

Lords of the Earth

CAMPAIGN TWENTY-FOUR (OLD WORLD)

The Age of the Crusades



Turn 32

1156 ~ 1160 Anno Domini

535 ~ 540 in the year of the Hegira

1782 ~ 1787 years since the birth of Guatama Buddha Sakyamuni

Nengo Hougen-Gannen kara Heiji-Sannen made.

Announcements and items of note (Please read! Really!)

Feudal Leaders : OK, it has always been my habit/policy to not list feudal leaders in your leader section,

but, instead, insist that when you want to use them and their troops that you note in your orders that you are "calling them to service" and then and only then would you get to know their leader ratings and troops. Well.....the new STATS program that we use for Lords processing sometimes lists a FA leader in the leader section if a region turns FA...so, I am going to list FA leaders in this case and try and list all FA leaders...so, if you have an FA region but the FA leader isn't listed, just let me know and I'll correct the stats and list them.

Leader conditionals in case of invasion: If a situation occurs in which a nation is invaded and the capital or homeland is threatened, and the leaders of that nation are off doing other stuff, what happens? Do they return to save the nation? To deal with this situation, and so as to avoid any chance I might resort to "second guessing" a player, I do the following: I make a combat stat check for each leader to see if they return with their troops to the capital to try to defend it. Otherwise, they continue on with whatever orders they had been originally given. The king will automatically return however. Note that all of this applies **only** in those cases where the player has not given conditional orders for their leaders.

Leader precedence: In those cases where there are multiple leaders with armies fighting together, unless otherwise specified, the main leader will be determined by rank. Thus, the main leader will first be the king (if present), then the heir, then the princes in (descending) order of age. After that (if there are only Lieutenant type leaders) then the one with the highest combat rating will be in charge.

Death of leaders during a turn: If a leader dies during the turn, I generate a new leader then and there right after they died, and have the new leader complete their planned actions. If it really matters, like during a war where every action point matters, I will have a delay of 0-5 AP (1d10-5) for the replacement leader to come "on-scene."

Historicity: Sometimes, when you get new leaders, I will give them names that are historical. This can sometimes happen even if you give them names, since I feel it adds something to the game. If you **really** want to give your leaders non-historical names, that's fine, I guess, just let me know. Also, just so you know, names that are clearly dorky, well, I reserve the right to modify them slightly so the game just doesn't seem silly.

New World Results: This is the news for the Old World. The New World is run by Steve Brunt, with links to that information on the Lords 24 website.

The Maps: The maps need to be updated. I know. I and others are working on it.

Missionary actions: last turn, missionary actions got a hefty bonus since I forgot to figure in a number of divisors and other modifiers. From this turn onwards, Missionary actions will be more realistic.

Intel actions: Sometimes players don't use their Intel or Assassin ops. That's fine with me, but it is a resource you're not using each turn just in case. For example, you might want to use that Assassin op to "just in case" Crush Revolts that occur, or something like that...

Religious Orders: it is no longer possible to form a religious order simply by spending the resources and

conducting the actions necessary. Instead, I have inserted a Random Event into the stats program that gives a player an opportunity to found a religious order for that turn only. Said religious will then be put up for a player to run via the standard lottery method. The intention of this ruling is to eliminate the tendency for groups of allied players to pool their resources to create yet another allied empire, thus increasing the power of their alliance as a whole in a way that seems, to many, unfair.

Cult of Shiva: The Cult of Shiva is hostile to Hinduism, but otherwise identical to it.

"Extra APs" : Almost always extra APs can be spent on a leader action to give it a bonus to succeed. The primary example of this is with the DP (Diplomacy) action. Almost everyone, at one time or another, runs DP actions with extra APs. Problem is, often people just say "Do DP with all remaining AP." As part of my effort to speed processing time and save my sanity, your hapless GM is no longer going to take the time to calculate such extra APs. So, please indicate how much they are if you want to get credit for them for your actions.

MAXTAX: MAXTAX is in effect, it is set at 2.5. this means that regions and cities with more than one owner (for example, if an Open Nation, a Religious Primate, and a Religious Order all have some status in the region or city) would proportionately share the tax and NFP revenues of the region/city up to the maximum tax setting.

Other campaign 24 Old World specific rules...Are listed on the website, under "Rules and Clarifications" at <http://www.throneworld.com/lords/lot24/rules.html>. I recommend looking at them, since although the L24 specific rules and clarifications are not listed on this newsfax, they all still remain in force and "not seeing them on the newsfax" is not an acceptable reason for not knowing about them.

Intel note: it is my understanding from the rules, (and the way I process it) that when you do a CI intel action, the target you give it is a type of potential enemy intel action, not the target of the action. Thus, you might do the following: **"CI versus any enemy IE attempts"**. But you would not do: **"CI v. any enemy intel against my government."** You can do CI against most any intel operation out there, such as IE, AO, CU, etc...

Newsfax color? Well, I know the newsfax isn't as flashy as it could be...I intend to add pictures and other fun stuff but I wanted to get it out. In the future I will add more color to it...so, if you have pics or something else you think should go in it, send 'em along (GIF files are preferred).

PS: If anyone knows how to calculate equivalent years in Hindu, Shinto, et al...let me know and I'll put it on the newsfax banner...

How to make your GM happy (PLEASE READ! REALLY!):

Please send any and all Lords24 correspondence to lords24gm@throneworld.com . Really. I get lots of email to my alarikf Throneworld account, but then I have to forward it to my L24 account so I make sure I answer all queries in the order I received them...

If possible, please use the latest MS Office version of the order form. It can be found at http://www.throneworld.com/lords/players/forms/lords_orders_2_2_1.zip and really lessens the brain- and eye-strain I suffer from other forms. Many of you use text orders in email, and those are still fine so long as they don't run too long. I know a lot of you prefer Excel spreadsheets, but the orders I get in Excel are really annoying to figure out sometimes. (note also that the new MS Office order form mentioned above incorporates an Excel spreadsheet to calculate builds, expenditures, etc...)

If possible please try to use the latest MS Office Orders Template for your orders. It can be found at http://www.throneworld.com/lords/players/forms/lords_orders_2_2_1.zip and it reduces eye- and brain-strain on me. I know a lot of you like to use Excel, but this order template incorporates an Excel spreadsheet for expenditures, income, and so forth. Also the orders that I get that are in Excel (you know who you are) are often very difficult to interpret. For those of you who use text orders in the body of your emails, that's fine, so long as they don't run too long, otherwise they get confusing also...thanks!

Thanks go out to:

Everyone for putting up with (a) the long delay in getting Lords24 back on its feet and this turn out. It's good to be back.

Steve Brunt, for starting the campaign and running the New World half of it.

Cameron Reid for his Excel action processor.

Norah Jones, for, well, duh.

NOMENCLATURE

Turns are currently five (5) years long. Base tax rate is 100%.

Infantry (200 men = 1 point), Cavalry (200 men = 1 point), Siege Engineers (200 men = 1 point), Warships (2 ships = 1 point), Transports (2 ships = 1 point).

LORDS 24 WEB RESOURCES

The Lords Twenty-Four homepage is at:

www.throneworld.com/lords/lot24/index.html

All of the on-line resources, including order forms, mailing lists and web-sites for Lords of the Earth are summarized on this page:

www.throneworld.com/lords/players/resources.html

You can subscribe to the Lords 24 mailing list by pointing your web-browser at:

<http://www.egroups.com/subscribe/Lords24>

...and following the instructions on that page.

VARIOUS FEES AND LEVIES

Much as I would like to run this game for free, alas, I cannot convince my wife to let me. heck, I have a hard enough time explaining to her what I do late into the evenings on the computer when she is asleep. ("You play computer games? Uh-huh. Yeah right. Sure you do...that's what all men who sit in front of their computers late into the evening do...") And, remember, EvilLesley(tm) absconded with all the cash, so we've got to recoup those losses...hence, the ugly subject of money:

Turns: \$5.00 per turn.

Maps Available on-line at the [Lords 24 website](#) (but they're out of date right now!)

We are using the LOTE 5.9.2 rules set. It can be obtained [here](#). Or you can get a spiffy new printed copy from Tom for \$10.00 (Local) or \$15.00 (Mailed in US), \$18.00 (mailed overseas).

One last thing: Please send all **PayPal** payments to: alarikf@yahoo.com (and NOT to the Throneworld email - I try and keep all my PayPal stuff on my yahoo account for bookkeeping purposes).

Turn 33 Orders due by: Ok, so last turn, it **clearly** was poorly received when I asked for orders back in just two weeks. I won't do that again. So, this next turn's deadline is: **TWO WEEKS AFTER I FINISH AND PUBLISH THE UPDATED MAPS. And, no, I don't know when that will be yet, but I am working on them frantically, and will tell you as soon as I'm done...**

Without further ado, the news for these years in Lords 24 history...

Manchuria

Mercenaries for hire: 13i, 19c

Great Khitan Horde

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Lu'No

Diplomacy:

Except for the untimely death of his only son, Lord Lu'No and his domains were uneventful in these years...

Ju Chen Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Ju'Ki'Ta

Diplomacy:

A small outbreak of the plague claimed a number of lives, including many of the Khan's family, but subsided rather quickly. The only lasting effect was the revenge many took on the priests and shamans of the lands, hanging and burning many for their failure to appease the gods of illnesses...

The Goryeo Kingdom

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Yun Yon Zun

Diplomacy: The Khan of Parhae, finally brought low by the inducements and comforts of the lowlanders "civilization" was brought fully into the kingdom (f), even though Lord Huan Kho died during his long, many-year embassy there.

Urbanization continued apace in the Kingdom, as settlers, refugees, a variety of pirates, and landed nobles continued to swarm to the cities and the amenities provided there. More and more, the cold countryside was less preferable to the harsh but opportunity-ridden cities of Goryeo. Indeed, scholarly pursuits became ever the rage in these years. The Confucian schools swelled, and a large number of the bonzes who came from the schools were adept and wise. As part of his continuing efforts to strengthen his rule and enrich trade, the King ordered a great road through the mountains and connecting Kaiching and Pusan.

China

Mercenaries for hire: 14c,6xc,5w

Phoenix Sung Empire

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Zhong Tan Song

Diplomacy: Hopei (a), city of ZenZun (ea), Yen remained recalcitrant, as did the city of Yen-Ching. Old lord Lu Pan, sent to Yen, died enroute, but his embassy was completed by his assistant. Missionary attempts in the cold regions of Manchuria, Kin and Tumet, failed miserably...

The glory that was the Middle Kingdom and the Grand Dynasty of Song lumbered on under the rule of Gaozong Song. While the northern lands rumbled with the sounds of restless hordes, those in the Middle Kingdom were concerned little. The Empire was secure in the hands of the scholar-lords, and, for now, the hordes to the north did not bother the Song with demands for tribute or other nastiness. Not that they

would pay, of course...

