

## Newsfax, Turn 11

(start of 441 CE through the end of 444 CE)

### Notes:

1. Only three players failed to use the proper form for orders. Thanks to the rest of you!
2. Please remember to use the **Custom Units** information on your stats sheet for such things as gp and nfp costs, APs, etc.
3. 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!"
4. You are encouraged to submit text and images for inclusion in the newsfax, which may satisfy your need for propaganda, creativity, or fun.
5. 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.

As is traditional, here is what I listened to while processing this turn. Oh boy.

- Simple Minds - *New Gold Dream*
- Nowhere - Movie Soundtrack
- Veruca Salt - *American Thighs*
- Jane's Addiction - *Nothing's Shocking*
- 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)

*Ikram the Fair, Khakhan of the Hunas*

Diplomacy: Und (UN), Kashgar (T), Tashkent (P), Bactra (T)

Ashirbu, Shah of Quba and husband of Gul, was in a lavish ceremony named Regent Heir for Yusuf until the latter achieved his majority. Many lambs were roasted and imported wine consumed, and a good time was had by all.

Ikram himself then marched on Tashkent with hundreds of thousands of warriors, only to find the city unwallled. The merchants sent forth a delegation to invite the Khakhan to own their city and leave a garrison, only spare their lives and property. Ikram was pleased at their obsequious behavior and sent several *minghans* into the city.

Tokharia "hosted" the hordes of Tasra the gurkhan, where the Hephthalites proved to be rude guests, riding down from the hills and looting, burning, and enslaving as they went. Having shown his dark side in 441, Tasra next travelled to Bactra, Bactria, and Khuttal, fresh scalps hanging from his horse trappings. The nobles in each case were aghast at the attentions of the barbarians, but saw the reason in joining Ikram's growing empire, though the Pagan rites were offensive.

Zor Halat, the ilkhan, was meanwhile talking up the moniker of Ikram "the Fair" in Kashgar. At a feast in 443 the 55-year-old suddenly died in mid-bite. His hosts were so terrified of the reaction of the Hephthalites that they immediately decided to pay tribute to Ikram, on whose "Fairness" they would rather not rely. The reaction of peasants in Otarsh to fear was instead obstinance, and shamans spreading the word of the Wind and Earth gods instead found local pagan families converting to Manicheanism by the hundreds.

But none of these events boiled the blood of Ikram as much as the treachery of Safeen (see *Kushan Empire*).

## **White Turk Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Osman*

Diplomacy:

Isolated from the flow of events, the Turks decided they needed to bond yet more strongly together. Thus each warrior pledged *anda* to the Khan himself, forging a more serious bond. As if to show this was a decision was made by the Gods, a son was sired by Osman.

## **Khwarizm Hunas Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

*Alpiv Alchon, Khakhan of the Hunas, Khan of Khwarzim*

Diplomacy:

The disease that is literacy spread like wildfire among the nobility.

## **Steppe Shamanism**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Primate Religious Authority)

*Ikram Sechen, High Shaman*

Diplomacy:

The spirit journey was a long one.

## **Kushan Empire**



(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*Lakshmi, Queen and Regent for the Kidarite Shao*

Diplomacy: Und (T)

"Kill them. Kill them all." The Queen was not amused. Persian armies on the border were not to be tolerated, since between them and the Hephthalites the Kushans found themselves like a child rolled up in a rug. Lakshmi ordered her agents forth into the enemy camps, each with a different mission.

While her men set forth, Her Gloriousness made sure that her own morale would remain high during the war. Thus at 44 she wed the charming Prince Jayapala One-Arm, causing some talk in the countryside. She also hired a thousand barbarian horse-archers to augment her army, and assigned to her son Shaka the tedious task of shuffling papers for the diminished realm. All this well before the snows had melted from the palace grounds, for she and her new Consort had imperial business to attend. By fast horse relays they rode in secret to the camp of Safeen the Hephthalite. Had her court known of this risky move they would surely have revolted en masse.

But they did not. In Und Lakshmi and Jayapala found Safeen to be remarkably receptive to their offer. For the Hephthalite commander had no love for the Persians, and a new lack of respect for a khakhan who would send his young daughters off to be violated in Ctesiphon. Yet no daughters (especially the cute one) for Safeen! With his record of supplying loot and victory, Safeen had little trouble convincing his troops to join with him. For now. The troops decamped for Afghanistan, leaving Und to gladly rejoin the Kushan Empire.

Meanwhile, a team of assassins moved west with a caravan. With so little time to plan, the men and women, disguised as a travelling company of singers and dancers, had to play it by ear. Their lucky break came when they arrived in Kash and their caravan master informed them that their target, Gaidam, was fond of entertainment, especially as he had been ordered to wait with his army for the arrival of Ariobarzanes, the *eran-spahbad*, and his siege force. To break the tedium Gaidam was hiring as many people as he could to keep his officers distracted from the tedium of their posting.

Yet more fortune smiled upon the secret agents, as Gaidam himself saw them perform and was smitten by a dancing girl named Irina with green eyes and auburn hair who moved like a cobra. And indeed, within a week she had shown the other aspect of a cobra and stabbed him in his bed while he slept. The Persians slipped away, leaving chaos in their wake. Without a leader, the army fell to bickering at all levels. Some called for revenge on what must have been a vile Kushan plot, while others said that the only thing to do was to stay put and await reinforcements.

Into this stepped the only other official *spahbad* present, Abandanes, Shah of Persia. This former rebel saw an opportunity and promoted himself as leader of the "revenge" party in camp, quickly using his skills to sway the mass of troops. Abandanes knew that with this army he could conquer the Kushan Empire and rule it as his own, granting fiefs to his loyal men and perhaps, eventually, becoming master of Ctesiphon as well. Publicly, of course, he was leading the army of the Shahanshah to annihilate the enemies of Darius, to which few could gainsay him. So it was that the Kushan agents had, inadvertently, made an army which would have waited out 441 in Kash into a force bent on the destruction of their mistress.

Abandanes first took "his" army to Hazarajat, liberating the place after a fashion, though by now the locals had little use for either Persians or Kushans. Kandahar, unwalled in a previous siege, acceded to Persian rule and let them in. This was Abandanes' new base, where the *spahbad* set up a depot before pushing on into Afghanistan in October of 441. The army commander was confident with Kandahar as his base, and announced to his troops that once Gaidam was avenged they would march home and replace the Shahanshah for his crime of making peace with those agents of Ahriman, the Romans. Ariobarzanes marched eastward with his siege force, hearing disturbing rumors along the way.

Thus it was that in the cool season of 441 two armies faced off across the passes into the outskirts of Kabul. One consisted of a Persian army under a rebel leader, while the defenders were lead by Zoraz and his new-found friend (whom he detested regardless) Safeen, each leading their own men. Abandanes probed for a path through the mountains, since he wanted a quick end to the campaign because the natives told him that the winter would come early and hard this year. He knew that he outnumbered his enemy, and knew his men were veterans.

Over a period of weeks 23,000 Persians tried to force their way through, while the defenders frustrated their every attempt with ambushes, skirmishes, and the occasional small battle. After a few thousand Persians had been lost Abandanes called off the campaign, citing to his men the onset of winter. But in Kabul there was cheering, for their losses were half those of their enemies, and their city was not besieged. For now. The Persians fell back to the comforts of Kandahar and considered their next moves.

The following summer proved interesting in many ways. For in July Abandanes had news that Ariobarzanes, the *eran-spahbad* and commander of all Persian forces under the Shahanshah, was just a week's march away. The siege army had arrived in Kash only to find the main army of the east under a new leader in a new place, and with a new attitude. The wily rebel decided not to fight his countryman, and instead to welcome him. Ariobarzanes had by now learned what had taken place, and approached the camp of his fellow leader with caution. After an exchange of hostages and friendly letters Abandanes came alone to the tent of the *eran-spahbad*.

"You know I have to arrest you," Ariobarzanes said in a low voice. "I could have you executed on the spot, Abandanes, as you know. And yet you came here on your feet. Talk."

Abandanes took a deep breath and said, "You have some wisdom, *eran-spahbad*. Our Shahanshah has married into the family of the Turanian devils by accepting their daughters. He has made peace with the Destroyers, the Romans, even as they seek to reduce Egypt and our allies. And yet you do not consider that another could do better than this?"

With such words Ariobarzanes was convinced to join, rather than execute, Abandanes. Together they knew they could take Afghanistan and make Persia safe, and together they knew they could place on the Peacock Throne a more worthy Shahanshah than Darius, perhaps Xerxes or another. The plan was to set Queen Prakasina and her son Vasudeva in power in Kabul as their vassals, pulling them out of internal exile, in order to smooth over the transition to Persian power. With the remains of the Kushan army in their hands, the combined army ought to be able to march on Ctesiphon.

So they planned their summer campaign against Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Zoraz the Lion, hero of all Kushan, had died, replaced by a nobleman named Eucratides, allegedly a descendant of Alexander of Makedon. He assisted as Lakshmi and everyone else readied for the inevitable summer attack from the west. They were aided by the recently-arrived army of Safeen's Hephthalites, which helped to even the odds. For the Persians, under their two commanders Ariobarzanes and Abandanes, would have severely outnumbered the Kushan army. But with the barbarians on their side Lakshmi's army was only slightly less than her enemy's.

The allied Kushano-Hephthalite force put up moderate resistance, slowing the Persian entrance into the valley of **Kabul**. After marching along the river, September 14 of 422 saw the two armies face off to the west of the city. Before him, Ariobarzanes could see the Kushan militia lines up with some Hephthalite banners waving in the breeze to their rear, one flank anchored on the Paiminar Hills to the north. He had left his sappers and engineers back in camp, since they would be of little value in the open field. Abandanes opened the action with a spirited charge on the Kushan southern flank. This pushed back the defenders, prompting Ariobarzanes to order an attack all along the line. 32,000 Persian pushed against the thin line of defenders, who slowly fell back rather than routing.

Ariobarzanes smiled. Soon he would have his own kingdom, and eventually power in Ctesiphon. Then he heard shouts and cries from his rear. Turning in the saddle, he saw dark shapes bearing down on the rear, fast, with a few banners of *asvaran* turning about and moving off to face them. "Oh crap," he thought, and quickly organized a counterattack. But it was too little, too late, for the Hephthalite's main force had swept around the hills to the north, turned the corner, and rode hard from the west, ignoring the Persian camp and falling on the rear of the main line. Thousands were slaughtered as they were caught between the hard place of the Kushan line of armored infantry and heavy cavalry and the rock of the barbarian charge.

Displaced from the hills anchoring their flank, the Persians fled and were chased down by the Mongol horse archers. The pursuit was ferocious. By the time Abandanes could collect arrows to count survivors, he found 15,000 troops had been left dead in Afghanistan. Kushan losses had mainly been of their own countrymen, and these were light. Once more the citizens of Kabul feasted their victory, while the Persians fell back to Kandahar in a foul mood.

