

The Sahûl Chronicle

Turn 23

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1561–1565 SA

In the sixth year of the reign of the Emperor Dradein IX, Sardarthion fell to the siege of Contessa K'ivik of Kicitchat. The Emperor was wounded in the final assault on the palace and captured. He remained a prisoner of the Kicitchat for ten months. In the year 308 of the Second Age, the last Emperor of the ancient dynasty died without issue.

– *The Annals of Vator (Being a History of the First Empire)*

In the year 1565 of the Second Age, being the second year of the reign of the Empress K'ivik of Kicitchat, who had yet to even take her throne, Sardarthion fell to the assault of Prince Carberic of Cappargarnia.

– *The Sardarthion Chronicle*



EVERY STORY GOES through a number of stages. Various philosophers and teachers throughout time have tried to crystallize and systematize these, everybody from Aristotle to Ælius Donatus to Horace to Gustav Freytag. None, of course, can agree on exactly how drama works, or how many stages a story goes through. All agree, however, that there's a stage just before the climax where all hell breaks loose and everything that could go wrong, does. My friends, I believe with this Turn we are firmly in that stage.

Enjoy this Turn, and take a good long time chewing it over. There's a lot here, and the one thing I can guarantee you is that whatever nefarious plan you set into motion, it didn't turn out exactly as you hoped.

Schooners are abbreviated SO, regardless of what it might say in the rules.

CURRENT PUBLICATIONS:

Atlas of the World – With maps of Sahûl, Oratoa, and the rest of the Known World updated to Turn 20. Includes other supplementary material, including an index of all regions.

Cruenti Dei Oratoa Campaign Guide – This campaign guide provides a look at the warm and sunny continent of Oratoa, a land steeped in mystery and deep in the embrace of an Heroic Age.

Cruenti Dei Rules Supplement 1: Errata and Additions – This supplement contains the corrected Movement system, plus many new options for your Realm. Free download or in paperback.

Cruenti Dei Rules Supplement 2: Underlands – This supplement details the Underlands, a series of vast caverns underneath eastern Sahûl. Free download or in paperback.

Cruenti Dei Rules Supplement 3: Age of Discovery – Expands the rules for NSR 10 and beyond. Paperback.

The Chronicle, Volume 1 – The compiled Sahûl Chronicle from Turns 0 through 10 inclusive, plus some other nifty bits. Available in both paperback and hardcover.

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The Annals, Volume 1 – The compiled Oratoan Annals up to Turn 20, plus some other bits. Available in both paperback and hardcover.



SIGNS AND PORTENTS¹



HE MIDSUMMER METEOR shower continued each year, and numerous “shooting stars” lit up the skies at other times as well. None, however, crashed to earth.

On a warm summer evening in 1565, those observing the waxing crescent moon saw a terrifying sight. The upper horn of the moon split in two, and from the midpoint of the division a flaming torch sprang up. It spewed out fire, hot coals, and sparks over a considerable distance. Meanwhile the rest of the Moon writhed and throbbed like a wounded snake. Afterwards it resumed its proper state.

As if this weren’t apocalyptic enough, three days later a rain of shooting stars fell through the sky in the vicinity of the Moon. At first, it was similar to the delicate beauty of the Midsummer Meteor shower. Within hours, however, they began increasing, soon falling at a prodigious rate. Before the night was over, it was as if a blizzard of tiny flaming lights were falling from the Moon.

They only ceased when the sun rose, its powerful light washing away the transitory brightness of the falling stars. The next day, the strange celestial events were the topic of conversation in every city, town, village, and farmstead throughout Oratoa and Sahûl.

Opinions ranged from the event being nothing more than a particularly impressive (but ordinary) meteor shower, to being an evil omen. Some thought that it was the beginning of the end of the world.

Even before the Moon rose the next evening, a flurry of meteors could be seen on the horizon. As the Moon rose, the number of shooting stars dramatically increased, until again it was as through the stars fell like rain.

Mass panic ensued.

The density of the falling stars soon thinned; within just a few days it was more of a sprinkle than a monsoon, but it was a month before it ceased entirely.

¹ With apologies to Gervasus Cantuariensis (c. 1141 – c. 1210).

Western Sahûl

THE KIT’IXI COAST

COUNTY OF TOKATL (141/TA)

Her Excellency, Tinikatua VIII the Implacable, Mistress of the Totek Hive, Countess of Tokatl, etc.

Trade: Averon, Chi’tixi, Kachar, Sakkar, Taneki, ThaceD

DP: Let’s dance!



HE DEEPLY WEIRD and deeply religious Countess Tinikatua VIII is getting old, and so she rested from her previous exertions. She did mention that she was totally against the whole “kill Chi’tixi” thing and thought that everybody should have a time out.

The great Landgrave Tazzix Tarn, Mistress of the Karatz Hive and former Regent of Tokatl died in faraway Oratoa sometime in 1564. A day of mourning was held, which included the emptying of the fabled wine cellars of Tz’akat.

When what the Tokatl called “the Great Moon-shower” began, a public holiday was declared so that everybody could dance by the light of the Moon and the falling stars.

Tokatl’s government expanded.

ELECTORAL DUCHY OF TANEKI (601/YG)

Her Victorious Maješty, Toktoka VI, the Steady, Lady Talkeltik of Akeltl, Baroness Ketatl, Electoral Duchess of Taneki, Imperial Governor of Tramelis.

Her Excellency, Xitar III, the Vampyr, Mistress of the Coactoka Hive, Lady Amoxcali, Countess of Pexiki, Lord Admiral of the Green.

Trade: Atuburrk, Averon, Chi’tixi, Itaxik, Kachar, Sakkar, Tokatl, Urdraháhn, Yarni-Za

DP: Kalli (F), Tepetitlan (F)



UCHESS Toktoka continued her extension of the House of Magnates and the House of Equerries to the aristocracy of Pexiki.

Internal development continued apace. Many new public works were built throughout the Realm. The great city of Utahpir, capital of the County of Tzatz, grew to be one of the premier cities of the

Empire. The Duchy built a road from the County of Pexiki's capital of Amoxcali to nearby Cholca in Ximi. Another road extended from Ajchac in Exiya to Itzelchoa in Naualpilli.

The heroic Admiral Namtzar died in 1563 while returning from Oratoa.

The Duchy's cavalry improved, and the Duchess herself endowed a new system of primary education at the capital.

Taneki found herself drawn in to the Puritan Crusade. With the loss of the *Golden Rule*, Taneki's eastern trade collapsed.

The Lunar meteor storm was handled with perfect equanimity in Pexiki, but in the north there was a great deal of concern. A potential peasant rebellion in Uitzetla was crushed before it could get properly started.

ELECTORAL GRAND DUCHY OF AVERON (51 SI/IL)


Her Gracious Majesty, Jushana I, the Cold, Lady Drax, Baroness of Goorin, Countess of Darida, Electoral Grand Duchess of Averon, Overlord of Sakkar, Protector of the Faith, bearer of the Topaz Crown.

Tiketua VII of Tishrak, Margrave of the North.

Cleon II, the Devout, Grand Master and Knight-Commander of the Champions of the Renewal, Margrave of Yax'te.

Trade: Araxes, Carcë, Chi'tixi, CM, Itaxik, Kachar, Pehuatoka, Taneki, ThaceD, Tokatl, Urdraháhn

DP: None.

RAND DUCHESS JUSHANA continued reigning in majesty, her subjects continued to fear her, and her son and heir Prince Gondulan continued to stay out of politics and unmarried. In fact, he threw himself into a massive project to produce a history of the First Empire, based on various historical documents that have come to light in the past few decades. He set his handlers and the AGDIS agents assigned to him the task of fetching him increasingly large amounts of ancient texts, reference works, paper, pens, ink, tea, and crumpets.

Averon, meanwhile, continued its road-building programme. In the north, a new road connected Graidir with Jorun. In Yax'te, Averon finished the road from Ozto into the forests of Alonwë. The road crew discovered that some enterprising local lumberjacks built a road from Alonwë to Erclë in their off-season.

In 1565, the people of Averon were terrified by the celestial sights. There was rioting in some of the cities, but as the starfall faded away, so did most of the apocalyptic panic. Even so, there's a movement in the north of people giving up their land and moving to higher ground, presumably because they think that when the world ends there will be a lot of lowland flooding.

Yax'te's winters of 1562 and 1565 were even worse than usual. The snows of 1562 weren't fully melted until the following summer. The snows of 1565 are still everywhere on the ground.

Averon's naval quality improved, thanks to massive military expenditures.

ILUVARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH MILITANT (11 IL)

Her Holiness Sardula V, Iluvarian Matriarch of the West, Archemandrite of Tikata.

Trade: Averon

DP: None.



RCHEMANDRITE SARDULA remained in obedience to the Orthodox Pontiff. The western church continues to enjoy its newfound serenity.

COUNTY OF KACHAR (18 I/UR)

Her Excellency, Kassa IX, Mistress of Calpolli, Lady Tchantli, Countess of Kachar, Protector of the Fair Isles.

Trade: Averon, Itaxik, Pehuatoka, Sakkar, Taneki, Tokatl, Urdraháhn

DP: None.



HANKS TO THE Myrmidons and the youthful and energetic aristocracy, Countess Kassa's court has become the most fashionable in the west. The arts flourish, and

the capital of Tchantli is renowned for its parties and, in some quarters, infamous for its decadence.

When the stars rained down, the Kachari people assumed that the heavens themselves are honouring the magnificence of “our Contessa”.

The winters of 1562 and 1565 were particularly bad, though the other years were better. The Kachari can’t decide which represent the trend and which are the outliers.

QUEENDOM OF ITAXIK (30 I/UR)

Her Majesty, Queen Chath’ecutla II, Mistress of the Tis’chok, Countess of Takkikik, Queen of Itaxik, Golden Beetle of the West.

Trade: Averon, Kachar, Pehuatoka, Sakkar, Taneki, Urdraháhn

DP: Habaniah (A)



THE REGENT RULED Itaxik while the Empress Chass’ika burned through her political capital like a wildfire on the steppe. With the Imperial government collapsing in 1562, Regent Chatoaya had the foresight to call upon the Princesses of the Tis’chok Hive to prepare for the advent of a new Queen. As the events of the following year proved, the Regent was wise indeed. Queen Chath’ecutla ascended the throne with only the minimum amount of confusion, mostly caused by the uncertainty in Sardarthion. Only Noyokka renounced its tribute, and there were no rebellions². The new Queen really feels like she dodged a bullet. Perhaps even a cannonball.

Hearing the cries of the oppressed and conquered people of Habaniah, the people of Itaxik sent them financial aid. The grateful Habaniah threw off their Carcëan shackles and joined Itaxik. The government of Carcë has lodged a formal complaint and cut trade in protest.

The Queen is unsure how to proceed in light of the confusion in Sardarthion, what with the usurping Emperor Carberic restoring Itaxik’s electoral status and all.

² That’s not *quite* true, of course. The doddering Lady Notekua attempted to raise a flag of rebellion, but she more or less immediately died, and her successor had no such ambition.

The Farmer’s Almanac continued to be published each year in six regional editions. The Bank of Itaxik’s “Ice Kitty” fund was restored, though the weather actually improved slightly in 1563 and 1564.

Then, in the summer of 1565, Itaxik like the rest of Sahûl was subject to what the locals called *the Blizzard of Stars*. Many in Itaxik took this as a sign that the Ice was a divine punishment and would return to lay low the wicked. The churches were full, as many people flocked to them seeking solace and understanding. Four new seasonal religious festivals, known as the *Rogation* weeks, became popular. These occur at the start of the seasons and feature a week of prayer and fasting, ending in a procession.

Baroness Chatoaya III of Ueka, former Regent of Itaxik, died in the autumn of 1565 at the age of 34. The winter of 1565 was deep and terrible

COUNTY OF PEHUATOKA (8 I/UR)

Her Excellency, Cipactonatha VII, Baroness Aueuetl, Countess of Pehuatoka, Guardian of Miçtia.

Trade: Averon, Carcë, Itaxik, Kachar, Sakkar, Urdraháhn

DP: Tekkulti (F), Chilyohan (F)



COUNTRESS CIPACTONATHA VI decided that a little construction work was in order. She spent down the treasury expanding Pehuatoka’s capital of Aueuetl and financing the construction of the port town of Xitutzmal in Hoo’astek. She even expanded Pehuatoka’s government.

And then she died.

Her young successor proved herself a competent administrator. She set her government to rooting out internal corruption, and to her pleasant surprise found virtually none³. Pehuatoka then set to expunging any foreign influence from their country, particularly anybody who might hail from

³ The County’s government is the very model of honesty and efficiency. Well, there was that one customs official in Chathetel who was *allegedly* taking bribes, but she was soon dealt with.

Chi'tixi, Yarni-Za, or what the government insisted on calling "Krommolek".

The effect of *the Blizzard of Stars* in 1565 was similar to what was happening in Itaxik to the west. Many took it as a divine sign that the Ice would return to destroy the wicked. The churches filled up, and throughout the region, the *Rogation* week festivals became popular.

The winters of 1562 and 1565 were pretty bad, though the other years were better.

LANDGRAVATE OF SAKKAR (19 IS/IL)

Landgrave Neallatalah of Sakkar, the Eye of the Storm, Mistress of Nelhuayotl, Heir of the Prophet, Beloved of the Light of Iluvar, Imperial Governor of Withidan.

Dame Tarik Tarkas, Grandmistress of the Military Order of the Sword of Iluvar, Warriors of the Ice.

Trade: Averon, Carcë, Duedhyn, Itaxik, Kachar, Pehuatoka, Taneki, ThaceE, Tokatl, Urdraháhn

DP: Failed.

LANDGRAVE NEALLATALAH MET with the Hive mothers, and together they reaffirmed the *Hundred Year Plan*. Sakkar sent additional colonists to the forests of Petlakkalko and Tonnak. This seemed to be just the push they needed, and both colonies are now thriving.⁴ In addition, Sakkar expressed their support of the Iluvarian Orthodox Church and the reorganized and reformed Iluvarian Orthodox Church Militant.

The Landgrave sent a small fleet of galleons and caravels sailing into the western seas. In 1565 they returned with wild tales and new charts. The great rain of meteors later that year had little effect on the Sakkari people, who were used to things falling out of the sky. At least these didn't seem to hit the ground.

Efforts by the government continue throughout the Landgravate to make new innovations in farming and herding techniques and plough technology widely available. The Sakkari are assessing whether

or not this helped mitigate the harsh winters of 1562 and 1565.

Averon enlarged Sakkar's Sorcery Academy.

THE MONDAHÁHN WASTES

THE ICY WASTES of Mondaháhn south of Yax'te continue to be a place of dark repute and ill tidings. The nomads now avoid the tundra of Kassarai, Smerlenth, Ougros, and Markalenth entirely. Erglim Prefecture is reputed to be dominated by a crater that constantly steams and hisses. A low, greenish fog has been reported occasionally in the nearby regions, which makes both man and beast sicken, sometimes unto death.

Thacia and Aret

THE HIGH PLAINS & NORTHERN COAST

THE PURITAN CRUSADE

Puritans vs. Chi'tixi (and apparently Taneki, too)

1562: Opening Gambit

HOSTILITIES BEGAN in a most unexpected fashion. In the summer of 1562, a Puritan fleet numbering almost 700 caravels and transports sailed up to Taneki's floating free-port fortress of *Golden Rule* in the Eastern Gulf of Iphil. After demanding their surrender and receiving an incredulous refusal, two lightning bolts arced from the fleet's flagship to the fortress, destroying virtually the entirety of the wall. Taneki returned fire, literally. The defenders lobbed a fire-bolt into the fleet, which destroyed about forty ships. It wasn't enough to stem the tide. A detachment of ships forced their way into the port and unloaded a prodigious amount of infantry.

Despite the best efforts of the Taneki Colonel, the *Golden Rule* fell swiftly.

⁴ Petlakkalko (3241)s, Tonnak (4231)t.

1563: *Finding the Fleet*

IN THE SUMMER, Atuburrk scouts reported the presence of a Puritan fleet in the Abalga Shallows. The main Chi'tixi fleet under the incompetent (but well-connected) Commodore Chatix was swift to respond.

The Puritan fleet, under Lord Adama, consisted of but 100 caravels. The Chi'tixi had 350 warships of equal quality. The two fleets met near Cape Lanarda, north of Kurrch.

Battle of Cape Lanarda (1563)

HAD THE CHI'TIXI fleet had an even somewhat competent commander, things might have gone very differently. Adama's fleet was clearly a diversion, not expected to survive, and intended to draw the Chi'tixi away from the main fleet of Puritan transports. Instead, given Adama's legendary military ability, it turned quickly into a real fight. Other than sheer numbers, the only thing the Chi'tixi fleet had going for it was a plethora of battlemagics. Unfortunately for them, they were totally neutralized by the Puritan wards.

As the ships engaged at close range, thousands of holy troops, more anger than ability, poured out of the Puritan ships.

Commodore Chatix destroyed about half the Puritan caravels at a cost of 140 warships. Undeterred, she pursued them around the cape and again brought them under fire. This proved to be her undoing, as she was among the great mass of casualties. With the lost and foundering Chi'tixi fleet reduced to but 135 warships, the remaining Puritans simply sailed away.

1564: *A Brief Lull*

THE FLOATING FORTRESS of Golden Rule, a shadow of its former greatness, was observed sailing serenely off the Dorkat Coast, accompanied by a massive Puritan fleet.

1565: *The Landing of the Tarotists*

THE PURITAN FLEET put their forces ashore in Tarotist Tichiir, long a Chi'tixi tributary state⁵. There was a considerable defensive force, though without competent field command, they were little more than target practice for the Puritans. The region quickly fell, though truth be told there were some in the region who embraced their new overlords. The ancient city of Astroy held out for several months before surrendering to the overwhelming force of Puritan arms.

Wenemet refugees piled ashore, seeking new lands in which to settle. Some immediately established new farms in Tichiir⁶. Others expanded the city of Astroy, which became the new Puritan capital. There are still tens of thousands of refugees in camps throughout the region.



Adama's battered little fleet made landfall in the rain forests of Rerekat. The remaining infantry unloaded and quickly conquered the region, which was completely undefended.



While the settlement of Tichiir was progressing, a much smaller Puritan fleet was making a break for the Chittix Coast. They put into a sheltered bay off the coast of Kit'ax and began unloading a great force of infantry and refugees.

It was at this point that the Chi'tixi Oratoan fleet, just back from service in the north, arrived to ruin their day.

⁵ Known as *The Black Claw Barony* and coincidentally one of the oldest Tarotist regions.

⁶ Tichiir (6532)M.

LADY TCHAZZIX, HERO of the ultimately fruitless siege of Mírchand, turned the full might of the Chi'tixi navy upon the fleet of Puritan transports in the bay. She commanded 455 mighty warships and 285 auxiliaries. Unlike some *other* Chi'tixi naval commanders, Tchazzix had a brilliant military mind.

Against her stood but 165 ships under the command of Commodore Shardem, which were hastily off-loading the last of their cargo. While Shardem had nowhere near Tchazzix's training and ability, neither was he some bumpkin just off the turnip wagon. He made the best of his impossible position and brought his fleet around to protect the last of the off-loading transports.

Ultimately, the young Wenemet Commodore could do little more than give his life, and the lives of his sailors, for his cause. Although not a single Puritan ship survived brutal onslaught, most of the infantry and refugees came ashore safely, perhaps 45,000 in all.

Chi'tixi lost a grand total of fifteen transports and a dinghy in the battle.

Shortly thereafter, the great rain of stars began. Throughout Chi'tixi this was taken as a bad omen. The Tarotists had landed, and now the very stars were falling from the heavens! Unrest was reported in the larger cities, leading even to rioting in the capital, which was quickly crushed the Royal Army.



Kit'ax surrendered to the Puritans, not that they had much of a choice.

PURITAN COMMONWEALTH (5 W/TA)

General Wilgi Parndarra, Black Claw Baron of Tichiir, Protector of the Righteous and Smiter of the Infidel, Governor-for-Life of the Puritan Commonwealth.

Trade: None.

DP: None.



GENERAL WILGI AND his Tarotist crusaders arrived on the coast of Chi'tixi to begin the "Great Cleansing War". The Puritans were so pleased and surprised with the relatively few losses they suffered in the crossing, that they with one voice acclaimed the General "Governor for life". For his part, Wilgi laid claim to the Black Claw Barony and warned his men that the crossing had, in fact, been the easy part.

They took the rain of stars as a sign that the Lords of the Tarot favoured their undertaking.

ELECTORAL QUEENDOM OF THE GREAT HIVE OF CHI'TIXI TIRRIX KI (33 I/YG)

Her Most Puissant Majesty, Taxitiki II, the Illustrious, Mistress of Tirrix & the Great Hive, Black Claw Baroness of Tichiir, Duchess of Chax and Tix'itikata, Countess Itax, Elector & Lich-Queen of Chi'tixi, Imperial Warden of the North, &c., &c.

Her Excellency, Tannix VII, Lady Ch'tort, Countess of Cærrat, Vice-regent of Western Chi'tixi.

Lady Gattax Ti'ir, Grandmistress of the Military Order of Gidaxa.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburrk, Averon, Ebmadh,

Hyrágec, IDK, Ingazi, Kicitchat,

Lynnarvor, Taneki, ThaceD, ThaceE,

Tokatl, Urdraháhn, Yarni-Za

DP: Failed.



CHI'TIXI SCALED BACK their wars to just one continent, but they made up for that by fighting on three fronts simultaneously.

The Puritans managed to land on the Chi'tixi coast in three different areas. The government of Cærrat was furious with the Chi'tixi Queen for keeping their Countess out of the country at this critical time and leaving their lands wide open to the Tarotist invaders.

The rain of stars in 1565 resulted in widespread panic, particularly in the urban centres. The Royal Army was forced to restore order in the capital.

The Chi'tixi gave over their three cathedrals⁷ to the Hidden Masters.

The treasury remains full to bursting.

⁷ Kitik in Kita'ët, Tchakitik in Ekatchix, Ikitik in Granax.

DUCHY OF THACE (39 S/UR)

His Grace, Willor VI, the Scholar, Lord Goshtikka-Ourane, Baron of Brennadein, Duke of Thace, Imperial Governor of Thacia Minor.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburk, Averon, Carcë, Chi'tixi, Ebmadh, Ingazi, Hyrágec, IDK, Kicitchat, Taneki, ThaceE, Tokatl, Urdraháhn, Yarni-Za

DP: None.

DUKE WILLOR VI INVESTED in education, libraries, and research. Of particular note was a project to conserve the rarest and oldest of books, which were starting to crumble into dust. Thace even built *new* schools – an Airship Academy and a Diplomatic Academy in Ourane. The primary school system, centered on the prestigious Saint Annír Primary Academy, was expanded. Massive new public works projects were constructed in and around the capital, returning it to its status as one of the jewels of the empire.

All of this made the old Duke a very popular fellow indeed. No longer is he called “Willor the Feeble” or “Willor the Sickly”. No, now he is known far and wide as “Willor the Scholar”.

His son and heir Lord Biard, meanwhile, deep in the throes of middle age, suddenly developed a fascination with all things airship. It quickly went from a hobby to an obsession, and he became the go-to royal for airship christenings, ribbon-cutting on new airship facilities, and sponsorships for various airship societies. In an entirely unrelated bit of news, the Duchy's airship quality improved.