And so the people met the passing of the Emperor with a mixture of great sadness and great reverence. He had led his people through strife, and they knew it. The funereal processions proceeded for miles, and the tomb into which he was laid was grander than anyone could recall. His son, the Crown Prince Zhong Tan Song, wasn't quite the man the late Emperor was, but he still commanded loyalty and when he ascended the throne there was no hint of rebellion. As a tribute to the late Emperor, Zhong Tan ordered the construction of a tribute to his rule and reverence for the law. A great pillar was begun, to be known as the Pillar of Law in the land of Szechwan. And, the new Emperor continued to oversee the expansion of imperial largesse and beneficence, and a number of cities benefited accordingly. Also, vast quantities of laborers, peasants, and prisoners died on the construction of two more great road segments linking Hupei and Hubei, and Szechwan and Hubei.



A great deal of assistance was given to the Wudan School, to such an extent that even the most loyal ministers began to question whether it was wise to enrich a potential threat to the throne right in the Empire itself. To allay such fears, the Emperor hired multitudes of mercenaries to supplement the regular levies.

The Greater Wheel

(Buddhist Barbarian Religious Primacy)

Thirumbaba

Diplomacy:

The monks reveled in their wealth and isolation, preferring their mountain fastnesses to the worldly cares of those below...

The Wudan Masters

(Buddhist Civilized Religious Order)

Ma

Diplomacy: Anhui (op), Hopei (failed, reduced in status to UN), Houma (op), Shentung (failed, reduced to OH), Shensi (oh)

The fighting monks of Wudan continued to pay homage to the Sung, and, in turn, receive much largesse from them. Tithes were dutifully paid to the Kings of Annam, Thaton, and the Sung Emperor, but many

grumbled about them. This was of no concern to master Ma, who had embarked the Order on a path of ambition. Great sums were spent to hire scholars and labourers, and the number of monks increased greatly, as did the domains. Ma, it seemed, was truly trying to bring the order up to the status of a major power in Middle Kingdom politics. His ambition was met with disdain by the less worldly of his fellows, but the majority welcomed the new and active role in world affairs, and took to it with a gusto. Alas, while Ma himself was cunning, he was burdened with men who were less skilled as he, and many of them met with failure in their attempts. Lord Jia Dian died of the plague, but his acolyte carried on his work.

Western Sung Empire

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

Song Zhi Zhe

Diplomacy: Lord Loung Wang was murdered by the nomads of the north during his embassy there. Little surprise either, really, for all know how the unwashed barbarians have no sense of The Law or civilization... Lang Shan and associated tribes (hostile).



Song Zhi Zhe, alarmed by the nomads to the north, hastened to build up the defenses of the realm. A great series of castles and forts were raised along the frontiers, and sentries posted. But all was not grim, for the scholars were commanded to raise a great Pillar of Sangha in Shensi to revere the Buddha and provide an inspiration to all. Also, Song's wife was busy giving him two sons in these years.

Lord Sheshen died of consumption while in Chiennan. His acolytes carried on his work in Yun. However, the lord of Yun himself was patrolling the province of Shensi, unable to meet with them lest the barbarians come pouring over the frontier on his watch...Lord Mao, for his part, proved a corrupt and venal bureaucrat, and his sheer incompetence caused the royal coffers and scholars many headaches.

Japan

Mercenaries for hire: 21i, 10xi, 10xc, 10hc, 12w, 10t

Clan Kiyowara

(Shinto Civilized Religious Order)

Kiyowara Masahiru

Diplomacy:

The head of the clan, Takanori, died, finally, and was replaced by his cousin Masahiru.

Nihon-no-Tenno

(Shinto Civilized Religious Primacy)

Tenno Saso-no-yuki

Diplomacy:

The Imperial court mourned for a year and a day upon the death of the Emperor Sotoku. The designated successor, Konoe, had a very short reign of only a year before also perishing (that year was given the name Hougen). Through the usual arcane and obtuse rituals, a member of the bloodline took the throne and the name Saso-no-yuki. The Court tried its best to stay clear of Shogunate politics. The (new) Tenno gave his reign the era name of Heiji.

The Minamoto Shogunate

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

Minamoto Toshimitsu

Dynastic events: Princess Kimie died up in northern, cold Niigata. Testunori, son of Naetoru, was invested as future Shogun by Toshimitsu. Lord Danjuro was killed in a duel.

The Minamoto heads, much like their Taira foes, bolstered their samurai ranks greatly in anticipation of coming war with the southern Daimyo. Nonetheless, Toshimitsu continued to advocate certain changes in the society and structures of the rules governing samurai behaviour and the caste system of the Japanese. The massive influx of samurai into the areas surrounding Heian led to the growth of many suburbs, inns, and camps there. The Shogun's advisors warned him that if he trusted his subordinate generals with too many men, that they might prove less than trustworthy, for it was a time of betrayals and danger in Nihon...

The Daimyo of Toyama set sail to the south, looking for the southern passage to the lands down there, for loot and conquest...but the seas, rough and wild, laid low his plans, and he lost 4 of his 10 ships before returning, disgraced.

The Taira Shogunate

(Shinto Civilized Open Empire)

Taira Yasuhisa

Diplomacy:

Taira Yasuhisa, preparing for war, raised a large army and watched and waited for the damn Minamoto...

Central Asia

Mercenaries for hire: 12i,19c,3s,7xi

The Mongol Khaganate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Bartan ba'atur of Kiyat

Diplomacy:

The Lord of the Mongols surveyed the lands around him. he snarled when he heard of the exploits of those bastard Jungarians, half farmers the lot! But, there existed no tribes near enough for Bartan to conquer. Perhaps the route of conquest lay elsewhere...

Glorious Khwarzim

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Kemal

Diplomacy: Kazakh(fa)

Kemal, heedless of the danger of the Uighur, had concentrated his efforts on bringing the Khazakh tribes back into his realm. However, it was not long before he was summoning all his men to him to defend Khiva and assist his allies in Ilig...Luckily, the Uighur bypassed his lands, and the only tragedy that befell Khwarzim in these years was the death of Lord Ak'alla.

The Uighur Khanate of Jungaria

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Khagan Thakir II

Diplomacy: Kazan Horde [Ob, Kazan, Kama Bulgar] (f)

The Great Uighur Khagan Thakir, glowering down at the lowlanders, dreamt of conquest and riches. Those cities of theirs, where the gold flowed like a river, were ripe for the picking. And the horsemen who pledged loyalty before him were limitless, while his people looked to him for the land they needed to settle in...He gathered his men to him, and let the word go out to the tribes...into the lands of the weak they would go, and find plunder and loot for all...and so, Thakir set off at the head of a veritably limitless host of horsemen and refugees from the steppe. The ground shook as they moved, and the animals for hundreds of miles around sensed great changes in the air, and fled.

The Karakhanate of Ilig

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Saleh

Diplomacy: Uzbek(f), Missionary attempts in Khazakh and Gurgan met with little success.

The Karakhanate, long a land of peace, prosperity, and civilization on the outskirts of the Dar Al Islam, enjoyed a few final months of calm as word reached Saleh that the Uighur hordes of the steppe were on the move...While Saleh had great ambitions for the nation, all that would have to wait for now. The alarms sounded when word of the invading nomads reached the steps of the palace, and it was clear that the day his father had feared had finally come. He hastened to return to Samarkand from his work in Kophat Dagh...A worse time for such a crisis could not be imagined, for the kingdom had just come through one dynastic rift



and the loyalties and influence of his sister Rana, perhaps his most skilled commander, were not only in doubt but she was also in far off Khvor with the majority of the khanate's horsemen pursuing the pacification of the nomads down there. This left the defense of the realm up to Lord Abdullah with much of the army in Samarkand, and Mostafa on the frontier with a token force until Saleh and Rana could return to Samarkand. Saleh set off as fast to glorious Samarkand as his horsemen could travel...

The Raids of the Uighur Khan: 535-540 Anno Hegira (1156 - 1160 Anno Domini)

Khagan Thakir crossed the mountains in Otrarsh early in 535, trailing behind him, the legends say, at least eighty-thousand horsemen, thirty-five thousand foot-warriors, and a sea of dispossessed men, women, and other tribesmen looking for a place to settle...the earth itself bowed to him (as well it should) as the trees and ground were trampled flat by the passing of the tribes...accompanying him were his allies, the Khan of the Gobi Tribes, and Chief of Hill Tribes of Memar and their horsemen. Over the mountains they came, and into the lush valleys of Otarsh. As they traveled through Otarsh towards Tashkent, they were harassed by the scores of hill forts and mountain redoubts that the Ilig had built up over the years, and they were pelted with stones as they passed by the Fortress of the Prophet along the silk road. In Tashkent, behind high walls, was Lord Mostafa and his guard and Abdullah, who had just arrived from Samarkand to reinforce Tashkent. They were at an impasse, for Thakir had bypassed the fields and forts of Otarsh itself, and seemed to be foregoing any attacks. True, there were rapine and looting on a small scale, but, on the whole the nomads seemed on the move rather than on the attack. Perhaps, Mostafa and Abdullah hoped, they had decided to leave the Karakhanate in peace? As the nomads hove into view of Tashkent, however, such hopes were dashed as Thakir encamped to the north of the city and sent his men to survey its defenses.

Abdullah was in a bind. Saleh had tasked him to defend the lands of the Ilig, but to ensure that he not get caught in the open against a large force of horse. Still, if he was to use the Otarsh forts to his advantage, he could hardly do that behind the strong city walls of Tashkent. And he knew all too well that when Thakir saw Glorious Samarkand he would also see that the grand city, ever bustling, had recently torn down its walls to make room for more scholars and merchants...

And so it was that when word reached Abdullah that the proud Khan Thakir had fallen prey to an assassins' knife, and a great commotion had erupted from the camps of the nomads, that he took the chance to leave

Mostafa in Tashkent and return to ensure the safety of his Lord and Samarkand.

Earlier that month, in the hustle and bustle of the hundreds of camps in Otarsh, a group of horsemen, looking every bit the dusty and weary nomads who surrounded them, burst into the tent spaces of Thakir. Drawing their scimitars, they shouted a cry to Allah and struck...they were immediately cut down by the Khan's guards, but not before a poison arrow had pierced Thakir's chest. Even before he was dead, bickering and accusations had erupted between his son (Thakir the second) and the sub-Khans, as well as the allied khans of the Gobi and Memar tribes. Sub-Khan Zutarsh, plotting to rally the tribes to his side, was betrayed by ca-Ataj, and soon decapitated by Thakir the second's personal guard. While he was slaying a number of notables who had never been too happy to follow his father, the allied Khans pulled up their tent stakes and returned to their ancient homelands, preferring the stability of the steppe to the lowlands and the brutality of Thakir. While Thakir was brutally enforcing his rule among the tribes encamped in Otarsh - and ensuring that no one else remained to challenge him - the news of the death of his father spread through the steppe lands that had vowed loyalty to him. The lands of the Gobi and Memar tribes were the first to declare independence, when their Khans returned to them. Over the next few months, the tribes in Bulingir, Gaxun Nur, Gurvan, Hsia-Hsia, Kashgar, Lang-Shan, Lob-Nor, Shan, Sinkiang, and Taklamaklan all declared their independence from Thakir II. The entire affair left many hundreds dead and thousands exiled from Thakir's camps and it took many months before the new Uighur Khan was ready to continue on and get his revenge against those who murdered his father. This sentiment of murderous rage was only increased when a second assassin, this time from Khwarzimir, was caught sneaking into camp. Thakir took great pleasure in watching his slow death by flaying.

