

# Sudden Apocalypse

AN AGE OF AIR AND STEAM



## Lords of the Earth

### Campaign One

Turn 207

Anno Domini 1743 – 1744

**TURN 208 ORDERS DUE BY** Friday September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

All Notes, Clarifications and Announcements have been moved into their own Notes document, as have the Industrial Supplement rules. **You should read them!**

## SOMEWHERE IN NEAR-EARTH SPACE

Ice-shrouded gray rock tumbled through darkness. The surface of the flying mountain swarmed with uncounted numbers of winged, crustacean-like creatures. They labored in the darkness, drilling and shaping with their machines. The vast stone tumbled slowly, end over end, though the mob of creatures burrowing within its mantle was so great even the light of the distant sun failed to reflect from their carapaces and velvet wings.

Near the northern pole of the asteroid, a lean black shape drifted on the solar wind, engaged in the rudimentary communications which prevailed between the denizens of Yuggoth and other creatures.

<Once split,> the messenger radiated, <one striking | falling | incinerating stone will strike | crush | shatter these islands...> The messenger radiated a picture of four great islands lying alongside a vast continent. Great importance was placed upon a certain coastline, and a particular bay.

The Mi-Go flashed agreement in cerulean and azure.

<the other hammer | vessel | tool will impact | rend | absorb this place, at the foot of these mountains | dimples | grains of sand.>

The messenger waited, but the Mi-Go did not reply. Instead its rumped, chitinous skin flared and coruscated with a dozen nameless colors. Other of the fungi nearby gathered, and they fell to an inscrutable conversation, even to the dark messenger. At length they replied *na*.

A dispute followed, and the dark messenger was forced to admit defeat. Who could divine the thoughts of the fungi? They were beyond the byakhee's poor skill in such things.

<rend | slaughter | consume | know> it spat in disgust. *The master will not be pleased...*

## NORTH ASIA

### Mercenaries

#### Condottieri

15c, 20i, 10a

#### Captains

Saigo Tsugumichi (M968)

Bantag Yen (MB77)

#### To hire, please contact...

Pacific Mercenary and Trust Corporation

#### Quality Ratings

i15 w15 s18 c12 a12 z3

### TOKUGAWA JAPAN (Tokushima on Shikoku)

*Kii Yoshimune, Shogun of All Nippon, Daimyo of Manila, King of the Philippines, The Sea-Spear, Monster-Slayer.*

**DIPLOMACY** Kagoshima(c), Yamaguchi(a, part of Nagi prefecture)

The new Shogun was eager to show his skill and to secure the loyalty of both nobles and the people. As a result, a huge effort was devoted to rebuilding the fleet and expanding the various fisheries along the coastlines. The Shinto clergy, meanwhile, had attempted to turn the Buddhists of Shimane to follow the old ways – with disastrous results! Rioting and fisticuffs between the Buddhists and Shinto adherents disturbed the public peace and the local daimyo had to outlaw any kind of public religious event just to keep things on an even keel.

The Emperor – pleased with the revival of the old, proper faith in Japan – took ship for the Americas to visit his *other* constituents. Hideyoshi Anosuri (who had commanded the Imperial Guard for so many years) took his troopers west, for the sound of the guns was calling from the Middle East.

Late in '43, the fleet dispatched to the Persian Gulf under the command of Admiral Mirragi returned – without being sunk by the rascally Javans or consumed by sea monsters or crushed by the falling sky! The shogun turned a blind eye to the celebrations which ensued. Everyone stuffed themselves with Ming pork and rice. Hmmm... very tasty.

The year 1744, however, was one of calamity and woe. Those surviving accounts name it, *the year of the Burning Wind*, for great typhoons roared up out of the south-west, lashing the islands not with chilling rain, but smoking steam and terrible heat. Fires broke out in every city, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. The crops failed – the rice cooked in the paddies – and even in Holy Ise there was great mourning.

A strange high darkness like a heavy cloud beyond sight blotted out the sun, and made even the strongest of men lose heart. Where was the Sun Goddess now, when her people needed her most?

### PACIFIC MERCENARY & TRUST CORPORATION (Kryztin on Luzon)

*Juchen Agoi, President and Executive officer*

**DIPLOMACY** Sabang in Aceh(ma), Sunda in Pajajaran(ma), Singhasari in Kediri(ma), Port Kolos in Sakalava(ma). Medan in the Marianas Islands(ma)

The Trustees were quite busy – plying Javan waters for new trade opportunities and trying to swing some big deals. They leased out a sizable number of mercenaries to the Ming and let a general or two to the Prester John. Juchen took a second wife, a Japanese lady named Fujiko Kima, whose family had fallen on hard times.

Luzon took a heavy blow from the tidal waves and burning rain flung down by *Jehanantukul* (Hell's Hammer), but the port of Kryztin was spared much of the destruction by the high mountain ranges across northern Luzon.

Captain Che'fu (who was sent into the southern seas) got into one scrape after another – entirely failed at his assigned missions – but escaped with his life and some whopper tales to tell. The

entirely more sober Captain Shimura, on the other hand, made the long crossing of the Indian Ocean just in time to find himself in the middle of a ferocious siege. That was a tale to tell...

#### **THE PURE REALM** (Fusan in Silla)

*Great Master Cho Hun, Abbot of the Wing Kung Temple of the Greater Vehicle of the Message of the Bodhisattva*

**DIPLOMACY** No Effect (boy, does that suck...)

Cho Hun remained in the south, attempting to restore some order to the wreckage of the Realm's temples and farms there. Only by good luck did he escape death during the "rain of fire" and the dreadful killing fogs which followed. All reports from the north were worse, and he despaired of seeing Fusan again – for the seas had turned strange and travel by boat was impossible.

The priests Polu Than and Chan Fo (attempting to organize a great temple in Lin'an) was not so fortunate, and both perished with all the people of that great city. Wan Ho, in Fusan, saw the enormous flash in the southern sky and (having some knowledge of recent events) evacuated the shoreline and the docks. The tidal surge at Fusan was twenty-five feet, destroying much of the lower city. Everywhere the people wailed and lamented, for the gods had turned their faces from the faithful and only torment awaited all men and women in this life.

Undaunted by the political repercussions (or the constant bloodshed the effort engendered) the Pure Realm continued to flood the Bay of Bengal-area provinces of Arakan, Mon, Kalinga, Vengi, Madurai and Chola with priests fired up with missionary zeal. Thousands of martyrs resulted – particularly in Madurai, Arakan and Vengi where the Buddhists were outright slaughtered by local Moslem gangs. Work began on a highway between Holy Fusan and the Manchu city of Kaiching in Koguryo.

#### **THE MANCHU MONGOL EMPIRE** (Harbin in Shangtu)

*Manchu Ch'ien-Lung, God-Emperor of the Middle-Kingdom*

**DIPLOMACY** Sikhote(fa), Jilin(t), Wudan(a)

Settlements continued in the north, with the provinces of Naiman, Kerait and Khalaka reaching 2 GP in size. Substantial efforts were also made to return the Iced land to cultivation, which was wise for the shockingly huge storms of '44 wrecked most of the coastal settlements in Koguryo, Anshan and Bandaos. The 'black sky' reported by Japanese merchants also afflicted the Manchu, and the failure of the late harvest in '44 boded ill for everyone.

#### **THE KINGDOM OF PRESTER JOHN** (Maclan in Tuhnwhang)

*Lewis Corrigan, Khagan of Karakocho, The Incarnated One, Wolf-Brother of the Altai, Iskander Returned!*

**DIPLOMACY** A great quraltai was called, summoning all of the khans and chiefs of the people to Maclan...

Khagan Lewis gathered all to him at Maclan, and there he put to the assembled tribes, clans and families a proposal. "Our friends in Persia, and across the sea of salt, have sent us messages, begging our aid in a great war against the darkness of the Ice. They say one stronghold of the Ice Lords remains, and they hold the holy city of Jerusalem in their clawed fist. They have sent us gifts..." And Lewis disbursed into the vast crowd countless presents of gold and silver coin, worked cloth, iron bar, silk, cacao bean, and other valuable things.

"They summon us to battle, and the teachers and judges who remember the holy word of the Prophet have issued a *fatwa* calling upon all men to raise their swords in defense of Islam. Those who might perish in this holy war will live in paradise, and there they will eat of every goodly fruit, and taste every earthly delight."



The Khagan spoke for a day and a night, whereupon followed lengthy discussion amongst the tribes. In the end, a great many chieftains agreed to follow Lewis (and his Mongol general Bantag Yen) to the war in the uttermost west. These included the khans of Kucha, SInkiang, Suzhou and the Gurvan. The clans who had lived in the Tarim, the Tsinghai and the Tsaidam were also eager to find new, rich lands for their flocks – for those southern provinces were beginning to fail now the Ice had receded and the north rains did not come<sup>1</sup>. Many others decided to stay, and accepted Lewis' daughter Meegan as their queen.

So a vast and lengthy column departed Maclan in the spring of '43, winding endlessly into the west. Behind them, the sky darkened and the sun swam up as through a sea of blood... a febrile dimness filled the upper air in the east, and followed the marching columns of the Gurvan and others as they rode west.

#### **S** EVENTY MILES FROM THE MOUTH OF THE YANGTZE RIVER

Late in '44, the skies above the balmy and pacific coast of China split wide with a monstrous, unimaginable howl.<sup>2</sup> The air convulsed, slammed aside by a quarter-mile wide rock, and rushed out from the oncoming beast at typhoon speeds. Vast dark banks of stormcloud raged with lightning, spilling away across the China Seas. A huge flaming mass punched into the ocean, catapulting out waves a mile high. Most of the water in the area of impact vaporized into a boiling cauldron of superheated steam. The asteroid sledgehammered into the ocean floor, sending a shockwave through the muddy bottom of the shallow sea.<sup>3</sup>

Within hours, the atmospheric shockwave crashed across the Chinese coast, shattering buildings, flattening temples, tearing trees up by the roots, whirling thousands of people away into the sky. A wall of superheated steam followed, parboiling or incinerating everything exposed to the air. Cities and towns burst into flame. Two hours later, the burning cities of Lin'an, Shanghai and Fuzhou vanished under a vast tidal wave which came roaring up out of the deeps like the doom of god.

Multiple aftershocks rippled out across the sea floor, causing waterspouts and whirlpools to consume shipping. The huge wave thrown out – which had annihilated the provinces of Kiangu, Taiping, Chekiang and Fukien<sup>4</sup> – was still a hundred feet high when it slammed into Cheju'do, northern Taiwan and Okinawa. Tens of thousands more perished, and there was heavy damage to all the cities facing the Huang Hai and the Tsushima Strait.<sup>5</sup>

The plume of steam (and vaporized fish and dust and rock) thrown up from the impact mounted into the heavens, eventually spreading out into a vast black pall across northern Asia. A dense cloud, impenetrable to the sun...

<sup>1</sup> And you thought the Ice was all bad... hah!

<sup>2</sup> Hum deed um... ok, rolling for a spotting round. Hm, only one round, so I guess they're firing for effect. Roll... scatters off ground zero (Ise) to the... roll... southwest... roll... four zones and into the Huangzhu Wan. Shoot. That's messy. Better email Briana about this... (later) ok, one asteroid into the drink!

<sup>3</sup> Luckily for everyone in Japan and on Taiwan, the impact did not strike the China Sea fault line.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to everything just being smashed down, incinerated and washed away. Everything was drenched in seawater and brine from the depths of the sea, which is just not good for the local agriculture.

<sup>5</sup> Is Tom being nice? Yes, he is. Check out this page: <http://sherpa.sandia.gov/planet-impact/comet/> for a depiction of a cometary impact off New York. In this case, I'm saying the amount of kinetic energy injected into the sea and atmosphere is much lower as the asteroid the mi-go dropped was not moving when they tipped it into the atmosphere, so it did not have a lot of momentum. Still wouldn't want one dropped on me...

## **THE DIVINE KINGDOM OF JUDAH** (Pienching in Honan)

*Yui-Yen Ben-Yair, The Hand of God, Champion of the Hosts of Christ, Celestial Emperor, hwey tlaotani*

### **DIPLOMACY** None

Still displeased with the way the Ming were making a mess of the war in Annam, Yui-Yen considered dispatching a few Yaqui rifle regiments to clean things up... but then changed his mind. There were more pressing matters at home. Indeed, he'd started to get a queer feeling of impending trouble. Acting on the intuition which had saved him more than once, the Hand ordered massive stockpiles of food, firewood, coal and animal feed be gathered in every city and town. His provincial police were put on alert, and he gathered his armies to him in Pienching, waiting for *Something* to happen.

Missionary work continued among the Buddhists of El'Khudz and Beijing – acts which were little less than a slap in the face of the Pure Realm – but Yui-Yen, frankly, didn't care what old Chun Ho thought. "As long as he keeps his piss-yellow priests out of my house, he can do as he likes."

Then, of course, the southeastern sky rippled with flame, and a vast crashing boom rolled across the land. Old Yui-Yen rose from his gilded chair, blind eyes turned to the sky, and he snarled in disgust. "Foul carrion," he muttered – and one of his courtiers, cowering nearby, heard him – "digging worms, crawling before His black feet, licking His hands. Well, I know their fate – and they will rue this day..."

A rushing wind howled across the land, and everyone looked up in fear. Yui-Yen gathered up his little boys and bade their nurses take them into the deepest cellar of the palace. The Hand, himself, betook himself to the armories and girded blade, pistol and rifle to his hand. Within the hour, the winds had risen to a gale and the entire city shook and moaned with force of the hellstorm roaring out of the south.

Thanks to the Hands' foresight, though there was great destruction in the south, the army and the police were ready to help and aid as they could. No one, at least, would go hungry *this year*. Admiral Falcon – who had suffered such plights – was killed when the tidal wave hit Nantong, and the last of the Judean fleet was torn to shreds. General Wui also perished in the south, vanishing with so many others whose bodies were never even recovered.

## **THE MING CHINESE EMPIRE!** (Wuhan in Hupei)

*Kin Wah, Regent for...*

*Hongzhi Ying-Kwon, Emperor of China, Hammer of the Barbarians, The Redeemer, Divine Son of Heaven, The Merciless*

### **DIPLOMACY** Lingsi(nt)

Repeatedly battered and bloodied by the Javans, the Ming commanders were forced to adopt a modern style of line of battle for their musketeers and infantry. Yongzheng had hopes of finally crushing the Javan 'invasion', and had mustered three more armies in Lungtung, Hupei and Korat. After a great deal of marching here and there, the Ming armies swept into Lingnan and Lingsi, occupying both provinces. The Annamese bands which had raised such a ruckus there previously were now nowhere to be found.

As soon as the winter weather lifted in '44, therefore, Yongzheng and his armies invaded Annam from Lingnan, Korat and Dai Viet. A massive force had been gathered, including mercenaries from all over Asia (and even beyond – a squadron of Aeronautical Research and Fabrication zeppelins was on hand to support the assault).

Though Yongzheng had long railed and ranted against the Annamese, his presence (and that of the entire Ming army) in the south saved them from the horrific destruction visited upon the Ming coast around the mouth of the Yangtze – and even Wuhan

suffered from the terrible burning winds. Only by great luck did the hapless Emperor Hongzhi (who had run outside to see what was happening) survive a great fire in the city, as well as vicious tornadoes and cyclone winds.

## **NEW ANNAM**<sup>Ⓜ</sup>

1743 was a year of troubles in Annam. Shir'le's old confidant and friend Gr'ee (who still owed allegiance to Queen Nita) was murdered on Hainan Island by yellow-robe assassins as he prepared to take ship south to Java. Shir'le herself was wounded by Viet separatists (financed by Ming, doubtless), and Annam itself was rife with rumors of an underground movement dedicated to her overthrow.

Late in the year, the Hanoi prison where the Ming general Foo Liao was imprisoned was attacked by a night zeppelin raid and the Ming officer escaped. The gray zeppelins faded into the darkness, almost as soundless as the bats flitting between the lamps of the city streets.

In '44, even as Shir'le's armies were busily fortifying everything in sight, four Ming armies invaded the province (Yongzheng from the northeast, Kin Wah from the east, the mercenary commander Gemish Huorn from the south and the Ming general Wang-li Chung from the north-west. At the same time the province erupted in open revolt – the fuel of rebellion lit by the saffron-ropes priest-spies of the Realm.

Shir'le was determined to go down fighting – "Remember the A'lamo!" She screamed to her troops rushing to the barricades and redoubts in Hanoi. "Viva Annam!" Slightly less than 12,000 men prepared to face the Ming onslaught. Their two lone zeppelins thudded past overhead, laboring to gain altitude.

Sixty-thousand Ming (and mercenaries) stormed into the Haiphong plain, and the sky was suddenly aswarm with ARF airships. The Annamese scout zepps struck from the clouds, spitting small rockets and light cannon-fire. The ARF airships broke – darting aside far faster than the Annamese airships – and returned fire with a blaze of heavier rockets and the rattle of quick-firing cannon. Both Annamese zepps blew apart and plunged into the city below, wreathed in flame.

A massive Ming artillery barrage followed, with the ARF ships scudding about in the upper air, raining napathene bombs on the hapless Annamese infantry below. The first Ming infantry rush followed before the day was out... and a brutal melee spilled across the Annamese trenches and redoubts. Annamese rifle regiments poured volley after volley into the swarming mass of the Ming, but the Chinese just *did not stop coming*.

Three days of hand-to-hand fighting later, the last of the Annamese 'rebels' were hunted down in their holes and bayoneted (or hacked to bits with axes or sharpened shovels). Shir'le herself was killed after the Ming smashed through the door of her sick room – the first two men going down to pistol-blasts from her matching, pearl-handled revolvers – and then she wounded two more with a long knife before being bludgeoned to death.

Ming losses were high – the southerners had sold themselves dearly – but Yongzheng stalked through the shattered fortifications with a grim delight. "That's put paid to them!" He coughed, looking rather pale. "Hah hah ha!"

Mopping up in the province took the rest of the year, as the rebellious Viets had somehow gotten the idea they should rule their own province and a Ming garrison was put in place to count the heads and round up the survivors. The Regent's health continued to worsen, though his good humor could not be quenched. By December of '44 he was dead – taken by the Cough.