The Duke's oldest grandson⁸, the dashing young Lord Ebalondrir, graduated from the Military Academy at the top of his class in 1564. The hunt for a suitable bride was soon well underway. An eminently suitable match was found in the person of the Lady Chabi, one of the several dozen nieces of Sar Tremek of Carcë. She arrived in the summer of 1565 to meet her prospective groom. A grand ball was held, and the two seemed to hit it

off. More importantly, the respective governments thought it a good match.

Three nights later, the two would-be lovers met at the *Pavilion of the Summer Rain*, a favourite hunting lodge of the Ducal family, each with a family-appointed chaperone. That night, moon erupted with flame. Lady Chabi's chaperone considered this a bad omen, and so the evening ended early. The next night, the rain of stars began. The Carcë delegation decided that this was a *very bad omen indeed*. They called off the engagement and left the country forthwith.

And if that wasn't enough, Mount Gwinim in the desert erupted some five times between 1561 and 1565. Fortunately, hardly anybody lives out there.

The Church built a road from their Cathedral of Tarnet in Sandir, joining the coastal city of Drannhír with the city of Rúnahd in Twein.

ELECTORAL COUNTY-PALATINE OF THACE (39 S/UR)

His Most Excellent Maješty, Merryn the Wise, Lord Goshtikka-Snamarthis, Burgrave of Wagga-Wagga, Overlord of Carcë, Electoral Count Palatine in Thace. Margrave Thosh the Wicked of the Severed Steppe, Sar of Nemidor.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburk, Averon, Carcë, Chi'tixi, Hyrágec, IDK, Ingazi, Kicitchat, Sakkar, ThaceD, Thünd(2), Urdraháhn

DP: None.

COUNT PALATINE MERRYN continued fighting wars in both Oratoa and in the Byrrin Valley. In keeping with the venerable tradition, the Count Palatine's son and heir Prince Brannis was trundled off to the University of Urdraháhn in 1562, the Empire's so-called *Year of Troubles*.

Thace's mountainous north and the southern steppelands got pretty darn cold in 1562, and while the weather improved in subsequent years, it's still pretty chilly.

Count Palatine Merryn was somewhat startled to discover a Thacian Viceroyalty in Oratoa.

⁸ Lord Biard's eldest son.

IT HAPPENED WHILE Retorok Collangio⁹ himself was making an observation of the (greater) Moon during a cool summer evening. The Moon was a waxing crescent, and Collangio was sure that he could see the peaks of distant lunar mountains at the edge of the crescent's shadow. At the advanced age of 79, his eyes weren't as good as once they were, but his younger apprentices assured him that they, too, could see the "wrinkles on the Moon".

He took a sip of tea and then looked back up at the Moon. His mouth opened noiselessly, and the teacup slipped from his fingers and clattered to the floor. For the horn of the Moon had erupted in a gout of flame, spewing coals and sparks over the whole of its surface. The Moon shimmered, as if it were being seen underwater. It was all over in just a few minutes.

The Master called for an apprentice. "Send a message to Snamarthis immediately. We must allay any panic. I fear this is only the beginning."

Indeed, three days later, shooting stars fell through the sky in the vicinity of the Moon. It began as a gentle rain, but by the end of that first night, it was as if a blizzard were falling from the Moon.

For a month, the stars fell like rain.

Throughout Thace, some scholars predicted the birth of a new prophet, and some spoke of the end of the Age. Prophecies included the ruin of the Church, the fall of royal Houses, and even the coming of an apocalyptic flood. Authors distributed pamphlets by the hundred, illustrating

them with woodcuts so even the illiterate would understand them.

The people remain uneasy, despite the assurances of the elderly, but still strong, Astronomer Baron.

Then, in northern Thace¹⁰, the usual hazy glow flashed briefly in the skies one afternoon in the chilly autumn of 1565. In subsequent years the area produced a bounty of natural resources, including lumber, linen, grain, hemp, wool, and fish. Truly, this is the land of Urda's bounty!

LORDSHIP OF CARCĚ (9 S/UR)

Sar Grotan Tremek II, Fourth Lord CarcĚ, Master of the Horseclans, Scourge of Urda the Fierce, Defender of the Steppe.

Trade: Araxes, Averon, Pehuatoka, Sakkar, ThaceD, ThaceE, Urdraháhn

DP: None.

CARCĚ'S STEPPE CAVALRY continued to serve in Thace's Oratoan and Cappargarnian wars – just the way they like it! Thacian cash and know-how continue to make their way to the steppe.

Emboldened by an extremely wealthy Itaxik envoy, Habaniah Prefecture rebelled from CarcĚ and then joined Itaxik. Sar Tremek was furious at the insult to his honour and that of his nation. CarcĚ cut all trading ties with Itaxik and lodged a formal complaint with their overlord, the Electoral Count Palatine of Thace. The Sar's son and heir Lord Dardûr proceeded to take his anger out on Cappargarnia.

CarcĚ extended their road network from Hish to Hobith. They raised some more cavalry, improved their infantry quality, and expanded the Assarnes Military Academy.

The southern steppelands got pretty darn cold in 1562, and while the weather improved in subsequent years, in 1565 it again took a turn for the icy.

⁹ A scientist who had done valuable historical and archaeological work as a Captain, and then Commodore, in the Thacian Navy in Oratoa before turning his prodigious talents to astronomical observation. He is considered the father of Thacian astronomy and is the author of *In Search of the Stars*, a foundational book in the Thacian sciences. It has been described as "part memoir, part philosophical musings on the nature of life and one simple sophont's relationship with the Gods, and part exhortation to young natural philosophers to seek the truths of Urda's grand creation wherever they may be found. He is also Baron of Forndonim and nephew of the fabled Baron Retorok Sendare.

¹⁰ Specifically in the prefectures of Daradu, Galeo, Galluch, Jannas, Mennendar, Ortuch, and Spenna.

ELECTORAL GRAND DUCHY OF ARAXES (28 W/UR)
His Gallant Majesty, Kapalless IV, Baron Pinyerrel, Elector and Grand Duke of All Araxes.

Grand Duchess Sardierre the Fair, Lady Protector of Araxes.

Trade: Atuburrk, Averon, Carcë, Chi'tixi,
Duedhyn, Einandhu, Hyrágec, IDK,
Ingazi, IOC, Kicitchat, ThaceD, ThaceE,
Tokatl, Urdraháhn

DP: None.



THE POPULAR NEW Grand Duke spent his time smoothing the ruffled feathers of some of the Great Houses. He ordered a considerable expenditure in expanding the Grand Duchy's allied armies¹¹ for use against Cappargarnia. Even so, the realm remained prosperous and the treasury fat.

Although the newspapers breathlessly paired the Grand Duke with any number of eligible ladies of the court, Kapalless remains unmarried.

Araxes' military leadership in the Byrrin complained that their forces were not nearly as advanced as the other armies there.

Starting in 1564, there were protests throughout Tewynn and Tythyen, and particularly in the streets of Baylow. The protesters are agitating for the return of the two prefectures to Duedhyn.

Araxes expanded their Diplomatic Academy in Pinyerrel, doubling its size.

COUNTY OF KICITCHAT (341/YG)

The Sorceress Atter'chi, Regent of the Kicitchat Hive and Associated Dominions.

T'ivik the Lich, Grandmistress of the Nameless.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburrk, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn,
Ebmadh, Einandhu, Golmath, Hyrágec,
IDK, Ingazi, Lynnarvor, ThaceD, ThaceE,
Urdraháhn, Yarni-Za

DP: Failed.



KICITCHAT CONTINUED REFORMING the Republic of Erphan in their own image. Thousands of Yagnarist missionaries

again ventured into the Tarotist lands, and their efforts are slowly beginning to pay off. Other than a small Tarotist remnant, Tanji and Dwelnaz are now officially Yagnarist. In Erediar, the very heart of the Cappargarnian Republic, a majority have now converted to Yagnarism as well. This includes scions of the Republic's most famous families, including prominent members of the Houses of Anabrin, Steene, and Tiribissi. The fact that many of these same Houses partook of the ongoing *Consul Edict Continuity Fund* is simply coincidence.

The Erphani Senate sent a public letter, polite and petitionary, to the Countess of Kicitchat requesting clarification on a number of points of law. This they followed up with a sealed proposal.

With the death of the Empress Chass'ika in 1562, Countess Sith'tat IV the Black abdicated her throne, so as to focus on her duties as Chancellor until the election of new Emperor¹². In her place, the ruthless (but unfailingly polite) Countess K'ivik ascended to the throne, losing a eye in the process.

The new Countess did nothing to expand her holdings in the Byrrin¹³, but larger and larger armies continue to muster in Erediar. She sent an impressive diplomatic mission to Andelvas Lord Treskaw. Lord Treskaw clearly looked with favour on the ambassadors (and especially their great pile of cash).

As the Imperial election of 1562 extended to the following year, Countess K'ivik grew increasingly anxious. Her predecessor remained both alive and Chancellor of the Empire, making her position within Kicitchat extremely tenuous. Already there were those who whispered that she "wasn't really Countess" while Sith'tat the Black still lived – and effectively ruled in Sardarthion.

And then, at noon one summer day, the Imperial Crown appeared on the head of the Countess. She immediately set out for the Shrine of Moroko, leaving the lich Atter'chi once more as Regent.

¹¹ Particularly that of Count Puchalam Bormandes of Pabanhipa, who happened to be in the right place at the right time.

¹² And then presumably she planned to retire to her estates.

¹³ Other than the planned assault on the fortress of Shieldwatch.

Protests by Kicitchat's large Tarotist minority, and increasingly by Yagnarists as well, continued against the Kicitchat alliance with Chi'tixi. Marches in the urban areas of Taxitki, Inyib, and Xant'ki became almost a monthly occurrence. Interestingly, these protests have not yet spread to the Cappargarnian conquests.

The *Countess Sith'tat IV College of Law* was dedicated at the University of Tchaç'at.

Kicitchat's sorcerers made a breakthrough that catapulted them into a technological and cultural renaissance.

ELECTORAL GRAND DUCHY OF ATUBURRK (42 W/YG)
His Gracious Majeŝty, Adhanggar Rahnes II, the One-Armed, Count of Erran and Odol, Imperial Governor of Ardebon, Elector & Grand Duke of Atuburrk, Lord Admiral of the Blue, Provisionary Administrator of the Imperial Free City of Punchega.

Trade: Aradéc, Araxes, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Golmath, IDK, Ingazi, Kicitchat, Taneki, ThaceD, ThaceE, Tokatl, Urdraháhn, Yarni-Za

DP: None.

GRAND DUKE RAHNES continued to rule from the Imperial Free City of Punchega, making sure that nobody there was up to any mischief. It was a long and lonely vigil. Meanwhile, his armies and agents fought in all of Sahûl's many wars.

The obnoxious Count Caranthes remained in Wagga-Wagga with his steadily growing family.

Atuburrk's scholars and historians continue to work on their compilation of the island's history. The committee is hopeful that they'll make their 1575 target date.

Atuburrk built an arsenal in Ibungiy.

Central Sahûl

THE HEART OF EMPIRE

THE SECOND CAPPARGARNIAN DOOM (1551 – 1565) AND THE IMPERIAL SUCCESSION CRISIS

Cappargarnia vs. Araxes, Averon, Carcë, Chi'tixi, Ebmadh, Hyrágec, Ingazi, Sakkar, Thace (Electoral); Hyrágec vs. Ebmadh; Imperial Succession Crisis

1561: A Couple of Surprises in Store



WHEN THE GREAT Urdan army¹⁴ arrived in Carlon in the spring of 1561, Thacian Lady Gollandir received a herald from Cappargarnian General Sir Anabrin Taidarian. It was a summons and a challenge to duel at dawn, six days hence, with weapons of her choosing. It also contained a carefully drawn series of insults to her honour and that of her House. She could do nothing but accept.

The Field of Sorrowful Remembrance (1561)

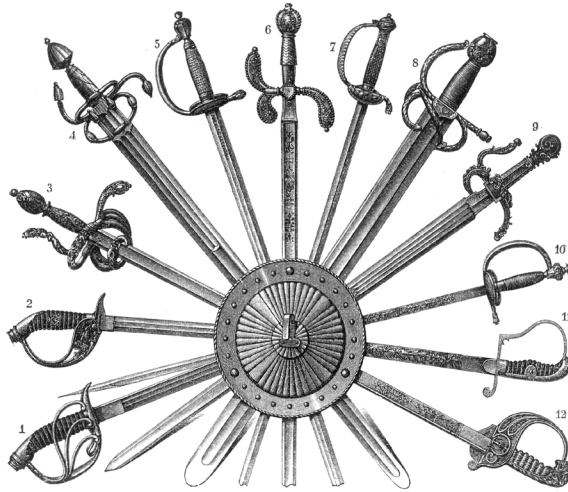


THE TWO PARTIES arrived in the pre-dawn hour. They met at the Field of Sorrowful Remembrance, a flat grassy area in the shadow of an ancient apple orchard whose owners claimed was planted during the First Empire.

The Cappargarnian Wenemet was in his mid-twenties, young and well-muscled. His second was his cousin, an officer of the Cappargarnian army. By contrast, the Thacian Saurian was forty years her challenger's elder, but she was lithe and spry. Her second was the old Araxean Wenemet, Captain Lord Mardant. A Saurian herald acted as judge.

Lady Gollandir chose swords as the weapon of the duel. The herald and the seconds duly inspected the chosen weapons and nodded their approval.

¹⁴ Numbering 9,500 Araxean archers under Captain Lord Mardant together with Electoral Thace's 45,000 cataphraçti and 8,500 hussars under Lady Gollandir.



And it began. As the bystanders looked on helplessly, these two great captains danced nimbly while their blades thrust and cut. Lady Gollandir's speed was dazzling, and the desperate Sir Taidarian could do little but beat her back. Eventually, however, the Wenemet's superior training proved decisive. He feinted left and then swept his sword past the old Saurian's parry, stabbing her deeply just above her heart.

As she fell, Sir Taidarian saluted her.

He shook hands with the Araxean second and the herald, and then he and his cousin left the field under the safe conduct afforded them by the chivalric code.

Lady Gollandir's command of the army passed to the young General Lord Tahnodir, a grandson of the famed Prince Basodir.



Cappargarnian Prince Deirn Carberic gave over command of the Adndar garrison to his attaché Cassias Dronex, naming him Burgrave of Adndar and charging him with the city's defense against what they both assumed would be ludicrous odds.

The Prince and a small but heavily armed force of about 5,000 arquebusiers then left the city.



In Dwelnaz, Kicitchat Regent Atter'chi gave the commandant of the Blood Swords fortress of Shieldwatch the option to surrender the fortress and demobilize the garrison in peace. The commandant thanked the Regent for her offer, but he politely declined and indicated that his men were willing to die for their country, though this was clearly not their first option.

The Regent disposed the full force of her 36,000 troops to begin the siege.



Princess Mirra of Thace seemed to be settling into Hyrágec's Endani Prefecture, making her home with the now elderly Sar Ortak in a humble cottage near to the Shrine of Moroko. One day in the heat of the summer, she went up into the Ened mountains "for a little walk". When she returned, she was flying upon the Dragon Erancia.

They were joined by the Order of the Sacred Raven. Grandmaster Sir Dewethva of Pesk led his 14,000 knights and the Dragon Skögul into the area, where they encamped near to the Shrine. The two dragons, wary of each other, were introduced by Mirra, who suggest that they would be "the bestest of pals before long".




Meanwhile, in Dramûl, Araxean ally Count Puchalam Bormandes of Pabanhipa arrived with some 15,000 cavaliers, 4,000 scouts, and an astonishing 50,000 light infantry en route to join up with the Thacians to the northeast. They ran smack into a force of 7,000 Cappargarnian knights led by Senator Sevas Artessa. She certainly had not expected to run into a force almost ten times her size, but there was little she could do but try to make a break for the city of Kattras and hope the Tarotists there would let them seek shelter there.

Alas! They would not, and the Cappargarnians found themselves with the full weight of the Arax-

ean army in front of them, with the locked gates of Kattras behind them.

Battle of the Gates of Kattras (1561)

IVEN THE FACT that the Araxeans clearly had numbers and position, the only chance the Cappargarnians had to pull out a victory would involve superior leadership or magic or both. Sadly, neither the wiles of Sevas Artessa nor her array of battlemagic proved sufficient to prevent a rout.

No one, however, had figured on the demands of Araxean chivalry. The Araxean infantry simply stood around and waited while their cavaliers nobly fought the Cappargarnian knights as if it were some sort of tournament *melée*. Even so, there was never really any doubt of the outcome. Instead of being simply obliterated, the Cappargarnians were *nobly* dispatched. There was some effort at capturing the Cappargarnian captains for ransoming them back to their families, but in the end only a handful survived. Senator Sevas Artessa was not among the survivors. Once her shattered body was found, she was given a proper knight's funeral.

There were perhaps 500 Araxean casualties among the light cavalry.

The city fathers of Kattras continue to refuse to open the gates.



A peculiar magical surge was detected in Envel, but it was harmlessly dispersed by the power of the Cappargarnian wards.



Meanwhile in the north, the anti-Cappargarnian armies of Ebmadh, Chi'tixi, and Averon crossed the border from Ebmadh into Arétar. They were a disorganized bunch. The Chi'tixi commander, Dame Tixit, had only one goal;

she was obsessed with hunting and finding Pontiff Fenric VI of the Hidden Lords and his army. Nothing else mattered.

Her 35,000 troops and 125 airships were slowed down considerably in their task by the presence of a number of zombies, which reduced their pace to a brisk shamble. They were paced by the Averese army of Lady Pinkerton, some 5,000 marines and 9,000 infantry.

Baron Sandrim Haryt II of Ebmadh, however, would not stand for this leisurely pace. He had with him 6,500 horsemen and 3,500 arquebusiers, not to mention every free company he could find, some 71,000 mercenaries all told. He had absolutely no intention of taking a long, slow tour through the northern Byrrin Valley looking for one old Saurian.

Nothing in Arétar could possibly withstand this immense force of 130,000 men. Nevertheless, the Chi'tixi and Averese, not finding Fenric or his army here, moved on without so much as an attack.

Baron Haryt was incredulous. If his allies weren't going to occupy the region or try to take the city of Golluz, *he* damn sure was. He secured the Ebmadhi occupation of the region and set two of his mercenary bands¹⁵ to lay siege to the city of Golluz and hoped that one of his allies would come through with some ships to help.

Then, as the Chi'tixi and Averese armies shambled off southwards towards Djarden, the Baron with his remaining men and the Hawkwood Company set off to the west.



Meanwhile, in Plormel, the Baron of Ebmadh's son Lord Hesiod ran into a spot of bother. While much of the Hyrágec force there got back into their ships and departed for points unknown, a remnant force of 4,500 horsemen, 29,000 infantry, and 2,500 longbow remained under Lord Injiro.

He sent notice that any Tarotist wishing to leave Plormel for Ebmadh was welcome to do

¹⁵ The Great Byrrin Company and Willeborn's Spears.

so, but that he meant to secure the region for the King of Hyrágec.

Lord Hesiod, who had 14,500 men and thirteen castles at his disposal, sent back an incredulous reply to Lord Injiro. Surely there was some kind of mistake? Surely you did not mean to take the Plormel Prefecture from the Barony of Ebmadh?

Lord Injiro was firm. Plormel was to belong to the crown of Hyrágec. Hesiod and his men could just hie back to Ebmadh.

Lord Hesiod sent reply that as of 1559, Plormel was part of Ebmadh, and that if Injiro and his “backstabbing Urdans” wanted it, they could bloody well try and take it, but that he and his men meant to defend it.

Battle of Banarri Meadow – a Soldier’s View (1561)



DARBY WAS TALL, perhaps six feet, though his tufted ears easily added another four inches. He was stout, even by Wenemet standards, and the worn leather straps of his grandfather’s steel breastplate strained against his bulk. As he leaned forward to pat the neck of his charger the tight, brocaded collar of tunic cut awkwardly into the fur of his neck. It was hard to breathe in this position. He sat back up in his saddle.

A volley of arquebus fire exploded from the Ebmadhi lines. Darby winced at the blossoming of smoke around the enemy position and steadied himself for the sound and the inevitable hail of lead. The crackling sound, when it came, wasn’t nearly so bad as the visions of terror Lord Injiro had instilled in them the night before, but then the Ebmadhi were still four or five hundred yards across the vast field of ripening barley, and the wind was against them.

If any of the balls found their targets, Darby did not notice. The Hyrágecan longbowmen duly returned fire. An exercise in futility at this distance. The battlemagic started then, long arcs of blue and green volleys flying overhead between the armies. Most of them collided with each other, producing

a sound like distant thunder, but Darby could hear screams echoing from the enemy lines as some of the sorcery found its mark.

Ahead of the lines of Hyrágecan chivalry, Lord Injiro wheeled his horse about to face his Wenemet warriors. The early morning sunlight glinted off his splendid field armour with its sweeping curves and gold filigree. The wind was picking up again, Darby noted. The three great kura feathers affixed to Lord Injiro’s helm streamed like banners, and even from his position in the third rank, Darby could see the sleeves of his lord’s tunic, a deep blue slashed with yellow, ripple visibly.

Lord Injiro held up one ungloved paw. Dimly, Darby could hear him shouting, but the wind was too strong to make out more than a few scattered words. To Darby’s right, Janesh in his garish scarlet brocade leaned over in his saddle and snorted, “more speechifying.” Before Darby could do more than nod in agreement to his old friend, Lord Injiro had turned back towards the enemy. Up and down the Hyrágecan line of battle, the royal banners simultaneously dipped. Darby and more than four thousand other horsemen spurred their horses into the glorious charge.

Darby could hear no sound but the overwhelming drumming of the hooves of four thousand horses. He knew the enemy would get off one, perhaps two more volleys before the riders could close the gap, but after that they would be cut down like the barley. Even with their arquebuses, what chance had shopkeepers against Hyrágecan chivalry?

With over half the distance covered, Darby saw a staggered chain of smoke from the enemy lines. This time, Hyrágecan horses stumbled, sometimes tripping up those hard behind them, opening ragged holes in the advancing formation.

Darby stole quick glances to either side. The total numbers lost seemed tiny, surely no more than one in fifty, perhaps less. The charge would be through the enemy line before they could reload. Darby gritted his teeth into a rough smile. Perhaps he and Janesh would be warming their feet by the

fires of the fabled Sleeping Cat Inn in Olba in a few days after all.

Darby felt, rather than heard, the crash of cavalry against the arquebusiers, like a great tidal wave upon breakers.

Something was wrong. The charge had stopped, as if it had hit a rampart. Instead of sweeping through the Ebmadhi, a wall of screaming Wenemet and horses reared up in the front rank. The second rank, moving too fast to veer, simply charged into the horses in front of them. Darby and his companions of the third rank tried to stop, but they were already much too close. His horse twisted to the right to avoid the inevitable collision, and Darby desperately tried to rein her in, to regain control. The screams from the front two ranks were unearthly, and already the riders of the final rank were fast upon him.

In the crush of horses, riders, weapons, and armour, Darby felt his horse roll under him, and suddenly his right shoulder erupted in pain as he hit the ground, hard.

He couldn't breathe. He couldn't see. The confusion of sound was dim in his ears, as if he were drowning. In a faint, forgotten corner of his brain, Darby heard his name. "Now what can that mean?" he wondered idly.

Suddenly, cold air and light pulled him screaming back into the world. Janesh had pulled his helmet off. He was inches from Darby, filling his vision, shouting his name. Around him, chaos and confusion swirled.

"Darby!"

Janesh, too, had lost his helmet, and part of an ear Darby realized. Dark blood matted the fur on the left side of his face and dripped from his muzzle onto Darby. Janesh shook him.

"Darby! Darby, are you all right?"