As Thakir surveyed the grand and high walls of Tashkent, he remembered the words of his father: "Do not attempt to take lands, nor to storm a lowland city if they are walled, for while they are weak as kittens, they will take a great toll with their stones and arrows from the wall-heights, and they will come upon your men when they are preoccupied with taking the women and wealth of the cities...instead, seek out those cities that are without stone around them, and swarm into them, killing all and leaving none left behind. Then, and only then, will your men safely feast on the wealth of the farmers and city dwellers..." And so it was that Thakir now turned away from Tashkent, much to the relief of Mostafa who remained inside its walls...his goal was to attack, loot, and burn legendary Samarkand for his scouts had told him it was bereft of walls...

By this time, Saleh of Ilig and Princess Rana had both returned to that city, and had put aside their differences and were gathering together with Abdullah's men, who had arrived after a long trip in which they evaded the horsemen...Much like Otarsh, the lands of Kara-Khitans had been built up for many years with forts and redoubts, anticipating an eventual invasion from the north. But none had foreseen such a vast ocean of horse that Thakir brought with him. As the people of Samarkand fled to the West, Saleh, Rana, and Abdullah gathered their forces to "use the field forts to their advantage" and make a stand against the hordes in the hills and valleys of Kara-Khitans. So, as the horsemen moved they came under increasing attacks from the many forts throughout Kara-Khitans as well as from scouts of the Ilig. The land had been built up, literally, for decades against just such a possibility of nomadic invasion. Thus, as Thakir moved through with his 120-thousand plus nomads, he remembered the words of his father again to avoid combat in the lands and only sack cities if possible. The 54-thousand odd Ilig warriors across the region were not allowing him to bypass the region itself, and so, after a few months, he turned north and away from battle.

Thakir's horde then skirted far to the north in Kara-khitan, and bypassed into Bactria, followed in close pursuit by the armies of Ilig. Bactria, too, had fortifications, but not as many as the Ilig homeland. But what was more important, was that Iskander was walled. That combined with the armies of Abdullah and Saleh, forced Thakir to chose between a walled city and open battle, or continuing onwards. While the Ilig harried the vast refugee train ("laager") Thakir carried behind himself, they could do little due to the presence of so many defending nomads.

And so the Uighur avoided combat again, and continued into Bokhara. There, due to a combination of luck and skill, Abdullah and his men were finally able to bring the nomads to battle in the hills of Bokhara before they could reach the unwalled city of Burkhara. Saleh and Rana had stayed behind in the capital, to protect it from other incursions and protect their seats of power. The 30-odd thousand men (including the fortifications throughout the area) met Thakir's nomad in a series of bloody battles, and soon had routed the nomads from the safety of their forts. The horde scattered to the north, into the desert lands of Kyzl-Kum, to lick their wounds. They soon disappeared into the lands of the Kazans...

A year or so later, when traders reached Samarkand with word that the Uighur had continued into the lands of the Northern Turks, it was clear that the immediate threat was over. Later, Mostafa of Ilig died from an infection he caught during the Uighur invasion of Otrarsh.

Pacifica

Deleur Acephalus of Nan Matol

(Oceanic Pagan Seafaring Open Empire)

Lezerux

Diplomacy:

The mysterious civilization of Ponape continued to be beyond the ken of those elsewhere...

South East Asia

Mercenaries for hire: 7i, 4xc, 5w

The Dai Kingdom of Annam

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

T'an Minh II

Other dynastic events of note: The Lady Yingnam died in her sleep...

The high and hilly lands of Gouangxi were cultivated with many peasant laborers from the interior. This was one of the few useful proclamations that came from the mouth of the King in these years for he had become bored with the day to day affairs of state. He began to spend much of his time dallying with various concubines and ladies of the court, and was purported to have sired no less than 4 illegitimate sons in these years...This was probably just as well, for he had proven himself no friend of the Confucian Court. While the Eunuchs were placating Tan Minh and engaging in dangerous intrigues amongst themselves, the royal bureaucrats were exasperated by the meddling of Tanh Minh, and were just as happy to see him spending more time with the Ladies of the Pillows than in the court. At least then they could get some work done. Now if they could only get rid of those meddling Eunuchs...T'an Lung II, the younger brother of the King, helped out the bureaucrats, a bit. The weakness in the capital brought some independent minded types out of the wood work in distant Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Laos, but nothing yet has come of it.



Encouraged by this lack of direction in the court, the dashing and handsome Duke To of Nan Chao (a relation to the throne by way of the Dowager Empress Yingam, who has, by the way, outlived both sons and may outlive her grandson at this rate!) took this opportunity to woo and, after a short time (and a minor scandal) the Princess T'an Bai. There was some slight hullabaloo soon after the wedding and Tan Lung, not too stupid, decides it is best for Duke To to get out of the Court for a while to let things cool down. Hence., he is sent on missions of naval exploration to the far east where he can't get in too much

trouble. At the head of 6 of the finest junks in the fleet, he heads East...and is never seen again (at least not on this plane of existence). T'An Bai mourns deeply, and his brief marriage and adventure will, much later, become the subject of many popular operas.



The Kambujadesa Empire

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Javyaravarman

Diplomacy:

The Prince of Siam, a trusted ally of Khmer, mourned for a year and a day after his wife Vimila was found

drowned in the palace pool. As she was also the daughter of the late, great Suryavarman II, the nation as a whole was saddened. But lord Javyaravarman, not the most diplomatic, or well loved but perhaps one of the most skilled rulers in Khmer history, kept the nation on an even keel and completed a number of projects long in the works. A trading post was formalized in the hills of Surin, known as Surinya, and a great road, through treacherous passes and dangerous swamps was plowed from it, around the Mekong, and finally to Angkor. The far off entrepot of Singapore also expanded due to trade and the influx of merchants and guilds led even more farmers sons to abandon the ancient art of rice growing for the hullabaloo of the cities and open oceans.

Lord Phran Somnuk also expired in these years of some sort of attack by an angry ghost, rumoured to be a jilted lover. His replacement traveled down to Singapore along with elements of the fleet to administer over the entrepot and patrol the area in a (probably vain) attempt to expel the various pirate clans that made their homes in the area.

The Kingdom of Thaton

(Buddhist Civilized Open Empire)

U Thant

Diplomacy:

The plague swept through the royal court, claiming the lives of Souphan, and precipitating the ascendancy of U Thant to the vacant throne. A number of other notables and court hangers-on also passed away, including Anawratha the Younger, Ken Tung, and Telok Anson. Adding to the misery of the realm a series of particularly harsh winters reduced much of the rice crops in these years.

Indonesia

Mercenaries for hire: 15w, 8t, 6i

Free State of Palawau

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Mukmin

Diplomacy:

Continued to ply their trade far and wide...

The God-Empire of Sri Vijaya

(Buddhist Seafaring Open Empire)

Gozomye

Diplomacy: Sunda in Pajajaran (f), Utara (f), Kediri (ea)

As Gozomye continued to consolidate and extend his rule across Indonesia, the Grand City of Buddhist Sri-Vijaya continued to grow as merchants from all over came there to trade their wares (as well as a variety of others - pirates and refugees mostly). It was truly an island of Buddhist calm amongst a sea of pagan islanders. Proud Gozomye inaugurated his son, Jimunum, as a prince of the realm and then, when Waahibah died of a tropical flu, to be next in line for the throne. In further dynastic news, Amajanti, the spinster daughter of long-gone Ginandjar, was married off to the Prince of Utara in a successful bid to get that land to join the Empire.

India

Mercenaries for hire: 17i, 5c, 14w

Kalachuri Kingdom of Tripuri

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Jayala

Diplomacy:

Despite the troubling rise of haemophilia amongst the royal family, the Tripuri kingdom was otherwise uneventful.

Pratihara Kingdom of Kaunaj

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Otarappan

Diplomacy: Lord Sughosh had some progress in his efforts in Jihjoti, but they were largely wasted after the events in Rewa later...

Otarappan continued to struggle with the heretics in Jihjoti, but they remained recalcitrant in their beliefs in the Shiva-goddess. While the King raised new legions - just in case - clashes between the Shiva cultists in the countryside and the more traditional Hindu dwellers of the city of Rewa became more and more violent, and scores died. And while the Brahmins and priests of the realm tried, and failed, to convince the cultists of the falsity of their beliefs, the hand of Shiva itself descended from the sky and took revenge upon the unfaithful in the city of Rewa. Rewa, a stronghold of Hinduism surrounded by a sea of Shiva-cultists, was shook to its foundations by the greatest earthquake in the history of the region. for three terrifying hours, the

ground heaved and buckled, toppling almost all the buildings of the city, killing thousands, if not tens of thousands. Those who survived, fled into the countryside to the righteous smirks of the cultists. Many of the survivors took up the Shiva faith after they returned to the ruins of the city and saw the corpses of their loved ones, being picked by the buzzards. Later, came the plagues and illnesses, and the rats. In all, over half the people in the city had been killed, and the city itself rendered a ghost of its former self...

Sad Drivida Kingdom of Ceylon

(Hinduism Seafaring Open Empire)

Bhaljahu

Diplomacy: Missionary efforts to convert the Buddhists in Sri Lanka met with moderate success...

The increased religious fervor of the past generation showed its fruit as the Brahmins of these years showed themselves to be high-minded and aggressive in seeking out new knowledge and ideas to enrich their culture. The schools bloomed and the temples thrived, and all felt that they were indeed living in the golden age of Seylon. This was especially felt when news of the tragedy in Rewa and the rise of the troubling Shiva-cultists spread. A number of students and scholars founded a city devoted entirely to learning and study in the cool hills of Sangas, and named it Bhellium. In these times of plenty and optimism, King Bhaljahu took a local noblewoman as his wife, who later bore him a boy and a girl.

Lord Bhelisad died from pneumonia while on embassy in Sangas, and Lord Tingistor retired from public life. A young and adept man rose to take Bhelisad's place at the table and salvaged the negotiations, earning himself a spot amongst the Brahmins. Sangas became fully part of the realm.

The Order of the Dagger

(Hinduism Civilized Religious Order)

Chulori

Diplomacy:

Lord Chanakya Nandalal died peacefully, having brought his order to prominence in holy India. The warriors of the order continued to make great strides in their martial prowess, but otherwise stayed away from worldly affairs.

