

Newsfax, Turn 9

(start of 433 CE through the end of 436 CE)

Notes:

1. Please remember to use the **Custom Units** information on your stats sheet for such things as gp and nfp costs, APs, etc.
2. Any sons and daughters not married off or promoted may form the nucleus of a revolt, so to coin a phrase, "Think of the children!"
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. See earlier turns for more of these.

Sounds to create *A Twilight of Empires* by - purely FYI.

- Dead Can Dance - eponymous
- Killing Joke - *Brighter Than A Thousand Suns*
- Björk - *Post*
- Curve - *Doppelgänger*
- Autolux - *Future Perfect*
- Interpol - *Turn on the Bright Lights*
- My Bloody Valentine - *Glider*
- Catherine Wheel - *Ferment*
- Motorhead - *No Remorse*
- Joe Jackson - *Jumpin' Jive*
- The Allman Brothers Band - *Idlewild South*
- Thee Heavenly Music Association - *Shaping The Invisible*
- KUOM - www.radiok.org
- KCPW - www.kcpw.org

Generally eastward starting with ...

Central Asia

Hephthalite Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Ikram, Khakhan of the Hunas

Diplomacy: Quba (A), Kashgar (F), Gandhara (UN)

Safeen, a favorite of the Khakhan, felt like a marked man. And he was. Three swordsmen attacked him while hunting snow leopard, having buried themselves in a snowbank to surprise him. Following snow leopards was dangerous business, so Safeen was well-equipped for an attack, his armor taking many of

assassin's blows before he dispatched them all with either his axe or bow. The nomad leader would have a good tale to tell at that night's campfire. A few days later his favorite dog vomited up the grilled yak meat Safeen had just tossed to him. Alarmed, he raced to the yurt of his uncle, who administered purgatives until Safeen was dizzy from the effort to rid his body of the tainted flesh. A slave had disappeared from their camp, apparently after attempting to poison the khan.

Unable to satisfy his honor, Safeen expressed himself through his army, as 10,000 nomad horsemen swept through Tokharia, Transoxiana, Turkmen, and Kara-Khitani. These years of burning, slavery, looting, and various atrocities salved his soul, and he was at last at peace with the gods. Especially satisfying was the stiff resistance of Kara-Khitani, presenting a good challenge to overcome.

On the diplomatic front, the citizenry of Quba was impressed with the Hephthalite army and decided it was a team worth joining. Decades of religious oppression did not however sit well with the leadership of Otarsh, who refused the entreaties of Zor Halat to forgive the Khanate and swear allegiance.

Allegiance was became a critical issue in various quarters of the Khanate when Ilginc the Cruel died of a heart attack on September 23 of 433. This unmerciful man had left no heir, leading to a short power struggle at his court. The Khan of Kashgar, though not a member of the Hephthalite clan, quickly rose to prominence as a power broker, culminating with his marriage to Ilginc's widow within a moon of her husband's death. While unseemly, the beautiful Umay and her family was convinced that for the safety of her many daughters - for she had never given Ilginc a son - she had to wed soon. Thus it was that the 29-year-old widow was married to the handsome young khan Ikram. This nuptial coup ended the power struggle, and the remaining contenders, elders, and shamans declared their *anda* to Ikram. The gods seemed to favor the match, as within a year a son was at last born to Umay, pleasing both her and six of her daughters. The eldest, Gul, was less pleased, as she had long been promised to Ikram. Still, she was very young and some other handsome khan would no doubt bring her a valuable horse in due time.

White Turk Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khakhan Osman

Diplomacy: Suvar (C), Kazan (F), Kirov (FA), Tobolsk (FA)

The Prince of Suvar allowed the Turks to raise a rude city on the banks of the Volga called Kazan. The Prince had been to Constantinople, and averred that Kazan was to Constantinople as a rat was to a stallion. Still, he was pleased to have a handy place to shop for luxuries. Various tribes and clans were given license to settle in the harsh lands to the north. The Turgay moved into Kirov, the Avars to Pelym, and the Khirghiz to Tavda. All were happy to supplement their pastoral pursuits with hunting and trapping in the north woods, much as their ancestors had done.

Fittcheen the Grey had been khan of the White Turks for as long as most people could remember. Indeed, he had been "the Grey" longer than all but a few of his followers could remember. But at length, in the spring of 435, he entered his terminal illness. Bedridden, he tried to mediate between his children over the future. But even such a wise leader could not rule from beyond the grave, and his death at the age of 97 lead to open warfare between his heirs. And there were many of them, though he had outlived many, including his grandson Atta who had died the previous year.

Small raiding parties stole horses and sheep, burned crops, and occasionally killed. The newly-populated regions of Tavda and Pelym decided that without Fittcheen they held no ties to the White Turks and broke with them. Several moons later Osman, a grandson of Fittcheen, had forced the other leaders to acknowledge him as khakhan, and peace returned to a diminished realm. The birth of a son to his concubine was taken as a sign of heavenly pleasure at his reign, and the remaining clans rejoiced.

Khwarizm Hunas Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Akhkulili, Khakhan of the Hunas, Khan of Khwarzim

Diplomacy:

Khingala Alchon had long dreamed of reuniting the Hunas into one polity. After so many decades his clans had however lost interest in what seemed a hopeless project, and wished the khan would recognize reality and worry about matters closer to home. This came to a head in March of 433, when the gurkhan and ilkhan lead a few large men into the khakhan's quarters, arrested him, and publicly beheaded him a few days later. Surprisingly, few people really objected to this coup. Akhkulili married Akhshunwaz's very young daughter though he was old enough to be her grandfather. Most of the people shrugged at this development and went on with their lives.

Raids by Safeen's Hephthalite army soon changed this attitude. Hundreds died, thousands were displaced, and scores travelled to court to complain. Akhkulili did not, however, feel his political position was strong enough to take on his challenge, and was content to fill various posts with his flunkies and otherwise consolidate power.

Steppe Shamanism

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Primate Religious Authority)

Ikram Sechen, High Shaman

Diplomacy:

Toulun Sechen was busy preaching in Otarsh when he was felled on May 14 of 435 by a particularly aggressive virus. The natives had been impressed by his peaceful approach as contrasted with the past policies of the Hephthalites, many converting to the steppe faith.

Kushan Empire



(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Lakshmi, Queen and Regent for the Kidarite Shao

Diplomacy: Und (EA)

In Kabul many families had stocked up supplies, expecting the Hephthalites to appear outside the gates of the city at any moment. In the event, this did not happen, and by 434 there was great relief throughout the empire that their enemies had decided to abuse someone else. For now.

Lakshmi escorted the wife of Koungas, Prakashina, and her son Vasudeva, back home to Und. In the course of the journey the two women grew closer, so that both regretted the need to exile the princess by the time they arrived in Und. With this goodwill, the mission of Lord Vikram to that province was eased, and Prakashina's family was pleased to ally itself once more with the Kushans. In 435 the young Shaka was crowned prince and heir as his mother Lakshmi beamed, a sight most of those present compared to the smile of a goddess.

Oghuz Turk Realm - socii populi Romani

(Monophysite Christian Nomadic Open Empire)

Khan Sonqur, Rex Turcorum and Magister Equitum per Orientem

Diplomacy:

Having wandered for years, the Oghuz decided that Betpak was a pleasant home for now.

Juan-Juan Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

P'ulochen, Khakhan

Diplomacy: Ts'in (P), Yuan-Chu'an (P)

The old man walked into the presence of the Khakhan and made a perfunctory bow. He had known too many such men to be impressed. They all needed his aid, and he was more than willing to lend it, for a price. Despite his income over the years, the engineer Wu Fe dressed simply, having donated most of the silver to the Daoist monks. P'ulochen thus acquired a siege train, for which he was most thankful, his people having the common nomad confusion regarding the taking of cities. Several *minghans* of sappers were trained, a small start.

Their first summer saw them deployed against Ts'in. The former Western Ts'in city was ringed with barbarian encampments and a rudimentary ditch, isolating it from all aid and succor. Unimpressed by the field of tents below their walls, the citizens held out for over a year, finally capitulating on September 4 of 434. When the gates opened it was the Mongols and Turks who fled, driven away by the thousands of thin Chinese shuffling forward like an army of the dead. They fell upon the ground in many places, grazing with their hands on the late season dry grass. The courage of the city impressed P'ulochen, who "invited" the plutocracy of the town along with his court - under guard, of course.