The following year, 443, saw Abandanes and Ariobarzanes working to convince the *asvaran* and *dihqans* to give them one more chance against Kabul, unfolding a devious plan for success. Thus it was that as soon as the passes were clear in the late spring the Persian army once more marched into Afghanistan. This time there was little resistance in the mountains and again the walls of Kabul were in sight. Again the

two armies lined up, yet this time the Persians were outnumbered at the battle of **Second Kabul**. Two thousand *dihqans* were sent forward against the enemy, and after a few minutes they fled away from the Kushan line.

This was, however, a feigned flight. As expected, the enemies fell for it, chasing after the fleeing Persians pell mell. Ariobarzanes then ordered a general attack with a blast of horns, causing the *dihqans* to turn about, form a line, and loose arrows at their pursuers. Surprised at the charging Persians, Safeen and Eucratides ordered their respective armies to reform. To the dismay of Abandanes and Ariobarzanes the enemy ranks quickly reordered themselves before the Persians could reach them. Now it was the Persians who were attacking in disorder, falling like wheat before the scythe to the thousands of arrows shot at them. They then turned, fleeing in earnest, leaving over ten thousand dead on the field of battle, while the defenders' losses were nearly zero.

Despite this overwhelming victory, Lakshmi rode to each commander and forbade him from pursuing the crushed enemy beyond Kandahar and into Kash. For the Persians were always a devious foe, and the arts of Abandanes were by now legendary. Besides, she had achieved both a great victory and a political coup, for Ariobarzanes, the Persian *eran-spahbad*, was her prisoner, captured when his horse fell in the rout. With the Shahanshah still in Ctesiphon Lakshmi knew that she would need at least some bargaining power in the coming negotiations.

## **Oghuz Turk Realm - socii populi Romani**

(Monophysite Christian Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Bogotai, Rex Turcorum and Magister Equitum per Orientem*

Diplomacy: Atelzuko (PT)

Sonqur, now beginning to feel his age, made the official declaration that Bogotai, son of the late Tamil, would be his heir, and was to take up his duties upon the Khan's death. Having finished his speech Sonqur lay himself under a tree for an afternoon nap. His repose was disturbed, much to his annoyance, by a messenger bearing news that a pair of men clad in western garb had borne a message to Sonqur, suggesting the Oghuz return west. The west-men told Sonqur that great fame and fortune would come to the Oghuz if they left China. Out of earshot of the Blue Turk Khan, Tardu, they added that this service to the Monophysite Church would not go unrewarded, both in this world and the next.

The Khan emerged from his tent the following week, having been closeted with the westerners and his court, including Tardu. Sonqur declared before the clan leaders that the omens for the tribes had changed, and that they must ride west at once. The minor khans were amazed, annoyed, and astonished at this news. Their leader pressed on, claiming rich lands full of fortune for all that would journey with him.

Within a week everyone was ready, though there was much grumbling. At the mustering field, an omen of great power took place according to stories which made their way to civilization. Apparently, Sonqur was speaking from a wagon to an assembly of clan fathers and mothers. His face slowly brightened as he spoke, so that, according to one witness, the elders were forced to cover their eyes. The Khan saw this and paused in his discourse on their route of march. One leader who put some cloth in front of his own face in order to see more clearly claimed to have seen a winged figure, hazy, behind and above Sonqur.

As quickly as it had come, the "event" ended. A priest behind the wagon declared the Blessing of the Almighty had been given to Sonqur, and all present immediately set out to their own clans with the news. Thus it was that a grumbling mass of humanity ceased their argument and strife, trundling westward as quickly as possible. Sonqur himself died in his sleep in March of 441, found with a smile on his face, so the story went. The teenaged Bogotai was acclaimed the new *Rex Turcorum* en route.

Iffen, the khan of the city of Kuldja, was not impressed and chose to keep his citizens right where they were. Haring off with a crowd of flea-bitten barbarians did not seem the wisest move. But Karluk, Wusu, Jungaria, Beshbalik, Altai, and the city of Khocho were emptied by the nomads as they headed west.

The road was not always an easy one. Saksiny resisted the passage of the Turks, and the Tabolsk tribes in particular lost hundreds of warriors in an ill-advised assault on a fortified village surrounded by marshland. At last Atelzuko was reached, the local nobles defeated, and the Oghuz and Blue Turks rested a bit.

## **Blue Turk Khanate - *Tribe of the Oghuz Turks***

(Asia Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Tardu, Khan of the Blue Turks*

Diplomacy:

Sonqur Khan rode to the Blue Turk camps with news that both intrigued and annoyed Tardu. "Ride west?!", Tardu exclaimed, "but we just came from the west." "I have been assured that plunder, glory, and riches will be more bountiful in the west-lands than here in the east.", Sonqur replied coolly, "Do you not desire riches and glory for your people? For we are of the same stock, Tardu Khan. You were once an Oghuz. The blood of the Oghuz still runs in the veins of you and your people. You cannot tell me that you do not wish for the glory and riches I speak of." "Aye, you are right Sonqur Khan. I do desire glory and riches. Though my heart is against it, we will ride with your people. I swore an oath of loyalty to you the eve of our departure from the Persian lands, and I will uphold that oath. But I fear that disaster will come upon us."

Thus it was that the Turks, only recently settled in the old Juan-Juan lands, picked up and migrated again (see *Oghuz Turk Realm*). A son was born to Tardu in Urkel, and all were glad of it.

## **Uighur Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Hsiao Hsin, Khan*

Diplomacy: Shian (FA)

The newly-named Ilkhan, son of Hsiao Hsin, was in for a surprise when his father sent home from Shian the daughter of their Khan. She was to be his bride, but it quickly became apparent she was more than a match for her new husband, widely known to be less than impressive. The Uighurs were tired of being part of an "empire" and the khan renounced his allegiance to the Later Liang, who seemed not to notice.

## **Juan-Juan Khanate**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*P'ulochen, Khakhan*

Diplomacy: Om'chu (UN), Dzamin Uud (UN)

The khan of the Altai was riding through a small wood when he came upon a small clearing astride his path. How pleasant, he thought to himself, and halted to admire the budding shrubs and darting birds. Without warning he was set upon by wild kittens, dozens of them. They seemed to be hunting in a pack. His steed broke into a gallop as the khan plucked the tiny assailants off his cloak. On returning to camp, he consulted a shamaness. Brushing her long grey hair, she told him this was a very bad omen indeed. He needed to regain power, somehow. When pressed, the crone told him that leaving the Khanate would probably turn his life around.

And to it was that the Altai clans gathered up their kine and trundled off to the Ordos bend, where they settled the old homelands of the Hsiung-nu. No longer would they ride off at the bidding of P'ulochen to the far corners of the Earth.

Reflecting on his life of service, the Dzamin Uud khan also took his clans and went home, disappointed. For he had travelled to Europe and back, and yet had nothing to show for the venture but an aching back and smaller herds.

The tribes had, in any event, returned from their trek to Om'chu, which promptly threw out the nomad tax collectors. Months of travel in a fruitless quest did little to improve the tempers of the khans sent thither.

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

(Daoist Nomadic Component Nation)

*Khan Khojan*

Diplomacy:

When the son of Khojan was born, it is said that the sky began to thunder, and hail the size of hawk eggs fell from the sky. All who spent time with the infant fell under his spell, and before long he was too big for his tiny mother to carry easily, proud though she was. But for now, his cousin Subotai would be the heir to Khojan.

Meanwhile, the court learned more about the Immortals, the Way, and became ever more Sinicized.

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

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Component Nation)

*Naiman, Regent for Altakai*

Diplomacy:

Altakai fumed. Was he not a man? Was he not ready to rule? Only Naiman dared deny him, this teenager whose dark eyes stabbed into one's heart with a glance, who had snow leopard pelts to spare. Naiman did, however, elevate the lad to *gurkhan*, which seemed to placate him. For now.



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

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Khan Arton*

Diplomacy:

Families were hungry. Trade was stunted. The realm was a shambles. Arton realized the futility of imperial ambitions for his desperate people, and declared that the greater Tu-Yu-Hu Kingdom was officially dissolved.

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## **China**

### **Chinese Buddhism**

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Master Lo-Wang III*

Diplomacy:

The activity of the Daoists (see *Daoism Temples*) caused concern. Even the death of Lo-Wang II failed to perturb the serenity of the Order.



### **Chinese Kingdom of Annam**

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Wei-Chou Su*

Diplomacy:

The king was concerned with the barbarians across the mountains (see *Juan-Juan Khanate* and *Khanate of the Hsiung-nu*). He was not quite sure what to make of priests calling for action in Nan Chao, however (see *Daoism Temples*). The king of Gouangxi died, but his son remained loyal to Wei-Chou Su.



## Daoism Temples

(Daoist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Ko Chao Fu, Ling Pao Master*

Diplomacy:

The Master continued to toil away in secret, leaving many to gossip as to his activities. Away from the center, Mao Tze Tsu passed away while on a mission to distant Lang Shan yet succeeded in inspiring the local people. Mao Fu Yei went very far, to Nan Chao, where he talked up the idea of resistance to barbarians, to get them to drive invaders from the neighborhood. There was some interest among the nobles and people, but without direction from the King they would not act. Li Chan preached throughout Szechwan, where the citizenry welcomed him with great food and earnest ears.

## Eastern Ts'in Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*K'ung Ti, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Nanping (NT), Chiennan (UN), Ghang'de (NT)

Bored. Bored, bored, bored. Zhou Huangi, Lady of Ling Ling and the young widow of emperor Zhou Ti, was tired of court life. "It's all, like, bridge here, canal there, and stuff. I'm outta here!" she informed the chamberlain. With her entourage the Lady of Ling Ling went home and set up her own small court, centered around herself (of course) and her childhood sweetheart, a charming local lad, and a circle of philosophers, artists, and other ne'er-do-wells. K'ung Ti was for his part glad to be rid of her.

To celebrate her departure, the Emperor named Chin Ti as his heir, with brother Kuang Ti as a royal prince. The sheer glory of the empire inspired the Duke of Ghang'de to pledge a level of fealty to K'ung Ti, to the delight of the latter. Major road projects kept thousands employed, while those matters of annoyance to the departed Lady were gratefully received in Funiu, Hubei, Fujian, Hainan, and elsewhere.

The Lady of Ling Ling did however set an example for other citizens. Attempts by priests sent by the Office of Expansion of the Dao of Empire to "improve" the spiritual lives of peasants in Kuang-Ling failed miserably. The Daoist bishop Mi Zhu died while on an official mission to Nanping. A small delegation of from the bureaucracy meekly informed the mighty emperor that due to changes in the empire the census was hopelessly outdated, and that this was preventing the increase of revenue to the Friend of Heaven. K'ung Ti proved mild and did not order the immediate execution of the scribes and their families.

His reaction was less sanguine regarding the loss of Chiennan. The death of the Marquis of Chiennan caused a wholesale reappraisal of attitudes regarding the empire, and his successor had support for declaring independence. Similarly disturbing were reports from merchants of piracy along the coast of Taiwan and as close to the Chinese shore as Quemoy and Matsu. They begged the emperor to take action soon.

## **Khanate of the Hsiung'nu**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Alagh, Khagan of the Hsiung'nu*

Diplomacy:

His people were cold, hungry, and bored. Alagh entertained several proposals for action yet none seemed practical.

