

## Newsfax, Turn 6

(start of 421 CE through the end of 424 CE)

### Notes:

1. For information on **Trade Conduits** and how to use them, please see the new link on the Rules Addenda page.
2. Please remember to use the **Custom Units** information on your stats sheet for such things as gp and nfp costs, APs, etc.
3. You are encouraged to submit text and images for inclusion in the newsfax, which may satisfy your need for propaganda, creativity, or fun.
4. At the bottom of the newsfax is a rules hint, usually a choice nugget right from the GMs rulebook.

As is traditional, here is what I listened to while processing this turn. Pretend to care, or not.

- Love - *Forever Changes*
- Stevie Ray Vaughn and Double Trouble - *Couldn't Stand the Weather*
- Crosby, Stills, and Nash - eponymous
- Slowdive - *Souvlaki*
- Ride - *Nowhere*
- Curve - *Gift*
- Tones on Tail - *The Album Pop*
- Brian Eno - *Apollo: Atmospheres & Soundtracks*
- Glenn Miller - *Pure Gold*
- Simple Minds - *Sparkle in the Rain*
- The Sundays - *Static & Silence*
- Kitaro - *Tunhuang*
- Future Bible Heros - *Eternal Youth*
- Simple Minds - *New Gold Dream*
- KUOM - [www.radiok.org](http://www.radiok.org)
- KCPW - [www.kcpw.org](http://www.kcpw.org)

*Generally eastward starting with ...*

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## Central Asia

### Hephthalite Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Ilginc, Khakhan of the Hunas*

Diplomacy:

The Gur-Khan was happy to have orders to move against someone, but was a bit dismayed at the target. Perhaps Ilginc was unconcerned with the small power calling themselves the White Turks. Whatever the reason, a host of the Hunas moved into Balkash and was rather surprised to meet Fittcheen the Grey leading over 12,000 men (and not a few women). The White Turks were understandably upset at the horsemen riding across their lands and fell upon them at **Red Iron Mountain**, to which the outnumbered Hephthalites had fallen back to reconsider their options. Surrounded by nightfall the Hunas were forced to attempt a breakout after a few days foraging among the rocks and gullies. Over 5000 riders charged out at dawn, down a gentle slope and on a plain confined by talus and small cliffs. Freedom within their sight and only a few hundred horse opposing them the Hunas goaded their mounts to a gallop.

Unfortunately for them, they had forgotten how wiley was old Fittcheen. The first wave of cavalry rode into concealed trenches and were quickly swarmed by warriors on foot carrying axes and spears. The rest of the horse pulled up and were then charged in the flank from a hidden gulch. A swirling melee ensued, dust rising quickly into the morning air. It is said the old man himself dispatched a dozen of the invaders himself, and by nightfall White Turk fighters of all ranks were busy looting bodies and taking heads. The foreign force was wiped out, their leader captured and released on the whim of Fittcheen, who imagined the Hephthalite khakhan would inflict a more severe and humiliating fate on the losing commander than he wanted to spend time on.

On the plus side, Umay produced a baby girl as the first snows fell in 424.

## White Turk Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Fittcheen the Grey*

Diplomacy:

The old khan survived an attack by concealed archers while out hunting with his clan leaders. Every arrow missed him, but one hit his horse. The animal was felled and taken sick for weeks, enraging Fittcheen who had a nomad's regard for his steed. The archers were not found and rumors were common from the Aral Sea to Lake Balkash.

Later on this all centered on Ilginc the Hephthalite khakhan (*see Hephthalite Khanate*). Fittcheen himself was unperturbed, having seen his favorite daughter Ashira die suddenly at 61 and his twin grand-daughters also succumb to a fever in 423. The khan of the Turgay was, meanwhile, left to frolic on his own grazing lands.

## Khwarizm Hunas Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Akhshunwaz, Khakhan of the Hunas, Khan of Khwarzim*

Diplomacy: Khazakh (A), Turkmen (PT), Sogdiana (PT), Singanakh (PT), Otrar (PT)

While realizing that he had aspirations greater perhaps than his reach, the putative khakhan nonetheless decided to rebuild an empire. Thus his forces set out to conquer neighboring lands.

The Turkmen and Sogdians were overrun with little effort. A circuit of the battlements of Boqara was enough to convince the army that a siege of any sort would prove fruitless, and the horde moved on. Singanakh was next to feel this sting of the Khwarizm Hunas horsemen, who also managed to compel the submission of unwalled Otrar. Over 10,000 veteran warriors appearing in the streets will have that effect ...

Less successful was Khingala, who failed to win either friends or converts in Gurgan. Akhshunwaz was pleased anyway, as he now had an empire and a daughter to marry off to solidify his rule.

## Steppe Shamanism

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Primate Religious Authority)

*Zugeer Sechen, High Shaman*

Diplomacy:

The spirit world seemed more confused than usual.

## Kushan Empire



(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*Koungas "the Redeemer," Kidarite Shao*

Diplomacy: Und (A), Taxila (F), Margiana (PT), Herat (PT), Hazarajat (PT), Transoxiana (P)

When the snows begin to melt in the passes, Koungas travels with his guard to Und. He hopes to cast off the aura of his family's barbarian past, and pays his respects at fire temples and monasteries along the way. Paying court in Und and promising the hand of his son, Kanishka, in marriage proved fruitful until news arrived in late February of the death of the young prince. The lad was apparently hunting snow leopards with his courtiers when a rock and ice fall crushed him while tracking one of the beasts on foot.

While naturally depressed, Koungas found solace in the arms of his second wife, who delivered a son in his autumn years. Also rewarding were the closer ties to Und and the ancient university city of Taxila. There he observes examples of the earliest tablets written in Kharoshti, the perfect form of written Sanskrit, which was developed in the Taxila. He also visits the university, the oldest in the world, and the first Buddhist monastery, Dharmarajika Vihara, and reads the Rock Edicts of Ashoka at the palaces of Mansehra and Shahbazgari. These last are copied by his scribe and sent back home to be replicated in marble for his own palace.

More interesting perhaps was the daughter of the *raja* of Und, Prakasina, who was to wed Kanishka as a diplomatic gesture. She objected, stressing her desire to travel to a Buddhist convent in Kucha. On the death of Kanishka she was instead married off to Koungas. The girl's trip back to Kabul was a sullen journey indeed.

## Oghuz Turk Realm

(Monophysite Christian Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Sonqur*

Diplomacy: Abarshahr (C), Nishapur (C)

Having agreed to leave Persia, the khan gathered his tribes for a long march (see *Sasanian Persia*). Before departing, Sonqur deigned to be baptized on Easter Sunday of 421. While most of the clans were either pleased or apathetic, some were outraged at this abandonment of the traditional ways. Further, many Persians, mainly Christian and Jewish scribes, flocked from refugee camps to join the nascent Turkish government - and its promise of looted silver. Rumors also were spread that when the khan became Shahanshah he would reduce the status of the lesser tribes and khans.

This was too much for a coterie of minor nobles, one of whom slipped into Sonqur's tent on a midnight within a moon of his baptism. The attempted assassination was bungled, however, the conspirators rounded up, and heads soon decorated pikes around the camp. After a rousing sermon from archbishop Dorian many were left with the misapprehension that the khan's flesh had turned the killer's knife because of his acceptance of the Holy Spirit.

When the time came to march south, however, the Khan of the Kama Bulgars, Tardu, had had enough. With the Ob and Kazan tribes he declared the Blue Turk Khanate and informed Sonqur that the old school nomads, many of them Turks settled in Parishkhwar, would not be rolling their wagons south. Sonqur was sad to see them stay but avoided inter-tribal warfare by graciously ceding to them Persia as well.

So afraid were the terrorized by the Turk were the peoples of Abarshahr and Khurasan that they continued to call Sonqur their lord despite his departure. They interpreted the establishment of the Blue Turks nearby as the intent of the Turanians to return in force, and the court at Ctesiphon held many who agreed.

## **Juan-Juan Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy:

"This is not what we expected." With those words Anakai announced that the tribes would be heading back to the East. Outrage, relief, and resignation were the most common reactions, but the various lesser khans agreed to return. Spring saw the wagons loaded, animals gathered and counted, and tack checked and repaired. Most families had been convinced that their future lay in the lands of the Middle Kingdom, not among the paltry little kingdoms of the West. Most families, that is. Others were tired of promised wealth and wanted silver and silks, up front.

The long trek into the morning sun did not include all the clans. The Ghuzz khan saw no point in riding for months back to the meagre steppe of his ancestors and remained on the Black Sea littoral. And in June the khan of the Wusu openly declared his disgust at the Ilkhan. The following day his horse threw him into a ravine, where he was impaled on a dead tree branch. After that incident nobody dared oppose Anakai.

In the lands of the White Sheep Turks the khan of the Kyzl-Kum was foolish enough to oppose the horde. They were swept aside, hundreds slain. The clans of Scythia met a similar fate. The following year saw resistance in Betpak defeated.

By 424 the horde had arrived in Dzamin Uud, having skirted Later Liang outposts en route. Agents of "a Chinese power" met with the Prince and Regent to map out the next moves. These revealed themselves that summer, as the horde entered the Toba Wei province of Kin (*see Toba Wei*).

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

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Khan Juchin*

Diplomacy:

The Wudah khan passed away, with leading clan elders gathering to decide on policy and succession near Lake Balkash. In the cold weather they picked a new khan and then packed up to join the rest of the horde as they looked for a good campsite for the winter, on the lakeshore.

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

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Khan Alptketin*

Diplomacy:

The khan made his way eastward with his people (*see Juan-Juan Khanate*). When the Ayaguz were near their ancestral lands they bolted and ended up with the Uigurs (*see Uighur Khanate*). Seeing this the Tamarin, whose khan had died, also left the federation for their wooded homeland.

## Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom of the Aza

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khanum Goland*

Diplomacy: Tsinghai (UN), Qinghai (UN)

From the walls of Fu-ssu the khan watched the passing Hsiung'nu horde and pondered the future of his own realm (*see Hsiung'nu Khanate*). Scribes wrote down these reflections and shamans sung them when he died on a warm August morning in 424.

While these were praised and propagated, a far different sort of legacy was being made by minor khans. These younger leaders were disgusted with the lack of energy - and loot - the Tu-Yu-Hu had generated for themselves and their families. A struggle ensued to woo various clans, with the result that Tsinghai and Qinghai left the kingdom. The widow of the khan was acclaimed as khanum to oversee the realm under the minority of her son. As a princess of the Tsinghai she looked forward to reuniting the khanate and choosing a new path.

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## China

### Chinese Buddhism

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Master Lo-Wang*

Diplomacy:

News reached the Evanescent Master that the monastery in Kin was sacked by barbarians just off the steppe. He pondered this for a moment, then said the immortal phrase, "Go fish."



### Chinese Kingdom of Annam

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Ma Yueh*

Diplomacy: I-Chou (EA), Gouangxi (A), Padishan (FA), Yung ch'ang (EA), Gunzhou (FA)

Hundreds of men and animals began the perilous trek across the Palani and Nalini river valleys and down the Lauhitya, stopping for supplies at the frontier post of Yung ch'ang, and crossing steep mountains via narrow trails between the Gupta and the Annamese realms. Most of the trade goods never made it, but for those unable to use sea routes wealth awaited brave merchants.

More sweaty men worked on roads, again. One of them, after a fashion, was the King. His road trip was to I-chou, a city he had previously besieged, from which he had taken a bride. And again he was at the gates, seeking an alliance and a wife. The guilds there knew that now was a good opportunity to join a promising dynasty and allowed Ma Yueh to send agents to the city and to seek a wife. He found her, a princess who had decided to leave the convent after several decades inside - the prettiest Buddhist nun in the area, so it was said.

Another set of conquests of the heart, as it were, were made by other agents in Gunzhou, Padishan, Gouangxi, and Yung ch'ang. This last was quite a coup given the rather anarchic civic polity there, but the citizens knew this was a chance for greater wealth. And so the realm expanded, and all were pleased.



## Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master*

Diplomacy: Chi (MN)

Many good deeds were done, and the Master was pleased. Shantung, long ravaged by barbarian and Han alike, was restored to something of its former glory. The Temple of North Heng Shan was started a bit late as the Hsiung'nu were busily ravaging the province of Ningsia. The local people were glad of the steady work the Master supplied.

Most of the staff under the Master, as well as Fu himself, were engaged in a grand theological project. None would say what exactly their discussions involved except to say it would redound to the glory of all under Heaven.

## Wisdom from the desk of Ko Chao Fu

In the state of Song there was an old man who liked wild animals very much. He especially liked monkeys and raised many of them in his house. Because he liked them so much his neighbors nicknamed him Grandpa Monkey. The monkeys that the Grandpa Monkey raised were loveable and intelligent, and they could even understand their master's feelings. Grandpa often spent time with the monkeys and became very familiar with their habits; as well he even knew if they were happy or sad.



For instance the monkeys showed its feelings by the quantity of food it had. On one occasion, there was a male monkey that was lost, but Grandpa was not worried as he knew that it was attracted to a female monkey. True enough it came back the next day; however, the monkeys became more numerous everyday. He had to spend a lot of money to buy food for the monkeys.

After a while there was not enough money to buy more food to feed them, though everyone in the granddad family lived frugally. Grandpa Monkey then decided to reduce the daily rations of food to the monkeys. The monkeys, however, had been spoiled had their own ideas. If their food was going to be reduced, it must be politely discussed with them or they would chatter incessantly and throw poo in protest. Grandpa said to them 'our family is becoming poorer and poorer and there is no way we can eat as much as before. From now on, you will get three pieces of fruit in the morning and four pieces of fruit in the evening.

The monkeys were very unhappy when they heard this. They opened their mouths and sneered at him and they hooted and hollered incessantly. But Grandpa said 'Because you are not satisfied, how about four pieces of fruit every morning and three pieces of fruit every evening?'





After the monkeys had heard that the Grandpa Monkey had changed his original plan, each and every one was very happy. They all kneeled on the floor and bowed respectfully to Grandpa Monkey.



Few knew quite what to make of this parable, but most realized that the mystery of the story was the lesson itself. Hundreds studied it for a political or ethical message, and several schools of thought arose. The Master was well pleased.

Priests wandered Kwangtung, healing fishermen and chatting up smugglers. Most were amazed at the attention they received, given that missionaries usually visit the unenlightened. Peasants in Korat were just annoyed and considered just ignoring the temples for a while.

## Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*K'ung Ti, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Hangzhou (F), Yingtan (F), Chiennan (A), Funiu (EA), Ts'ang-wu (A), Hwai (F)

Gui Ti, imperial prince and noted poet, did not sleep well the night of 14 February, 422. The death of his wife some years before had not lifted its burden from his heart, and travel into the remote land of Hwai to court the local grandees had been difficult. Princes were expected to oversee as well building projects, and the officials in charge had proved more than usually inept in the many dams, roads, canals, and civic improvements ongoing there.

Aids to the prince rushed in after hearing a great noise which they could not classify as either human, animal, or mechanical. His chamberlain claimed that when he first entered the room a green fog covered Gui Ti, a mist which quickly dissipated. The young man lay on the floor arms stretched upward and feet together, dead. Scattered on his desk were scraps of paper each with a colored chalk drawing of what looked like a fat green bird with a number four in the Indian style on its body. Priests brought in to determine the significance of this were at a loss.

