In an impassioned Easter homily for 409, the patriarch denounced heretics, praised the Faithful, and urged the "Royal Priesthood" to greater effort. Copies of this tract were distributed across the Monophysite world, and fervor among the congregations was never higher. So much so that those of "lesser faiths" (to quote) became somewhat nervous at the intolerant attitudes of their neighbors, and even some within the Church grumbled that, to quote a smith in Edessa, "If I wanted to detest other Christians we would have moved to Africa and become Donatists!"

In a related bit of news, Parthimus, the newly-appointed *Grandmaster of the Order of the Sacred Sword*, was sent to Alexandria to see to the defense of the Holy Cathedral therein. To aid him, over 2000 young men were trained and armed in the Roman manner to guard the Church. A number of citizens, including the Imperial Praefect Nero, were alarmed at these developments, and petitioned Arcadius to send a legionary garrison to, "maintain the civic order." A few Orthodox youths were seen to throw stones at a detachment of *Sacred Sword* soldiers. These maintained ranks, shields high, and a major riot was averted.

Scores of evangelists poured into the Roman province of Arabia, preaching in bazaars, sermonizing in plazas, and lecturing in the shade of date palms. Within a few years, everyone of import had been baptized. In Lydia, Bishop Bertimus managed to baptize a (in)famous and wealthy courtesan. He promised that her renowned tattoos of scenes from history would be accurately reproduced on the walls of the new monastic chapel. Thus was not only a soul saved, but a work of art as well, though her clientele naturally felt somewhat cheated.

And in far Barbaria, Bishop Dorian "Perigrinatus" told stories. These stories were about a great warrior who conquered death itself and lives with the Sky Father. That, at least, is what was heard among the tents of the Oghuz nobles, who had taken to keeping the captive priest as after dinner entertainment. At first this had consisted of beatings and humiliations, but as the tribal army journeyed to its home grazing lands this turned to at least vaguely respectful attention. By late 412, Dorian, who knew that while his gift for evangelism was limited the Holy Spirit was all-powerful, was nonetheless baptizing minor khans and khanums. He could dream that by Easter he could hold a mass for the entire tribe, though for now only the ruling clans were attending to his message.

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# East Africa

## Axumite Empire

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Emperor Tewodros Ella Asgad

Diplomacy:

Tewodros felt fairly good. He was on a horse, riding south. He was going home. The fact that he was naked and bound at the wrists and neck was, given the circumstances, acceptable. His son Menelik would have to marry a barbarian princess, but there are worse things, and it could be turned to advantage, eventually. And in an ironic sense he was pleased that his ransom had been so, well, kingly. Still, his pride and thus that of the nation had been wounded, and a reckoning would be required.

At the gates of Adulis, the exchange was made under overcast skies. A string of asses laden with silver, gold, and spices was lead up the road to Satifal. Then the Emperor was lead south, where he was quickly untied, covered, and bundled off in a palanquin.

## Blemmye Tribes

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Satifal "the Great"*

Diplomacy:

The sobriquet appended to the king's title seemed appropriate to all concerned. Satifal was somewhat satisfied with the results, though he would rather have convinced Tewodros to be his vassal (see *Axumite Empire* above).

## Nobades Kingdom

(African Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*King Movad II*

Diplomacy:

The barbarian king, Movad, was pleased when his concubine from Kerma presented him with a new son, and it prompted some unusually deep thinking on his part. Civilization, as with this city girl, had some good points. Perhaps he would look into it further. Identical triplet daughters came the next year, surely another omen.

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# Persia

## Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Narses-Kartir, Mobedhan-mobed*

Diplomacy: Asuristan (CA), Mosul (AB), Nia (CH), Abadan (MN)

The Keepers of the Flame continued to expand their reach throughout the Persian lands and beyond. The shot of Arash the Archer may circumscribe the empire, but the reign of Ahuramazda is everywhere.