The Pala of Bengal

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Humaputrim, the Pillar

Diplomacy: Palas(c), Missionaries were active, and pretty successful in the high-reaches of Sikkim

Fretting, Humaputri felt stymied by his advisers, for they kept trying to rein in his spending on new scribes

and guards, as they did little good. Bah! So he busied himself with the running of the government, just like always. It's not *always* good to be the king. At least he got to spend plenty of time with his wife, who bore him a son in these years. he also busied himself ordering and overseeing a new courier route to Nadavaria across the grand bridge there. The land as a whole, peaceful, continued to grow in wealth and activity. The city streets bustled, the peasants laboured, and the Brahmins studied and ruled. The influx of lower-caste members into the city of Guar expanded it to include the fort of Ganesha, the Elephant God, on the water and at the great anchors of the bridge across the river. Lord Lachai was commanded by the King to get the royal records in order, including bringing many of the unwashed into the tax rolls. Despite everyone's expectation that this was a well-nigh impossible task, after 4 years of hard work across the land, he succeeded. And it killed him, for it weakened his heart so much that when he finally stopped, he didn't get up again.

Western Dhara Kingdom

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Munja

Diplomacy:

Peaceful, with little of note.

Persia

Mercenaries for hire: 4i, 9c, 1s, 5xi

The Ghaznavid Emirate

(Shi'a Islam Barbarian Open Empire)

Mustafa, Emir of Ghaz

Diplomacy: Kash (ne), Badakhshan (hostile! "Go home Shia pig-dogs!"), Kashmir given as the personal fief of Mehmet.

Mahmud, Sultan of Ghaz, knew he should take care of a few internal problems before turning his eyes anywhere else, and those pesky Hindu peasants in Parapavura still needled him. Assembling his men, he took a train of administrators and mullahs to that mountain city to settle there, but got caught in a landslide

on the way and, alas, the Sultan was crushed beneath a pile of boulders. His men recovered his body, and gave it a proper burial, in the highlands, next to an ancient stele.



When news reached Kabul, Prince Mustafa saw his chance immediately. A highly ambitious man, he knew that now was an opportunity, not a trial. Quickly purging the court of a variety of enemies (perceived and otherwise) he set himself up as the lord of the realm, not answerable to anyone. The few sultans who

protested that his family had always been first among equals were dealt with. Lord Oshtuk, after he returned from his mission, soon fell to this ax. After a short time, Mustafa had brought all power in the realm unto his person, as Emir. Having done so, he found that he was tied up in the affairs of state that come with such power. AS a result he ordered Oshtuk to deal with the Parapavura problem as the former Sultan had intended while Mustafa spent some time with his wives (but no progeny came along). Oshtuk took his men north and settled a number of his men in and around the city to bring it closer to Ghaznavid control.

Tragedy also struck the Emirate in these years, when a massive fire swept through the caravanserai in Kabul and proceeded to decimate most of the city.

The Saffarids of Baluchistan

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Salman

Diplomacy: Qatar (a)

Sheykh Kaboos, the designated heir to the throne, died a violent death in Qatar when he and his men were ambushed by a group of angry Bedouins. Despite the mourning and concern in the Emir's family, work in the kingdom went on: a couriers' road was completed linking Safahali with the wilds of the Siahhan desert and, as part of this effort, the area around Safahali was brought under cultivation. More and more slaves were taken into the guilds and given some degree of freedom in the process...

Middle East

Mercenaries for hire: 10w, 1hw, 8t, 19i, 19xc.

Merc-leader-at-large (for hire): Manosh Kazarani (K646), true Sultan of the Buwayids (no restrictions on hiring)

Ar Rassid Imamat as Sa'Na

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Azir Abu Naharen

Diplomacy:

Azir Abu Naharen assumed the throne upon the death of his father, the Jackal. Otherwise, the land was quite except for the throngs of pilgrims to Jakhaila.

Ar Rawwadid Emirat at Tabriz

(Sunni Islam Barbarian Open Empire)

Mohammed

Diplomacy:

Little of note occurred in these years in the Emirate...

Heyrenik'un Armeniam

(Eastern Orthodox Barbarian Open Empire)

Hieriea Amirspalar

Diplomacy:Galatia(fa)

Having been finally convinced by the priests of the sanctity of the Catholic rite - which was, in truth, almost identical to the Armenian rite they practiced - Hieriea formally asked Metropolitan Phillipus of Armenia to re-integrate the Armenia priests into the Catholic hierarchy. While the two rites were extremely similar, they were not identical, and some strife did erupt. Hieriea was prepared for this however, and had set her efforts on smoothing over any discontent. Despite her best efforts, the people of both Cappadocia and Psidia rejected the changes. Lord Drastimad, tasked by the queen to prevent any uprisings to her rule, marched on the recalcitrant priests of Psidia and met them at the head of a peasants' army outside Hierancyra. The peasants, inflamed by holy passion, soundly trounced Drastimad and sent him packing back to Armenia.

The city of Thedyarbekir, named in honour of Hieriea's departed and wise uncle, grew up around the fortress of Ardasur in Armenia.

The Abasi Caliphate

(Sunni Islam Civilized Religious Primacy)

Akbar, Sword of Allah

Diplomacy:

The stress of the news of the invasion of the Uighur from the east and the internecine fighting amongst the faithful in the Dar Al Islam led to pressure by the Ulema on Omar to step down early in favor of a more responsive Caliph. Otherwise the only news was the founding by pilgrims and merchants of the city of Raqqa in Diyala.



The Almohad Caliphate (dead)

(Sunni Islam Nomadic Open Empire)

Mehmed

Diplomacy:

The death of al'Muwahhidun early in these years came just as the Buwayids began their march into Aleppo itself, plunging the Almoravids into turmoil. Mehmed took command of the few remaining Bedouin warriors and the vast numbers of Awlil refugees in order to put up some last minute defense and save his faltering people from destruction...

The Buwayid Sultanate

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Awud ibn Zarife

Diplomacy: Abadan(t)

Zarife's ambition continued to grow, and he gathered his warriors under him to extend the reach of the Sultanate as far as fabled Antiocha - at the expense of the Almoravid dogs...

The War of the Buwayid Ascendancy 1150 ~1160 A.D.

Leaving his son with much of his men, he took his generals Ayub and Fouad and the bulk of the army and marched on Aleppo itself. As the wagon trains left Carhae and entered the dusty lands of Palmyra, disaster struck when Zarife and Ayub, conferring together in their tent, were crushed when a caravan of camels was spooked and rampaged across the camp. Leaving the politics of the incident aside, General Fouad took the men and continued westward into Aleppo to fulfill his sultan's last wishes and conquer the Bedouin Almoravids. While Fouad was not the most respected commander, he did have the advantage of being well liked and as his men were ready to fight. There was no love lost between them and the barbarian Alwlil anyways, and as they came out of the desert and found themselves amidst the refugee camps and occasional horsemen of the Almoravid, they eagerly took to battle. Over the next few months, the sheer weight of the refugees - sneaking into their camps at night, dropping rocks on them from hill ambushes, and luring them into traps, took their toll, but the Buwayids continued to fight. Although the Alwlil had many tens of thousands of men women and elderly fighting for their lives, the actual warriors at their command had largely died year ago against the Crusaders...The campaign dragged on for over a year, and, amidst terrible

slaughter. In the end, although the Bedouins had dealt the Buwayids massive losses, and even managed to drive them back into Carhae at one point, they were all slaughtered by the Arabs. The remaining Buwayids marched into Aleppo again the next year, to find the region a wasteland of burnt villages and scattered ruins. Antioch itself was defenseless - there was no one left to resist even if they had walls to hold back the invaders...the Almohads were dispersed to the four winds, and the Buwayid family was ascendant. As a footnote, just as Faoud was entering Antioch, one of the (many) spiteful Alwil children pushed over a mass of stonework and masonry from an upper building, killing the general. Back in Baghdad, Awud had consolidated his control of the Sultanate amidst some strife, but, as fate would have it, with the death of Fauod, all threats to his rule had been taken care of.

The Great Khanate

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Cha Khan

Diplomacy:

Ensclosed in Kul'sary, the Great Khanate settled down, and, for the moment, disappeared from the pages of history...

The Hatamid Emirat

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Rukh al-Din, Sultan of Damasc

Diplomacy:

The death of Rukh-al-din ushered in the reign of his son, Rasul-al-haq.

The Yemeni Rassid Imam

(Sunni Islam Nomadic Open Empire)

Ty'rik ur'Adal

Diplomacy:

The Imamate was at peace, and tranquil...

North Africa

Mercenaries for hire: 2w, 1hw, 2t, 10i, 9xc.

Empire of Egypt

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Badr II

Diplomacy: Ad'Diffah (t), Ulema missionary work in Kordofan met with little success...

The heart of the Arab world remained largely at peace under the stewardship of Badr the second, unlike the rest of the Dar Al Islam. Newly conquered Alwa was brought under the plow, and Nubia was colonized with loyal Arab peasants, pushing out the Ethiop Coptics. As always, Badr was vigilant, and ensured that the coasts and lands of his realm were vigorously patrolled and that the war against the Italians was well-funded from his coffers...Two girls were borne to Badr's wife, but tragedy also struck the royalty as Prince Nithotep and Prince Khatra both died in these years (of unrelated and natural causes.)

The Cypriot Pirates

(Sunni Islam Seafaring Religious Order)

Jamis

Diplomacy: Egypt (down to OH after spectacular failures by Commander Ladrow), Faiyum (oo)

Grandmaster Jamis, ruling from his high perch in Alexandria, enjoyed himself greatly over these years reveling in how far he had come, and how things had changed, since he served Egypt. Now look at him, he was master of his own house, with men and ships at his command. True, his ancient home of Cyprus remained under Christian domination, but, also, the Egyptians respected and feared his order. Truly life was good. He relaxed in these years with those thoughts as well as in the arms of his wives, who bore him a son (and three daughters as well). Ladrow and Bishar busied themselves extending the orders' influence across the nearby lands, with borrowed money from the Jewish bankers...They didn't have much success, despite this. In fact, commander Ladrow never returned from this trip, as he died in some brigand attack in the south. His replacement attempted to carry on his duties, and largely failed.

Ummayad Sultanat al Oran

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Cathalon, the Cunning

Diplomacy: Kabilya (a), servants of the Sultan continued to preach the word of Allah in Catalonia, to some success.

Muawayia continued to petition the Imam for aid against the thrice-damned Catholics - was he not the only member of the Dar al Islam fighting for the Faith? But, no messages came from the East...And so, he set forth once again to deal with the Italians and free Palermo from the clutches of the Catholics - one way or another. He began by sending forth the word to all the bazaars and caravanserai throughout north Africa that swords for hire would find riches in the employ of Oran...

Eastern Europe

Mercenaries for hire: 12i, 11c, 6w

Duchy of Lithuania

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Open Empire)

Vilas, Duke of Lithuania

Diplomacy:

Duke Vilas and the kingdom were peaceful in the cold East, but were troubled by omens of rampaging hordes...

Duchy of Poland

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Open Empire)

Ziemowit Curlybeard

Diplomacy:

Also a peaceful land in these years...

Khanate of the Northern Turki (dead)

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Dastan II

Diplomacy:

Dastan's empire was overwhelmed in one fell swoop when the Uighur horde, swept out of the Ilig lands, and descended upon Nogai and Bolgar. Dastan's men fled in the face of overwhelming odds, and disappeared into the Russian steppelands. The walled city of Great Bolgar was spared the onslaught of the nomads, and appealed to them to spare their lives...