The Marquis of Hwai decided the following day to join fully with the empire, and was seen weeping openly as the royal body was removed from his small palace. Hundreds of peasants lined the route along which the dead prince travelled, for he had clearly demonstrated his devotion to them, in their minds.

Earlier, more bad news had arrived at the imperial residence in Chien-k'ang. Assassins ordered to slay Toba Kuei had failed, had been captured, and had indeed confessed the role of the Ts'in dynasty in their employment.

But all was not dire and drear. The imperial heir, Prince Zhang Ti, travelled with a large army to Chiennan on a mission of peace. Impressed first that his realm was not being invaded, and then that the imperial army behaved itself, and finally that the soldiers seemed quite competent, the Marquis agreed to form an alliance with the Empire. His young and unusually beautiful daughter was sent with her aunt and an escort to wed the Emperor on May 14 of 423. Within a year the young woman had provided K'ung Ti with a son, and all rejoiced at the news.

Several important generals and courtiers descended on Funiu to convince the locals to rejoin the dynasty. While they were received cordially, and did in the end succeed, the thousands of colonists who accompanied the nobles did not make a good impression. They lived in tents or huts as they were able, ate up all the food they could find, and generally made a nuisance of themselves.

## Khanate of the Hsiung'nu

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Bulinger, Khagan of the Hsiung'nu*

Diplomacy:

He was old. More than that, Bulinger missed the steppe outside the curve of the Great River where his people had lived for many generations. The khan wished one great and glorious deed before joining his ancestors, so that he might be esteemed among them. Thus it was that his *ilkhan* and other advisors gathered to consider what to do. Military conquest of the Ts'in or Toba would doubtless lead to unending glory, but the odds were not good.

Thus was hatched the scheme of a "Great Migration" of the Hsiung'nu. Kouang, Khan of the Lang Shan, was wed to Suna daughter of Sanglant and his people were to join the planned mass transhumance. He was named *tarkhan* and joined the clan of Bulinger, and was a traditional man known to preserve closely the *shiralgha* among his family. Given the extreme youth of Sana no children were expected from this union anytime soon.

It was not until 423 that the tribes managed to get underweigh, with many puzzled by the various delays and obstructions coming from the tent of the Khagan himself. Apparently he was waiting for his *gur-khan* Cotys to return from some mission, which he did, bearing a huge scar on his left shoulder which left it permanently impaired. Meanwhile many scribes had been hired to track who owned what, allowing Bulinger to slyly acquire more power for himself. The people were dazzled by his vision of migration and did not mind this change in the established order - done in the name of conserving traditional values.

To pay for all of this the Chinese of Ningsia and Wu Hai were taxed at swordpoint. Every moveable object of value - including more than a few fair youths - was taken away on horseback or by the wagon load. A few peasants objected and were immediately slain, which action silenced the remainder who saw the futility of opposing their barbarian overlords. Most just paid and then rejoiced when the hated nomads had gone forever.

The masses trundled into Wu-Hai and thence across the border into Yanzhi. The court of the Western Ts'in empire was embroiled in a series of minor scandals and power struggles and essentially ignored the nomadic invasion. Datong Shan was the next province entered, a rugged land where the locals were sullen but allowed passage seeing the overwhelming numbers upon them. By the September of 424 the horde was in Tsaidam and the Khagan decided to stay there rather than risk the desert on minimal supplies.

## **Korean Kingdom of Koguryo**

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Changsu*

Diplomacy:

Bandao continued to feel the booted heel of Changsu as his troops continued to enforce Buddhist doctrine at the point of a spear. Furthermore a road was built from Choson Mon to Pyong-yang to improve his hold over the north.

## **Later Liang Kingdom**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Lu Ssu, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Lob Nor (T), Bulinger (UN), Tunhuang (F), Suachu (T), Kucha [city] (NT), Sha (NT), Dzamin Uud (UN)

Many changes were wrought upon the empire. Scribes were hired, khans were courted, and grazing lands assigned.

The Uigur khan, Hsiao Hsin, was allowed to ask *anda* of the Hsia-Hsia, Gurvan, and Ayaguz. He formed his own realm under Lu Ssu, the Uighur Khanate (*see Uighur Khanate*). The Tangut khan seemed not to mind what was essentially a demotion as he really did not want the responsibility - though a few of his courtiers were later to be seen slapping their foreheads. All did rejoice when twins were born of one of the imperial concubines.

Messengers were sent on fast steeds to read out the following:

*The Sons of the House of Lu shall now and for all time be raised as Sons of the Plains, they shall neither see nor learn of Cities until they have come of Age.*

*So declares Tengri and all the Gods.*

*Lu Ssu, Emperor of China.*

Imperial scribes counseled against such a move, but most others were pleased with this dictat. Citizens were happy to recognize the suzerainty of the emperor without paying anything resembling taxes. Most of the clans were happy at this recognition of the old ways and their values under the influence of Chinese cultural imperialism ...

Yumen was not impressed, however. Priests garbed in furs and antler headgear made no converts among the locals and were generally figures of derision. They were Chinese, literate, and civilized with no interest in accepting the barbarous and inferior beliefs of their temporary overlords.

In 424 Spring, which usually brought joy as snow began to leave the upper grazing lands, brought instead confusion as the Bulinger khan Yeh Hua-Hsing died at the advanced age of 62. The late leader had vowed closer ties to the Empire, but his heir strongly disagreed and declared his people would no longer recognize Lu Ssu as their master.

## **Uighur Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Hsiao Hsin, Khan*

Diplomacy: Uighur (HM), Gurvan (FA), Hsia-Hsia (F), Ayaguz (NT)

The young khan was pleased, if a bit confused, at being trusted as master of such wide domains. With a strong wife and many sons, he knew his clan had a good future.

## **(Hou) Later Yen Dynasty**

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy: Yen (F)

Fear. This was the motivating factor at the court of Mu-Jung Dynasty. Fear of the Toba Wei caused walls and fortresses to be constructed all over the small realm. Fear of them also caused bids to go out for thousands of mercenaries. Fear of the Juan-Juan inspired their being supplied with rice and millet by the boat-load. And fear of isolation lead to the aid for Chao and Chi by river.

Agents worked in Yen and within a few moons the local Toba tax collectors decided that, well, the Mu-Jung were not so bad and life would be easier if they worked for them instead. Thus administration passed to the Hou-Yen, to the relief of the local magnates who preferred this barbarian dynasty over the one with the bad accent.

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

(Daoist Civilized Component Nation)

*Ma Ch'in, Sung King*

Diplomacy:

The Sung kingdom was quiet - for a while. Then a concubine of Ma Ch'in gave birth to identical triplet daughters and quiet was a thing of the past.

## **Toba Wei Empire**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Toba Kuei, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy:

The year 421 was not a pleasant one with the Toba. Yen went over to agents of the Later Yen (*see (Hou) Later Yen Dynasty*) and Toba Kuei was dismayed that his own officials would defect to the enemy so readily. He was further disturbed to have assassins from the south (*see Eastern Ts'in Empire*) caught just inside his encampment with the mission of removing his spirit from his body.

One good bit of news was the resolve of Ts'ui Hao in holding fast to his allegiance before the entreaties of foreign agents. Promises of horses, lands, and silver did not cause him to waver, and Toba Kuei was pleased to send him his favorite mare as reward.

Alarm was the mood at court as the implications of the Juan-Juan seizure of Kin sank in (*see Juan-Juan Khanate*) by the autumn of 424.

## Western Ts'in Empire

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

*Chow Lu, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy:

The mighty Chow Lu was arguing with a marquis about land seizures when a messenger arrived with news the Hsiung'nu were marching through the empire (*see Khanate of the Hsiung'nu*). While not unexpected the message was nonetheless alarming, and the emperor ordered his people to stay out of their way.

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## South East Asia

### Cham Kingdom

(Hinduism Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Samudravarman*

Diplomacy:

Lord Humprapum became a high-profile noble as he conducted a census of the small kingdom. His tireless efforts, followed by a small effort against piracy, were lauded by all. Unfortunately there were not enough scribes at the capitol, so that the detailed tax rolls were useless. On top of this Samudravarman favorite concubine died in childbirth.

### Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Pendravarman*

Diplomacy:

Born to the king and queen was baby boy, and the entire kingdom was pleased.

### Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy: Lampang (EA)

Peasants toiled in the heat and damp, finishing the stone road from Vyadhapura, across the Mekong Bridge, and down to Tonle Nagara. All cheered, not the least the people whose corvée labor had summoned the pavement from the earth and lain it across field and hill.

And while the king's favorite courtier Var Dhara died of a fever early in 421 Korn Danh rejoiced to have twin sons delivered in the following year. Chekriya, his wife from Perak, sent a messenger home to please her father.

## Kingdom of Tarumanegara

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

*Purnavarnam, Raja*

Diplomacy:

More large fish were pulled from the end of the dock.

## Malayadvipa - *Gupta Tributary*

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

*Sripanasan, Regent for Crown Prince Varanavendra*

Diplomacy: Sabara (EA)

Palembang grew as more divers and forest people moved to the city for riches, the easy life, and communicable diseases. This simplified the census run by the Regent. The islands of Wangka and Belitung were found to have abundant tin ore and miners swarmed the place, setting up a rich trade in the much-desired mineral.

## Pyu Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Kyanzittha*

Diplomacy: Sagaing (T)

The court decided to maintain a peaceful path, to sustain the national *dharma*. Cities grew, and Burma saw new villages and terraced farming begin to change the face of the land.

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## Japan



## Emishi Lords

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Ashitaka*

Diplomacy: Hokkaido (A), Toyama (A)

King Ashitaka looked out over his wilderness realm and was ... less than happy. Conflict with more powerful Southern neighbours was clearly not the way to re-establish Emishi fortunes - at least for now. On the other hand, defencelessness was not an answer either. Military caution and diplomatic action were the order of the day.

Missions to Hokkaido and Toyama resulted in closer ties to the Emishi "government." Prince Kodama was struck by a falling tree branch while on a hunt in Toyama and was killed instantly.

## **Yamato Japan**

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

*Jingu Koga, Regent for Okinagatarashi-Hime No, Kima of Wa*

Diplomacy:

Finally Nintoku, now an old man, had at last enough scribes and records. In a meeting with the major nobles he demanded their fealty. Most were silent, a few stormed out, but in the end they acquiesced. They knew that this man already held immense power and none could withstand him. But in the far south the Southern Mountains Clans decided that this was too much for them and they decided to make their own path.

Having reached a position of high power the Kima of Wa spent most of his time in meditation. At the age of 60 he died peacefully on January 13 of 422.

The place fell apart. Crown Prince Ojin was in Kwanto taking a tour of local lords when news - slowed by a winter storm - finally reached him of Nintoku's death. He and his army marched for Naniha to wrest the throne from Jingu Koga. This princess had formed a ruling coalition with the clever and handsome courtier the Lord Heero to rule in the name of Prince Okinagatarashi-Hime No, the son of Nintoku and Narua and next in line for the throne after Ojin. In practice he was confined to the palace and was rarely seen.

Ojin's army reached the capitol and immediately mutinied on learning that priestesses had already blessed the new Kima of Wa. Ojin escaped with a few sword cuts and took to the unruly seas in an old fishing boat. He had been betrayed by his own wife, Minekawa Takako, who was promised her life and that of her two young daughters. Once Ojin was clearly gone Heero, the new prime minister, took her and her children to the shore and there beheaded them. Jingu Koga reprimanded him for this but went no further. From his exile Ojin cursed his former homeland and took up a new life as a mercenary, his well-equipped retainers joining him in exile.



## Southern Mountains Clans

(Shinto Barbarian Open Nation)

*Mononobe Jutarō, king*

Diplomacy:

Unwilling to bend his neck to the Kima of Wa, Mononobe declared his kingdom independent (*see Yamato Japan*). Later developments showed the wisdom of his early move, and many mourned his passing later in the same year that saw the death of Nintoku. None regretted his death more than his infant son, who seemed to apprehend the danger of the situation. Yet nobody rose to challenge his right to rule someday, and a cousin of Mononobe Jutarō, Kōji Jutarō.

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## Western Europe

### Alamanni

(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Arbogast, Rex*

Diplomacy:

Arbogast was not happy. A later age would call mistakenly call this a "Mid-Life Crisis" but most of his companions termed it mere common sense. Regardless of his mental state he knew that without action his young warriors would turn on him. And so it was that in 421 the Alamanni tore down the gates of what might be their capitol, Corduba, and ordered the citizens to gather their belongings and come along.

The church objected. The senators quietly fled. But the remainder submitted, since there was really no chance of opposing the Germans. The army sacked many of the empty villas and then moved on. Following the decayed Roman via northward the horde crossed the Mariani Montes in the autumn of 421 and began reducing the province. By the following August Metellinum, Norba, and the lesser cities had fallen, leaving only Emerita Augusta.

This city was surrounded by 130,000 Germans and yet resisted with a spirit borne of desperation. From the autumn of 422 through the following summer the place was closely invested, while some clergy were able to smuggle family and a few others out through the blockade. But after July even this ended as a plague was reported in Emerita Augusta. The close investment broke up as the disease spread among the Germans. Half of them came down sick and no small fraction of these died.

Within the walls the scene was even more dreadful. Many attempting to flee were cut down by Arbogast's household troops in order to keep the rest of the people safe. By August there was no resistance to the Alamanni, but only a few volunteers entered the city. They returned ashen, and declared the place unfit for people. Arbogast heeded them and lead his army away from the devastated city. Thousands of his own people had been lost to the fever, an impromptu graveyard outside the siege lines covering a low hillside. The families removed from Corduba were settled in Emeritanus.

Losses in the 423 invasion of Carpetani were light, though Arbogast was dismayed to learn the Cordubans placed in Emeritanus had taken advantage of his absence to foment revolt. He was happy to settle loyal Germans in Carpetani - he knew they would behave. By June of 424 the Alamanni had mustered to surround Toletum. At that time they also learned that the Romans appeared to be on the move (*see Gallaecia*), and Emeritanus was soon lost. The population there, both old and new, did not miss the Germans at all.

## **Kingdom of the Alans**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Xerxes, Shah*

Diplomacy:

The young prince Artaxerxes pestered his father for a bride, but in vain. The shah was preoccupied with maps and messengers as he tried to discern a useful pattern in current events.

## **Angles and Jutes**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Aethelred*

Diplomacy: Skane (F)

The ambassador from the Frisians was nervous, and the king could tell. Hargeld kept his thickly-bearded chin high but his grey eyes sought too much in the faces of the household guards.

"We have no news from the court of my lord, good king," he said, and then shuffled back ever so slightly. Aethelred managed to maintain his composure, though his fair cheeks had turned pink and a small vein high on his forehead beat out the tune for a wedding dance.

"Well then," he said, "I suppose we shall not be enjoying their company." The king paused. "Yes, leave now, with your head if you fancy keeping it!" The ambassador raced for the exit of throne room, out the doors of the wooden house that passed for a palace, vaulted into the saddle of the horse his groom had ready and galloped away.

While personally disgusted with the Frisians, Aethelred had more plans for his kingdom and was pleased with their outcome.

Prince Hengist was sent to Skåne, there to seek the hand of the noble Brunhilde. This princess had rejected all suitors as unworthy. Most thought this to be just rude as she was nothing much to look at and displayed little skill with either loom or bow. But Hengist knew what he was about and after a few verses from Aristophanes and some shrewd negotiations with her father he had his bride.