Weakly. "Janesh? What... what happened? You're a mess."

Janesh shrugged. "I've had worse," he lied. "Can you walk?"

"I think so. What happened?"

Janesh helped Darby to his feet, and almost immediately pushed him back to the ground, while in the whirlwind around them the cavaliers of Hyrágec shouted, screamed, and bled. Officers shouted, trying to form up lines.

"Janesh, what...?" Darby's question was interrupted by a *crack!* like the first report of summer lightning. All around them, cavaliers and horses fell. As the smoke rolled over the two of them, huddled amongst the corpses, Darby heard the rallying shouts of the captains give way to the sounds of slaughter and rout. The hellish smell of black powder settled over them, stinging their eyes and noses.

"Come on!" Janesh tugged at Darby's arm. "Let's take advantage of this smoke before they reload again."

"Where to?"

"Away from here."

"There's a copse of trees about, what? fifty yards behind us and to the right."

Janesh shook his head. "No good. They'll expect survivors there."

"What about the stream to the left?"

"Good. It might even be behind their line."

They crawled, rather than walked, through the maze of fallen Wenemet and their horses, stacked sometimes three deep. Gradually the sounds of massacre ebbed to a weary, ominous silence, as the piles of bodies gave way to trampled fields, and eventually to rows of pale green new barley.

Darby's shoulder ached from the fall, and he couldn't go much farther. He turned his head to look for his lagging friend.

Janesh was some distance behind him, unmoving. "Curse me," thought Darby, "his ear."

Darby crawled back. Janesh was still breathing, but he had clearly lost a lot of blood. Panic squeezed Darby's heart when he saw the trail of blood and crushed barley snaking off behind then towards the thinning clouds of smoke that marked the field of battle.

"A one-eyed Malebolge could follow that trail," he said to no one in particular.

Darby ripped long strips of saffron linen from the folded insets of his puffed sleeves for bandages. Janesh still had his canteen, and hoping he'd filled it with water instead of wine this time, Darby liberally poured the contents over the top of his friend's head.

It was wine. Darby hoped it would sting.

With some of the blood washed away, Darby could see that about half of his friend's ear was torn off, and a shallow furrow was ploughed through the fur and skin behind. No arquebus did this.

The wound on Janesh's head oozed blood, but no longer gushed. "Well of course," said Darby as he tried his best to bandage Janesh's wounded ear. "No vital organs to speak of in his head."

Janesh lazily opened one eye. "I heard that, you know."

"You dog. How long have you been awake?"

"Not really sure I'm awake now." Janesh tried to sit up. He failed.

"Take it easy there, Janesh. That's it, just lay back a bit. How're you feeling?"

"Terrible. Dizzy. Thirsty. Hey," he smiled weakly, "don't I usually rescue you?" Janesh reached for his canteen.

"Don't bother. I used it to wash your wound. The Wenemaids aren't going to be calling you 'Tufty' anymore."

"That was a '38 Toowonoma, you barbarian. You don't clean a wound with a '38 Toowonoma. Are you mad?" Janesh's words were angry, but his voice was sleepy, and he'd closed his eyes again.

Darby shrugged. "Get your breath back, or we're going to have worse things to worry about than which wine I spilled. He looked back down the trail they'd blazed. The Ebmadhi were probably already hunting down the wounded, to ransom them back to their families. It was only a matter of time before someone followed their path. Darby did not want to be around when they showed up. Far to the south, he could just see a line of trees. It was dark and ominous on the horizon. A forest? Janesh lay

on the ground, unmoving, and Darby remembered that sleep was dangerous for a head wound.

"Janesh, did you see what happened to Lord Injiro?"

Janesh didn't open his eyes, but spoke slowly and deliberately. "The old man went down with the rest of the first rank. Everybody went down, Darby. Everyone. Four clans lost their lords today."

"But how? What happened, do you think? It couldn't have been the arquebuses." Keep him talking, he thought.

"Pikes, cousin. Pikes. At the last possible moment, the first line of arquebusiers stood back, and the second rank set pikes into the ground in front. They were twenty feet long or so. Damn good discipline under a charge. Damn good. Never saw anything like it."

"Pikes?" Darby was genuinely angry, now. "Pikes? They can't do that."

Janesh snorted and opened his eyes. "Can. Did. And now we're errantry, you and I. Lordless vagabonds hundreds of leagues into enemy territory with no possible way back."

Darby set his teeth in a grimace and eyed the distant darkness of the forest again. Janesh sat up, propping himself on his elbows. "What do you see, Darby?"

"Get up Janesh. We've got some work to do if we're going to get to the forest's eaves before they find us."



The Hyrágecan army, having sustained considerable casualties in Plormel Prefecture, scrambled to evacuate the remaining 7,500 men across the river to Kritrix. Lord Injiro was among the dead.

Ebmadhi casualties were also heavy, with perhaps 6,000 men remaining. Only one of the castles, however, was destroyed. Lord Hesiod sustained a near-mortal wound, and his army remained in Plormel while he recovered.



As if in answer to Ebmadhi hopes and prayers, an Atuburrk fleet took up position in the Lower Byrrin to blockade all Cappargarnian commerce and communications.



After the mild weather of the past few years, the Winter of 1561 was a sharp shock. Lake Sardath, which had been nearly free of ice during that last glorious summer, had frozen up solid again in its southern and western reaches. The snows, particularly in the south, buried villages and farms beneath them. And when the spring of 1562 arrived, the snow did not melt throughout much of the Upper Byrrin Valley.

1562: The Year of Troubles

WHILE THE CHI'TIXI and Averese sought him everywhere, old Pontiff Fenric and his 32,000 men had crossed the river into Adnari Ilani. Like their enemies of Chi'tixi and Averon, the Cappargarnians did not pause to conquer the region. Instead, they blasted apart the two undefended castles in the region with a well-placed lightning bolt and continued marching with an almost unnatural speed.



Count Drathnes of Murali announced that he was sending a "mission of mercy" to the Byrrin Valley "to provide aid and comfort to loyal Imperial citizens". Murali anticipated that the fleet would arrive in 1565.



IN DWELNAZ, KICITCHAT Regent Atter'chi's siege of the castle of Shieldwatch was well underway, and preparations for an assault were in their final stages. Inadvertently riding to rescue was a small Cappar-

garnian army of perhaps 4,000. It proved to be the remnant of the Blood Swords, commanded by their Grand Marshal, Steene Caranthes.

Battle of Shieldwatch (1562)

OUTNUMBERED SOMETHING LIKE nine to one, the Blood Swords were caught with few options, none of them good. They rode hard for their fortress, and Regent Atter'chi really had nothing to do but wait for them.

As they arrived, the forces inside the fortress sallied out, augmenting the Cappargarnian number, but by far less than they might have hoped.

As Kicitchat siege engines and artillery, backed up by perhaps 20,000 pike, hussars, and zombies, pounded the fortress, Atter'chi set her considerable cavalry force – 14,000 knights – to deal with the advancing Blood Swords.

Despite Cappargarnia's matchless siege technology, despite the genius of Steene Caranthes, despite every possible lucky break in the battle, the Cappargarnians could not hope make up for the difference in numbers. Under the ruined walls of Shieldwatch, the Holy Blood Legion of Swords was obliterated, and their Grand Marshal killed in desperate, bloody combat. They died with honour and courage.

The cost in Kicitchat zombies was horrific.



In Bufalein meanwhile, the very heart of the Tempest March, Burqan Qaldûn's army of 16,000 Carcë steppe cavalry had little trouble in wiping out the garrison. The imposing walls of Prosperos are quite a bit beyond their ability, so they just surrounded the city and killed anybody who tried to leave.



Chi'tixi and Averon's Fenric-Hunting Army shambled into Djarden and searched for the Pon-

tiff and his forces. Not finding him, they continued shambling southwards towards Taporí.

No garrison was left, and no attempt was made to secure the city of Alkandh. They were after Fenric, and nothing could stand in their way.



For months, the captains of the Great Byrrin Company and Willeforn's Spears had carefully laid their siege lines. With Atuburrk's fleet in the river, they had completely cut off the Holy City from any outside aid or food. The senior Captain – "Spears" Willeforn, now in his mid sixties – demanded the city's surrender in the name of the Baron of Ebmadh.

The reply came thus: "the Baron is the pox-marked codpiece of an undead clotpole. If he wishes to profane all that is holy, by all means we bid his mercenary dogs paint the walls of the Holy City with their blood. We shall throw their bodies with those of the Chi'tixi giglets and Hyrágec maltworms that fill the valleys for miles around."

The assault began the next dawn.

The Second Battle of Golluz (1562)

EBMADH'S FREE COMPANIES began their assault of the Tarotist Holy City of Golluz on the eighth of Quintilis, on a cold, hard morning, with the wan sun struggling mightily to show its warmth. They numbered 38,000 veterans and they brought with them two batteries of artillery to smash the city's walls.

The walls of Golluz remained formidable and Cappargarnian siegecraft is world renowned, but this time Fenric was not here defending his city with his army. The artillery had pounded the walls for days leading up to the assault, and already ragged gaps appeared.

Captains Willeforn and Drake led their men against the city under withering fire from defending archers. Thousands died before some of Drake's men managed to force the South Gate, even as the wall's

great Carnelian Tower collapsed into rubble. Panic gripped the defenders for a moment, and in that moment Willeforn's Spears forced their way through the gaps. Within three hours, the flag of Ebmadh flew over the ruined keep.

The Free Companies counted 4,000 casualties and the loss of one artillery battery to defensive fire.



Baron Haryt of Ebmadh, meanwhile, had led his armies, accompanied by the Hawkwood Company, into Dunvaël. He had expected to meet there with the armies of his son, Lord Hesiod, and he was perturbed to discover that they were not there.

The Baron, Captain Dwinbi Sardes of the Hawkwood Company, and Janos of Taporí¹⁶ parlayed with the local gentry, making sure that they did not fail to notice the 40,000 man army backing them up. There was also a rather large amount of gold available to those who chose to throw off the Cappargarnian yolk and ally with Ebmadh¹⁷.

The only real fly in the ointment was the presence of the Blood Swords fortress of Bloodwatch and some associated knights, perhaps 3,000 or so in all. The leadership of Dunvaël let it be known – subtly of course – that should that little horror show go away, they were more than willing to entertain the Baron's most generous offer.

There was nothing for it but to assault the fortress. In the autumn, this is exactly what they did. The Blood Swords put up a decent fight, but they were outnumbered and they had no leadership to speak of. Although the Hawkwood company lost some of their cavalry in the scramble against the enemy knights, the fortress itself was easily taken.

¹⁶ Janos is the son of Janosik, the Taporí rebel leader who claimed descent from the old Cappargarnian Landgraves of Taporí back in 1535. The Baron of Ebmadh has made it a hobby to ally himself with dispossessed leaders from throughout the Byrrin, virtually all of whom want nothing more than the destruction of Cappargarnia.

¹⁷ "Cappargarnia wielded a big, clumsy stick, and if that didn't work they threw you a carrot. I always offer the carrot first, but I make damn sure they know I am capable of beating them to death with it and then eating it myself."

– Baron Haryt II

In the great hall of the city of Croubal, the local gentry abandoned Cappargarnia and swore fealty to the Baron. The Baron took the great castle for his own and renamed it after his family, calling it Sandrimháhn.



Burgrave Lanharnes iv of Adndar arrived in Ilani with his airfleet to retrieve the local garrison from his city of Marangal. He was disappointed to see that they had done nothing to prevent the (now long gone) Cappargarnians from destroying the region's castles. He was pretty sure that at least one of them still had a mortgage.



Meanwhile, in Sardarthion, the continuing cold weather was close to the least of the Empress Chass'ika's worries.

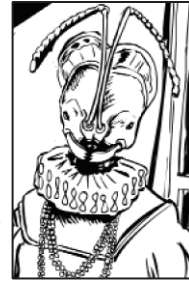
The Fall of the Empress Chass'ika (1562)

THE STORM HAD been brewing a long time. While the Empress was renowned for her tact and her diplomacy, nobody could claim that she was an efficient administrator. In two years she confirmed Ebmadh and Gornya Knjažestvo as Imperial Realms, granted an Imperial Charter to the city of Abrahiem, and made numerous appointments¹⁸. In short, she had run through her political capital like rain through a gutter and made countless political enemies. Her loyal Chancellor, Countess Sith'tat of Kicitchat, had tried to handle the smaller issues and placate where she could, but dissatisfaction within the Imperial government and the Imperial domain boiled over from the bureaucrats and aristocrats to the people, who now blamed every

¹⁸ This was in addition to the previous five years, where she had created the Baroness of Sakkar a Landgrave and appointed and re-appointed any number of judges. She also admitted the Oratoan Kingdom of Kéatoa into the Empire.

bad thing on the Empress, from the corruption of officials to the icy weather.

The situation got immeasurably worse when Imperial Chamber Court suspended the Yaminon Justice appointed by the Empress for violating the Court's rules. What should have been an administrative or political wrangle rapidly escalated when the Empress castigated the Court for, essentially, having a thin skin and sticking to the letter of their rules¹⁹. The Justices of the Court struck back hard, with a number publicly saying that the Empress was undermining the constitutional authority of the Court and undermining the very integrity of the Imperial government.



As the battle between the Court and the Empress dragged out in the capital's newspapers, the Count Palatine of Khûnatar and a number of Imperial Knights published a pamphlet calling Chass'ika's reign "an unmitigated disaster, both at home and abroad" and calling for her immediate abdication. "Back in my father's day," observed the old Count Palatine, "there would have been a duel by now."

By this point, the entire Imperial government in Sardarthion had essentially shut down. And then the news of the general Sahûlian retreat in Oratoa reached the capital.

The first riots were reported in Sakkarah in Son-drim Prefecture, but within weeks they'd spread to Sardarthion itself. The mob filled the snowy streets and squares of the capital. The Emerald Watch strove to maintain order, but a rumour sparked that they were marching to the *House of Peers* building. What had been a peaceful, if angry, crowd quickly became an enraged mob.

The grey skies, filled with dark and brooding clouds, turned to a wonderland of white as snow flurries began to fall on the tense city. As the mob

¹⁹ "At the end of the day we believe you based your decision on your own personal feelings as opposed to any actual wrongdoing, and in this we are greatly disappointed in those who hold Judgeship as their actions soil the nature of the position you are supposed to be upholding."

surged through the streets toward the Palace, the Emerald Watch hastily erected barricades across the Avenue of Paharnes to stop them.

Meanwhile, at the *House of Peers*, a small group of anonymous masked and armed aristocrats took up defensive positions. Similarly, armed retainers were noted outside the *Hall of the Electors*, where the Chancellor and a number of the Electoral envoys were holed up. The doors of the great Urdan *Shrine of Iurdana* remained open for the wounded and those seeking safety within its walls, but the sisters there were careful to confiscate any weapon larger than a knife that anybody might be carrying.

Day after day, the crowds in the streets continued to grow, despite the piling snow, bringing most other activity in the city to a halt. Finally, the Empress herself came out of the palace to the barricades. The crowd saw her and surged forward. The Emerald Watch stood firm with their pikes, and the result was a hundreds dead. The Empress, seeing the bodies of those skewered by her guard, fled in horror back to the palace.

The Empress Chass'ika signed the *Instrument of Abdication* on the fifth of September and instructed the Chancellor to call for an election. Had she done so the previous day, that might have been enough for the mob, but now rose red blood ran in the snow white streets of Sardarthion – in the Avenue of Paharnes and even in Tarbyr Square in front of the Imperial palace. The mob would no longer be satisfied with a piece of paper – especially an abdication that wouldn't take effect until a new election was held.

On the 7th of September, panicked guardsmen burst into Empress Chass'ika's private office with grave news: some of the Emerald Watch had defected to the mob. Barricades had been breached on at least two side-streets. Although the breaches had been contained and reinforcements were heading to the trouble spots, it was only a matter of time now before they broke through. The Empress, after much hesitation, ordered the Emerald Watch to restore order.

Three days later, the Emerald Watch, led by the Adhanggar Guard and the Colonel-in-Chief of the Watch, moved to clear Tarbyr Square of the mob that had been camping there for the better part of a month. At first, the mere sight of thousands of pikemen entering the square in their resplendent green and black uniforms was enough to disperse the edges of the crowd. As the line of soldiers swept through the square and the mob was pushed into a smaller space, however, a desperate resistance began.

It quickly spiraled into a full-fledged battle in the plaza, with the crowd employing knives, clubs, and the occasional real weapon against the disciplined Emerald Watch with their pikes and swords. The Watch cut through the mob like a scythe through summer wheat. Some few on the front lines valiantly tried to hold back the soldiers, but as the folk song later described it,

*Sardarthion that autumn
When the soldiers came
Heros fought them, died, and bled
When the soldiers came
We just broke and fled.*

Those who fought were slaughtered, but most of the panicky crowd escaped the square and melted back into the labyrinthine city. When the square had been secured, the Empress Chass'ika came to inspect the area.

The bodies of the dead protestors had been stacked up against one side of the muddy and bloody square in a great pile. A train of sledges stood nearby, and soldiers of the Emerald Watch were throwing the bodies up into them for transport out of the city. At first, the Empress didn't recognize the pile of mangled bodies for what they were. When she finally did, the Empress was speechless in horror.

The horrific reminders of the violence were covered a few days later as a blizzard blanketed the city, returning it to a pristine and icy white.



The next week, the mob again tried to take over Tarbyr Square, pressing up against the barricades and shouting for the Empress. This time, Empress Chass'ika obliged them by herself coming to the barricades with a fresh detachment of soldiers.

The Colonel-in-Chief, a gruff and blunt old Malebolge, pointed out to the Empress groups of several dozen soldiers in the mob. They had torn the insignia off their uniforms and seemed to be in sympathy with the crowd. "Deserters," muttered the Colonel. "More every day. Morale is low, and in some of the regiments discipline has gone out the window."

At the sight of the Empress, the mob roared, and it was all the Emerald Watch could do to hold them back. The Empress tried to address the crowd, to calm them, but she could not make herself heard over the roar. Snowballs flew through

the air, and the few soldiers with shields reflexively raised them.

Suddenly, a surge of people pushed their way forward, and some of them came over the barricade. The soldiers fought them off, sword to club, but the breaches only grew, until it was as if they were trying to hold back the tide.

And then the Emerald Watch broke. Soldiers threw down their weapons and fled from the crowd, or they simply dove for cover. Members of the elite Adhanggar Guard immediately formed up around the Empress, raising their shields against the continual rain of snowballs, some with stones in them.

Despite their best efforts, several struck the Empress.

*In that snowy September
Sardarthion sent
Children out for fun
Sardarthion sent
Mother on the run*

The injured Empress withdrew to her chambers, mourning for her Empire and refusing all medical attention. She died the next day.

The doctor who examined her body indicated that none of her wounds were particularly serious. He entered the cause of death as “despondency and a broken heart”.



Fresh from their victory over the Cappargarnians at the Gates of Kattras, the enormous Araxean army of Count Puchalam Bormandes of Pabanhipa arrived in Carlon.



The Election of 1562

CHANCELLOR SITH'TAT ABDICATED her throne as Countess of Kicitchat, so as to focus on her duties as Chancellor until the election of new Emperor. By October, order in the city had more or less been restored, more by people fleeing the cold than the armed force of law. The Chancellor convened the Electoral Envoys, though those of Cappargarnia and Aradéc were, by previous decree of the electors, excluded from the election.

They descended on the Imperial Palace at dawn on the Ides of October. They were met on the palace steps by Chancellor Sith'tat, flanked by four members of the Adhanggar Guard. In the icy morning air, the Chancellor quickly administered the oath to the envoys and then all fled inside to relative warmth of the Blue Chamber.

Floored in the deep blue Kranthic marble that gave the room its name, the Blue Chamber stood three stories tall. Although nine great lanterns hung in the chamber, only two of them actually cast any light into the gloom. Cracked and chipped blood red columns supported two balconies and a choir loft on their dizzying way to the vaulted ceiling. At one end of the great hall were massive doors, worn and cracked, carved from a single Aradécian cedar. At the other end of the hall, facing the ancient doors, was a simple iron chair flanked by tarnished, brassy looking lion statues. It was set upon a stone dais cut with three shallow steps, worn round and smooth by millennia of supplicants and stained black with the blood of fallen Emperors.

All other furniture had been cleared from the Chamber except for nine roughly-hewn chairs set around a circular table, carved with an intricate design depicting the Nine Sacred Animals. After each envoy had taken their seat, the Chancellor read the *Great Charter* to the envoys and then left the Chamber, and soldiers of the Emerald Watch sealed the great door behind her. In view of the political situation in Sardarthion, by common consent, the Chancellor retained her badge of office until the election could be concluded.

The election was not quick. Days stretched into weeks, as the Envoys debated. The crux of the issue for some of the Envoys was apparently the death of the Empress. Their instructions were contingent on whether or not the Empress had died a natural death or had been assassinated. No one, it seems, could agree on whether the strange death of Empress Chass'ika was an assassination *per se*.


Days stretched into weeks as winter settled over the city. Envoys furiously sent communications back and forth to their governments.



The winter of 1562 was harsher than any of the past decade. With the Empire without a head, war raging throughout the continent, and snow piling

higher than the rooftops through much of southern and central Sahûl, you could be forgiven for thinking that an apocalypse had come.

1563: Cappargarnia on the Ropes

 HE GREAT URDAN army²⁰ marched into Adndar's snowswept Cappargarnian-occupied homeland of Envel. They were commanded by the young untested Thacian Prince, General Lord Tahnodir, ably advised by Araxean Captain Lord Mardant and Sakkari Marshal Chan Koxol²¹. While they arrived from the south, an Adndari army of perhaps 20,000 men and 40 airships led by Burgrave Lanharnes simultaneously arrived from the north.

The Cappargarnian garrison holed up in the city of Adndar and prepared for the inevitable assault. The undefended Hermitage and the old fortress of Nalhul immediately surrendered to their master, Lanharnes.

Shortly thereafter, Lanharnes took a meeting with an Ebmadhi ambassador who made him an offer of alliance. Given the amount of financial backing this offer represented, and given that the Baron's motto seemed to be *Death to Cappargarnia*, Lanharnes was well disposed to accept.



Chi'tixi and Averon's Fenric-hunting army shambled into Taporì and searched for the Pontiff and his forces. The poor, dirt-farming Yagnarists in the region didn't exactly welcome the Chi'tixi army as liberators²², and they were *extremely* wary of the Averese. Nevertheless, the Chi'tixi did destroy the Cappargarnian garrison.

²⁰ Numbering 9,500 Araxean archers together with Electoral Thace's 45,000 cataphraçti and 8,500 hussars.

²¹ Herself accompanied by the Deva Sirrix.

²² The fact is, the region is the poorest and least developed region in the whole Byrrin Valley by a wide margin, and the inhabitants have become something of a joke, commonly thought of as yokels. Indeed, in much of the northern Byrrin, the word "Taporì" is synonymous with "hick".

Not finding Fenric, the army continued shambling westwards towards Gurvan.

No garrison was left, and the instant the armies left the region it declared its independence. This, as it turns out, was a poor decision, as a Demon began tearing up the region, only adding to the misery of the poor Taporì.

The Demon in question was apparently shaking down anybody it could get its hands on regarding the location of Fenric and his army. It killed hundreds before it actually paused to wait for somebody to answer. When the poor vagrant in question could only stammer, the Demon bit off his head at the shoulders and then continued on its rampage.

Finally, it managed to work out from somebody that Fenric's army had crossed the river, moving at unnatural speed.