After a brief struggle among his generals, Kin Wah claimed the massed armies of Ming and sent a letter to the young Emperor Hongzhi assuring the boy the 'Regency' would continue to 'look after him' and Kin Wah would soon be in the Imperial Capital to coordinate the relief efforts along the coast.

## SOUTH ASIA

<b>Mercenaries</b>	
<b>Condotieri</b>	30c 30i 5a
<b>Captains</b>	Gemish Huorn (M956)
<b>To hire, please contact...</b>	None
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	i15 w17 s20 c11 a12 z5

**THE KHEMER EMPIRE** (Angkor Wat in Khemer)

*Bao Dai "The Pious" Moldoraja, Emperor of the True Khemer*

**DIPLOMACY** Nam Pung(nt)

The Emperor continued to breed – finally gaining another son – and allowed the Ming to hire an army of mercenaries at Hafez in Dai Viet. Moldoraja was pleased to hear the fighting on his northeastern border had ended, for he was stirring up a great deal of trouble in the west. His priests (and those of the Realm) were very busy along the Indian frontier, constantly pressing and pressing, seeking more converts.

In the fall of '44 – amid good news from the Indian front – young prince Khejaraja vanished while on his way home from temple school. The bodies of most of his guardsmen and tutors were found soon afterwards, horribly disfigured and floating in a canal just off the Tonle Sap. Despite his aunt's pleading<sup>6</sup>, the Emperor seemed unmoved, and pleased with his newer, younger son.

The province of Mon – veritably besieged by Buddhist priests – finally converted to Buddhism, but they did *not* accept the possibility of Khemer rule. Instead, after petitioning the European expedition working in the ruins of Weisskastel, they placed themselves under Danish protection. This effectively stymied lord Sanjaya's mission to speak with them.

General Blajakay was dispatched to Palas to take command of the large Khemer army stationed in the midst of so many Moslems. He arrived by sea and immediately took to the field with 26,000 men. "Time to kick some Moslem bee-hind!" He declared. The emirate of Samatata (which had recently revolted) was the first objective. Despite spirited resistance, the Samatatans could not resist the relentless barrages of the Khemer guns and died in droves. After installing a new viceroy in the province, Blajakay returned to Palas.

His men bloodied by the fighting in Samatata and their spirits high, Blajakay now instituted a vicious pogrom in Palas – the Moslem landowners would be stripped of their holdings and enslaved, and boatloads of Khemer colonists would be given their homes, estates and lands instead!<sup>7</sup> As you might imagine, this provoke a vigorous response from the natives – not only in Palas, but in Gaur, Assam and Nadavaria as well. Everyone could see the writing on the wall...

The Khemer responded to the rebellion with an iron hand. While the garrisons of the outlying provinces fled towards Palas (helped by a passel of spare Khemer generals), Blajakay smashed the revolt in Palas itself and executed fifteen thousand rebels. The rest were enslaved and set to repairing the roads and irrigation

<sup>6</sup> Though Khejaraja is the crown-prince, his mother was Thy Lan, who is dead – leaving him without a voice or a patron in the snake-pit of the court. So – did the new queen, Jehemana, have something to do with the boys disappearance?

<sup>7</sup> Cool. Dave is so evil...

canals. At the same time, Khemer colonists swarmed in to loot and steal and generally set up shop. (This made Palas a 2 ☹ 6 region.)

The Moslem rebels from Assam, Gaur and Nadavaria bargaged the Yasarid sultan for assistance, pleading for his army to intervene in their uprising. But there was no answer from Abdullah. Driven by desperation, the Assamese and Nadavarians marched on Gaur, hoping to join forces.

Blajakay – having crushed the Palans – let them gather and then pounced with his entire army. Among them the three provinces had managed to must about nine thousand fighting men. The Khemers swept down upon them with 25,000 veterans. The Moslems were encircled, hammered with artillery and then the Khemer regulars hacked their way through the screaming fedyaaheen, slaughtering them to a man. The bodies were left to lie in the fields of Gaur, though the skulls were taken as trophies and made into a great mound near the Palan border.

At the end of '44, both Assam and Nadavaria were in Moslem hands (and Nadavaria had reverted to Yasarid control), though no one expected them to be able to resist the Khemer, when Blajakay Red-Hand came knocking.

**HOSOGAWA BORNEO** (Kozoronden in Sabah)

*Hosogawa Shigo, Daimyo of Kozoronden*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Though the shogunate suffered from terrible storms in the north, and the same darkening sky afflicting other Asian nations, the immediate damage from the Hell Hammer was limited to Luzon, where the port at Kryztin suffered fires and many ships were destroyed. General Gorobei also died – though that was from worms – and Shigo began a project to promote trade among the islands.

**JAVA ~ WHERE IT'S RAINING BLOOD™** (Sunda in Pajajaran)

*Nita, Great Kahuna of Java, Emperess of the Maori, The Sea Spear*

**DIPLOMACY** Broome(f)/Tempyo(a)

While everyone lamented the deaths of so many of their kinsmen in Annam, Nita had turned her attention elsewhere. Shir'le would live or die by her own skill and wit. A wide-ranging series of mercantile arrangements were negotiated – but then fell through when the contractors failed to deliver on their promises. The mayor of Port Kolos was sent home (where he found an unexpected and dangerous homecoming) and efforts in Austral bore fine, sweet fruit. Two new factories opened in Sunda – one devoted to the production of Baby Ming dolls, and one to Royal Ming playsets ("Dominate the weak Emperor! Loot the economy to line your own pockets!").

In a shocking display of cooperation, the Albanian East India Company – which had an extensive warehousing and transport operation on Palankawai in the Andaman Islands – agreed in principle to allow Aeronautical Research and Fabrication to have use of facilities there.

**THE SUPREME PRIMACY OF ORO** (Fukuzawa in Irith)

*Mola ne Wooka, High Priest of the Shark*

**DIPLOMACY** Karratha in Yaralone(ch), Iten in Nokama(mn), Rabaul on Bismarck(ch)

Determined to extend the reach of the shark-priests into all the realms which worshipped Oro, Mola himself sailed west to Karratha in Yaralone (where he sought to interview the strange tattooed man who had lately appeared there, but was too late in his arrival), while Tars and Thuvan made for Iten in Nokama and Rabaul on Bismarck respectively.

## THE BORANG BAKUFU (Sakuma in Borang)

*Izurayama Toho, Daimyo of Borang, Lord of the North, Emperor of Austral*

**DIPLOMACY** Okora(nt), Yampi(nt)

A concentrated effort to woo the Tempyo and the Broome to the side of the Bakufu, and away from the rascally Javans, failed. The locals had no desire to be under the Izurayama thumb, and in any case the Javan coffee was much, much better. Shiguro was forced to spend the rest of '43 and '44 negotiating with jungle tribes and sweating. The military attaches with Shiguro's embassy also noted the arrival of a powerful Javan squadron to 'watch over' Tempyo port.

Toho began to express a taste for grandiose projects – the province of Pookora was settled to 2 GPv, and a national effort to implement the Lisbon Accords began. At the same time, a considerable quantity of cash was shipped off to the Maori in exchange for pilots and engineers. His advisors guessed the shogun was becoming bored... things were too quiet.

Word came from the north of the arrival of a Maori airship squadron at Fukuzawa. A whole crowd of Borang military officers were on hand to meet them and the four Maori zeps were quickly taken away for examination.

## NANHAI WANG'GUO (Rabaul on Bismarck)

*Sugawara Te Anu, Daimyo of the Southern Seas*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Despite the dissolute nature of his younger days, Te Anu redeemed himself in the eyes of the clan elders with a steadfast and wise eye. The new possessions in Austral were fortified, new armies raised and dispatched to the provinces and diverse investments made to ensure the Nanhai did not fall behind the great powers.

A pair of Maori airships was seen over Madang province, but the presence of so many Nanhai troops stationed there seemed to scare them off.

The shark-priest Thuvan Dinh was welcomed by Anu to the court of Rabaul and given many presents, including a house in the hills overlooking the Nanhai capital, which became the first official residence of the Oro priests.

## THE MAORI IMPERIUM (Joetsura on Te Ika A Maui)

*Tinopai Great Tooth, Lord of the Fleet, Emperor of the Maori, Blessed of Oro, The Big Kahuna*

**DIPLOMACY** Beringa and Montai(f)

Peace reigned in the land of the long white cloud, and the newly vital city of Joetsura expanded to 4 GPv. Great Tooth took a trip to the south, where he attempted (in his brute way) to convince the Hokitkans to pay more taxes. The chief of the Hoki, meanwhile, was flying a squadron to Austral where he was wined and dined and grew fat on heavy Borang cuisine. This proved too much for his heart and he suffered a bad heart-attack and perished in late '44. Luckily for the Great Tooth, the next Hoki chief was amenable to his rule.

## CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA

<b>Mercenaries</b>	
<b>Condottieri</b>	15c, 15i, 10a
<b>Captains</b>	Rajah of Vijashuram (M836), Zolofit the Calm (M821)
<b>To hire, please contact...</b>	None
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	i16 w20 s17 c11 a13 z6

## SHI'A IMAMAT (Yathrib in Kosala)

*Rhemini, Ayatollah of the Shi'a, Voice of Allah*

**DIPLOMACY** Nadavaria(ab), Pandya(ab)/Mozul(ch),  
Chola/Amon Sül(ab), Madurai(ch)/Zefara(ab),  
Tripuri in Dahala(ab)

Coupled with the revolt of the Bengalese Moslem princes and a massive effort by the Imamat to throw back the latest Buddhist offensive, the yellow-robe incursions into the piety of the people of Nadavaria and Kalinga were crushed. Both regions remain firmly Moslem. Elsewhere, the imams hurried to establish a consolidated, effective church hierarchy throughout Yasarid lands – before it was too late and the Buddhists overwhelmed them all.

## YASARID INDIA (Yathrib in Kosala)

*Abdullah Al-Din, "The Lucky", Shah of India, Prince of Basra and Amon Sül*

**DIPLOMACY** Dahala/Tripuri(ea)

Despite the threat of the Khemer to the east, Abdullah attempted to take advantage of the Arnor abandonment of the southern Hussite lords. Unfortunately, lord Thabid elected to stay in safe, comfortable Dahala rather than test the lances and pistols of the Southern League's border patrols in Pawar. On the other hand, the raj of Tripuri understood the benefits of a closer alliance with the Yasarid shah.

The Buddhists continued to make trouble in Kalinga, Vengi, Madurai and Chola – precipitating violent rioting and massacres by mobs of enraged Moslems (and those few Hussites still around). Hundreds of houses were burned, the newly-Buddhist inhabitants dragged into the street and hewn to bits with machetes and axes. The Yasarid governors turned a blind eye to these brutal scenes – “a good Buddhist is a dead one, roasting in the fires of hell.”

After the annihilation of the Khemer garrison of Nadavaria, a small Yasarid army crept into the province and took over local governance. At much the same time, shah Abdullah himself led a small army of six thousand fedyaaheen into Kakatiya (over the protests of his general Abu'la the Ghulam), where he encountered the massed levies of the Hussite barons of Kakatiya, Pawar and Karnata (some nine thousand men).

Abdullah – chagrined and enraged in equal measure – attempted to flee with his men back into Chela, but were run to ground and forced to give battle at **Warangal**. Despite the marked superiority of his riflemen, the Hussites crumpled Abdullah's army with a convincing pincer movement, and then their cuirassiers<sup>8</sup> slaughtered his men as they fled. Abdullah himself, though sorely wounded, managed to escape<sup>9</sup> the debacle and fled into Chela.

Abu'la and *his* army, were isolated in Pawar by the departure of the Arnor armies, had received a letter from Abdullah, directing the Ghulam to “cut his way to the sea.” The loyal general complied, marching into Anhivarta and then swinging south. As he did, the barons of Satava, Kayal and Nasik converged upon him from ahead and behind. They were lusty for battle, so the Ghulam drew up his forces near **Palghar** and set to! As it happened, Baron Fulk of Satava was a canny and daring commander. The Yasarid front was engaged by the reckless Kayalese and Nasiki, while the Satavan woodsmen crept through heavy marshes on the Moslem left and suddenly burst out, overrunning Abu'la's artillery battery.

The Yasarid army – now shelled from the flank – retreated in mild disorder. Abu'la kept a firm hand and managed to extract most of his lancers and some of his infantry. The guns were a loss. The next day the Satavans pressed the issue, and Abu'la – trapped in a hostile countryside and cut off from home – was put at bay.

<sup>8</sup> The Arnor/Indian Hussite cavalry is – in fact – the best in the world. Well, the Danes are pretty good too.

<sup>9</sup> This is what? The third, fourth time he's had an army obliterated and he's escaped?

This time the noble Ghulam could not escape. His army was smashed to bits by the Satavan guns – his own cannon! – and the Hussite *landschnecks* raced in to slash his lancers apart.

Abu'la himself went down fighting, a dozen Satavan knights hewn down by his mighty blade before some infantrymen pierced him with pikes and bore him to the ground. His head then graced Fulk's banner as a token of victory.

Following this victory – and the capture of those precious Yasarid guns – Fulk marched south into Malabar, where he chased the Moslem garrison into Fornost (for about the dozenth time). This time, however, the Hussites had the artillery to batter down the gates and a strong enough leader to lead them into the city. The Yasarid troopers fought bravely, but against the swarming mob of Hussites they had little chance.

#### **THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE** (Amon Hen in Karnata)

*Georg Fulk, Baron of Satava, warleader of the League, plus seven of his fellow dukes and barons*

**DIPLOMACY** Agreeing where to eat lunch counts, right? Right?

Consists of the diverse baronies and duchies of Anhivarta, Pawar, Kakatiya, Satava, Nasik, Belur (part of Karnata), Gangas, Chera, Karnata, Malabar (part of Satava) and the cities of Amon Hen and Fornost (part of Satava). Attack them at your peril!

Near the end of '44, a Danish fleet made landfall at Anhivarta, near the ruins of old Kayal, and set up camp on the shore. Emissaries of the League rode to meet with the Danish commander and discovered he wished to rebuild the city as an Imperial possession. This caused considerable consternation among the princes of the League, and some heated discussion, but in the end they refused the Dane persimmon ... I mean, permission, to build.<sup>10</sup>

#### **THE REALM OF ARNOR** (Schwarzkastel in Edrosia)

*Peregrin Arnorus, Rajah of India, Duke of Delhi, Grand-Duke of Aballach, Prince of the Black Tower*

**DIPLOMACY** Rajput(fa), New Dehli in Uttar Pradesh(c)

The Grand-Duke kept busy at home and was rewarded with a daughter. His most recent wife, Katharine, took sick after the baby and did not become well immediately. Tovar Brunson was dispatched to Rajput, where he became the duke of the province. He and Valerus also instituted a vicious pogrom against the Moslem clergy and landowners – “you will become Hussite, or you will test your faith in hell!”

Crushing the revolt of the Rajputs was a lengthy process – occupying Brunson and Valerus for most of '43 and '44. In the end, though, the province became nominally Hussite.

Thanks to the assistance of the Albanian East India Company, Schwarzkastel expanded and was greatly beautified, and trade was opened with Masai and Ethiopia.

#### **SHAHDOM OF AFGHANISTAN** (Kabul in Afghanistan)

*Ahmad Durani, Shah of the Afghans, Lord of Kabul*

**DIPLOMACY** Balkh(a), Dasht'e'lute(t)

Refreshed from their foray down into the hot country, the Afghans drilled and practiced and honed their gunnery skills. The Kabul City Battery – of such noble fame – tinkered about with some different kinds of gun carriages.

#### **THE KINGDOM OF KUSH** (Astakana in Kush)

*Bujayapendra, Blessed of Vishnu, prince of the Kushans*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Under the wise and benevolent guidance of Bujayapendra, the Kushans labored ceaselessly in the thin mountain air. The city of Astakana expanded and a vast fortress (the *Saivasakana*) was built around the old citadel. A great number of guns were purchased from Persian merchants, endowing the young state with a formidable battery.

The king also took a little time to discuss matters of warfare with his boyhood friend Vishartu (general of his armies) and they penned a short book titled “The Lost Art” on the virtues of sound tactics, cunning and maneuver in the pursuit of military victory. They included a number of notable military blunders, usually focusing on the use of power rather than skill.

#### **THE NOBLE HOUSE OF TEWFIK** (Basra in Abadan)

*Tewfik Solomon, Purveyor of a quick boat to somewhere safer!*

**DIPLOMACY** Oman(ma), Akko in Levant(ci), Cem in Mand(ci)

Though rocked by various attacks – and smarting from the loss of most of their trade arrangements in the Mediterranean – the Tewfik continued to plug ahead. Even the flood of Persian and Danish troops pouring into Basra did not dissuade Solomon from attempting to secure exclusive rights in Akko and Cem. Too, he sent captain Busir and a small squadron of warships down Oman to negotiate with the tribesmen there. Busir's mission met with great success, and a bride was negotiated for little Saul.

There was more sadness, however, as old sheikh Assan of Mecca passed away, leaving his holdings in the desert under Solomon's purview.

#### **THE SAFAVID PERSIAN EMPIRE** (Bukhara in Turkmen)

*Safi Jehan, Khan of Khans, Shahanshah of Persia, Prince of Bukhara, Caliph of the East*

**DIPLOMACY** None

The king of kings received a host of favorable reports from his ministers – with the cessation of war in the east and the end of the spate of piracy in the Gulf – trade bloomed, with the ships of many nations thronging to Persian ports. Unfortunately, these glad tidings were almost immediately followed by grim reports of burning cities and entire provinces denuded of man and his works. Further, a strange high darkness began to cover the daylight sky, and everyone could feel a thin chill in the air.

Despite these ominous signs, the Persians continued to rebuild from the onslaught of the Ice. The cities of Dzambul, Samarkhand, Basra and Cem were all expanded, while much land was placed under cultivation – again – in Ferghana, Ahvaz and Khwarzim. The new airship factories continued to work double shifts, expanding the Imperial aerofleet.

Unknown persons attempted to destroy the government offices in Burkhara during a busy midday conclave of the Imperial ministers. Much of the west wing of the palace was destroyed by a massive gunpowder explosion, but remarkably few people were actually killed. A great many clerks were shaken up, however. Similar attacks rocked other cities throughout Persia and in Merv nearly three thousand people were killed when the blast sparked a city-wide fire.