Kutelburi, the gürkhan, had been sent ahead to secure Yanzhi, as the next target was Yuan-Chu'an, the former Western Ts'in capital, which was placed under a cordon before the first snows fell in November. Naturally this city was well-defended, holding out until 12 July of 435. The khakhan recognized his growing realm needed some of the famous Chinese bureaucrats, and enlisted many into his service. They had their work cut out for them, tracking payments under the supervision of the ilkhān Anaksos to the khans of the Huang,

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

(Daoist Nomadic Component Nation)

Khan Khojan

Diplomacy: Ningsia (F), Pan (F)

Rumors spread widely that khan Juchin was under demonic possession. And in fact the leader of the Mongols did nothing to dispel these calumnies, keeping late hours, muttering to himself, and refusing food. Finally he made an announcement on February 15 of 433, that the path had been made clear to him. With that rather cryptic introduction to the council of elders, he announced the realm would henceforth follow the Daoist faith.

While one might have expected chaos to ensue, it did not. For the Mongol leadership had considered such things in private for some time. Integrating the faith of their mothers into the new way was managed with skill by various monks, to the extent that by Summer of 433 all the lands and peoples of note were converted, at least nominally.

And the new religion did not preclude old habits. The people, along with their Turkish allies, crossed the mountains in Ningsia. The place was rapidly subdued, local resistance exterminated along with their families, and by late summer Juchin's people were the new magnates and landholders, settling on the land though refusing to farm crops. By June the city of Pan had been invested, isolated by swarms of nomads patrolling beyond the glaciēs. Attempting to starve them out, the barbarians did not hide their plans to wipe out the city, inspiring the citizens to defend their home with energy. Thus the siege lasted until the following summer, the gates opening on July 21st.

The Mongol gurkhan lead the procession into the Pan, past hundreds of sullen Han. Suddenly one old yet enormous woman screamed in frustration and heaved an iron cookpot from her balcony above the street. By sheer chance it hit the gurkhan in the temple, killing him instantly. The nomads were stunned only momentarily, then turned on the population. The city was sacked while its people were rounded up outside the walls. Once the loot had been extracted they were allowed back inside and the nomads withdrew a short distance. Hundreds of citizens who had remained hidden came out to celebrate their apparent survival.

At dawn the next day fire arrows rained down on the city. The barbarians had encircled the city in the pre-dawn hours, and were intent on firing Pan. It burned intensely, people running out the gates in fear. These were cut down with swords and spears, so that by evening none remained living. Peasants from the area were forced to clear out the charred and hacked bodies, and then to generally clean the city site. Thousands of Mongols then squatted amidst the ruins, founding a new city named Pan.

Meanwhile, the passing of Juchin in May of 435 threw the realm into a mountain stream. The Wudah Khan was insulted by Juchin's comment that his continued reverence for Tengri was an act of cowardice. An official challenge was made, and the two men faced each other on the wrestling floor. In a match which lasted nearly two hours many remarkable deeds were done, but in the end Juchin was killed, dying of a crushed trachea. The clans of Wudah were satisfied that their honor had been reclaimed, but the Khakhanate was now headless. A short power struggle ensued, the surprise winner being the teenager Khojan, who outmaneuvered his older brother and his uncle.

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

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Naiman, Ilkhan

Diplomacy:

While marching with their friends the Mongols (see *Eastern Mongol Kingdom*) Alptekin died in September of 433, essentially of old age. Naiman was named regent for the young Altakai, son of Alptekin, and whose mother was Shara, daughter of the great Ogodei.

Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom of the Aza

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Goland, Khanum

Diplomacy:

In an attempt to keep her fractured kingdom joined, Goland named her son, Arton, as her heir. This was not unexpected, as the hopes of the people rested in him.

China

Chinese Buddhism

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Lo-Wang II

Diplomacy:

Lesser monks were a bit miffed that the famous Vis' vadeva (see *Daoism Temples*) had not bothered to stay with them.



Chinese Kingdom of Annam

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

King Wei-Chou Su

Diplomacy:

The Annamese and their Han overlords got on amazingly well.



Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master

Diplomacy:

The old men fell back, sweating and exhausted, from the forge at which they had worked. A piece of twisted metal was all that remained of years of effort, and Ko Chao Fu wondered at the ways of the Immortals. Mao Fu Yei's eyes closed, breath slow and deep. He was beyond wondering, beyond thought, and slumped to the floor in a dark corner of the room. The Ling Pao master gave his friend a thin smile,

rose, and walked out in the moonlit night. At least the Dao was flowing well with the nomads.

For to the west, scores of plainly dressed missionaries were travelling among the Mongol horde and finding a receptive audience (see *Eastern Mongolian Kingdom*). Would that the locals were as enthusiastic, as Li Chan's work to organize a new cathedral in Koueichou failed as citizens fell to bickering over siting, funding, and family honor. Bishop Cho Yu Fan died of a painful cancer, another drain on morale.

The abbot of Tai Shan was pleased to see Vis'vadeva arrive in 436. Several scribes took down every word spoken in several teaching sessions exchanged.

Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

Zhang Ti, Emperor of China

Diplomacy: Ling Ling (A), Chin An (A)

The mighty empire tended its people, who flourished. Kienchou saw an influx of farmers under a tax forgiveness program. Refugees from nomadic depredations found new homes in Chiang Hsia, and were grateful. The citizens of Ling Ling were suspicious of the growing power of the Daoists, yet nonetheless agreed that, yes, the empire did need their help. Prince Zhou Ti was pleased at this success, and as well pleased with his new bride from Ling Ling, who though young was already famous as a poet. Sadly, the prince died of a fever months after the betrothal, leaving a widow and in due time a son who would never know his face.

After a short yet painful cancer the Emperor died on November 22 of 436. A week of mourning was declared by Zhang Ti, who then took the reins of power into his own hands with no objections. At this sign of stability the city of Chin An agreed to evict the remaining pirates given haven there and to side fully with the empire.

Khanate of the Hsiung'nu

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Bulinger, Khagan of the Hsiung'nu

Diplomacy:

The nomads enjoyed the fine climate of the south. A good place for an old man like me, mused Bulinger.

Korean Kingdom of Koguryo

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Changsu

Diplomacy: Mantap (UN), Puyo (UN)

Lord Langtu chatted up the nobles of Pyong-Yang, and within a week had found a wife for his king. Or perhaps she had found him, for it was later revealed that the young lady had worked tirelessly behind the scenes to secure for herself this position. While a bit abrasive, over the next few years she pleased Changsu by presenting him a daughter, then twins, a boy and a girl.

The people of Bandao remained leery of the Koreans, and engaged in minor raiding along the border. The Hou Yen were quick to take advantage of the situation (see *Hou Yen Dynasty*). Mantap and Puyo were relieved of their responsibilities to the king.

Later Liang Kingdom

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Lu Ssu, Emperor of China

Diplomacy:

A trickle of trade continued to find its way through the kingdom.

Uighur Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Hsiao Hsin, Khan

Diplomacy:

Peace prevailed, much to the annoyance to the young and the restless.

Hou Yen Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

Mu-jung Ch'uei, Emperor of China, Later Yen Dynast

Diplomacy: Chao (P), Bandao (A)

Mu-jung, a royal prince, agreed with the Emperor that the citizens of Chao were failing to show sufficient respect. Thus several thousand troops removed the local council of merchants, priests, and nobles and replaced it with hand-picked flunkies. Loud demonstrations were brutally suppressed, and running street battles between militia and Hou Yen troops took place over a week in May of 433. In the end several hundred citizens had been killed and a number of small fires had erupted. In the end Mu-jung Ch'uei was Emperor of Chao, winning their fear at the cost of their respect.

Bandao was well-known as a hotbed of anti-Korean sentiment. Thus Master Wushu travelled there to visit with the local nobility. These were very pleased to have the attentions of a powerful neighbor in their struggle for independence from Pyong-Yang, and quickly agreed to sign a mutual defense agreement with the Hou Yen.

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

(Daoist Civilized Component Nation)

Ma Ch'in, Sung King

Diplomacy:

Refugees from barbarian oppression were resettled in Pienching and the old capitals of Loyang and Chang'an. Bishop Lao appropriately enough smoothed the path for the growth of these cities, allowing for clever property transfer arrangements and generally keeping local annoyance at a minimum.

South East Asia

Cham Kingdom

(Hinduism Barbarian Open Empire)

King Humpraptum

Diplomacy:

The king was on the terrace, painting wet clay pots his son and heir, when an attendant approached, eyes wide. "Sir, the Khmer have crossed the Ba and are marching up the coast," the young man fairly shouted. Samudravarman's reply included words his son had yet to encounter, and of course the art lesson was canceled.

For the army of Korn Danh II, augmented with thousands of merciless Malay and Tai mercenaries and a large allied fleet including Darsh "Silverfin," moved up the shore, capturing villages from the stunned locals with little resistance. The ships of Karmjit Muthupandi joined them a week later, having been delayed by an unseasonable storm in the Penunjuk Wan. The Cham were not to allow the invaders to overrun Champa without a fight, and marched south under the leadership of king Samudravarman and lord Humpraptum to meet the army from Funan. At the fishing town of **Tuy Hoa** the Cham waited, hoping that their inferior numbers would be outweighed by a good defensive position. However putting their flank on the sea proved unwise, as the Cham fleet was quickly dispersed. This made the troops uneasy, and when the Khmer elephants charged the inland flank the defenders fled almost instantly, running for the beach. Sadly for them the Khmer horse swept around them and cut the routing army off. What followed turned the surf pink as the Cham army was wiped out, no quarter being given them by the mercenaries, who were paid by the head. Some thousands were taken prisoner by the Khmer.