## **Korean Kingdom of Koguryo**

(Chinese Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Changsu*

Diplomacy:

Old Changsu enjoyed the fine weather.

## **Later Liang Kingdom**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Lu Wu, Emperor of China*

Diplomacy: Lob Nor (UN)

In 441 the khan of dusty Lob Nor, Shih Shih, was slain by a poisonous serpent, and his people decided it was an omen to leave the Later Liang entirely. 442 saw the death of Xiang Yu, the Khan of the Turfan clans, which lead to his successors refusing to send any more tribute to the court of Lu Ssu. The following year, Fate was rude enough to take his life. His eldest son, Lu Wu, succeeded him peacefully.

Worse still was the loss of their Uighur vassals (see *Uighur Khanate*).

## Hou Yen Dynasty

(Daoist Civilized Open Empire)

*Gaoyen, Emperor of China, Later Yen Dynast*

Diplomacy: Kin (FA)

The emperor writhed in agony as his pregnant wife tended to him. At last death ended his misery on May 2 of 443, at the age of 63. A handsome baby boy was delivered a bit prematurely, but he seemed healthy. Gaoyen took power at the age of 15, seemingly ready for the burdens of rule.

Lord Wutan, being of noble bearing and a quick mind, was dispatched north into the grasslands of Kin to seek alliance with the Daoist chieftains there. He succeeded, and also found a young and wise wife for the new young Emperor. Otherwise, peace and prosperity reigned.

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

(Daoist Civilized Component Nation)

*Ma Ch'in, Sung King*

Diplomacy: Loyang (NT)

The fisc was opened for the building of levees, the digging of wells, and general improvement of the countryside. A concentration of effort was in Xiangfan, which grew to a major city. More controversial was the declaration by the king that his daughter Ma Qin, one of three triplets, would at 20 years of age be his heir. Having a woman as heir was a confusion and annoyance at court, the eunuchs having to modify the standard ritual. Many lords grumbled, but fear of Ma Ch'in held them in check. Her marriage to general Kao Lishi mollified them somewhat, though the husband was not raised in rank beyond lord. Most nobles smugly assumed he would be the real power, since her sister Ma Li had also been married off to an old general.

Ma Ch'in was still a hound, and sired two more sons on his concubines. Bhu-Ti, the guard captain and mayor of Loyang, died and the new regime decided for more autonomy. But apprehension over the reaction of Ma Ch'in caused them to retain nominal loyalty to him.

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## South East Asia

### Chen-La Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Pendravarman II*

Diplomacy:

Worries over the growing power of the Khmer were confirmed (see *Khmer Kingdom of Funan*).

## Khmer Kingdom of Funan

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

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

Diplomacy:

The Cham were no more. And yet Korn Danh, in his beneficence, wished not to see that noble line extinguished. Thus it was that sumptuous weddings were held at the royal capital. Prince Asim was married off to the Cham princess Bradravarie, prince Asim took to wife Anaka, the daughter of Norodom Huoth, and the glamorous elder princess Nimai married the young Cham prince Dyupati. These popular events were marred somewhat by the scandal in Sresthapura, where a Khmer agent was caught attempting to bribe a royal official. This unfortunate was sent off to the mines to work off his crime. A more public mission, Norodom Huoth's trip to Mison, convinced a few people that life was better now under Korn Danh.

The vagaries of life took their toll at court. Asim died in 442, leaving behind a childless widow. The delightful Nimai died in 444 and was mourned by her toddler daughter and husband.

## Kingdom of Aceh - *Subjects of Pallava*

(Oceanic Pagan Seafaring Component Nation)

*Munir, Raja*

Diplomacy: Belawan (PT), Sarawak (F)

Suharu was fishing from his royal boat off the coast of Sarawak, where he had been working the native tribes, when a tremendous tug on the line pulled him into the water. Before he could be pulled out of the ocean no less than four huge blue and white sharks ripped his 53 year old body to shreds before disappearing into the depths. His son Munir was only 11, but showed such promise in the academic subjects that he was able to take control of the realm.

One of his first acts was to make a satrapy out of the city of Belawan, a sign of his more gracious style of rule. A day later an embassy from Sarawak arrived, pledging the total loyalty of their land to Munir. The manner of his father's death was an omen they should cleave to his kingdom.

## Kingdom of Tarumanegara

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

*Purnavarnam "The Great Elephant," Maharaja*

Diplomacy: Bali (P)

As scores of warriors loaded onto the next giant outrigger, the aged Purnavarnam anticipated that his empire would at last grow to match his ambitions for posterity. Unfortunately he lacked enough shipping, so that the invasion of Bali had to take place over many months, first establishing a beachhead, then pushing along the coast. The ultimate battle saw both sides lead by *rajas* on elephants and thousands of troops. Still strong, the *maharaja* himself slew the enemy commander with loosing of a single gilded arrow. All were amazed and the Balinese army fled in disarray. Purnavarnam returned home and commissioned an epigraphic account of his conquest, as well as a song in honor of his loyal warriors. This was tempered officially in 443 with the death of the First Wife at the age of 50, but the ruler himself was

elated at ridding himself of the whining crone. At 73 years old, at last his life seemed to be improving.

## **Malayadvipa - Gupta Tributary**

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

*Varanavendra, raja*

Diplomacy:

The *raja* spent most of his time improving governance, to good effect.

## **Pyu Kingdom**

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

*King Kyanzi*

Diplomacy: Sagaing (C)

The king was pleased that his least favorite concubine managed to give birth to a beautiful daughter. Unfortunately for him, the year 444 saw a minor outbreak of The Cough sweep through the region. He died from it at the age of 63, causing a minor crisis at court. The province of Sagaing took the opportunity to cease tribute shipments, especially as they were upset at the accession of Kyanzi, the son of Kyanzittha and one of their princesses whose family was out of favor. Despite his dull persona the new king was known as an efficient administrator, which was an essential skill in such a civilized empire. Peace and prosperity continued unabated.

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## **Japan**



## **Emishi Lords**

(Asiatic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Ashitaka*

Diplomacy:

The old king lavished attention on the son of his dotage and pondered the military buildup to his south (see *Yamato Japan*).

## Yamato Japan

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

*Jingu Koga, Queen*

Diplomacy:

Thousands toiled building a coastal highway from Naniha to Izumo, for the greater glory of the realm. Jingu, meanwhile, worked hard on her own project, raising three tiny princesses to be worthy of their rank. As she claimed at court, she would rather have been wielding a spade doing roadwork, the easier task. Hiroaki oversaw the expansion of the army, much to the interest of all Nippon since new conquests seemed unlikely.

## Southern Mountains Clans

(Shinto Barbarian Open Nation)

*Koji Jutaro, regent*

Diplomacy:

The fishing was good. Prince Akihito was officially called to serve as Crown Prince by the regent. This was in part politics, part romance, as the lad had fallen for arguably the most beautiful woman in all Asia, the Lady Jun. Poems had been written, songs sung, and artists moved by her, but only the young prince had both the status and charm to woo Jun successfully.

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## Western Europe

### Alamanni

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Rechila, king*

Diplomacy:

The warriors wanted to fight. The merchants wished to trade. The nobles desired new lands to conquer. Yet Rechila wallowed in sybaritic delights.

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

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Gaius Carpus, Rex Gallaecia, Vicarius Lusitaniae*

Diplomacy: Baetica (T)

A peace was declared with the Alamanni, allowing caravans to cross the frontier. The Germans were not however particularly happy with Gaius Carpus, limiting trade by virtue of rapacious tariffs. With digits firmly crossed against the eventuality that barbarians stop drinking good Spanish wine and instead look towards his realm with avarice, the *rex* concentrated on local prosperity. To this end prince Balbus was sent off to Baetica on a friendship mission. Sadly, on October 21 of 442 he died in a riding accident. He was only 21, and his mother Queen Arcadia mourned for an entire year.

## Rugian Tribes

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Sigeric*

Diplomacy:

The Rugians enjoyed the pleasant Iberian weather.

## Siling Vandals - *Diocese of Spain*

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Gento, Rex Vandalarum, Vicarius Hispaniae*

Diplomacy:

These Vandals were rather peaceful, and hoped their neighborhood remained so.

## Kingdom of the Alans

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Arlon, Shah*

Diplomacy: Austria (UN), Meissen (UN), Bohemia (UN), Lausatia (UN), Thuringia (UN)

443 saw the death of the Austrian king, Barana, which event did not reduce the overall peacefulness of the Alan domains. Even the warriors, who had been promised lands and not been given them, bided their time. Some of the lesser *shahs* were however given lands in feud to Arlon, which was resented heavily by the patient clans. These changes allowed the Shah to now provide for his warriors, but they were by now in no mood for more promises.

Furthermore, the conquered Lombard regions and others resented the fact that the distant Alan capital would now be levying against them effectively. Every non-garrisoned captive region rebelled, while Arlon struggled to regain control over his army. Even Austria, long a friend, took the opportunity to reject the Alans. Within months the small garrison of Meissenberg was massacred and the Lombards once more took control of their own destiny.

## Angles and Jutes

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Peada*

Diplomacy:

On the death of Hengist on October 23 of 444, most embassies expected the violent realm of the Angles and Jutes to collapse into war and chaos. Instead the people rallied around the figure of his son, Peada, son of Hengist and Brunhilde. He was backed by Cnut, jarl of Halland, and of course by his mother, a princess of Skane. The warriors were still upset over a lack of booty and inadequate subsidies, but hoped for better days.



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

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Oebersius, Rex Vandalorum*

Diplomacy:

With his new power (see *Empire of the Huns*) Oebersius saw to the edification of his old neighborhood by building aqueducts and roads in Narbonensis. Gaiseric, meanwhile, sired a little girl quickly tagged as "Berta the Beautiful." Young prince Tuldila, the teenaged son of Gaiseric, was named as Oebersius' heir to the Asdingii.

## **Empire of the Huns**

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

*Oebersius, Khakhan*

Diplomacy: Belgica I (UN), Novum Populi (UN)

The khakhan smiled grimly, and his generals gathered around him, most of them shorter, sallower, and squinty of eye, chuckled. Oebersius knew how to keep his nomads happy - by keeping them on the move. Thus it was that Belgica I was invaded by an overwhelming force intent on conquest. But the locals, a mix of Latins, Gallo-Romans, and Germans, put up a determined resistance, ambushing parties of Hun raiders, sniping at Gothic scouts, stealing horses, and generally making a nuisance of themselves before melting back into the local population.

This wearied and angered the lesser *gurkhans* to the point where the effort to reduce the nobility to submission turned to slaughter and looting. Disgusted, the Hun army then left the region and headed south for Lemovicia. By contrast, the natives there cowered in fear as the thousands of brutal-looking riders, most with scalps tied to horse trappings in a time-honored tradition, filed past. Novum Populi, a rich Roman land little touched by decades of barbarian depredations, felt sharp edge of Hunnic rage. The towns were looted, churches sacked and burned, and despair spread abroad. Oebersius then brought the army to Maxima to enjoy their swag.