Persian armies under a constellation of generals from all over the empire (and overseas) converged on Basra in '43. Fleets



<sup>10</sup> Though perhaps some... consideration... might change their minds.

thronged the port, a great din was raised as regiment after regiment trooped ashore, and the roads into the north were clogged with endless lines of men, horses, camels, carts, mule-trains and artillery. A great host was massing to do war...

A great number of foreigners were expected as well, but before the Danish Expedition could land, trouble broke out among the Persian generals. Within the space of a fortnight, the lords Sarai Owaiis, Bashin al'Yazdur and Ibrahim were all murdered. Their bodies were found disembowled, limbs strewn about their chambers, heads missing, entrails arranged in horrifying patterns. All three men had enjoyed a strong and vigilant guard, yet those men had heard nothing.

In the armies assembled in the cane fields and caravanserais, only one word was uttered – causing all men to fall silent and make a sign against evil – *hasheshin*. Further away, in the capital, minister Abu'zaid also perished under strange circumstances, though no one could rightly say the wind-spirits had done him in. Despite these poor omens, the muster continued, though now the young general Rashad found himself in command of a vast army.

The throng of the Prester John tribesmen passed through Persia in '43 and '44, clogging the roads with endless lines of armored men ahorse, and bleating flocks of goats and sheep and kine. Yurts rumbled past old Samarkhand and Bokhara, covering the fields from horizon to horizon, and the dust they turned with their great wheels ascended to a steadily darkening sky. At the end of '44, the Prester John had reached the lowlands of Hahmar, and all the nomads marveled at the richness of the fields and the swamps and the numbers of the birds in the sky and heaviness of the soil.

They also stared in amazement at the enormous wreckage left by terrible floods on the Tigris in '44, which laid waste to large portions of Abadan and Hahmar provinces.

**T HE CAMPS OF THE TUAREGS, NEAR MOSUL, EARLY '43**  
“The messenger is here, my lord.” The tribesman bowed low to the great chief Adin ibn Saleh and then withdrew. The old Tuareg looked upon the man before him and nodded in delight.

“You live,” he said, white beard bristling against the oaken darkness of his craggy old face. “All said the son of Abu Sayyaf was dead, murdered by agents of the Dane.”

“I live,” Muyaia Sayyaf replied, casting back the hood of his travel-stained djellaba. With careful movements, he drew out his saber and a old, rust-stained pistol and laid them on the camp table between the two men. “Yes, I should be dead.”

The younger man raised his tunic, revealing a torso spiderwebbed with puckered scars. “These are the wounds delivered to me by a betrayer of Islam, Osman, the king's foul demon. I am sure you are curious why I am here, why would I dare set foot in the Taureg chieftains' tent when the Georgians would kill me if they knew I was here. It is very simple. Allah spared my life and he set me certain tasks. One of them was to make sure our tribe did not totally succumb to the will of the Georgians. I am sure you are amused by this so let me tell you about how I got here and maybe it will help you determine if I am truly who I say I am and if I should be listened too or turned over to Osman or Rashid himself.”

The old chief spread his hands, then settled himself on a fine Persian rug. A hookah was close to hand, but Saleh did not reach for the water-pipe. Instead, his keen old eyes fixed upon the younger man, and all attention was his.

“I will begin by telling you of an act of cowardice.” Muyaia began, settling himself. “My tribe was in dire straits. My father was dead, the Hussites had brought a great deal of firepower down on

Egypt and there was no chance for my tribe to survive. I am in fact very grateful you chose to take me under your wing and aided me in reaching Georgian territory.

“Since I knew my situation was dire I prayed and fasted for a week hoping Allah would give me guidance and at the end of the week he did. Two things were revealed to me. First, to build an Islamic Brotherhood and eliminate the evil which permeates Georgia. Second, he told me to beware Rashid for he does not bow to the will of Allah.

“Believing the sultan to be a good Moslem, I requested an audience with him and I told him of my vision. He said he strongly supported all things which made Islam stronger. Armed with this knowledge I prepared my tribe. I told them of the grand scheme and how the Georgians were our friends and would support us. Yet I was also wary because Allah would not have given me such a warning without reason.

“One morning Osman, Rashid's right hand, requested I ride with him. I was very leery of this but agreed – Rashid was my benefactor – how could I refuse? We rode and it was very pleasant then just as I was beginning to feel at ease Osman plunged his dagger into my back! Like a true coward, he bundled up my body and tossed me into a deep ravine. Only by an act of Allah did I land in the pool at the bottom of the waterfall and survive. I put the cold mud of the Holy Lands on my wounds and rested for a long time.

“While I lay on that barren shore healing – slipping in and out of consciousness – two angels came down and sat with me. They told me Allah had sent them to watch over me and ensure I complete the tasks the god had laid before me.

“While they watched voices spoke from the air, telling me tales of Light and tales of Darkness. They told me how while the Ice benefited the three tribes of the Sahara they were in reality foul demons bent on the world's destruction. They told me the world is full of such foul denizens and men themselves must destroy these powers of darkness.

“Purging not only Islamic lands but also all lands. They declared that the *Ahl Al-Kitab* be followed and those who follow the one true God be used as instruments and allies to achieve the goal of eliminating as much evil in the world as possible. I swore to them I was the man to lead their crusade against the darkness wherever it might lurk.

“I had healed but apparently the angels were still skeptical of my fortitude so they assigned set before me three tasks: first, to recover a pigeon's egg from the djinn of the Rhub-Al-Khalit.”

Muyaia reached into his robe and drew out a simple, worn round stone. Saleh leaned closer, raising one white eyebrow at the impeccable smoothness of the stone. In the light of the copper lanterns hanging from the roof of the tent, the egg seemed to gleam with an inner light.

“This instrument,” Muyaia said, returning the egg to his pocket, “if used properly can kill the unkillable. My reward was my life. Second, to find the daughter of a descendent of Mohamed in the Holiest City of Islam. And win her love. My reward for this? Allah granted me a son.”

Muyaia smiled, thinking of his distant family, and years of care and worry and struggle dropped away from his face.

“Last, go into Georgia and stop the Georgian King from completing construction of the temple to Ahuramazda. I have achieved two of these goals and with your help I will achieve the third. In the next few months men loyal to me will move across the desert, led the greatest Sunni general of our time, Bey Senghor.

“Even as the feyaheen reach my side, the armies of the king of kings will invade Georgia from the east. From the north the Swedes will come and from the west the Dane. All these armies will be bent

on destroying Georgia and bringing an end to the reign of the idolater Rashid.

Saleh's face had grown long during the younger man's speech, and now he made to speak. Muyaia forestalled him, raising a quelling hand.

"Wait, old friend. You may have already received your marching orders to oppose these invasions but I respectfully request you refuse. The Zoroastrian Temple is being built by a King who claims to be a Sunni, yet the Moslems and the Fire-Worshippers have always been enemies – so I ask you why would he do such a thing?"

"Rashid no longer follows the one God. He has been lured into dark pacts by I do not even fully understand and he will drag everyone down with him if he can. I respectfully request you do not travel down this path, the Persians are loyal Moslems and more powerful than the Georgians, I assure you. Your tribe with my help would benefit very greatly if you followed my lead and assisted them in their efforts against Rashid."

Saleh stood, slowly unfolding himself from the floor. His graven old face was troubled and a thin, wrinkled hand stroked his beard. At last he said, "you have been long in the desert, cousin. You do not know of Osman's death, or of my ascent in the favor of the great Sultan."

The Tuareg's eyes flickered in the lamplight.

"All these things you tell me – they are known already in Baghdad. The eyes of the Sultan see far, and pierce all veils. All things are known to him, every secret revealed."

Saleh drew a pistol from his robes – a queer weapon of black metal. Muyaia grew very still, and his own blade and pistol seemed vanishingly far away, sitting on the table between them.

"Your frail little desert god must place his trust in men," the Tuareg laughed in a chilling, half-mad voice. "But I serve a god himself, and his power splits the heavens! Look you outside, and you will see the stroke of his anger arc across the heavens. Soon the blow will land, the earth will shake, mountains tremble and the great kingdoms of man will be cast down!"

Muyaia moved – a flash of motion – and the tent plunged into darkness. Saleh screamed, hot oil from the lamps splashing across his face. The black pistol banged in darkness, a jet of flame casting wild shadows on the ceiling. The young Moslem was gone, one wall of the tent cloven open.

"Guards!" Saleh screamed, leaping out into the night. "Wake! Wake and find me this dog of a Sayyaf!"

Yet Muyaia escaped, though the Tuaregs hunted for him high and low, and with all the powers at their command. Messengers were dispatched to Baghdad and old Saleh – now the right hand of Rashid – knew a pure, gnawing fear. What would happen to him now he had failed?

**THE KINGDOM OF GEORGIA** (Baghdad in Mesopotamia)

*Rashid Ibn-Majid, King of Georgia, Protector of Armenia and Mesopotamia*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Disturbed by certain reports from his western port cities, the sultan issued an edict banning the agents, factors, representatives and emissaries of the Norskrad company from Georgian lands and cities. Apparently the northerners had attempted to abscond with funds being transferred from the Albanians to Georgia three years previous. Reports were also received in Baghdad of a "Spanish woman" nosing about in the ancient holy places of Jerusalem.

As Saleh had claimed, the sultan had learned from diverse sources of the impending invasion of his realm. This sparked



considerable ire in the black-eyed king, but he had made certain preparations for such a day.

"Those who strike against me," Rashid proclaimed, summoning his generals to him, "test their strength against the dark stars, and the fire hiding in night." He looked to the sky, while two coal-black leopards licked his hands and crawled at his feet. "Their doom is coming closer by the hour..."

## THE WAR AGAINST THE BEAST (AD 1743-1744)

*Georgia*

vs.

*Sweden, Persia, Denmark, Kiev, Carthage, Aztec, Sword of Allah and the Nisei Republic*

And I heard a great voice ring from the temple saying to the seven angels, *Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men having the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

And I heard another voice from the altar say, *Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and the sun became blackened and dim, as if scorched.

And men were tormented with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, *It is done*

And there were voices, thunders, lightnings; a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great...

### AD 1743

#### January

After escaping the assassination attempt, Oniko of Denmark sets sail from Krak-de-Chevaliers for Basra.

#### February

The El'Rif himself leads a Swedish army of 9,200 men into Georgian Cilicia. He intends nothing less than the



## AD 1743

- March** liberation of Jerusalem from the infidel.  
In Baghdad, the Sultan learns of the El'Rif's invasion and responds; a vast host marching swiftly up the road to Homs. Part of this army is a mixed force of zeppelins and cavalry commanded by Abuaddin.
- April** The Persian general Rashad arrives in Basra and finds himself in command of the entire Persian host assembling there (the other commanders having fallen to misfortune or the assassins' blade.)  
The Sultan's army reaches Antioch.
- Early May** The Danish fleet arrives in Basra and begins to unload 32,000 men, 175 guns and 44 zeppelins.
- Late May** The El'Rif's striking force has reached Tarsus – which they find to be fortified and defended by a Georgian garrison. The Sultan also arrives – having moved with great speed from Baghdad. Maneuvering with great skill, the El'Rif manages to break off to the west, slipping back into Isauria.
- Early June** The Danish admiral Gligoric arrives at Krak-de-Chevaliers and unloads a force of 9,000 Danish regulars and 20,000 Hussite mercenaries provided by the Albanians. He joins Tiechman and the Imperial Arab Scouts brigade, already at Krak.
- Late June** The Sultan plows into Isauria, his light cavalry leapfrogging ahead of the rest of the army, and his zeppelins trapping El'Rif in the city of **Antalya**. The Georgian zeppelins prove more than a match for the Swedish Air Corps, and then the city is leveled by the Sultan's artillery and airships. The el'Rif dies battling among the ruins, falling with the last of his men, ripped apart by the Sultan's Guard.
- Early July** The rest of the Persian armies, under the command of 'Abd al Latif arrive in Basra from Carmania. There are now 83,000 Persians in the field, supported by 575 cannon and 4 zeppelins. Al'Latif takes command of the Persian fleet.  
The Sultan's army marches east into Cilicia.
- Late July** The Swedish admiral Dottski arrives in Basra with a Swedish fleet crowded to the gunnels with 17,000 men, countless guns and almost one hundred combat zeppelins. Within days of the Swedish arrival, the Shaat-al-Arab is crowded with the Aztec Singing Flame and Sword of Empire legions, as well as a contingent of 4,000 Tlahulli (Order of the Flowering Sun) jaguar and eagle knights.  
Hakim al'Rif (prince of the Swedish Exarchate of Inner Africa) arrives at Antalya in Isauria with 4,600 Berber hussars to reinforce his father. He and admiral Stuebing find the city in ruins, and a Georgian flag flying above the broken towers of the citadel. Wondering if his father has been forced to retreat further west, the Swedish squadron sails along the Lycian coast...  
The Georgian general Abuaddin, lying in wait with a force of airships, strikes from the clouds as the Swedish fleet enters the **Gulf of Finike**. Rockets and bombs rain down on Stuebing's ships. The steam cruisers return fire with a rattle of light guns. Their own rockets flash into the sky. A Georgian zeppelin convulses, then explodes in a blossom of orange flame, raining debris into the sea. At almost the same moment, bombs smash into the decks of two of the steam cruisers and explode. Shrapnel tears into the interior spaces, rupturing a boiler. The *Bauhaus* blows apart like a cheap cup, followed moments later by the *Muscovy*, whose magazine catches fire. The rest of the Swedish ships break for the open sea, and the Georgian zeppelins sweep after them, raining fire on the sailing ships. Both Hakim and Steubing are badly injured and only one steam cruiser, the *Malmo* escapes to limp into Heraklion harbor a month later. Hakim dies of his injuries.

## AD 1743

- August** Colonel Phillip Drake, Royal Army<sup>11</sup>, placed in command of the Swedish regiments in Basra. Unloading of the various fleets is finishing up. Things are a royal mess in and around Basra, where there's just barely room to fit so many ships, men and supplies. The Persians are stretched thin to provide enough food, water and entertainment.  
Gligoric and his Danish army march across the blisteringly hot Sinai, intending to invade western Georgia. Their men suffer terribly in the wasteland.  
The Sultan's army marches east into Aleppo.  
Abuaddin and his cavalry/zeppelin force swing back into Cilicia.
- September** The entire Alliance army – 158,000 men – marches north through Hahmar and into Georgian Mesopotamia. Their advance is immediately opposed by the Tuareg chieftain Aden Amin ibn Saleh and a mobile army of Arab lancers in support of an extensive string of fortified villages and other citadels. The Alliance army immediately sets about smashing every single one of the forts into rubble. They've come well prepared with sappers, artillery and airships, but it still takes time.  
The Sultan's army marches east into Palmyra.  
Abuaddin's reaction force reaches Antioch.
- October** Gligoric's army of the Sinai (supported by Tiechman's Arab scouts) attacks the province of **Petra**. To their surprise, they find the emir of Aqaba and his army ready to resist them.<sup>12</sup> Luckily, Gligoric had brought a big army – 32,000 men – and though everyone was about perishing of the heat and thirst, they managed to smack the Petrans around and capture Aqaba.  
Abuaddin reaches Homs.  
The Sultan's army arrives in Baghdad, even as the Alliance hosts clear away the last of the fortifications. The Tuaregs join up with the Sultan, who measures the odds... he has roughly 100,000 men in the field and 140 zeppelins. The Alliance outnumbers him, but not by an overwhelming margin – and this is his land, his people... his long held preparations. He decides to fight.  
Forty miles south of Baghdad, on the road to ancient Babylon, is the fortress-town of **Girumu**. In late October, with the rains threatening, under a leaden sky, the armies of the Sultan and the Alliance clashed in (frankly) epic combat. Against the daemon-Sultan Rashad the Sunlanders arrayed Oniko of Demark, the Pale Flame; Drake, the Persian Rashad, and the Aztec Sword of Empire legion.<sup>13</sup>  
The armies collided in a dispersed fashion, each side trying to bring their full weight to bear on only a portion of the enemies number. The skies above were already aflame with battle when the first artillery barrages thundered out. Though the Alliance had more airships, the Georgian ones proved their master in speed, turning ability and firepower. Only a paltry ten Aztec zeppelins (of peculiar design) proved capable of matching them one for one...  
On the ground, the Pale Flame rode into battle, surrounded by a great hedge of her Imperial Guard, and held overall command. Often, as she received reports and issued commands, she showed a pale, strained face and kept her eye upon a strangely-worked mirror always close at hand.  
Across the farmlands and plains (the frontage of combat was almost five miles long), the Sultan also bent his will against the Empress, and loathsome servants lurked at every hand. The sun dimmed with smoke and dust, the air

<sup>11</sup> Though possessed of many Flashman-like characteristics (see <http://www.harryflashman.org.uk/home.htm> for more details), Drake is actually an entirely competent general – though a boor and a fool.

<sup>12</sup> Petra and Aqaba are actually independent and only nominally part of Georgia.

<sup>13</sup> Tom pauses to calculate, like, a million modifiers.

reverberated with the constant thunder of guns and the rattle of rifle and musket. The front met in a blaze of gunfire, the screams and shouts of men and the boom of drums and the wailing of pipes. Almost immediately, the lines of battle began to skew as each host sought to flank the other.

Amid all this, the Sultan waited and watched, a legion of his *Pushthighan* close around him. "I want her," he snarled, seeing – far across the field – the banners of Denmark. A mailed fist curled around the hilt of a saber of ebon hue. "She is their heart, and I will tear it out."<sup>14</sup>

A long vicious day followed, with great slaughter on both sides. But the Georgians did not break, nor were flanked. And though the Sultan tried to rush to grips with Oniko, she kept away, and vast black columns of smoke mounted to the heavens, and under the unblinking, uncaring sun fifty-thousand Sunlander troops perished or were sorely wounded. Nearly forty-five thousand Georgians also fell, mostly among the Tuaregs, whom the Sultan ever used in the thick of the fight.

Yet the Georgian airfleet smashed the Alliance from the sky, and Oniko was forced to retreat – though in good order – back into Hahmar, lest her army be savaged from the air. Sister Chaltique (one of the Knights of the Flowering Sun), commanding the rear-guard, was killed by the blast of an airship bomb. Though Oniko tried to break away, the Sultan pressed her retreating elements, slaughtering any man who fell behind.