On a vastly different mission was Cnut, Jarl of Halland. The king had encouraged him to go a-viking, which suited this famed hunter. Hundreds of his kinsfolk and various landless lads set sail for the British coast. Sight of their sails made port cities bar gates and peasant clamdiggers hide in the marshes when the northmen sailed from their port on the Isle of Wight.

Venta lacked a defense and was raided mercilessly, though being a poor city it produced little loot. Lucensis was next, and then Tarbellia where resistance was fierce. The local magnates in Lugdunensis III had well-equipped militias while those in Lugdunensis II were caught enjoying the many luxuries the land offered. In each case churches were especially sought after, often mistaken by the northmen for treasuries. Hundreds of young captives were also bound and taken home for employment and/or enjoyment.

By Trinity Sunday of 422 rumors of sea-borne raiders sprouted from Olisipo to Eburacum and local estates demanded protection from Mediolanum - or wherever they might find it.

## **Asding Vandals - *Hun Vassals***

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gunderic, Rex Vandalorum*

Diplomacy:

The death of Godegisel of a flux on 21 May 421 precipitated a crisis (*see Empire of the Huns*). Gunderic, the new leader, was blessed with a daughter, though the mother Ursula, a Rugian princess, passed away in 424.

## **Burgundians**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gundioc, King of the Burgundians*

Diplomacy:

The king Gundioc demanded oaths of fealty from his subject nobles, causing some grumbling and the defection of a couple of small clans. But this tightening of his grip on power succeeded despite the resentment of the rewards offered to the new group of scribes. Fathering three children, Gundioc seemed to be moving his nation in the right direction.



## **Classical Pagan Oracles**

(Classical Pagan Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Hecate, Sibyl*

Diplomacy: Londinium (MN), Lucania (EC)

The Sibyl herself, after an untroubled sea voyage, sailed up the Tamesis, narrowly missing the fleet of Cnut (*see Angles and Jutes*). Only a few buildings in the countryside were still smoking after the raid of the barbarians. Thankful citizens, including not a few Christians, showed up for the consecration of the expanded temple complex. The fabled beauty and charm of Hecate herself played no small part in attendance at the festival.

## **Eire Kingdom of the Scots - *Diocese of Hibernia***

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*High King Donald I, Rex Scotorum, Vicarius Hiberniae*

Diplomacy: Britannia II (T), Valentia (UN)

A deputation of kings rode to a meeting with Donald, many in the chariots which indicated both their poverty and their conservatism. Dublin was a riotous and muddy town in the cold season as country royalty allocated all the best cottages and the few inns to themselves.

The reason for their visit was the demand by the High King for an oath of their fealty to the crown. Needless to say this did not go down well with men (and a few women) jealous of every copse and glade their neighbor might hold. Days of heated debates, usually fueled by some sort of fermented drink or other, turned to weeks. Donald did in the end convince these rustics that greater organization was needed to press claims in Britannia - which meant to the kings their sons would have a chance at great treasure at the expense of the Latinized weaklings there.

Scores of curraughs were built and outfitted so that by Spring of 421 they joined the main fleet in shipping troops to Britannia II. The fact that Roman gold paid for them helped impress the kings that the Donald guy had connections and could take them places.

Prince Donald the Red set the diverse mass of prisoners to work clearing land in Midhe. Those not killed in accidents, felled by disease and abuse, or escaping to an uncertain fate across the sea found homes in the created farmland. Given that lifelong slavery or even execution was the alternative, they were reasonably pleased with their lot. The fertility of the land was also shown in the birth of a daughter to Donald and his wife, Rhianna Princess of Midhe.

Maxima Caesarea was "blessed" for several years with the presence of competing embassies, one from the Scots and one from the Picts. Disdain for the Picts to their north was matched with disgust at the Empire for ceding their lands to Eire, of all places. In the end, Donald the Red was unable to beat the convincing arguments of Padrig and the nobles decided to annoy the Scots by allowing the Picts to claim rule there. It amused the Latin-speaking nobles that some barbarian lout would hold he ruled them from a frozen hillside in the north.

## Franks

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Clodius, Rex*

Diplomacy: Germania I (F), Belgica II (PT to Belgica I)

Bishop Euric was surprised to find that the estate holders and grandees of Belgica I were not interested in having Frankish colonists as neighbors, and so the clans set up camps and awaited negotiations. The army moved on to Senonia and set out to conquer that province which was nominally under the suzerainty of the Red Huns, at least according to Mediolanum. Though outnumbered nearly three to one the local comitatenses put up a well-directed and spirited defense and by late July the Franks were forced back into Parisii.

After a rousing sermon by the bishop on a hot August evening the northmen decided to try once more, and with a few weeks had surprised and slaughtered the defenders of Senonia and succeeded in subduing the entire province. Their glory was to prove evanescent (*see Kingdom of the Red Huns*).

In April of 421 the army of Merovech entered Parisii. The local militia fled to their homes at the news, knowing themselves hopeless against such might. This left the lord plenty of time for his favorite sport, boar hunting. In a large wood he finds, however, more than he desired as a particularly large hog unexpectedly charged, unhorsed the prince and then mauled him severely. Merovech died of blood loss that night, June 5 of 422.

A week of mourning ended with his body being sent home for burial. The promising son of the mayor of the palace, Malarich, was soon chosen by acclamation to lead them though peace was to be their lot for many months. But in early March of the following year news of Red Huns crossing into Parisii arrived and Malarich formed his councils of war.

It had been a mild winter, but March saw a heavy snowfall followed by severely cold temperatures. Malarich came up with a plan and lined the **Sequana River** with warriors, facing the Red Hun army from the opposite bank. The nomads had lined up with a continually moving mass of horse archers, a few charging up to the river's edge and loosing several missiles before whooping and galloping off to their friends.

By mid-day the Huns were pressing close to the brush lining the stream, anxious to cross but leery of plunging across the icy flow. Just then Malarich ordered a charge and 12,000 Franks screamed as they ran pell mell across the ice-covered river. The horsemen, who had assumed the ice this late would be too thin to support a horse and man, were surprised and hundreds caught and slain.

The remainder of the Red Hun army of 15,000 retired deftly out of reach while the Malarich reformed his men into a number of columns with now their backs to the Sequana. A strong force of nomads had, meanwhile, crossed the river upstream and were busy in a small siege of the Frankish camp, the defense of which cost many lives on both sides. The Frankish columns were now attacked by Huns from all sides before they had a chance to march forth. Alternately felled by black-fletched arrows and then charged by armored horse the army of Malarich was reduced to clumps of huddled men, dying. By nightfall the entire force had been wiped out. Even the few score who had managed to run downstream on the ice perished in the water or of exposure in the cold night air. Before dark hundreds of crows, ravens, and gulls had settled

on the field to feast.

After settling a number of clans in Germania I, Clodius moved more people to the gates of Trier. Meeting with the city senators, the Frankish king announced his intention to increase the size and importance of this city by moving thousands of his countrymen and their families within the walls. The local notables nodded and sent Clodius away so that they might deliberate in private.

Within the watch the city walls were lined with militiamen, the gates closed, and a messenger sent out to the barbarian camp. The king was informed that while Trier might allow him to tell his friends he is their lord, they would not suffer their beautiful city to be "enhanced" in such a way, on demand. Thus Clodius was left wander the province with his people while considering an alternate plan. To top this, his wife Beatrix died in childbirth at the age of 40, an event both tragic and remarkable for her age and the survival of the infant, a son. The childless widow of Merovech, Princess Scarlt, became the godmother of the baby and moved into Clodius' household.

To balance against the weight of bad news the *reges* of Belgica I, Allaert, found success in his invasion of the neighboring Roman province of Belgica II. Despite stiff opposition from the various walled towns his men prevailed due to their superior mobility. The fact that his men were in fact not Franks but Romano-Gallic locals was not lost on his people, who hailed him in the fields and from the pulpits on his triumphal return.

## **Frisians**

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Jentze Wolfsen*

Diplomacy:

The kingdom entered a period of sloth, much to the annoyance of its friends and neighbors (*see Angles and Jutes*).

## **Lombard Kingdom - *Societas Imperii***

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Autharii, Rex Lombardorum*

Diplomacy:

As armies tramped nearby and the gods seemed themselves to war, the Lombards hid in a bush. One positive result was the birth of sons to both the king and Aistulf, his heir.

## **Pictish Kingdom of Alba**

(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sean Mac Aniel, King of the Cruithni*

Diplomacy: Maxima Caesarea (C), Flavia (EA), Anglia (EA)

On Epiphany of 421 Talorg announced that he had been baptized, and that henceforth he expected his court to follow him in the ritual ablution and take the Eucharist. Some inroads had been made by the Church, but most were taken aback at this betrayal of the traditional gods. Few would deny, however, that these had not served them well against Christian Britain, and most followed their king in this matter.

General bemusement greeted news that the Emperor in distant Italia had ceded Valentia. Fishermen and millers were a bit more intimidated on learning that many neighboring provinces had been given by the Empire to their new vassals, Britanniae and Hibernia - silly names, they giggled, often followed by an uncomfortable silence.

Yet more pained silence followed the news of the death of Talorg Mac Aniel as the last leaves fell from the trees in 421. At 43 he was taken by a painful cancer. Some whispered that the gods had their revenge on him for turning away from them. Young Sean was acclaimed king while on a mission to Flavia, where he succeeded in wedding the fair Miranda. He also succeeded in closing the distance between Anglia and Alba.

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

(Arian Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Vitalianus*

Diplomacy:

The Quadi, to a man, were well pleased that the Khakhan had not called them to war (*see Western Roman Empire*).



## **Roman Christian Church**

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Celestine, Bishop of Roma*

Diplomacy: Tarbellia (UN), Venta (UN), Lugdunensis II (UN), Lugdunensis III (UN), Lucensis (UN), Liguria (UN)

Raiding by Cnut (see *Angles and Jutes*) resulted in the sacking of several parishes in the wild West. On September 2 of 422 the aged Elpidius, Bishop of Lugdunum, lay feverish on his bed while three widows attended to him. At noon he lifted himself up and asked for a scribe. A message was thus sent to the Emperor and, unfortunately for him it was ignored in the mass of communication the Augustus' officials see. For Elpidius had predicted the onslaught of the Huns, though this was misinterpreted as the movement of the Red Huns through Lugdunum. Thus the seed of prophecy was once again sown on rocky soil, as Elpidius died that same day.

## **Siling Vandals - *Diocese of Spain***

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gaiseric, Rex Vandalarum, Vicarius Hispaniae*

Diplomacy: Astigitanus (UN), Carthago Nova (UN), Carpetani (NT/OC), Toletum (T), Edetania (T), Hauptland (UN), Lacetani (UN), Tarraco (UN), Saguntina (UN), Valentia (UN), Tarraconensis (UN), Cluniensis (PT)

A good deal, no doubt. The Empire would cede a vast swath of land in sun-splashed Iberia in exchange for nominal obedience. More important, thought Gaiseric, was the prospect of greater distance from the Huns. Of course the head of the new "Diocese of Spain" did not mention to most of his people the fact that the emperor did not in fact own most of the lands to be ceded.

And so the peoples marched, first down into the Danube basin, then westward. Gaiseric cleverly moved using concealed paths and rarely used routes to avoid Huns and other annoyances as necessary. Spring of 424 saw the horde nearing Garunda in Lacetani along the *via* and the locals wisely decided that this passing batch of barbarians should be avoided. Tarraconensis magnates decided also to allow the Siling Vandals passage.

But the citizens of Cluniensis were too outraged by the behavior of the Alamanni to let a batch of foreigners trample their fields. The locals were clever enough to taunt a force of armored cavalry into dismounting to assault their wooden fortress, wiping them out. By the end of the summer the land was added to the Siling Vandal domain.

## **Suevi Kingdom**

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Agnar*

Diplomacy:

The Suevi decided to avoid danger and contented themselves with pestering travellers to Aquileia.





## Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Marcus Traianus Marcellinus, Augustus*

Diplomacy: Neapolis (EA), Campania (F), Samnium (F), Africa (EA), Viennensis (A), Novum Populi (F), Tarbellia (NT)

In a grand ceremony on a chill January day in 421 Aelia, the daughter of Honorius, was wedded to the emperor. While all agreed it was an essential political match as he was old enough to be her father, all were equally astounded at the mutual affection the couple displayed, and indeed all were pleased when within some years the young princess had given birth to a daughter Flaccilla and a son Marcellinus. Thus fortified, the people faced a tumultuous period in the history of the Empire.

A major imperial administrative change was announced to the imperial senate by the Augustus himself in February of 421. This general reorganization of the Empire (*Constitutio Marciana*) was laid out as:

- the Prefecture of the Gauls (containing the four Dioceses of Britain, Gaul, Seven Provinces, Spain) is abolished
- the Emperor creates three new Dioceses (Hibernia, Belgica, Lusitania) in the former Prefecture of the Gauls
- the Diocese of the Seven Provinces (southern Gaul) still stays under direct Imperial authority and control
- the other six Dioceses of the former Prefecture of the Gauls (Hibernia, Britain, Belgica, Gaul, Spain, Lusitania) still recognize the Imperial authority and are part of the Western Roman Empire, but they also obtain independence *de facto* from the Emperor
- an Imperial Diet is established in Mediolanum to coordinate the Emperor and the six independent Vicarii, heads of the six independent Dioceses

Furthermore, the emperor conceded the Roman title of Vicarius (head of a Diocese) to all the leaders of the six Dioceses:

- i) Donaldus, *Rex Scotorum*, *Vicarius Hiberniae*
- ii) Volusianus, *Vicarius Britanniae*
- iii) Vallia, *Rex Taifalorum*, *Vicarius Belgicae*

- iv) Edeco, *Rex Hunnorum*, *Vicarius Galliae*
- v) Gaisericus, *Rex Vandalorum*, *Vicarius Hispaniae*
- vi) Carpus, *Vicarius Lusitaniae*

There was some grumbling, but when it was realized that the existing elite classes would not lose status, and that the empire might be thought of as expanding under this arrangement, the *Constitutio Marciana* was quietly accepted. Administrators applauded the changes as they meant that the upkeep of scores of roads, bridges, aqueducts, and other constructions was to be fobbed off on unsuspecting rubes in the countryside. As a result the empire began to look a bit shabby around the edges and definitely in need of a makeover.

Thus this went off smoothly. The Taifali, unfortunately, chose to wait to claim their provinces and remained in pleasant Italia for now (*see Taifali Tribes*). Damnonia became Britanniae, the Scots now Hiberniae, and so on, with much activity ensuing.

The *comes rerum privatarum* Sempronius was killed in an unseasonable Spring snowstorm while travelling across the Alps on the Emperor's business. This death turned several complex plans into a swirling mess it took four slave administrators two full months to sort. Yet another source of worry was the increase in piracy along the African coast, from Carthago to Kyrene.

Timotheus, *magister officiorum* and priest, made his way to Viennensis in an attempt to secure its allegiance. In this he was successful, and continued to find friends for the empire in Novum Populi and Tarbellia. Eric the Burgundian was the object of many late-night offers - of employment, that is. In the end the caché of the Empire was a big draw and he joined up as the new *princeps Burgundorum* - he thought the title might impress the ladies. Eric was not, however, able to convince his Roman deserters to sign up, their leaders being implacable in their hatred of Mediolanum.