Meanwhile, orders had gone out to his Red Hun vassals to move south and settle. Their thralls did not mind this, but the locals in Parisii were not interested in leaving their ancestral homes and refused. Modares, the Red Hun leader, would not in turn do the dirty work of his overlord and requested backup from Oebersius. This was granted, and within months a force reported to have been over 100,000 horsemen appeared in the province. Only then did the local magnates relent, and the populace trod downtrodden to the south, settling in Tarbellia. Needless to say, the natives there were none too happy with developments, but accepted their new neighbors as fellow victims of barbarian aggression. Mostly, they denounced the Empire for betraying their trust, while praying quietly for the Empire to send an army to deliver them.

## **Franks**

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Childeric, Rex*

Diplomacy:

Childeric, a man of great ability and ambition, chafed under the advice of the council of elders who argued patience in growing a kingdom.

## Burgundians

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Frederic, King of the Burgundians*

Diplomacy:

Marion, the daughter of Gundioc, grew tired of waiting for Frederic to find her a prince to wed, so she used her wisdom and grace to snare a *thiufan* of her own. Within a year she had a beautiful baby daughter to show, though her husband was killed in 444 in a bizarre hunting accident involving an icy pond, a trout, and a score of archers. In contrast, the king sired on his consort an infant so homely that the nursemaid demanded extra payment - and got it.

Just as ugly were the Huns, who were making the neighborhood far too interesting for Frederic's liking (see *Empire of the Huns*).



## Classical Pagan Oracles

(Classical Pagan Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Hecate, Sibyl*

Diplomacy: Amara (UN), Nobatia (CH)

The priestesses bemoaned barbarian depredations (see *Angles and Jutes*) and the policy of the Eastern Roman Empire, especially the slaughter, rapine, and looting in Amara. The aged Hecate kept her plans to herself.

## Frisians

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Jentze Wolfsen*

Diplomacy: Colonia Agrippina (FA), Trier (F)

Folcwald the Elder successfully convinced the citizens of Colonia Agrippina that their future lay more with Frisians than with Romans. They did nonetheless refuse to tear up their imperial charter, as the senate considered that as their city was surrounded by barbarians even the faint hope of imperial aid was not to be given up. Trier on the other hand welcomed to chance to fully change teams, as it were. But to get there Folcwald had several narrow escapes from Frankish patrols, and was thus trapped in the city, where he heard an earful about how the Franks were restricting trade.

Wulf, son of Jentze and a Wendish slave girl, lived up to his name, having by the age of 13 already slain 2 men in feuds. Despite - or as some claimed because of - this he and his milder brother Jens were acknowledged as the king's sons and heirs. Most expected the future to be an active one for the realm.

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

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Autharii, Rex Lombardorum*

*Alastar, Prince and Regent* Diplomacy: Meissen (HM), Silesia (EA), Thuringia (F), Meissenberg (F)

Autharii and Aistulf continued to pine away under Alan confinement in Meissenburg. On the collapse of Alan power in Lombardia (see *Kingdom of the Alans*) the sons of Autharii and Aistulf sprang into action, leading the liberation of what remained of the capital, restoring governance, and generally taking charge pending the return of the True King. Hundreds of men flocked to the banner of Alastar, and this son of Aistulf was acclaimed as regent. Thus was the Lombard Kingdom restored, after a fashion.

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

(Keltic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*High King Brian I "Lord of the Isles," Rex Scotorum, Vicarius Hiberniae*

Diplomacy: Hebrides (P), Orkney (P), Shetlands (P), Faeroes (PT)

The wind lashed his perfect orange hair as he stood in the prow of his flagship. Behind the king scores of men pulled on oars into the stiff breeze, heading north to bring yet more islands under his reign. For Brian had found Britain proper too tough a nut to crack and decided on a new strategy to get beyond Eire.

So it was that the Summer of 441 the lord Liam organized the expedition of thousands of warriors, the king, and Brian's drinking buddy Marcus. The Hebrides were first landfall, soldiers of the king swarming over the collection of islands. Seeing the fair face of Brian and his sense of justice, hundreds of Scitii warriors pledged their loyalty to him and joined his army. As reward they were left to garrison their neighbors, leading to both a better and worse situation. The now-seasoned troops moved on to the Orkneys, their passage smoothed by proper sacrifices to Manannan and Macha. These islands also were easily conquered. There the Scots spent a miserable winter, many having to raise their own hovels to protect them against the cold north winds, others choosing to live on their ships, others barracked with locals. When the weather turned in 442 they set sail for the Shetlands. Here the High King also found easy success, but when scores of native warriors surrendered Brian, in a drunken rage, ordered their execution for not putting up more of a fight.

This act, combined with various omens, caused unease in the army, making them afraid to sail to the distant Faeroes. Stories of dragons, vicious pixies, and other frights, had been told them along the way. But Brian berated them for cowardice, and indeed within a fortnight the fleet arrived under fair skies, for truly their king seemed to stumble into good fortune wherever he laid his drinking horn. The Faeroes turned out to be inhabited by a somewhat inbred lot who greeted the invaders warmly, then sullenly agreeing to follow Brian as their High King. Wintering here, the fleet then sailed home the following year. By then all were ready for the sight of home. Indeed, a tipsy Marcus was so eager that on seeing the coast near Dublin he leaped overboard and swam for it. His body came ashore the following day, May 30 of 443.

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



(Classical Pagan Civilized Component Nation)

*Volusian, Rex Damnonia, Vicarius Britanniae*

Diplomacy:

The Brits were generally pleased with themselves, which irked everyone else no end.

## **Pictish Kingdom of Alba**



(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)  
*Miranda Mac Aniel, Queen of the Cruithni, Princess of Flavia*



Diplomacy:

The Scottish ambitions in the Isles were tracked with some trepidation (see *Eire Kingdom of the Scots*).

## Quadi Clans

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)  
*King Araharius II*  
 Diplomacy:

It came suddenly. Angered at the lack of initiative on the part of Vitalianus, a coup was organized by the *thiufan* Gert. The king was captured in his sleep and quickly executed, his nephew put on the throne. This did not, however, change the fortunes of the tribes, and Gert's influence, while great, diminished with time.

Yet more disturbing was the death in childbirth of Rua, Princess of the Asding Vandals, and a living link to the mighty Empire of the Huns. All mourned her, the widow of Araharius, another sign of troubled times indeed.



## Roman Christian Church

(Roman Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Leo I, Bishop of Roma*

Diplomacy: Novum Populi (UN)

The Roman Church scoffed at the reforms emanating from Constantinople (see *Orthodox Christian Church*). News of the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem fueled feelings that these were the End Times, and many faithful took to wearing black and looking inward. Events in what was left of the Empire did not refute their beliefs (see *Western Roman Empire*).

## Suevi Kingdom

(Arian Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Hermeric*

Diplomacy:

The men were loud. They smelled. They shouted. They brandished spears. But Hermeric was able to talk them down with smooth words and a soft tone. Thus were the might Germanic warriors pacified - for now. Horta, disgusted with her brother's dithering, married an older nobleman and moved out of the court. Her saga-inspiring beauty and dance would be missed.



## Western Roman Empire

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Marcus Traianus Marcellinus, Augustus*

*Marcellinus, Flavius* Diplomacy: Belgica I (UN), Novum Populi (T), Colonia Agrippina (C)

Bad news followed bad news. The Ostrogoths were on the march (see *Ostrogothic Kingdom*), Colonia Agrippina was imperial in name only, and the Huns had reneged on their treaty by taking Belgica I (see *Empire of the Huns*). Their depredations in Novum Populi went unanswered by an imperial force, so the locals rewrote their compact with Mediolanum and organized for their own defence. These were indeed dark days for the empire.

As if these were not enough sad tidings, Gaius, the magister officiorum, died of a heart attack at the age of 66, a favorite of Marcus. The following year, on March 29 of 442 Marcus himself, former Consul of Britain, a man who had fought his way to the throne, died after a long illness of the liver. With the empire beset seemingly on all sides, the bureaucracy, church, people, and nobility unconsciously agreed that now was not the time to cause problems. The declared son and heir of Marcus, the youth Marcellinus, was anointed as the new Emperor of Roma. He found himself ruling a much-diminished patrimony, with hunger in a few provinces and barbarians seemingly everywhere.

## Ostrogothic Kingdom

(Roman Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Amalasigrun "the Fair," Queen*

Diplomacy: Campania (F), Samnium (F), Lucania (P), Ravenna (F)

"They are weak. Now is the time to strike." So said young Amalisigrun to the gathered *thiufans*, and all cheered. Too long had they scurried about under the gaze of the empire, afraid of the long reach of the emperor. It appeared that the Huns had cast down the power of the Romans, leaving room for the Ostrogoths to flourish.

Thus it was that with the first buds of spring in 441 Marcus Attilus led his mass of iron-clad horsemen against Samnium. This province proved to have no imperial garrison to defend it. Seeing the way was clear, Attilus engaged in a bit of ad hoc land reform, executing a number of magnates and settling Goths on their lands. This was not entirely unpopular among the long-suffering population, who hoped their burdens under the barbarians would be lighter. But then, as usual, hope was all they had.

Lord Blacwin invaded Lucania, which also falls without the need for the spilling of any blood. The Gothic army merely had to appear before one of the many inadequately walled cities for it to surrender. Apulia was next on his line of march, and it fell quickly as well, with some of the citizens even cheering their "liberator." As reward for this greeting, Blacwin ordered the region to be pillaged.

In more peaceful endeavors, the queen herself oversaw the colonization of Campania, using her skills to overcome local resentments. Baldric was meanwhile quite busy chatting up the senators of Ravenna, the former imperial capital. As any fool - even an aristocratic one - could see, the winds of change were blowing, and they agreed to board the Gothic ship. Besides, they smelled better than the Taifali.

## **Slavic Kingdom of Aemilia**

(Slavic Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Kroll*

Diplomacy:

Young king Kroll was again watchful. Nobody messed with the Slavs, however, they having proved to be far more resilient than any might have guessed.

## **Holy Empire of Rome**

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Probus, Augustus*

Diplomacy:

A festive wedding was held in Aquileia between Cerelia, daughter of Stilicho, and a nobleman of the city. This provided the one bright day in an otherwise worrisome drift of the realm in to triviality. There was not enough food to keep all happy, and the army grumbled at the lack of adequate pay. Some even talked openly of hiring out to "civilized" parties.

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

(Roman Christian Civilized Component Nation)

*Petronius, rex*

Diplomacy:

Petronius of Epidaurum looked with both fear and wonder at the new kingdom up the coast (see *The Pirate Kingdom of Illyria*). Queen Amaryllis was of course outraged and amused at the uncivilized behavior of their new neighbors, but did nonetheless arrange for a small ivory rattle to be sent to the child of the pirate queen.

## **The Pirate Kingdom of Illyria**

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Tirvalda Illyria Leisima*

Diplomacy: Pannonia II (EA), Histria (EA)



The Adriatic coast was rapidly becoming a power vacuum. The Western Romans were in decline, and after some decades of inaction the Holy Empire of Rome was nearly done for. The barbarian powers, such as the Suevi or Slavs, clearly had no great strategic vision. And in the east, Constantinople was continually distracted in either Persia or Egypt.