#### November

Near **Nasiryah**, Oniko turned again, and struck hard at the Sultan's vanguard. Another enormous battle brewed up, shaking the heavens with such a tumult of cannon and screams and the rippling blast of riflemen firing in volley. This time, the Danish Imperial Guard jammed into the heart of the fray, smashing into the Georgian center. The Sultan was taken unawares, and his army staggered back. An enormous number of Persian infantry were chewed up as Oniko attempted to grind down the Georgian center.

Again, the Sultan attempted to come to grips with her, one to one, and again she danced away, spending the Aztecs and Persian troopers like water, but bleeding Georgia... bleeding the Sultan badly. The captain of the Sword of Empire legion fell at Nasiryah, and the battered remnant of his army decamped – though Oniko pleaded with them to stay. In the night, the Sultan limped away to the north.

Abuaddin reaches Baghdad with his army.

#### December

Exhausted, both armies fell back – the Georgians to Baghdad, the Alliance to Basra – to lick their wounds and tend the wounded. The wet season was upon them, turning the land between the two rivers to mud... Now Oniko and the Sultan wait for spring and the dry season to come.

#### AD 1744

##### January February

The Kievian count Vasilyko arrives in Vasi and takes command of the Swedish army stranded there by the death of general Tarasuik.

##### March

Muayaia Sayyaf Adin and his Sword of Allah *mujhadeen* attack the Fire Temple at Ganzak in Kurdistan. As the temple is undefended save for unarmed priests and scholars, they slaughter everyone in the place and set it afire. The buildings are pulled down and the land strewn with salt. A great storehouse of Avestan religious writings (carefully gathered by the Zoroastrian priests over the last six years) are destroyed.

The Nisei general Hideyoshi Anosuri lands in Basra with an expeditionary regiment of 1,200 men. They've traveled half way around the world... but they have arrived!

Gligoric and his Danish army defeat the emir of Petra's army and move to besiege Aqaba.

The armies of the Sultan and the Alliance both march into Hahmar province, eager to come to grips with one another and end this struggle. The dance of maneuver and feint and skirmishing begins again.

#### April

Gligoric's army in Petra captures Aqaba.

After weeks of probing one another's cavalry screen, and the intermittent battles of the remaining Alliance airships against the Georgian zeppelins, a meeting engagement northeast of ancient **Urak** exploded into a full-fledged fracas between both armies. Despite the unexpected nature of the clash, both the Sultan and Oniko showed the full range of their skill in a fluid battle of maneuver.<sup>15</sup> Only by an hour's difference – the erratic movement of one Swedish regiment – did the Sultan take the field, driving the Alliance army back into Abadan province. The retreating Sunlanders suffered constant attacks from the air, and from Abuaddin's light horse, which now outnumbered their own by a heavy margin. The battered Sunlanders reached Basra to find two fresh regiments of Nisei troops waiting.

Oniko immediately put the Japanese on the front line, rotating back her Persians, who were worn to the breaking point. Georgian airships were seen above the port, surveying the lay of the land.

#### Early May

The Kievian/Swedish Cossacks under Count Vasilyko invade Georgia.

Gligoric's army garrisons and secures both Petra and Aqaba.

The Sultan invades Abadan, intending to smash the Alliance back into the sea. The Alliance fleet puts to sea, hoping to escape a devastating air-raid.

Far to the east and west alike, the sky is torn asunder and vast devastation visited upon the earth. Millions perish and great cities are consumed by the waves.

#### Late May

Oniko draws a line at **Ash-Shuai'ba** – the last defensible position before the Sultan's artillery is raining shells into the port of Basra itself. Now the Alliance digs in – hastily – and the Sultan is on the attack. Unfortunately, the long series of battles has taught Raschid respect for the Pale Flame and her skill, and he's learned quickly in this crucible of battle...<sup>16</sup>

Hideyoshi Anosuri and his Emperor's Own guards are the first to go down, their line crumpling under a sudden attack by the Sultan's Guards. Encircled on the left wing, the Nisei fight hard, but go down gallantly under waves of Tuaregs. The entire Alliance left collapses and the Georgian air fleet swoops in, taking heavy losses to smash the batteries covering the broken wing.

The Sultan commits his reserves and Oniko is forced to throw her own Imperial Guard into the gap. A ferocious melee erupts, but the Danes stand firm in the midst of a dissolving Alliance army. Abuaddin's lancers burst through the faltering line and swing right. Drake is forced to pull back his Swedes and Persians. Oniko is left alone, surrounded by her Guards in a sea of Georgian troops.

Now the Sultan turns his attention to her, and rides forth, challenging her to battle. In reply, she takes a rifle from one of her Empress' Own Foot troopers. Sighting calmly, she puts two bullets into Raschid's breastplate at extreme range. Luckily for him, the heavy cotton padding

<sup>14</sup> Ok, the Georgians have the modifier advantage (mostly for home ground and a prepared defense, giving them a total +2). The Sunlanders have the advantage in combat points (1,334 to 1,030). Let the dice roll!

<sup>15</sup> As in, the Sultan rolled his max, and Oniko one less than hers.

<sup>16</sup> That is, when he rolled a crit on the last battle, his Combat skill *went up one*.

behind the shattered metal absorbed the shock. "There's my answer," Oniko screamed, her voice long raw from the effort of command.

The Georgians surged against the Danish square and the melee resumed, even fiercer than before. Despite the ferocity of the attack, the Danish veterans stand firm, then hack their way out to the southwest, into the desert.

By nightfall, the Alliance army is split in twain and in full retreat. Georgian airships and light horse dog them, bleeding the fleeing regiments. The Persian commander Rashad is killed, commanding the rear-guard, and then Drake is wounded.

**Early June**

Relentless, the sultan presses Drake, driving him away from Basra and into the marshes along the lower Tigris. By the end of the month, the remainder of the Swedish / Persian / Danish army is destroyed. The marsh-people, bowing before the sultan, hunt down the survivors – gaining a rich prize (a gold *simitar* for each head).

Oniko and her Imperial Guard manage to escape down the highway to Kuwait City, where Abd al'Latif's fleet is able to evacuate them. The remainder of the Aztec Sword of Empire legion has already fled east into Fars province.

In the east, Gligoric and his army invade Levant find the province defended by local militia and an annoying number of fortified strong-points, villages and encampments. The Georgian general Sadir ibn Sadir is commanding the defense, which slows down the Danish advance considerably.

**Late June**

Oniko and her surviving guardsmen – less than five thousand men – arrive by ship at Abas in Fars. She dispatches messengers to Shah Jehan, informing him of the disaster which has overtaken the Alliance campaign, urging him to move any armies at his command to Zagros and Fars to reinforce her.

Sultan Raschid continues to mop up in Abadan.

The Kievan/Swedish army of the Caucasus conquers the province of Georgia.

**Early July**

The Persian shah Jehan and his general Al'Qadir, encamped at Semnan in Khurasan, receive Oniko's letters. They immediately set out with 90,000 men to reinforce her.

Gligoric besieges Sadir ibn Sadir in Akko, which is strongly fortified. The Danes are confident, however, in their ability to reduce the archaic fortress.

The remnants of the Aztec Sword of Empire legion march southeast into Mand province.

**Late July**

The Sultan dispatches Abuaddin to secure Kuwait, while he turns east and marches into Ahvaz province. There is no Persian resistance.

The Danish Empress is finally reached by courier and learns of her sister's death and the destruction of northern Italy and Venice. She is stunned, but her spirit does not break. Instead, she closets herself in her tent, from which queer lights were seen to flicker, late at night.

When she emerges, she addresses the troops and tells them of Venice's destruction by a falling star – and the ruin of Verona and all those lands – and of the great storms and furies even now raging over the broken earth. Her eyes are keen as she looks into each heart.

"This is the time of revelation," Oniko said, speaking very clearly, that all might hear. Her face was lit, as from within, by a shining light. "Our enemy no less than the Beast himself, the daemon-sultan, Satan and Shaitan. And we are all which stand between him and the rest of the world. We band of brothers, these few thousands who have stood in the furnace and felt the Lord at our side. This is Armageddon, and we are the soldiers of the Lord of Heaven and we *will not fail!*"

**August**

Jehan, Al'Qadir and the Persian army of armies reach Khvor.

The Georgians secure the provinces of Kuwait (though Abuaddin is unable to capture Kuwait City) and Ahvaz. The city of Shankar surrenders as soon as the Sultan's army arrives.

The Aztecs march into Bandar, where they encamp at the city of Ormuz. The Singing Flame fleet is waiting for them. Everyone hopes they've escaped the Sultan's pursuit.

Gligoric's army besieges Akko with all vigor. Sadir ibn Sadir fights gamely, but he is outnumbered, outgunned and the Danish siege engineers are the very devil themselves. Akko falls and Sadir is killed.

**September**

Terrible flooding due to torrential rains afflict Hahmar and Abadan provinces.

The Sultan secures Ahvaz and rests his men. Work begins on prepared positions along the highway from Zagros. Abuaddin rejoins the Sultan and brings reports of the fighting in Levant and the resistance of Kuwait City.

Oniko, meanwhile, has rested her men as well, and begun work on fortifications on the approaches to Abas in Fars.

Jehan and Al'Qadir reach Kerman in Shir-Kuh, but their advance is also slowed by poor weather and a long logistical train.

Gligoric advances into Jordan. He curses, seeing yet another province filled with forts and walled towns and surly, hateful natives. The Danes begin subduing the province.

**October**

Hanno, a general of Carthage, arrives in Krak de Chevaliers with a corps of 4,400 men to reinforce the Danish garrison.

The Sultan, having learned of the slow advance of the Persian reinforcements, launches a raid into Fars, but is unwilling to test Oniko's defense of Abas without his main army, which remains in Ahvaz.

The Persians managed to reach Al Wan in Zagros before being forced to halt for the winter. The province is crowded with refugees from further west. Worse, the Prester John and the Gurvan have also arrived with their vast flocks, thousands of yurts and endless contingents of rowdy nomadic warriors. The province feels very small and the harvests are already paltry.

The Aztec crown-prince Nimulana arrives in Ormuz on a swift frigate, having spent nearly two years at sea, retching over the side of the *Ehexatl*. Rather sodden and green, he is ready to become a man and lead warriors into battle! *Urp*. The ragged remnants of the Sword of Empire legion are in not much better shape.

Gligoric captures Amman.

Vasilyko's Kievan/Swedish army of the Caucasus conquers Azerbaijan and lays siege to the city of Tabriz. Further south, in Kurdistan, the Sword of Allah is also trying (rather badly) to take Nineveh. The Georgian garrisons in both cities laugh at them and call them names.

**November**

The rains continue, and everything turns to mud. Falls of ash and thick dust begin to afflict the land between the two rivers. The Sultan is pleased.

**December**

Winter comes, and the rains, and everything stops, waiting for the spring.

## EUROPE

### Hussite Mercenaries

<b>Condotierr</b>	32i, 28c, 26ec, 8a, 12xc, 16ht, 10xea, 8ec, 2z
<b>Captains</b>	Jan Stahlansk (M78A)
<b>To hire, please contact...</b>	Albanian East India Company
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	c12 i15 a14 w17 s20 z6

### Catholic Mercenaries

<b>Condotierr</b>	9xea (AA guns), 10hea (rocket batteries)
<b>Captains</b>	Baron Von Hausen (M783)
<b>To hire, please contact</b>	Norsktrad
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	c12 i16 a13 w18 s18 z6

## AERONAUTICAL RESEARCH &

### FABRICATION (Rostov in Levedia)

*Jessica Orozco, Captain of the West*

*Solyom Pasternak, Captain of the East*

**DIPLOMACY** Taino/Kusan(nt), Treya in Delaware(ma), Khazar(a), Urkel(a)



The company was very busy – with agents and representatives in action world-wide. Solyom himself was in China, commanding a zeppelin squadron in the service of the Ming Regent during the suppression of the Annamese rebellion. Company aircraft performed admirably, raining death and destruction upon the criminals and foreign provocateurs that had been causing so much trouble.

Settlement efforts in Kuban were successful, making the province a (1 ♠ 6). Captain Arpada – in command of a motely and very heavily armed band of ARF soldiery – continued his patrols along the Volga, rousting out bands of cannibalistic, degenerate Ice-men, shooting enormous bears and wolves and generally trying to restore order and civilization along the fringe of the Ice.

His attempts to secure an arrangement with the black-robed priest who rule in demon-haunted Astrakhan failed, however, and the stench of their sacrificial fires continued to stain the sky over the black waters of the Volga. This provided some excellent grist for the sermons of the Hussite priests infesting the province. Similarly, the prince of Taman was thrown out of Patzinak by the pro-Swedish chiefs there.

## PRINCIPATE OF KIEV (Kiev<sup>2</sup>)

*Vladimir III, Prince of Kiev, Master of the Holy Rivers*

### DIPLOMACY

A festive weekend – celebrating the



Princess Anna at her birthday party

birthday of princess Anna Kournos<sup>17</sup> – was rudely interrupted when a band of swarthy men (dressed in fur hats, heavy overcoats adorned with hammer and sickle symbols) stinking of vodka attempted to rush the stage where the prince was presiding over the poodle-parade. Shouting “death to the oppressor of the workers, peasants, laborers and ox-throwers” these ruffians were immediately set upon by

brawny guards. A scuffle ensued and amid the tumult one of the assassins’ beards was given a mighty tug – and it flew off!



<sup>17</sup> Actually, she’s Queen of Kiev and married to Vladimir, so just quit thinking those thoughts you were thinking. Particularly you Baklovakians!

Moments later, everyone stared in amazement as the “Baklovakian assassins” were revealed (down to their underpants) as Polish agents! How cunning...

Though he was perturbed (but not surprised) by the villainy of the Polish hegemonists, prince Vladimir still issued a wide-ranging and startlingly liberal “declaration of religious tolerance and worker’s rights” which promised protection and acceptance of Hussites and Catholics alike.



Count Vasilyko of Kiev

Of course, while thousands of edicts were being printed and distributed (along with an autographed 8x10 woodcut of the princess – no, not in her birthday suit!) the Orthodox clergy were pressing their missionary efforts in Alfold. Only the presence of Count Rhakovski and an army of Cossacks kept the Hussites in the province from open rebellion, and more than a few Hussite priests were given the sack as a result. The cruelty of the count was only exacerbated when Vladimir granted the entire province to Rhakovski as his personal fiefdom in ‘44. “Mine,” chortled the count, “all mine!”

Angered by the religious pressure of the Kievians upon their cousins in Alfold, and urged by certain foreign powers, the Carpathians repudiated their fealty to Kiev and refused to pay tribute.

A very strong force of cavalry was dispatched to assist the Swedes in their war against Georgia, and an even larger force of specially-imported French poodles were shipped up the river to Komarno in a long string of barges laden with casks and wicker Sunday picnic baskets.

## PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BAKLOVAKIA (Komarno in Slovakia)

*Wysowski, First Citizen, Protector of the Workers and Peasants*

**DIPLOMACY** Carpathia(neutral)



Even as the Senate presided over the opening of a new bath-house and distillery in Komarno, urchins ran up from the docks, shouting grand news. “Pastries! Free pastries! And spirits!” A veritable river-fleet of barges – some even flying the jaunty flag of Kiev – were arriving at the Komarno city docks amid a cacophony of barking. As everyone soon learned, princess Anna – so well loved by the citizens of the Republic, even though she was a naughty Kievan – had sent them presents!

Poodles – imported French poodles – in number sufficient for every single citizen, large and small, with hand-lettered tags around their poodle necks saying “not for the eating.” And pastries – oh, such wonderful cream-filled, extra-sized vladovas – again enough for every man, woman, child and ox to gorge themselves to oblivion. And the vodka! Not just *vodka*, but special Kievan *vladka*, which as everyone knows is double the strength and twice as clear, like air! And everyone needs air to live, right? A massive, nationwide party began, notable for the fine BBQ.

First Citizen Wysowski’s visit to Carpathia – in disguise, very clever, as a woodsman carrying a Baklovakian flag – was filled with hilarious hijinks – pianos falling out windows and nearly crushing him to a bloody pulp, attacks by rabid poodles, a washerwoman with enormous arms and a sharp axe, etc. However, thanks to a terrible accident early in the trip where he lost his vodka bottle, Wysowski managed to win through, alive!

The First Citizen returned in ‘44, just in time to observe the entire nation of Baklovakia sleeping off a truly enormous hangover (and pastry-over, if you know what I mean). Everyone in Komarno was snoring, asleep, as the Citizen rode into town. The only moving

creatures were a few furtive poodles – fur matted with burrs and mud from hiding in a culvert – who slunk away from him, whining in fear.

Wysowski dismounted, staring around in disgust. “None left for me? Oafs!” He muttered. Then one of his men shouted, pointing to the south. “Looka-that!” Sergeant Luigi cried. Wysowski turned, shading his eyes against a sudden glare.

The southern sky was lit by a mammoth blaze of light, swelling until it outshone the sun and climbed to the heavens.

“Oooooooooo! Pretty! Wait – why is that ox flying so high?”<sup>18</sup>

**ALBANIAN EAST INDIA COMPANY** (Thessaloniki in Macedon)

*Nikolas Argir, Senior Partner in the AEIC*

**DIPLOMACY** St. Brendan in Cape Verdes(mf), Calais in Flanders(ma), Schwarzkastel in Edrosia(bo), Munich in Bavaria(ma), Ulm in Swabia(ma). Metz in Nivernais(ma)



Negotiations continued with the dockyard workers, the stevedores and the sailors. Nikolas wanted a fair and equitable arrangement – and more to the point, he wanted to keep the Communard labor organizers out of his workshops. Everyone was working hard, anyway, and wages were high – so there wasn't really a problem. Not yet anyway. Cartel payments were disbursed to all and sundry, though they were very small.

Two more passenger zeppelins were added to the Airways fleet, the *Gypsy* and the *Champagne*. The steamship yards were equally busy, with the cruise liners *Duchy of the Isles* and *Santorini* entering service. Aerodromes were opened in Thessaloniki and Constantinople. The Ulm aerodrome was doubled in size. A steamship terminal was built in Gozer, on the Ethiopian coast, and the company invested a great deal of money in expanding the Arnor capital of Schwarzkastel.