The Baron of Ebmadh arrived in Gurvan with his own army as well as the Hawkwood Company. As they had in Dunvaël, the Baron, Captain Dwinbi Sardes of the Hawkwood Company, and Janos of Taporì all parlayed with the local gentry, generously plying them with gifts while making sure that they did not fail to notice the large army backing them up.

Unlike their brethren of Dunvaël, however, the Gurvan aristocracy were not disposed to accept the Baron's offer. Given that the region had no garrison or castles, the Ebmadhi military occupation of the region proved quick work. The city of Udhibar, however, still had the remnants of its once high walls defending it. Reminding his men that Prince Rahnes of Hyrágec had taken the city in 1554 with *cavalry*, the Baron ordered his men to begin preparing for an assault.



The Election of 1562 (now held over to 1563!)

OVER THE COURSE of the cold and snowy spring and early summer, heralds with instructions for the various and confused Electoral Envoys arrived in Sardarthion.

They reconvened on the morning of the 19th of Quadrilis. Late that same afternoon, the great doors creaked open, and the envoy from Chi'tixi intoned the ancient formula: "long live the unanimously elected Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Empress of All the World, Her August and Imperial Majesty, K'ivik of Kicitchat!"

At noon the next day, the Imperial crown vanished from its accustomed niche, only to appear just as suddenly on the head of the new Empress in Tchac'at. At 14 years old, she was only slightly older than Chass'ika had been at her election.



Of the Cappargarnian armies, there had been no sign for many months. The wily Fenric had eluded the Chi'tixi and Averese armies and Prince Carberic's force likewise had vanished. Until now.

For both Cappargarnian armies met together in Adndar's prefecture of Morwenna. Given Cappargarnia's legendary prowess in siege warfare, the three small undefended castles there had little chance against 45,000 Cappargarnians.

Oddly, after leaving a perfunctory garrison, the Cappargarnians couldn't be bothered to siege or to assault the city of Pakhandar. Instead, the two armies continued marching together... southwards.



It seems as though everybody was after Pontiff Fenric. First the Chi'tixi and Averese joint Anti-Fenric Task Force, then the mysterious Demon who had torn through Taporì earlier in the year.

Now, a third entrant appeared in the "Kill Fenric" club: Spekthes the Gladiator.

Spekthes issued his challenge in Taporì, where the benighted population was still reeling from invasions, snowstorms, and a Demonic attack. The Gladiator challenged the Tarotist Pontiff to a duel to the death.

The Taporì people witnessing the speech duly applauded at the right times²³ but were otherwise listless and tired by the whole affair. They rather hoped that Spekthes would set off southwards and leave them alone. After determining that Fenric and his army had been sighted in Morwenna, he did just that.



The enormous Araxean army of Count Puchalam Bormandes of Pabanhipa arrived in Envel to augment the enormous Thacian and relatively tiny Adndari armies already there.



An Ebmadhi diplomat – reportedly a loquacious Saurian beauty named Taräel – was chased out of Cappargarnian Adément.



The winter of 1563 was a great deal less harsh than the previous year had been. It was still long and snowy, but by the time the spring of 1564 had begun, the weather was actually pleasant, and the snows began to melt.

1564: The Cappargarnian Gambit

CAPPARGARNIA'S 60,000-MAN ARMY crossed the border into the Imperial Demense in the summer of 1564. Torsi Prefecture, utterly undefended, surrendered. The Imperial Free City of Einahdhu, under the con-

²³ They had apparently been paid to do so, in fresh produce.

trol of the *Most Ancient and Undaunted Imperial Order of Herald's*, did not open their gates to the invaders. Neither did the castle of Mortain²⁴. The ultimate goal of the Cappargarnian army was not difficult to guess, for they made no secret of it: they were marching to Sardarthion.

Fury erupted in both the House of Peers and in the College of Electors as the representatives of the Imperial Realms inveighed against what was variously described as “an insufferable insult to the Imperial dignity”, “a most heinous act of treason”, and “an unprecedented assault on the Empire itself”. It was, at least, not the last of these, as this sort of thing had been commonplace under the First Empire. Indeed, the current Second Empire had been founded by such an attack by Paharnes the Great in 791. Sardarthion and the Imperial throne had been won by force of arms at least once since then²⁵.

A few, however, saw it for what it perhaps most truly was, a desperate gamble by a Prince whose realm faced extinction.



In the north, meanwhile, the war ground on. The army of Baron Haryt of Ebmadh, together with the Hawkwood Company, began their assault of the city of Udhobar in Gurvan. The joint Chi'tixi / Averon Fenric-Hunting Army of Doom™ arrived in the region at about the same time. The Baron graciously invited the army's leaders to dinner.

It was a strained affair, as both Averon's Lady Pinkerton and Chi'tixi's Dame Tixit made it perfectly clear that they had their orders and needed to be on their way. The near-constant barrage of Ebmadhi artillery shelling Udhobar probably did little to contribute to the evening's merriment. The two left early, leaving the Baron and Lord Dwinbi to finish off the last bottles of wine.

²⁴ Ruled as an Imperial fief by Lord Mortain, the former Emperor Sydath II.

²⁵ Prandollen Rhazahan of Aradéc took the city in 1199, becoming Emperor Rhazahan I.

By morning, the Chi'tixi and the Averese armies had left, heading northwest towards Dunvaël. Within the month, the Ebmadhi finally captured Udhobar with a loss of perhaps 1,000 men.



The Empress K'ivik of Kitchat arrived at the Shrine of Moroko in summer. The area near the shrine was a hub of activity. Not only were there the usual throngs of pilgrims from all over the known world, there were a vast series of hastily constructed warehouses in the area. Barracks for both the huge Hyragecan Royal Army stationed there and for the Order of the Sacred Raven clustered around the shrine. Two dragons stood watch.

The Empress was welcomed to the shrine by Princess Mirra of Thace. Deep within the shrine, the two spoke alone for several hours. When they emerged blinking into the sunlight, Mirra was heard to offer to “replace your majesty's missing eye”, to which the Empress reportedly replied “I've never seen clearer than I do right now”.

As Mirra returned to the work of supervising the new construction at Moroko, the Empress took to riverboat to journey south to her coronation at Sardarthion. She had no sooner left than news of the Cappargarnian occupation of Torsi arrived.



The Great Byrrin Company and Willeford's Spears entered Cappargarnian Djarden under the banner of the Baron of Ebmadh. Seeing no evidence of a Chi'tixi or Averese garrison, they quickly conquered the region. The city of Alkandh, whose walls had not yet been rebuilt, surrendered immediately rather than face an assault (and probable plunder) by the Free Companies.



The final Thacian reinforcements, some seventy schooners, arrived in Envel. They unloaded 10,000 pikemen led by the seasick Sar Kangus of Duzjun. This brought the allied army to a total of 154,000 preparing for the liberation of the Imperial Free City of Adndar.

1565: Sardarthion, Sardarthion!



APPARGARNIAN ARMIES COMMANDED by Prince Deirn Carberic and Pontiff Fenric VI crossed into Sardarthion Prefecture on the Ides of Sectilis. The ailing Pontiff, who had recently celebrated his 78th birthday, had to be carried across the border in a litter. Prince Carberic, however, rode at the head of the army on a grey charger, the Banner of Malygris firmly in his hand. At the Prince's side rode Steene Artarik, the Butcher of Zadres.

They met no resistance.

When they arrived at the great Imperial capital of Sardarthion, they found the gates shut against them. The Prince sent a herald into the city with a message indicating that as an Elector – even a Doomed one – he and his honour guard was guaranteed entrance into the city.

The Colonel-in-Chief responded that according to *her* reading of the Great Charter, the Prince was certainly allowed entrance, but that his escort was limited to five hundred men.

When the herald presented this message to Prince Carberic, the Prince laughed. “Please tell the Colonel-in-Chief that she is more than welcome to try to stop me.”

The Battle of Sardarthion (1565)



WEEK LATER, PRINCE Carberic and his 60,000-man army stood at the gates of Sardarthion. He seemed disappointed that the gates were closed. The Emerald Watch held the wall, though of the vaunted Imperial Sky Galleon squadron there was no sign.

The mood in the city was restive. A number of the people in the city welcomed any imposition of

order after the chaos of the previous year. Others, generally gathering around the *College of Electors* and the residence of the former Chancellor, expressed dismay and urged the Emerald Watch to prepare the city's defenses. Within the Emerald Watch itself, morale remained disastrously low and the desertions continued.

The Prince sent a repeat of his earlier message demanding entrance into the city. A quick flurry of short messages then passed between the Prince and the Colonel-in-Chief.

C-I-C: You may enter the city alone when your army returns to your lands.

PRINCE: I claim these as my lands.

C-I-C: They belong to the Empress.

PRINCE: I recognize no Empress. Surrender my city of Sardarthion.

C-I-C: Achieve it if you can. We will never surrender.

PRINCE: Very well.

A Cappargarnian Efrete assailed the wall and its defenders with fire-bolt and fists, while the Prince's arquebusiers peppered them with shot. Strangely, most of the Prince's army did not engage. Even so, the famed Cappargarnian siegecraft made good progress against the decrepit and obsolete weaponry and tactics of the outclassed Emerald Watch.

And then, stone golems started falling from the sky. The first few crashed down near the old Ondorine Orchards in the Northgate neighbourhood, causing terrible damage as they smashed into the earth and exploded into sharp stone fragments. Two fell into the North Gate itself, tearing through the Dronex Tower and bringing it crashing into the ground.

The next eighty or ninety appeared firmly on the ground. This was scarcely an improvement, as they immediately began lumbering towards the North Gate, batting aside any defender who might get in their way. Once they arrived, it was but a moment before they had succeeded in smashing

open the North Gate. Now the remainder of the Prince's army rushed forward into the breach.

The morale of the Emerald Watch, already low, collapsed. The Colonel-in-Chief tried to rally her soldiers, but some had already laid down their arms, and a sizable number under a Colonel Tarant had simply returned to their barracks. Nevertheless, she was able to cobble together a decent force consisting of the Adhanggar Guard, about twenty regiments of pike, and at least some of the defenders on the wall. They inflicted perhaps 8,000 casualties on the Cappargarnians before being slaughtered by a combination of stone golems, arquebusiers, pike, and archers.

Prince Carberic ordered that the dead be given a decent burial, and he asked that the Colonel-in-Chief, an Urdan, be entombed at Iurdana.

The Cappargarnian army surveyed the city and found that the Imperial airfleet was, in fact, grounded for want of Mana. The walls and the remaining Emerald Watch barracks were secured. Ex-Chancellor Sith'at was "detained" and the small cadre of Kicitchat loyalists surrounding her were arrested or dispersed. Soldiers were stationed around both the *College of Electors* and the *House of Peers* "for the protection of the noble Envoys".

Prince Carberic rode through the streets of Sardarthion to thunderous applause. There was some question as to how much of this civic approval was genuine and how much may have been purchased, but no matter. The parade ended at the Imperial Palace, where less than two years earlier K'ivik of Kicitchat had been elected Empress.

Prince Carberic and his *New Republican Guard* entered the ancient and dilapidated audience hall known as the Blue Chamber. Invited guests filled the chamber: envoys and ambassadors of the Electors and Peers, officers of the Emerald Watch²⁶, Cappargarnian military officials, and the cream of Sardarthion aristocracy.

Prince Carberic of Cappargarnia climbed the three shallow steps of the dais and sat upon the dull grey iron throne, flanked by tarnished lion

statues that might once have been gilded. The old doddering Pontiff Fenric VI stood beside him.

Prince Carberic proclaimed in a loud voice,

Kindred of Sahûl!

For seven centuries, the Empire stood as the crowning achievement of civilized beings. But there were those who would set us against one another, and we took up arms to defend our way of life. Some realms of the Empire had conspired to create the shadow of dictatorship under the guise of law. They had hoped to grind the Empire into ruin.

But the aims of would-be tyrants were valiantly opposed by those who believe in the ideals of the Empire, who believe in the rights of Realms, who believe in civil discourse not shouted down by corrupt Courts, who believe in peace and prosperity and not endless bloody war.

This is the next step in the restoration of our Imperial liberties. We follow in the example of our predecessors, of Dronex, of Rhazahan the Mighty, of Paharnes the Great himself.

*Therefore, I Deirn Carberic, Electoral Prince of Cappargarnia, hereby rededicate myself to the restoration of our Empire and proclaim myself by favour of divine Fate and by right of conquest, Emperor of Sahûl.*²⁷

Before the stunned assembly, Fenric placed a simple golden diadem adorned with a single emerald upon Carberic's head and shouted, "long live the Emperor!"

The shout was quickly taken up by the Cappargarnian officers, and a moment later by most in the chamber²⁸.

²⁶ Including a newly appointed Colonel-in-Chief Tarant.

²⁷ Copies of this speech were printed and distributed throughout Sardarthion, and copies eventually made their way throughout central Sahûl.

²⁸ Not, it should be noted, by any of the Electoral Envoys. A number of the other ambassadors were rather muted as well.



Carberic the Usurper

As the news spread throughout Sardarthion, the overwhelming emotion was relief. Some had feared purges, but this did not happen. Many took this new Emperor at his word that he desired nothing but the restoration of peace and liberty.

Even in the Byrrin Valley, there were those on both sides of the Cappargarnian Doom who, longing for a restoration of peace and prosperity, accepted the new Emperor. In the days following his declaration, hope flourished in the hearts of the people of Sahûl, and the Emperor Carberic was arguably the most popular Emperor since the early days of Sydath II²⁹.

²⁹ Sydath was perhaps more loved, but Carberic more feared.

As the would-be Empress K'ivik journeyed up the Byrrin – to what destination, now, none could rightly say – the Imperial Crown no longer mystically returned to her head each day at noon. Many took this as a sign that Carberic's revolution was a *fait accompli*. Worryingly, neither did the Crown return to its small chamber in the Mausoleum of Paharnes in Sardarthion, nor to the head of Carberic.

The Quadrantid Ediċt (1565)

CARBERIC TOOK ADVANTAGE of his unbridled popularity to make his first misstep. With a grand flourish, he promulgated the *Quadrantid Ediċt*³⁰. This document purported to restore the traditional Imperial government as envisioned by the *Golden Ediċt*, updated to modern times and with the worst of its incomprehensible rhetoric trimmed out.

Among other things, he affected to abolish the Imperial Chamber Court and to radically reform the College of Electors. He struck Chi'tixi and Araxes from the list and restored Itaxik and Zarkhandu. He then added Hyrágec and Murali, for a total of eleven Electors. To say the College was in an uproar might very well have been the understatement of the century.

In fact, this uproar and discontent was quickly spread and amplified through the city by those opposed to the new regime. The Electoral Envoy from Thace stood in the College to denounce the new Ediċt. In the Peers, the representative from Kitchat reiterated her government's position that Carberic was not Emperor. To this she added "as the ravings of a traitor and a usurper, this so-called ediċt has no standing in law or fact".

At this point, the Count Palatine of Khûnatar announced that he owed his allegiance only to the

³⁰ Named after a meteor shower with its origins in the constellation *Quadrans Muralis*. Since this is a winter event, usually appearing about the Ides of Paharn and certainly not happening at the time the ediċt was issued, most were puzzled at the name. The current popular theory is that it is meant to evoke the *Golden Ediċt*, which was promulgated on the Ides of Paharn in 1387.

“lawfully elected Empress K’ivik”, and the Empire itself seemed to totter on the brink of civil war. Each Realm must now decide where they stand.

Certainly within the “Imperial Domain”, opinion is divided and the civil order hangs by a very thin thread indeed.




Meanwhile the war ground on. In Adément, Lord Dardûr of Carcë led 38,000 steppe cavalry³¹ and a Dragon in destroying the small garrison and conquering the region. The city of Halak, however, resists the invaders for now.



The joint Chi’tixi / Averese Fenric-Hunting Army of Doom™ shambled back into Ebmadi Dunvaël on its endless, hopeless quest. With Fenric ensconced in Sardarthion, Spekthes the Gladiator dismissed the elderly Pontiff as a coward for refusing his challenge, and he returned home.

The Demon who had been hunting Fenric was much more dogged in his approach. He ambushed the Cappargarnian Efreet in the streets of Sardarthion.

Fire in the Streets of Sardarthion (1565)

 HE DEMON OPENED with a flying tackle, sending Efreet and Demon tumbling in a furious roiling fireball down Andrones Avenue, scattering soldiers and civilians like ninepins. The two powerful immortals wrestled through the streets of the Imperial capital, creating a swath of fiery destruction in their wake. Buildings that had stood hundreds of years or more were reduced to rubble and dust. The dead must be numbered in the thousands.

The Demon was getting the better of the Efreet when the Cappargarnian army finally formed up and mounted a counter-offensive with arquebuses

³¹ Including no less than 5,000 cataphraḡi. Looks like that arrangement with Electoral Thace is paying off!

and archers. This evened up the odds considerably, and in a final, cataclysmic confrontation in Tarbyr Square, the Demon exploded in fire. The ancient buildings facing the square were all damaged or destroyed, and a fire broke out in the Imperial Palace itself. Fortunately, this was soon extinguished, but not before the wing closest to the square was reduced to an unroofed empty shell. Cappargarnian and Emerald Watch casualties were perhaps 5,000.

This was all a little too much for the elderly and ailing Pontiff Fenric. He died peacefully in his bed some weeks later. With the confused political situation in the Byrrin, the normal methods of choosing a Pontiff for the Church of the Illimitable proved impossible. For now, the office remains vacant.




In Torsi Prefecture, Sydath Lord Mortain³² spoke out against “Emperor” Carberic’s “illegal seizure of the Imperial City”. The various aristocrats of the area supported him, and in the late summer he led them in an armed uprising. Lord Mortain declared his allegiance “to the Empire, to the *Great Charter*, and to the lawfully elected Empress of Sahûl”. He stands ready to fight for the Empire “one last time”.



By early summer, the allied armies were ready to begin the assault on Adndar.

Fifth Battle of Adndar (1565)

 HE HONOUR OF leading the battle was given to the Burgrave of Adndar, Tiribissi Lanharnes IV, now an ally of the Baron of Ebmadi. He personally led the Adndari airfleet over his city. On the ground, the actual combat operations were overseen by the young Thacian Prince, General Lord Tahnodir, ably aided by

³² Lord Mortain was of course Electoral Grand Duke of Atuburrk from 1523 to 1534 and reigned as Emperor Sydath II from 1524 until his abdication took effect in 1536.

Sakkari Marshal Chan Koxol³³, Sar Kangus of Duzjun, and the Araxeans Captain Lord Mardant and Count Puchalam Bormandes of Pabanhipa. Together, the allied army numbered 154,000 men.

Against them stood the mighty walls of Adndar, defended by Cassias Dronex³⁴ and a mere 7,000 men and a score of stone warriors, all armed with the latest in the vaunted Cappargarnian siege technology.

The Sakkari Deva led the charge against the mighty walls, while the Adndari airships coordinated the attack. Wave after wave of Araxean footmen stormed the walls in vain, while the Thacian siege engines did their best to pull them down.

Even though everything seemed to go wrong for the allied attack, and even through the Cappargarnian defenders fought brilliantly, in the end the battle came down to sheer numbers.

When General Lord Tahnodir at last led his Thacian pike through the rubble that had been the walls of Envel, the defenders were dead or scattered. Cassias Dronex was dead, and the city was restored to its true Burgrave.

The allied casualties were limited to the Araxean light footmen, many thousands of whom gave their lives for the liberation of Adndar.



The Sky is Falling! (1565)



IN A WARM summer evening, the upper horn of the waxing crescent moon split in two, and from the midpoint of the division a flaming torch sprang up. It spewed out fire, hot coals, and sparks over a considerable distance. Meanwhile the rest of the Moon writhed and throbbed like a wounded snake. Three days later a rain of shooting stars fell through the sky in the vicinity of the Moon. At first, it was similar to the delicate beauty of the Midsummer Meteor shower. Within hours, however, they began increasing, soon falling at a prodigious rate. Before the night

³³ Accompanied by the Deva Sirrix.

³⁴ The Cappargarnian “Burgrave of Adndar”.

was over, it was as if a blizzard of tiny flaming lights were falling from the Moon.

They only ceased – or at least appeared to cease – when the sun rose. The meteor storm continued to fall from the Moon every night throughout the rest of Quintilis and into Sextilis before fading out completely.

Throughout the Byrrin Valley, a great apocalyptic fever gripped the people. Many interpreted it as a terrible omen of the fate awaiting the Empire should civil war erupt. Some took it as a condemnation of Carberic’s seizure of Sardarthion, some as an affirmation of a new order.

In Trifin, a mendicant named Munser preached to the discontented masses against the depredations of the Cappargarnian aristocracy. Saying that it was the duty of honourable Tarotists to change the world for the better, Munser instigated a peasant rebellion against the nobility and against Cappargarnia. The fearful burghers of Joarbal soon joined the rebellion, and by the autumn the region was independent. Munser pledges to export his “peasant revolution” until all of the Byrrin is “free or in flames”.



The joint Chi’tixi / Averese Fenric-Hunting Army of Dooooom™ shambled back into Ebmadhi Gurvan. The commander of Averon’s forces, Lady Pinkerton, had quite enough of the whole venture, but Chi’tixi’s Dame Tixit vowed to pursue Fenric “even through the gates of hell itself” to get her revenge. The corpse of Fenric, now honourably interred in Sardarthion, had no comment.



Welcomed by Lord Mortain and the people of the region, Empress K’ivik landed in Torsi. Castle Mortain is now K’ivik’s provisional capital until she can reclaim Sardarthion. They were joined by a motley collection of Imperial officials and offi-

cers, and even a previously missing Cappargarnian Senator³⁵.

The vast Imperial bureaucracy, heedless of the turmoil at the top, continued to grind on as it always had. For now, the provincial receipts are still collected in Sardarthion, though that may certainly change.



While a smaller task force of 35 galleons docked at Zadres, the bulk of Murali's fleet sailed past the city and into the Lower Byrrin. Admiral Torrfin's fleet numbered about 200 ships altogether, including thirty caravels. They are reportedly laden with supplies for refugees and those in need.



The weather turned foul in the early autumn, with snow flurries throughout the Byrrin as early as September. By mid October, the Upper valley was already blanketed in snow as far north as Joarbal and Tiritix. Within a month, winter had truly arrived throughout central and southern Sahûl, with drifting snow burying villages and farmsteads.

A terrible blizzard in early Sartember was responsible for thousands of deaths throughout the region.

BARONY OF EBMADH (37 M/TA)

Baron Sandrim Haryt II of Ebmadh, Chancellor of the Imperial Free City of Adndar, Iron Hand of the North, Liberator of Zadres.

His Excellency Tiribissi Lanharnes IV, Hereditary Burgrave of Adndar.

Trade: Atuburrk, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Einandhu, Elphárec, IDK, IOC, Kicitchat, Lynnarvor, ThaceD, Tiryowglas

DP: Adndar (A – *see below*), Arzhadior (A), Dunvaël (F)

³⁵ This would be Lord Abramin Sardos II. He was one of the five Senators to stand against Prince Caranthes. He was arrested in 1548, released in the general amnesty, and immediately vanished into exile. He inherited Lordly title (in exile) in 1554.



ARON HARYT METICULOUSLY planned his campaign against Cappargarnia, sending his captains to the field with detailed orders and conditionals for every imaginable contingency. While this level of planning is not unknown elsewhere, the Baron has raised to a high art form.

Even so, there was one contingency for which the Baron had not planned: the perfidious attack by Hyrágec upon an Ebmadhi army in Plormel. Otherwise, things went fairly well, although only a fraction of the Baron's diplomatic entreaties in the Byrrin bore fruit.