Oriental Roman Empire

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Theodore the Scribe

Diplomacy: City of Sinope (a), Despite the ill health of the nation, Theodore's wife gave birth to two sons and two daughters in these years, bringing hope for the people that perhaps the famine might lift one day

soon...

Devastated by the plagues of locusts and such that destroyed crops in the Empire for the last five years - and hence severely reduced tax revenues - Theodore was forced to borrow heavily from the Jewish bankers and levy new and stringent taxes on the people to keep the government running. And the fates did not smile on Byzantium in these years, for as the bugs and beetles that had destroyed the crops for years began to subside drought and famine struck, again. "By God, what have we done to deserve this?" moaned Theodore, as he saw people starving in the streets and refugees fleeing the Empire for greener pastures. Only a loan by the Rum Khanate combined with oppressive taxes kept the empire afloat...Theodore and others looked back on the glory days of the Crusade of Basil as a time long lost...Still, Tannehauser kept the troops on the frontier and Manuel Comensus (and the fleet) in Carsk, kept watch for any invasion of Muslims. Press gangs were necessary to prevent mutinies and ruffians prowled the highways, looking for food and gold. Comensus himself fell victim to a group of mutineers.



The Ests

(European Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Cimir

Royal events: Prince Piotr Werkuun died of some pox like illness...

Cimir oversaw the settlement of a number of refugees fleeing the steppes on the shores of Lake Lagoda, in a new village to be known as...Lagoda. This was pleasing to Cimir for more people, meant more gold for his coffers, and this was aided by the completion of a courier's road between Moltha and Reval. In this way Cimir could better rule his vast domains.

The Rum Khanate of Turkiye

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Open Empire)

Tyox, The Vanguard

Diplomacy:

The Christian frontier, guarded by the Khans of Turkiye, remained safe for now. Despite holding court (such as it was) in cities that had now known peace for over a decade, the Khan's men were not lax, and continued to build great their walls and fortresses to hold back the Muslims. Nonetheless, the Turkiye were not above a little money-making on the side, and the engines of economics forced trade to re-open with the Egyptians across the Mediterranean.

The Turki

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Queen Mahea

Diplomacy:

Uneventful and peaceful was the Turki realm in these years...

The Varangian Rus of Kiev

(Eastern Orthodox Civilized Open Empire)

Thorfinn II, The Rus-Axe

Diplomacy:

Aside from the death of Thorfinn I at the ancient age of 75, and the ascension of his son (who had been forced to wait until he was 40 to assume the throne, damn his old man!), the realm was at peace, yet wary of nomads to the east...

The Western Roman Empire

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Euthemius, son of Christoph.

Diplomacy:

Aside from Vlad the Abstainer passing away from an extended flu, the land, finally was settling down. Christophorus remained locked away with his demons, while his son ruled in his stead.

The Yasi

(Asiatic Pagan Nomadic Open Empire)

Ku'Lo

Diplomacy:

Tzoemir passed away and was succeeded without incident during the councils of the tribes. The nomads continued to hunker down in Mordva, and the Khan of the Ialomita left their cause to return to his homeland.

Western Europe

Mercenaries for hire: 20hi, 10ei, 5hei, 30i, 30c, 15hc, 10ec, 10hec, 20w, 5ht

Das Deutesches Konigsreich

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Joseph Albrecht

Diplomacy: city of Bremen (fa), Lord Gunter sailed to the north seas, probably looking for the passage to the Viking lands, but did not return.

The Reich, its war weary people hopeful for an abatement of misfortune, undertook the restoration of their ravaged lands and cities harried by the Northmen during the most recent wars. The Emperor Albrecht, seeking a bride for himself and a groom for his niece in free Bremen (so that his dynasty might continue to reign unimpeded) ordered the smoke blackened ruins of Frankfurt and Kiel refurbished even as he lavishly subsidized the revival of trade throughout the Rhine valley and Frisian coasts. Utrecht, however, the Empire forsook forever, abandoned to remain evermore a haunt of bandits and filthy scavengers in flight from civilization, in favor of aggrandizing the coastal village of Amsterdam with the royal favor, which now became the principal city of Holland, granting the burghers an imperial charter to monopolize the Reich's nascent trade to Moorish Lisbon. Once more merchants dared to ply the gray Northern waters to England, Estonia, Svearland, and beyond, the grim memories of baleful times banished to the custody of dusty chronicles penned by cloistered monks.

The Emperor ordered the gathering of various garrisons by his underlings to Saxony, where the canny Field Marshal Lothar oversaw the reorganization of the imperial hosts, sorely depleted by long years of strife against Frank and Viking enemies. Throughout the vast estates of the imperial family, the sergeants and hauptmanns, grimfaced veterans of the late Emperor's wars, conscripted the strongest and most martial youths, broad shouldered Saxons and ruddy cheeked Frisians inured to hardscrabble lives and enrolled them in the Emperor's own household guard under dire oaths of obedience to both God and Emperor, where they learned through grueling labor and discipline (upheld by the whip) to wield ax and sword and pike with surpassing grace, bending both mortal body and mind to attain mastery of the soldierly craft.

In royal news, Emperor Albrecht married a duchess of Bremen, and that city became part of the burgeoning Empire. Later, she gave birth to a son (finally!) to Joseph, but she died in the attempt. Helga, daughter of Emperor Albrecht, was married off to a capable burgher by the name of Frederick Barbarossa. Ancient Lord Jakob died from a nasty cold (heck, at his age, look at him cross eyed and he'd keel over...)

Duchy of Bohemia

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Sviatel

Diplomacy: none

The realm thrived in the peace that was prevalent, and the villages of Danube (at the mouth of the Danube in Slovakia) and Vienna (in Austria) were both incorporated into the realm. Also Praha and the surrounding lands grew rich as merchants and noblemen began once again to throng to its markets.

Kingdom of Spain

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Juan

Diplomacy: Navarre (f), Old Castille (ea)

Peace at last in Spain did not bring with it God's mercy, as a massive earthquake decimated Castellon one early wintry day...lasting four hours, the city's inhabitants were slaughtered by the collapsing walls and structures, and many fled, never to return. Valencia, too, suffered some damage, but not to the same terrible extent. King Juan, however, was off in Navarre, wooing the nobles there. His plan to bring together the disparate Catholics of Spain in one grand kingdom was greeted with disdain by many - the Spaniards were generally a mistrustful, independent lot. And, Juan was forced, by the events of the last war, to learn the lessons of his father well. No longer trusting to God and fate, he threw himself fully into the world of diplomacy. He dispatched Maria Elizabeta to find a marry a Navarrese nobleman ("for the good of Spain...") and he himself offered his hand (and the throne of Spain perhaps...) to a princess of Old Castille (who later bore him two daughters). All was not joyful, however, for Princess Isabella died in a nunnery under mysterious circumstances.

The Akramid Caliphate

(Sunni Islam Civilized Open Empire)

Mohamar

Dynastic events: Mohamar was sent into a depression upon the death of his beloved, and much younger, wife, from pneumonia. Obrahim, also died, from falling from his horse when he was spooked by (false) sightings of Italian warships off Madiera.

Refugees from the wars continued to settle in and around Elvas and Madiera, finding solace in the Mosques there. These were truly becoming some of the most grand cities of Iberia, much less the Islamic world...a grand road from Cordoba to Seville was completed, as the merchants pounded the dirt into hard packed earth and plied their wares all along it...

Mohamar took great pains to extricate Achmed and his men from Merrakesh, lest the Italians isolate and slaughter them across the Med. A keen eye was kept for Italian ships...but, in the end, the Akramid warriors returned to Seville safely.

La Milice Du Christ

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Religious Order)

Guillame Guiscard

Diplomacy: Vermandois (oh), Brabant(oh)

Guillame busied himself with ensuring his continued support for the Norman kings of France and expanding

the influence of the Order...

Le Royaume de Bourgogne (in exile)

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Phillipe II, the Blind and Scarred

Diplomacy:

Phillipe continued to rule the realm from the darkness (since he is blind, that is...) as messengers read him news that Henry of Normandy had invaded...

Norman Kingdom of France

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Marie Planchette, regent for Louis VI, the Boy-King

Diplomacy: Brittany (down to NT), Hainaut (down to NT),

Henry, fancying an end to the Burgundians once and for all, raised a great host and marched directly on his foe, without fanfare or trumpets, but a steely determination. For once and for all, while the Pope's eyes were turned to the troubles in Italy, he would destroy the Burgundian kingdom!...

The Norman-Burgundian War of 1156-59

Henry was brutally efficient, and marched directly into Burgundy itself at the head of a vast host of over 20,000 men. As soon as the news of war came to Bourgogne, Phillippe and his barons rushed to the defense of the realm. Baron Plum de Terre and Duke leTour led what men the Burgundians could muster to meet the Normans in the fields of the Rhine. The Burgundian cause immediately seemed hopeless for Norman scouts ambushed the caravan of the Baron, and slaughtered him, leaving leTour in charge. Blind Phillippe nervously awaited news from the front, and it came soon enough, with news of slaughter and mayhem. Phillippe's advisers quickly spirited him and most of the treasury out of Bourgogne towards the south.

The next season was spent by the Normans conquering the peoples of Burgundy and Bourgogne proper. The Abbess of Burgundy, head of the Pope's abbey high in the rolling hills outside Bourgogne, faced down the Norman hordes as they looked to the Abbey's riches. With a thunderous voice, she berated the Normans as impious, convincing them and Henry himself that to loot the Abbey would surely send them all to hell. Henry, not wanting to waste too much time, allowed the Abbey to stand, for now. The Normans then moved south into Lyonnais, where they beat the locals into paying tribute to the Norman crown (and did loot a Papal abbey there). Although they bypassed Lyon, they then moved into Provence itself, and that land was the victim of widespread Norman looting (and a revolt put down in the process), and Cannes,



with its paltry walls, was sacked and burnt -- though both of these campaigns inflicted losses to the Normans.

And Phillippe? he and what remained of the Burgundian nobles fled to the friendly city of Marseille and appealed to the Roman Pope for assistance. There was widespread hope that the Pope would intercede as the Normans had also looted and burnt the glorious Cathedral of Provence...

Upon the Norman army's return to Burgundy to revel in their victory over their hated foes, the Burgundians had their last laugh, for Henry expired one day after returning to the city when he received news that his son and daughter had both died in a hunting accident. In far off Paris, Louis VI was inaugurated as the new king, but he was a mere boy of 14. Bernard de Baileul, second in command of the army after Henry and a cunning veteran, now commanded the entire army in far off Burgundy. Indeed, rumours had been flying for many years of Bernard's own grand ambitions, and here, with the king gone and the army his, he found his chance. Promising his men riches and loot, he declared himself Duke of Burgundy, gave all the treasures from the looting of Provence to his soldiers, and seized control of Burgundy, Lyonnais, and Provence (much to the consternation of the Paris court where Marie Planchette, the wife of Henry and mother of Louis VI, was acting as regent for the boy-king).