Miss Alexis also opened a shopping mall (selling imported Italian clothes, at least while there were any) at the Paris aerodrome. There was also a great deal of trade activity in the Indian Ocean, where the company had finally found enough ducks to put in a row. Her efforts to establish a more than a nominal merchant presence in the city were thwarted, however, by the not-nearly-so-stylishly-dressed Wolfden & Cane.

A series of mild scandals plagued the Company (really, though, they were almost ignored amongst the horrors of the cataclysm and the news of the war), besmirching their good name – particularly among Moslem customers.

**THE SWEDISH EMPIRE OF RUSSIA** (Grodno in Masuria)

*Solomon, King of Sweden, Tsar of the All The Russias*

*Bengt Krycek, Crown Regent and Altkansler*

**DIPLOMACY** None



A grim crown regent Krycek issued a string of baldly-worded proclamations: war was declared upon Georgia, trade contacts were banned with the House of Tewfik and the Georgian state, an ancient claim was expressed to the island of Hymirholm in the Atlantic (Bermuda). A stern warning was issued to the Frankish Commonwealth, warning them to stay out of the fracas in Spain. Protests were sent by diplomatic channels to the various Hussite powers, protesting the Hussite-sponsored attacks on Catholic merchants.

Efforts were also made to micromanage the various mercantile shipping concerns – who ignored the state's desires entirely, and

remained focused on following the markets.<sup>19</sup> A long running dispute over certain loan payments continued to fester between the Krychek finance ministry and the central bank. A few Aztec merchants wandered in from the Icelandic route, their holds filled with corn, tobacco and cotton.

The last of the Hussites hiding out in Morocco were tracked down and given a taste of good Catholic medicine! And their gout was cured, too, though by a painful process. Some backbenchers in the Senate complained they hadn't been given the full particulars of the situation in Georgia, though after the War Committee on Unearthly and Ungodly Activities was done with them, they wished they hadn't asked.

The particularly exposed Swedish settlements at Terhazza were abandoned, though a garrison remained at the fortress of Kjellfastning and the salt mines<sup>20</sup> continued to be worked. The settlers – sunburned to a man – marched to Bir-El-Khazaim, where they met another huge mob of men, women and children from Neymoskva – who were also heading home.

Meantime, a large number of the refugees in St. George-the-Defender were shipped back north in a fleet commanded by the Emperor himself and landed in the ruins of Malmo in Skane, which was rebuilt to 2 GP. After this rescue mission, Solomon returned to Idjil to settle some religious troubles among the natives.

In Russia, a force of Finnish ski regiments and Norwegian mountaineers under the command of General Thorvalds made a sweep south through the abandoned provinces of Smolensk, Chernigov, Pereyasavl and Levedia – arresting bandits, breaking up polygamist communities, shooting Ice-beasties and generally cleaning up the countryside.

Amid the ruins of Riga, a Papal cardinal (the previously disgraced Paolo Georganta) arrived to take charge of a large force of Papal troops which had been languishing in the cold and chill for years... they were very happy to see him, though the prospect of marching across the vastness of Russia was daunting.

Altmark Yeltsin, returning with a group of his aides from inspecting the encampments of the Twelfth Borodino rifles outside of Antalya in Isauria, was attacked by a group of men in Queen's Own Huscarls' uniforms. One particularly enormous assailant was seen to strike the Altmark's head from his body with the single blow of battleaxe (it must have been an axe – certainly not a claw-like hand!). The rest of the aides were slain as well, in a furious gun battle, which brought thousands of men running to their aid. None of the assailants was captured, those men who were not killed outright taking their own lives.

To the despair of the Swedish armies operating in the south, Yeltsin was soon joined in the cold grave by Bjarni Tarasuik in Vasi and Issak Simonagun in Isauria, though their deaths were not nearly so vicious as the Altmark's. This forced Admiral Dottski to take command of the majority of the forces in Antalya and sail off to the south in one massive force to join the Danish Empress in the 'Persian Expedition.'

At the end of '44, a large fleet of Mixtec warships and troop transports arrived in St. George-the-Defender in Morocco and everyone swarmed into the port for shore-leave. Both Swedish and Mixtec military police patrols were heavy, but inevitable breakage occurred.

<sup>19</sup> Remember, under the Hands-Off-Trade system we now use, an Open Nation cannot rearrange their trade MSP directly. They *can* change base ports, open and close routes, etc.

<sup>20</sup> A particularly vivid depiction of the underground salt mines at Terhazza can be found in the book *Tribesmen of Gor* by John Norman. There's also a lot of lurid adventure and bondage. If you like that sort of thing.

<sup>18</sup> This brings to mind the beginning of John Wyndham's *Day of the Triffids*.

### **THE POLISH FREE STATE** (Warsaw in Poland)

*Frieda Lezinski, Duchess of Poland*

**DIPLOMACY** No visible effect

Complaining bitterly he never saw his wife because she was always off addressing some church group, Duke Wilhelm hied himself to Warsaw and set about an audit of the ducal government books. He hated math, too.

Frieda, meanwhile, engaged in a whirlwind tour of the provinces, making sure to press the Catholics of Danzig and Sopot to give up Papism, and smiling and waving while minister Piotr dickered with the nobility of Stralsund. With the help of the Knights of Tabor, Danzig was converted to Hussite.



### **THE KNIGHTS OF TABOR** (Mount Tabor in Bohemia)

*Walter Theisman, Voice of Huss, Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Mount Tabor*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Unfortunately, the Knights had chosen to concentrate most of their efforts in the Alpine cantons and in the Po valley this turn – which proved fatal for Sir Kenneth Faaceman and 5,000 Taborite infantrymen. Von Junzt, meanwhile, escaped from his Afriqan ‘protectors’ and fled in a small boat, eventually reaching Sorong in Irian. There, hiding out in a native hut, he began to transcribe a book from the dreams and phantoms he experienced while sleeping.

### **THE UNITED KINGDOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN** (Kingston in Northumbria)

*Oliver V Cromwell, King of England, Scotland and Wales*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Grain and other raw materials continued to flow into England from Shawnee (now a very valuable trade partner) and from various lands associated with the Jesuit order. Gold went the other direction. Oliver also began to stockpile a great amount of specie, which made many of the English merchants and banks happy, and displeased others. The king also buried himself in work, keeping the nagging ministers (and his mother) at bay about the question of a wife and offspring.

The London police were baffled by a spate of murders and suicides in the financial district. No less than eleven clerks and managers at well-respected commercial venture banks were found dead by their own hand, or assaulted by footpads and slain, over a three week period in the spring of '43. Commissioner Halversham was unable to produce any suspects, motive or means – leading to a great deal of puzzlement.

On the other hand, a great many Jesuits were seen in the city, which led to understandable – but worrying – tensions between them and the Hussite citizens. The Crown began to pay close attention to the police administration, particularly during a visit by the Papal nuncio Cardenas. A general public outcry also rose in support of the Norskrtrad companies, who had – of late – become an obvious target for Hussite-sponsored terrorism.

Phillip Drake, a rather clever officer in the Royal army, who had been dispatched to Antalya in '42 to observe the Swedes in action, now found himself rounding Arabia on the RSN steam cruiser *Moscow* with a hamper full of gin, tonic and limes. Though he saw himself as the morale officer (and truth be told, was something of a rude, offensive, racist bastard without a civil tongue in his head), upon landing Basra-port (a filthy, stinking cesspit swarming with soldiers, brown people and hundreds and hundreds of ships) Drake was informed by Admiral Dottski that *he* would command the Swedish Royal Army regiments ashore, in this

harebrained campaign to capture Baghdad from the daemon-sultan Rashid.

“I’m doing what?” Drake almost spilled his G&T in horror.

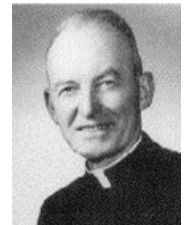


Figure 1. Lt. Col. Phillip Drake in his Mayfair apartment, 1741

### **THE SOCIETY OF JESUS** (London in Sussex)

*Martin Sawyer, Vicar-General of the Society of Jesus, Defender of the Faith*

**DIPLOMACY** Great Yarmouth in Anglia(oh), Caete(oh), Susu(oh), Mahair on Arawak(oh)



Despite the horrible massacre in Calusa in '42, the Jesuits continued their plan of building small religiously-planned cities at convenient locations. This time, however, they secured the assistance of local rulers, or provided protection themselves. In this way, the cities of Bissau in Susu (shared with Vastmark), San Augustine in Calusa and Portsmouth in Wessex (shared with England) were built.

Horchow’s fleet managed to establish a presence in Mahair on Arawak, but failed to convince the sugar-cane lord of Colon to do more than listen to him rant on for a couple hours. He then sailed to Calusa, where he met VG Sawyer and then took over administration of the province from the Shawnee.

### **THE FRANKISH COMMONWEALTH** (Paris in Ilé De France)

*Jacques du Maine, Archon of the Commonwealth*

**DIPLOMACY** No Effect

The Archon surveyed his recent dealings and was pleased with the outcome of his arrangement with the Carthaginians. The port in Tangiers would allow the Commonwealth to expand its trade to the Middle-East, Western Africa and the Black Sea. Many new ships were dispatched to take advantage of this. The defense of the isolated city would become a new challenge, for there were many uncertainties and dangers in North Africa. The garrison there would need to be reinforced and orders were written to see to this.

The trouble in Spain worried the Archon greatly. A civil war on the Commonwealth’s borders could always “accidentally” spill over the frontier. These things had a way of spinning out of control and the Archon did not wish them to spin in his direction. And then there was this thing with the students... crazy young idealists!

The young invariably found out some of their ideals compromised to the reality of running a government and dealing with people and other nations. But this would take time and a great deal of damage could be done while they were learning these realities. Jacques took the precaution of putting the Commonwealth armies on the highest level of alert.

A strange message arrived from Kiev... a wild request for every poodle in France. The Archon’s advisors were never able to explain to the Archon’s satisfaction what this affair was all about.

The whole thing was absurd! Did the Kievans really expect the Commonwealth to dispatch its leaders to deliver poodles to the easternmost recesses of Europe? Did they not realize the Archon had much better things for his people to be doing? The Archon dismissed the request with a hearty – though somewhat strained – laugh. Perhaps the Kievans were trying to lessen the tensions of leadership through comedy.

In any case, there was a strange shortage of poodles thereafter, though Jacques could not abide the barkly little things, so he was secretly pleased.

A new Hussite trading cartel, Wolfden & Cane Holdings, had approached the Archon about locating its services in the Commonwealth. The Albanians were already in Paris and the Norskstad had been conducting operations out of Brest for years. But, the Norskstad had been very secretive and had profited a great deal from the work the Archon and the Commonwealth had devoted to expanding Brest and the port facilities.

In return, the Norskstad had offered little assistance. The Archon decided that a better arrangement could be made with the W&C and dispatched his lovely and able daughter Margaret to “make it so”. Agreements were reached with the AEIC and W&C Holdings on city expansion and technology exchange. A garrison of 2,000 fresh Commonwealth riflemen were formed up in Brest just in case the Norskstad caught any wind of these dealings and tried to cause trouble before Margaret arrived.

The Archon decided that the Commonwealth had studied this matter of the Lisbon Accords things long enough and set about finding the funds and manpower to abide by the Accord’s strictures.

Finally, the Archon sat down with his cartographers to see if they could actually read or draw a map. Many of the Commonwealth’s trade fleets had been uselessly sailing in circles looking for places that existed only in out-of-date rutters.

**WOLF DEN & CANE HOLDINGS, LTD** (Paris in Ilé De France)  
*Harrison Wolfden and Jason Cane, General Partners*

**DIPLOMACY** Brittany(ma)/Brest(bo – stolen from the Norskstad), Tours in Maine(ma)

While Harrison watched the government do his work for him, Jason toured the Mainese countryside. He nearly fell off his bicycle twice and suffered a severe bump on the head, but still managed to arrange for shipping facilities in the town, and a local representative. His stutter was getting better.

The offices of Wolfden & Cane were shuttered for nearly a month in the fall of ‘43 after a spate of pernicious anemia swept through the banking district, leading to nearly three dozen deaths. All of the bankers, clerks, managers, till-girls and their families fled the city and took extended vacations in the countryside. Eventually, things returned to normal and business flourished once more.

**THE DANISH EMPIRE** (Thessalonika in Macedon)  
*Oniko Paleologai, Queen of the Greeks, Empress of the Danes, Protector of Italy, Mjолnir-na-Midgaard, Rex Germanicus, Pendragon of the Isles*

**DIPLOMACY** No Effect

Ever industrious, the Danes continued to expand and rebuild. Lorraine was settled to 4 GPv, while Munich expanded to 3 GPv. Fresh regiments were raised under the command of the regent, and four new steam cruisers were built – two at the Venice yards and two in Augusta at the new Krupp works. The last of the rail track connecting Venice (from the Lagoon-side port of Mestre) to Trieste in Slovenia was complete. Now it only wanted for a train...



Hussite priests were dispatched to a variety of remote outposts – Brooklyn on Pachogue, Gibraltar, Constantinople and the plains of Khazaria – to preach to the heathen and the fallen.

The Empress, for her part, was marshalling a powerful army – built around the core of her Royal Guardsmen – in Mansura among the ruins of Krak-de-Chevaliers. Though she expected the enemy to strike *back* as soon as her forces entered Georgian territory, she had not expected for them to bring the war to her. Not so directly.

A long day had ended – her mind still filled with details of steamship coaling, munitions lading, holds and cargoes and tons of supplies – as she entered her tents at the center of the great Imperial camp beside the murky green waters of the Nile.

“Mara – I need a fresh doublet and...” Oniko leapt aside, her only warning a queer tickling feeling as she passed from the blazing light of day into the dim tent. Her saber was a blur in the darkness, and almost immediately smashed from her hand, spinning away.

Something huge, with wrinkled skin, exuding a thick musty stench, came at her and the Pale Flame grunted as a massive claw gouged at her chest. Thick, horn-like talons sparked from a thick, padded shirt of chainmail. Oniko rolled away, dragging a small, twisted flute from her breast. The thing charged again.

Ignoring the matched brace of pistols at her hip, the Empress sounded the flute in a warbling, tuneless wail. The huge shape shuddered, then flipped sideways, receded to a point and vanished.

“Guards!” Oniko clawed for her pistols as the first of the assassins stormed into the chamber. A fraction of a second later, twin Mannlicher revolvers were hammering away in a cloud of smoke, bursts of flame and the screams of dying men.<sup>21</sup>

Two weeks later, the Danish fleet and the Empress’ army set sail from Krak for Basra and the land between the two rivers.

#### **IMPERIAL VENICE, THE SKYWATCH TOWER NEAR THE ARSENAL, LATE SPRING 1744**

Empress-Regent Claudia took the last of the narrow steps three at a time, her skirts gathered up around her thighs. She burst onto the rooftop observatory, two of her guardsmen panting at her back. A crowd of astronomers and scientists turned towards her and Claudia felt a chill drape across her shoulders. The faces were pale and taut, as if they had looked into an abyss of fire.

“Tell me,” she snapped. Time was ever short for the ruler of a vast empire, and no less for her, as she labored to keep her sister’s military expedition in the Middle East supplied.

There was no answer, but old Cassini raised his hand, pointing to the northeastern sky. Claudia produced a pair of spectacles and turned – then grew still. There was no need for spectacles. A pair of enormous lights hung in the sky, drowning the moon, washing out the stars.

“How long?” Claudia felt her heart seize up, her breath grow short.

“A day, perhaps.” Cassini turned to his assistant, Calvaire. The Frenchman shook his head sadly. “One is already shining red – we think friction heats such objects as they enter the ocean of air around our world.”

Claudia turned to her guardsmen. “What of Spielmann? Is there any word?”

“Yes,” gulped the lieutenant colonel. “A letter came just today – there is *no gate* he wrote, and *the Yithians took him*.”

“Damn!” Claudia looked back to the sky. “You old fools should have informed me days ago!” She bolted back down the stairs. “Get my son aboard an airship, *right now!*”

<sup>21</sup> The Imperial Guards failed their CA roll horribly, but the assassins blew their roll by an equal amount. And so Oniko escaped death by a hair, again.

Sixteen hours later the sky over Venice convulsed<sup>22</sup>, a pressure wave thrown aside by the plunging asteroid shrieking down upon the city and the Veronan countryside. Zeppelins in flight – and there were many fleeing the doomed city – were slammed to earth, shredded beyond recognition. An enormous scream of distorted air roared out. The Adriatic flattened, then heaved, smashing ships like kindling. Nearly every building, church, warehouse and factory in Verona province was smashed to the ground by the supersonic blast.

Then the rock slammed into the Lagoon, and Venice and hundred mile radius vanished in a titanic explosion. The shallow waters vaporized, joining a mammoth blast of pulverized stone, rock, buildings, sea, docks and farmland. A secondary blast – this one heated to incinerating temperatures – roared out, annihilating everything in Verona, Lombardy, Savoy, Romagna, Illyria, Slovenia, and Carinthia. The bulkwark of the Italian alps blocked some of the raging inferno from Tyrol, but the surge of superheated air lapping over the mountains melted every glacier, snowpack and peak in the Alps.

Enormous floods roared down the valleys, inundating towns and drowning cities, carrying away hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. The lower mountains of the Italian alps also blocked some of the ravaging blast from Liguria and Tuscany, but vast and widespread devastation afflicted those provinces as well. To the east, most of Croatia, Bakony and Slovakia were destroyed. Even the railroad – so newly finished! – into Slovakia was not spared, the bridges, trestles and way-bed smashed, buried or incinerated.

Worst, the impact threw up a vast cloud of dust and ash into the upper air. While a rain of burning stones would fall across Europe for the next three months, the spreading stain in the sky soon blocked out the sun. A dreadful cloud joined the faint brown smudge already clogging the higher reaches of the sky – the detritus of the Olathöe explosion.

Claudia, her scientists and her family – attempting to flee across the barrier of the Alps by zeppelin – were killed when the stormfront rolled across their aerial convoy and tore them all to bits. Not one airship survived, even the *Grand Baklovakian* which had been carrying the Imperial family to safety.