Thanks to a grant from the Baron, the annual Zadres Book Fair resumed in 1561, for the first time since the Rape of Zadres in 1553. The city's guilds, particularly its powerful Printer's Guild, seem quite fond of the Baron.

ELECTORAL REPUBLIC OF CAPPARGARNIA (4M/TA)

General Sir Anabrin Taidarian, Regent of the Republic.

Sevas Dorn, Grand Marshal of the Blood Swords, Consul-General of the Tempest March.

Trade: None.

DP: Failed.



RINCE CARBERIC MADE one last desperate gamble in playing for Sardarthion and the Imperial throne. Only time will tell if he will succeed in restoring peace and order to the Empire – or even in saving Cappargarnia.

He issued the *Quadrantid Edict* to more or less turn back the clock on the Imperial government. Will it stick? Is it even legal? Nobody knows.

IMPERIAL FREE CITY OF ADNDAR



IS EXCELLENCY TIRIBISSI Lanharnes, fourth of that name, Hereditary Burgrave of the Imperial Free City of Adndar, received an offer that, ultimately, he couldn't refuse. In return for help against the Cappargarnians, he signed an alliance with Ebmadh and designated the Baron as his sole heir. The Guilds obliged by electing the Baron as their Chancellor.

THE IMPERIAL DEMENSE – K'IVIK (0 M/UR)

Her August & Imperial Majesty, K'ivik, Lady Tchac'at, Countess of the Kitchat Hive and Associated Dominions, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Empress of All the World.

Trade: Aradéc, Araxes, Atuburk, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Elphárec, Golmath, Hyrárec, Ingazi, IOC, Kitchat, Lynnarvor, ThaceD, ThaceE, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn

DP: None.

IIP: 20

EMPRESS K'IVIK DOES not control Sardarthion, which has proven to be a bit of a problem in establishing her reign. She does still have the Imperial Crown, however, even if it doesn't seem to be particularly bound to her any more. She also has the good will of most of the Electors who, after all, elected her, so that's something.

THE IMPERIAL DOMAIN – CARBERIC (14 M/UR)

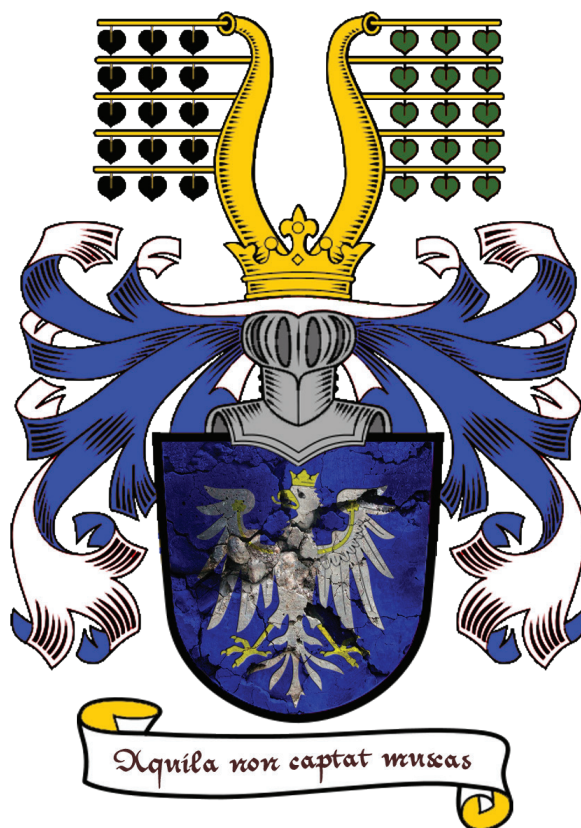
His August & Imperial Majesty, Carberic, Lord Deirn, Burgrave of Punchega, Electoral Prince of Cappargarnia, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lord of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Emperor of All the World.

Trade: Einandhu, Lynnarvor, Tiryowglas

DP: None.

IIP: 5

EMPEROR CARBERIC LOST virtually his entire realm in his quixotic bid for the throne. Was it worth it? He came to the throne with great popularity and influence, the first to claim it by right of conquest in centuries. He frittered away virtually all of it in issuing his *Quadrantid Edičf*. Was it worth it? Is it even legal and binding? Who knows?



IMPERIAL FREE CITY OF EINANDHU (4 M/UR)

Sir Forngian Dareth, Tiger King of Arms.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburk, Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Elphárec, Golmath, IDC, IDK, IOC, Kitchat, Lynnarvor, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn

DP: It's a living.


THE HERALDS ARE just plain puzzled about what to do with the heraldic situation, particularly about who is or is not an Elector. The Heralds also voiced some concerns about Aradéc's "go it alone" approach to heraldry and the mail service, though at the moment their national heralds seems more like a private messenger service than a serious attempt to undermine the Order.

PRINCIPALITY OF DUEDHYN (14 S/UR)

His Highness, Prince Merryn IV, the Good, of Duedhyn, Lord Goslowes, Baron Dhanos, Defender of the Faith.

Trade: Araxes, Atuburrk, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Elphárec, Hyrárec, IDK, IOC, Kicitchat, Lynnarvor, Sakkar, ThaceE, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn

DP: Finnedor (A – see below)

 PRINCE MERRYN CONTINUED to focus on the redevelopment of his realm. Duedhyn built a diplomatic academy and a law college in Pareis. The government expanded, as did the Principality's primary school system, and many new public works projects were constructed in the capital. Work continued at the Library of Pareis, with groups of Murali and Thacian scholars, as well as individual scholars from all over the Empire, visiting the library campus.

In Avalow, a port town rose over the long-forgotten ruins of Mirjyn Priory, while in Lowarthow the village of Metas-on-the-Darriow grew into a town³⁶. In short, Duedhyn is booming.

Or would be, if the weather weren't so terribly, terribly cold. In the winter of 1562, the Darriow froze completely solid, and even with the rapid warming in the late spring of the following year, there were places in the deep valleys where the snow had hardly melted before the first snows of 1563 began.

The harshness of the climate oddly redoubled the Prince's grim determination to reunite the people of his fractured realm. In 1562, he was present at *the Sacrifice of Khuder Pedrevan and the Coming of Marwynn Avelanergh*, and the following year he set in motion his plan for *the Reuniting of the Clans*.

The bones of the Dragon Randgrith had been locked away in the Prince's storehouses since 1509, with no one quite sure what to do with them. The Prince ordered these holy relics dispersed to the religious sites throughout Duedhyn, with some also being sent to Branvras Priory in Finnedor and

to Iurdana. The dragon's great skull was set high above the altar at Gwithi Priory in Pareis.


On a cool night in summer, the Moon exploded into a shower of sparks that fell like a blizzard for a month. Many compared their beauty to that of falling ice crystals. The wise and learned of Duedhyn took this as a sign that the deepest winter of all was imminent. Indeed, the fearsome winds of winter came early in 1565. While the weather is certainly cold and snowy, Duedhyn has survived far worse winters. After all, you could still see the chimneys poking up out of the snow.

The nomadic caribou herders of the Sarthes taiga were surprised to see more doughty Duedhyni settle in the region to become loggers³⁷.

The Cathedral town of Manakoth rose in Morhogh near Cannow on Lake Sardath.

The ancient Baron Glannyn of Avalow, who had memorably referred to Prince Meriasek as "that pockfaced lunatic" and once suggested that Prince Merryn II "grow a pair", died in Finnedor in 1562. His body was borne back to his homeland to be interred with his venerable ancestors. He was succeeded by his grandson Drennyn.

The Sacrifice of Khuder Pedrevan and the Coming of Marwynn Avelanergh (1562)

 HE PRINCE ATTENDED a magnificent rite at Gwithi priory in Pareis led by Raven Priests and supported by the orthodox clergy. A series of great sacrifices were made in the Raven style, and the power and blood of the earth were offered up to Urda to seek her blessing on a complex summoning. The prince prostrated himself, asking that Urda send to them a light to guide them through these dark days, and then calling upon Raven to beseech his sister Dragon to bless the realm.

The old wizard Khuder Pedrevan, supported by a number of apprentices, called out to Urda to send to Pareis the wisest of her dragons, no matter if she be lame or weak, to serve as keeper of the li-

³⁶ Both prefectures, it should be noted, are part of the Raven Ordinariate.

³⁷ Sarthes (3133)s.

brary of Pareis. Some in the city, remembering the battles of the last war, wondered at the wisdom of a Draconic librarian, but most held their tongues in the face of the prince's resolve.

Seeking to bond the dragon not to himself or another, but to the very foundation stones of the Library itself, the wizard Khuder Pedrevan worked the deepest parts of his sorcery in the catcombs beneath the Great Library. At the height of the ritual, the spell crystal shattered in the wizard's hands sending bolts of unrestrained Mana and razor-sharp crystal shards exploding through the chamber.

Pedrevan appeared to age a dozen years or more. His skin grew grey and wrinkled, and his eyes faded to an icy blue-white and clouded over. Crimson blood dripped from a hundred small nicks and cuts, standing out in sharp relief on his white robe and grey skin.

Nevertheless, he continued the rite.

As the exhausted and feeble old wizard reached the end, he turned to his apprentices. "Now I am done, and red blood will call red fire. Much blood has been spilled to destroy this land. Perhaps now shall we pour out some to lay a new foundation. Urda grant that someday this will be the greatest seat of learning the world has ever known." With these words, he entered into the darkness beneath the library and was seen no more.

The earth beneath the city of Pareis rolled.

If it was an earthquake, it was the briefest ever recorded, more of a roll than a rattle. Very little damage was reported, but the church bells rang throughout Pareis, and even in Baylow across the river in Tythyen.

And then she was there, standing outside in the court of the Great Library. A dragon, but white the colour of the snow that covered the city, a brilliant dazzling white. Those assembled there gasped as one at her delicate beauty and aura of sheer power, elegantly restrained.

And then she was gone. In her place stood an elderly Saurian matron, pale and grey, dressed in the traditional black garb of the librarians of Pareis.

She took a pair of ivory spectacles from her coat pocket and affixed them primly on her beak.

Finally, Prince Merryn gasped, "who *are* you?"

She smiled, almost patronizingly. "My dear, you may call me Marwynn Avelanergh³⁸. I am the librarian."

Reuniting the Clans (1563–1565)



RINCE' MERRYNN'S ENVOYS continued their work in Finnedor, even as the Prince himself continued his efforts to forge one nation out of two different religious traditions. To this end, he maintains his custom of attending services of both the orthodox Urdan Church and of the Raven Ordinariate.

As part of his effort to reach out to the Ravenists who fled Duedhyn, the Prince established the *Raven Repatriation Fund* and invited all those of Duedhyni ancestry to return to their motherland.

News of this "right of return" quickly traveled up and down the length of the Byrrin Valley, raising interest even amongst the Duedhyni settlers in Hyrágec. While much of the money and resources set aside for resettlement no doubt went to line the pockets of unscrupulous, the Resettlement Authority reported that a small trickle of people started coming into the country in 1563.

Due to the Byrrin war, most of those who set out for Duedhyn have yet to arrive. There are stories filtering back of families or larger groups of refugees slowly making their way to Duedhyn through war zones and great hardship. When – if – they will arrive is anybody's guess. While most of those who returned dispersed throughout the Realm, the army did route a number of the refugees to resettle the icy forests of Koes.

An unintended consequence of the Prince's plan soon became evident. Starting in 1564, there were protests throughout Araxean Tewynn and Tythyen, and particularly in the streets of Baylow. The

³⁸ This is almost certainly not her real name, though perhaps it is a title or honourific of some sort. In Old Sardic, *mar wynn avel an ergh* means "as white as the snows".

protesters are agitating for the return of the regions to the Prince of Duedhyn.

RAVEN FINNEDOR

JABIN LORD NENEPILLAX, Protector of the last Ravenist prefecture of Finnedor, surveyed his options and chose the best course for his disparate and quarrelling people. He disbanded a number of Colonel Draves' remaining Raven Lancers and settled them into the town (now city) of Samia, much to the annoyance of the hard-line Ravenists there.

One of the Duedhyn ambassadors, the elderly (but feisty) Baron Glannyn of Avalow, fell grievously ill in early 1562. He was attended by his retinue (of course) and by a Raven monk to comfort him in his last hours. When the old Saurian finally died, the monk swears he saw a brief flash of light around the Baron's crest.

Throughout 1562 and 1563 Lord Jabin's second son, the Prelate Artyrs III, exchanged a series of long letters with Prince Merryn of Duedhyn and the Lady Mirra of Thace. It was by all accounts a lively, contentious, and ultimately conclusive correspondence.

Then Lord Jabin took a deep breath and signed an alliance with Prince Merryn of Duedhyn, bringing to an end more than a century of enmity and war.

LANDGRAVATE OF LYNNARVOR (22 MS/YG)

Landgrave Ebarrew Dolmathes II, the Prudent, Landgrave of Lynnarvor and Burgrave of Fair Belsûnd.

Trade: Cappargarnia, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Gornya, IDC, IDK, Kicitchat

DP: Treskaw (A – see below)

LANDGRAVE DOLMATHES HIMSELF went to the city of Treskaw in Old Kommolek to meet with Lord Andelvas. Dolmathes is one of the most charming and persuasive Wenemet to be found anywhere in the Empire, and he soon had the entire Treskaw court eating out of his paw. Unfortunately, Lord Baltasar arrived there to try and spoil his fun.

A sweet (though perhaps slightly doddering) old Saurian in a burkha, who identified herself as Mother Iona of the Church Universal and Triumphant, arrived in Fair Belsûnd in the summer of 1561. She immediately reported her presence to the proper authorities and indicated that the Church had sent a letter to the Landgrave informing him of her desire to conduct some research in the local library. The local authorities, with no instructions to the contrary, gave their permission, though they warned her not to proselytize, and they kept a careful eye on her.

The winter of 1562 was unusually bad, though this was mollified somewhat by the glorious summer of 1563. Following the fall of the "ice crystals" from the Moon during the summer of 1565, the weather started getting worse again. Throughout the second half of Sextilis, a series of blizzards buried the realm, and it has yet to dig out.

The border town of Trevamal was established in Olekker. The Landgrave's government expanded, as did the military academy in Fair Belsûnd.

LORDSHIP OF TRESKAW

LORD ANDELVAS WAS beset by suitors. First, the utterly charming and persuasive Landgrave Dolmathes of Lynnarvor arrived. Within weeks, he convinced Andelvas to open negotiations to marry off his son Annavas to the beautiful (though still very young) Lady Enbrel of Lynnarvor, who just happened to be the Landgrave's own daughter.

The resulting marriage would, of course, unite their two realms. All through the terrible, terrible winter of 1562, the delicate negotiations continued. They were disrupted in the summer of 1563 by the arrival of a dashing young Wenemet diplomat from Kicitchat by the name of Lord Baltasar.

He pretty much unravelled all of Dolmathes' carefully laid plans. He wasn't *quite* as charming as the Landgrave, but he spread around a lot more largesse. Any number of clerks and clerics hung around Lord Baltasar, advising him and generally adding to the prowess and prestige of the Kicitchat

mission. It was more than enough to give Lord Andelvas second thoughts about the wisdom of aligning with Lynnarvor when mighty Kicitchat was offering him a deal. Finally, Lord Treskaw “suggested” that the Lynnarvor delegation might as well go home. The wily Dolmathes dithered, pleading it would take several weeks “just to pack up my belongings”.

In the summer of 1564, with the Cappargarnians making their move for Sardarthion, Lord Baltasar took his leave and headed north. Landgrave Dolmathes unpacked again and redoubled his efforts to betroth his daughter to Lord Andelvas’ son, though he was a decade her senior.

Finally, worn down by Dolmathes and captivated by the prospect of his grandchildren being Landgraves, Lord Treskaw consented to the union. An alliance was proclaimed, and word sent to Lady Ebrel in Fair Belsûnd, where she is studying at the military academy. Her reaction to the news is not recorded.

GORNIA KNJAŽESTVO (3 G/YG)

Grand Boyar Bakenbar Volov of the Gornia Rogami Knjažestvo, Lord of Oömigmak, Boyar of Delin.

Trade: Lynnarvor

DP: None.



HERE KICITCHAT AND Lynnarvor played the suitor to Lord Treskaw, Grand Boyar Bakenbar was besieged by a plethora of diplomats from across Sahûl seeking various concessions ranging from trade to fealty.

The Kingdom of Hyrágec offered overtures and potential trade to Gornia Knjažestvo through diplomatic messages. When the Grand Boyar cautiously deferred upon the matter of trade and potential missionary contact with non-Yagnarist realms, the Hyrágecan envoy kindly offered to host a cultural delegation of Gornia Rogami for an exchange of music and artistic forms.

An extremely smooth talking envoy from Sakkar came bearing gifts for the Grand Boyar. She was there to lay the foundation for future agreements in “international trade, possible Peer Trading Post,

land transfer, and trade road building.” Playing down their rather peculiar past relationship, the envoy declared that “Sakkar is here to help the Gornia as the most southern western realm.”

With the news that the Empress had recognized the Grand Boyar as an Imperial lord and the Gornia Knjažestvo as an Imperial realm, Grand Boyar Volov disbursed a substantial sum from the treasury and proclaimed a celebration:

*The war is over, and we have no need to fear!
Citizens of Gornia Knjažestvo, I give you these
moneys in order to throw a realm-wide feast! Our
next wave of young ones are reaching maturity.
Girls, weave the ceremonial clan-cloths to present
to the men of your choice! Young men, view the
handiwork and choose a talented mate! Build
houses, gather grasses, and increase as Yagnar wills!*

In the midst of this celebration, Yagnar himself arrived in Oömigmak. The Avatar Khurdán suddenly appeared one day, standing in the entrance to the Tower of Delin. He noted the supplies being stockpiled in the area and nodded in satisfaction.

News quickly spread, and the Gornia Rogami flocked to see him. Upon the breathless arrival of the Grand Boyar, who had run to the site from his house, the crowds parted. The Grand Boyar trundled up to Khurdán and fell to his knees.

Khurdán helped him to his feet. The Avatar assumed the form of a Rogam elder. Chairs were brought for them both, and on the snowy hillside Yagnar taught his people. The discourse lasted hours and covered a wide range of subjects, from the practical³⁹ to the philosophical⁴⁰ to the esoteric. Afterwards, he went into private conference

³⁹ Build religious sites and donate them to the Hidden Masters, colonize Cantecait and Roudosam, stay hydrated, etc.

⁴⁰ “Every person and every ruler who serves Yagnar may do so in different ways – the field is wide. What serves me in one time and place may not in another. Make allies with those who serve my purpose, even if they are serving their own purposes as well. But! *Serve* you must – the field has boundaries and to cross them means destruction without pity. One does not ‘join Yagnarism’; you serve Yagnar or you serve his enemies.”

with the Grand Boyar, reportedly gifting him a bag of gold.

In the months following the festival, the realm experienced a sudden rush of betrothals and weddings.

Later that year, a diplomatic delegation from the Electoral Duchess of Taneki arrived in Oömigmak, consisting of the Baroness of Uitzetla⁴¹ and the Sar of Histaun. They came bearing many gifts, which the Boyar's government gratefully accepted.

In 1565 fleet of a hundred Tokatl schooners laden with heavy cargo and thousands of migrant workers docked in Oömigmak.


The double port town of Zakotvane was built in Elobros.

COUNTY OF TIRYOWGLAS (46 SW/IL)

His Excellency, Count Sarrik III, Baron Kwilkyn, Count of Tiryouglas, Defender of the Faith.

Trade: Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Elphárec, Golmath, Hyrágec, Iäthedain, Ingazi, IDC, IDK, IOC, Murali, Urdraháhn, Yaminon, Zarkhandu

DP: None.

OUNT SARRIK III tackled the overflowing treasury with prudence, carefully controlling the impulses of his young ministers.

The government invested in improving the County's military and bringing it up to modern standards. In this, some success was achieved as cavalry and naval quality improved.

The towns of Grunnen in Trynnor and Mitra in Umaseth both expanded into cities. Courage Priory in Mypor and Charity Priory in Ujek grew into abbeys. Tiryouglas built a great arcane forge on the slopes of Mount Tathor in Tamris. The County's government expanded.

The winter of 1562 was cold and snowy, but the weather improved the following year. After the *rain of stars* in 1565, several weird apocalyptic sects briefly appeared in the eastern cities. They soon faded out as the practical people of Tiryouglas

contended with the terrible, driving snows of that autumn and winter.


Given the events in the Byrrin Valley, the Count is quite concerned for the safety of his son, Lord Truedhek, who is enrolled at the Imperial Heraldic Academy in Einandhu.

ILUVARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (29.1 IL)

His All Holiness, Pope Sanguine XV, Pontiff of Sistrameides, Archemandrite of Ilúhir.

Trade: Araxes, Duedhyn, Ebmadh, Einandhu, Elphárec, Hyrágec, IDK, Ingazi, Murali, Tiryouglas, Urdraháhn

DP: None.

OPE SANGUINE XV continued to invest heavily in new public works projects throughout Church lands. His agents continued to do their good work throughout Iluvarian lands.

Sadly, the Pontifical See was not immune to the cold and snowy weather during the long hard winters of 1562 and 1565. While in other places, people panicked at the *rain of stars*, in Sistrameides the whole thing was treated like a long festival with fireworks. Parents and children took blankets and picnic dinners to the parks and watched in wonder.

Naval and siege quality improved. The Pontifical University of Sistrameides endowed two new colleges: history and engineering, which join the already existing colleges of theology, law, and medicine.


MOST SANGUINE DUCHY OF ELPHÁREC (38 W/IL)

His Grace, Kanda-Eparreb Morcrades I, Count of Angûron and Siddhan, Duke of Elphárec.

Kanda Morcrades Lord Ebléc, Chancellor of the Regency Council.

Trade: Einandhu, Hyrágec, Ebmadh, Ingazi, IDK, IOC, Tiryouglas

DP: None.

LPHÁREC'S URBAN POPULATION soared. Sandrapras in Angûron, Cullasiroc in Lósenor, and Kronoth in Grimás all ex-

⁴¹ Who is known to be disgruntled with her Duchess and covetous of a Landgrave's title.

panded. The new mining town of Tegmena rose in Caris. To knit the Duchy's cities closer together, new roads were built⁴². Massive new public works were put in everywhere. Apparently, the Duke is putting that engineering degree to good use.

The Duke convened the Regency Council in 1564 with an eye towards reform. After carefully taking note of the development of parliaments in Aradéc, Araxes, Ingazi, and Taneki, the Duke and Council discussed the future of regularizing and codifying Duchy's government. The Council adjourned with a promise from the Duke to call them back in five years' time to look at options.

Infantry and airship quality improved, and the Air and Diplomatic academies expanded.

KINGDOM OF HYRÁGEC (33 W/UR)

His Valiant Majesty Irrjir Rahnes VII, King of Hyrágec, Beloved of Urda.

Trade: Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Elphárec, Golmath, Ingazi, IDK, IOC, Kicitchat, Tiryowglas, ThaceD, ThaceE, Urdraháhn

DP: None.



ING RAHNES CONCENTRATED his efforts and talents on his own realm and the on happiness and prosperity of its people.

The site of the Royal Conservatory was greatly expanded, as was its mission. It was renamed the *Royal Academy of the Arts*, and it consists of three colleges: the College of Fine Arts, the College of Dramatic Arts, and the Royal Conservatory.

In the Cappargarnian War, things went less well. Lord Injiro led his army against that of Lord Hesiod, son of the Baron of Ebmadh, in Plormel. Lord Injiro lost the battle and his life.