Into the chaotic countryside of petty kingdoms and minor warlords came Tirvalda, a woman of obscure background and little mercy. With her small band of followers she "organized" the various powers of Illyria into a kingdom. Most of these powers were unusually heavily-armed merchant vessels, who of course did not fear piracy so much as use it as an "off-the-books" source of revenue. These various captains and many land-based merchants, plantation magnates, and mine owners agreed that without Roman law and order setting up a realm was wise. As Tirvalda was an outsider, she was able to get around local jealousies. Her hard-boiled mother, Velidsana, helped in this, as she knew where bodies were buried - literally, in many cases.

Thus was born the Pirate Kingdom of Illyria. One of its first acts was, well, to engage in piracy on the Adriatic. Ironically this failed utterly, as apparently the local captains were well-aware of this danger. This was promoted by Tirvalda as a show of might on the part of the Illyrians, and on return hosted many festivals. Nine months later a daughter was born of Tirvalda by her favorite captain, which under the circumstances caused little scurrilous talk.

Meanwhile, her aide Lemaldis made a tour of the neighboring lands with her young son. Eager for stability the magnates of Histria and Pannonia II vowed allegiance to the new queen.

## **Taifali Tribes - Friends of the Ostrogoths**

(European Pagan Barbarian Component Nation)

*King Joannes, Rex Taifalorum, Vicarius Belgicae*

Diplomacy:

The clans met behind closed doors on September 26 of 444. Joannes, their king, had been felled by a fever, and now they had to choose between his two young princes for their new leader. The deliberations were short, as the rule of eldest son strongly mitigated against the claims of the younger teenaged son of Vallia. Thus it was that Gregorius was quickly acclaimed the new *rex Taifalorum*.

## **Kingdom of the Red Huns**

(Roman Christian Nomadic Open Empire)

*Modares, khan*

Diplomacy: Parisii (UN), Tarbellia (PT), Lutetia (T)

Under orders from the Huns, Modares went to the leadership of the Parisii and demanded they migrate. While few desired to leave their homes, all agreed that to deny the Huns was a dreadful idea bound to lead to carnage and dishonor. Thus it was that thousands of peasants, merchants, workers, and others headed south in 441 under the "guidance" of Modares (see *Empire of the Huns*). The citizens of Lutetia refused to go, and holed up on their island until the storm blew over. Also not pleased was the emperor. The conquest of Roman territory was considered an act of war, and the ambassador claimed treachery on the part of the Huns. As a token of his displeasure, the emperor removed the Gallic Diocese title from Modares, which cut his pride greatly. It failed, however, to move him, as the swords of the khakhan cut

more deeply still. And so Tarbellia falls to the barbarians.

## Gepids

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Ardaric, king*

Diplomacy:

The king was pleased when a son was delivered of his Gallic concubine. Otherwise he was relieved that his tiny kingdom had not suffered the attentions of either the Huns, Ostrogoths, or Romans. Lately.

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## North Africa

### Berber Kingdom of Tingitania

(Roman Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Flavius Juba, Rex Tingitaniae*

Diplomacy: Magnus (F)

Life at court was always entertaining. The ancient Juba was blessed - or cursed - with four teenaged girls of the family, who were always scheming, pranking, and generally causing trouble. The visit of the stern master of the Donatist Christians (see *Donatist Christian Church*) provided more grist for the mill, and much fun was had at his expense. Juba privately worried about ever marrying them off, but could not deny their utility in fending off pests like Maximianus. He was however pleased that the priests funded dredging and rebuilding of the port of Magnus in Maghrib. If only the intervening lands where his ...

### Donatist Christian Church

(Donatist Christian Church Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Archbishop Maximianus*

Diplomacy: Hippo Regius (CH)

"The faithful are weak!" shouted Maximianus to the assembled priests. A look of shock flashed on most of their faces. "We must make them work harder, believe more strongly, and give more for the Church," he continued. These were not popular words, but the clergy looked upon their new missions with the usual sense of martyrdom and set out across the North African countryside.

Their lack of enthusiasm showed in many ways. In Hippo Regius, Mauretania, and Carthago attempts to convert families failed miserably. The Archbishop himself failed to gain the support of any local congregations to found new churches, though he did manage to convince the citizens of the port city of Magnus to allow the Church to fund dredging of the ancient harbor there, and the building of new jetties and other facilities. They may feel rather vague about matters of theology, but bags of *solidii* will always gain attention. This drew thousands of new settlers from around the region, which growth was generally welcomed and grew the port into a major regional urban center. Also, Judas was able to found a small church in Hippos Regius, some recompense for his loss of support in Africa for founding a cathedral.

But again the Archbishop himself failed, this time in a diplomatic effort to extract a tithe from the king of Tingitania. His mission was met with amusement at court - the dour manner and black robes of Maximianus combined with his appeals to duty were seen as an absurdity at the court.

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## Eastern Europe

### Arian Christian Church

(Arian Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)  
*Cincinnatus, Pontifex ipseque Primas Gothicus et Germanicus*  
Diplomacy: Latium (CH), Poland (CH), Moesia II (CH)

Cincinnatus expressed the dismay of his clergy at the emperor's new religious policy (see *Eastern Roman Empire*). A strongly worded missive was sent to Constantinople and copies distributed to dioceses throughout Europe. The *Pontifex* was not dissuaded from his faith, of course, and sent missions to Latium and barbaric Poland. Yet more priests travelled the wilds of the domain of the Alans, converting some one in five of the nobility. Cincinnatus, at the court of the Alan king, was pleased at this. He did however fall ill with a strange stomach ailment before Christmas of 444 and died in agony before the year was out. The Church was thrown in to confusion and awaited a Sign to indicated who would now lead the faithful.



### Khanate of the Tyrasean Alans

(European Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)  
*Arpad, Khan*  
Diplomacy:

The tribes were at peace. The weather was mild, the crops grew well, and the flocks increased. Goar, the Royal Prince, was a devious and handsome lad and had within a year sired a beautiful little girl on the royal milk maid. The court was not impressed, but nonetheless accorded the birth with due ceremony.

### Orthodox Christian Church

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)  
*Patriarch Procopius "the Beneficent"*  
Diplomacy: Bithynia (CA)

At a synod in Thessalonika in February of 441, Procopius found himself walking down a city street with his guard. The fur wrap was tight around his neck against the cold, and he was thankful for its warmth. Turning a corner, the Patriarch came upon the city main square. Few people moved about, but just at his feet a young woman cried out, "Alms!" His guard was about to lecture her, as they so often had, that could she not see he was the Patriarch and that the priest was not to be disturbed. Procopius called out, however, and they fell silent. For the woman, wrapped in an oddment of rags, was quite obviously blind, two white

orbs staring out from her otherwise plain face. Moved by what he could not say Procopius gave her his fur and as well ordered his chamberlain to give her five gold *solidii* and escort her to the nearest church to find her employment.

On his return, the priests and bishops attending noted a vague change in the face of the Patriarch. Whether a glow came from his eyes or a nimbus enlightened him none could agree, but all were impressed at his transformation. They became a bit dubious when he announced his program. Thousands of *solidii* were to be spent on irrigation projects, bridges, dams, and other improvements in Constantinople, Macedon, Europa, Attica, and Thessaly, the coin taken from the overstuffed treasury of the church. Three priests who had been in charge of accounting for this were defrocked for embezzling large amounts of coin and funnelling them to relatives and politicians. Even more appreciated was the reduction of the imperial tithe by 20%, saving the Emperor a chunk of change indeed and winning many friends for the Church at court.

Less popular was the announcement of a new Church Calendar. Based on a 13-month year, it held weeks of seven days each - 13 months named for the Apostles and Mary, and a week after the Days of the Creation. This quickly became widespread in the Church itself, but the idea did not initially take hold among the general populace. Even more controversial was his plan to rebuild the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Opinions on this varied widely between faiths and within faiths. Some Jews rejoiced at this sign, while others were deeply outraged that Christians would dare meddle in their affairs. Some Christians hated all things Hebrew and either enjoyed the idea of meddling in Jewish faith issues or despised building them a Temple. Other Christians revered the God of Moses and had likewise divergent opinions.

The theological chaos was fertile ground for philosophers and pamphleteers, for politicians and populists. Surprisingly there was little violence in the streets, despite many heated debates, often done with rhetoricians waving about a copy of the Ecclesiastical Calendar, which featured a Bible verse for each day. This was the first and most widespread distribution of Scripture ever, and among the literati of all classes provided grist for interpretation both learned and inane.

Amidst the turmoil, priests continued to move about, proselytizing and organizing the faithful. This proved hard slogging. Procopius himself was busy overseeing the construction of a new marble cathedral at the busy port city of Apameia in Bithynia. On April 12 (or the 5th of Peter ...) of 444 suffered a seizure while meeting with local workers to discuss a fresco of the Transfiguration. Within the hour he was dead, at the age of 52, leaving the Church in a desperate state. A hasty meeting of leading bishops lead to the agreement that his initiatives should go forward for now. However there was a complete administrative paralysis elsewhere as leading clergy met at the **Synod of Apameia**. Months of meetings yielded no prospective Patriarch on which all could agree, ending the year 444. The diverse writings of Procopius were collected together and edited into three short works which proved quite popular sellers at churches around the empire.



**Eastern Roman Empire**

(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Theodosius II, Emperor*

Diplomacy: Moesia II (C), Aswan (UN), Berenice (P to Faiyum), Nobatia (UN), Arcadia (NT)

The evening was well on. A moderate feast had been cleared, and a score of family and courtiers lounged as Maria, 13, entered the chamber with a small harp. As she played and sang a folk tune about a shepherdess, Theodosius smiled. His daughter was a delight, and he treasured the time he had with her all the more since her abortive marriage left her a widow. The Patriarch had been "convinced" to annul that arrangement, leaving her available for another diplomatic venture. He sighed, not for the first time wishing he were a simple wealthy farmer trying to marry off his children to nobles in the village. In that case at least his family might stay in touch.

But he was the *Imperator*, defender of what remained of Greco-Roman civilization, and thus duty-bound to travel to Petra with Maria and a small entourage. By the hot spring of 441 he was at what passed for the court of Athaulf the Visigoth. Theodosius and Athaulf discussed the future at great length, and by the end of his stay the former had convinced the latter that Constantinople was once more friendly to Goths. Athaulf rejected the offer of Maria's hand in marriage - he was an old man with one wife already. But his nephew, the promising young Ulfilas, was certainly available.

So it was that Ulfilas, at 18, was sent with Maria back to Constantinople. Theodosius took leave of her, as his destiny called him west rather than north. So it was that the two young people travelled together. That they learned to appreciate each other was clear at their grand wedding in the Hagia Sophia, a beautiful if somewhat smallish church, when the hundreds of notables gathered therein could easily tell the charming couple were smitten with each other. Within months other "things" were also easy to tell, and Maria was carted off to a local convent for some months, returning with a healthy baby boy. As this convent was popularly used for "short term" pregnancies, tongues were set to wagging, though the thoroughly proper behavior of the princely couple soon silenced these.