#### **NÖRSKTRAD** (Lisbon in Portugal)

*Johannes Teugen, Mäklareväldé of the Nordic Trading Company*

**DIPLOMACY** Sayyida Infi in Idjil(ma), Barcelona in Catalonia(ci)

A new airship factory was opened just outside of Lisbon, in the vast industrial district the company had been building for some time. A great deal of money was sent to Sweden, to help restore the inhabitants of Malmo (once the offices of the company) to their home. The Swedish government – eternally strapped for cash – was only too happy to take the donation.

Much to their surprise, the Norskrtrad offices in Brest were suddenly entered in the summer of '43 by a huge mob of Commonwealth soldiers. The horse-leather clad shape of Princess Margaret prominent among them, they proceeded to eject the Catholic merchants from their city – lock, stock and barrel. The properties previously owned by the company were forfeit to the Archon and there was *no* receipt forthcoming. On the sidelines, a lean, cadaverous representative from Wolfden & Cane laughed into his stovepipe hat.

Despite the physical attacks upon the company – by the Commonwealth, and the Republica Popular – a sustained effort by Johannes managed to restore the reputation of the business in government and Catholic circles throughout Spain and England. The simple matter of the company being targeted for slander, abuse and physical attacks by agents of the Hussite powers was well established.

#### **THE KINGDOM OF NAVARRE** (Bilbao in Asturias)

*Jose Sancho de Leon, King of Navarre*

**DIPLOMACY** Too late for being nice

Their backs pressed to the wall by Largo's advance into the north, Jose Sancho and his martial wife Natasha packed their children (and her teenaged sister) onto a mail boat and sent them off to safety, and exile (again). With the family out of the way, Natasha rolled up her sleeves and pressed the remaining Royalist lords for their last nickels, dimes and spare socks. A last, gallant army was mustered in Bilbao and immediately marched for Galacia...

#### **RÉPUBLICA POPULAR DE ESPAÑA** (Seville in Andalusia)

*Student's Revolutionary Oversight Committee*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Faction politics within the Communard movement caused a violent split between the SRC cadres in Spain and the 'masterminds' in Komarno. "We raise our own flag," the workers and peasants declared, ten thousand voices raised in a cheer. "We find our own liberty! Liberation!"

The first thing the new self-motivated SRC did was order the cadres in Languedoc to sack and loot the offices and establishments of the Norskrtrad company in the province and city of Norbonne. The 'bourgeois' elements were hounded into exile, or just shot in the head. There were fires – which got out of control – and random looting as the students and the poor ran wild in the streets.

The Limoge cadres then marched west (reinforced by many Red Rifle soldiers from the Marseilles cadres) into Aquitaine and immediately ran into the counter-revolutionary forces of the Largoistas! A shout went up from the loyal defenders of the workers and the peasants, and the cadre army rushed to form a line of battle!

And in the south, the student committee in Seville reorganized their motley bands of workers, peasants and undergraduates into a formal military organization – with regiments and batteries. They also repudiated the Carthaginians who had been providing them with supplies, guns, ammunition and modern artillery. "Carthage – for all their fine words – are no more than the tools of the ancien regime – no more than exploiters of the people – wreckers!"

The Jesuit seminaries, churches and farms were duly pillaged and burned to the ground afterwards. On the other hand, no one bothered the Sisters of the Rose when they opened a free school in Narbonne. At least, not yet.

#### **THE REPUBLIC OF SPAIN** (Lisbon in Portugal)

*Largo Cabellero, Commandant of the Imperial Guard and protector of the State*

**DIPLOMACY**

Il Presidente, in the field with his army in Old Castille, narrowly avoided being kidnapped by Royalist infiltrators. The men – old woodsmen and retainers of King Jose – were hanged as traitors. Pleased to have so easily avoided an embarrassing outcome, Largo led his army into Asturias. The Republicans swept across the province and found – to the Presidente's disgust – the Royalists had already fled to Galacia. Bilbao – lacking even the

<sup>22</sup> This one did not scatter off-target. Unfortunately for Denmark. Personally, I was betting it would scatter onto Komarno or Rome... shows what I know.



most rudimentary defense – surrendered to Alfonso's cavalry vanguard.

Eager to catch Jose, il Presidente gave chase, his army hurrying west and then south to try and run the Royalists to ground. General Alfonso took a vast host of knights and headed east into Aquitaine.

While armies were marching hither and yon across the northern half of the nation, the Vice-Presidente Jose Tordesillas Cabellero was presiding over the state ministries in Lisbon. At his brother's command, a set of new laws were enacted, attacking the old guild structure among the manufactories and workshops throughout Spain. By these means, the Cabellero regime hoped to defuse the Communard threat.

The arrival of a rather petulant Marguerite Drake and a pair of ARF cutters in Cortez was not marked with particular celebration. The Norskrtrad merchants in the city looked upon the interference of these "upstart air carrion" with distaste. In comparison to the famous and radiant Albanian aeropilot Alexis Kuklone, Marguerite was a dull frump (entirely unlike her famous mother, Jessica) and showed little interest in the business of setting up an ARF office in the city. The cutter captains despaired of getting her to take her responsibilities seriously – and then while she was walking in a crowded, noisy Cortez market-street, someone passing by put a gun to her side and fired two rounds. The sound was muffled by the girl's heavy dress and stole, so her escorts only noticed something was wrong when she fell to the ground, dead, blood flooding from her mouth and nose.

Minister Migual – who had been attempting to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the students in Seville – was suddenly seized and thrust before a 'worker's trial'. Found guilty, he was soon stretching a rope outside the city cathedral (now the headquarters of the SRC cadres in Seville). Four months after the minister's death, a Largoista army arrived from the north, escorted by a pair of new-built scout zeppelins.

The students scattered or vanished as the government troops entered the city. General Antonio (the Largoista commander) was very suspicious and kept a close watch on his brigade commanders. His wariness was quickly rewarded as the students attempted to convince the common soldiers and NCO's to join them. Antonio crushed the incipient rebellion – sobering four of the conspirators himself – but then his force was attacked from all sides by the Communard forces hiding in the city.

The battle of **Seville** was a confused affair, fought in narrow winding streets, on the rooftops and from house to house. Antonio's 5,000 Republican troops – though actually well equipped for fighting in a city – were outnumbered by the 8,000 SRC troopers. Antonio was also a poor leader, and entirely outmaneuvered by Queipo de Lana (the military leader of the Seville cadres). Within days the Largoista army was annihilated. Antonio was taken prisoner and soon met the same fate as poor Miguel.

Having crushed the initial Republican response to their revolt, the Sevillistas then marched northwest into Estremadura and captured the city of Tharsis. The Norskrtrad factors in the region had already fled, but the Communards wrecked what remained of their businesses and factories.

Now, back in Aquitaine... the Limoge cadres had marched into the region to receive a warm welcome from the peasants and townsmen (who had been very poorly used by the Royalists). However, the Largoista army under Diego Tordes entered at the same time. Shockingly, the Communards outnumbered Tordes – who immediately retreated west towards the Republican armies operating in Asturias. Unfortunately, a crucial bridge over the Adur river at **Pau** collapsed mysteriously, leaving Tordes and his men stranded on the eastern bank.

The 10,000 Communard fighters waded in, supported by a heavy barrage from their Danish-made artillery. The 7,000 Republicans rushed to dig in (most of them were sappers, actually) and a frightful melee erupted along the riverbank. The first Communard attack was beaten back, then the second. Tordes' engineers swarmed over the bridge, repairing the battered span with anything they could lay their hands on. Night fell. Under the cover of darkness, the Republican swam the river or crawled across the partially-repaired bridge. In the morning, the Communards woke and found the enemy gone.

Within the month, Tordes and his surviving men met up with Alfonso, who rode into Gascony with 8,000 knights. Together they struck back into Aquitaine. The Limoge cadres were gone. They had marched south through the Pyrennes into Catalonia. Tordes and Alfonso gave chase! Marching by night and day, the two Republican generals caught up with the Communards outside of Barcelona – where an attempt to inspire a student uprising had failed – and the Limoge cadres had settled in to besiege the port.

Again the Communards attempted to flee, but failed to escape Tordes' wide-ranging cavalry patrols. A battle erupted at **Matorell** as the cadres attempted to break out of the trap. Despite lacking any artillery at all, Tordes managed to use his superior speed of march and maneuver to encircle and destroy the Communard army.

So, in the west, the Royalists had marched south from Galacia with all speed, lunging for Lisbon and the prize of the entire Republican government... with Largo delayed among the mountains of Galacia, Jose Sancho and his small force reached Lisbon two months ahead of il Presidente. The Royalists approached the city stealthily, sending ahead agents to inspire a rebellion in their favor.

Luckily for the Republicans, the Norskrtrad company had had *just quite enough* of skullduggery and civil unrest, so their agents were keeping a careful watch on the surrounding countryside, the city... everything. The revolt was aborted in the womb as Norskrtrad mercenaries (a grim lot of Frisians) swooped down upon the Royalist sympathizers and arrested them all. Jose Tordesillas – roused from his bed by Malcom Procure's guardsmen – rushed to take command of the city garrison. Between the 3,000 Frisians and the 800-man city watch, the walls were held when the Royalist army actually came within sight of Lisbon.

Lacking the strength to try the fortifications, the Royalists then skedaddled south into Estremadura, where they found (rather unexpected) allies in Quipo de Lana's students and workers. Largo himself and his army were not far behind, and hot on the chase.

Despite the advantage afforded by Largo's zeppelins, Quipo de Lana managed to avoid his patrols and fell back south across Estremadura. Il Presidente tried to catch up, but ran out of time in '44, encamped at Tharsis in Estremadura. The Communards and their Royalist allies were back in Seville by then, eating oranges and drinking sangria.<sup>23</sup>

And, while the Largoista armies had been entirely busy in the north and west, a daring force of African volunteers (mostly students attending the Universidad de Sevilla from Carthage, Mixteca, Vastmark and other southern nations) had marched up the *eastern* coast of Spain, capturing the provinces of Grenada (and the city of Cortez) and Valencia (and the city of Tortosa), which are now in SRC hands. Papal and Jesuit holdings were looted and – as in Estremadura – set afire, the servants freed, the priests sent to consult with their Lord from the end of a rope.

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<sup>23</sup> And the state of Civil War between Spain / Navarre / Republica Popular ended. It's just a normal war, now. Isn't that nice?

## THE DUCHY OF THE ISLES (Valetia on Malta)

*Neya al' Raschid, Empress of the Isles, Emir of Archimedeia, Duchess of Sicily and Sardinia*

### DIPLOMACY Epirus(t)

Soon after completing his long overland march from Rostov, the king of Epirus passed away – home at last, safe in bed – and his people decided to only grant Neya and her duchy the least of tribute.

## THE CHURCH OF ROME (Vatican City in Rome, Latium)

*Clement VII, Pater Patrias, Pope of the Roman Church, The Vicar of Christ, The Successor To Peter, The Keeper of the Keys, The Servant of the Servants of God, Patriarch of Azteca, Soldier of Light*

### DIPLOMACY None

“Our search for the rest of the Cross will continue,” Clement declared – giving several of his cardinals a hard stare. Their faces were like stone, but no one would speak in the face of such apparent anger. “One section remains in English hands, yet I would have the others! Our situation is too dire to let any possible advantage go.”

In other matters, Clement issued an annulment of marriage, striking aside the vows binding Nicholas of New Granada and Niki of Great France. A personal message was also sent to the Emperor Louis, pleading for calm. A similar announcement was made in Spain, where the Church had attempted to strike a neutral stance between the Republicans and the Royalists – but the sustained attacks of the Communards against the very fabric of the faith... no expected that to go without a harsh response.

The Pontiff also summoned the Curia and nominated Vladimír Tukachevsky for canonization. “He faithfully and loyally served Holy Mother Church throughout his life. A shield against the Muslims, victor over the demonic Icelords, founder of the Jesuits, and a Martyr to the Faith battling Satan in the hearts and minds of Cultists.” Miracles attributed to the saint include several cases of the blind seeing, and a chapel found behind the retreating Ice in Latvia with the Jesuit Seal engraved on the altar. The chapel was abnormally clean of debris, and had the sweet smell of roses throughout the nave. Concurrent with this, the Papal offices published an encyclical warning of disturbing lapses of faith within the Lencolar Church. Such lapses included forced conversion of loyal Roman Catholics in Caquetio, and rumors of aid and assistance from rogue Lencolar officials to several branches of “Animal Worshipers”.



everyone into his office for a severe talking-too. A letter of apology was dispatched to the Spanish, and several over-zealous sub-underminers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lost their pensions and corner offices.

While laborers throughout the emirate continued to toil on repairing the various farms, wells and orchards wrecked by the passage of Tuaregs; general Hanno was dispatched to the east to join the Danes in their great war against the demon-sultan. However, as chance would have it, Hanno was greatly delayed by the effort of mustering his men – and then drilling them to some reasonable standard – and did not actually reach Krak de Chevailers until the end of '44.

In Tangiers, a boat packed with refugees from Spain landed and was met by two cloaked women in religious vestments. They found a teenaged girl and her younger brother, then whisked them away to a place of safety.

## CHRISTIAN EMIRATE OF LIBYA (Noor al Senussi on the Azores)

*Skikda, Emir of Egypt and Lybia, Emperor of the Danes*

### DIPLOMACY None...

Much to the despair of the tiny community of Libyan expatriates living on the Azores, their noble leader Beni Saida died of congestive heart failure at the beginning of '43. This left his widow Fatima in charge, and she set about making sure there was food to eat and water to drink and the garbage was taken out. There was some small hope of regaining their homeland – if a suitable patron could be found – but even that faint gleam of hope vanished when prince Skikda suddenly arrived by on an Islander merchantman.

“I am here!” The prince – now emir – proclaimed upon his arrival. Fatima was truly disgusted, but she was also a proper wife and accepted her son's rule – even if she thought he was a dolt. Of course, he was also a dolt who claimed to be Emperor of Danes (by marriage to his late wife, Claudia, who had imprisoned him on Capri and considered just shooting him like a dog at one point.)

## THE PRINCIPATE OF VASTMARK (Chihuahua City in Takrur)

*William Casimir, Stadholder of Takrur, Prince of Vastmark*

### DIPLOMACY No effect

The stadholder resolved to take a small party of guardsmen north and enter the lands of the Moslem tribes of the Adwaghost. His advisors were horrified ... “the Adwaghost are restless butchers,” they exclaimed. “They eat human flesh! They bow down before horrific idols!”

“Nonsense,” William said, preparing to set out. “They're human beings – possessed of rational thought and intellect!”

Despite what everyone expected, William's mission to the Moslem tribesmen was not a horrible disaster ending with ants burrowing into his eyes as he struggled against chains or ropes binding him to the sand. Instead – by sheer blind luck and relentless bravado – he traveled among them, impressed the clans, made the women swoon, showed his courage and wit, and escaped with the lives of himself and his men. No mean feat, considering the tremendous hostility evidenced by the Moslems for the Catholics in the south.

Despite recent reforms by the prince to regulate the commercial lenders in Chihuahua City, trouble continued to afflict the stock companies and pawn-shops. A number of notable local financiers were killed in duels – mostly over trivial matters of honor – and two hanged themselves over irregularities in their books. The prince, seeking to calm a skittish business community, promised to investigate fully and see orderly business was restored.



## AFRIQA

### Non-Catholic Mercenaries

Condotierr	30i, 15a, 10c, 6hc, 3xc
Captains	Bey Senghor (MB96)
To hire, please contact...	None
Quality Ratings	i16 w16 s18 c11 a12

### Catholic Mercenaries

Condotierr	10i, 23xea, 20t
Captains	General Xho (M936)
To hire, please contact...	Norsktrad
Quality Ratings	I15 w18 s21 c11 a12

## THE EMIRATE OF CARTHAGE (Augustina in Tunisia)

*Hamilcar Barca, Emir of Augustina, Sultan of Tunisia*

### DIPLOMACY Some

The apparent association with the revolutionary students in Andalusia was severed by Hamilcar's government, and the Emir ordered



The Jesuits built a town, Bissau, in Segu province with help from the Principate.

#### **THE MALI AX EMPIRE** (Ax Mixtlan in Mixe)

*Nine-Jaguar, ne-Axamaloa na-Tochul, King of the Mixtecs, Lord of the Niger, Captain of the Firestorm Banner, True Emperor of the Aztecs, Emperor of Mali, DarkLord of Africa*



#### **DIPLOMACY** Teke(neutral)

Feeling his age, the old Emperor set his son Quimchetl at his side as prince, heir and his co-emperor. Then the sixty-two year old Nine-Jaguar retired to his residence to write a book of philosophy and his memoirs. Quimchetl – then only eighteen – was quite eager to take up the reins of power, and soon proved himself to be impetuous and even reckless in his use of the authority vested in him. Luckily, the bureaucracy had enough spare capacity to run around and clean up after him.

Reports of a Jesuit agent among the natives of the Teke coast were confirmed after the local only-recently Lencolar chiefs stopped paying tribute to the Empire. The governor of Onogui sent a letter to the Dark Lord, requesting troops to suppress this insolence. A Mixtec embassy – under the wise hand of the Feathered-Lord – attempted to rectify the situation, but failed.

Missionary work continued among the citizens of Xuicaxl (in Zerma), where there were still Catholics hiding out. The Green-Eyed Lord's mission to the oases of Arauane ended badly. Unlike the lucky William Casimir, he was not able to overawe the Moslem nomads, and met a sticky, uncomfortable end.

The Lencolar leader, sister Elizibeta, was attacked twice by brigands in the provinces of Nupe and Mixe. In both cases she managed to drive off the attackers with her "hittin' stick" and Old Reliable, her .31 caliber Pocket Remington revolver. She's a crusty one, is Elizibeta.

A powerful fleet and army were placed under the command of Mixcoatl and the Serpent, then dispatched to the north in aid of some Alliance business in the Mediterranean. However, the fleet only made it as far as St. Georges in Morocco by the end of '44.