In military matters, it was decided that the Gepids would be a focus of activity. The legions, under *magister equitum* Flavius Tullianus, marched via Dertona south to "relieve" Genua, while Eric marched north with his small force of German mercenaries. An April uprising by the oppressed local Roman population was quickly dealt with by the Gepid king, who had been expecting such a move by the Empire.

Vidimir was not, however, expecting to see actual Roman troops, and had in fact taken to disregarding such a possibility. Using little-known passes Tullianus moved into Alpes Cottiae and was able to march to the city of Vada Sebatia and occupy it with little resistance. Meanwhile Eric's force had advanced quietly and taken the town of **Forum Claudii** by surprise. The main Gepid force was then faced with two armies, one to the west and another in the hills in the east.

Vidimir decided to deal with the Germans first in order to secure his rear and then advance on the Roman main army. Hearing of the Gepid approach, Eric ordered **Forum Claudii** to be barricaded. Within a few days pits, moats, and wooden ramparts were scattered about and inside the town, most of the citizens having fled.

The Gepid army, some 10,000 strong, surrounded the place and prepared to storm it. But the following day a messenger rode into Vidimir's camp with the news that Tullianus force was a day's march away and was much larger than what the barbarians mustered. Vidimir decided to fortify his camp and await the Roman army.

Their approach was not subtle. The Flavius Jovius was travelling with his retinue. They included servants, slaves of various sorts, acrobats, dancers, mimes, and a full kitchen staff. While the main army had been carefully crossing the mountains into Alpes Cottiae his entourage and guards had stopped at all the cities along the way, sampling the local foods and other pleasures before spending several long weeks in Genua. Thus when he joined the main army Tullianus was not pleased.

On April 19 the imperial legions appeared at dawn within a mile of this camp. Tullianus decided to let fear gnaw at the barbarians, hoping they would rush out of their crudely walled place to their doom. And in fact this is what Vidimir did - that evening. At sunset he ordered his infantry, who had been resting, to charge down the hill. In the gathering gloom the Gepid foot rushed into the nearest ballistae which had been pestering them all day, sweeping it away.

Tullianus rapidly recovered and sent the *quaestor* Olympius with some *alae* of horse to counter by hitting the massed barbarians in the flank. Vidimir countered by sending 3000 armored cavalry in support and a battle unfolded along a kinked line at the base of the hill. Hundreds of Roman *auxilia* were ridden down before legionaries formed up to drive back the enemy cavalry.

In the end numbers and quality told the tale, as the Gepid line was enveloped on each flank. Hundreds of Sarmaticized horsemen fell trying to buy time for the infantry to withdraw, which they did. Tullianus decided not to pursue across the hills at night.

The following day a herald approached the Roman camp. Several days of negotiations ensued, at the end of which Vidimir agreed to leave the Ostrogothic cause and fight for the Emperor. When the news reached Mediolanum there was pandemonium as spontaneous crowds of citizens cheered in the streets, and the Augustus himself walked among the people to celebrate with them. Good news had been hard to find, and nobody could recall such a positive development. The Gepids clans were allowed to remain, for now, in Alpes Cottiae.

Eric the Bastard and his men enjoyed the pleasant life on the coast. When it came time for them to advance on Aemilia and liberate it from foreign oppression he only smiled a bit. Take on a Hunnic army maybe ten times his size? Eric instead went for a refreshing swim, a skill recently learned from Jovius. This prince had sailed off for Africa. Actually, Tullianus had forced the effusive prince onto local shipping and out of the theater of operations.

Jovius arrived in Africa and set about meeting and greeting the locals, most of whom he seemed to know. His ships had stopped in most of the ports along the way, and nearly everyone knew the prince to be a jolly man who much to their surprise paid his tab, always a substantial sum. This won many friends for himself and the emperor.

Meanwhile things in Genua were heating up. The staff of Tullianus had become sullen, thinking on their estates in the suburbs of Mediolanum and what an army of Huns was doing to them. The *flavius* himself was beginning to wonder at the wisdom of his policy of exacting adherence to the imperial strategic plan. But a change at this late date would probably ruin his career, so it was only at the start of 424 that he began to bring his army out of winter quarters and plan an invasion of Liguria.

Much of that cold season saw Olympius prevailing upon his new "friend" Vidimir to join with the Romans in attacking the Hun army. The Gepid king did give in to these entreaties in the end. His people were no longer under the *umbra* nor even the *penumbra* of Ostrogothic, and thence Hunnic, protection, while the

imperial army did have its rather sizeable cavalry boot on his neck. Similarly, Eric and his small force were induced to accompany their paymasters into what may well prove a foolhardy venture.

By the time the Romans had all of their ducks - or shields - in a row, it was high summer and the troops were loath to leave the cooler coast for the inland plains. For their part, the Huns were left with few and poor leaders, unable to stop the liberators from marching across the mountains towards Mediolanum. Nonetheless a minor khan by the name of Gargamel was chosen to lead the horde as *gur-khan* of the moment. Few doubted victory over the Romans, who were outnumbered more than two-to-one and were still fielding large numbers of infantry in this, the day of cavalry.

The two forces met at the **Addua River** on August 22nd. Despite the inherent advantages the Huns had, the imperial army was far better lead. Realizing that withdrawing after a loss to such an army was suicidal, the *flavius* drew up his troops with their backs to the Addua and their right reinforced by a small vineyard.

Waves of nomads surged forward, to break on the Roman position before wheeling about for another go. By noon hundreds of dead Huns littered the front of the position, while an attempt by Gargamel to send some dismounted Goths through the vineyard resulted in a disaster as they and their supports were routed.

Tullianus sensed a weakness in Hun morale and launched a counterattack with his fresh *equites* and the Gepids. This charge against the enemy center met little resistance, and was followed up with more Roman troops. Hunnic resistance melted and the their camp was overrun. Over the following month thousands of captives were liberated, and vast amounts of booty were retaken. So large however was the nomad predominance in horse archers that attempts at pursuit were entirely ineffective. The invaders streamed down the valley into Aemilia, where news of the loss threw the camp of the new Khakhan into chaos. Gargamel was killed on orders of the Khakhan.

For his part, Tullianus was given an old-style welcome in Mediolanum, hundreds of fettered Huns being led along the streets. The hinterland was repopulated and a tax deferral was granted to the *coloni* so that they might have a chance to recover their devastated lands.

## Holy Empire of Rome

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Pentadius, Augustus*

Diplomacy: Histria (UN)

A pox felled Stilicho on 23 June of 422, throwing the realm into confusion. Who would lead them? What was their purpose? The maiden daughter of Stilicho, Aemilia Materna Thermantia, managed to hold the tiny empire together by appeals to the Holy nature of the kingdom. She declared herself regent for the young sons of Stilicho, Tiberius and Julian.

Her death in the following year prompted another, more serious crisis. The twin sons of Stilicho's son Eucherius had their proponents as they were a year older than the late Augustus' little boys. The holdover crusader generals, Memmius Cella and Paulus, were convicted of plotting against the state and were executed with little fanfare. They did however have their supporters, and the province of Histria decided to secede.

One Pentadius, one of Stilicho's most faithful commanders, was acclaimed as emperor by the troops and senators of Aquileia on 24 September of 423 and consecrated by Bishop Timothy. Pentadius promptly set about doing nothing much at all, though promising to keep safe the children of Stilicho. The young sons of Eucherius were brought into his household under close watch, and the guard troops from Constantinople were useful in keeping domestic order.

## **Ostrogothic Kingdom**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Tamora, Queen Mother and Regent*

Diplomacy:

Paulus, her Roman husband, had warned her. "Trust no one," he had said before making a short journey back to Neapolis to oversee political changes there (*see Red Huns*). But despite her perilous position Queen Tamora was alarmed when she walked in on her nursemaid, Gertamna, bending over the sleeping mat of her young son. Gertamna was the size of most Ostrogothic warriors, and indeed was always armed, a veteran of a number of battles.

Thus when the Queen surprised the nursemaid the latter immediately dropped the child, her hands leaving red stripes on his neck, Gertamna drew a large knife from her belt and ran at Tamora. The Queen though half the size of her attacker also charged barehanded, screaming. At the last moment Tamora sprang to her right and avoided the blade. Gertamna tucked into a roll and turned in time to see her opponent throwing a full and lit brazier at her. The burning coals struck her in several places, but the heavy ironwork knocked her backwards, knife flying out of her hands.

Tamora quickly picked up her boy and made for the door of the Roman-style manor. Entering the common room she found two guards already moving her way. The nursemaid tried to pull up but plowed into one of them and a brawl ensued. In the end Gertamna was captured and put to the question before being publicly beheaded. Her husband was fined heavily and ended having to sell two of their children into bondage to pay the fee.

What the nursemaid revealed was an elaborate plot on the part of the local Roman Pagan priesthood to slay the boy in secret. Of course the regional clerics were nowhere to be found. The Goths were outraged enough that many more accepted baptism. They were also impressed when Tamora gave birth to a daughter, Amalasigrun.

The year 421 also saw a number of mysterious deaths, fires, and the implication of Theodohad in a plot to sell Goth widows into the Hunnic slave trade. While the alleged traitor averred his innocence he left the royal service. So many other nobles were disgusted with the affair they also refused to work on behalf of the kingdom. Of course the loss of the Gepids in the Spring did not bode well either, and Tamora did a lot of fast talking to hold the clans together under her leadership.

April also saw Aemilia in turmoil. Hundreds of armed refugees filtered back onto their former farms aiming to liberate them from Gothic mismanagement. These were quickly dispatched by the alert garrison, most of them being slaughtered in a number of ill-considered skirmishes and sieges of small towns. News from Alpes Cottiae was more ominous (*see Gepids*).

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

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Polyanthus, Dux et Praeses Dalmatia*

Diplomacy:

Sent on a special mission into Italia, Polyanthus was considered lucky to return with his head intact. He was happy to see that Narona had indeed fortified itself against the storm everyone knew was coming.

## **Kingdom of Britanniae - *Diocese of Britain***

(Classical Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

*Volusian, Rex Damnonia, Vicarius Britanniae*

Diplomacy: Anglia (UN), Atrebatia (F), Flavia (UN), Mercia (T), Londinium (F), Venta (FA), Isca (EA)

Inspired by his new relationship with the Empire, Volusian decided to strip the forts in Siluria to raise a small field army. He then paraded his army around to impress the provincials. This was especially successful in Londinium. Venta was not happy with the new political situation, but the threat of Cnut helped drive the citizens into the new Diocese.

## **Kingdom of Roman Gallaecia - *Diocese of Lusitania***

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Gaius Carpus, Rex Gallaecia, Vicarius Lusitaniae*

Diplomacy: Baetica (UN), Gades (P), Cluniensis (UN), Emeritanus (T), Emerita Augusta (T), Leon (EA), Legio (AW), Lusitania (FA), Scallabitanus (EA), Olisipo (T), Vettonia (UN)

As a "truly" Roman realm, Gallaecia was pleased to be welcomed back within the orbit of the empire on their own terms. So it was that Carpus lead his small force of newly-raised troops on a recruiting and diplomatic mission.

Leon was happy to have its local *comitatenses* join with anyone, their young "*flavius*" eager to win glory. Similarly, Scallabitanus proved a fertile ground, Carpus easily enrolling several centuries of locals into his army and indeed convincing the local *rex* to join the new Diocese of Lusitania. The province of Lusitania proper not only supplied troops but agreed to send its tyrant along to lead them.

Meanwhile, the heir, Gaius Carpus had gained several years of experience managing the kingdom. He now was ordered by his father to find a new bride in Leon, the local girl whom he had married having died in childbirth after giving him a healthy son. The sister of Leon's ruler agreed to wed the youth, her being only four years his senior and after a quick wedding found herself with child.

With his new army in Lusitania, Carpus decided that despite the Alamanni having stolen his patrimony by invading and settling Emeritanus he now was in a position to press his claim from the Emperor on that province. So despite a light snowfall the Gallaecian force marched into Emeritanus and easily liberated it. Wintering in a villa outside Emerita Augusta - the same estate previously occupied by the Alamanni

leadership - Carpus died, on January 18, of a sudden heart failure at the age of 60.

Despite his untimely death the various contingents with him agreed to maintain their loyalty to the new Diocese. The new bride of Gaius Carpus found herself a queen and thus in a position to talk her husband out of travelling to Cluniensis, given that land had just been taken by a large barbarian force (*see Siling Vandals*). And the new *rex* was smart enough not to visit Legio, whose senators had been so incensed at being given away to a minor power like Gallaecia that they had voted for war and appointed a dictator. They were a conservative lot indeed. As yet the militants had not decided to march forth against the new Diocese.

Gades was similarly unimpressed with their treatment by Mediolanum but decided for now to remain within Gallaecia given the Alamanni and Angle threats.

## **Gallie Kingdom of Lemovicia**

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Appolonius, Rex Lemovicia*

Diplomacy:

The tiny realm dissolved in a spate of mutual recriminations and financial improprieties.

## **Taifali Tribes**

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Vallia, Rex Taifalorum, Vicarius Belgicae*

Diplomacy:

The brother of the king, Dubius, had managed negotiations with the Emperor to find the tribes a new home on vast lands in the West. Unfortunately, as the people were ready to move the Prince took ill. His ailment was partly physical and partly of the spirit, where he alternately raved about his home in the East and then urged Vallia to lead them into Gaul.

Confused and concerned, the King decided to stay put. Dubius finally passed away on Christmas Eve of 421, not yet even 40 years old. He left behind a baby girl. Vallia took this as a sign and sired several children of his own.

## **Kingdom of the Red Huns - Diocese of Gaul**

(Asiatic Roman Christian Nomadic Open Empire)

*Edeco, Rex Hunnorum, Vicarius Galliae*

Diplomacy: Aeduia (T), Aquitania (UN), Cubia (T), Lugdunensis II (T), Lugdunensis III (P), Portus Namnetum (T), Coriallum (T), Parisii (PT), Lutetia (T), Senonia (P), Campania (UN), Samnium (UN), Neapolis (UN)



The king of the Red Huns was conflicted, as were many of his people. Several of the lesser khans grumbled about leaving the idyllic climate of Italia for Gaul, which sounded too much like the steppe for their liking. Most of them however were pleased at the prospect of wider domains and better pasturage for their herds - and perhaps a chance for combat and loot as well. Edeco was of course flattered that the Emperor had named him "King of the Huns." This was perhaps an overly expansive pronouncement, but it certainly set the king to thinking late into the night.

Thus the tribes bid farewell to their neighbors, including Turpilio, comes Neapoli, who had decided to remain in his hometown and to die under Roman rule and be buried among his ancestors. By March of 421 columns of horses, wagons, and those on foot made their way through Samnium and along the *via* into Taifali-ruled Flaminia. By late July they were at Mediolanum, where Edeco made a brief courtesy visit to the imperial court. They crossed the Alps in early autumn and debauched into the valley of the Rhodanus as the first snows fell.

Spring of the following year saw the horde enter Cubia without incident, adding it to the Red Hun domain. It was there that they learned of events in Senonia (*see Franks*).