## Kingdom of Persarmenia - *Sasanian Persian Satrapy*

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Mazdak, Satrap*

Diplomacy:

Mazdak decided that his reign needed greater legitimacy. Thus it was that Mazdak married an Armenian princess on Easter Sunday of 409.



## Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

*Yazdigerd I, Shahanshah of Persia*

Diplomacy: Uruk (F), Abadan (F)

Lacking any real diplomatic energy in Ctesiphon, Yazdigerd decided to sell Turkmens to the Hephthalites. Nobles and *asvarans* across the land were astonished that the Shahanshah would relinquish even one garden plot to the traditionally loathed Turanians. Give a barbarian an inch and he will be marching on Ctesiphon, some said.

First Sorhab, shah of Balasagan, and then Mihr, shah of Herat died, both of the cough. Their realms, however, were inclined to stay in the empire, which was peaceful and prosperous. The Yemenis and Lakhmids received the tribute that was their due. And the Kushan ambassador Kash remained difficult to find, nearly impossible to talk with, and generally an aloof and mysterious figure at court. All the while Sasanian bureaucrats tried to negotiate a peace with him ...

*Yazdigerd's grief for his dead daschund, Arcadius, who choked on his own "foulness" (euphemism and prophecy rolled into one) and died, was profound. Despite strong protestations from the Zoroastrian hierarchy, the Shahanshah ordered a small dakhma to be built near Veh Ardashir. The body of the dog was placed therein by Yazdigerd himself, and the carrion birds set to work on the remains within the hour.*

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## South Asia

## Lambakanna Sinhala - A Kingdom of Chera

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

*King Suravatha*

Diplomacy: Kalyani (UN)

The court was saddened by the death of Suravatha's eldest daughter at the age of nine. Losing Kalyani and Seylan added to the grief (see *Pandya* and *Chera*).

## Buddhist Stupas

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Rugendra

Diplomacy:

Priests continued to preach to limit the executions of prisoners. One small victory was the change in sentence in Sarnath of a convicted highwayman. Rather than having his hands, feet, nose, and ears cut off prior to placement in an old boat headed downstream, he was after extensive lobbying by the local temple priests to death by archery. Thus by small steps ...

## Chera Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*King Gaman*

Diplomacy: Seylan (A)

Noting the number of large empires bordering his tiny realm, Gaman directed his engineering staff to contract with the appropriate *sreni* and raise a fortress at the fishing village of Panadura in Sri Lanka. He hoped that the restive Sri Lankans would be intimidated, at which it failed utterly (see *Pandya*), though the export of rice to the island nation was effective.

After years of badgering by Lord Ichaa, the Raja of Seylan decided to leave the Lambakanna Sinhala for the Kingdom of Chera. In further growth, Muziris expanded to include its fortified fortress within the high walls. A Buddhist mystic was seen to fly up to the top of the north tower one moonlit night, which set tongues wagging for many months.

## Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

*King Jatavarman*

Diplomacy: Kalyani (FA)

The clever Lord Banabhatta smuggled himself into the court of the Raja of Kalyani hidden in a shipment of Roman wine. Before the Raja could object that his king, and thus Gaman, had ordered people like him to be excluded from his city, Banabhatta began such a stream of sweet words and gifts that Kalyani soon found itself in the Pandya orbit.



## Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*Chandra Gupta II, the Great*

Diplomacy: Sahis (EA), Sagala (EA), Vaisali (A), Surashtra (T), Valabhi (F)

"In might, in glory, in care of people, who can compare with Chandragupta?" Thus began a long bit of propagandistic prose from court poet Kalidasa who, though already highly acclaimed, clearly knew which side of his daily *naan* was spread with *ghee*. Coins of the emperor trumpeted titles like *Narendra-chandra* "Best of Kings", and *Simha-vikrama* "Lion strength". A new city, Delhi, was raised in the northwest, new paved roads were stretched to link distant cities, and heavier armor for closer fighting was introduced to some of the standing army.