#### **THE FREE REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA** (Soba in Funj)

*Fredik, Regent for...*

*Saul Ashūr, President-For-Life of Ethiopia*

#### **DIPLOMACY** None

The Regent continued to beg, borrow and scrape for enough coin to service the massive loans weighing down the state. Luckily, there were no new crises to afflict the Ethiopians, and the last of the debt was paid down. Harvests – for a brief moment – were even flush, allowing some grain to be stored without the necessity of imports. Albanian ships began to arrive in Gozer (where the Company was also building a steamship terminal) with goods from Arnor.

#### **THE MAASAI KINGDOM** (Mbeya in Kimbu)

*Tudar Kaii, King of the Maasai, Emperor of Ethiopia*

#### **DIPLOMACY** Kikuyu(nt)

Brawny Kaii was very busy – the sloth of his youth cast aside, kingly raiment revealed – and a vast expansion of the Royal University was undertaken. Work continued apace on the twisting mountain road from Ankolye to Nia'nia, though even that mighty undertaking was nearing completion. A new city, Arusha, was built in Maasai province – on the road up from the coast. Some very mild missionary activity was undertaken in ever-troublesome Kongo – but amazingly the locals did not revolt this time.

An expedition was dispatched to the Mountain of the Sign in Kikuyu – which had lain undefended for years, actually, so it's good

no one had noticed – to reoccupy the fortresses there and begin a variety of investigations in the old ruins.

The South Afrikans, disturbed and outraged by the invasion of their Madagascarene provinces by the Axumites – "a Masai proxy, if ever we've seen such a thing!" – ceased shipping grain and pickled yams to the kingdom, even though they were bound by treaty to do so. A stiffly worded letter of protest was also received by Kaii's foreign minister.

In the summer of '44, the king was hunting lion in the grasslands outside of Arusha when a lioness – an old, canny, black-tufted creature – took him from ambush. Horribly torn and scarred, the king's ashkaris carried him into the hunting camp on a bier of spears. Kaii did not last the night, his lifeblood spilling out upon the tawny ground. The lioness also met her death, but took four strong hunters with her.

Kaii's young son, Meru, who had only just come of age, returned to the capital with his father's body, expecting to receive the acclaim of the ishkaris regiments as Emperor. Instead, he found old Nestor's son Sogobu<sup>24</sup> circulating among the troops, handing out gifts and playing the very king himself. Meru – not the most forward of young men – was forced to put his own case to the troops, all unprepared.

Unfortunately, Sogobu was ready for his challenge, and there was a scuffle as Meru tried to make his way into the camp. Sogobu's men rushed the young prince and his bodyguard. Spears flashed in the night, lit only by the light of great bonfires. The body of Kaii tumbled to the ground. Meru, crying out, was taken captive. Within the hour, the boy was strangled in Sogobu's tent. The rest of the Tudar family fled to Mt'wara, seeking shelter with the fleet.

There, Sogobu's agents were waiting and little Gomutu and Behi were taken captive. They vanished – most people assumed they were drowned. For a wonder, the various generals and potentates accepted Sogobu's claim and there were no revolts.

#### **MOTAA OJEKH** (None)

*Eon, Nagusa Negast of the Ethiops, Favored of Jah, Protector of the Cave*

#### **DIPLOMACY** None

Trapped on an isolated, wilderness island – without so much as a town to call their own – the Axumites cursed man and god alike – with special emphasis on the Maasai dogs who stranded them in this hellish jungle. Their scouts, however, returned from the west to report an actual town on the Sakalavan coast. A town inhabited by Malays, Javans and other known reprobates.

Eon, therefore, decided to march his army over the mountains into Mahabo and conquer that land, then attack Port Kolos and take the trade station for himself! In Mahabo a Afriqan garrison was slapped around, then chased into the jungles. Eon swept into Sakalava with high hopes of taking the city with minimal resistance.

Unfortunately, not only did Port Kolos have an actual *wall* and a city militia, but two frigates owned by the Pacific Mercenary & Trust company, commanded by Captain Shimura, arrived in harbor just in time to join the Javan defenders in their battle against the Axumites. Eon dispersed his men and ordered an attack on the walls. The first attack was beaten back, with heavily losses among the Axumites.

While Eon was rallying his men, the mayor's son (who had taken command of the Kolos squadron while they were operating in Indonesian waters) also sailed into port a week with twenty-four battlecruisers of the Squadron at his hand. Now Eon's positions in

<sup>24</sup> Hah! You thought Sogobu had just disappeared into the annals of history, did you? No! The GM does not forget passed-over heirs, extra brothers and other troublemakers. Old Nestor had declared Sogobu his heir while Kaii was still too young to rule, then dismissed him.

the hills around the town were subjected to shelling from the big, three-hulled battlecruisers. In poor ground and facing a well-prepared position, Eon abandoned the campaign and marched off south, cursing his enemies.

His battles, however, were not yet over...

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA** (Great Zimbabwe in Rozwi)

*M'beron, Protector of the Senate and the Republic*

**DIPLOMACY** Vaal(f), Umtata in Transkei(ea), Hwange(a), Nambe(ea)

A great clamor rose in the Senate, for the honorable representatives from the province of Merintha requested – nay, demanded! – the expulsion of the Axumite bandits from their homeland. “Madagascar is ours,” they proclaimed to anyone who would listen. For his part, the Protector was also rather put off by the ham-handedness of the Maasai, and ordered out generals G'mar and Huwele with a dozen regiments of Vaalese riflemen and artillerymen to deal with the invasion.

Relations with Maasai chilled noticeably. Among the effects – the export of foodstuffs, cloth, animal feed and pickled yams halted. On the other hand, relations with the HAC were excellent and a substantial tithe was sent to support the Jesuit order. Any drop in trade, however, was more than offset by the establishment of new routes to Japan and Arnor.

Missionary work continued apace in Mahabo, Comoros, Mauritius and Hova Merina – despite the depredations of the Axumites. In any case, while the Maata were rampaging around the north, trying to capture Port Kolos, the Afrikan navy began landing a polyglot army of Vaalese and Republican guards in Mahabo. There they met scattered survivors from the destroyed garrison.

King Ikombe of Vaal was the first ashore, near the end of '43, with four thousand of his soldiers – all armed to the teeth! Unfortunately, in the spring of the next year, king Eon and his Axumites came riding south to attack the Afrikan encampments (and the RSA navy had not yet returned with the second wave of troops.) Ikombe found himself engaged in pitched battles with the fanatical Axumites. He lost – even his expert riflemen being unable to turn aside the relentless attacks of the Axumites. Without artillery to even the odds, the Vaalese regiments went down in defeat.

1744 proceeded in a fashion displeasing to both the subsequent Afrikan expeditions under G'mar and Huwele, who found the southern shores of Madagascar swarming with angry Axumites, and for Eon, who watched helplessly as the Afrikans landed at Port Kolos under the sheltering guns of the Javan and PM&T ships. Soon they would march out, and then – the Axumite leader though, in a truly dark humor – this fragment of history would end...

**THE HONORABLE SUD AFRICA COMPANY** (Iusalem in Karanga)

*Kaiune, Master of the Southern House*

**DIPLOMACY** Iesuwayo in Mbundu(mf), Brass in Ife(ma), Goana in Vaal(ci), Chabaz in Vengi(ma), Umtata in Transkei(mf)

In the interests of acquiring future business, a tidy sum was dispatched in letters of credit (on Persian banks) to aid the Prester John in finding a new home in the land between the two rivers. An even tidier sum was disbursed to the government of the Republic as a cartel share.



## NORTH AMERIKA

### Mercenaries

<b>Condotierr</b>	8hi, 7ha, 1xec, 28i, 24c, 5a, 1z25
<b>Captains</b>	Tizoc (M836)
<b>To hire, please contact...</b>	None
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	i15 w17 s18 c12 a12 z4

**THE NISEI REPUBLIC** (Usonomiya in Yokuts)

*Tokugawa Akari, Commander of the Armies of the Republic, Protector of the Emperor of All Japan, daitoryo of the Diet*

**DIPLOMACY** Abagai on Kiska(t)

Nisei armies are – everywhere – in motion.

Unfortunately, many of them just don't have the legs to get where they wanted to go. But they're game for marching, so they soldier on. A fleet is dispatched, under admiral Moshi, to reopen the northeastern passage to Japan, while another squadron – this one under General Shun – heads for the Caribbean.

Shun's fleet passed by Tijuana at the end of Baja California, where they restored Nisei control over the old colony. Then – still a little woozy from the margaritas – they passed through the Aztec canal and, after some bad storms (the weather's getting worse and worse) they landed at Colón on the western end of Arawak. There, while Nisei marines kept watch over de-shipped guns and palisades, the town of Tokari was built on a fine bay facing the Bahama Sea.

Admiral Moshi's voyage was equally long – trending first north to the old whaling station of Chotan on Attu. They had tried to reach Montai on Beringa, but that was out of range from the nearest mainland port. There Moshi found a thriving city still inhabited by the Tatar race which had suffered such devastation on the mainland. Furthermore, they were well armed... Efforts at diplomacy only gained him the right to take on water and purchase whale steaks at an exorbitant price.

Without Chotan, the proposed northern trade passage was useless, so Moshi sailed back east to Abagai on Kiska (where the locals were neither so rich, nor so well equipped with armed whaling boats and cannon). There he managed to make an equitable arrangement with the locals, and settle some of the civilians he had aboard.

**THE HIGH KINGDOM OF COLORADO** (Three Crosses in Navajo)

*Fredrik Grosse, King of the Ute, High King of Colorado*

**DIPLOMACY** None

Aside from breeding, the Coloradans continued to work industriously at recovering from the loss of the lands (and shipping ports) taken by the Arapaho. The cities of Bullhead (in Hopi) and Corpus Christi (in Karankawa) expanded.

Considerable trouble disturbed the always-fragile peace on the island of Taino (a noted refuge for mercenaries, pirates, scallywags and rough types of all sorts) where the investigations of a plucky girl reporter had revealed the tenacious influence of the notorious Aztec *quimichtin*<sup>26</sup> among the company captains. There was great unrest among the soldiers as a result, and many war-captains found themselves without troops! However, almost immediately afterwards the famous Jessica Orozco arrived in Taino with a squadron of ARFW ships and entered into negotiations with the condotierr to represent them as a brokerage service. As of press-time, there were still some matters outstanding, though an agreement was reportedly close.

<sup>25</sup> A pair of ex-Inuit Taguak airships, just looking for work, y'know?

<sup>26</sup> The "mice", or Aztec Secret Police.

## ARAPAHO TEXAS (Ayoel in Atakapa)

*Nemukare of the Arapaho, Great Chief of the Plains, Duke of Ayoel*

### DIPLOMACY None

"What is this?" Valeria, princess of Shawnee and Arapaho, looked up from sharpening her hunting knife. The servant trembled slightly, seeing an undimmed flame burning in the woman's eyes. Of late, the ever-feeble princess had grown more and more mercurial.

"Letters, my lady," said the maid in a quavering voice. "From your father and your grandfather."

"Really?" For a moment, Valeria's mood lifted and she tore open the letters with the tip of the curved blade. Once she began reading, however, her face darkened with incipient rage and the maid – knowing the worth of her life in such conditions – silently fled away. Valeria read the letters twice, her mounting anger nearly bursting free of her indomitable will, then – leashed and chained – it settled to an icy determination. With very careful motions, she tore up the letter from her father into tiny bits, then burned them.

The letter from her grandfather, however, she kept, for it revealed information of a useful nature. The princess rose, went to the window and looked out. The camps of the Arapaho stretched as far as the eye could see, a quilt of fires, the sound of war-chants, the bitter smell of woodsmoke under a dark, Texan sky.

"Mihcatzintli – attend me."

A robed figure entered, slightly stooped, features invisible in a deep hood. There was a rustling sound. "Yesss... What is your desire?"

Valeria smiled coldly. "Enemies have revealed themselves, hoping to sway my heart with familiar words, with love, with compassion. I will give you names, the names of your enemies... and you will do as I have bid."

The figure bowed. "You will not wait... the stars are not yet right."

"We," Valeria hissed, strapping the knife to her hip, reaching for armored vest and breastplate, "will make these stars right."

Within the hour, Valeria and her husband Nemukare (the brother of the Scar-Eye) launched a long-planned coup in Ayoel. Valeria's Shawnee troops stormed Ugraima's residence and the king was hewn down in the midst of a ferocious melee. The lady Anna Paulain attempted to escape down the river with her children, heading for her father's demesne in Chitimacha. Nemukare's warriors gave chase in river-boats, caught the fleeing woman and slaughtered her and her guards.

Ayoel burned, a quarter of the city roaring up in flames as forces loyal to Ugraima were hunted down and massacred by Nemukare's men. Messengers were sent to Tecolote Azarama and Okmulge Nevershy Horse (the remaining two great chiefs of the Arapaho), demanding their fealty to Nemukare. Paulain of Chitimacha had already repudiated the kinslayers and sent a frantic letter to Fredrik of Colorado, seeking his aid against the usurper.

Azarama refused to dishonor his blood-brother Ugraima and led his men north, heading for Quapaw, where he hoped to find the Shawnee warleader Talltree. Okmulgee, however, gladly joined Valeria and Nemukare. The combined armies then crossed the Snake into Taposa. With this, Valeria declared herself Empress of Shawnee and Arapaho alike<sup>27</sup>, with Nemukare as her consort.

## THE SHAWNEE EMPIRE (Cahokia in Michigamea)

*Valeria Stormdragon, Queen of the Shawnee, Empress of the Iroquois*

### DIPLOMACY Bang – right inna head!

Empress Treya was busy in her field encampments at Cahokia, sending out the usual blizzard of missives, edicts, proclamations and out-right orders. A commotion in the camp drew her attention and she stood, automatically picking up a pair of pearl-handled revolvers. She might be reaching an advanced age (sixty-eight at her last birthday) but none of her native caution had departed with the passing years. Her guards also came alert, hands to weapons. The Empress strode out into the shaded courtyard in front of her offices. "What's all this about, then?"

The guards at the gate – where a long line of petitioners were waiting – looked to her in confusion. "It sounds like a parade," one of them called back.

Moments later, as Treya – surrounded by a phalanx of guardsmen – climbed a stair to the second floor, the better to gain a view of the unexpected festivity, there was the sharp, flat crack of a rifle. The Iroquois guardsmen immediately leapt to the Empress' side, but she was already slumping against the palisade, thin bronze hand clutching at her side. Crimson spilled between her fingers. Men shouted, pointing. A flurry of shots rang out as the Iroquois shot wildly at the rooftop of the neighboring building.

Men in distinctive green-and-brown hunting garb appeared from the line of petitioners and the officers, throwing a hurried, secondary cordon around the dying Empress.

Treya cried out as her men lifted her up. A huge crowd jostled down the stairs, someone called for a doctor, for a surgeon. The sound of the parade grew loud outside, though the petitioners jammed the gate, staring in amazement at the riot of motion inside the Imperial compound. The Empress' pale, drained face was visible for a moment between the armored breastplates of her officers.

The front of the parade swerved – a brightly attired cart covered with ribbons, streamers and jangling bells – and four men rushed forward, limbs straining. The cart slammed into the iron-bound gate, and there was the sudden hiss of a fuse. Seconds later, as the four men struggled against the shouting crowd, the cart vanished in a blast of heat, smoke and fire. Thousands of iron fragments had been hidden inside the cart, amid barrels of naphtha and gunpowder. The blast shattered the gate, toppled the watch-towers, laid low hundreds in the street, and dozens within. The guards carrying the Empress into her offices were struck down, torn to shreds by the vicious cloud of shrapnel. One of them – in a green-and-brown cloak – was Lucas Windrider, the Empress' consort.

Treya was already dead, her lifeblood spilling out from a buffalo-hunting rifle's wound, even before her corpse was disfigured by the explosion.

Thirty-five miles away, across the winding gray-green breadth of the Great Snake, general Talltree was riding with his men in the woodlands of Quapaw. Many of them were Ghostdancer warriors – for those rabid fanatics held the prince in great esteem. A messenger approached the hunting party, riding hard, his horse flecked with foam. Talltree raised a hand, rising up in his saddle.

"What news," he called, keen gray eyes searching out the man's face.



Empress Valeria of Shawnee and Arapaho

<sup>27</sup> I've been putting off this civil war for turns... such a mess. Anyway, here we go!

"The Empress," the rider shouted – a young man, one of the corps of new officers lately come into Imperial service. He waved a message pouch. "It's the Empress!"

"What?" Talltree felt his heart go cold, and an ominous premonition came upon him. His liege-lord Treya was growing old – she was nearly twenty years his senior – but she seemed invincible, eternally young. "What has happened?"

"She is dead," the man said, drawing a pistol from the pouch. There were four shots before the Ghostdancers were upon him with a terrible, wailing scream. The man was torn to bits, limbs hewn to bloody fragments. But Talltree was lying dead under his horse, face torn away by three closely-spaced bullets.

A similar attempt was made on the princess Taiya, who was suffering through an endless round of negotiations with the elders of Michigamea province. In her case, however, the men in green-and-brown snatched her out of the council chambers and whisked her away on a fast horse only moments before the building blew apart and stealthy men in common clothing descended on the rubble to "search for survivors."

The princess was stunned. First by the news her father and mother were dead, then by the revelation – delivered by a grim-faced Ranger captain as they lay hid in a copse of trees outside of Cahokia – that her sister Valeria was behind their deaths.

"She is a pawn of the Lord of Eyes," the Ranger said, sitting with his back to an ancient oak, dappled sunlight falling across him, mixing with the rumpled brown and green to make him nearly invisible, even to her, only feet away. "We have been watching for a long time – and of late there have been signs which caused us alarm. But her agents are everywhere, and they are without fear."

The old captain shook his head in dismay. "They were too quick for us, even though we knew something foul was in the wind. I am sorry."

"What... what do I do now?" Taiya – by nature a sweet and biddable girl, nothing like her mother or sister – was nearly crying with fear. The Ranger captain's eyes glinted with worry. *So much depends on you, child... so much. If only we weren't distracted by that business in the Holy Land...*

"You come with us, and we find a place of safety, where you can declare your sister a regicide and claim the throne of Shawnee for yourself."

Taiya broke down completely, hugging the earth and sobbing in despair.

#### THE WAR OF THE DRAGONS (AD 1743-1744)

*Shawnee (Valeria), Arapaho (Nemukare), Lord of the Eyes*

vs.