Riding into Senonia in April of 422, Edeco was surprised to see small groups of peasants approach with a plea to free them from the Franks. The king had thought to find stiff resistance from the locals and was happy to meet with them. The Franks had, under their Bishop Euric, formed up near **Noviodunum** and so Edeco and his *gur-khan* Modares marched to meet them. Some part of the army was sent to destroy small contingents of Franks housed in outlying manor houses.

The rest of the army arrived at Noviodunum, a small unwallled city, to find the northmen encamped within, roads barricaded and the place stoutly defended. Pondering this, Modares decided to send the bulk of his armored horse a league away and skirmished with the Franks. The latter, emboldened by the small number and cowardly demeanor of the Huns who always ran when confronted, decided to form up and attack. On April 19 a wall of armored men marched towards the perceived camp of the Red Huns over a nearby low hill.

After an hour of marching in the cool sunny day their order was haphazard and thus the charge of a line of mailed cavalry from over a rise was met with little resistance. Turning to flee back to the town they were alarmed to find their way met by a mass of strangely bold horse archers. By mid-day 6000 Franks lay dead, Euric among them having lead a countercharge against the nomad's heavy horse.

Despite the initial friendliness of the locals, Senonia was as a whole just as unhappy with the rule of Edeco as of Clodius. Thus the host marched along the Atlantic coastline and into Parisii by March of 422, there to meet yet another army of northmen (*see Franks*).

After a very active campaign, Edeco decided that his people ought to rest in Parisii for a while and so there they remained. And while the climate was not mediterranean, his men found it - and the locals - far from unappealing.



## Gepids

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Vidimir, Chief of the Gepids*

Diplomacy:

A cool spring breeze off the ocean blew the brown hairs across Vidimir's forehead as he inspected the small docks at Portus Venetis. Without access to Genua, he was considering expanding the facilities here though the locals all scoffed - politely - at the notion. Looking up at the cliffs behind him, he had to agree that while the setting was beautiful it had little potential for being a major port.

The sun was setting over the water, suddenly blocked by the sails of a small fishing vessel coming in with the afternoon's catch. It was passing close by the shore, though the king took little notice. The Gepid tribes were not learned in the ways of sea fishing. A flash of light off the water did catch his eye, but the glare of sunlight soon made him turn his head.

Something about the color and shape of that flash did, however, pull him up in his stride next to a large boulder. Without thought he pulled his sword from its looted silver scabbard and waited a few breaths. The old certainty of fighting filled his mind as he heard footsteps crunch the pebbles behind the boulder, and he quickly turned to face the owners of those feet.

Three men, wet and naked, were advancing on the boulder from a few paces away. Each had a short sword and a round unmarked shield. Vidimir instantly rushed the nearest assailant, his blade severing the man's sword arm. The other two fell upon the king, their blows crunching into his mailed body and knocking him down. Vidimir quickly rolled and came up on his feet, his lucky blade entering the upper thigh of one of the men and slipping into his abdomen. The other man slipped on the beach stones and fell, cursing.

Before the man could recover the king had kicked him in the head, and the fight was over. Vidimir dragged the last man up the shore where a few of his warriors were running towards him. This man was questioned rather successfully and, along with the evidence on the recovered fishing boat, the king learned that the Emperor had sent the assassins. Rather than being enraged Vidimir was relieved. He had heard the way of the Romans but had yet to feel the full force of their wiles.

To celebrate he sired a son on one of his concubines. Vidimir had not, however, seen the last of the Emperor's tools (*see Western Roman Empire*). In the end he decided the future of his people did not in fact lay with the Ostrogoths.

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## North Africa

### Berber Kingdom of Tingitania

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Flavius Juba, Rex Tingitaniae*

Diplomacy: Rusaddir (T)

Tormandus spent years infiltrating the high society of Rusaddir, and in the end that city agreed to pay tribute to Juba. Otherwise the *rex* did some reorganizing, some painting, and shuffled papers.

All mourned the death of Constantia, wife of Juba, in childbirth at the advanced age of 43. Her good works and concern for the lower classes had made her more popular even than her husband, and her funeral was the event of the season.

## **Donatist Christian Church**

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Archbishop Emeritus*

Diplomacy:

The aged patriarch Emeritus was pleased to oversee the hiring of a larger staff to manage the far-flung holdings of the True Church. He was less happy that the secular leaders of the province of Africa were wooed by the Caesar, Jovius (*see Western Roman Empire*). Still, the treasury and the churches were both full, for which he remained thankful.

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## **Eastern Europe**

### **Arian Christian Church**

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Vandalarius, Pontifex ipseque Primas Gothicus et Germanicus*

Diplomacy: Alpes (AB), Raetia I (AB)

The Pontifex preached the Better News throughout Germania I for years, to no effect. More adventurous than him was Christophus, who was discovered by a minor Hunnic khan in Little Poland while being sheltered by some locals. Chased through a bog in his nightshirt, the priest barely escaped with his life.

### **Khanate of the Tyrasean Alans**

(European Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Respendial, Khan*

Diplomacy: Pechneg (HM)

Splitting from the Juan-Juan (*see Juan-Juan Khanate*) horde, local Alans and Goths joined with the khan of the Ghuzz Turks to form a Turko-Alanic federation. Life on the sea and steppe was good, and the new realm looked forward to feasting on the bones of The Empire - as any respectable nomad did these days. The Alan leading this agglomeration, Respendial, dreamed large.

## Empire of the Huns

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Uldin the Hun, Khakhan*

Diplomacy: Verona (PT), Asding Vandals (NT), Torki (UN)

A Hunnic horde under Balimber opened the Spring of 421 by swarming over the unwalled city of Hunneria. Citizens were slain in the streets, the place sacked and burned. After a few days no building was left standing, smoke from glowing embers marking the site now inhabited by crows and wild dogs. Thus passed the capitol of the Siling Vandals, long departed for sunnier climes (*see Siling Vandals*).

Uldin and Ruas, meanwhile, set out with their troops and a long queue of slaves to Alfold and the court of Godegisel. The suffering of many of the captives in the frigid mountain passes is recounted in the hagiography of Saint Geramnus published in Aquileia later the following year. April saw the host approach Alba Iulia and negotiations began almost immediately.

Now Gunderic, the heir to Godegisel, was a supporter of a rapprochement with the Huns to save their people, while Gaiseric, his younger brother, was against the Huns in order to save the honor of their people. When in the midst of the talks Godegisel died, supporters of each camp immediately sprang various plots which had been years in the making.

Nights were active in Alba Iulia for several days, with small bands of men of the pro-Hun and anti-Hun camp ambushed each other, and entire families were massacred on a few occasions. Eventually Gaiseric himself was killed in a skirmish and resistance crumbled. Uldin had wisely taken a neutral stance, withdrawing his forces to their tents. Gunderic was acclaimed king of the Asding Vandals on 4 June 421, and only then did Uldin restart negotiations.

For his part, Gunderic was aware that the anti-Hun camp could not be ignored, and agreed only to a treaty of mutual accord with Uldin, but not to pay tribute. The Rugians in particular were wary of any alliance with their ancient foes - but were also impressed by the tens of thousands of impassively brutal horsemen the khakhan had in tow. The mercenaries of every stripe, including Goths, Alans, and some unidentifiable, also left a definite impression of "inevitability" on the Vandal court.

In the autumn of 421 thousands of armored Hunnic archers under Mundzuc surrounded Verona, to be joined later by hundreds of Goths and Alans. The Hunnic lord received a delegation of civic leaders and laid out his demands. To wit, they were to submit or be starved out and treated as Hunneria had been treated. The senators and other magnates withdrew and a heated debate ensued. The following day they sent a messenger to Mundzuc's camp. The nervous man told the nomad lord that Verona was willing to leave the empire, but could not allow itself to be ruled by barbarians.

As Mundzuc was considering how to respond, a subaltern entered the tent with the news that the city appeared to be in a state of mob violence. Within an hour a second messenger from Verona was presented to Mundzuc. His message was that the citizens would be pleased to pay tribute to Uldin and apologized for any inconvenience by giving the Hunnic khan a jeweled silver belt buckle of impressive size. The heir, Balimber, was wed to the daughter of the wealthiest senator of the city. This was timely, as his wife Satsa, an unruly Gothic princess, had recently died in childbirth. She too, however, passed away in the same manner in the following year.

Without the logistical dead weight of thousands of groaning slaves the khakhan's host moved back up the Danube to Carnuntum, where a few luxury supplies were bought at the free port. Then the Huns moved through conquered Pannonia and Venetia, pausing to gaze in wonder at the walls of Aquileia. By the end of June of 422 Uldin was sipping khvass with Mundzuc in a stately house within Verona and plotting his next advance.

For everyone could see that the khakhan had his avaricious eye on the prize, Mediolanum. July saw the barbarian horde advance on a wide front up the valley of the Padus River and into Liguria. The few hundred militia who dared to oppose them were hunted down and exterminated, along with their families where identified. Thousands of refugees fled the advancing army into surrounding provinces, but not into the capitol, where the gates were shut against them.

The Roman main army, meanwhile, was busy defending Alpes Cottiae from any invaders. Tullianus read the reports from across the mountains and took another draft of his iced drink. He had his orders, and in any event the Huns would likely break themselves on the walls of Mediolanum.

And indeed the nomads seemed to have spent themselves in moving up to the Roman capitol. Satisfied with looting the countryside and carrying off the population for their own "uses," they camped here and there in villages, terrifying the people and generally having a grand time.

The remainder of 422 and into 423 the Huns despoiled Liguria. Then one chill February morning Prince Ruas was riding along a small irrigation ditch when part of it gave way from neglect, the *coloni* tenants having fled. His mount landed on him and Ruas' neck snapped against a rock, killing him.

Then on 6 October of 423 Uldin was felled by a heart seizure and died at the age of 51. Despite the fond hopes of civilized people everywhere the Hunnic Empire did not dissolve into a stew of warfare and assassination. Rather, the khans gathered outside Verona and after a lot of horse trading - much of it actually involving horses - chose Uldin's acclaimed heir Balimber as the new khakhan with a minimum of fuss. Key in this was Uldin's widow, the Patzinak Alan princess Gunver, who though childless was respected by all. She forced compromises, found honorable positions for the irascible khans, and generally smoothed the way.

In Genua, the Roman prince Tullianus was frustrated by the turn of events to the north. He decided to wait until his orders changed, and housed the few refugee families from Liguria. By 424 he was ready to move (*see Western Roman Empire*).

Finally, the province of Torki decided that the perilous adventures of the Hunnic Empire were simply too stressful, and they left the realm.

## **Orthodox Christian Church**

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Patriarch John Chrysostom*

Diplomacy:

The Church maintained a low profile while war raged to East and West. Clement, the Secretary General, was slain by bandits while on a pilgrimage in the wilderness in the Fall of 422.

Adherents of Nestorius, Pelagius, and others engaged in vigous discussion and the occasional scuffle. Witnessing these in Constantinople, Abraham of Harran, a widely-acclaimed holy man from the Levant, was felled by a heart seizure and died on 14 February 422.

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

(Arian Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Nevitta*

Diplomacy:

The Rugians carefully observed events regarding the Huns (*see Asding Vandals*).

## **Slavic Tribes - *Tributaries of the Huns***

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Bole*

Diplomacy:

The Slavs kept their heads down and made sure the payments to their Hun overlords were never tardy.



## **Eastern Roman Empire**

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Eutropius, Imperator*

Diplomacy:

Athaulf, magister officiorum and sometime King of the Visigoths, spread the two sets of orders out on his table, and glared at the two centurions responsible. One, a short blonde youth with an alarmingly misshapen nose, had arrived that day from Constantinople bearing a set of elaborate orders from Arcadius himself. The other, a wizened Egyptian lacking both hair and most teeth, had presented his credentials the previous day from Bishop Eutropius Cypriotis, along with commands for the "Gothic Legion" as it was widely known.

Athaulf had paused to catch his breath, cheeks ruddy and eyes watery from a long and anatomically improbable tirade directed at these two.

"And exactly what do you expect me to do with such letters?" he said, gesturing to the table. "On the one hand, my men are to march back to Antioch to make the Shah happy. So says your Bishop. Over here we have orders from the Emperor himself to loot, kill, and burn."

The demi-king sighed and rubbed his cheeks with his hands. He motioned to a scribe. "This man will be writing a message for each of you to carry back. The legion will remain here for now. When those two sort it out they can get back to me." Athaulf then began dictating while the two centurions stood, swaying.

The uproar at the imperial court was no less energetic. Arcadius was eager to avenge his humiliation at Ctesiphon, while Eutropius Cypriotis held that the honor of Rome was at stake and the abhorrent truce with the Persians must be, at least nominally, kept. Within weeks tongues wagged throughout the camp of treason, heresy, Pelagians, plots, conspiracies, and such.

The affair came to a head on an unseasonably hot day in late January. In the middle of his afternoon massage Arcadius was arrested by a mixed body of guards, *scolae*, and *alae*, lead by several tribunes. As he was lead outside a huge throng of legionaries cheered - but none offered to help their emperor. Instead they had offered Eutropius the purple.

But despite their threats, pleading, and arguments, the bishop would not be swayed. No priestly man would be raised up as emperor, for only the return of the Christ could usher in His Kingdom on Earth. And so the empire was, for a time, left without a master. The bureaucracy pretended nothing had happened, and the army did the same, so Constantinople was not unduly disturbed by events on the Persian border.

By the end of February, however, the emperor and the bishop had reached a concord under the stern eye of Patriarch John Chrysostom, who had roused himself to travel to the distant frontier. On March 1 Eutropius was named Caesar, second only to Arcadius, and a mixed Persian policy was achieved. This left nobody happy, but a rift had been avoided and the empire was once more of one mind - a mind with a serious headache.

The summer of 422 saw a tragedy as a freak storm wrecked the fleet shipping more troops to Ravenna. Among the dead was M. M. Thracias Dux Theophylact, one of Arcadius' most trusted courtiers.

On November 30 of 424 news reached Arcadius of the death of his archenemy, Yazdigerd (see *Sasanian Persia*). The shock of the news proved too much for the frail emperor, who fainted away and was carried by his guardsmen to the private rooms of a confiscated estate in Mosul. Despite the care of doctors and priests, he passed away that very night.

Within the hour the various legionary commanders, including those of the *scolae*, proclaimed Eutropius the new Emperor. The bishop was reluctant to assume the purple but was wise enough to see that without a male heir and no other ready aspirants at hand it was his duty to remove his chausable and take up a crown. Constantinople was of course thrown into an uproar as the various rumors and facts arrived from the Persian front, but only a small amount of opportunistic rioting marked the occasion.

## **The Duchy of Moesia - *Civitate Foederatae***

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Melchiades, Dux et Praefect*

Diplomacy:

The Empire was preoccupied with events in the East (*see Lakhmid Arab Kingdom*) and ignored this backwater.

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## **Middle East**

### **Ghassanid Arab Kingdom**

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Timotheus*

Diplomacy:

Even before the sad demise of King John (*see Sasanian Persia*) Timotheus was acclaimed leader of the remnant of this desert kingdom. Prince Paul, meanwhile, wed a local girl and the happy couple was blessed with a son.

### **Kingdom of Yemen**

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Ishmael ibn Yahsub*

Diplomacy:

The realm remained at peace, prosperity reflected in the birth of a son to Ishmael. The favorite concubine of Adam died, however, in childbirth in 422.