The Dukedom of Burgundy

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Bernard de Baileul, Duke of Burgundy

Diplomacy:

The self-proclaimed Duke of Burgundy inaugurated his court amidst the once-proud city of Bourgogne...

The Anacletan Order

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Bertrand, Servant of Anacletus

Diplomacy:

When alone in his study one night, the holy Pope LeRoy passed away with a beatific and peaceful smile on his face. When word reached the Parisian peasants, a great moan began to arise, for it was well known amongst them that LeRoy was blessed by God and a Saint among men. For, was it not true that, only recently, he came across a Venetian woman spouting obscenities, curses, and lifting her skirt to anyone that passed by her, and, pitying the poor creature the Pope had approached the demon possessed Venetian and loudly stated..."In the name of GOD, begone!" And did this not drive out of her a stream of locusts and a vicious demon who was actually the Roman Pope Victor? It was well known, too, that the Roman screamed at LeRoy that "My master Satan shall have your soul" And with that, the little demon Roman Pope flew into the air, with the loud <brrrraap> sound of flatulence. Yes, the Saintliness of LeRoy was grand and his death brought forth a great weariness in the people of Paris. But the death of LeRoy brought

to the forefront a man who was liked far and wide himself, the Cardinal Bertrand. Bertrand was not only a firm believer in The Miracle of LeRoy and, of course, the Saintliness of Anacletus but many of the Parisian Cardinals were indebted to him in one way or another. Furthermore, in an earlier life, he had been a soldier of no small renown, and the followers of Anacletus needed now, more than ever, a warrior-pope. The power and influence of Rome grew monthly, and the wars in Burgundy and Italia troubled many in the Paris councils. It was at the Synod in Cherbourg that all would come to a head...

From the journals of Pope LeRoy, revealed upon his ascension:

One Friday afternoon, I was out on a soul winning hike and I came across a peasant wog working outside her home. I sensed immediately that she was a Roman Catholic and had been reared near Rome, Italy.

After chatting with her for a while, I brought up the subject of her salvation only to find that she knew absolutely nothing about the Bible. So I started from Adam and Eve and explained salvation's story to her in detail.

I told her that one time God made a man named Adam and a woman named Eve.

"Is that right?" she replied.

"Yes, He made Adam out of dust and He made Eve from Adam's rib."

"Well, isn't that unusual!" she replied.

"Then God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden."

"Oh, how nice."

"Then one day something happened. Eve did something wrong. Then Eve seduced Adam and made him do something wrong. They ate the forbidden fruit and ran from God's presence and were spiritually dead."

"Oh, how sad that they did that," she remarked.

Then I proceeded to tell her that immediately God promised He would provide a sacrifice through the seed of woman. I told her that Jesus was that sacrifice and that He died on the cross.

She could hardly believe what she heard. "Isn't that nice! That is so fine."

Then I proceeded to tell her that He died for her.

"Oh, that makes it better."

Then I told her about Heaven, and she could hardly believe what she heard. She was like a little Venetian boy at the bordello for the first time and was almost clapping her hands for joy as she heard for the first time not only the story of Christ but the story of Adam and Eve and really what the cross was all about.

When I asked her to bow her head and pray the sinner's prayer, she did so gladly but unconsciously prayed in Italian. When she finished praying, she looked up and asked, "Am I saved now? Will I go to Heaven when I die?"

I told her that if she had put her faith in Christ as her Saviour, she would go to Heaven.

"Well, I just did. Didn't you hear me?" She did not realize she had prayed in Italian.

I replied, "Maybe you did and maybe you didn't. I heard you gibber but I have no idea what you said."

"Oh, I prayed in Italian, didn't I? I guess I will have to do it again."

You should have seen the look on her face when I told her that God knew Italian very well, although he preferred French, and that He had heard her prayer and saved her soul. She seemed pleased not only that she was saved but that God was so well educated.

Happily she came forward the next Sunday professing her new-found faith in Christ. Though she died soon after, she no doubt is in Heaven having some "Italian fellowship" with Christ.

The Papal States

(Roman Catholic Civilized Religious Primacy)

Pope Victor II

Diplomacy: Venice (abbey), Valencia (ch), Tyrol (ca), Romagna (ca, but later Cardinal Anulfo died of old age on the way back), Aquitaine (ab)

Spiritually, the power and influence of the church continued to grow across Europe, while at the same time the secular realm was greatly troubled. The invasion from the north threatened much, and the news from Burgundy was grim as well. Nonetheless, many stalwart believers remained, and Victor was confident that God's grace would come to the heretics. Church monies flowed hither and yon to shore up support, a great amount of investment in Venice even, despite the...troubling actions of the Venetian dukes of late. Nonetheless, Papal nuncios, priests, and other representatives were assisting in a number of local and good will efforts in Venice as well as the lands of Bohemia.

The Pope himself was out of Italia consecrating a grand cathedral in the Alps of Tyrol, and so was able to stay out of harms way given all the trouble there, but he was greatly disturbed not only by the events there (which led to the looting of many Church sites there, particularly the messy destruction of the Cathedral of Campania) but also the destruction of the Glorious Cathedral of Provence by the Normans.

The Politics of the Synods

The supporters of the Parisian Papacy continued to agitate for a Synod to resolve the differences in the church, differences which grew day by day and had even begun to confuse the peasants and laity. Rome, for once, was silent in the matters of the Synod, and once the Synod of Cherbourg was announced, it began to work hard to encourage the princes and lords of Christendom to support its cause. The Normans too did the same, of course, but the wars that engulfed the lands had taken their toll on the Papal dispute, and in the single Synod that occurred, the tone was one of intense politicking amidst a backdrop of weariness.

The actual differences between the doctrines seemed minor these days, but this was probably more due to the despair after so many deaths and horrible acts in Burgundy and Italy. And, although the lands of Germany and Bohemia remained relatively peaceful now, it was only recently that they too were subject to invasion, rapine, and pillaging. Then, the sense of dread was only increased by news from the East, of great

Mongol hosts threatening all of the Kingdom of God. So, as the councils met and the differences among the Paris doctrine and the Roman Doctrine - such as the matter of lay investiture of the clergy (Anacletan doctrine was built on this idea, while Rome thought it heresy, and wished instead to reform the Church and prohibit simony, lay investiture and a married clergy) came into open debate, more telling than the words of God was the mood of the delegates. Such is the nature of politics. So, despite the "miracle of LeRoy" and a number of brutal murders of delegates to the Synod in the wilds of Lyonnais, Bertrand - the new Primate of the Anacletan Doctrine in Paris - found the delegates aligned against him. Indeed, only Normandy, Savoy, and the Knights of the Temple of Christ (la Milice du Christ) voted for legitimizing the Anacletan Doctrine. Everywhere Bertrand turned, the politics and back room deals worked against him, and the wars in Burgundy and Italia were a albatross around his neck, and the vast majority of the delegates voted for Rome (England, Spain, Salerno, Byzantium, Bohemia, Venice, and Svear)



In the end, fuming, shouting himself hoarse against the tyranny of Rome and its doctrine, Bertrand had no choice but to leave the Synod and return to Paris, dejected. The Parisian Papacy was now a "papacy" in name only, and all but Bertrand referred to it as the Anacletan Order. He still refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, but that now seemed only a matter of time.

(GM note: There is still a schism in the Church until the Anacletan Order recognizes the Roman Papacy- see the notes section of the newsfax on the "papacy in dispute" as to how this may happen. The Anacletan Order is now a Religious Order, and, due to its unique history, can share all its currently co-located sites with the la Milice du Christ. Any new sites cannot be co-located with similar sites of the la Milice du Christ - or any other religious order for that matter)

Republic of Venice

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Marcus

Diplomacy:

Marcus of Venice, tired of labouring for years under the threat from Salerno in the south and the upstart Savoyard Hyperborean barbarians to the west, knew that Venice was but a pawn in the politics of Italy and that she would be better off without either of these threats. Add to this the loyalty the Venetians had towards Rome, and it was a fine line Marcus and the Venetian nobles were forced to walk between appeasing and putting up with all their neighbors...it was into this environment couriers from certain states came bearing messages and offers that might yet be turned to Venice's advantage...

Hyperborean Italia of Savoy

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Open Empire)

Lydia, of Savoy

Diplomacy:

On more than one occasion lately Dong slammed his fist down on tables in meetings with his advisers, shouting about the arrogance and general unpleasantness of the Salernese and how it infuriated him. On top of this the Parisian Pope's star seemed to be dwindling rapidly. The only bright star in his political firmament lately was the envoys from the Venetians showed a greater respect than before, and a number of recent agreements seemed to have ended hostility between the Savoyards and the Venetians to a large extent. Admittedly, the Venetians still hewed to the official line from Rome, but, in the grand scheme of things, Dong knew that they were weak and feared both him as well as the rising influence of the Salernese..perhaps that could be used to his advantage..

Principality of Salerno

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

Marco Silvio

Diplomacy:

Refugees continued to flee the Muslim encroachment in the south, primarily settling in Naples and Calania. Marco himself, tired of the conflict and eager to put a final end to the Muslim uprisings in Sicily, set off with the fleet, loaded with men from Naples, and headed towards Sicily. Many of his generals followed..

The Salerno-Savoy Wars of 1156~1160

In the year 1156...

A number of sappers and footmen of Venice, under the command of Ludovico Sempro, cross over into Lombardy and meet up with Savoyard forces under their King's most trusted general, Ceasar Adolphus - indeed, to the Venetian nobles observing, it appears that the Savoyards have made the Venetians an offer they dare not refuse, and both armies march south towards Salernese territory. They soon cross over into Romagna (three months into the campaign season) and the Savoyard forces go about bringing the populace under their heel.

Meanwhile, Marco of Salerno has been campaigning in Sicily, from both land and by sea, he is determined to take Palermo from the hated Muslims. Landing troops near the city as well as being joined by Octavio over the ferry bridge, he begins an encirclement of Palermo in order to starve the Muslim insurgents out.

In Romagna, the Savoyards engage the local troops under the dukes of the area. Their "mercenaries," the Venetians, shun open battle and beginning to set up siege works around the walled city of Bologna. Over the next few months, the dukes of Romagna are hunted down in their villas and their guards slaughtered. Romagna is pacified by the Savoyards, and the Venetians begin a siege of Bologna. Bologna falls quickly to the skilled Venetians, and they occupy the town.



In Sicily, meanwhile the city of Palermo, out of food and surrounded by over 1,800 heavy pike and the entire Salerno fleet outside the harbor, soon gave up. Lord Jaffe, more of a nobleman than a general,

yielded quickly to the Italians. Jaffe and the few troops there are taken prisoner by Marco, and the city is occupied. Word has reached Sicily by now of the invasion in the north, and Octavio Brucellus and his men, patrolling the area, head back north to repel the invaders...

in the year 1157...