Among those slain was Samudravarman, killed when his elephant was encircled by Malay spearmen and butchered. Humpraptum managed to escape by swimming through the surf and made his way back to Amaravati. He found the palace in chaos, word of the debacle having spread faster than an autumn fever. The nobleman quickly organized his friends, family, and other loyalists and took power. The late king's family was seized and Humpraptum married Samudravarman's eldest daughter. She detested the old man, but found she had no choice.

To the south, the Khmer had not been lax. After the usual spate of battlefield looting was done the city of Vijaya was invested, cut off from succor by both land and sea. With the king dead and a large enemy army outside its walls, the city surrendered after just four days. The Tai mercenaries were disappointed at this, having hoped for a long siege to justify their ravaging the place. Some men took to looting on their own, but generally Vijaya was captured intact.

Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

King Pendravarman

Diplomacy:

The old king found reports from Cham disquieting (see *Cham Kingdom*).

Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Korn Danh II, the Great, King of the Mountain

Diplomacy: Oc Eo (A), Champa (P), Vijaya (P)

The armies of Korn Danh marched north and into history, easily shattering the Cham (see *Cham Kingdom*). In addition to hiring Tai and Malay mercenaries, the king also paid for canals and roads in many places. Korn Danh himself spent much of his time in the old trade city of Oc Eo. He did in the end convince the locals to aid him in his imperial ambitions. May 12 of 435 saw the death of Gridha Sayee, king of Ligor and long-time ally and friend of Korn Danh. His son decided to it was better to remain a friend of the Khmer and pledged his loyalty as his father had done.

Kingdom of Aceh - *Subjects of Pallava*

(Oceanic Pagan Seafaring Component Nation)

Suharu, Raja

Diplomacy:

Accounting, a new art - or magic - for Aceh, had revealed that the treasury was continually depleted by the need to pay for the sons of local lords to come and parade about and with new spears and coats. Thus under the pressure of his scribes the Raja ended this practice, drastically reducing the available army. This bit of wisdom was one factor in convincing the Belawan prince to drop his allegiance to distant Pallava in all but name. This success, plus the birth of a son to Suharu, created a generally sense of prosperity.

Kingdom of Tarumanegara

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

Purnavarnam, Raja

Diplomacy:

The fishing was good. Not great, but good.

Malayadvipa - *Gupta Tributary*

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

Sripanasan, Regent for Crown Prince Varanavendra

Diplomacy:

Varananendra at last took power in his own name from his uncle Sripanasan, who retired to his estates.

Pyu Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

King Kyanzittha

Diplomacy: Manipur (EA)

The irruption of the Hsiung-Nu onto the northern verge of Pyu worried Kyanzittha. His court came up with a two-pronged response. One was military, wherein Pegu was festooned with walled villages and stone towers as a defense-in-depth. The other was to send the king and his daughter, Alyia, into Manipur. There, under the very noses of the ignorant barbarians, Kyanzittha worked their wiles on the local nobility. After some time an agreement was reached, and Manipur joined the kingdom. This event did catch the attention of the nomads, who reacted by trying to capture the Kyanzittha, Alyia, and her new husband, the local prince. With a dozen guards they managed to fight their way out of the prince's palace, Alyia bagging several nomads with her excellent archery. This allowed them to paddle down Mali and thence the Irrawady to safety.

The following year saw the birth of a daughter to Alyia and the death of Nagarjunakanda the Holy. Despite, or perhaps because of, events the people of Manipur kept to the old gods and eschewed the message of the Buddha.

Japan



Emishi Lords

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ashitaka

Diplomacy: Toyama (T)

The death of their revered leader Lady Moro in 434 caused great sadness in Toyama. The new Lady of the Land decided that the lack of pressure from the Yamato meant Toyama could keep its warriors at home.

Yamato Japan

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy:

Peace reigned over the land.

Southern Mountains Clans

(Shinto Barbarian Open Nation)

Koji Jutaro, regent

Diplomacy:

Boatbuilding activity picked up as several new fishing locations were found.

Western Europe

Alamanni

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Wulfgar, rex

Diplomacy:

On his deathbed in a priory in Gades, bishop Lucius was heard to mutter something nobody had ever heard the upstanding citizen say. In a low voice he cursed the Alamanni king, Galindus, denounced him as an usurper, and called on the Angel of Death to claim his soul. The old priest then died, not knowing that far away Galindus would suffer a seizure, collapse, and be declared dead within the hour.

As the now-dead leader was truly not of the royal line, there was some consternation in Hauptland on his death. This was multiplied when news of the Curse of Lucius reached the court. Within a day scores of men appeared before prince Wulfgar, who had been under guard since losing the succession struggle to Galindus, and begged his forgiveness. This son of Arbogast was however young and hotheaded, the victim of years of abuse. Many received his blessing, but others were seized by the men who had been his gaolers and were executed by archery, considered an ignominious fate. Still, most hoped that new and energetic leadership would remove the blot on the honor of the Alamanni resulting from the loss of territory at the hands of the Gallaecian state.

Kingdom of the Alans

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Arlon, Shah

Diplomacy:

The nomads enjoyed the spoils of their victory over the Lombards.

Angles and Jutes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Aethelred

Diplomacy:

All were amazed when, at the age of 39, princess Brunhilde gave birth to a daughter. Crown Prince Hengist was pleased, of course.

Asding Vandals - *Hun Vassals*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

Oebersius, Rex Vandalorum

Diplomacy: Narbonensis (HM), Viennensis (F), Lugdunensis I (F)

As leader of the Vandals, Oebersius declared a union of his people with that of the Huns. Testimonial to this were the new homes found for his tribe in lands secured by the Hunnic army (see *Empire of the Huns*). As the first buds of spring appeared, thousands of Vandals were given pastures, farms, and villages in Narbonensis. Behind the inexorable wave of Hun conquest more clans were settled in Viennensis and Lugdunensis I. The Asdingi thus turned their backs on their past in Dacia, just as they had left the Black Sea shores a century before.

Burgundians

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Henrico, King of the Burgundians

Diplomacy: Augustodunum (UN)

Tribal *thiufans* and shamans looked with fear at the assault on the Red Hun realm (see *Kingdom of the Red Huns*). Nobody was surprised at the perfidy and cowardice of the Romans, who apparently had caved to Hunnic pressure to sell out their putative "Diocese of Gaul" and abandon them to a terrible fate. The loss of Maxima to Oebersius' men proved their apprehension was not idle (see *Empire of the Huns*). The senate of Augustodunum took the opportunity of the extermination of Burgundian warbands to declare itself a free city. These developments in part explained the lack of dispute on accession in 435 of Gundio's named heir Henrico. The young man had indeed shown energy, having fathered two sons by a palace milkmaid in recent years.



Classical Pagan Oracles

(Classical Pagan Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Hecate, Sibyl

Diplomacy:

The aged head of worship of the Old Gods continued to worry about the fate of western civilization, and whether she would be able to find a cobbler to make her some comfy slippers.

Eire Kingdom of the Scots - *Diocese of Hibernia*

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

High King Brian I, Rex Scotorum, Vicarius Hiberniae

Diplomacy: Connaught (F)

"Yer bloody right I could!" shouted Brian, and at that the Anglish ambassador smiled and said, "Prove it." Sobering a bit, the High King realized that all his nobles were looking expectantly. All of them were silently hoping their leader would come to his senses and back off, and all were disappointed. Thus it was that in May of 433 the *Rex Scotorum* sailed off with just a few seaworthy curroughs on a mission of conquest. Their first stop was at Britannia II where Brian took command of a small contingent of locals armed with shields and javelins, and maybe an eating knife. With less than 500 armed men the dashing young king invaded the hilly land of Gwynned. Or at least they could see the hills. On crossing the Seteia Brian's small force faced a small wooden keep. While setting up a siege the Scots were attacked by armored infantry and Welshmen on ponies and was wiped out. Brian managed to escape by swimming the chill waters of the river and fleeing to Deva, just a mile downstream. The only good news for the kingdom was the success of lord Liam in convincing the king of Connaught to be "as a brother" to Brian.

Franks

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Childeric, Rex

Diplomacy:

The young king watched events to the south with apprehension (see *Empire of the Huns*). The birth of a natural son to his long-time consort did little to lift the pall at his court.

Frisians

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Jentze Wolfsen

Diplomacy:

The great lord Ernst Terpstra died unexpectedly on May 24 of 436.