Avitus Petrus was at this time taking command of the Constantinople garrison, causing some worry among various groups most especially in light of the following from the Emperor:

### **Imperial Decree**

*Theodosius sought reason with the Lakhmids thru compensation for the stolen parts of the Empire. The Sheik did not see it this way. The Emperor, together with his advisors, sought a solution and the root cause of the current issues. It seemed to all that the proliferation of foreign churches was causing unrest in the Empire. These wayward Christians needed to have a strong message sent to them. The Lakhmid Arabs and Monophysite Heretics with their actions in Egypt needed to be sent a message. The Emperor decided to send this message via the Arian Heretics and loyal Pagans.*

The *flavia* had however no plans along these lines, and indeed was married before Maria, to the daughter of a courtier from Ephesus. She provided him with a marvel, identical twin girls, then died in childbirth in 443. While Theodosius tramped across the desert, Avitus shuffled papers in the capital city. The port of Thebes was given over entirely to fishing, and other fleets were reassigned to a more efficient use of harbors. And of course pursuant to Theodosius' Decree of 441 Arian Christians and Classical Pagans were taken off the guest rosters to A-list parties at court.

As Theodosius and Athaulf discussed family matters, the army of Narcissus was not lax. The troops happily sacked and burned Amara, looted all the Old Gods temples to be found. This may have been a poor choice, as Narcissus himself the following year while passing through Faiyum. Leaderless, the Army of Egypt was stranded. This misfortune for the Empire would haunt the Emperor. Zenon the lame, Proconsul of Faiyum, ravaged Nobatia just as Amara burned. This army then moved north as well, leaving a large number of legionaries in Thebes to guard against a barbarian counterattack.

By October of 442 Zenon and his men were in Aswan to wrest it from Blemmye control. The local people were happy to see an imperial army, and initially treated them as liberators. But Zenon had been given Aswan as his fief, and set about executing anyone deemed a possible focus of resistance. The people quickly turned on him, killing hundreds of Faiyum equites and legionaries before being utterly crushed. Zenon then moved on to besiege Berenice. This proves a hard case, taking all of 443 before it succumbed to pressure. Zenon took a ballista spear in the leg, and spent the rest of the siege carried about on a litter after nearly dying from blood loss.

The city of Berenice did in the end fall to the boys from Faiyum, and Zenon showed admirable restraint in not ordering it levelled. Some of the older troops were assigned as a garrison over the citizenry as the Proconsul settled in for some R & R. Unfortunately he had overlooked the need for garrisons in the countryside, and Aswan took advantage of the opportunity to throw off the Faiyum yoke in 444. These blows to the nascent Blemmye hegemony, combined with unrest at court, caused Arcadia to rejoin the empire, much-needed good news for Constantinople.

An attempt to strike at the soft underbelly of the Lakhmid war machine by liberating Circis did not end so well. As noted elsewhere (see *Lakhmid Kingdom*) the entire region revolted from any foreign allegiance and settled into a happy anarchy. This period of bliss was interrupted by the appearance of a force of imperial equites under Pius Crassus. The Roman army expected little resistance, but found their way blocked repeatedly, suffering repeated raids from out of the desert, even at one stage being lead into the wilderness by local guides who disappeared. After this last hardship Crassus declared the campaign a victory, as Circis was now out of the Lakhmid sphere of influence, and marched away.

In other news, Georgios, Comes Lazicae, was quite pleased to be given 3000 Roman troops to command, and busied himself with marching them along the valleys to impress the other nobles. The mission of Bishop Xenon to Coele Syria to make nice with the locals was an utter disaster. His posting there reminded the magnates how much they "tolerated" the Patriarch of Constantinople, leading to widespread unrest fomented by the landowners and various rabble-rousers. A popular uprising was threatening, whereupon Xenon bowed to the inevitable and renegotiated the membership of Coele Syria in the Empire. Avitus Petrus was not pleased.

In Europe, Titus Pullo took a small force into Moesia, where he convinced Moesia II to at least nominally accede to imperial rule. He then followed the new imperial policy closely, leading to the local Arian organization being assaulted and looted. Having paid the troops, Pullo moved on to Viminicium where the Arians received similar treatment. In fact the appearance of an imperial army was taken as a signal by local Orthodox families, and mobs moved from village to village, attacking Arians they found and sometimes slaughtering entire families. Hundreds were killed before Pullo was able to restore order.

The major event of these years was, naturally, a violent one. As anticipated by nearly everyone from Penzance to the Punjab a Roman army marched out of Pelusium bound for death or glory in Aegyptus. The Spring of 443 saw the *Master Militum per Orientem Dux* Verinian lead the imperial army into Palaestina Salutaris, the Emperor in nominal command. The sheiks of the region were cowed into allowing their passage, though they were not above the occasional raid on military supply caravans moving down from Caesarea Maritima. Theodosius reflected that his was not the first to take the Gaza road into the Nile Valley, and he wondered whether it would be the last.

Unfortunately for the Romans, the new Lakhmid sheik now had a firm grasp of the reins of power in his lands. In addition to his own men he could also rely on the militia of Alexandria, which had been brought up to the front. These troops had little love for the emperor in Constantinople, and fought under the motto, "Better to fight them in Tanis than in Alexandria." The Roman strategy this time was to reduce the local fortifications before pushing on to the Nile, to be patient, to do a proper job. For their part, the Arabs and Egyptians had tired of giving hospitality to the imperial army and decided a quick counterattack would catch the enemy off-guard and spare the interior the ravages of an invading army.

Thus it was that **Tanis** was surrounded after a few outlying towers had been reduced by the thousands of sappers and engineers brought along. Verinian was in his tent, sipping a bit of chilled wine after spending the morning on an easy reconaissance around the walls of the small city. It would fall within a week, he thought, and smiled. The sooner he was out of this sandy hell the better. A messenger entered his tent, sweating heavily. The man was a knight, and had clearly just ridden into camp. He had the attention of the *dux* instantly. A large force of Arabs was approaching from the south, less than a day's march away. Verinian cursed his lazy scouts as he rewarded the messenger, then headed out the door. Time to get down to business.

It was dawn of the next day. While the Arabs considered it a cool morning, within the watch it would become hot, as Verinian shaded his eyes and fruitlessly scanned the sky for a cloud. He did see over 100,000 men arrayed for battle on his side of the gentle-sided *wadi* between the two armies. These were in good order, blocks of legionaries supported by archers, equites, and various auxiliaries. Across the divide milled the Arabs, who seemed somewhat fewer in number, stretched to right and left with the Alexandrians holding the center. Verinian smirked, as he saw the "civilized" militia held to good Roman order while the barbarians milled about under diverse clan banners, most seemingly ahorse.

A quick conference of the imperator, the dux, and several staff officers resolved that the Alexandrians were probably the key - break them and the Arab morale would fail. The commander of the Pelusium garrison, Theoctistus, commented that he had yet to see the Lakhmids run from a fight - mildly of course as Theodosius was present - but his remark was ignored. A detachment of Sarmatian *equites sagitarii* was sent off at a gallop to the left, just to keep the Arabs guessing, while the heavy horse arrayed itself to charge the center.

Verinian put himself in the van, behind the front rank of the *cataphractoi* and surrounded by his small *foederati* and standard bearer. The *dux* wished to be sure that the cavalry charged in good order and in good spirits. And indeed the average trooper was heartened that for once a Roman commander would lead the charge. If Verinian put himself at risk prospects for victory must be good.

Theodosius had his signifer wave two flags, and Verinian's corps advanced at a walk. When they had gone a couple hundred paces ahead of the front, a general advance was ordered. The measured tramp of thousands of feet made an ominous sound and some of the Arab horses reared or cantered about. But the sheikh's men remained on the edge of the *wadi* awaiting orders to attack. Roman line continued to surge forward, down the slope and across the gravel-covered stream bed.

As the legionaries crunched gravel under their sandals small parties of archers ran forward up the slope. These found a few places of shelter in tiny gullies or behind rocks and began to snipe at the Arabs upslope. Few of their arrows found targets. One squad of slingers did succeed in disrupting the Alexandrian line for a while, but those in the rear ranks put up their shields so that the occasional slingstone clattered harmlessly away. In the center the armored horses struggled up the shallow slope, slowing substantially in order to maintain good formation. Into this the Alexandrians began to pour arrows, slingstones, and javelins, causing yet more chaos.

But within a few minutes the the Roman horse were nearly at the top, and Verinian ordered a charge at the trot when the enemy were only 50 paces away. The front rankers kicked up dust as they surged up the slope and contacted the Alexandrian militia, who had stood with spears braced against the charge. One volley of arrows from the Roman rear rankers was followed immediately by the crash of horse, man, and metal. The militia, under their general Peranius, fell back a few steps, but held, the Roman charge degenerating into a scrum.

It was at this stage that Masud ordered a counterattack with a staccato of horns. Imran lead his infantry through the screen of cavalry at the ridge and down into the *wadi* into the legionaries on the right, who were quite surprised at this. The sheikh himself led a charge of heavy Arab and Egyptian cavalry on the left down against the Roman foot. This prompted Roman heavy horse on each flank to charge, which was met in turn by thousands of Arab horse shooting arrows and throwing javelins.

As the fight intensified an *alae* of Alexandrian armored archers fought their way through the Roman center to reach Verinian's standard. Their ranks were decimated by his guard, but with sword, shield, and bow they made it to the general himself, who was shot out of the saddle and decapitated where he fell. His standard was taken, which caused a great cheer from the Alexandrians and ululations from the Lakhmid ranks.

On seeing the center was about to fall, Theodosius ordered a general retreat. He did not want to see his prize *scolae* trampled by barbarians and was mindful of the political effects of a military disaster. Covered by the Roman cavalry the legionaries quick-marched back into the *wadi* then up and out once more. The losses on their side while not catastrophic were among the largest ever seen. Nearly 20,000 men lay dead in the gravel and on the slopes, while the Alexandrians and Arabs had suffered less than a quarter of that, still enough to prevent a vigorous pursuit of the defeated.

Theodosius was seen to take the loss with equanimity, an attitude which gave hope to some and infuriated others. The emperor knew that with better coordination of his armies and better luck the Empire would yet have Aegyptus once more, and that the Arabs would be worried now that he had nothing better to think of than their demise. Well, he did have to get his army back to Pelusium, no small feat given the desert was not actually in Roman control. This oversight caused a few casualties and did not endear the locals to the average legionary. Of course, since "Tiberius Legionary" had been promised substantial loot from this enterprise the emperor was not looking that charming either.



Finally, Theodosius was shown a report from a naval officer on piracy in the Mediterranean, bemoaning the spread of crime at sea, especially based out of the Aegean Isles and the Balerics, plus the infamous brigands of Isauria. A large fleet action was proposed. Theodosius decided to sleep on it.

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## Middle East

### Ghassanid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Timotheus*

Diplomacy:

The court-in-exile waited for events to turn their way, when petitions to the Emperor would at last be answered. Life went on, heirs were born, yet a vague despair hung in the air.