*Iroquois (Taiya), Ghostdancers (Teoclote), Papacy, the Rangers*

So... Valeria and her personal troops (and the Arapaho) were marching up from the south with all speed. Cahokia was in the hands of general Farspear, who was Valeria's man. Taiya fled east with the Rangers and young Hadawak'o (whom her mother had hoped she would marry). The Ghostdancers exploded in righteous anger and almost immediately found an ally in Teoclote Azurama and his army of Arapaho (who were pacing, more or less, Valeria's advance north, but on the western side of the river).

Princess Taiya escaped to Delaware in the east, where Cardinal Anthony Remi was encamped with a modest army of Templars. There she declared, with the old ranger captain on one side and Hadawak'o (now her husband) on the other, a rival claim to the throne of Shawnee. This was in late July of '43.

In the meantime, Valeria had reached Cahokia, accepted Farspear's fealty and impressed her will upon the Imperial troops

gathered there. She had also learned of Teoclote's alliance with the Ghostdancer scum to her west. Nemukare, eager to gain control over the rest of the Arapaho, pressed her to crush these 'rebels.'

Though Valeria was eager to hunt down her sister and end Taiya's threat, she realized Teoclote could not be allowed to linger behind her, causing trouble. Nemukare and Okmulgee were dispatched with the loyal Arapaho and several batteries of Shawnee artillery to hunt down Teoclote and his Ghostdancer allies.

Valeria herself, accompanied by Farspear, marched east, accepting the loyalty and tribute of towns and cities as she passed.

Nemukare's army crossed the Snake at **Infni** in a flood of horses and men. Supported by the Shawnee fleet (under Rainwalker's command) they made a swift passage over the river. Azurama and the Ghostdancers were waiting, however, knowing their best chance of defeating the kinslayer was as the Arapaho/Shawnee army was disordered in the crossing. 65,000 Nemukarist troops swarmed up the bluffs and banks of the Snake, right into a hailstorm of fire from Teoclote's 48,000 defenders (26,000 Arapaho, 17,000 of Talltree's Shawnee and 5,000 Ghostdancers).<sup>28</sup>

Nemukare's attack was a costly failure. Though his armies landed in a two-mile frontage, he was unable to break through Teoclote's guns to the plains beyond. After two days of slaughter at the river's edge, Nemukare called off the attack. Raindancer's fleet could hold the river against the Ghostdancers, and Nemukare had other business – down south, in Arapaho lands.

Taking advantage of the Shawnee highway, Nemukare easily reached Ayoel before Teoclote could react. Teoclote did, however, seize Osage and Caddo. This put Teoclote in a position to cross the Arkansas into Tonkawa, as Raindancer's fleet was still at Cahokia holding the Ghostdancers at bay. This was the situation in the southwest at the end of 1744.

In the east, Taiya's proclamation had caused great excitement. Dozens of lords along the eastern seaboard rallied to her cause – particularly since Hadawak'o was an *Iroquois* and the ascendance of the Shawnee dynasty ruling from Adena in the west had long chafed their pride. The support of the mysterious Rangers gave many hope – and the widely spread news of Valeria's alliance with the Lord of the Eyes<sup>29</sup> instilled fear in even the most ignorant.

Valeria's army halted in Wenro (still an uninhabited and desolate land) for the winter of '43-44, then pressed on as soon as spring came in '44. Cayuga and Iroquois were no better – the land empty, without sources of food or shelter – everything still bearing the taint of the Ice. A weary, disheartened Shawnee army reached Mohawk in June of '44. Hadawak'o and Cardinal Remi were waiting with a paltry army of ten thousand men. Valeria's host numbered 57,000. The Iroquois general did not intend to fight, however, and contented himself with blowing up bridges, fighting skirmishes with his scouts and falling back slowly to the south.

Farspear, commanding Valeria's army, was having none of this. He rushed the Imperial Guard forward in a daring lunge, and caught Hadawak'o by surprise. A fierce battle erupted only miles from **New Canarsie**. Hadawako' – for all his bravery and skill – was trapped against the Hudson and slaughtered along with his men. The broken bodies of Hadawak'o and Cardinal Remi were dragged before Valeria, who looked upon the corpses with great pleasure.

"Now find me my rebellious sister," she snapped. "But bring *her* to me alive."

<sup>28</sup> Ah... now there's a battle! None of this 8,000 men a side and a distempered poodle nonsense...

<sup>29</sup> The great god Kror is known as the Lord of a Thousand Eyes in north America.

For her part, the newly widowed Taiya fled south with her meager court, Valeria in relentless pursuit. The necessity of crushing incipient rebellion among the eastern cities delayed the Empress, however, and by the end of '44 she had only advanced as far as Powhattan.

**THE KINGDOM OF THE IROQUOIS** (Malaga in Creek)

*Taiya Stormdragon, Empress of the Shawnee, Queen of the Iroquois Nation*  
**DIPLOMACY** None

At the end of '44, Taiya (and her newly born son Lucas) were in Creek, where a few thousand supporters had gathered. Luckily, the provinces of Chowan, Monacan, Catawba, Santua, Cheraw, Yuchi, Tunica, Yamasee, Timuca, Chatot, Muskogee and Choctaw had rallied to her. Unfortunately, essentially the entire Imperial government had sided with Valeria.

**THE ORDER OF THE FLOWERING SUN** (Tenochtitlán)

*Chikietl, Master of the Order, Shield of the Sun against the Ten Thousand Enemies*

**DIPLOMACY** Yagul in Pisones(oh), Gorea in Zacatec(oh), Mexicalli in Boruca(oh), Mixtlan in Boruca(oh), Tlacotalpan in Popoluca(oh)

Though most of the Order Knights were off in the Middle East fighting under the blazing day-son, Chikietl and Sixteen-Mountain were very busy within the Empire. The order-master was getting tired though... it was very wearing to rush from place to place without so much as a rest.

Tzompan, stuck at home with the accounts and books, was not so happy. He was even *less* happy to suddenly have Gimoc of Caquetio's snot-nosed son Pardane dumped on him. "Send him to the *calmecac* school," Tzompan bellowed. "With the rest of the useless little... noble children."

Pardane glowered at everyone and refused to even speak. He was terribly unhappy.

**THE AZTEC EMPIRE OF MEXICO** (Sion in Huave)

*Trákonel "The Victorious", Emperor of Mexico, Warrior of Christ, Protector of the Faith, Smiter of the Infidel, Conqueror of the Incans, Rex Britannicus*

**DIPLOMACY** Unita(f)

The weather – poorly of late – turned decidedly strange. Hot winds blew from the Pacific, baking the central provinces and turning the northern littoral into a parched desert. In the deserts along the Baja sea, no rain fell and the earth seethed with long-delayed life. Appearing first in scattered locations throughout the north in '43, then swarming down in vast, black clouds which blotted out the sun in '44, an enormous blight of locusts tormented the farms, fields and cities of the Empire. Dreadful agricultural losses were suffered as the ravenous creatures ate everything in sight.

Even in Sion, as the sky darkened and the pervading, maddening *hummmmm* made conversation impossible, people bent their heads in fear... for all were sure, in their hearts, that *Kror* had returned to haunt the world of men and lay waste to the cities and the plains alike.

Large sums were disbursed to the Sisters of the Rose and Denmark. Trákonel brushed locusts from his papers, and then continued to scribble edicts and pronouncements. The cities of Acapulco, Mexicalli and Tenochtitlán were expanded. Joyously, trade was resumed with Spain and Sweden via the northern route – now the Ice had receded enough to allow the settlement on Iceland to be reclaimed. Efforts were sustained to acquire the proper sized



bolt cutters as mandated by the Lisbon Accords, and an attempt was started to break down the power of the great merchant *pochteca*.

Trákonel also cleaned house in the south, where the rebellious and independent princes of Ulva had long thumbed their nose-rings at Aztec authority. Plus, they were Catholics! The Eagle, Pyramid and Jaguar legions attacked Ulva, chasing the locals back into the city of Aser, which was then besieged by land and sea. After three months of shelling, the citizens surrendered, though the Papists wept to see the banners of the Empire march into their stronghold.

**THE SISTERS OF THE ROSE** (New Jerusalem in Quiche)

*Kelly Davias, Holy Mother of the Lencolar Christian Order*

**DIPLOMACY** Culhua(mn), Tula in Otomi(ch), Tres Lagos in Guahibo(ch), Caraca(ch)

Kelly expended a great deal of effort (and gold) to broker an armistice between Caquetio and the Knights of Saint John. She prayed the truce would hold and treachery would not rear its ugly head. Still, there was no denying the victory her sect had gained over the Catholics. Caquetio was lost to the Papacy, and peace restored in the south (well, not *all* of the south, but some).

An arrangement was reached between the Sisterhood and the Albanian East India Company allowing individual priests and priestesses to travel – free of charge – on Albanian packet ships and other transports. Efforts to establish a more formal trade relationship were stymied by the lack of Albanian facilities in the Amerikas.

New Jerusalem expanded a level. Following news of the armistice in the south, a great celebration (the day of Our Lady's Peace) was held in the Lencolar city, with banquets, outdoor masses, praying and whooping and hollering.

Sister Ruth, traveling in the frontier districts between Aztec and Colorado, found herself subjected to constant, harassing attacks by Apaches, Krorist slavers and other neer'do'wells. She escaped no less than four attacks, but failed in her mission to bring the word of peace to the barbarians in those lands. She also ran out of ammunition for her Remington double-action and lost the rifle (cracking the stock over the head of an Apache as he swarmed onto the top of her armored carriage).

A very sullen little girl (Nima, the daughter of Gimoc of Caquetio) arrived in New Jerusalem and was straightaway enrolled in the Sisterhood School for Wayward Girls. The nuns there looked her over, tsked a few times and sent her down the junior girls dormitory. Nima was not pleased.

**SOUTH AMERIKA**

<b>Mercenaries</b>	
<b>Condottieri</b>	25i, 16c, 11a, 1ea, 1hei
<b>Captains</b>	Joseph d'Sackville (M977)
<b>To hire, please contact...</b>	None
<b>Quality Ratings</b>	i15 w17 s18 c12 a12 z4

**THE KINGDOM OF CAQUETIO** (New Hiquito in Caquetio)

*Ladila Viceno, Queen of Caquetio, Regent for...*

*Pardane Viceno, King of Caquetio*

**DIPLOMACY** None

The official religion of the government, nobles and royal family of Caquetio became – at last – Lencolar Christian. Coupled with this change, Gimoc also continued to attack the slave-holding landowners on a legal level. A substantial infusion of cash from the Sisters helped this effort immeasurably, as did the rising swell of public opinion *against* slave-holding. Feeling rather poorly himself – and faced with the necessity to take to the field with the Royal army

– Gimoc appointed his second wife, Ladila Viceno, as regent for his children (even though both of the children in question had been packed off to foreign schools).

An armistice of two years duration was proclaimed between Caquetio and the Knights of Saint John. As a gesture of honorable peace, the body of Grand-Master Samuel was returned to the Knights.

Amid all the other excitement, a squadron of ARF zeppelins arrived in Caquetio – and were met with public cheers and parades (and everyone wanted to go on a zeppelin ride) – and governmental shame-faced-ness. Only three years previous, the ARF had been ordered out by Gimoc's administration, and now they were welcomed back with open arms. The presence of the ARF aeromarine was also welcome and the Caquetian officers examined their light guns, clever uniforms and tools with great interest.

The Sisters continued their work, converting the (rather apathetic) citizens of Caraca (along with Teofilo) and Cumangoto (with Ponta Grossa) to the Lencolar rite.

Gimoc's health continued to fail, and in late '43 he passed away of some hemorrhagic fever which made him bleed from the eyes and nose. A few scattered Catholic priests made great note of this, but they were roundly ignored. Queen Ladila now found herself ruler of the entire nation, at least until young Pardane came of age.

#### **THE KNIGHTS OF SAINT JOHN** (New Granada in Acroa)

*Nicholas Gafard de Masa, Grand-Master of the Knights of Saint John*

**DIPLOMACY** Tobajara(t)

Feeling entirely trapped and surrounded by his new relatives, young Nicholas used the first opportunity to flee New Granada and take to the road. By secret means, he had dispatched letters to the Pope and Cardinal Livingstone, who was at Zaragoza with a Templar army and fleet. In these missives, Nicholas begged the pontiff to annul his forced marriage to Niki of New France and strike aside this treaty and will which his father had forced upon him. At the same time, the Grand-Master made arrangements to hire a large force of mercenaries and to raise new regiments of troops in Zaragoza (which he really, really hoped would be loyal to him.)

Using the local churches, the Papal nuncio Livingstone distributed the news of the Pope's annulment of the marriage between Grand Master Nicholas and Niki of Great France. This caused much consternation among the people, who now realized the pending unification of both realms might disintegrate into civil strife.

As chance would have it, Antone Diaz (who commanded the Knight's fleet) took sick at the beginning of '43 (after dinner with Livingstone) and was dead within the week. His death robbed Great France of their strongest supporter within the Knights. Immediately after this, Livingstone took his army on the road, intending to meet Nicholas in Shucuru.

The grand-master's flight precipitated a brutal struggle in New Granada between his spies (and Papal agents supporting them), who now launched a purge to gut the Great France supporters in the military, and the minions of Emperor Louis. As it happened, the French had not wormed their way into the ranks of the Knight's intelligence apparatus, which was very, very lucky for Nicholas.

Several attempts were made to murder the Grand-Master as he fled – indeed, it seemed every hand was turned against him – but by good luck and raw cunning he managed to reach Shucuru unharmed. There he found Livingstone and the 'new' army. He also learned Diaz was dead. Nicholas rejoiced!

Now backed by loyal troops (particularly the well-paid Aztec mercenaries) Nicholas marched north to Tobaraja where he hoped to gain a wife and an ally. He had a debt to settle in the south as was eager to be about the bloody work!<sup>30</sup> By dint of a gun to lady Madeline's father's head, the Grand-Master gained what he desired.

Leaving his wife pregnant and in the care of loyal Knights in Zaragoza, Nicholas hared off south for New Granada, his new army in tow...

#### **THE PRINCIPATE OF BOLIVIA** (Trischka in Karanga)

*Ramon Mascate, Prince of Bolivia, Duke of Trishka*

**DIPLOMACY** Uru(f), Aspero in Nazca(f)

Duke Thome continued his efforts to forge a modern state from the fractious and hide-bound Incan barons. He and his son Ramon visited the Uruans, where they managed to make some kind of impression on the duke's head by dint of repeated banging with a bight of wood. This effort – though successful – proved too much for Thome, who had a heart attack in the spring of '44 and died, leaving the principate to his son, Ramon.

#### **GREAT FRANCE** (Versailles in Calchaqui)

*Louis de'Saone, Emperor of France, Prince of Varres, Lord of the South, Smiter of the Heretic*

**DIPLOMACY** Quite a bit, of a non-standard kind.

Well appraised of his 'vassal' Nicholas' treachery, Emperor Louis ordered the notable Allen of Pichunche (one of his liege men, and a duke in his own right) north with a newly raised army. "Restore order there," Louis said in affected drawl. "Our attention is elsewhere at this time."

As a matter of fact, Great France was creaking under the strain of Louis' building projects and this foray into grand diplomacy and conquest. Some of the more troublesome lords were, in fact, dispatched to Acroa to make trouble there, for Nicholas, rather than for Louis at home.

In New Granada itself, the violence of the purges and the intermittent street battles between the pro-France and pro-Nicholas factions convinced prince Francois to take himself, his escort and his sister (darling Niki) away from the capital. They rode south to Kaingain, where they met Allen coming north.

While Niki was packed off back to Versailles, Francois and Allen moved back into the land of the Knights – this time with a real army at hand. As Nicholas was busy getting busy in Tobajara, they were able to reach and seize New Granada without anyone being able to stop them. Indeed, since they immediately restored order in the troubled city, many of the citizens welcomed them.

Prince Francois and duke Weygand set about wooing the city fathers and the great nobles to their side, promising a glorious, unified, Catholic empire – one which did *not* bow to the Lencolar scum, one which saw the lesser people in their place, one where the old traditions were upheld!

Allen marched his army north, with Baron Francis as his right hand, looking for Nicholas' army. The two claimants encountered one another south of Juaizero del Norte, near the site of a Zionist battle, at **San Jose del Belomonte**. The army of Great France numbered 16,000 men, while the combined Knights/Aztec mercenaries/Templar force was just short of 20,000 men. The French deployed for battle, their artillery batteries running forward, their lines shaking out... and everything went to shit.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas is *not* very clever, actually. He's just apparently very lucky.

<sup>31</sup> Which means... the Great French blew their combat roll and Nicholas rolled the best he could. Somedays... the bear gets you.



They were still deploying from road-march column when Nicholas stormed out of the trees on the left with his cavalry going hell-for-leather. At the same time, guns hidden in the high cane fields to the right of the French position opened up at nearly point-blank range, ripping huge bloody swathes through the ranks of the southerners. Within hours, Francis was dead and Allen was missing. The army of Great France was annihilated in a single afternoon.

Nicholas marched into New Granada with a spring in his step, and adoring crowds cheering from every balcony. Prince Francois and his lackeys were nowhere to be seen.

## **BANK LIST**

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<b>Nation</b>	<b>Bank</b>	<b>GP</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Aztec Empire of Mexico	Tenochtitlan Teocali	1,968	40%
Frankish Commonwealth	Banque du Lyons	183	40%
Chan Mongol Empire	Uncle Wu's	565	40%
United Kingdoms of Britain	Royal Bank of London	475	38%
Free Republic of Ethiopia	Funj Gold Reserves	789	40%
The Khemer Empire	Pronunkuram Vaults	651	40%
Principate of Kiev	Royal Bank of Khitai	142	35%
Coptic Kingdom of Maasai	M'Beya House of Credit	1,112	20%
The Nisei Republic	Yedo Matsuma Bank	617	40%
The Republic of Spain	Aztlan Mercantile Credit	269	25%
The Republic of Spain	Banque du Galway	280	40%
Empire of Swedish-Russia	BUX	763	45%
Duchy of the Three Isles	First Merchant of Valetia	109	40%
Principate of Vastmark	Brehmen Bank	151	30%
Java - Where It's Warm(tm)	Sunny Sunda Savings	765	40%