Lombard Kingdom - *Societas Imperii*

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Autharii, Rex Lombardorum

Diplomacy:

Autharii and Aistulf languished in captivity to the Alans, though they were treated fairly well in deference to their status and their great ages. News that the nomads continued to struggle a bit to retain Meissen and its city, and that Silesia yet remained loyal gave them some hope. And of course there was some chance that the Romans might remember their commitment to defend them ...

Pictish Kingdom of Alba

(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Miranda Mac Aniel, Queen of the Cruithni, Princess of Flavia

Diplomacy:

It was a Friday, September 13 436, that the only child of Miranda and the late king Sean, princess Aryll, died of a long-term wasting illness. The entire kingdom mourned her loss, and many wondered at the future of their growing realm.

Quadi Clans

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Vitalianus

Diplomacy:

All were pleased when the Asding Vandal princess Rua presented her husband the Quadi prince Araharius with a healthy baby boy. The poverty of the tribe was overlooked for a time.



Roman Christian Church

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Leo I, Bishop of Roma

Diplomacy:

Millions looked to the Church for hope in these troubled times. The death of the capable and relatively young Sixtus III in 435, as well as the very holy Ninian, did not provide much succor to them.

Siling Vandals - *Diocese of Spain*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Gento, Rex Vandalorum, Vicarius Hispaniae

Diplomacy:

King Gaiseric was pleased at the discomfiture of the Alamanni (see *Alamanni*). He was not long to enjoy this, as his body, weakened by gout, ceased all functions on April 20 of 434. Gento, the son of Hunneric and Thudigunda, was acclaimed as his successor, outdoing his younger cousin the bastard son of Gaiseric. The prince was anointed by Bishop Alaric and was elevated to the satisfaction, if not enthusiasm, of all.

Empire of the Huns

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Oebersius, Khakhan

Diplomacy: Asding Vandals (F), Maxima (F), Portus Namnetum (T), Lugdunensis III (F), Senonia (T), Aeduia (P), Cubia (F), Narbonensis (UN), Lingonia (F)

The leader of the most dangerous army in the West chuckled to himself as he rode north. Oebersius knew that in Mediolanum and Constantinople all barbarians were regarded as being untrustworthy. He saw no reason to disabuse them of this notion, preferring to deal with the "civilized" world on the basis of power. This he knew was all they really respected.

So it was that the Hunnic host, consisting of Huns, Goths, Vandals, and most anyone in the area with a penchant to violence, left the lands given them by the emperor and entered Lugdunensis I. Moving up the Rhodanus in the spring of 433 was a pleasure in itself, and many of the older nomads enjoyed the natural scenery. The Roman populace did not return their gaze with equal serenity, but sullenly acceded to their new overlords. By September the main army was crossing into Maxima up the Arar river from Lugdunum, with a flanking force moving along the Dubis river the gorkhan Kubla. Here they met their first resistance from the Burgundian garrison and some Gallo-Roman troops. These were surrounded and massacred, but this delayed the advance of the army and it wintered outside Augustodunum. Estates taken from the Burgundian garrison were apportioned to thousands of Hun warriors as rewards for long service, so they and their families spread out across the land to rule it closely.

Another force, under prince Magar, crossed the Rhodanus into Viennensis. There was no resistance, and a large garrisons were left in the countryside and in cities like Vasio and Aquae Sextiae. This army then marched north to occupy Lugdunensis I.

April of 434 saw Oebersius enter imperial lands once more as his *minghans* crossed into Lingonia. As usual there was no resistance, the locals shocked to see barbarians finally take notice of them as conquest targets instead of just stealing all their stuff and running off. Given that the Gallo-Roman farmers had mostly been reduced to serfdom over the previous generations and that the Huns were not always good at managing their coins, the people were generally undisturbed by the changes at the top.

The campaigning season of 435 opened with the host entering the new homeland of the Red Huns (see *Kingdom of the Red Huns*). Success there led to Oebersius pressing his new vassal's claims to Cubia and Aeduia against the Burgundians. The remainder of 435 was consumed in reducing Aeduia and Cubia, with the latter being settled by thousands of veteran warriors. The irascible Celts of Lugdunensis III were the enemies sought in 436. One of their commanders was so clever at insulting the Mongols that a *minghan* of Oebersius' guard cavalry dismounted and charged his stronghold rather than showering it with fire arrows. Hundreds of enraged warriors were felled by a combination of a concealed ditch and naphtha, and the Huns withdrew for a day. The place was then stormed by yet more men, and the garrison was slaughtered. By summer the province had fallen, and nomads were given farms to manage across the scenic hill country. Thus ended the freedom of the Red Huns, who began as a grouping of Christian clans upset at

management of the siege of Mediolanum some decades earlier. The Huns proved they had a long memory when it came to matters of honor. The host wintered in Cubia, having found it to have some of the best grazing in Gaul.

Suevi Kingdom

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Hermeric, King

Diplomacy:

The autumn of 435 saw the death of Korga of a painful cancer. The heir prince Hermeric gained the throne with no opposition.



Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Marcus Traianus Marcellinus, Augustus

Diplomacy: Lugdunensis I (UN), Sicilia (F)

The Caesar, Jovius, was impressing the local nobility and merchants of Lugdunensis I with the need to rejoin fully the empire. Thus it was especially galling when hundreds of thousands of barbarians appeared in 433 to conquer the province, evict the landowners and settle Vandals on the land (see *Asding Vandals*). He nonetheless continued his efforts into 434, finally dying of exhaustion and frustration. The wider calamity of Hunnic betrayal was denounced throughout the remainder of the empire, with many whispering of the foolishness of Marcus in trusting nomads (see *Empire of the Huns*). A further blot on the reputation of the Augustus was the capture of an imperial officer in his attempt to assassinate Queen Tamora. And the mission of Bishop Thomas to Africa was rebuffed by the local Donatist clergy, who preached against the spectre of imperial religious oppression.

A small amount of good news was forthcoming, to be sure. A daughter was born to Marcus' concubine, a Gallic beauty. Thousands had expected to take up farms in the fertile plains of Aemilia. But the Slavs settled there had other ideas.

Flavius Tertullianus Gaditanus marched into Aemilia with the remaining Western legions, auxiliaries, and the polyglot forces of Eric the Burgundian. The army was assured that their 30,000 men would have no trouble dislodging the 6000 Slavs and Veronan militia, clearing away the barbarian settlers, and moving in

good Roman citizens. So confident were they that the prospective farmers marched with the army. But on the march down the Padus in 433 a host of mosquitos set upon the army because of extensive early spring rains. Hundreds contracted malaria, and thousands were weakened. Then a plague struck the marching army, a fever and cough decimating the ranks and slowing the advance to a crawl. By the time a battlefield near Verona had been determined, the Roman army was in a pitiable condition. Nonetheless the Slavic army, with Hector's Latin force at its core, found the legions to be tough, and thus fell to attacking the civilians in its rear. Thousands were slain, and the Slavs were cheered at this slaughter and fell upon the regular troops with more energy. Despite their poor condition these men fought back ferociously, leading to King Ladis ordering a withdrawal of his force, which lost twice as many warriors as had the Romans. Hector knew a Pyrrhic victory when he saw one, having read his Livy, and did not pursue the battered imperials as they withdrew back across the border.

Weakened by both malaria and the blow to his prestige, Gaditanus died the following year.

Holy Empire of Rome

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Sextus, Augustus

Diplomacy:

Sextus and his brother Delmar worked hard to hold their realm together.

Ostrogothic Kingdom

(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Tamora, Queen Mother and Regent

Diplomacy: Latium (HM)

"Assassin!" screamed Amalasigrun, princess of the Ostrogoths, as the young nobleman entered the court of her mother Tamora. An alert guardsman stopped brushing his long blonde hair and grabbed the fellow, pinning his arms from behind with arms like living iron. "No!" the visitor yelled as he was carried away. But the princess was proved correct, as the putative courtiers contacts were detailed, some questioned "closely." Under the tutelage of her father, the ex-Roman and bishop Paulus, Amalasigrun had been helping to manage the Ostrogoth intelligence bureau, and had learned that despite the appeal of all things Roman they were not trustworthy. Tamora's handmaiden and a young *thiufan* were arrested and publicly executed for treason on behalf of Mediolanum. The shock was apparently too much for Froederic, who died straight away of a seizure. The rift between the Ostrogoths and the Empire grew noticeably. The decree that Latium would henceforth be the home of the clans did not help matters. In the week that followed Theodoric, the putative heir, passed away, essentially of old age.

Tamora travelled across the mountains to Flaminia as a guest of the Taifali court. The queen was well-received. Meanwhile prince Marcus Attilus was busy fathering children, twin sons, one with red hair and one with black, and a daughter, on his Latin consort. Other plans came to naught.

Dalmatia - *Civitate Foederatae*

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

Ariadna, Regent

Diplomacy:

The young princesses managed their tiny realm as well as they could.