The House Irrjir Clan Mothers met in 1561 and chose Princess Finora as her father's heir. Crown Princess Finora graduated from the Urdraháhn Diplomatic Academy in 1565.

After many years of trying, in the cold winter of 1562 Queen Delega finally gave birth to a second child, a tiny sliver of a son she named Paharnes. Unfortunately, the Queen herself soon fell ill and

⁴² Epadh to Kronoth and Beördhu to the new town of Tegmena.

died. The child, who was himself quite sickly when born, was carried to his full pouch-term by a wet nurse and now appears healthy.

News arrived that the Prince of Duedhyn had announced a "right of return" to all those of Duedhyni ancestry. Amongst the Duedhyni settlers in the Kingdom⁴³, there was some interest in returning to their motherland. Most, however, were thriving in their new land and wanted nothing to do with it.

There were additional reports in the Elbun Forest of a strange figure in a black feathered cloak. He traveled amongst the Duedhyni communities, lauding Hyrágec's King and proclaiming the imminent return of the "royal greatness of Hyrágec".

The celebrated Mæstro Johannes died in 1563 at the age of 74 following a long illness and decline. King Rahnes ordered a week of mourning for a Wenemet that many regard as a national treasure.

With the conquest of Sardarthion by Carberic of Cappargarnia and the publication of the *Quadran-tid Ediēt*, the King of Hyrágec faces a choice – not only K'ivik or Carberic, but peer or elector.

Infantry quality improved.

MIRRA AT MOROKO (1561 – 1565)



MIRRA, PRINCESS OF Thace and Avatar of Urda, took over operations at the Shrine of Moroko. The Master continued to maintain the shrine and supervise the reception of the pilgrims, but Mirra took charge of the vast supplies and gold reserves that arrived almost weekly at Moroko. Warehouses were constructed to hold the growing hoard, which came from every corner of the continent.

She made her home with Sar Ortak in a humble cottage near to the Shrine. Soon they were joined by the Dragon Erancia, and then by the Order of the Sacred Raven and the Dragon Skögul. After an initial period of distrust and loud and colourful threat displays, the two drag-

⁴³ These are located in Endani Prefecture, Elbun Forest, and most especially in Kerneveg Prefecture.

ons settled down to a peaceful, if not entirely amicable, coexistence.

In 1564, the Empress K'ivik made the customary pilgrimage to the Shrine, and she spent some time with Mirra in deep conversation. By all accounts, Mirra impressed upon her that her duty lay in the reconstruction of the Tent of the Sky and the gathering of the crowns, "for if the whole world is destroyed, even the poor Yagnarists will have no place to play."

Sar Ortak, now in his mid-sixties, shows no signs of slowing down. He remains the Avatar's chief protector and closest confidant.

The Gawan Peninsula

THE FEUDAL NORTHEAST

COUNTY PALATINE OF INGAZI (40 W/UR)

His Most Urdan Excellency, Gwariva Razhim XI, Overlord of Gawan, Captain of the East Riding, Burgrave of Deriháhn, Count Palatine of Ingazi, Marshal of the Peer Banners, bearer of the Sapphire Crown.

Trade: Aradéc, Araxes, Atuburrk, Chi'tixi, Golmath, Hyrágec, Iäthedain, IDK, IOC, Kicitchat, Murali, ThaceE, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn

DP: None.

INGAZI'S COUNT PALATINE came of age and began his programme to increase the power and prestige of his realm. Vast investments were made, and overseas Ingazi consolidated their Oratoan holdings.

The instant the Tarotist Puritans attacked an Imperial Realm, the Count Palatine summoned Parliament and together they declared war on their neighbour. Ingazi's *Grand Army of the North* was already on the move, and they crossed the northern border within a month.

Urdan missionaries and engineers flooded Walu. The region is now majority Urdan, though there's still a sizeable Tarotist minority. Numerous pub-

lic works projects were built there as well, bringing Walu up to something like the standard of living enjoyed in the rest of Ingazi.

The rain of falling stars in 1565 caused widespread unrest in Ingazi's northern territories. Calling it a sign of divine displeasure, some of the more zealous were calling for a great purge, to clear out Urda's Church of those of lukewarm faith. In Ingazi's southern lands, however, the people settled down after their initial panic.

Ingazi's infantry improved. Again.

CHURCH UNIVERSAL & TRIUMPHANT (67 UR)

Her All-Holiness Dromóa XII, the Circling Raven, First Matriarch of Urda, Protector of Sahûl.

Trade: Aradéc, Araxes, Atuburrk, Averon, Carcë, Chi'tixi, Duedhyn, Einandhu, Golmath, Hyrágec, Iäthedain, IDK, Ingazi, IOC, Itaxik, Kachar, Kicitchat, Murali, Pehuatoka, Sakkar, Taneki, ThaceD, ThaceE, Tiryowglas

DP: Probably.



FIRST MATRIARCH DROMÓA cut the ribbon at a new Accounting and Business College at the University, the result of decades of trial and error in developing new bookkeeping procedures and oversight, not to mention a system of standardized accounting. The Church has high hopes that this will help reduce the corruption endemic in their far-flung bureaucracy. To that end, the Church's new system of accounting was made mandatory at all Cathedrals. The Church's government, meanwhile, already the largest and most sophisticated in the known world, expanded even further.

To the consternation of many in the Church hierarchy, Dromóa has shown a preference for promoting those without any higher education.

Lord Zharharn graduated from University in 1561 and then headed home to Iäthedain, while Crown Princess Finora of Hyrágec studied at the Urdraháhn Diplomatic Academy, graduating with honours in 1565.

Count Merryn and Countess Lorreia of Pareis remained in Urdraháhn. The Count read law at University, while the family expanded, welcoming two young sons born of a single egg. The rarity of this event has made the two young boys a subject of wonder and endless speculation.

The campus of the very popular Diplomatic Academy expanded.

While the Church did not formally issue a statement regarding the “rain of meteors”, the Urdraháhn Chief Astronomer was quoted as saying it was “worrying, obviously, but a completely natural phenomenon”.

AGAINST THE PURITANS (1563 – 1564)

Ingazi, Kumara vs. Puritan Commonwealth



WITH THE IMPERIAL status of the Puritan Commonwealth already dubious, its neighbours began preparing for the inevitable. When news reached the Gawan peninsula of the Puritan victories at sea, both Ingazi and Kumara made their move.

1563: Ingazi Attacks!



THE INSTANT THAT news arrived in Ingazi that the Puritan Commonwealth had attacked an Imperial realm, Ingazi armies crossed the border into Dalkurnu and Dalgányi. While the Ingazi had expected some sort of battle at sea between the Puritan fleet and the Yagnarists, they certainly weren't expecting the Puritans to attack Taneki's floating freeport fortress of *Golden Rule* in the Eastern Gulf of Iphil. Nevertheless, the orders issued by the Regent to the army commanders were explicit: if the Puritans attacked any Imperial Realm, *Operation Frequent Manhood* was go!

The Desolation of Dalgányi (1563)



IN DALGÁNYI 60,000 cavaliers, knights, horsemen, arquebusiers, and infantry led by Colonel Boran and Count Sarnhim of

Ardhalka crossed the border from Gawanyi. Many of the soldiers were themselves descendants of the Urdan refugees who had once fled these same lands, and spirits were running high.

Regardless that the *official* reason for the attack was to come to the aid of another Imperial Realm (Chi'tixi), they saw themselves as the liberators of rightfully Urdan lands that had been stolen by the Tarotists a century ago. What they saw chilled them to the bone.

There was no one there.

Every farm, every village, even Adarsh PRIORITY, was completely abandoned. The houses were all empty, the fields overgrown and overrun, and wild animals prowled through the lanes.

Eventually, a few people were found, mostly shepherds or hunters living far away from settled lands. Upon being questioned, they revealed that the Puritans had embarked on a great crusade. Only those who hid themselves away were left, and they were very few indeed.

The Peculiar Conquest of Dalkurnu (1563)



INGAZI SENT 18,000 allied forces led by the young firebrand Baron of Payirri and the elderly and widely respected Lord Withiwandi across the River Yali into the very heart of the Puritan state. The plan was to draw the Puritan army into battle, hopefully giving the main army in Dalgányi time to finish their work there and then join in the attack from the west, forming a pincers to trap any Puritan army between them.

What the Ingazi found in Dalkurnu was, in its way, just as peculiar as what they had found in Dalgányi. As in the west, the region was empty of people, but the evacuation here gave every evidence of being hasty. Many houses still contained the belongings of their former owners. In some cases, meals were set out on tables, or empty kettles still hung over cold hearths. Although the doors of Adit Abbey were open and the monks gone, the vestments in the chapel were set out as if for an imminent rite.

What was not abandoned, however, were the region's four castles. They were not only manned, they were defended. Similarly, the mighty walls of Susa towered over the surrounding countryside, and a great fleet was embarking down the river.

Lord Withiwandi ordered the army to take the castles. They easily did, though they took about 2,500 casualties in doing so. He set his remaining troops into position to siege Susa and waited for the expected reinforcements.

1564: The Puritans Crumble

CUNNING KUMARRAN AGENTS moved into the Puritan lands with the single-minded zeal that characterized their dedication to their goals. Kalikadra and Yukarra soon paid tribute to Kumara, and the few people left in Karirpulyi were happy to become Kumaran subjects. While Karirpulyi was just as empty as Dalgányi and Dalkurnu had been, the other two prefectures retained at least some of their population. The city of Yalish in Kalikadra remained perfectly intact.

Gone, however, were the Puritan armies and fleets, their vast stockpile of resources, and any trace of their peculiar religion.

The Siege of Susa (1564)

INGAZI'S *GRAND ARMY of the North* started their campaign against Susa by launching a fire-bolt against its mighty walls. It punched a neat hole through the thick walls and brought down one of the gate towers in an avalanche of stone.

From inside the walls, there was no movement, no defense, no counter-attack. Cautiously, Colonel Boran sent a regiment into the breach. They reported back that the entire city was abandoned. Unlike much of the rest of the Puritan territories, however, the city had been thoroughly sacked.

The bewildered Ingazi raised their flag atop the keep and declared the empty city the capital of their Transyalian territories.

REPUBLIC OF KUMARA

DP: Nunharri (F), Mingka (F), Craziiness.

THE REPUBLIC CONTINUED their programme of conversion, this time bringing about two-thirds of the population of Windra into the fold of the King in Yellow.

Kumara then sent diplomats into the Puritan lands, armed only with their charm and a huge pile of cash. The love of money won out over principles, and they were moderately successful in taking over those lands not gobbled up by Ingazi.

Meanwhile, a Yaminon fleet⁴⁴ docked at the port city of Wendaháhn in Windra Prefecture. They unloaded an army of pike to help defend the Barony against any outside interference. They were somewhat surprised with what happened there next.

For Baron Abmbur Kasten II of Dambiyi, First Speaker of the Republic, Servitor of the King in Yellow, had finally come to an accommodation with his much stronger neighbour, Prince Sardirian of Golmath.

Kumara founded the town of Malandyi in the Minyappa highlands.

PRINCIPALITY OF GOLMATH (48 W/TA & KY)

His Gracious Majesty, Volpel-Walarri Sardirian, the Grumpy, Baron Volpel, Count of Runazar, Electoral Prince of Golmath.

Baron Abmbur Kasten II of Dambiyi, First Speaker of Golmath, Servitor of the King in Yellow.

Baroness Jejodh Dara of Nydoon, the Beautiful and Beguiling.

Baron Luranés of Mendileen, Lord of Gormaháhn and Master of the Thalari.

Trade: Aradéc, Atuburrk, Hyrágec, Iäthedain, Ingazi, IDK, Kitchat, Murali, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn, Vess (3), Yaminon

DP: See below.

⁴⁴ Apparently reflagged Averese transports.



PRINCE SARDIRIAN FEVERISHLY worked to keep his Principality of Golmath together in the wake of the Puritan exodus. In the deep south, he expanded Gormaháhn into a city and revived the ancient title of Baron of Mendileen for the Thalari lord of that Prefecture. He then invested him as master of a dependency ruling over the whole of the Thalari lands.

The institutional exhaustion of the Fellowship of Connate Tarotists (FOCT) finally came to a head in 1564 with the death of Pontiff Mordican III. Rather than appoint a new Hierarch, Prince Sardirian simply ended his Realm's ultimately fruitless century-long experiment⁴⁵ with religious primacy and nationalized the few religious sites that remained under FOCT leadership. There was some trouble in Pirayi, but the Prince's heir Count Kaidarian went in with an army of pike and dragoons to enforce the Princely supremacy.

Prince Sardirian received a delegation from the Republic of Kumara in 1562. The talks with the Kumaran diplomats culminated in 1565 in a treaty that provided for the accession of the Republic of Kumara to the Electoral Principality of Golmath as a baronial dependency. Taking a page from Murali's "a thousand schools of Tarotism" philosophy, the cultus of the King in Yellow was welcomed into the already eclectic mixture that is Golmathi Tarotism.

As part of the agreement, Golmath will develop a representative Parliament under the guidance of Baron Kasten, who is an expert at that sort of thing. For his part, Baron Kasten looks forward to extending Kumara's political ideals to the rest of Golmath.

The great Lunar meteor storm of 1565 caused a wide number of reactions throughout the Principality. In Kumara, the people regarded it as a divine sign of the King in Yellow's triumph. In Nydoon, many of the locals pushed their "eat, drink, and be merry" philosophy to its limit,

⁴⁵ The FOCT began in 1468, with the election of the Hierarch of Serri as Pontiff Mordican I. It never really recovered from the destruction of Serri Cathedral in 1531.

which may or may not account for the terrible harvest that year. Throughout central Golmath, with unemployment still endemic, many of the youth gathered into roving gangs that pillaged the countryside, or joined one of the many new orders of itinerant penitents, or just gathered into the growing slums looking for work. In Runazar, they were too busy freezing to pay much attention to the "snow that didn't stick". In Mendileen, there's a growing movement among the Thalari that holds that the meteor storm is a sign that they, who walk the snowy wastes, will soon inherit the whole of the earth and sky.

ELECTORAL KINGDOM OF ARADÉC (56 W/IL)

His Royal Maješty, Sansollen Manandir II, Baron of Wanumarra, Count of Abijar, Electoral King of Aradéc.

Trade: Atuburrk, Golmath, Iäthedain, IDK, Ingazi, Iruša, Murali, Urdraháhn, Vess (3), Yaminon

DP: Zadok (T, *but see below*)



KING MANANDIR II gratefully accepted his Imperial pardon in 1561 and immediately opened trade with as many of his neighbours as he could. To increase trade, he also arranged for the development of two new towns in the eastern Isles: Wilim on Madra and Dukhu on Milawalpayi.

The King continued his many construction projects, which included the dedication of a new Engineering College at the University of Kityara, the expansion of the Aradéc Center for Disease Control (ACDC), and the continuing slow spread of schools of primary education throughout the Kingdom⁴⁶.

Attempts to improve the Kingdom's sorry rugby programme, however, have thus far proved unsuccessful. Even so, the national team is looking forward to getting back into international competition; they are scheduled to play the Zarkhandu All-Blacks in 1567.

⁴⁶ Headed, of course, by the internationally famous Specontuluvda Academy.

The Aradéci Heraldic Guild (AHG) has proved only moderately popular within the Kingdom, despite the King's promotion and use of it. Compared with the professionalism of the Most Ancient and Undaunted Imperial Order of Herald's, Aradéc's private heralds are strictly amateur hour. As one noble put it, "they're half the price of the Imperial Herald's and still not a bargain." They have taken to following around the Imperial Herald's and (with the permission of the recipients, of course) copying down every communication delivered. This has not made them any more popular. The AHG have characterized these developments as "growing pains".

The new *Ministry of Communications*, by way of contrast, has proven very popular indeed. Responsible for regulating Aradéc's growing printing houses and newspapers, the Ministry provides access for pool reporters at the Royal Court and at various national and regional sporting events. They even have reporters and editorialists themselves who have unparalleled access to the workings of the government and to the aristocracy and wealthier merchants. For a pittance of a subscription fee, the Ministry sends out stories and editorials to various press outlets throughout the Kingdom.

With the end of the Imperial Bann, Yaminon students and scholars began to appear at the University of Kityara. Despite the unilateral action of the Empress Chass'ika in lifting the Bann, opinion in Aradéc generally held that she was dangerous and incompetent, particularly in her various foreign policy fiascos. When news arrived that Chass'ika had announced her abdication, the general consensus was that it was the single most useful edict she'd issued since her election.

News of the death of the Empress, however, was regarded more soberly.

In the southern prefecture of Zadok, the ruling council there agreed to pay tribute to the King of Aradéc. However, the instant a Zarkhandu army arrived in the region, the Aradéci diplomats there

renounced the entire agreement and told the Zadoki that they were on their own. While the Ministry of Communications reports that according to the latest polls this was a popular move within the Kingdom, it has made many of the independent prefectures wary of Aradéci intentions and motivations.

The royal family continued growing with the birth of Prince Paharnes in 1562 and Princess Serenta in 1563. The King's older sister⁴⁷, the Princess Dagamiri, once again put to sea in her sloop *HMS Wanderlust* to explore the wonders of the east.

The King modified his order regarding the Tower of the Ending of Days, declaring it off-limits to everyone except the Iluvorian Orthodox Church, the Church Universal & Triumphant, and Princess Mirra of Thace.

The "rain of meteors" was widely reported in the Aradéc press as a sign of heavenly displeasure with the corruption and decadence of the Empire and particularly in the Imperial government(s).

COUNTY OF MURALI (22 W/TA)

His Excellency, Kilyara Drathnes II, Baron of Karrka, Count of Murali, Imperial Governor of Muralis.

Trade: Aradéc, Golmath, Iäthedain, Ingazi, IOC, Irusa, Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn, Vess (3), Yaminon, Zarkhandu

DP: Yes!



COUNT DRATHNES THREW his realm's resources into the Byrrin Valley to aid those Tarotists suffering from the ravages of war. His fleet arrived in 1565 in the Lower Byrrin.

Development funds were scattered throughout the realm, though careful attention was paid to Toworrah, which was much poorer than the rest of the County.

⁴⁷ King Manandir is in fact the *youngest* of the eight children of King Deric II and Queen Glóamora. His oldest brother was the childless King Paharnes V. The second son, Prince Deric, is a scholar and professor at the University of Kityara, as is the Princess Maya. The Princesses Mayia and Trudora were killed by the Commonwealth in 1547, and Princess Tashona is a nun at Kityara.

The Count's son and heir Lord Drathnes visited both Toworrah and Caros to firm up support for House Kilyara. The charming (and lucky) Lord Drathnes succeeded admirably, and his personal reputation on the Isle of Ebalon is quite high. His popularity even rubbed off a little on Margrave Volpel Tregarion III, the previously unpopular ruler of the Isle⁴⁸ now in the employ of Murali. It's not that anybody actually likes him now; they just despise him less.

Murali finally took control of Warendji in the Underlands. The Wenemet inhabitants there were none too pleased. They had formerly dwelt in the lush forests of Thika, and the Murali government had essentially sold them into slavery to the Yaminon "mole men" and then abandoned them for nearly a generation. The Warendji-Thikans want their former homeland returned to them, and they immediately raised a standard of rebellion. Master Dringo, the same Wenemet goon responsible for the loss of their homeland on the surface, just happened to be in Warendji with a small army. He soon reduced the people to abject obedience again.

On the surface, meanwhile, the people of Murali were awed by a rain of meteors that lasted a month, and they were frozen in the harsh winter of 1565. The city of Antraki in Inzana grew. The County's siege technology advanced.

DRACONIC BARONY OF IÄTHEDAIN (11 SW/UR)

Baron Darandein Zharharn III of Iäthedain, the Just, Lord Dragonwood.

Sir Darabur Sardein, Grandmaster of the Military Order of the Red Dragon.

Trade: Aradéc, Golmath, Ingazi, Murali,

Tiryowglas, Urdraháhn, Vess (3), Yaminon

DP: None.

⁴⁸ Just how unpopular is Volpel Tregarion? Zadok, the homeland of his former realm, rebelled from Zarkhandu in 1557 and the rebel leaders did not ask him back. In fact, they were willing to pay tribute to Aradéc, but the name of their own Margrave never even came up in conversation.



THE DRACONIC BARONY sent homesteaders into Scagadon. They were well on their way to making their little colony work when a Zarkhandu army arrived, commanded by a Colonel Evagh.

They unloaded from a small fleet of twenty transports. They numbered perhaps 2,500 light horse altogether. Colonel Evagh had expected some reinforcements waiting for him in the region. Instead of zombies, he found Iäthedain colonists and the army of Sir Boromis: 400 knights and 12,500 additional cavalry.

Heedless of their presence, the single-minded Colonel Evagh marched his small force directly to the manicured ruins of fabled Keörin. Sir Boromis was having none of that. After perfunctorily asking for the Zarkhandu army to leave, he readied his attack. At this point, even Colonel Evagh had to concede that the entire operation had completely unraveled. After seriously considering battle⁴⁹, the Colonel instead withdrew his forces back to their ships and called it a day.

The Baron's son, now educated as a jurist – as were his father and his father's father before him – returned from Urdraháhn.

The town of Dragonwood grew into a city, nestled in the deep woods of Sital. The colony in Scagadon succeeded beyond Baron Zharharn's wildest dreams⁵⁰. Nevertheless, the winter of 1565 has proved very deep and difficult indeed.

IÄTHEDEK: THE PROTECTORATE OF FRIEBÆLD



THE GREAT WYRM Friebæld was little seen, though she could occasionally be heard. In 1562, she flew up and down the length of the Antean River, which terrified the merchants and fisherfolk there. She paid no attention to them, and she soon returned to the Wyrmwaste. Theories about as to why she might have done this range from "scouting out new lands to conquer" to "stretching her wings a bit".

⁴⁹ The Colonel is not exactly a tactical genius.

⁵⁰ Scagadon (4143)s.

VEILED MASTERS OF YARNI-ZA (33 YG)

His Unholy Magnificence, the Lich Yŝtar, Thirteenth Patriarch of the Priests of Ozahn, Dread Hand of Yagnar, Voice of the Hidden Masters of Yarni-Za, Lord of the Fell.

Trade: Atuburrk, Chi'tixi, Kicitchat, Taneki, ThaceD

DP: Nope.

YSTAR THE UNHOLY spent most of his time in Oratoa, overseeing the holy war, building for the future of Yagnarism in the north, hobnobbing with Khurdán, and excommunicating the King of Zarkhandu.

You know, the usual.

BARONY OF IRUSA (3 S/YG)

Baron Torzyx III of Irusa, the Devout and Fierce and, and Fiercely Devout and Devoutly... Whatever. I am Full of Fierce. Fear the Fierce. Fierce!

Trade: Aradéc, Murali, Yaminon

DP: None.

BARON TORZYX FELL gravely ill in 1561, taking to his bed for nearly a month. Eventually, he got better. An invisible assassin was captured by the Baron's personal guard. Well, not captured so much as snapped in half. It appears to have been Malebolge, but until the invisibility wears off, it's hard to be completely sure.

In thanksgiving for his deliverance, the Baron went on pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Siddith. While he was praying in the Cathedral, a rain of frogs fell from the rafters. The Baron, incensed, declared that it must be some sort of Tarotist conspiracy – they had *clearly* infiltrated the Cathedral! The Baron took control of the Cathedral and turned out all of the “crypto-Tarotist” clergy, replacing them with loyal Yagnarists, many of whom were personally known to the Baron.

Since there was obviously a widespread Tarotist infiltration, the Baron radically changed his personal contacts and schedule to keep the infiltrators off kilter. The Baron assembled all his nobles and issued them new orders. At the end of the audience, a shower of guts, gibbets, bones, and slop spewed

from the rafters. The Baron ferociously declared this to be Yagnar's unholy blessing.