### Kingdom of Yemen

(Judaism Civilized Open Empire)

*King Ishmael ibn Yahsub*

Diplomacy:

All were amazed when the princess Elizabeth, daughter of Adam, had a son by Masun of Asir at the age of 39. It was her sixth child and she was praised in the villages. This cheered a nation distraught after the death of the young princes Lael, the heir, and Eschol. The aged king meanwhile prayed on how to spread the faith among his neighbors.

### Lakhmid Arab Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheikh Masud al-Qays, Satrap of Egypt*

Diplomacy: Alexandria (FA), Circis (UN)

Fitful sleep had become common to the aging leader of the Lakhmids, Imru al-Qays. Managing the influences of the Monophysite Church, merchants, tribal leaders, and local Egyptian magnates of Greek, Roman, or native backgrounds caused seemingly and endless mass of Gordian knots. Thus it was that he lay awake in his tent - for he as yet eschewed the degrading comforts of walled villas - in the dark and heard a faint footfall.

Normally an armed camp, even in the watches of the night, is not an entirely quiet scene, men heading for latrines, others on watch, and so on. This sound was different, and he realized it at once. Imru calculated that if an enemy was in camp the odds were good that his guard - a pair of very large Thracian slave-warriors - had been neutralized. The sheik rolled silently off his traditional bedding to the edge of the tent where he kept his sword, a Dailami-style buckler, and a horn.

Before the old man could cut the tent away and escape into the night, they attacked. Two men in black robes quickly entered from the front door, breaking to the left and right before chopping at the bedding from either side. All this took a few heartbeats. The man who had turned right at the door was surprised by a sword in his neck, Imru taking no chances of his opponent wearing mail under his clothes.

The other assassin was surprised for a moment, long enough for Imru to blow two short blasts on his horn, the camp alarum. As the horn was dropped his enemy attacked with sword and dagger. The dark assailant was fast, and Imru furiously blocked the blades with his shield while falling back, the room only lit by the dull red glow from a brazier near the bed. The old man quickly found himself with his spine pressed against the tent fabric. A dagger thrust took him in the right shoulder, and a sweep of the sword cut deeply into his calf, coming up and around to remove two fingers from the Sheik's sword hand.

As the blade dropped from the Arab's bleeding hand he made a quick prayer to God and pushed forward on the shield with his remaining strength. This caught the assassin a bit off balance, making him dance to the side. But Imru, unable to use the tent side as a support, fell, and became dizzy from loss of blood. A heavy fuzziness rapidly took hold in his mind, barely registering that his enemy was falling.

On hearing the horn a duo on watch had sprinted for the tent. They had thrown open the entrance flap, careful not to trip over the bodies of the beheaded Slavs, and immediately loosed arrows into the assassin. Hit in the eye and throat he died in seconds. A Persian physician was rushed to the tent, and after several days of work managed to stabilize the injured *Satrap*.

Over the next months Imru's condition improved. Surprisingly, he held no grudge against the Emperor, from whom all knew the assassination plot had sprung. By late February he was able to move with crutches through the camp to great acclaim. Poems were written of his bravery, his strength, and his courage. Within a week he was dead, claimed by the same "camp fever" that had struck down scores of others. Imru was 58 years old, a leader who had taken his people from Persian cats-paw to major player in the Mediterranean world. His body was interred as he would have wanted, in an unmarked tomb under the desert sands.

His son, Masud, was 29 years old, a man of some accomplishment in battle and diplomacy. The al-Qays family had enemies yet, and many had awaited the death of Imru to press their case for leadership of the clans. Among these were the tribes of Circis, who had long wondered at their faint ties to the Lakhmids and announced independence - but this did not spare them the wrath of Imru's enemies (see *Eastern Roman Empire*). More important was the loss of Alexandria, which felt confident that the religious troops of the Monophysites, plus their own huge militia, would be able to withstand any assault. The sheikh of the Jabal Shammar decided that his people had not signed on for any of this, and left en masse in the night, marching for home.

Disaster threatened as a plot by Ata ibn Sued, supported by the sell-sword Nuweira, to take over the Lakhmid throne was uncovered. These two were captured and executed, the mercenaries pledging their loyalty to the new sheikh in order to save themselves. A diplomatic press in Alexandria by Utbah ibn Khuzaymah had some effect. Four Lakhmid princesses were married off to senatorial families, with the result that the great city rejoined the Arab cause, albeit it at some remove. Thus the rebellion was foiled and the kingdom saved. Princess Wa'd took a husband without permission, a scandal ameliorated a year later when twin sons were born of her. The long-neglected princess Sudi also wed late in life to some snickering at court.

These difficult months and years proved to be a purifying fire, readying the nation for the inevitable clash with Rome (see *Eastern Roman Empire*).

## Monophysite Christian Church

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Patriarch John*

Diplomacy: Myos Hormuz (MN), Edessa (CA), Napata (CH), Lalibela (CH), Aden (CH), Aden (CH), Hira (CH), Pelusium (CH), Qustul (CA), Blemmye (CH)

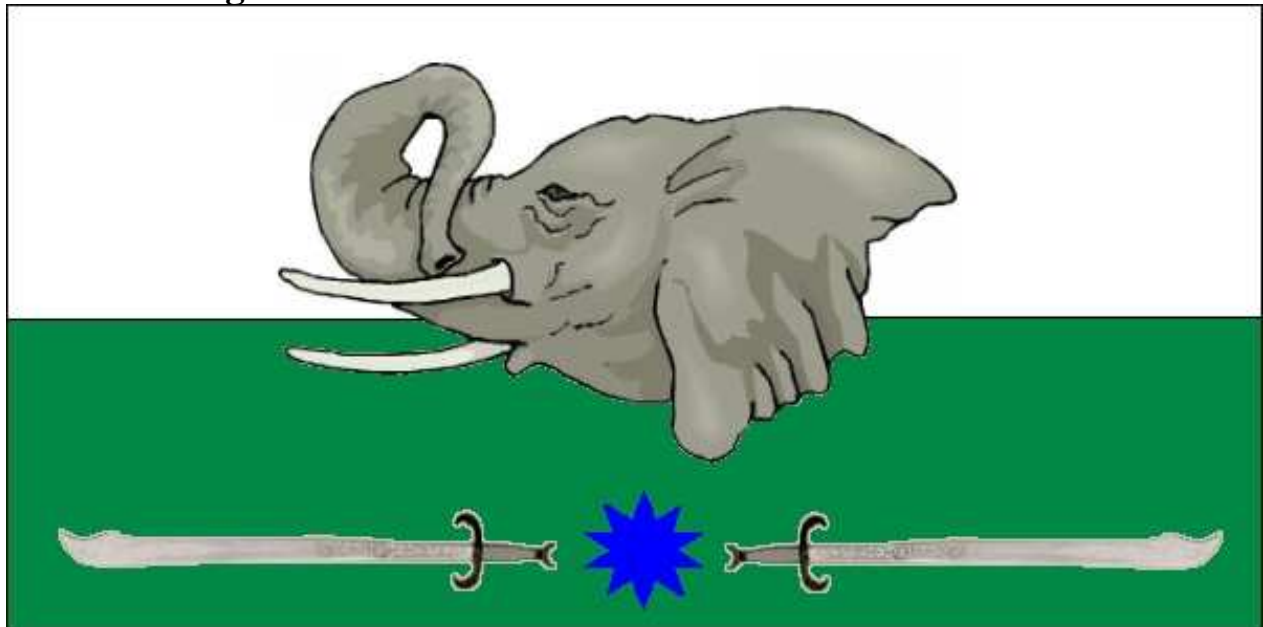
Many missionaries, priests, and deacons were sent forth to preach the Word. Their voices fell on willing ears, generally, most especially in Blemmye and Beja where the barbarians there felt they were as good as the Romans and deserved a big god too. Bishop Thomas passed away at the age of 77 and was buried beneath the floor of the expanded church in Myos Hormuz. Patriarch John personally founded a new cathedral in Edessa, seemingly daring the Imperator to stand against the faithful (see *Eastern Roman Empire*). Pilgrims gathered there from Armenia, Persia, the Arab lands, and yet further afield.

Bishop Timothy travelled throughout the Upper Nile provinces, holding organizational congresses there and in Aden. His fellow priest Ethiopus founded a church in Hira, much welcomed by the few thousand people living there among the ruins of the once-great city.

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## West Africa

### Moorish Kingdom



(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

*Sheik Izri al-Kasurga*

Diplomacy: Arauane (NT), Jenne (F)

The Sheik considered. His young general, Severus, was popular with the troops and the throne of al-Kasurga was a bit dodgy at the moment. Thus it was that the 25-year-old leader was married off to the 16-year-old princess Randja al-Kasurga. Neither was particularly handsome but they did seem happily wed. Their honeymoon was postponed, however, as Severus and Sukman marched the army off to continue the Moorish "project" in Hausa - carnage, flames, and slavery. Initial resistance was fierce, but when the **Battle of the Oxen** - so named because the defenders tried to charge beasts into the Moorish lines - led to the complete slaughter of the local warriors all hope fled and the people yielded to the coffle. Thousands were marched away to toil in the fields of Songhai. Sukman "the Subtle" had little time to enjoy these fruits of evil, as a fever claimed him 443. A small monument to him was erected to him in the capital, built of course with slave labor.

Meanwhile Izri himself travelled to Jenne, where the people were happy to see him. Had they been honest they were pleased he had come without an army, and were pleased to join the kingdom fully in order to escape a worse fate. They even gave up their most promising princess to wed the sheik, which led to another success when a daughter was born of her. Meanwhile the lords of the desert in Arauane decided that they need not hold too closely to the Moors.

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## East Africa

### Axumite Empire

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Emperor Tewodros "One-Eyed" Ella Asgad*

Diplomacy:

Tewodros had tired of war, and was instead pleased to hear stories of Roman victories against his enemies to the north.

### Blemmye Tribes

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Component Nation)

*Zakarias II, King of Blemmye*

Diplomacy: Aswan (UN), Arcadia (UN)

The aged Zakarias took baptism from a Monophysite Christian priest on Epiphany of 441. His death at 65 before the next Easter was a shock. His son Zakarias II was crowned at Easter, but had to twist many arms and threaten both beheadings and herd confiscations in order to gain the fealty of many nobles.

Despite these moves Arcadia revolted away, returning to Roman control. The move by a Roman army into Aswan, the siege and loss of Berenice, were heavy blows for such a young king. Only the birth of a daughter to him gave some good news, though of course a son would have been preferred. Zakarias II resolved to regain the offensive and rebuild his father's empire.

## Nobades Kingdom

(Monophysite Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*King Phillipus Silko, Basileus*

Diplomacy: Nobatia (UN)

News from the rude court of the Blemmye king was first good, then bad. All of Nobades was happy to learn the Zakarias was indeed loyal to Phillipus, and had also accepted baptism along with his family and people. The death of Zakarias, then the loss of all his conquests, left the realm dispirited.

The savaging of Nobatia by the Roman army, followed by its desertion of the Nobades Kingdom, did not make for good gossip. Neither did the failed mission Pigol. This nobleman had attempted to slip into the camp of Zenon, Proconsul of Faiyum, and convince him to leave the Roman cause. Instead he was captured and brought before the army commander, who refused to accept any of Pigol's arguments and instead had him bound and dragged along as the army marched north on yet another task for the distant emperor (see *Eastern Roman Empire*). Part of the would-be secret agent's job was a success, as he managed to convince two important Faiyum nobleman to wed the Nobades princesses Kandake and Mantace. These latter treated this as a boon, given their poor prospects locally.