Kingdom of Britanniae - *Diocese of Britain*

(Classical Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Volusian, Rex Damnonia, Vicarius Britanniae

Diplomacy:

A hunting accident claimed the life of king Volusian in 434. His heir, Libanius, took the reins of power and as if to show the blessing of Jupiter a son was born of his wife Veloria.

Kingdom of Roman Gallaecia - *Diocese of Lusitania*

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Gaius Carpus, Rex Gallaecia, Vicarius Lusitaniae

Diplomacy:

The already busy wife of Gaius gave birth to sons six and seven. As the seventh son, many were impressed that great things would come of this dynasty.

Taifali Tribes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Joannes, Rex Taifalorum, Vicarius Belgicae

Diplomacy:

The plague of royal deaths among European kings continued as Vallia died of a fever in 435. His son Joannes took power with little objection.

Kingdom of the Red Huns - *Diocese of Gaul*

(Asiatic Roman Christian Nomadic Component Nation)

Edeco, Rex Hunnorum, Vicarius Galliae

Diplomacy: Lugdunensis II (UN), Lugdunensis III (UN), Portus Namnetum (UN), Senonia (UN), Coriallum (UN)



Melodunum is a city upstream of Lutetia on the Sequana river. The Hun host arrived there on April 4 of 435, having spent the winter in Lingonia (see *Empire of the Huns*). Awaiting it was the army of Edeco, king of the Red Huns. The progress of Oebarsius' horde had been followed closely from the court at Lutetia. Feelings among the older men against the main Hun force still ran high, and the feeling abroad

generally was one of apprehension. While some few expected an imperial army to come to their aid at any moment, most were wiser than this and knew that the empire looked only after itself, and did a poor job of doing even that.

After several heralds had passed between the two camps Edeco and Oebersius agreed to meet face-to-face under an oak tree just over a ballista cast outside Melodunum. The Red Hun king was surprised to see how young his Vandal counterpart was, and how handsome. Each had brought three aides and a few scribes, and the discussions continued through lunch. In the end Edeco was not convinced that Oebersius was to be trusted. The Huns had offered many inducements and threats, but the Red Huns did not think them enough to surrender their honor. Edeco also thought he had a better claim to rule all the Huns than did Oebersius, who was after all not even a proper Hun at all.

Thus negotiations ended as the sun lowered in the sky, Edeco returning to his quarters in town. But he would never leave them. Before dawn a team of black-clad Huns floated silently downstream on inflated goatskins, clambered up the fishing pier, and slipped into Melodunum. The smallest of them climbed the back side of the two-story mansion that was the Red Hun HQ and lowered a rope, the rest of whom rapidly ascended to the small balcony. In unison they burst through the door and fell upon Edeco before he could react, slaying him with short swords within seconds. Heartbeats later two Red Hun guards rushed in via the main door to the room, and were likewise slain. Before more reinforcements could show up, the team slipped down the balcony rope and escaped into the night.

The assassination of Edeco caused instant chaos in the Red Hun camp. Some of the "tribunes" called for revenge, others for surrender, each faction lead by a brother of the late Octar. Modares' men knew there was no hope of resisting the main Hun army, while those loyal to Guntar claimed the righteousness of their cause would shield them. Violent clashes continued all day and into the night, while Oebersius held his forces in check, knowing that to press an attack might weld the "rebel" Huns against him. As night approached, a small party rode forth from Melodunum, Modares at its head.

"We are willing to follow Oebersius," they told the Hun gurkhan Kubla, who smiled grimly and bid them into his tent. In exchange for submitting to the will of the Khakhan the Red Huns were allowed to keep the city of Lutetia and Parisii as their domain. On hearing of these various betrayals the Red Hun khan of Lugdunensis II broke ties with the "treacherous" court of Modares. Those warriors in the walled towns of Lugdunensis III decided agree with the new order and continued oppressing the locals, as did senators in Portus Namnetum and nobles in Senonia. Senators in Coriallum really wished the Romans would return, and disavowed any barbarian ties.

Gepids

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Regent Gorm, Steward of the Gepids

Diplomacy:

Bedridden for years, the steward Gorm finally passed away in 436, just days after the sixteenth birthday of his young ward prince Ardaric. The youth's supporters wasted no time in pushing forward his claim to the throne. Few nobles were pleased to see a smooth-cheeked boy in power, and several retired to their estates and refused to acknowledge the new ruler. After the Gepid army leveled one manor house the remainder came around.

North Africa

Berber Kingdom of Tingitania

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Flavius Juba, Rex Tingitaniae

Diplomacy:

The realm of Tingitaniae was quiet.

Donatist Christian Church

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Archbishop Maximianus

Diplomacy:

The death of Augustine did little to boost the Donatist cause, much to the annoyance of archbishop Primian. A plague swept the land in 434 and claimed the lives of Primian and his deputy Tamortus. An obscure priest named Maximianus was promoted as a compromise leader of the sect.

Eastern Europe

Arian Christian Church

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Vandalarius, Pontifex ipseque Primas Gothicus et Germanicus

Diplomacy:

The Arians were quiet, though disturbed by events.



Khanate of the Tyrasean Alans

(European Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Respendial, Khan

Diplomacy:

The hunting was happy.

Orthodox Christian Church

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Bishop Procopius, Synod Elder

Diplomacy: Achaia (CH)

The aged Bishop of Athenai travelled widely about the countryside of his home, preaching here and there. Everyone appreciated his attentions, and were saddened when the effort became too much and he passed away. Similarly, the Patriarch of Antioch attempted to win converts in his home parish among the Monophysites before passing. At least the Patriarch of Ephesus did not die on his Holy Path among his people.

A clear winter sky blazed blue above the robed figure and his attendants clustered near the Western Wall in Jerusalem. A small crowd encircled Patriarch Cassius, mainly from idle curiosity at what the Orthodox Christian Patriarch was doing at what was usually a place for the few remaining Jews in the Holy City.

The old man did have a beautiful voice as he prattled on "... for the High Priests had condemned Our Savior in their pride and fear, but their error need not be inherited. Er, what I meant was that Jews of today have the same choice as their ancestors. That is, to repent and acknowledge the Messiah." Cassius paused and accepted a drink of warm mulled wine from his chamberlain.

Clutching her thin cloak against the cold breeze, a teenage girl saw a great opportunity for sport and called out, "So despite Moses, my cousin Sarah, who does not follow Christ, is going to Hell, sir?" The Patriarch, ecstatic to at last hear a reply, even from a mere girl, raised his hand and said, "Oh yes, my dear, she is doomed. Indeed may the Lord strike me down if this Sarah had any hope on that path." Thereafter he spoke no more, for out of this clear sky a flash of lightning cracked and the old man was instantly blackened, his robes flaming. Some in the city, on hearing of this, ran forth to see the place. Within an hour a small riot erupted between citizens wishing to worship there as the site of a miracle, others hoping for the restoration of the Temple despite their nominal Christian status, the local officials hoping to restore order, and Church stewards and guards hoping to carry off the charred remains of the priest and clean up the street.

The girl smiled, turned on her heel, and dissolved into the city.

In Greece, John Chrysostom passed from this world on April 30 of 435 in his sleep at the extreme age of 88 years. While Korinthos generally hewed to the Monophysite doctrine, the local bishop ordered three days of mourning, and the church bells tolled but once, so as not to seem celebratory. Such was the Patriarch of Consantinople respected, though not revered, throughout the Empire.

His legacy in the spiritual realm was great, but in the temporal world the Church was blown by the hot winds of strife. A synod was held in Constantinople of priests from around the Empire. After two years of debate (which included a non-fatal defenestration, a stabbing with a candle, two riots, an alleged food poisoning, and several scroll-clubbings) Theodosius interceded personally to demand a resolution. Procopius, Bishop of Megalopolis, presided over the congress, and met with the Emperor through January 437.

Rugian Tribes

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Sigeric

Diplomacy:

The itinerate barbarians enjoyed their new home in sunny Iberia.

Slavic Kingdom of Aemilia

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

King Ladis

Diplomacy:

Thanks to the wise leadership of Hector, proconsul of Verona, and a bit of luck the Slavs managed to retain their small yet prosperous kingdom (see *Western Roman Empire*). Victory however was not entirely a joyful occasion as many mothers and widows mourned their dead sons and husbands.



Eastern Roman Empire

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Theodosius II, Emperor

Avitus Petrus, Caesar

Diplomacy: Achaia (UN), Arcadia (UN), Aswan (UN), Cappadocia (UN), Duchy of Moesia (UN), Insulae (UN), Isauria (UN), Libya (UN), Libya Inferior (UN), Lycaonia (UN), Palaestina Salutaris (UN), Syria (PT), Wirozan (UN), Korinthos (PT), Bostra (UN), Alexandria (UN), Pelusium (PT), Palmyra (UN), Tyros (PT)

Theodosius could not sleep, despite remaining awake for two days coordinating the response of the *scholae* to the riots. All that work, he thought, and still the flames outside my window rival the glow from the braziers here in my room. The wicked rumors his agents in the streets had written to him, the reports of empty granaries, and growing discontent among his scribes, these gnawed at him until the emperor more collapsed than fell into sleep.