The Baron determined that the Tarotist conspiracy was almost certainly centered on the Tarotist Cathedral of Random in Yarnith, long under Zarkhandu's control. Taking advantage of (yet another) Tarotist uprising in the border territories, Irusa invaded Yarnith.

The Battle of Random (1563)

IRUSA'S MOST FORMIDABLE commander, Colonel Tareem, led 10,000 living and 10,000 dead against all comers in Yarnith. The Tarotist rebels numbered perhaps 6,000, while the Zarkhandu garrison was but 500 Saurians and a hundred stone warriors.

The casualties were horrific. The rebels, of course, never stood a chance. The Zarkhandu forces were similarly wiped out⁵¹. Colonel found himself with but 8,500 men remaining. However, he also found himself in control of the region, so he went on to take the Tarotist Cathedral of Random and throw out the Tarotist clergy. Irusa having no one left to staff it, the great church and its grounds now stand dark and empty. The suppression of Random gave the other Tarotist rebels a cause to rally around.

APOTHEOTIC KINGDOM OF FELL ZARKHANDU (50 S/DF) *Vihollinen the Steadfast and Unyielding, Regent of Fell Zarkhandu.*

His Dread Majeŝty, Oband Tachg, Lord Sakkath, Count of Vúhlath & Mlideen, Duke of Hyáglión, King of Fell Zarkhandu.

Sir Dukath Bir, Grandmaster of the Order of the Second Sons.

Trade: Gavan' Zarkhand, Murali, Tiryouglas, Yaminon

DP: New Zarkhandu (*see below*), Syrháhn (T), Naddith (T, *but see below*)

⁵¹ Irusan apologists were quick to point out that Irusa and Zarkhandu had fought the rebels together. Just bad luck that none of them had survived. Almost nobody buys this.



ITH HIS STRUGGLE against the Veiled Masters now careening towards an open breach, King Toban Zho decided to end their influence in his realm for good.

A Long, Slow Starvation? (1561)



N EZEK, TIMAUT, Marn, and Taizhir, the regional garrisons took up positions near to the religious sites of the Veiled Masters. While the troops fully respected the sites and their priests and monks, they also fully cut off any interaction between the sites and Zarkhandu territory. Anyone trying to cross the cordon, even Zarkhandu's subjects, were to be turned away, effectively blockading the monasteries and cathedrals.

Although the cordon was quite loosely enforced to begin with, within just a few weeks Zarkhandu tightened the noose. Nothing was allowed in or out of the sites: no food, no communications, no labour, no tithes, no groceries, no firewood, no charcoal. Nothing.

Outside the cordons, the soldiers roasted meats in outdoor pits, and the smell drifted into the enclosures so that the poor monks could constantly smell roasting meats. There was bacon, mutton, pork, beef, fowl of every description – and not just roasted. Literally every type of preparation of meats known to Zarkhandine chefs was prepared, including succulent meat pies, sausages, and skewers. The meats were grilled and boiled and smoked and baked.

The King announced that if any priest or monk so chose, they may declare a change of cult, leave the Hidden Masters, sign over their sites to the Countenance of Coals, and enjoy the lovely buffets⁵².

Needless to say, this did little to calm the religious tension in the Kingdom. Then news arrived that Khurdán himself had declared King Toban Zho a heretic and excommunicated him. Unrest spread throughout the realm. Even while Toban

⁵² All copies of the signed declarations to be copied, notarized, and filed with the Tiger King of Arms, naturally.

Zho, now branded the “heretic king”, attempted to calm the nerves of his people and their clerics, something very odd was happening. The magicians and priests of Zarkhandu had now no access to Mana; their spells and incantations simply failed as if they fell upon deaf ears.

Meanwhile, in the shadow of the mountain of Yarni-Za, the young Zarkhandine wizard Salzar suddenly found himself in a world of trouble.

The Unleashing (1561)



HE MISSION HAD been fraught with danger from the beginning. Salzar had been ordered – by the King himself, no less – to teleport to the ancient stone statue at the foot of the mountain and to free whatever had been imprisoned there.

He had come to unholy Yarni-Za. He had stood in the shadow of the ancient stone statue, some 120 feet high, carved in the likeness of an upright, bipedal jackal. At night, he had himself seen its eyes glow with an eerie, red light. He had listened in rapt attention as an old pilgrim told him the legend that Yagnar himself was in the statue.

He had walked to the foot of the ancient statue, where he saw several pilgrims rapt in religious ecstasy, later breathlessly telling any who would listen of the dark and blood-soaked visions they'd received. He'd heard one old Saurian's unearthly scream as all of his bones spontaneously shattered. That sound would haunt him the rest of his days, both waking and in his dreams.

He had heard the warnings of madness and worse from those who guard the pathways and tend to the pilgrims.

Despite all of this, the wizard Salzar climbed the hidden spiraling stair, ancient and crumbling, that was ingeniously carved into the statue's back and up to its neck. Hand over hand, he clambered over the enormous jackal head using hidden, nearly invisible hand-holds already ancient when Paharnes founded his empire.

Finally, standing upon a narrow ledge running on the statue's cheek, he looked into the eye – a window the size of a pony. Through the mottled red glass, the wizard Salzar saw what appeared to be a chamber within the statue's head containing a vaguely kindred-looking shape, bound in stout chains and glowing with a intense red aura.

The wizard prepared himself and withdrew the spell crystal from his pack. It was the size of a small cantaloupe and clear as quartz. As he began the required incantations, spiderweb-thin lines of blue lightning played about its surface, before fading to nothing. Salzar realized to his horror that he could no longer feel the Mana flowing through his body. He was cut off. What had gone wrong?

But there was still Mana somewhere, and close, for Salzar could hear – he could *feel* – it humming. To his surprise, he realized that without the distraction of the naturally occurring Mana flowing through his body like the waves of the sea, as it had every moment of every day throughout his young life, he could feel the statue-tower *itself* humming. Somewhere very near to here, he realized, was a Mana battery. It was perhaps a small one, but one now under someone's – some *thing's* – conscious control.

Carefully, the young wizard climbed up onto the very eye of Yagnar itself. There was no handhold here, and he had to press his body right up against the red window or risk falling backwards to his death. The desert wind howled around him, and young Salzar suddenly realized that this could very well be his death here, at the tender age of 26. He was a hundred feet up, pressed flat against the window, one hand holding a spell crystal and the fingers of the other desperately seeking any sort of purchase on the smooth, undulating glass. For the first time in his young life, Salzar knew real fear.



And then, the bound creature on the other side of the red glass looked up at him. It wasn't fear that Salzar felt then, it was mindless terror. As he looked into its eyes, Salzar was dimly aware that the creature was constantly changing shape, Saurian to Wenemet to Human to things stranger still. But its eyes! They burned into Salzar's mind, and his thoughts raced with images not of his own making.

Black shadows slithered over darkness blacker still. The mouth of an immense creature opened in front of him as if to swallow him, and its teeth waved in an unfelt

breeze like tentacles or seaweed before each became a kindred made of smoke and shadow. His body burned. He smelled corruption and heard, echoing in the distance, a million voices screaming in desperate fear. Their voices faded under a mocking laughter that rolled over him like the immensity of the tide. He learned what it was – he learned *who* it was: *Vihollinen*. The Bale Wraith Vihollinen.

And then, the bound creature on the other side of the red glass smiled at him. And Salzar smiled as well, the grin of a madman, for the wraith's thoughts were his own.

The two of them, together, began to chant. In his right hand, Salzar could feel the spiderweb-thin lines of blue lightning again begin to play about the surface of the spell crystal. In his peripheral vision, he could see it glowing brighter as the incantations proceeded and Salzar and the bale wraith channeled the vast, mystic forces of Mana from the tower room through Salzar's own body. The energies of the spell crackled and flared around the crystal held in Salzar's outstretched hand.

With a roar like thunder, fire-bolt after fire-bolt exploded through the crystal into the window perhaps an inch away.

The second shattered the window, and a cascade of tiny ruby shards filled the air like a sandstorm.

Salzar fell forward into the chamber, his body drawn like a magnet.

The third thudded into the Bale Wraith, and its manacles glowed red hot. Salzar could feel his protective spells failing.

At the fourth, the Bale Wraith's manacles were white-hot, and the air itself began to burn. Salzar could feel the Mana pouring uninterrupted through the crystal.

As the fifth fire-bolt erupted, the spell crystal shattered. With a fiery whirlwind the Bale Wraith was at last freed from its ancient prison.



Salzar was surprised to awaken. How long he had been unconscious, he did not know, but he found himself on a bed with crisp white sheets under a ceiling painted white and blue. He sat up.

Pain shot through him.

He looked down at his arms. The right was bandaged, and it ended in a stump just below his elbow. The left arm was not bandaged, but it was covered in disfiguring burns and peppered with a myriad of tiny scars. It had been a long time healing. How long had he been unconscious?

He was suddenly aware of another presence in the room. It was Him. The Bale Wraith. *Vihol-linen*. Other than the huge bat-like wings folded behind him, he looked like an ordinary Saurian. He said, simply, "you saved me, and I saved you".

Salzar gasped, "my lord".

The Bale Wraith smiled, an action that totally unnerved Salzar. He spoke casually. "Let's you and



me take this country back for Yagnar."



Meanwhile, throughout Zarkhandu, religious conflict was again erupting into violence. Naddith, which had just agreed to pay tribute, renounced it.

Tarotist uprisings in the north were further confounded by an Iru-san invasion "to root out the Tarotist conspiracy and reclaim the region for Yagnar". Indeed, in the confusion of battle, both the Zarkhandu garrison and the rebels were killed, and the region fell into the hands of Iru-sa. They turned

out the Tarotist clergy from Random, thus giving the other Tarotist rebels a cause even greater than mere independence. As it turns out, even stone warriors aren't much good without leadership, and both Iärdan and Vess rebelled. King Toban Zho, meanwhile, sent his army to deal with the Tarotists... in Zadok.

The Zadok Ruling Council had been entertaining several envoys from Aradéc, and they had just finally agreed to pay tribute to the King of Aradéc. When the Aradéci diplomats heard that a Zarkhandu fleet had been sighted, they immediately broke off relations with the Zadok Ruling Council, renounced the entire agreement, and told the Zadoki that they were on their own.

The Zadok Campaign (1562 to 1563)

UNDER THE COMMAND of Grandmaster Dukath Bir, the OSS fleet of about 35 ships attempted to boldly sail into the harbour of Zadok's city of Bratarak, thereby hoping to avoid the great walls of the city. Unfortunately, the Zadoki had no intention of letting them in. After a short, sharp initial battle, the fleet was repulsed.

There was nothing for it but a naval assault. The transports regrouped and charged the chains and towers, trying to get in as close to shore as possible. Many ran aground, but these were able to disgorge wave after wave of heavy infantry, who splashed ashore under withering fire.

It was a messy, brutal affair, and casualties were measured in the tens of thousands. In the end, the OSS captured the city, having lost twenty transports and half of their initial 10,000 men.

The following year, the OSS infantry easily reconquered the rest of the region. Given the Irusan dissolution of Random Cathedral, the natives are viciously anti-Yagnarist.



The loss to of Yarnith Irusa and the debacle at Scagadon did little to improve the King's declining popularity. The breathless rumours of some sort of crazy demonic force whirling up the frozen Minrao River certainly didn't instill confidence in anyone that the King had the situation under control. Whatever else could be said about Toban Zho, it was clear he didn't have the commanding presence of his predecessor.

The King increasingly found himself isolated. It was one thing to break off from a (probably) corrupt Yagnarist primacy and develop your own sect, it was quite another to be cast out by the Avatar of Yagnar himself. Despite an attempt to cover it up, the increasingly obvious lack of magical ability in the Kingdom's sorcerers was starting to cause a panic as well.

An attempt by a Zarkhandu fleet to sail through the Ice Sea of Brimdomo nearly ended in tragedy. Fortunately, as it became obvious that passing safely through the icebergs was not something that was working out so well, the fleet turned about and put into port in Yardeis. As a result, the region was unexpectedly overrun by Timpril colonists. They didn't particularly find anyplace they could settle, though it is surely not coincidence that nearby Uldûn was the only one of the Veiled Masters' sites to surrender to Zarkhandu.

Then in 1564, the revolution arrived in Vúhlath itself.

Vihollinen Triumphant (1564)

AS SUMMER ARRIVED, so did the fiery whirlwind that had been winding its way up the frozen Minrao. King Toban Zho marshalled his armies, and he and an enormous army of zombies and stone warriors met the strange entity as it came ashore in Vúhlath near to the Zarkhandu capital. Next to the King stood his cousin, Prince Dornet. Dornet had been hastily withdrawn from the diplomatic service to stand in the place of the King's son and heir, Prince Brennet, who was but eight years old.

Near at hand was a crowd of people determined to see what they hoped would be a diverting bit of bloodsport.

The vast tornado of flame subsided, and there stood a Saurian, comely and of proud bearing. Great, bat-like wings swept above and behind him, beating languidly as if he were marking time for a waltz. Next to this imposing figure stood the smaller form of the wizard Salzar, hideously disfigured by burns and a million tiny scars. His right arm ended in a stump just below his elbow, and with his left hand he leaned heavily upon a staff of ebony.

It was Salzar who spoke.

"You did well, Toban Zho, to bring an army of the unliving and the undead with you, for no living creature would fail to fall to my Master."

Toban Zho shouted, “your master is the King.”

Salzar continued on as if he hadn’t heard him. “My Master, the Bale Wraith Vihollinen, bids you surrender your crown and your throne and fall prostrate before the true servant of Yagnar. The ineffable Khurdán names you a heretic, and such a one cannot reign over the elect of Yagnar. Submit or die.”

“I refuse to submit.”

Salzar turned to Prince Dornet. “Submit or die.”

Without hesitation, the young Prince declared, “I submit” as he drew his sword and swept it directly into the face of his cousin, King Toban Zho.

His face smashed, a mass of blood and gore, the mortally wounded King drew his own blade and screamed. “Traitor!”

“It is you who is the traitor, cousin,” replied Prince Dornet coolly.

The two cousins fell upon each other with sword and fury while the Bale Wraith, his impromptu herald, and the whole of the army and the crowd merely watched.

Unfortunately for Prince Dornet, he was not nearly equal to the King in martial prowess, and it was not long before his limp body slid off the end of the King’s blade.

The King staggered a step towards the Bale Wraith before collapsing to the ground. Prompt medical attention would no doubt have saved the King’s life, but none was forthcoming. It was only then that the Bale Wraith spoke, addressing his echoing words to the crowd gathered nearby. “The heretic is overthrown and true worship of Fell Yagnar is now restored. Follow me, and I will guide Zarkhandu into a golden age.”

As King Toban Zho lay bleeding out his life, his immobile army formed an eerie, if unintentional, honour-guard for the two figures who now walked silently to the capital. They were followed by the crowd. By the time this procession arrived at the palace, the people of the city were shouting, acclaiming Vihollinen their king.

But when the procession arrived at the palace, Vihollinen turned and addressed the growing crowd once again. “We are no king, but we will

guide this realm under her true King. We are no god, but we will lead this realm to the right worship of Yagnar, her true god.”

In the following days, Crown Prince Brennet was crowned King at the tender age of eight, and the Bale Wraith named him King Oband Tachg – the implacable glacier. Vihollinen himself became the young King’s Regent by popular acclaim.

The new Regent ordered the relaxation of the interdict on the Veiled Masters’ remaining religious sites in the Kingdom. However, bypassing his Unholy Magnificence the Lich Ystar, the Bale Wraith petitioned Khurdán directly for control of the three remaining Yarni-Za religious sites within Zarkhandu’s territory.



To the south, the Timpril settled into Sighar and Kalid on the border with Golmath’s new Barony of Mendileen. In western Zarkhandu, they settled in Haidek, Kalid, Nûrlar, Sîghar, Yannek, and Yannic Harrahk⁵³. With the restoration of Zarkhandu’s Mana in 1564, the fleet transporting the Timpril settlers headed west across the icy seas, eventually settling colonies in Citu and Roudosam⁵⁴. Wherever they went, the Timpril cultivated a reputation for casual violence that does an old Yagnarist heart proud.



53 Haidek (2212)B, Kalid (3121)B, Nûrlar (2111)B, Sîghar (3132)B, Yannek (3113)B, Yannic Harrahk (1111)B.

54 Citu (3122)B, Roudosam (2121)B.

With the conquest of Sardarthion by Carberic of Cappargarnia and the publication of his *Quadran-tid Ediēt*, the Regent of Zarkhandu faces a choice – not merely K'ivik or Carberic, but is the King a peer or an elector?

The blizzard of falling stars seemed to confirm in the hearts of the Zarkhandu people their new course for Yagnar under the whip hand of the Bale Wraith. The winter of 1565 was harsher than those in recent memory, but the old-timers claim they can remember winters far, *far* worse.

Zarkhandu's cavalry quality improved. In the midst of all of the chaos, Zarkhandu entered a cultural and technological renaissance.

The Underlands


DOWN UNDER

YAMINON ALLIANCE (33 Y/-)

Mani Jaripri, Second Lord Yani, Master of the Union Guilds of the Federated Towns of Yangina and Putini.

Trade: Aradéc, Golmath, Irusa, Murali, Tiryowglas, Vess (3), Zarkhandu


DP: Wuka Luyni (F – *see below*)

 ANI JARIPRI WORKED diligently on building up his realm as only an engineer could. He ordered the construction of many clanking mechanical horrors. A new stadium was built in Uka. In Thika, Yaminon sappers began an ambitious project of carving out the mountain on which the city of Adalina sits.

The Yaminon established the towns of Wapati in Wura and Woretemo in Mapali Luyni. The towns of Nikani in Poatina and Vilani in Lutana grew into cities, and Adalina in Thika grew into an even larger city.

All of these projects, as befits the Yaminon culture, involved construction and engineering in some way. But in the corridors of Yaminon power, other things were afoot.

Chess in Tahuati

 ANI JARIPRI AND Lord Torni were deep into their seventh game of chess when Lady Vikkani finally arrived for the talks. Upon her entrance, Mani Jaripri toppled his king, and tossed Lord Torni yet another crown, which quickly joined its lost brothers in his purse.

“Greetings my lady, you are looking as beautiful as ever. Perhaps with your arrival, we may begin this discussion. I have asked you both here to speak of a matter I consider very urgent.

“You see, the three of us have been allies for several years now. And while I would like to believe that an alliance has been very beneficial to all involved, it is my hope that we may deepen this bond between us.”

At that, Mani Jaripri glanced to Lord Torni, and with a slight bow of the head said, “Lord Torni, I wish to first thank you for allowing us to hold this conference in your beautiful town. During the Golmath invasion, this place was the site of gruesome battles, but with strength and honour your people held on. It is that prowess that We of the Yaminon Alliance wish to preserve.”

After a sip of water, Mani Jaripri acknowledge the Lady Vikkani of Larapuna. “And you, my lady, have a land untouched by the ravages of time. While that ensures that your lands have been unharmed in the wars of the past, this has also not allowed you to receive the resources to unlock your people's true potential.”

Mani Jaripri rose to his feet, and addressed both of the leaders. “Sir, Madam, it is my goal to make the Underlands and the Yaminon Alliance the greatest nation in the world. With your help, we can begin this task. I ask you both to join the Yaminon Alliance not as the allies you are, but as full citizens.”

Lady Vikkani sat down in her surprise, and Lord Torni stood in his. Lord Torni accepted Mani Jaripri's proposal; Lady Vikkani proved herself more coy. “Were we all subject to you, it would be no alliance at all, but a monarchy. Now,

were you a baron, I would scarcely object. But we are both of us the same rank, lord and lady.”



In order to better do their job of protecting Yaminon subjects against the depredations of foreign agents and missionaries, the Inquisition under the watchful leadership of Lord Temma expanded their oversight of society and government. It seems to be working, as there were no foreign agents or missionaries to be found in Yaminon lands.

In 1565, when everybody on the surface seemed to be going crazy over some sort of astronomical show, the Yani put on a show of their own. In their (nearly complete) stadium, the Uka Bowl, they held the first ever Grand Martial Games. The rules were simple: full combat armour required and any sort of (blunted) weapon may be used. Some fought unarmed, to the great delight of the crowd. A panel of three referees judged each one-on-one bout. Each bout ended when the referees observed a blow that would be seriously injuring or killing, or until one competitor forces the other to submit. The champion for 1565 was a middle-aged army officer named Tormi Jiriya. The Yaminon are tweaking the rules and venue for the next games in 1566.

Yaminon infantry improved, and their ships are now half as likely to spontaneously sink. Naval engineers consider this a tremendous victory. The Yaminon also expanded their Military Academy.

Fabulous Efan

THE EASTERN CONTINENT

ARADÉC OVERSEAS TRADE COMPANY (56 W/IL)
Sir Jibiyu Golmar, Governor of the Toshi Station.

Trade: Aêtava, Hâkhamanish, Ôimatâ

DP: No.

IN 1464, ARADÉC built a second trading outpost called Jemour Station in Khoja in the fabled Kingdom of Hâkhamanish, where the Khabê Sea meets the waters of the

Ameshurza. Admiral Kalu's overdue fleet finally arrived at Toshi Station in the late summer of 1465.

VICEROYALTY OF GAVAN' ZARKHAND (4 S/DF)

His Dread Highness, Prince Sharret Drehl, Duke of the Parâta, Viceroy of Gavan' Zarkhand.

Trade: Aêtava, Hutaosâ, Ôimatâ, Zarkhandu

DP: Hathâr (F), Sinnithâr (F), Sennic (A), Tyrnoth (F)



EW ZARKHANDU SENT Dread Forge missionaries throughout the former lands of the Blue Sargs. The people of Hathâr, Norril, Sinnithâr, Tyrnoth, and Umbân all converted. In the north, the benighted population of Danileen also fell under the sway of Yagnar's Dread Forge. This was just as well, since the Prince also settled any number of Zarkhandu colonists into the region⁵⁵.

Queen Tannika conquered someplace called Dorn but suffered a mortal wound. The Prince similarly conquered Dasîr before returning to Danileen to meet with a Zarkhandine delegation.

After years of meetings and discussion, in 1464 Prince Sharret Drehl signed the *Treaty of Danileen*. He renounced his claims in Sahûl in exchange for the recognition of his princely title in Efan and a ducal title for his heirs. He accepted also the circlet of Zarkhandine viceroyalty in Efan.

The rain of stars spooked the various Efani barbarians, but their Prince proclaimed it a sign that the ice-forged peoples of Zarkhandu would conquer the world.

The Prince the name of the town of Hadria in Danileen to Kathadhan.

INGAZI EAST EFAN COMPANY



LL CONTACT FROM the Ingazi East Efan Company was lost. Rumour has it that Admiral Lady Gwariva Sardira and her fleet were captured by the mysterious Akhuda.



⁵⁵ Danileen (4222)s.

Official Journal of the Empire of Sahûl

Published by the Printers' Guild of Zadres by Appointment to Her August and Imperial Majesty



Her August & Imperial Majesty

Empress k'ioik

Lady Tchac'at, Countess of the Kicitchat Hive and Associated Dominions, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Empress of All the World.

ENNOBLEMENT

During the Reign of Empress Chass'ika:

The Baron Haryt of Ebmadh II is confirmed in his title *Baron of Ebmadh*.

Grand Boyar Bakenbar Volov of the Gornya Rogami Knjažestvo is granted the title *Lord Oömigmak*.