### **Lakhmid Arab Kingdom**

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheikh Amr al-Qays*

Diplomacy: Arabia (C)

Sheikh al-Qays played a major role in the tragedy that was the Persian War (*see Sasanian Persia*). Aiding him was his good friend and well-paid courtier Malik ibn Nuweira with his band of likely lads.

In an attempt to settle the past and move on, the Ghassanid leadership of King John, Prince Paul, and General Mukhtar took monastic vows, shaved their heads and entered a monastery a few miles outside al-Hira. This place of sanctuary called All Saint's was a rather pleasant caravanserai, the monks providing a ministry of service.

Unfortunately, John was unable to bear the news of the suffering of his people. Late one June night he slipped out with a map and a little water and made his escape. The following February his bleached bones were found in the desert due west of the monastery. John never learned the real news, that his beloved Petra was recovering from its sack.

In the midst of historic events the Crown Prince sired a number of children. In the process his favorite concubine died, an event Imru met with a grim equanimity. Better news was the decision of the captive Ghassanid troops to join the Lakhmid force. These swore fealty to al-Qays and marched with him in a position of honor, which was an improvement over their earlier prospect of slavery and sale into the mines.

## Monophysite Christian Church

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Patriarch Luke*

Diplomacy: Thebes (CH), Thebais (CH), Nubia (CH), Coele Syria (CA), Tripolitania (CH), Syrtes (CH), Memphis (MN), Meroe (CH), Makuria (CH)

To cap busy years of congregation building, the Patriarch consecrated a new cathedral at Seleucia, the port city of Antioch. Thousands attended an open-air eucharist and were disappointed to not hear an anti-Persian tirade from their spiritual leader.

Clergy and citizens alike were saddened when in the spring of 421 Ishmael, the 19-year-old Prince of the Blenmye, succumbed to a small outbreak of fever. His funeral was the social event of the season, and a number of heartbroken young ladies took vows of Holy Chastity on the spot.

The clans of Asir were willing to put up with the 12 missionaries sent among them. Even in Taif, in the north, the men were welcomed with few reservations. As the pilgrims to Qusai's Mecca were returning through that town they were interested to listen as the glories of the Christ were explained. They were clever not to deride Hobal and Manat, and so gained the respect of these pilgrims. Within a few years all the sheikhs had been baptized.

This team then travelled to Aden via the caravan route and likewise converted the leaders and masses there. It should be added that by the end of their mission only two of them remained unmarried, which helped establish local connections via Holy Matrimony.

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## West Africa

### Mauretania Nigerensis

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

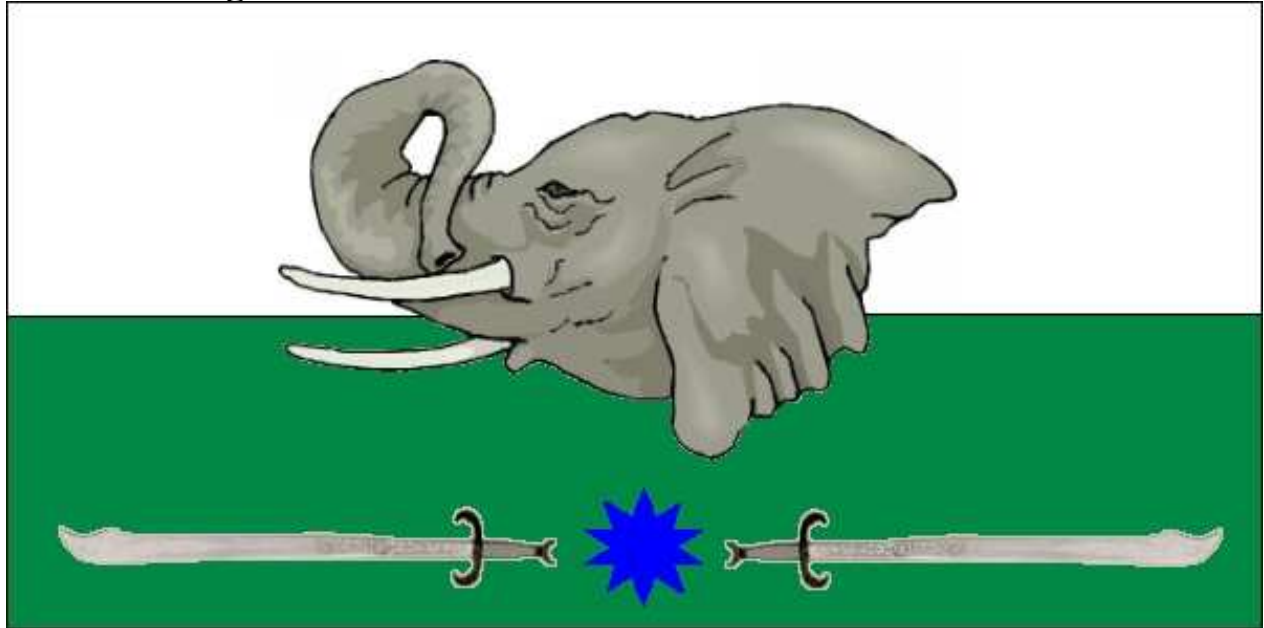
*King Solon*

Diplomacy: Galam (PT), Kalem (PT)



A minor officer named Solon fomented a revolt in the large garrison left in Galam by al-Kasurga. Stranded and ignored they decided to form their own nation with hundreds of troops and thousands of slaves. A petty and dreadful court was established among the forests and hills at the head of the Niger River, with Solon dreaming of empire.

## Moorish Kingdom



(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheik Sedray al-Kasurga*

Diplomacy: Sudan (P), Garou (P), Galam (PT)

The year 421 saw the Moorish army march down the Niger into Sudan, intent on punishing the upstart realm for its audacity in opposing the will of al-Kasurga. Thousands of war-hardened horsemen appeared suddenly outside the walls of **Gao**, throwing the city into a panic. King Mansa mustered an army to face the enemy, and within days a battle was fought near a hill outside the city. The Sudanese put up a stiff resistance but in the end the outnumbered and outclassed locals were forced to withdraw into their capitol. Their rearguard action allowed thousands of refugees to escape into the city.

Other thousands of refugees and thousands of Sudanese did not, however, escape the reach of the Moor. These were rounded up by village and herded off to an uncertain yet doubtless sad doom. They were however hopeful, as the concept of a siege of Gao left them the prospect of a defeat for their captors.

The beleaguered were not however to have an easy time of it. By late in 421 the city had been sealed off for two moons, and the Moors did not engage in the expected assaults on the walls. They were busy building pavises of green cowhide for their archers, and for the strange rock-throwers which wreaked havoc on the parapets and city houses. The spring saw the continuation of the conflict, with many defenders struck down by projectiles or slaughtered in ill-considered sorties. The walls had been reduced to rubble with troops defending mere barricades and housetops.

And yet the Sudanese fought with greater determination as their situation deteriorated. By mid-summer general Sukman "the Subtle" had seen enough. His army was still intact, but the prospect of further engagement with an enemy willing to fight to the last dog induced him to withdraw the Moorish army from its entrenchments. On July 14 king Mansa lead a procession around the city, drums and horns loud with celebration that at last the Northmen had been defeated. The fact that the city was in ruins and filled with the dead was forgotten in the general rejoicing.

The Moorish horde moved on to Garou, where the loyal vassal of Mansa found himself in an untenable position. After a number of sharp skirmishes and massacres his native army dissolved. Refugees fought alongside the Garou warriors but the effect was as before. Garou was treated as harshly as all opponents of the Moors, entire villages lead away in coffles to a sorry fate. The army, slowed by the thousands of whining slaves. marched home.

"I'm hungry! I'm thirsty! The binding is too tight! My child has bleeding feet!" said Sukman as he wiped his mouth after a large meal with the *flavius*. Sedray looked slightly ill, but nodded non-committally to his host. "Whiners and sluggards, the lot of them," exclaimed the general as he picked his teeth. "Still, they have their uses," he said while nudging the prince in the ribs rather too hard.

Meanwhile, general Abarug the Infamous was turned loose on Galam with a few thousand men. Galam was defeated with little fanfare, and thousands of villagers were captured for "alternative employment opportunities." Abarug next set his sights on the rich coastal region of Takrur. Despite inept leadership on the part of the local nobility the natives were numerous, fierce, and determined not to be enslaved. Abarug himself was slain when isolated from his guards, taking four spears in the chest before dying at the age of 52. His men retired back into Galam, there to take out their grief and frustration on the locals.

Amidst the brutality of war, rapine, and slavery the cherry on top had to be the ill-fated adventure of the shiek himself. Concealed in a reed boat, Abdul attempted to sneak into the Adawara capitol itself. Alert guards inspected the vessel as it pulled up at Kumbi-Saleh and discovered Abdul hiding within. A short sharp fight ensued and the now-wounded leader was taken prisoner. A long debate over his fate was ended suddenly when the tall elderly matriarch of one of the refugee families stepped away from the table, strode quickly over to the unconscious prisoner and slit his throat with a hitherto-concealed blade. The assembled nobles turned to see her laughing loudly, printed dress soaked in red blood of her enemy. Another noble took a spear, beheaded the sheik and marched around the city with the head stuck to the end. People in the city came out of their homes with blazing torches and variously shouted or wept at the sight.

On his return to Mopti the young *flavius* was crowned the new sheik with a minimum of fuss. While the legacy of Abdul was assured, the manner of his demise brought a sense of foreboding to some of the assembled Moors.

## **Sudanese Kingdom**

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Mansa, King of Sudan*

Diplomacy:

As a lioness would maul a calf, so was the Sudanese polity treated by the Moorish army (*see Moorish Kingdom*).

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## East Africa

### Axumite Empire

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)  
Emperor Tewodros Ella Asgad  
Diplomacy: Opone (UN)

Having found success in Berbera, the emperor left a garrison and marched home. His son Menelik begat two daughters and twin sons on his Blemmye princess wife Elizabeth. A road was begun over the mountains to the west and generally peace and prosperity prevailed. Indian efforts scuttled a mission to Opone (*see Kingdom of Sindhu*).

### Blemmye Tribes

(African Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)  
*King Satifal "the Great"*  
Diplomacy:

The king remained watchful. This was all to the good, as unwelcome visitors had made travel plans (*see Nobades Kingdom*).

### Nobades Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)  
*King Phillipus Silko, Basileus*  
Diplomacy: Qustul (F), Amara (F), Beja (F)

A special mass was held in the royal chapel praising Patriarch Luke for feeding his flock, literally. Kasu benefitted from much building in the name of the late queen, a princess of that province. Makuria finally had enough irrigation to qualify as farmland.

Count Pigol faced 3000 warriors in Nobatia and easily rode them down. Leaving a garrison he marched the 5000-strong expeditionary force into Beja in an invasion of the Blemmye "Kingdom." The region was crushed and a flood of immigrants were soon tilling fields left by dead militiamen, their families forced to find a new life - or none.

The Nobades army was flushed with success and pushed on into Blemmye, set on putting an end to this realm entirely. Under the wily Zakarias, king of the Beja, the Blemmye main army withdrew to the slopes of **Asoteriba** in late October of 423. Outnumbered by three to one, the defenders knew their only

hope lay in some clever strategem. The rugged terrain of the coastal mountains provided this.

Pigol and his men were lured into following the enemy army up and down the rocky hills by deserters and dropped baggage. Finally the Nobades men were cheered to finally see the Blemmye drawn up for battle on a ridge. Eager to have an end to the situation the nobles hastily drew up a line of battle and, ignoring Pigol's orders, charged up the slope. Zakarias smiled and met the charging horse- and camel-mounted warriors with his dismounted men.

By the time the invaders reached the Blemmye line their mounts were winded and many of their riders had fallen to archery. King Satifal nodded and Zakarias lead his men in a countercharge down the hill. The Nobades were caught and many slaughtered, the remainder fleeing on foot, horse, or camel. Leaving hundreds behind the army escaped down the coast to Beja, carrying Pigol who was wounded when a camel fell on his leg.

Regrouping after a thorough looting of bodies and some of the enemy camp, Satifal - under intense pressure from Zakarias - decided to follow up this victory with a pursuit into Beja. Now the Nobades warriors were the ones attempting to escape into friendly territory. At he **Baraka River** the pursued were forced to turn and form up for battle. Pigol directed the defense from his makeshift litter, happy to not be jostling his injured leg.

The Nobades commander knew that his army still outnumbered the enemy by more than double. Thus he ordered one regiment to establish a camp in the middle of a defile while the remainder of his army found several nearby gullies in which to hide. King Satifal lead his household troops in the van and immediately fell upon the camp. In what became known as the **Battle of the Tents** the defenders put up a surprisingly stiff resistance as more Blemmye rushed their camp. Suddenly horns sounded off the rock walls of the canyon as masses of camelry and cavalry rushed out at the surprised Satifal and his men.

In a twist of fate hundreds of overeager Blemmye were cut down in the first charge, more slain as they attempted to flee. Zakarias and Satifal managed to cut their way out and dragged the remaining troops back to Blemmye to nurse their wounds and consider their options. For his part Pigol was in no condition to continue the campaign and let himself and his men heal.

In more peaceful news there were a number of weddings to foreign princes and princesses. Princess Ganace, one of the triplet daughters of the late King Movad, at the age of 15 wed a noble of the city of Qustul. Prince Menas her elder brother was married off to a princess of Amara. Finally, Phillipus himself married an attractive yet widowed daughter of the king of Kordofan, who had agreed to have the woman baptized.

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## Persia

### Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Azargoshasp, Mobedhanmobed*

Diplomacy: Abadan (MN), Ahvaz (AB), Zagros (AB), Ublra (AB), Siraf (CH), Bandar (CH), Kirman City (CH), Fars (MN), Bishapur (MN)

Over 30,000 *gyanavspar* were outfitted for war, some on foot and some ahorse. These were placed at the disposal of the Shahanshah (see *Sasanian Persia*). Other mobeds and dasturs were busy throughout greater Iran, strengthening the local organizations and reassuring the people in these hard times.

Namirog, Dastur of Mosul, was preaching from village to village in his "territory," Ohrmazd had few adherents, when the Roman army marched in. A pro-Roman mob outside Dura caught him and was soundly thrashing the old man when a pro-Persian mob - or simply a mob opposed to beating the elderly in the streets - rescued him and he was spirited into Dura. After many months he was once more able to walk, though with a cane only.

Kartir, First in the Light, was stricken with a fever in June of 423 and his heart failed on the 15th of that month. Though the able Azargoshasp was quickly named to replace him his loss was a blow to all the faithful, though at age 66 the death of the Mobedhanmobed was not entirely unexpected.

## **Kingdom of Persarmenia - *Sasanian Persian Satrapy***

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Mazdak, Satrap*

Diplomacy:

Everyone but the king was surprised when the Shahanshah himself requested Mazdak lead the imperial armies to defend all Persia from the Romans. For Mazdak knew himself to be the mightiest warrior in all the empire, a trait most found disturbing but none dared question openly.

Tigranes, Prince of Armenia, accompanied him, but after a few years returned home in disgust at Yazdigerd's strategic posture. More colonists were settled in Ghilan.