Once the riots were put down the tribune and vicarius of the *scholae* appeared at the imperial apartments and began to "negotiate" with Theodosius. While knowing that disposing of the emperor would bring chaos, the soldiers demanded some change at the top in order to assuage their men as well as the provinces. Over the strident objections of the empress, Vigilantia, the senate thus named Avitus Petrus, eldest son of Theodosius by the handmaiden of his mother Aelia Eudoxia, as Caesar. This pleased many, but to others merely confirmed several of the various rumors popular in the provinces.

Turmoil at the top and famine on the ground lead many provinces to rebel (see list above). The garrisons of Tyros, Korinthos, Syria, and Pelusium had by April put down local insurrections, but at the cost of alienating the populations over which they kept guard. In Isauria the garrison was slaughtered and, according to reports, eaten! Perhaps the greatest loss, and the one which pained even plain folk in Constantinople, was the loss of Alexandria to the Arabs (see *Lakhmid Arabs*).

While disaffection was widespread if spotty, unrest in the army was most worrisome. A rumor spread throughout the army in Coele Syria that its commander, Iohannes Xiphos, Bishop of Serdica, had in fact a growing number of Persian wives on which he spent gold embezzled from the soldier's pay. While the common legionary might put up with this from his *adjutor*, it was beyond the pale for a commander to do so. Xiphos' attempts to quell the rumor by executing a number of men only made matters worse, and he was arrested by his own tribunes and held in chains. The men according to tradition elected themselves a new commander, a merarch named Simmas whose father was a Greek but whose mother had been a Goth.

Within a week of his election an agent of the Sasanian court had approached Simmas with promises of Persian support for his bid to become the new emperor. While successful bids such as this were known from history, the merarch rejected the offer and let his troops know that while they were not under the orders of the Emperor they would still defend their beloved empire. This announcement was greeted with thousands of cheering voices, and the army returned its normal business of march, drill, and debauchery.

As turmoil rocked the Romans, the Persians were not idle. A large army under the command of Ariobarzanes as *eran-spahbad* crossed into Mosul. Aiding him were scores of Sasanian notables, including Ephialtes, Shapur, prince Darius, and the highly-regarded Armenians under their king Mazdak and his ally prince Tigranes. Against these tens of thousands was a defense lead by Bishop Dmitri Khoury, a man more suited to pastoral visits than in tending to garrisons and leading sorties. In a campaign of weeks the Roman defenders were largely wiped out, forts surrendering in some cases to just a handful of *dihqans* riding up to the gate. The few *scholae* in the province managed to escape back to Palmyra and then to Antioch with the bishop in tow, but many Roman standards had been lost. The stress of warfare proved too much for Khoury, who died on arriving at the city.

The Sasanian host advanced through Mosul into Osrhoene and thence down the Orontes into Coele Syria. Ariobarzanes had Antioch as his target, hoping to not only take this city, which had been done a century earlier, but to keep it as well. Simmas the Merarch had of course a rather contrasting goal. He refused the offers, doubtless genuine, from the captive Xiphos to help in the defense, since he did not wish to stain the bishop with his mutiny. Simmas and his officers drew up a plan which relied on funneling the Persian advance along the Orontes, which was heavily-fortified along both banks for many miles, and to make probing attacks from the hinterland with his somewhat smaller mobile force. At **Beroea** the Romans and Persians met in pitched battle. The Sasanian force was substantially weakened in dealing with the many fortifications with which they had to deal, and in fact at the start of their invasion of Coele Syria their total force of 70,000 men was dwarfed by the sum of Roman garrison and mobile troops, over 130,000. The battle at **Beroea** was thus the coup de grace, the Persians suffering massive losses and falling back to the neighborhood of Nisibis to lick their wounds. Weary of fighting the army stayed there and refused to advance further.

"Once more the barbarians are confounded by Roman fortifications, their simple ways unable to execute siegecraft," read the letter seized from Bishop Iohannes. Simmas smiled and shook his head slightly, then told his agent, "Let this note go on to Constantinople. Hopefully someone competent will read it and then

know the true source."

The Duchy of Moesia

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Melchiades, Rex

Diplomacy: Dacia (HM), Moesia II (F)

Hunger was abroad in the cities and thorps of his domain, and the *praefect* yet again found his entreaties for grain falling on deaf ears in Constantinople, which seemed only to care about obscure religious disputes and the senseless war with Persia. Yet Melchiades held loyal to the empire until a deputation of landowners, priests, and officers stormed his house and held him and his family hostage for two days. Only then did he yield and agree to rule them as their *rex*. This did not repair the agricultural situation yet was popular nonetheless. The cities, more interested in trade with Constantinople than independence, gave up on both sides in disgust and went independent.

Middle East

Ghassanid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

King Samuel

Diplomacy:

The sad little dynasty took to horse breeding as a way to earn a little coin.

Visigothic Kingdom

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Athaulf, King

Diplomacy: Asuristan (HM), Uruk (F)

On leaving the crumbling empire (see *Eastern Roman Empire*), Athaulf once more took the title king for himself. Thousands of Goths who had fed and clothed the army since their life on the steppe decades ago were at last rewarded with homes, settling in the Asuristan countryside and evicting the local magnates, usually by force. Yet more Goths requisitioned materials and built a new quarter onto the ancient city of Uruk from which they ruled the city. A further sign of the Lord's Grace was the birth of a son to the aged warrior and *rex*. At his new court Athaulf railed alternately at the wily Persians and the perfidious Greeks, but only when drinking. An enterprising Sasanian courtier appeared before the king and was politely received. The Visigoths were not, however, eager to join either side in the long-running war.

Kingdom of Yemen

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

King Ishmael ibn Yahsub

Diplomacy:

The ancient city of Qana was proud of its high walls. Its young and popular sheikh, Mosa, was therefore in a bit of a quandary when Isaak opened the discussion of Yemeni settlers moving into a new quarter of the city, to be built with royal funds. For not only was Musa close to the Yahsub clan, but his putative new citizens were encamped just outside the walls - in the flood plain, no less. When the expected rains came a week into negotiations the tents were washed away. The citizens of Qana, moved by the plight of so poorly-lead a rabble, took many into their homes and helped others settle on the slopes on the other side of the city. Silver from the king finished the job, and by the end of 433 there was indeed a new quarter of the city. Showing solidarity with their new neighbors, the migrants swore fealty to sheikh Mosa and helped to build a low wall in their part of the city, thereby restoring at least part of its defenses.

A great wailing and gnashing of teeth arose in September of 434 when the crown prince, Ben Jamin ibn Yahsub, died suddenly of a fever. He was but the first notable victim of a plague which seemed to strike at random throughout Southern Arabia. A few weeks later Qayls Daniel ibn Haroun, the royal emissary to Mecca, was similarly struck down. Indeed, talks over trade with Axum were halted when the African delegates fell ill.

Ishmael himself was also busy. Travelling to Mecca, he paid a visit to the Ka'abah and marvelled at the array within, the thriving market outside, and the diverse community. However the Quraish had no interest in joining his realm - though several were eager to sell him trinkets. Moving on to Asir, the king did manage to convert hundreds to the faith of his fathers, but not nearly so many as he had hoped.

Lakhmid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheikh Imru al-Qays, Satrap of Egypt

Diplomacy: Alexandria (EA), Memphis (F)

"We share your Faith, and we are your neighbors," said Utbah ibn Khuzaymah.

"Alexandria is the crown jewel of the empire, and the emperor values you," said Calixtus Opprobium.

Such was the debate before the senate of Alexandria as the aristocracy debated the future of their city. Many feared the empire and were loath to leave it, sure that a dreadful retribution would be exacted, perhaps not this year or next, but someday. But most were heartily sick of Constantinople, this upstart city which did not share their religion but only tolerated it, which exacted taxes and to their eyes gave nothing back, and which pursued pointless wars with Persia which had nearly ruined the local economy. Thus Alexandria sided with the Arabs, though still keeping its own council in matters of war. The imperial legate sailed home to Constantinople, his mood on arrival as grey as the sky.

Another success was the turning of Memphis to the Lakhmid dynasty, as the *dux* Mikhail put his finger to the wind and decided the empire was not worth dying for. The people of Memphis cheered the announcement in the streets. Or at least the loud ones did so. Many others remained at home, fearful of change and doubtful of barbarians and their promises.

On coming of age in 436 Imran, son of Imru, was named a prince of the growing kingdom. He was a popular and ambitious lad, and the Satrap of Egypt had high hopes for his future.