Valabhi was expanded through property grants to demobilized soldiers from the Western Saka campaigns. The grants were issued after the arrival of Lord Ambedkhar and his army, which quelled the nascent rebellion by making even the most enraged 19-year-old stop and reconsider a night of joyful rock-throwing at the sight of well-acquainted Gupta squads on street patrol.

Such was the state of the empire that the nobles in far Edrosia did not even consider running from the shade provided by the Gupta umbrella when their shah died. The new shah acknowledged his loyalty to Chandra Gupta II, and the trade income continued to flow. Only the Hindu priests at court were upset, as the *Rajatiraja* insisted on listening with interest to the Jain, Manichean, Christian, Daoist, Christian, and Buddhist courtiers, whether Indian or *mleccha*. The people took Chandragupta's cue, and fervor in the streets increased on the part of the various evangelists just as attention paid to them decreased.

## Hinduism

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Virasenadeva*

Diplomacy:

Alarmed at the state of the Gupta court, Hindus sought refuge in other South Asian kingdoms. Sahdev was called away in 409, and his mentor Kalidena the following year.

The overall state of what is nominally the national religion caused many to despair. Many brahmins living as priests took up other callings, leading to an increase in the number of wandering *sadhu* and some religious sites degrading due to the outflow.

## **Jain Sects**

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Siddhasena, Acharya*

Diplomacy:

The Jainists were at peace.

## **Kingdom of Nepal - Gupta Tributary**

(Buddhist Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Visvadeva Biscotti Licchavi*

Diplomacy: Himachal (EA)

Loyalty to the Licchavis kept the Dhera-Dun mountain clan leaders within the Gupta sphere despite the death of that icy land's king. His son and heir vowed to change nothing. The Licchavis and Guptas are, after all, cousins.

## **Pallava Kingdom**

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*King Mahendravarma I*

Diplomacy:

No doubt inspired by the Guptas, Mahendravarma ordered a narrow road built to the western sea. Kanchipuram was also made the new capitol city, amid much fanfare and a three-day festival. Unfortunately, the queen, Kangavarti, had too much fruit juice during the parties and died from "complications." All Malabar was sad at the loss of their princess.

## **Vakataka Kingdom**

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*Prabhavati Gupta, Regent*

Diplomacy: Pawar (F), Ujjain (F), Satava (A), Pratishthana (F)

The daughter of Chandra Gupta II has at least overcome her grief at being a young widow. A Gupta through-and-through, she has big plans for her nation. A road was built, troops shifted, and Kalliana had its first contingent of colonists for the "Gupta" quarter.

But the *kshatriya* of the city had another idea. The garrison commander was bought off, and the *sreni* quickly erected a low palisade around Kalliana. The colonists were on the verge of massacre, but the Buddhists urged they simply be ejected. Annoyed, confused, yet relieved to escape with their lives, the would-be residents scattered to their home villages. When the regent and Kalaiamudha Gupta, her half-sister, arrived on a goodwill tour, they and their guard of over a thousand troops were refused entrance. Prabhavati vowed to avenge this dishonor and marched off.

The sisters parted ways, and the princess took a tour of Nasik looking for support. Not only did she not find any, but she was nearly captured by a band of unknown warriors. Only her guards' diligence saved Kalaiamudha.

## 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 AP to aid actions

Players should know that there are several types of "break points" or quantum levels, if you will, for investments. One of these is for the expenditure of AP in various actions where a bonus is allowed for spending extra time on a given task, most usually diplomacy and the founding of religious sites. Greater time spent is of no benefit in military operations.

The basic scheme is +1 for every full **5 AP**, i.e. [5], expended. For example, spending 16 AP on a diplomacy (DP) action breaks down as [4] for the DP itself, the base cost, plus another [12] (that's [16] - [4] = [12]), so that we do  $12/5 = 2.4$ , and dropping the fraction gives a +2 bonus. Increasing the APs spent by [3] would raise the bonus to +3. Reducing the APs spent by [2] leaves that many for other actions in turn.

Hope this helps. Please see prior turns' newsfaxes for more hints.