## **Blue Turk Khanate**

(Asia Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Tardu, Khan of the Blue Turks*

Diplomacy:

The Kama Bulgars lead the reactionaries within the Turk horde out of the Oghuz tent on more-or-less friendly terms. This new grouping was based out of Parishkhwargar and those Turks settled there, and held Persia proper as well. The Ob and Kazan tribes were happy to live off what they could "tax" from the local peasantry. The Persian defenses on the Gurgan border were allowed to collapse in places. The nomads neither feared their neighbors nor understood the need for such walls in the first place.



## Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

*Varhanin, Shahanshah of Persia*

Diplomacy: Osrhoene (NT), Hazarajat (UN)

All through the spring of 421 rumors of war came to the streets of Ctesiphon. Along with these were a string of fires, assassinations of obscure bureaucrats and minor nobles, and sporadic oppression of non-Zoroastrians. Few even claimed to understand these events, but all feared what they might mean, and cellars were well-stocked against a potential storm (see below).

On November 27 of 424 CE an unmarked horse of surpassing grace and beauty pranced up to the gate of the palace of the Shahanshah. News of this came to Yazdigerd, who ordered it to be saddled for him to ride. But none were able to approach the stallion, who reared and kicked at every opportunity. At last the shah approached, whereupon the steed calmed immediately. The beast stood still and allowed both saddle and bridle to be placed by his hand. The crupper, however, needed a bit of adjustment, and Yazdigerd reached down to finish the job. Suddenly the horse lashed out with a hind leg and slew the Shahanshah on the spot. The animal galloped off down the road, eluding capture with ease and was never seen again.

The Master of the Horse, the aging Artaban, was fingered in the above scandal and put to death, ending a long and unimpressive career at court. Others say that he was guilty of corruption in skimming silver out of the massive fortification projects around the capitol. Regardless of his fate, most agreed that he had certainly overseen a huge amount of labor as scores of towers were raised along the rivers and canals, and many villages throughout were walled. Few grumbled at their corvée labor given the news of a huge Roman army nearby, another on Asuristan, and the Turk on the rampage throughout. Surely Ahriman was about in the land.

Before his death, Yazdigerd named his son Xerxes a Prince of Persia. The lad was handsome enough but few thought he would amount to much due to his reckless nature and undue interest in things magical.

## *De Bello Persico, part deux*

### *Spring of 421*

- **Eastern Romans:** The M.M. Orientem Dux Verinian slipped into Osrhoene in April and began canvassing villages along the Arzamon and Mygdonius, and throughout Beth Arabaye. While nominally the area held to the shahanshah, few objections were heard as Verinian pleaded the Roman cause as holding the quickest path towards peace and prosperity.  
After some commotion in the Roman camp (see *Eastern Roman Empire*) preparations began for the new campaign.
- **Oghuz Turks:** A new Christian, the khan set about proving it by turning his riders loose on the local population. From the Turkish camps around Ray they set forth to extort silver and silk from the nobles and enslave girls and boys in raids across the countryside. Qanats were smashed, agiaries desecrated, and orchards burned. Resistance was widespread and mostly futile, and by June the horde was ready to move on.
- **Sasanian Persia:** Disturbing reports from various quarters reached the Shahanshah, Beloved of Ohrmazd, that many knife-thrusts at the heart of the empire would be attempted in the coming years.
- **Zoroastrians:** The troops consecrated to Ahuramazda were given over to the general direction of the Shahanshah in Ctesiphon.
- **Lakhmid Arabs:** Sheikh Amr al-Qays wasted no time gloating over his conquest of the Ghassanid state. Leaving the slower warriors with his trusted second, Hashim al-Kansa, al-Qays heads for the Roman frontier, encamping in Circis across the Euphrates from Persian-held Dura by late April. The following month al-Kansa and his men join the sheikh.

### *Summer of 421*

- **Oghuz Turks:** The Turks march into Zagros caused widespread panic along the expected route, but the peasants soon turned their herds and carts around when it became clear the Unclean Ones would just be passing through.
- **Kushans:** A strong force under Rustam Whitehair crossed the Persian border into Hazarajat on July 3 intent on conquest. Thousands of cavalry of varying weights streamed into the pleasant valleys, locating points of resistance and neutralizing them. Following a few weeks later another force under Tayhar Lionshield with foot, horse, and even armored elephants carrying archers in metal-encased howdahs marched down the dusty caravan road and into formerly Sasanian Persian lands in the process of being secured by Rustam's cavalry army.
- **Sasanian Persia:** His forces already mustered and on the road for just two days, Seyavesh, Satrap of Hazarajat, receives the news that the Kushans are riding hard into his lands. Grey hair and beard flowing in the hot wind, Seyavesh decides to leave his home and gather an army. Thus his men march as fast as they can down the old trade route into Kash, hoping to find succor among their neighbors. For they knew that Yazdigerd in distant Ctesiphon will have little aid to give them.  
And indeed, the Shahanshah was concerned over various reports indicating that regardless of what might appear on the eastern borders, the real threat lay to the west, and that Ctesiphon would once more be a target.

### *Fall of 421*

- **Eastern Romans:** It was a warm October morning that saw the Roman army under Bishop Eutropius Cypriotis cross the Euphrates on floating bridges and begin to march up the Khabur river into the heart of Mosul. Persian merchants counted nearly 100,000 men in this army, including thousands of Egyptians under the Vicarius Generalis Aegypti. The local militia was thrown into confusion, their leaders having expected the two sides in the war to woo them with gold rather than force their obedience with steel.

The Emperor too was along with the army. This time, however, he travelled with a small force of scolae and guards, and while sitting in on command staff meetings he rarely contributed. Some weeks into the campaign Arcadius stopped attending them altogether, preferring to listen with a wry smile to the daily protestations of the Persian ambassador.

- **Sasanian Persia:** Megabazus moved with the small crowds of refugees fleeing the Roman advance into Mosul and managed to escape detection, having sold off his silk travel pavilion and other high-profile items. Having to sell off personal items hardened him against the Empire and the court at Ctesiphon, and he moved on to plead the cause of the latter in Osroene.
- **Lakhmid Arabs:** Sheikh Farad al-Mundhir lay on a fine bed surrounded by his tribesmen, yet he was far from happy. The cough had drained his spirit, and now his heirs wished to receive a blessing or other token. Sent by the emperor to regain his position and oust the Ghassanids, instead he had heard that the tribes were frightened by the war and wanted no part of it. Now he dictated a letter to the Lakhmid king essentially acknowledging their right to claim Arabia. Late in the night al-Mundhir breathed his last, and his letter was announced in the tents and towns to great approval. The nobles thus managed to confuse the Ghassanid garrison commanders by celebrating them as allies while at the same time refusing to pay taxes. These soldiers were confused indeed, but not stupid, and rather than create a "situation" they decided to agree that the tribes would swear nominal loyalty to their king in exchange for tax amnesty.

### *Winter of 421*

- **Eastern Romans:** Several small-scale revolts in Mosul were put down with ease. The situation well-in-hand, Aetius Renatus decided that his men would be safe in garrison under Roman control while he nipped back home to the Nile to look to affairs.
- **Kushans:** With the first snows the Kushan foot began to invest the city of Kandahar, under the direction of Tayhar.

### *Spring of 422*

- **Oghuz Turks:** Crossing the Khersan River and on into Fars, Khan Sonqur noted the rich fields around each village, or large herds of cattle and sheep. Sadly he had to tell his clans to move on and not stop to pillage any more than was necessary.
- **Kushans:** The horse army of Rustam Whitehair marched swiftly between caravanserais into Kash. After less than two moons of campaigning the province was subdued, the local satrap surrendering to Rustam, who shipped him off to Kabul under guard.

### *Summer of 422*



- **Kushans:** By the end of June the city of Kandahar had at last been completely invested by the army of Tayhar Lionshield. And yet the young commander was impatient. His men had been camped outside the city walls through rain, wind, and snow, and while supplies were plentiful the troops were restless. Where was the promised loot? When could we expect to return home? How can we gain glory sitting here in the dirt?

Several tunnels had been dug while the city was being cut off, and by the start of July these were, according to the Hindu engineering officers, terminated inside the city. A week more and large spaces had been excavated at the end of each dig. One such was underneath a section of wall, while the other two were under the other city itself.

A small diversionary skirmish was ordered on one side of the city while the timbers under the sapped section of city wall were lit on fire. These supports gave way and while nobody heard the tree fall under the earth, everyone heard the sound of mud brick masonry faced with stone crumbling. Tayhar led a charge of armored elephants at this point, while engineers advanced to clear a path for the beasts and elite swordsmen swarmed ahead into the gap. They found resistance light. Meanwhile more troops were pouring out the two tunnel openings within the cities, cautiously at first.

At this point that Zalar, the Persian garrison commander, launched his counterattack. His stonemasons and sages from Kandahar had long known of the tunnels by listening closely, watching ripples in water dishes, and observing the Kushan army at a distance. Tayhar Lionshield topped the pile of rubble atop his elephant, feeling every bit the conqueror, just in time to see his advance contingent fleeing towards him, chased by arrows and armored swordsmen. The men at the tunnel portals were at the same time surrounded and cut down, while a single squadron of *clibanarii* charged out of the Kabul gate past gaping Kushan warriors slowly advancing on the city and into their camp. A few youths riding on the cruppers of the *dihqans* with ready torches lit the invader's tents.

The sight of the elephants fleeing, plus the camp afire, was too much for the troops, whose dreams of pillage had turned to terror. They fled, pursued by the *clibanarii* and hundreds of variously armed city men and the tiny Persian garrison. Thousands of Kushans were captured, wounded, or slain, and scores of likely lads from the city sacked the camp, returning with silk, silver, and spices. Tayhar managed to escape with an infantry escort and fled back to the capitol. With the departure of the Kushan army the province reverted to Sasanian control, and the various officials came out of hiding to collect duties, taxes, and generally make themselves a nuisance.

Meanwhile, to the north, the army of Rustam Whitehair marched his cavalry through the scrub-covered hills of Harev. One afternoon in late August scouts rode in from the left flank and announced a small enemy army one hour ahead. The Kushan smiled, happy to be able to land a blow against what had been an elusive enemy.

Redeployed for battle, Rustam led the van down a wide swale between two low rocky hills. The Persians looked to be an untidy lot, probably local militia in a mix of *paighan* archers, farmers with slings and spears posted here and there, with the cavalry milling about to left and right, perhaps 2000 in all. Feeling pity for them, Rustam sent a herald forward with a promise of leniency and no looting. The herald returned shortly, bearing the message that the fig in his hand would be all the invaders would get.

Rustam sighed, praised the Buddha, and ordered his men forward. The charge of the armored horse archers in the van sent the Persians fleeing to the rear, and soon Rustam was left behind watching a cloud of dust raised by the pursuers. Some time passed, and the commander was amazed to see these same troops fleeing in rout. Before he could stop them they had charged through his own formations, carrying them away as well.

For the Persians had read their *Manual for Warfare*. The ancient and now ex-patriot satrap of Hazarajat Seyavesh had been put in command of the armies of Herat and Margiana, who had

marched to his aid. With three small forces they agreed it best to join to meet the barbarian threat. The Margiana force under Narses was the bait, while the remainder of the army was hidden in gullies to the rear. Outnumbered two to one, the Persians could only rely on trickery to retrieve the day, and as the Kushan heavy horse rode down the men of Margiana they were in turn attacked to flank and rear.

Narses' losses were heavy, but the Kushans panicked and fled, though no Persians pursued. Rustam could convince them to rally only back in Kash. There word reached him of the loss of Hazarajat, and he pondered the next move of his isolated force.

- **Sasanian Persia:** Convinced of an immediate threat to the center, Yazdigerd refused the advice of some of his courtiers and kept the main army in Ctesiphon. Some of the army commanders muttered to their aides that the Turanians were ripping the country apart while the Shahanshah fretted on his throne.

### *Fall of 422*

- **Oghuz Turks:** Crossing the Tigris was for the Turks an arduous task, mainly revolving around chasing down enough barges and boats to ferry the horses, cattle, wagons, and other impedimenta across the water and into Abadan. Further slowing the advance were a number of well-sited towers and walled villages placed along the easiest lines of advance. These were, however, no great obstacle. After the first stronghold, called Gushnasp Alar, refused to surrender, it was starved out and the garrison staked to the ground and trampled to death. The next fort decided to surrender, as did most of the rest.
- **Lakhmid Arabs:** Al-Qays monitored the news from abroad and waited.

### *Winter of 422*

- **Oghuz Turks:** Sonqur was awakened in his tent in the cool of the morning by shouts and, even moreso, by the distinctive sound of metal on metal just beyond the heavy tapestry near his head. But while he managed to grab his dagger and small ax before racing outside, the fight was over. His guards had dispatched the small group of local commandos, the last of the resistance to his people's systematic looting of Abadan. The khan shook his head, wondering whether his clansmen would ever learn to take prisoners for questioning.

### *Spring of 423*

- **Eastern Romans:**
- **Oghuz Turks:** Nomads to the core, the clans packed up their loot and took their commandeered boats across the swamps of the Euphrates into Meshan. Despite the lack of a Roman army marching at his side, Sonqur felt confident that his men would be able to defeat the Arabs who might oppose him. As tributaries of the Persians whose nation he had ravaged, they would need to work hard to gain his respect.  
In Meshan he found a fairly fertile land, though he had seen better. The Turks pushed on, up the Euphrates.
- **Lakhmid Arabs:** A boy ran into the tent of Amr al-Qays, breathless. After a few breaths he was only able to say, "The Turks, the Turks!" The sheik nodded, and handed the lad a large silver coin with Yazdigerd posed on one side and a fire temple on the other. Al-Qays was unperturbed at the news, for his men had been sending him reports on the movements of various forces in the area.  
Let them come, he thought to himself, and his courtiers were surprised to see the sheik smile broadly. What do these Turanians know of warfare? Immediately the Lakhmid ruler barked out

orders, and the army decamped, most men pleased at the prospect of leaving the Roman-watching to the Iranians - and at the prospect of taking the already storied amount of loot from the Turks as just payment for their trouble.

### *Summer of 423*

- **Kushans:** Marching to liberate Kash, and then his beloved home of Hazarajat, the army of Seyavesh was ill-prepared for what awaited them. Having chased Rustam out of Harev the *dihqans* of Margiana, Herat, and Hazarajat were confident that the large Kushan army was a silk tiger, hard to tear yet easy to push aside. In mid-July the Persians were attacked as they crossed the trickle that was the Khash River east of Farah. Rustam Whitehair had his substantially larger all-mounted force sweep down from the surrounding hills on the west side of the river, and these overran the Persians on that bank. The remainder fled but were hunted down over the next few days.

In pursuit the satraps of Margiana and Herat were captured. Before Rustam they renounced their fealty to Yazdigerd and vowed no resistance to the Kushans. Seyavesh, though ailing, was spirited into Farah. Broken in spirit and frail of body, he expired a few weeks later at the age of 80. His son in Hazarajat decided not to resist the Kushan Empire when Rustam marched through in September. The father who had as a youth fought against Julian on the Tigris was thus rewarded, and the heir was ill-regarded for months after.

### *Fall of 423*

- **Eastern Romans:** The troops in Mosul hoped for glory and conquest in Persia, yet were denied.
- **Kushans:** Considering his orders and his options, Rustam Whitehair decided to march through Harev and thence to Transoxiana.

### *Winter of 423*

- **Oghuz Turks:** Sonqur was not pleased. An unseasonable rain, followed by a strong wind, had turned the landscape into a dun colored phantasm. The nomads had halted before the walled village of **Ullais** as scouts had reported a large force encamped nearby.