Monophysite Christian Church

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Patriarch To-Be-Named

Diplomacy: Cappadocia (CH), Osrhoene (CH), Qustul (MN), Atbara (CH), Adal (CH), Madina (CH), Hijaz (CH)

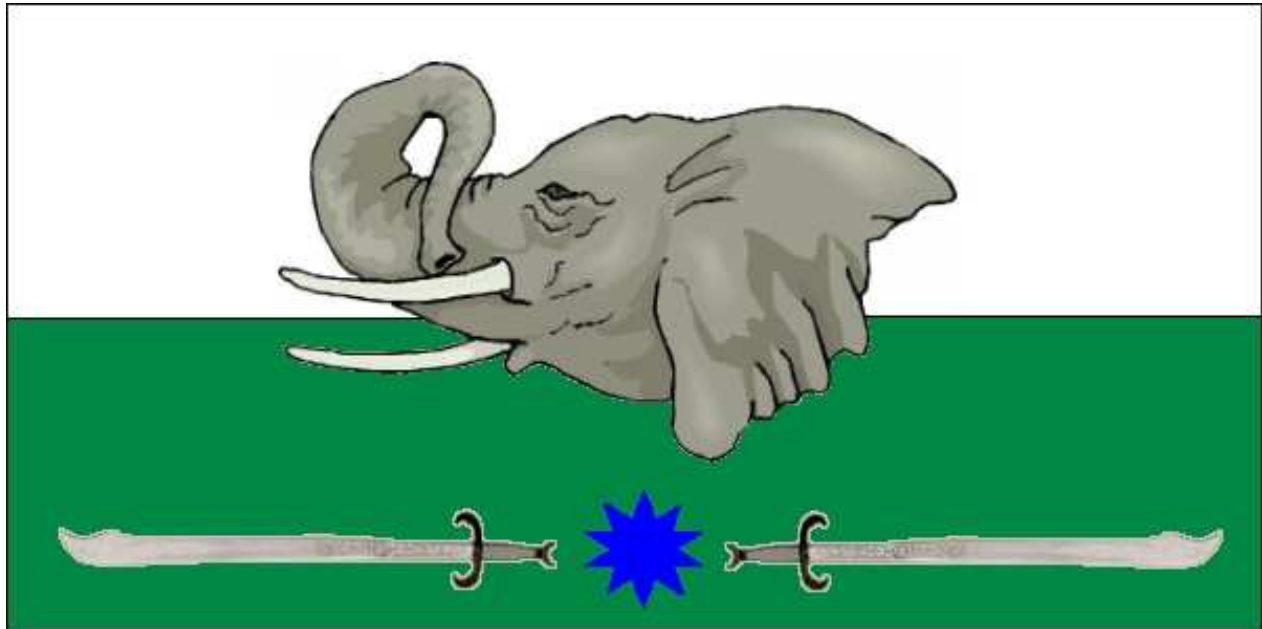
The former soldier and Grandmaster of the Order, Parthimus, died in his sleep on January 14 of 433, causing some distress in Alexandria as he had been responsible for building and training the Holy Army. Growing Arab influence would have to be addressed, or so many thought. Others were not so sure that Patriarch Luke shed any tears at the prospective departure of the Roman legate.

The church was busy in Africa, with many growing congregations in Nobatian and Axumite lands. Makuria saw a massive influx of missionaries and by the end of 436 had almost entirely taken the Christ as their savior. Sometime and somewhere in 434 Bishop Barnabas died. The Patriarch would not name his mission, but assured everyone that he had been martyred in a distant land. The following year saw the death of Luke's favorite, the Archbishop Ernestus, while crossing the Red Sea (by ship) on a church mission. New staff were appointed to the church offices in Alexandria, and the work continued.

More serious was the sudden death of Luke, who suffered a seizure during a Christmas Eve vigil while at a chapel in Megalapolis, and passed away within the hour. His staff called a congress of bishops from loyal regions and cities to meet at Alexandria, and the meeting began with at first only a few representatives on Epiphany of 437. By the following month nearly all the priests called to meet were present, and they were on the verge of naming a consensus candidate ...

West Africa

Moorish Kingdom



(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Sheik Sedray al-Kasurga

Diplomacy: Gorouol (F), Galam (PT), Segu (PT), Tavrur (PT)

Just as the Moors became more and more sub-Saharan in nature, so too they clung more closely to the old gods, as worship in the temples stepped up. Along these lines diplomatic efforts in Gorouol succeeded wildly, the locals seeing opposition as pointless and cooperation as most profitable indeed. A 15-year-old princess was married off to prince Madjer to seal the deal and while she was not the sharpest thorn on the boma the pair seemed happy enough. Less happy were the thousands of slaves smoothing roads and digging ditches in Songhai, though the crops grew taller every year as a result.

Of course the Moors would not rely on such peaceful efforts to guarantee their future. The army hit Segu, trampling the king's men underfoot in short order. The place was enslaved as was customary when the Moors were opposed, the inevitable revolt crushed as always, and the people looted by troops motivated through the promise of keeping all they could find. The following dry season saw the invasion of Tavrur, the rich land giving the realm access to Ocean for the first time. Prince Izri al-Kasurga then ordered the troops enslave the locals as usual. The regimental commanders refused, citing the vast population along the coast and their relatively small army. The prince accused his captains of mutiny, while the latter pleaded loyalty to their troops and people. Seeing that further talk may well lead to a real mutiny, Izri backed off and instead ordered his men to capture a local as a token slave. He then allowed the army to recreate along the shore to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Thus were the forms observed, though the substance not.

East Africa

Axumite Empire

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

Emperor Tewodros Ella Asgad

Diplomacy:

With no pressure from the subcontinent to the east, Tewodros relaxed.

Blemmye Tribes

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Zakarias, King of Blemmye

Diplomacy: Aswan (PT)

Zakarias let his gaze wander across the rocky ground. So this was the border with the Romans, he thought. Same sun-dried wasteland on either side, same sun-dried people too. He smiled to himself, for soon all this would be his. Zakarias only hoped his ancestors would be proud. The king nudged his horse forward, and his small army continued up the Red Sea coast and into Aswan. Inland moved the forces of his new - and, to many, surprising - ally, the Nobades king Phillipus.

The local *comes* read the reports from the frontier and realized that with the Arabs in the delta and the main army busy with the Persians (see *Sasanian Persian Empire*) the situation was hopeless. Thus it was that the officer surrendered to Zakarias, who allowed his men to keep their weapons but swore them to peace with his forces.

The Blemmye bureaucracy, such as it was, took over administration of the province. After aiding the Nobades in their further campaigns (see *Nobades Kingdom*) Zakarias returned to Aswan to study the defenses of Berenice. They were formidable, well beyond the capability of his small barbarian army, and so he contented himself to tour his new domain.

Taking Arcadia for the Nobatians was just as easy (see *Nobades Kingdom*).

Nobades Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

King Phillipus Silko, Basileus

Diplomacy: Thebes (C), Arcadia (PT), Thebais (P)

The king aided his friends the Blemmye, crossing the border with the Empire at the head of a large allied force (see *Blemmye Tribes*). While on march he learned of the death of his ally Anoub, the Count of Kordofan. Anoub's successor saw the successes of Silko and decided to stay the course. The Nobades army marched essentially unopposed through Arcadia, a few of the citizens even greeting them with flowers and prayers their coreligionists would spare them from a vengeful Empire. Villages and cities surrendered before him, much pleasing to Silko. He was warned, however, that on crossing the Nile he would face greater opposition.

Stationed in Thebais were several *alae* of imperial cavalry along with some *auxilia* and parts of a *legio*. Adequate to repel an invading army of barbarians, it was however lead by an out-of-favor imperial functionary, one Titus of Melitene. Rather than contesting the Nubian army at the river crossing directly, he relied on a mistranslation of Arrian and, seeking to emulate Alexander on the Granicus centuries before, waited some distance from the river. Thus allowed a crossing near the small city of **Latopolis**, king Phillipus quickly did so while general Pigol probed ahead with his hand-picked skirmishers, archers from the highlands.

Thus on an April morning in 435 at **Latopolis** some 13,000 invaders faced nearly 7000 Romans, including 2000 of the wealthy Titus' *bucellarii* armed in the Persian fashion. Nobatian archers advanced on these heavy cavalry in the center of the Roman formation, halted, and then at a command let loose a volley of arrows from their giant bows. These felled nearly the entire first rank, at which point Titus panicked and ordered a general charge. A broad melee developed, the *bucellarii* becoming mired in combats. The invaders were slowly pushed back in the center until king Phillipus charged with his reserve cavalry into the inner flank of the Roman heavy horse, at which point the latter fled, taking the remainder of the army with them. They however ran only a short distance and reformed on their standards. Screened by *auxilia* who made many daring counterattacks, the Romans marched away through the desert and eventually to Faiyum. With a thousand men as casualties the Nobatians were content to loot Roman bodies and establish a camp of occupation in Thebais.