Throughout 1156 and much of 1157, news filters out of Palermo and Sicily of the Italian invasion there, and the loss of the city. The networks of Muslim merchants and pirates in the area bring word to the Cordobans, informing them of the troops and fortifications in Sicily. In far off Oran, a decision is made to move against the Italians there, especially given that word has reached them of some other Christians invading the Salernese in the north. Christians fighting Christians! Hah! The (comparatively paltry) Cordoban fleet sets sail for Sicily...

In the summer, Muslim troops begin landing in the bays and coves of Sicily, their landing continued through the year, as a number of mercenaries are brought in after the Sultans troops. The peasants and local dukes of Sicily sound the alarm, for Marco Silvio, Octavio Brucellus, and the Duke of Tuscany have all already gone to various points north.

Over the course of the rest of the year, the Cordoban troops and mercenaries under Ibn Arabi muster on the shores of Sicily while Arabi himself sends out a courier with an offer to the Sicilian nobles, enquiring whether and to what extent they are loyal to Salerno. Despite some fevered words and the general concern of the people, the Sicilians refuse the Oran embassy, for they are truly loyal and friendly to Marco's house. The Sicilians put up a spirited defense, but their villas are burned and they retreat to the walls of Palermo. After a brief siege, in which the Muslims in Palermo rise up against the now-outnumbered Christians, the inhabitants of the city welcome the Cordoban troops into the city once again. Sicily itself is occupied, but the land is barely under control, as the mercenaries under Oran hire really have the run of the place, and enjoy themselves engaging in pillaging and general looting of the area.

In the north, however, Marco Silvio has returned to Naples with the fleet, and the Duke of Tuscany and Octavio Brucellus march through to Campania. Word has reached them not only of the fall of Bologna but also that Spoleto too has fallen to Savoyard troops and that the Venetians are also in tow and marching on Campania...winter brings a halt to the campaign season.

In far-off Cordoba, the Sultan Muawayia dies at the ripe old age of 59. Cathalon "the Cunning" assumes the throne, (although he is off at war at the time).

In the year 1158...:

Marco Silvio, Octavio, and the Duke of Tuscany all prepare to meet the invading Savoyards coming across from Spoleto, followed in trace by the siegemen and sappers of the Venetians. On the first day of their march across the mountains into Campania, the Savoyards suffer a tragic setback. Caesar Adolphus, long suffering from stomach pains and severe headaches, collapses and cannot be revived. A brilliant commander of many battles, the 18,000 men (mostly armoured horse) of the Savoy army are certain this spells doom, for they have come to believe in Ceasar as a reincarnation of *that* Ceasar. Their king, nonetheless, has faith

in Ceasar's second (a certain "Spunk" Felchmorio) and entrusts command to him. he is an able commander, but not the equal of Ceasar. The house of Savoy, however, is certain that their sheer numbers will overwhelm the damned Salerno fools in any case. And they're right, to a point. The *Battle of Mount Tulia* begins as a failed ambush, when mounted scouts from Naples encounter a wagon train of the Savoyards, and both armies are drawn into what becomes a bloody brawl. The 15,000 footmen of the Neapolitans get drawn in and are slaughtered but the vigour of their defense drives the invaders back in a rout across the mountains. Losses to the Salernans are horrific, but the Savoyards are blooded and shocked by the defeat, and they rout deep into Spoleto, during which time they are picked off one by one by the remaining Salernan footmen. The rout costs many more lives than the actual battle, and Felchmorio spends weeks just trying to understand how many men he still controls and contain the mass desertion. It is a fortnight until he even knows that his lord, the King of the House of Hyperborean Savoy, was ambushed by marauders and murdered. With a heavy heart he entrusts one of his couriers to carry the word to Princess Lydia in Cavallerri.

Ludovico Sempro, in command of the Venetian siege trains and sitting out the battles in their camps in Spoleto, remembers the words of his liege Marcus that, should the Savoyards suffer any reverse that he should return. Felchmorio, still reeling from his losses, accuses the Venetians of treason to their cause, but Sempro (not only a loyal Venetian but a good Roman Catholic and already uneasy working with these followers of Anacletus) ignores him and his men break camp and depart for the north.

For the next three months, both the Salernese and Savoyards sides try to round up their men and contain desertions. Felchmorio, hesitating to continue the attack, is reminded of his liege's last words: "it is imperative that Naples fall," and so having regrouped he leads his men once again over the mountains against Marco of Naples. The Savoyards, for their part, had regrouped quickly, and, while horrified to learn how grievous their losses were, they take heart in the routing of their enemy. Such celebrations did not last long, for *Second Mount Tulia* sees the Salernese troops decimated by the Savoyards and forced to retreat to the safety of Naples.

Winter falls and the cold brings a halt to the campaign season, with the Savoyards in control of the Campania countryside and the Neapolitans nursing their wounded and dying in the city of Naples. In far-off Savoy, Lydia assumes the throne of her house.

In the year 1159...

As soon as the season allows, Princess Christina of the house of Savoy takes command of the footmen of the army and travels from town to town in Campania, putting it to the torch, salting the fields, destroying bridges, crops, and aqueducts, and generally scorching the entire land so as to deny it to the Salernese. This takes the better part of the entire year, and she must fight off numerous peasants and farmers who resist (futilely). Felchmorio during this time, with the mounted troops, has surrounded Naples. But, there yet remain thousands of Neapolitan troops there, and they are well supplied by the Salernan navy. A few forays by the Salernans, bolstered now by the crews of their fleet, deal great damage to Felchmorio's troops, and he is unable to continue the siege of the city until the lands around have been put to the torch and Christina's men return. The Salernese troops, however, are not willing to simply sit there and be surrounded and having regrouped, now sally forth to fully engage Felchmorio. The Salernese drive Felchmorio from the field, and

take control of the lands immediately surrounding Naples. A nasty winter comes, and many on both sides die from disease and starvation. The lands lie barren and worthless, and Campania is a wasteland of roving bandits and grieving peasants.

In the year 1160...

With the end of the winter, the battle for Naples begins anew. The lands of Campania scorched, Christina rejoins Felchmorio with her men and together they prepare to face the Duke of Salerno. Marco of Naples and his generals can now muster a much larger force in the approaches to Naples than earlier, as the crews and "marines" of their vast fleet lend their numbers to the desperate defense of the city. No quarter is asked, and certainly none given, as the honourable conduct of war was long ago cast aside. The fury the Neapolitans feel knowing that their families and fields have been decimated is matched only by the sheer desperation of the Savoyards, for whom this is their last best chance to take Naples and deal a death-blow to their enemy. A series of bloody and confused melees in the Naples suburbs ensues, and lasts for the better part of three months, with pikemen roving the streets, going house by house and dragging out any suspected of being from "the other side." Soon, only the wolves, dogs, and rats go out at night and the dead are left to rot. Desertions skyrocket, looting and robbing of the dead become the norm, and the ranks of mercenaries are swelled. In a stroke of luck, Felchmorio is captured when his personal guard is overrun by bandits who capture him and ransom him to Marco of Naples. Christina takes command of the few remaining men, and falls back to the Campanian countryside (what's left of it, that is) to regroup what men she still has available. As the year draws to a close, Marco of Naples, too, regroups his forces and attempts to rebuild his army in anticipation of fresh assaults. Both sides, frankly, are bare skeletons of their former selves, their armies shattered.

Too, as the mercenaries in the pay of Cordoba in Sicily prepared to take their pay and leave, the Cordoban troops there realized they would be unable to hold back the rising tide of anger of the Sicilian Catholics there, and their that the Sicilians there would revolt and force them to seek shelter in the friendly city of Palermo...

Scandia and the Out Isles

Mercenaries for hire: 15w, 22i, 12c, 7t

Kingdom of Svear

(Roman Catholic Seafaring Open Empire)

Gustaf the Red

Diplomacy: Missionary efforts in Norwegian Hordaland met with some success amongst the Pagans...

Sveari settlers pushed their way into the northern reaches of the Kingdom, hacking through the cold mountains and thick pines to settle along the coasts and hills of Jamtland, brining the Christian frontier ever further north. Too, the cities of Skanet and Upsalla continued to thrive, making them beacons of

Christendom and civilization in the pagan northlands. The inns, churches, and hot springs of these cold cities become well known to merchants of the Baltic as a welcome respite from the dangers of the cold winters. A number of merchants from Norman France attempted to ply the trade to Upsalla, but were unable to make it even to Skanet.

Good King Erik finally passed away, and Gustaf took the reins of rule without incident. He also received good news from men that a princess of Norway had expressed interest in meeting him... But, as happens, his sister Katanna passed away in these years.

Saxon Kingdom of England

(Roman Catholic Civilized Open Empire)

James

Dynastic events: The princesses Siobhan and Alice, as well as the young Sir Robert died of a variety of natural causes.

Diplomacy: Lancashire (t), Cornwall (a), Bishop Heethman had some moderate success in dealing with the heresy in Caer Myrddin

Under the boorish rule of James, the bureaucracy and tax collection of the empire suffered greatly, as peasants and nobles alike found the King rather annoying and insulting. With little sense of protocol, James managed, in a few short years to bring the court and its nobles into open revolt, depleted the treasury, and generally aggravated the politics of the realm. Finally, when it became clear that the sorry state of the court's coffers meant that the war in Eire could not be afforded, a group of nobles engineered a form of palace coup by convincing James that the government could run fine without him, and "perhaps his royal highness would enjoy spending more time with his lovely wife?" Within a year, not only had the king's wife given him a daughter, but the finances and politics of the realm had calmed down. The value of the pound stabilized, and a number of peasant revolts were aborted. Later, the death of Aethelsten at the hands of a wronged knight whom he had insulted a year earlier brought home the seriousness of the crisis that had been narrowly averted.

Jarldom of Orkeneyjar

(Roman Catholic Seafaring Open Empire)

Bjorn Torvalds.

Diplomacy:

The home islands of the Vikings were peaceful as their warriors brought death to the Irish in the south. Kirkval continued to grow, especially as a reception point for a number of shipments of English grain. Missionaries, even, were active in cold Fjordane, and won some converts despite everyone's expectations. The real action was elsewhere, of course...

The Commonwealth of Iceland

(Roman Catholic Seafaring Open Empire)

Sven Olafson

Diplomacy:

Sven ruled his realm calmly while his housecarls under Fionna, worked to enforce his rightful claim upon Eireland (based upon Fionna's pedigree)...

The Tuath Kingdom of Thomond

(Roman Catholic Barbarian Open Empire)

Sean

Diplomacy:

Ships carrying some of the treasures of Eire departed for the south, while Sean set to defending the sovereignty of Ireland...

The War in Eireland

As these years dawned on the poor Irish, the Orkney Vikings under the brilliant Halfdan marched out of Munster and into Connaught, in a move surprising no one...at the same time the Vikings patrolled the banks of the islands, ensuring no Irish or otherwise might surprise them...The Icelanders, for their part, were a much smaller bunch (albeit with a large force of long ships that patrolled along the coast) led by Princess Fionna while Snorri Torvaldson sailed north to bring more warriors to the fight.