Given all of this, the expansion of defenses in many cities was welcomed.

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## Persia



### Orthodox Zoroastrian Church

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Azareth, Mobedhanmobed*

Diplomacy:

In the middle of a sermon at the local agiary, Namirog, the *dastur* of Mosul, suddenly stiffened, then collapsed. While the congregation was astonished and dismayed, they were not surprised since the wise old leader had seen 92 *nowruz* ceremonies. The following year saw the death of the influential and hard-working *mobed* Dadabhai in the province of Persia. Otherwise, animated discussions between the more orthodox clergy and Zurvanites, as well as other theological disputes, kept Azareth busy.

## Kingdom of Armenia

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Tigranes II*

Diplomacy: Artaxata (FA)

The birth of an energetic and delightful baby girl to Queen Varhia was seen as yet more evidence of a resurgent Armenian nation. So too was the oath of aid given by the Prince of Artaxata, who though dubious of the slippery city folk who were buying him ale and beef and pushing on him a treaty - and a written one at that!

## Kingdom of Persarmenia - *Sasanian Persian Satrapy*

(Monophysite Christian Barbarian Open Empire)

*King Zoltan, Satrap*

Diplomacy:

Young King Zoltan became a fixture at the court in Ctesiphon, ever urging action from the empire so that he might control his own nation once more. He did however find the huge capital city to be endlessly diverting. His warriors grouched at their treatment, living in a rich city yet receiving little coin to spend.



## Sasanian Persian Empire

(Orthodox Zoroastrian Civilized Open Empire)

*Darius, Shahanshah of Persia*

Diplomacy: Merv (F), Susa (F), Balasagan (F), Margiana (EA)

Darius took advantage of the relative peace to rebuild Abadan after the Visigoths had been evicted. Popular usage of the term "Visigoth" became widespread, to refer to a place or person who had been severely abused or rendered useless. Missionaries to the settled Turks of Parishkhwargar made so many cultural errors that in fact a small-scale pogrom of the few remaining Zoroastrian families took place. Efforts in Oman and Merv found more success. In fact, diplomatic pressure led to Merv at last acknowledging the wisdom of fully accepting imperial rule, as well as the surrounding lands.

More success lead to Susa also joining the empire, it's large militia boosting the army. Ephialtes also convinced Balasagan to be a bulwark against a resurgent Armenia. Success at home also blessed the *shahanshah*, as his Hephthalite wife Zeynap provided him with four children in as many years. Results of the campaign against he Kushans left Darius shaking his head in wonder - and anger (see *Kushan Empire*). But with war with the Romans at an ebb he was not too upset.

## Visigothic Kingdom



(Orthodox Christian Civilized Open Empire)

*Athaulf, Rex Gothicus*

Diplomacy:

While flattered by the attentions of the Emperor and his lovely daughter (see *Eastern Roman Empire*) Athaulf was not interested in throwing his beloved troops into the sausage machine in Aegyptus - at least not yet. Rejoining the Empire was, however, very compelling and a party at court pushed continually for this. This group noted that the treasury and the granary were nearly bare.

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## South Asia

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

(Buddhist Seafaring Component Nation)

*Chandra, Raja*

Diplomacy:

May 14 of 444 saw the death of Chandra at the age of 76, who had managed to steer his ship of state between the two shoals of Pandya and Chera. His long reign naturally left something of a vacuum for his heir Dipak to fill. Despite some grumbling on the part of some of the eastern shore nobility the new *raja* produced a successful coronation ceremony and the nation rejoiced. And indeed the blessings of heaven produced a son of Dipak's second wife, leaving his teenaged son by a concubine in something of an uncomfortable situation.

### Buddhist Stupas

(Buddhist Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Master Sanath*

Diplomacy:

The resurgence of Hinduism caused some alarm - well, as much alarm as the Buddhist hierarchy could muster.

### Chera Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Veerpal, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:

The Chera court continued to foment bile and conspiracy against Pandya. Nothing came of it, but the nobles did manage to entertain themselves.

### Pandya Kingdom

(Jainism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Jahala, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:

All mourned the death in 444 of the young princess Fenda, as in the empire hunger stalked the land.

### Empire of the Guptas

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

*Skanda Gupta, Maharajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:



The royal princesses Andal and Fatima found husbands, which as the family had not arranged marriages was tolerated. Andal subsequently bore a son, a grandson of Kamaragupta. This was big news, only because little else of note took place at the imperial court. Out in the country there were localized shortages of grain and some hunger, but no outright deaths from starvation.

## **Kingdom of Sindhu - *Gupta Tributary***

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

*Abhayatta, Maharaja of Pattal and Sindhu*

Diplomacy:

The *guru* Venkatachalapathi Salmuldrala attempted to escape his confinement in an Axumite fortress using a hollow reed, a wooden spoon, and a dozen round stones. At the last minute his plot was foiled by an observant washerwoman and he was escorted back to his "suite."

Identical twin daughters of Rudraman decided to wed without their family's permission, causing a small scandal. Their new husbands were happy to be tied to the royal family.

## **Hinduism**

(Hinduism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Guru to be named*

Diplomacy: Keldyna (AB), Arjunayana (AB), Kalinga (AB), Palura (CH), Vengi (AB)

Virasenadeva was moved by a dream to send forth his minions to preach and organize the faithful, who of late had been lax in their observances. Subundra founded an abbey in Arjunayana, and he and many others strengthened the old religion in many corners of the empire. Further, he told his scribes to strip many of the temples of their gold and use the money to build irrigation canals, dig wells, and generally promote the common good. For this he became much beloved among those of all faiths.

The *gurudhigurus* Virasenadeva and his friend Prakesh made in September of 433 a short pilgrimage to Varanasi. Thousands gathered to hear them teach over a fortnight. One evening, when an unusual cool air settled over the many temples and halls, the two elders were seated watching a devotional dance of a score of men and women, with a small female choir backed by musicians with gongs, conches, flutes, drums, and other instruments. After a break, a woman of stunning beauty stepped forward to sing. As she sang the dancers leaped and tumbled faster, and faster still, until their motions seemed a blur of limbs and sweat. As surprisingly as she had begun the singer stopped. The dancers collapsed where they were, the musicians rushing forward to revive them. Then one of the singers screamed. For where Virasenadeva and Prakesh had been was now only a pile of their modest clothing, sacred bags, and sandals. The elders were nowhere to be found, and neither they nor the enchanting singer were seen again. Most acclaimed the singer as Lakshmi herself, carrying off the two holy men directly. A temple was constructed and quickly became a popular shrine.

## Jain Sects

(Jainism Civilized Primate Religious Authority)

*Sarvanandi, Acharya*

Diplomacy:

Contemplation of life in all its variety continued to distract the Acharya.

## Kingdom of Nepal - *Gupta Tributary*

(Buddhist Barbarian Component Nation)

*Biscotti Licchavi, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Dhera-Dun (UN), Himachal (UN)

The *rajas* of Dhera-Dun and Himachal passed away at advanced ages, and their nobles in each case decided that allegiance to the Biscottis was not worth the effort. The *rajadhiraja* was pleased that his daughter, Kiran, decided to enter a Buddhist convent, and within a few years was abbess. By contrast, her younger brothers Mathwar and Kirti managed to sire a child each on concubines, and generally lived the Indian ideal of a courtier. This caused some consternation in the government, where still there was insufficient funds to match needs.

## Pallava Kingdom

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

*Mahendravarma I, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy: Tagara (F)

The *rajadhiraja* was concerned. Primyamvadi Gupta, his second wife, was old now and had produced no sons. His one son was now dead. Now 79 himself, he feared for his legacy should he die without issue. Thus he named Solavarman, his trusted aide, as the Crown Prince. Naturally this caused jealousy and resentment at court, but none dared dispute the move. And soon they would all be far too busy to worry about such matters.

For a large army lead by Lord Varahamihara was moving west across the hills along the old road and into the Chera homeland. Veerpal was amazed, but quickly Pomi and Prince Ganeza organized a defense based around the thick network of fortified towns, troops moved quickly by ship, and highly-trained troops. The invaders were thrown back into Chola with heavy losses, nearly 8000 men, while Cheran casualties were light. Despite the urging of Mahendravarma, Varahamihara refused to take his men into enemy territory again without substantial reinforcements. The commander was counseled by many to take advantage of the situation and seize control of the kingdom for himself, but he refused to plunge his beloved country into chaos.

A resurgent Tarumanegara caused some concern at court (see *Kingdom of Tarumanegara*). The new prince Solavarman was able to convince the citizens of Tagara to join the kingdom fully. He also took a bride from the local *raja*, suitably young and pretty.

## Vakataka Kingdom - *Gupta Tributary*

(Hinduism Civilized Component Nation)

*Damodarasena, Rajadhiraja*

Diplomacy:

The year 443 saw the death of the power behind the throne, mother of princes, Prabhavati Gupta, after an extended illness. While the nation officially mourned her, most were secretly pleased that this overt reminder of Gupta influence had been removed from play. This included her surviving son, Damodarasena.

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## 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.

### Filling Out Orders

Here are some more gentle reminders:

- Please use the codes for unit builds. That is, use "F" for "field forts" and so on.
- When demobilizing units, it is OK to treat it as a "negative build." Thus in the builds section place "-4HI" to remove those units from the army/place at which they start.
- Put in the exact letters for various Intel, Assassin, and Religious operations, e.g. "CI", without any other characters, e.g. "CI-" or "COU", to avoid confusing the computer.
- Be sure to use the right things for Religious Ops. That is, "EC" is not a Religious Op but a Religious Leader Action, and does not belong in the Religious Ops section. Instead, use "FCH", "FAB" as founding churches and abbeys is now possible via ROs as well as actions.
- As noted in the Rules Addenda, trade must include specific cities on each end if by sea, and must include an agreement in each trade partner's orders.

### Diplomacy of Pacified Regions

Under the Basic Rules **7.2.4.11** diplomacy (DP) may not be performed on places at a Control Status of Pacified. This is not strictly true any more. One may indeed DP regions and cities at **P** status, but the effect is not an immediate change in that status. Instead the **Years from Conquest** number, i.e. **YFC** on your stats sheet, is changed by the result from the diplomacy. The software checks this number each turn and determines whether the region flips to a better control status. Which is to say that wooing people who hate you may yet yield dividends in the long run, but it may take many turns to see a result. The usual result is of the order of adding 10 years or less to the **YFC** value.

## Change to Troop Recruitment

Because the leader action **Preach** is now named (or renamed) **Religious Conversion**, the campaign-specific rule **Recruitment** needs a name change to avoid confusion, since both are called **RC**. This is now called **RT** so please use this code from now on. If you have not done so, take a look. It is one way to get free troops ...

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

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A list of hints:

- Turn 10
- Turn 9
- Turn 8
- Turn 7
- Turn 6
- Turn 5
- Turn 4
- Turn 3
- Turn 2