Three sons were born to Menas and Yoanna, Princess of Amara, pleasing the entire kingdom. In 436 both the princess and the twin sons she was carrying died in childbirth, causing a great wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The secret mission of Shenouda to the city of Thebes did not initially go well. Posing as a naphtha merchant, the courtier drove his donkey cart up to the city and found a room at the caravanserai. The manager was suspicious of the man, who looked far too polished to be in such a position, and notified the militia. Shenouda was dragged out of his chamber at dawn and after some vaguely civil questioning brought before a senator of the city. As it happens this man had been to the Nobatian court on a trade mission some years prior, and immediately ordered Shenouda lodged in his own townhouse, under guard. Thus while the courtier did not succeed at secrecy, fortune smiled on his efforts nonetheless. Events in Thebais and elsewhere helped convince the full Theban senate to give up on the Empire and to at least nominally acknowledge the suzerainty of Phillipus Silko.

Persia

Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Azargoshasp, Mobedhanmobed

Diplomacy:

The shahanshah assured Azargoshasp that his troops could be dispersed to guard holy sites. The aged Namirog was pleased to once more be able to minister to his people as *dastur* of Mosul.

Kingdom of Persarmenia - *Sasanian Persian Satrapy*

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

King Mazdak, Satrap

Diplomacy:

Mazdak and Tigranes aided their Persian overlords (see *Eastern Roman Empire*).

Blue Turk Khanate - *Tribe of the Oghuz Turks*

(Asia Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

Tardu, Khan of the Blue Turks

Diplomacy:

Tardu was happy to rest as well in Betpak.



Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

Varhanin, Shahanshah of Persia

Diplomacy: Dura (FA), Nisibis (EA), Mosul (PT), Persia (PT), Abarshahr (PT), Transoxiana (PT), Margiana (PT)

Efforts around the region to proselytize for the Church of Truth failed notably in all cases. But this was just one effort by Varhanin to battle the Destroyer.

Encouraged and amazed at the irrationality and discord among the Roman ranks, the shahanshah borrowed gold from various sources throughout the empire and raised a large army. This was placed under the command of the young and dashing prince Darius, who at the start of the campaigning season marched forth from Ctesiphon with much fanfare.

The first target was the province of Mosul. Marching up the Euphrates the force arrived at the walls of Dura and encamped there for a week. Darius dined with the local lords and requested their assistance against the Romans. This rather put them on the spot, since Dura had hitherto been on friendly terms with

their neighbors, appreciating many aspects of what the Latins had to offer culturally. In the end Dura yielded, and its militia did augment the main Persian army under the command of Megas, a young noble looking to write his name into history with the blood of his enemies. Persian arms met with success in Mosul (see *Eastern Roman Empire*) with prisoners and loot sent back to court. A serious reverse on the approach to Antioch made the overall campaign into a bittersweet chapter for Sasanian history.

Meanwhile, Army Group East under Gaidam and Rustam, along with the *bucellarii* of Basiliscus, rode along the imperial road into Persia proper. This force of 40,000 *asvaran*, *dihqans*, and of course the Greeks, faced off against a much smaller force under the command of a young upstart shah. This Abandanes, a distant cousin of Varhanin, fancied himself something of a Cyrus himself and set a trap for the large army in the hills outside Ray. Sadly for his ambitions the citizens of Ray were desperate to see the rule of the shahanshah returned and sent agents secretly to the tent of Gaidam with information on the plans of the local shah.

Thus the typically sunny day saw Abandanes spring his trap, a force of *asvaran* who had marched into the rear of the huge Sasanian force to attack the camp under his personal command. Waiting for him was Rustam, a wily old commander leading his household troops. The two regiments, each riding fine horses with scale armor and carrying iron-clad warriors gripping long *kontos* and maces, smashed into each other at a fast trot. Rustam and Abandanes found each other in the dust and conducted a combat destined to be retold around campfires for generations. In the end the youth managed to smash his elder repeatedly about the head with his bronze mace, denting the helmet and finally dropping the man from his horse. Shortly thereafter Abandanes looked about and saw that his men had lost and he had been surrounded. Exhausted and dispirited, he surrendered. Brought before Lord Gaidam, the youth was spared because as a relative he had a right to battle Rustam without being a criminal. Abandanes and his remaining men were brought along with Army Group East, eventually incorporating themselves.

The following years saw the Sasanians march up the Silk Road, subduing Abarshahr with ease. In Margiana the local *dihqans* fled on seeing the large army, turning over their commander for execution. Merv, long the scene of siege and deprivation, cheered the Persians with the locals throwing flowers as the *asvaran* paraded to the bazaar. Having rested there for some time, Lord Gaidam took his men crossed the Oxus into Transoxiana. Weakened by Hephthalite raids it put up no resistance, leaving the large Persian army at the border of the largest of the Turanian empire.

South Asia

Lambakanna Sinhala - A *Kingdom of Chera*

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

Chandra, Raja

Diplomacy:

The lord Hari died in a swimming accident in 434.

Buddhist Stupas

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Master Sanath

Diplomacy:

Vis'vadeva at last made it to a Holy Mountain in far China.

Chera Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

Gaman, Rajadhiraja

Diplomacy:

Lord Ichaa passed away peacefully in his sleep at the age of 70. Just a week later the aged prince Hiral also died, and Gaman ordered public mourning for his brother.

Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

Mindha, Regent for the Rajadhiraja

Diplomacy:

Mindha continued to closely question passing merchants to discern the ambitions of those rascally Chera.

Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Kamara Gupta, Maharajadhiraja

Diplomacy:

A lassitude fell over the Gupta court. Kamara was rumored to have found an inner peace through meditation on the nature of Rama, whose worship was thus increased throughout the land.

Kingdom of Sindhu - *Gupta Tributary*

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

Rudradaman, Maharaja

Diplomacy:

The maharaja reconsidered his efforts in distant Africa.

Hinduism

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Virasenadeva, Guru

Diplomacy:

The guru rested rather more heavily on his laurels, as it were.

Jain Sects

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

Sarvanandi, Acharya

Diplomacy:

Sarvanandi applauded the peaceful path of the Gupta in recent years.

Kingdom of Nepal - *Gupta Tributary*

(Buddhist Barbarian Component Nation)

Biscotti Licchavi, Rajadhiraja

Diplomacy:

The Holy Prince and his entourage finally arrived at Daoist mountain temples and were warmly welcomed.

Pallava Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

Mahendravarman I, Rajadhiraja

Diplomacy: Belawan (C)

Thousands toiled under the glaring eye of the sun as a paved road was built from Belur to Tagara. Events in the East kept tongues wagging at court (see *Kingdom of Aceh*), fueled by a series of letters from Beluvarman, still a captive in the Spice Islands. The "Lost Lord" as he is called has some freedom now to wander around Yavadvipnam, though always with a companion.

Vakataka Kingdom - *Gupta Tributary*

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

Divakarasena, Rajadhiraja

Diplomacy:

After the turmoil of recent years, the rajadhiraja spent his time attending festivals and playing with his small children.

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.

Trade Reminder

Remember that international trade requires that both nations list the cities at both ends of the proposed trade route, in their orders for the same turn. Think of it as an agreement between sovereigns, either for an exchange of goods, or to assuage sensitive feelings, a payment of tribute. And of course the cities will need to be within trade range, etc. Please see trade rules for more exciting details.

Filling Out Spreadsheet

First, thanks to all of you who have used the new orders form/spreadsheet. Using this allows your GM to let the software do more work, which speeds the turn back to you. Here are some common mistakes and how to avoid them:

- Enter unit demobilizations in the **Builds, Bribes, ...** section with a short description, e.g. *Demob 4XII*, then enter the number of nfp as a negative number, e.g. *-4*, in the nfp column. Since builds are an expense, a negative expense is essentially a double negative, or a positive/income.
- Unit builds should use a format like: *IHC 3 Legoland 4 1* to raise one unit of heavy inexperienced cavalry for army 3 in region Legoland.
- If building units for a garrison in a region, e.g. 4F in Legoland, use army 99 to indicate they will be assigned to the garrison.
- When increasing city size, please write: *[+1] 99 Legopolis* as the format.
- For trade routes, please be sure to include correct port names - and of course to negotiate the trade terms with your trading partner.
- Please use your religious, assassin, and intel ops if your nation has them. If you do, the result will appear in the "Player Notes" of your results, a small bonus.

While the information is automagically entered into the LOTE database, the process is closely supervised by your GM to catch problems as they arise.

Food for Thought

Note that under **2.11.5.3** nations with agro surpluses may spend these. It saddens me to see poor nations with huge agro surpluses just let them rot in the fields, so to speak. Check it out.

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

A list of hints:

- Turn 8
- Turn 7
- Turn 6
- Turn 5
- Turn 4
- Turn 3
- Turn 2