But the Sean of Eire and the proud Irish would not go down easily, and upon his arrival in Connaught, Sean set about with a fiery passion to raise the call to arms and bring more Irish to the fight. For many decades they had been at peace and the vicious attacks they had suffered in the last few years had enraged them to the point of blind fury, and many men took up arms with Sean to help fight the invaders. He also took care to hire all the mercenaries and pirates he could get his hands on...And so, as the Viking Halfdan began his march into Connaught, fully expecting to squash the Irish once and for all, Sean was on the move. This was no idle king, and these times called for daring above all! And so Sean, at the head of a motley army of Irish and mercenaries, headed north into Ulster...

As the armies were on the march, groups of brigands and bounty hunters paid from both sides roamed the countryside, eager to serve one cause or another. In the camps of the Vikings, a pair of Irish wenches lurking behind the wagons trains of the Vikings attempted to sneak into the tent of Halfdan one night but his guards were as thick as flies. Their protests ended in blood as they were hung and left behind as an example for any other would-be Irish assassins.

Within half a year, Halfdan and his men, supplemented by a number of braces of Icelandic foot soldiers and

Vikings of the more northern dialects, had entered the lands of Connaught and began a systemic pacifying of the populace there. In the absence of any organized defense, the last Irish region soon came under Viking dominion. During the same season, however, Sean had marched north into Ulster and had burned Viking villages, hung a number of noblemen, and cowed the people into submission there. "Pay tribute to the Irish throne, or we will kill you all!" Sean demanded. And, knowing that their kinsmen were far away to the south, the Ulster-folk agreed. Then, Sean set to liberating Armagh from the yoke of the Icelanders who held the people there in check. A quick slaughter ensued, for the 200 Vikings in the city could not stand against the numerous and enraged Irish. Armagh was liberated!



As word of this reached Halfdan in Connaught, of course, he and his army of OrkneyJars (and some Icelandics as well as their vessels hugging the coast) began a swift march north to catch and vanquish the last of these Irish rabble. In the northern marches of Lienster, the two sides played a game of cat and mouse, with the ships and men of both sides searching for each other to bring the battle to bear in a way advantageous to themselves. Although Sean was no slouch of a commander, we was not the equal of Halfdan, and the Irish were boxed in. They killed man a Viking that day, but the housecarls of the northern Islands got the better of them. In the end, all were slaughtered, though at great cost to the Vikings. After picking through the bodies, the Vikings turned north once again, and pacified Armagh. The flag of Ireland lay in ruins, and the Irish cause...was lost.

Princess Fionna, at the head of the few remaining Icelandic longship, later traveled to Connaught, and hoped for a welcome reception from the people there - she was, after all, an Irish princess. She sought an Irish bride for the Icelandic king whom she served but had little luck.

The Norwegians

(European Pagan Seafaring Open Empire)

Olaf the Witless

Diplomacy:

A courier's road was built through the passes and from Hordavil to Norway to better enable Olaf to discuss and communicate with his allies the Svear...

East Africa ~ The Red Sea and Environs

Mercenaries for hire: 28i, 20xi, 9xc, 12c, 13w (mainly Coptics, but they'll work for anybody)

The Chwezi Dynasty

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Ndahura

Diplomacy:

A number of Coptic refugees settled in the lands of the Chwezi. They were met with suspicion, and sometimes curiosity.

Wadai Beduoin

(African Pagan Nomadic Empire)

Kasha, the Horse

Diplomacy:

Kasha and his tribesmen, tired of living with the insults of the farmers to the west as well as the continual harassment of Coptic refugees, erupted into central Africa in a bid to unite the tribes and conquer the lowlanders as the men of myth had done decades before...(the Wadai Beduoin control the regions of Wadai, Radoum, and Darounga).

West Africa

Mercenaries for hire: 25i, 4w

Bakongo Kingdom of Kanem-Bornu

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Nombato

Diplomacy: Jos (fa)

Tribes were settled along the coast of Soro to found the fishing village of Njamena, as well as in the lands of Ikego, where the group of huts was named Opar. Two boy-children were borne to the wife of Nombato, bringing joy to the royal household. Otherwise the land was peaceful and allowed many Coptic refugees on their Diaspora to travel through their lands.

The Dia Kingdom of Songhay

(African Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

Baru

Diplomacy: Bani (nt)

Baru, saddened by the death of his beloved Queen Ziina, lapsed into a deep depression for a year before once again turning himself to affairs of state. His return was the result of a realization - that the death of his wife was caused by the anger of the gods, as he had allowed far too many non-believers from the East into

the Kingdom. He immediately set about burning all the mosques and driving off all Muslims he could find. He sent men of skill to Kumbi-Saleh to convince that wicked city to renounce its Muslim ways. He dispatched Modute to count the men and women of the kingdom - to see how many were Muslims, no doubt. And he dispatched general Zabou with his men to the west to ensure that no Muslims spread any further...Later, Baru was pleased to take a new wife from amongst the tribes of Bani.

Usama-Yoruba Onium of Ibo

(African Pagan Civilized Open Empire)

M'Bwanza

Diplomacy: Gagnoa (c), The tribes of Gurma continued to refuse any diplomatic entreaties...they were summarily conquered. Showed them. hah!

M'Bwanza, The Curious, was always a man who kept one ear to the ground. Lately, after the troubles with Kombi had been "taken care of" he was keen to hear, one day, about a land and people who had been invaded and scattered, far to the East. He was unsure at first whether they were the Muslims of whom he had heard so much, or others. But eventually, word came that they were mountain dwellers with strange gods, or one powerful God. In any case, M'Bwanza had for years been searching for some news from abroad that might enlighten his people. Admittedly, Ibo was the most powerful kingdom of the entire world, and the Kanem and the Bornu and the Songhay all bowed to their wealth and influence. Nonetheless, M'Bwanza was still curious, for he had heard tales for many years of other lands (to conquer?). So he tasked his man Nobata to "travel East, until you can travel no further. If the land-spirits bar your way you then tell them that I, M'Bwanza, sent you, and they will cower and let you pass. You are to travel until you reach these distant lands and strange Gods, and then bring some of these people back, for I am curious to speak to them and have them serve me." He also issued a proclamation to the Court that bade any man who might bring him news from abroad to a reward of no less than 20 golden coins and 5 head of cattle. Soon, a few intrepid adventurers headed east also...And so Nobata left, with a wide variety of traders and others with him to see what he could find. The last anyone ever heard was that he had been taken prisoner by the Bedouin tribes in Wadai...later there were rumours he had ingratiated himself with the Pygmy tribes to the south, and even later that he had wandered off into the desert never to be heard from again...but, the latter news from Wadai, that the tribes there had erupted in anger, did alarm many in the kingdom.

Nonetheless, after a few years, a train of refugees was heard to have come from the East, through the great desert and to have arrived in Kanem Bornu. The tribes there, fearful of these people who had big noses and strange hair, refused their attempts to settle, and murdered many of them. They continued West, and came to the lands of the Air Emirate, a tribe of horsemen, pagans one and all, who owed some form of partial allegiance to the Ibo. Really, however, their allegiance was based more upon the promise of loot from Kombi than anything else. When these strangers appeared and settled in Kanuri, the Air tribes sent word to their nominal lord, M'Bwanza, letting him know they were going to deliver the heads of a couple thousand strangers instead of their oath of fealty this year. Needless to say, M'bwanza, not called "the curious" for nothing, demanded that they do no such thing and, instead bring the strangers to him. Incensed, and proud, the warriors of the Air Emirate murdered the courier (that happens a lot, actually) and set upon the strangers. Well, when word reached the court, M'bwanza was furious, and demanded an explanation from

the tribes. After many months, his courier returned, well, most of him returned. In pieces. Meanwhile, the strangers who had come to Kanuri had been mostly slaughtered and those that hadn't had bought their freedom by giving all their worldly possessions to the Bedouins - who then let them settle in peace in their village which they named "Odirn" or something like that...

Meanwhile, across the kingdom, much work continued on settling refugees and peasants in the cities and cleaning up a number of the more blighted city squares. M'Bwanza also spent a lot of effort trying to get the court into shape...without much success. But the Nubian scribes did like the new quills...

South Africa

Mercenaries for hire: 4i, 2t, 1hi

The Luba Empire of Malawi

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Langalibalele

Diplomacy:

Langalibalele continued to peacefully rule over a land of plenty. One benefit of such prosperity was the founding of the fishing village of Kilwa Kivinje on the shores of Kilwa. Otherwise, the Empire was quiet.

The Mwene-Mutapa Empire

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Changa

Diplomacy: Khosia (fa)

The passing of Chakran led his eldest son, Changa, to come into his own as master of the Empire. So, while the royal family went into mourning, amid much wailing and gnashing of teeth, Changa was taking control of the empire. However, his many years in the court had not taught him much, and he was singularly unskilled in the day to day running of things. Not necessarily a bad man, but without the attention to detail that an Empire demanded, taxes soon went uncollected, tribal violence broke out, and tensions flared. Soon, the incompetence of Changa led to open insurrection as the bushmen of Saan, Sotho, Banhine, Kafue, and even Phalaborwa revolted from the Empire. Changa's agents attempted to nip the revolt of the Phalaborwan tribes in the bud, but they were caught, their bowels sliced open, and their entrails fed to the dogs. A new port outpost in Phalaborwa, by the name of Ithembala, remained loyal to Changa, at least. As violence ripped across the empire, Changa found himself overwhelmed by the demands of office, and his mistakes compounded. Angering some, insulting others, appearing to favour one tribe over another led to a snowball



effect...it culminated when his chieftains, Sowete and Paki, were murdered in their sleep. Talk of replacing Changa was rampant. The students themselves went into the cities and demanded change of some sort, and much of the local scribes were hunted down as working for Changa (whether true or not).

There were a few bright spots in all this. Work continued apace on the road from Vaal to Matopos, despite the strife and banditry now plaguing the area. Also, the tribes of Khosia agreed to pay some allegiance to Changa, and their troops might help out in this time of need. However, being distant and now cut off from Mwene-Mutapha, their loyalties too could not be assured. And, there was a great deal of strife and discontent as the northern chieftains (the heirs of Chiefs Sowete and Paki) and their 5,000 men (on a mission in Rozwi) heard the whispers of revolt and many feared they would be seduced by it. Such a thing would surely cause the break up of the Empire. As it was, at the eleventh hour, Chief K'!lo remained loyal to Changa, out of respect for his father's memory. This, at least, meant that the northern cities would remain loyal and, most likely, the rest would follow...time alone will tell..

The Namaqua KhoiKhoi

(African Pagan Barbarian Open Empire)

Xamseb

Diplomacy:

Despite a great deal of unrest and strife in the alleys and turns of Namaqua, the KhoiKhoi remained relatively peaceful...

The Raja Kingdom of MalayBetis

(Hinduism Civilized Open Empire)

Andrapoina the Fair

Diplomacy:

Despite the deaths of both Amanitore and the prince Antsiroa, the kingdom remained at peace as Queen Andrapoina assumed the throne.