The khan nodded to the well-dressed Arab boy and handed him a scroll. Several layers of scribes and translators had allowed a semblance of communication between the two armies, and each had agreed that tomorrow, Christmas Day, was not going to see a battle between them, but that the following day might be suitable.

That day dawned cold and clear. Stretching from the mud-walled village on the Euphrates floodplain westward was a series of trench sections, reinforced in places with mud redoubts. A large force of Arab light horse was massed to the left of Sonqur's view, with a thin line of infantry, some mailed, lining the entrenchments.

The Turks had lined up opposite the Arabs in a mirroring deployment but with only a little infantry before **Ullais** itself. The khan had a simple plan - distract the enemy front while overwhelming their cavalry and then flanking the line.

"Oh my," muttered Sonqur. A lone Arab had walked his horse from their lines bearing a black banner on his lance. The Lakhmids then took up a wild and high-pitched cheer that sent an involuntary shiver down his spine. The Arab reined in, and Sonqur could now see a glint of mail under his robes. One of his clan guardsmen, Atlakh, used his few unbroken teeth to grin at the khan, who only nodded in return. Sonqur then ordered his guard to shoot down the Arab should he be

victorious.

Atlakh goaded his steed forward and within a few heartbeats the two men were racing at each other. The Arab ignored the two nomad arrows now dangling from his mail and loosed a heftier shaft that hit Atlakh on the outside of his thigh, pinning him to his saddle blanket and drawing some blood. Both then stowed bows and pulled hand weapons, the Arab lifting his lance from where it had been slung across his back, the Turk his small handax. Yards away, Atlakh threw his ax, which the Arab dodged, and then his lance was in the nomad's chest, point glinting suddenly from the back.

A gasp arose from the Turkish line. The Arab reined in his mare, leaped off the horse over the withers, and ran to the writhing form of Atlakh. Pulling his curved dagger, the victor quickly beheaded the Turk and held the head up high so that the blood ran down his face. So shocked were the guardsmen that they did not launch arrows at the man, only staring in amazement as he then remounted and raced back. The cheer from the locals was now his name, "Malik! Malik! Malik!" the famous mercenary.

A cry of outrage arose from the Oghuz, the Chorasmians, the Otrar, and the Tabolsk, who even in their own violent lives had never seen such a spectacle. They charged immediately, loosing arrows to make a thick cloud. But the Arabs were already on the move, infantry with shields up and cavalry racing forward. A swirling cavalry melee soon developed where before neat lines were. Al-Qays' men fell back and the Turks followed up eagerly.

Thus they were surprised to see thousands of great beasts with warriors on their backs coming over a low hill to their left. Most of the Turks had never seen such camels before, and many of their horses shied, some bolting in random directions while others spilling their mounts into the boiling dust at their hooves. A brass horn lowed from somewhere behind the Arabs, and they pressed their attack with swords, maces, lances, and javelins. Soon the Turks were fleeing back to their families encamped some miles downriver, though nobody pursued them.

Sonqur felt his defeat bitterly, especially as the Tabolsk had used their big iron axes to hack their way into the walled town, which was afire even as his horse archers were fleeing away. Most of the Tabolsk were able to get away, though hundreds were left dead in the dirty lanes of **Ullais**. The Turks fell back to Meshan and considered their next move.

### *Spring of 424*

- **Oghuz Turks:** With the Lakhmid capitol out of reach the Turks decided to head not for the *main* Roman army but rather the *nearest* Roman army. Thus it was that the Euphrates was once more crossed by the khan, this time into Asuristan. The Visigoths were welcoming, if a bit wary, and they all settled in for a long and very hot summer.

### *Summer of 424*

- **Eastern Romans:** Arcadius swooned in the heat while on a hunt and was carried back to his mansion.

### *Fall of 424*

- **Kushans:** Debauching into the fertile valley of the Murgab from the pass Kowtal-e Zarmast, the Kushan army had little trouble defeating the local militia after spreading out across the countryside. Meanwhile another army marched down the Oxus and then west into Margiana, lead by Prince Gudarz of Kapis and the Satrap of Tokharia.  
During the campaign a few hundred of Rustam's horse archers were slain in local ambushes, but by late November the province was fully under Kushan control.

## *Winter of 424*

- **Eastern Romans:** Rumors raced from camp to camp in Mosul, but within a week of the demise of Arcadius a new emperor had been chosen and the troops were well pleased.
  - **Sasanian Persia:** Megabazus had been playing tag with Verinian for years, and had developed a grudging respect for this clever Roman. They had travelled from town to town, chatting with the same local merchants and bishops but never at the same time. Thus when they arrived at a caravanserai on the Arbela road a day's march from Nisibis the two men broke bread as friendly adversaries and not bitter foes. In the end the Persian had the upper hand, and Osroene hewed more closely to Ctesiphon than before while remaining as independent as possible.
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## South Asia

### **Lambakanna Sinhala - A Kingdom of Chera**

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

*Chandra, Raja*

Diplomacy:

The merchants talked amongst themselves in hushed tones about the future of their realm. Anuradhapura was allowed to incorporate more of the surrounding countryside in a major construction effort. While on a discrete journey into Kalyani Prince Vishnu, son of the Raja himself, was caught by the city guard in an incident involving a caged monkey, a mango, and Jain mendicant. Knowing better than to alienate a powerful nation, the guilds and officers decided to keep the nobleman under guard in an apartment on the central city square.

### **Buddhist Stupas**

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Master Rugendra*

Diplomacy:

The hierarchy was *stupa*-fied.

### **Chera Kingdom**

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Gaman, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Gangas (C), Nandagiri (T)

In a bold move the *rajadhiraja* purchased a province and city from that foreign dynasty the Pallavas (*see Pallava Kingdom*). Ordered to smooth the waters with the locals in Gangas, *raja* Agriya and his party were captured while on a mission there. After being severely handled by the native militia a wandering

Jain managed to talk them into better treatment and medical attention. Months of chatting up the regional *rajas* made them agree to cease their war, and to allow Gaman to claim them as his vassals.

## Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Jatavarman, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:

Nobles of the land wondered at the declining position of the kingdom and chattered ceaselessly. Old Jatavarman did manage to sire a number of offspring but refused to wed.

## Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*Kamara Gupta, Maharajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Sukkur (F), Sahis (F)

A crisis was brewing in the west and the empire roused itself to face the expected Persian retribution. Thousands of troops were drilled in the capitol, thousands more were named *kshatriya* and given mounts, arms, and armor, and several cities were expanded or given fresh walls and new militia uniforms.

In the end, of course, there was no invasion (*see Sasanian Persia*) and some questioned the waste of resources on military extravagance. Rabindranath Tagore was not one of these as he was in charge of mustering troops, but the *maharajadhiraja* was destined to be disappointed in his *mahasenapati*. For Rabindranath had inadvertently insulted a proud *mahadanda-nayaka* who had the C-in-C assassinated. The minor *raja* then escaped to his estates, but then turned himself over to imperial agents.

Asvaghosa "the Holy" left his brahmanical duties to serve Kamara. He travelled to Sukkur and Sahis where everyone was impressed with his devotion and logic.

Years had passed and Vinayak Damodar, the legendary general, lounged in a small suite of apartments in the palace of the shahanshah. Life was good despite the occasional Roman incursion, and he had even wooed the fifth daughter of a minor courtier to attend him. Through his window flew a dove with a ribbon tied to its ankle and the general knew it was time to leave.

Plans had been in place for years, and he slipped out this same window to a waiting horse. The horse took him to a small boat he poled to the commercial port. From there it was a long journey to India. But despite the lauds of his king and joy at seeing his family, he was never the same. Late in the summer of 424 he passed away, most agreeing it was from ennui. To his closest friends he admitted missing the pleasures of Ctesiphon despite his captivity - something of course no official would ever hear.

## Kingdom of Sindhu - *Gupta Tributary*

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

*Rudradaman, Maharaja*

Diplomacy: Musama (F), Nikon (EA), Sind (F), Scebeli (F to Scebeli)

More *pustapalas* and *dhruvas* were hired to make governance more efficient. Power flowed into the hands of Rudraman, yet few objected as the rains were good and ships rode low in the harbors.

Less happy was news in 422 that Rudraman's wife, the daughter of the *majaraja* of Pattala, died in childbirth. So sad was the ruler of Sindhu that he sought no other woman and devoted himself solely to management of the realm. Her father Abhayadatta was blessed within a year with a baby daughter, whom all knew to be her own sister.

But Abhayadatta was not there for the birth, for he had taken the fleet west to strike at the purse of the Persian. Scores of fast ships set up off of Asaban to prey on ships owing allegiance to the shahanshah. These privateers soon decided to base themselves out of Musama for convenience and caused no end of trouble. Not that they actually managed to seriously interrupt trade. Given leave to pillage, the captains decided to take their pay and instead spend it in port, much to the delight of the Persian shopkeepers of Musama.

The *majaraja* of Pattala was thus always dragging what crews he could find out of various dives and brothels to lead them against merchantmen heading for Ublra and other ports. One reason for this was his reputation for being a lousy admiral. Over two years he managed to lose dozens of ships and their crews. Rumor has it that some of those not lost to poor repair, aggressive merchant convoys, or reefs were to be seen on the beach at Ormuz. Abhayadatta finally ordered his ships home and 424 saw him glowering at the palace staff in Pattala - those few who were forced to be in his presence, that is.

On a more positive note Venkatachalapathi Salmuldrala managed to use the presence of the Sindhu fleet to convince Musama to swear loyalty to Rudraman. Given the state of the Sasanian dynasty this was seen as merely practical in that city. When the monsoon winds blew he set sail for the African coast.

In the wood-palisaded port of Nikon the locals welcomed Salmuldrala and agreed to join the Sindhu as a way to increase trade. Unfortunately not all of the locals were happy with this and his small escort was attacked by pirates just a few days out of port. All but two of the Indian ships were taken, and the Hindu priest once more considered the wisdom of sea travel for the devout. The next port of call was Opane, where he had to contend with the Axumite representative Kaleb, who was trying to win them over. In the end the kandake decided on neutrality - mainly as a great way to get more free stuff.

## Hinduism

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Virasenadeva, Guru*

Diplomacy: Chandela (CA), Sarnath (AB), Jaunpur (AB), Keldyna (CH), Barygaza (AB)

Hundreds of baskets of grain were purchased throughout the Gupta realm by factors of Virasenadeva. These were stored in new granaries built in many parts of India, and even in far Africa. Scores of gurus and mendicants managed to convince Chandela that the Buddha did not mean to discount Rama and Vishnu, and the region was converted. On a mission to the city of Keldyna, the learned and ancient brahman Shounaka was expounding on the nature of Kali when he was struck with a seizure and died on the spot. This amazing fact helped convince the otherwise dubious locals to allow a shrine to be built in that place.

A sad fate also struck Shuka, who had taken sail for Palura. Off the mouths of the Ganges a sudden storm swamped his craft and all hands were lost. This of course pleased the conservatives who held that no good Hindu had any business going to the sea in ships. Such things were best left to lower castes and foreigners, as everyone knew.

## **Jain Sects**

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Visvasena, Acharya*

Diplomacy: Pawar (AB), Sarapion (CH)

Given their generous contributors, the Acharya decided to give a moderate amount of food away to the destitute throughout India. Jains generally, and Visvasena in particular, were lauded for this. Pallava agreed to pay a small tithe in exchange for a raft of special prayers.

The priest Aleray continued his work in distant Africa, working very hard to establish a small organization in Sarapion. He is not optimistic about his long-term prospects there among people who relish killing and eating so much, but is faithful enough to continue.

Elsewhere attempts at strengthening local organizations failed utterly, though missionaries to Chera and Seylan met with some success.

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

(Buddhist Barbarian Component Nation)

*Biscotti Licchavi, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:

The land was at peace. The young prince journeyed up the Indus, and rather than performing the usual frivolities of a man of his station with hunts, courtesans, and festivals, Vis'vadeva stopped to visit with holy men of all stripes. All were astounded at his ability to listen, not common among the *kshatriya*.

## **Pallava Kingdom**

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Mahendravarman I, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Aceh (UN), Gangas (UN), Nandagiri (UN), Malabar (A), Belawan (F)



All the kingdom rejoiced when in 423 Queen Priyamvada Gupta gave birth to a son in Malabar. The scion of the ruling Kadambas family of Malabar, Raghu, was so impressed that he agreed to join the Pallavas, and the two *rajas* became fast friends.

The sale of Gangas to the Chera kingdom did not go over well with the locals. Outraged at being forced into the service of a lesser realm the villages decided on independence. Nandagiri had however guildsmen who realized the commercial advantages and were open to them.

Equally troubling was news from the Spice Islands. The fleet had installed a new garrison in Aceh but after a few months the warriors had managed to make themselves hated throughout the land. Furthermore hundreds of families were filtering into the region, mostly former pirates. These two facts merged in July of 421 when the foreigners were rounded up and slaughtered. A communal government was established, though the natives of the deep interior - including the orange "men of the forest" - hardly noted the changes.

The following summer saw the return of the fleet, this time loaded with thousands of colonists eager for a new life exploiting the simple people of the islands. One day as the ships sailed in open ocean through the Bay of Bengal four seabirds fell from the sky, dead, onto the poop deck. The *guru* of the transport declared this an ill-omen and ordered a halt to the expedition. Tied together the captains argued for days about the proper course of action. At last Beluvarman decided they would proceed regardless. A month later a fierce storm in the Malacca Strait sank the large ship sending hundreds of Indians and their animals to their death. Thus chastened Beluvarman offered sacrifice to Indra before sailing on.

Finally they reached a harbor in Kampara, and simple shrines were set up to celebrate their arrival and to thank the gods. Over the weeks and months to follow, Beluvarman, the first *kumaramatya* of the city of Belawan, laid out the place in a traditional Indian square, with gates and quarters. The *raja* of Kampara was annoyed at the influx of foreigners but noted the tiny amount of space they were using and held his tongue.

## **Vakataka Kingdom - Gupta Tributary**

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

*Divakarasena, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Palura (F), Asmaka (A), Nasik (F)

Sea trade was opened with a number of nations after a hiatus of a number of years when the brahmins disdained such activity. Increased trade and a general revitalization were reflected in the swelling of the sizes of Ujjain, Pratihthana, and Pravaraपुरa.

The *rajadhiraja* went on a tour of various border lands. Everywhere he travelled his staff seemed to know the local politics as well as the natives, so his efforts were everywhere successful. Divakarasena was wedded to a near-child princess from Asmaka, and managed to find a bride for his brother in Nasik, where the locals were tired of war and national turmoil.

## 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.

### Extracting Tithe

This refers to rule **9.6.8.3**, the **Exact Tithe (EXT)** action. Basically, this is deprecated in this campaign. Rather than an leader action, tithing is to be arranged with nations on an individual basis. A good analogy would be trade, which is forbidden in this campaign to Primacy players. Each player, the Primacy and the Nation, must note both the level of tithe, i.e. percentage, and the names of the parties involved.

While the action itself no longer is used, it is still the case that a nation with a total of more four percent (4%) of its income given over as tithe will see a decrease in tax revenue. This defines "giving until it hurts."

Hope this helps. Please see prior turns' newsfaxes for more hints at the bottoms of those pages.