CHARTER

During the Reign of Empress Chass'ika:

The city of Abrahim in Oratoa is chartered as an Imperial Free City.

APPOINTMENTS

During the Reign of Empress Chass'ika:

To Warden of the North: Goshtikka-Snamarthis Merryn, Count Palatine of Thace.

To Governor of Muralis: Kilyara Drathnes II, Count of Murali.

To Governor of Thacia Minor: Goshtikka-Ourane Willor VI, Duke of Thace.

To Governor of Tramelis: Talkeltik Toktoka VI, Duchess of Taneki.

To Governor of Withidan: Nelhuayotl Neallatalah, Landgrave of Sakkar

To Governor of Artier, Biralis, Dranchoal, Kassaria, Kumarand, Mondahan, Orinos, Yann: *by examination*.

IMPERIAL OFFICES

Chancellor of the Empire: *vacancy*

Speaker of the House of Peers: *Hyrágec*

Justices of the Imperial Chamber Court:

..... *Chancellor of the Empire (vacant)*

..... *Speaker of the House of Peers*

..... *Chi'tixi (through 1584)*

..... *Averon (through 1579)*

..... *vacancy*

PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS OF THE EMPIRE

| <i>Province</i> | <i>GPv</i> | <i>Ref.</i> | <i>Governor</i> | <i>Province</i> | <i>GPv</i> | <i>Ref.</i> | <i>Governor</i> |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Agador | 55 | – | bureaucrat | Kembul | 50 | – | bureaucrat |
| Anabreis | 45 | – | bureaucrat | Kiermon | 65 | – | bureaucrat |
| Aradaun | 75 | – | bureaucrat | Kinsidan | 25 | 14 | bureaucrat |
| Arador | 55 | – | bureaucrat | Kordier | 60 | 14 | bureaucrat |
| Ardebon | 50 | – | Atuburrk | Kumarand | 55 | 7 | bureaucrat |
| Artier | 60 | 8 | bureaucrat | Lambris | 35 | – | bureaucrat |
| Balashan | 60 | – | bureaucrat | Larloc | 55 | 14 | bureaucrat |
| Belegaridor | 55 | – | bureaucrat | Mondahan | 8 | – | bureaucrat |
| Biralis | 65 | 14 | bureaucrat | Muralis | 50 | – | Murali |
| Chos | 45 | – | <i>vacant</i> | Narchoal | 25 | 7 | bureaucrat |
| Dorthacia | 25 | – | bureaucrat | Nauatidran | 5 | 8 | bureaucrat |
| Dranchoal | 45 | 8 | <i>vacant</i> | Orinos | 65 | 17 | bureaucrat |
| Dranmul | 50 | – | bureaucrat | Sachon | 35 | – | bureaucrat |
| Drazhan | 10 | – | bureaucrat | Sardior | 100 | 17 | bureaucrat |
| Endior | 45 | – | bureaucrat | Sistramidor | 65 | – | bureaucrat |
| Iantier | 55 | – | <i>vacant</i> | Tepalis | 50 | 7 | bureaucrat |
| Iasedior | 35 | – | bureaucrat | ThaciaMaior | 70 | 11 | <i>vacant</i> |
| Kaidu | 35 | 17 | bureaucrat | ThaciaMinor | 60 | 11 | Thace Duke |
| Kanapad | 10 | 8 | bureaucrat | Thebia | 45 | – | bureaucrat |
| Kanmul | 75 | – | bureaucrat | Tramelis | 65 | 17 | bureaucrat |
| Kaparis | 65 | 10 | bureaucrat | Withidan | 50 | – | Sakkar |
| Kassaria | 25 | – | bureaucrat | Yann | 15 | 17 | bureaucrat |
| Kastier | 40 | 8 | bureaucrat | | | | |

For each Province of the Empire, the income (*GPv*) and Turn of the most recent reform (*Ref.*) is given, as is the holder of the Governor's office.

REPORT OF IMPERIAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES, 1561–1565

INCOME

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Regional and Provincial Income..... | 250.8 |
| Public Works Income..... | 1230.0 |
| City Income..... | 13.0 |
| International Trade (Tariffs)..... | 1752.5 |
| From Exchequer..... | 809.9 |
| TOTAL | 4056.2 |

EXPENDITURES

| | |
|---|--------|
| Army Support..... | 73.0 |
| Military, sorcery, spycraft investment... | 300.0 |
| Public Works | 200.0 |
| Sky Tent Repair Fund..... | 2625.0 |
| Counter-Intelligence..... | 200.0 |
| TOTAL | 3398.0 |
| To EXCHEQUER..... | 658.2 |

RUGBY

All-Sahul League play:

All Realms may enter up to two teams in the League, subject to the approval of the League Trustees.

Current ASL teams are: Aradéc, Chi'tixi, Golmath, Ingazi, Murali, New Ingazi (St. Ilana), Runazar, and the Zarkhandu All-Blacks. Treskaw is reportedly putting a team together as well.

*Tournament results!**Round 1 (1562)*

Chi'tixi 8 at Murali 11
St. Ilana 8 at Runazar 13
All-Blacks 10 at Ingazi 11
Golmath (bye)

Round 2 (1564)

Murali 9 at Runazar 12
Ingazi 11 at Golmath 10

Championship (1565)

Ingazi 11 at Runazar 9.

Ingazi won the championship that had been denied them last cycle.

*Next cycle's matchings are:**Round 1 (1567)*

St. Ilana at Murali [yellow]
Chi'tixi at Runazar [blue]
All-Blacks at Aradéc [red]
Ingazi at Golmath [green]

Round 2 (1569)

Yellow at Blue
Red at Green

Championship match to be played in Ingazi in 1570.

Treskaw's new team has a number of friendlies against the All-Blacks (1566) and Runazar (1568).

Lord Admiral of the Blue: *Atuburrk*
 Lord Admiral of the Green: *Pexiki*
 Lord Admiral of the Red: *Tiryouglas*
 Marshal of Thacia: *Thace (County Palatine)*
 Warden of the North: *Thace (County Palatine)*

FREE COMPANIES & ERRANTRY &C.

HAWKWOOD COMPANY—32mc 20pk 9mi
 Captain: The Venerable Lord Dwinbi Sardes
 (1974w) TR age 81
 Location: *Udhibar, Gurvan Prefecture*
 Min. Bid: *hired for a long-term contract by Ebmadh.*

GREAT BYRRIN COMPANY (GBC)—25pk 13hu 1ar
 Captain: Captain Drake (LAA7s) TR age 28
 Location: *Alkandh, Djarden Prefecture*
 Min. Bid: *hired for a long-term contract by Ebmadh.*

WILLEFORN'S SPEARS—10pk 19mi
 Captain: "Spears" Willefor (LA53w) TR age 64
 Location: *Alkandh, Djarden Prefecture*
 Min. Bid: *hired for a long-term contract by Ebmadh.*

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

ALL BANK LOANS must be repaid within two Turns at 120% of the original amount of the loan. Those wishing to borrow from the Imperial Bank must contact the Board of Directors in advance for loan approval.

IMPERIAL BANK OF SAHÛL

Locations:Einandhu, Sardarhion
 Available to borrow: 3,900.0 GP
 (No single borrower may borrow more than 1,000 GP)

INVESTORS MAY PURCHASE shares in the Imperial Free City of Einandhu for 200 GP each, any profits to be divided by shares. Rule 10.5.2 investment income accrues normally. The four chief shareholders, together with the Tiger King of Arms, form the board of directors (indicated * below).

Shares of the Imperial Bank:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Guilds Council of Adndar* | 9 |
| Imperial Exchequer* | 7 |
| House Gwariva of Ingazi* | 5 |
| House Pangku of Araxes* | 4 |
| Ancient & Undaunted Order of Herald* | 3 |
| Printers Guild of Zadres | 1 |

Loans: Yaminon / 1,200GP / due T25

BANK OF ITAXIK

Location:Itaxik
 Available to borrow: 2,842.2 GP
 Loans: None outstanding.

Location: Urdrahahn
 Available to borrow: 2,320.0 GP
 Loans: Yani / 1200 GP / due Turn 24

FIRST YAGNARIST BANK OF THE EYE

Location: Yarni-Za
 Available to borrow: 0.0 GP
 Loans: Veiled masters / 1,440 GP / due Turn 24
 Loans entirely at the discretion of the Veiled Masters.

NOTICES

Reciprocal Non-Recognition (1561)

Dearest Cousins of Empire,

IT IS WITH HEAVY HEART that the Kingdom of Zarkhandu, having our own Primacy, cease to recognize the validity of the entity known as *The Hidden Masters of Yarni-Za*. Once they were co-religionists of ours but now we see them as a corrupted foreign power bent on submission to the perverted goal of twisted shadows and the long decayed na-brain of Lichdom.

To attack another Yagnarist and fellow Imperial during these critical times especially when overtures of cooperation were made, at their request, is just a policy of stupidity. Such wastefulness cannot be rewarded.

The Hidden Masters and any persons affiliated with them, including ambassadors, are now expelled from the territory of the Kingdom of Zarkhandu.

These senseless attacks only further justify the withdrawal of the Kingdom of Zarkhandu from the corrupted Twilight March which is now sadly just a Coalition of Shadow and the corruption of the once pure Khurdán.

King Toban Zho,
 Kingdom of Zarkhandu.
 Zarkhandu, Vúhlath Prefecture.

On Cappargarnia (1561)

WE REQUEST THE PEERS AND ELECTORATE consider stripping Cappargarnia of its Electoral Status and assigning it to another Tarotist Realm. We deem Cappargarnia unworthy of the status of Electorate.

Twice in fifty years their actions have lead to Empire laying both a Bann and Doom up on their Realm.

We can lay waste to their armies, strip them of their land, but at the end of the day the mightiest blow we can land is a loss of the status they no longer deserve.

By my hand and under seal:

Empress Chass'ika,
Sardarthion.

Open Letter to the Countess of Kicitchat (1561)

To Her Mandibleness Sith'tat IV, the Black, Lady Tchac'at, Countess of the Kicitchat Hive and Associated Dominions, Chancellor of the Empire, Conqueror of Cappargarnia and Guarantor of Erphani Liberties,

From Her Excellency's most devoted servants, the Senate and the People of Erphan,

WE EARNESTLY PRAY that this letter finds your excellency in good health and spirits. We, your servants, request clarification on a number of points of law. These first questions are in the form of an open letter.

1. Since the Countess of Kicitchat rightly maintains that the Princely Republic of Erphan is the lawful continuation of the Cappargarnian Republic, it stands to reason that all of the former prefectures that once sent Senators to Cappargarnia should now send them to Erphan. Question: does this include the prefectures of Krittix, Thichat, Dahu, Karadeg, Kentel, Cauaros, and Nolvonn? If so, when can these Senators be chosen? If not, why not?
2. Other than those laws explicated in the *Consul Edict of the Kicitchat Dominion of Erediar of 1556* (hereinafter "the Edict"), does the Republic of Erphan retain its laws and traditions, particularly in regard to (a) liberty of persons, (b) trading privileges and charters granted up to the present, and (c) the election of her Prince?
3. There appears to be a paradox created by the Edict, to wit: Article 4. No one may be elected Prince of Erphan unless they have sworn fealty to the Countess of Kicitchat. It seems, however, that once elected Prince, such ties of fealty must be legally dissolved, since it is common sense that a Prince may not serve a Countess, but that a Countess may serve a Prince. At the moment that these bonds are dissolved, however, the elected Prince will find himself in

violation of the Edict. The Edict itself foresees a resolution to this paradox in the election of the Countess herself as Prince (Enabling Article 10), and certainly this is a possibility. But according to Imperial Charter and tradition, the election must be fair and open (explicitly recognized in Enabling Article 8 of the Edict), which seems to indicate that someone other than the Countess may be elected Prince. By the terms of the Edict, as we have explained above, he would suddenly and automatically find himself in violation of the Edict and therefore deposed. Question: how is this paradox to be resolved? Since Erphan is (temporarily) without a Prince, this is certainly not an issue at present, but prudence dictates that clarification be sought regarding the political and feudal relationship between the Countess of Kicitchat and the Prince of Erphan.

Attest:

Senator Cassias Erates,
Chancellor of the Senate of Erphan,
Erphan.

Sky Tent Repair (1561)

THE TIME OF THE DEMON SUN draws near, Astronomers indicate the Demon Sun will reach us around 1602. In the meantime, the strike in southwestern Sahûl is perhaps just the first of many to come. Repairing the Sky Tent is of utmost imperative, thanks to information provided by Princess Mirra we now know the extent of those costs.

The Imperium will provide the majority if not all the gold required to repair the gates, unfortunately we are lacking in other resources and turn to the Empire to aid in the repair of the Sky Tent. We call up on the Empire to provide aid to repairing the gates, whether it is a small donation or a large donation every bit helps in preserving our future.

We understand that this lays a burden on some realms especially those in northeast Sahûl, in order to alleviate that burden we announce the Imperial Bann against Aradéc is over.

Those who are able to contribute we ask that they state how much they can donate, what they can donate and where they can donate it.

To save Sahûl, and perhaps the rest of the world, we must work together to save it. Thank you and may the Gods smile upon the task ahead of us.

By my hand and under seal:

Empress Chass'ika,

Mistress of the Tis'chak, Countess of Takkikik,
Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of
Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and
Empress of All the World.
Sardarthion.

Claims of the Empire of Efan (1461)

THE EMPIRE OF EFAN continues to claim the Continent of Efan. The Continent of Efan includes the mainland of Efan, the coastal waters of Efan, all the islands in or bordering the coastal waters of Efan.

Mir Kúkoš Tâhem,

Minister of Barbarian Affairs
for the Throne of Khorus.
The Celestial City.

Our Borders are Closed (1561)

IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED by the courts of Pehuatoka that the invasion of unasked-for holy warriors everyone keeps referring to as *missionaries* were acts of both espionage and war by Chi'tixi upon the sovereign realm of Zarkhandu so much so that even the Imperial Heralds have called it an invasion.

We further find that the excommunication of a King by his own subject, regardless of how far he is from home, to be treasonous, and that such subject controls a realm of his own an act of war upon another sovereign realm of Sahûl.

Our judgement is as follows:

To the rulers and citizens of the Electoral Queendom of Chi'tixi, the Hidden Masters of Yarni-Za, and the County Palatine of Krommolek our borders are closed. Citizens of these realms will have one year to exit the County of Pehukatoka. Those failing to do so will be tried and executed for espionage by flaying. Attempts to return will be met with summary executions of a similar nature. Further, trade will not be established with these realms while the borders are closed.

This ban shall last no less than 25 years, but no more than 100 years, with the decision being reevaluated every 25 years and we encourage other Realms of like (meaning fair and just) minds to show the appropriate backbone and moral courage to do the same.

The time on this ban is to be in addition to, and consecutive, not concurrent with, any punishment handed down by the Imperial Courts for such actions.

Countess Cipaŕonatha VI,

Countess of Pehuatoka.
Aueuetl, Pehuatokha Prefecture.

Petition to the Empress of Sahûl (1561)

To Her August & Imperial Majesty Empress Chass'ika, Mistress of the Tis'chak, Countess of Takkikik, Queen of Itaxik, Golden Beetle of the West, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Empress of All the World.

YOUR SERVANT, BARON HARYT II of Ebmadh craves your indulgence. We bring the following facts to your attention:

- 1) My ancestors, the noble barons of Ebmadh have been mentioned in the Chronicles since at least 1455,
- 2) Our House Sandrim has been marrying into the great Houses of the Empire since at least 1460 (when Sandrim Kierael married Tiribissi Taric),
- 3) My grandfather Baron Sandrim Hesiod of his own will came to the assistance of the outnumbered Kicitchat forces against the Raven Crusaders at the Battle of the Three Armies in 1494, and later died fighting the Raven Crusaders at the Battle of Ardarhun in 1497,
- 4) We ourselves liberated the Imperial Free City of Zadres from the perfidious Cappargarnians in 1556,

Our deeds have been sung for a hundred years *and yet* it comes to our attention that certain of the peers refuse to accept that the ancient Barony of Ebmadh is a legitimate realm of the Empire. When have we not risen to our duty? When have we not stood for empire against those who look to undermine it?

We pray, your august and imperial majesty, that you confirm our status as a realm in good standing of the empire of Sahûl and so put to rest this slander.

Death to Cappargarnia.

your servant,

Baron Haryt II,

Baron of Ebmadh.
Imperial Free City of Zadres.

Decree of Excommunication (1561)

TIRACH ZHUR WAS MERELY SCHISMATIC, but the new Zarkhandine King Toban Zho has gone too far. In his petition to the Imperial Chamber Court of Sahûl, he proclaimed us to be a “commoner on loan” from the Crown of Zarkhandu. He provokes us in his pride when he claims he has sovereign property rights over any free kindred, never mind over Yagnar incarnate.

In making these claims, he rejects the sovereignty of his own god, of Yagnar Himself!

We must now, therefore, declare that the Dread Forge under the rule of this heretic King can no longer be called Yagnarism at all, but at its best is a purely secular society. King Toban Zho is declared a heretic and not in communion with Yagnar or His Church.

Those who follow the society of the Dread Forge in its present form have no favour with Yagnar. If the King of Zarkhandu wishes to be an atheist, so be it. He rejects Me; We reject him.

Khurdân, Son of Yagnar.

Admittance into the Empire (1562)

THE FOLLOWING REALMS at this time will be recognized by the Imperium given other requirements are met laid out by the Great Charter:

The Free City of Abrahim in Oratoa is recognized as an Imperial Free City. We are further looking to establish or relocate an Imperial Fleet to Abrahim, if there is a realm with a spare fleet for sale please contact the Imperium.

The Barony of Ebmadh is recognized as a realm of the Empire.

Gornya Knjažestvo is recognized as a realm of the Empire. While we understand this may not be popular with some we can certainly say this was a difficult decision to come to. Ultimately it came down to the importance of Delin to the future of the Empire, Delin is the location of one the Shanks of the Tent and it was just too great of a risk to have any misunderstandings further damage the Shank in Delin. Protect it well, Boyar Bakenbar of Clan Volov.

Other petitions are denied at this time, but will still be under consideration for recognition at a future date.

The Tarotist Puritans are denied at this time as at this time they seem intent on attacking another realm of the Empire. If they choose a different path, then their standing will be reevaluated in a much better light.

The remaining Yagnarist Realms that broke from Zarkhandu stem from a disagreement, and we believe Zarkhandu should be allowed time to settle their differences. We do expect this to be done peacefully; while challenging, this is not impossible. Itaxik was fractured after the promulgation of the *Great Charter* and has been restored to its original borders without a single loss. We believe Zarkhandu can do the same.

We apologize for the delay in making a determination on the status of several petitions for admittance into the Empire. Petitions will be reviewed every five years as long as they are received.

By my hand and under seal:

Empress Chass'ika,
Mistress of the Tis'chak, Countess of Takkikik,
Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of
Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and
Empress of All the World.
Sardarthion.

Declaration of Aid (1562)

TO THE LOYAL IMPERIAL CITIZENS in the troubled Byrrin valley and other interested parties:

Many of you have been suffering under the Doom levied against the realm of Cappargarnia in spite of a sincere wish to have no part in the treasonous acts of certain parties. The people of Murali grieve for the innocent people who may have been harmed in the course of justice.

Though Murali is not large and lies far away, we wish to help those people who disavow the crimes which the Doom punishes. We have dispatched a fleet to provide aid and comfort to loyal Imperial citizens, which should arrive in the Byrrin River in the year 1565. This is not an invasion force, but a mission of mercy. We will dispense what humble aid we can along the river to any who renounce treason and have not borne arms against the Empire, to the extent of our resources.

Loyal imperial citizens who wish to leave the area for a fresh start in far-off Murali will be accepted, to the extent they can be accommodated in our limited space. (Followers of the Red Death need not apply.) The trip will be long and difficult, the destination hard, and the life ahead anything but easy. But there is peace.

We wish peace and prosperity for all loyal citizens of the Empire.

Count Drathnes,
Count of Murali.
Karrka, Muralis Prefecture.

Instrument of Abdication (1562)

WE, CHASS'IKA, Mistress of the Tis'chak, Countess of Takkikik, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lady of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Empress of All the World, do hereby declare our irrevocable determination to renounce the Imperial Throne, and our desire that effect should be given to this *Instrument of Abdication* according to Article 2 paragraph 3 of the *Great Charter*, thereby immediately summoning the Prince Electors or their lawful envoys to appear at the steps of the Imperial Palace in Sardarthion at dawn thirty days hence.

In token whereof we have hereunto set our hand and seal on this fifth day of September, fifteen hundred and sixty-two, in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed.

Signed at Sardarthion in the presence of Chancellor Sith'tat and Sir Forngian Dareth.

Chass'ika.
Sardarthion.

Treaty of Ringær (1562)

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, mindful of the horrors of war that have too long pitted the Kingdom of Ancalimë and the Empire of Sahûl one against the other, do hereby pledge peace according to the terms set here forthwith.

1. The King of Ancalimë surrenders to the vassalage of the Electoral County Palatine of Thace and places their leadership under the leadership of the Count Palatine of Thace.
2. The Kingdom of Ancalimë ceases all hostile actions against the realms of the Empire of Sahûl. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Ancalimë immediately ceases trade with all enemies of the Empire of Sahûl, namely the Kingdom of Pouákaitoa and the Dread Empire and its allies.
3. The Electoral County Palatine of Thace will protect the people and Kingdom of Ancalimë and work tirelessly to secure Ancalimë's borders from any and all incursions.

4. The southern frontier between the Kingdom of Ancalimë and the County Palatine of Kommolek will be fixed at their border of 1515 SA / 515 OR.
5. The Electoral County Palatine of Thace recognizes the Kingdom of Ancalimë as a unique and distinct Oratóan culture and will work to preserve that culture and to protect it.

King Calmalas,
of the House of Malvalas.
King of Ancalimë.

General Lord Basodir,
of the House of Goshtikka-Snamarthis of
the Electoral County Palatine of Thace,
on behalf of his nephew,
the Count Palatine Merryn.

Declaration of War (1563)

WHEREAS THE PURITAN COMMONWEALTH has made war upon a Realm of the Empire, and

Whereas they are thereby in violation of the *Great Charter* and the laws of the Empire, and

Whereas the County Palatinate of Ingazi is a loyal servant of the Empire, committed to maintaining its laws and customs, and

Whereas the lands of the said County Palatinate of Ingazi border upon the criminal Puritans,

NOW, THEREFORE, we the Count Palatine of Ingazi, our Parliament concurring, declare that Ingazi is in a state of war with the Puritan Commonwealth until such a time as the Empire may provide for a general peace.

Count Palatine Razhim XI,
Count Palatine of Ingazi.
Ingazi City, Warrayi Prefecture.

Duedhyn Library Access Decree (1563)

BE IT KNOWN, that by order of His Highness, Prince Merryn of Duedhyn all members of the Empire may have access to its Grand Library in Pareis under the following conditions:

First, any researcher who wishes to use the library for research in the general interest of the empire may do so freely provided that a complete copy of that research is shared with the Prince of Duedhyn, and the Holy Mother.

Second, any realm that fought on behalf of our house and in ensuring our throne are granted free access to our library for whatever research they wish.

Third, any realm that desires to do private research in our library will be permitted to do so on the payment of an agreeable fee to assist the principality in the continued growth and development of our library.

We encourage all who have great libraries to also grant access to their libraries under similar constraints.

Prince Merryn IV,
Prince of Duedhyn.
Pareis, Glasdor Prefecture.

Treaty of Danileen (1564)

THE LAWFUL ENVOYS of the King of Zarkhandu and Prince Sharret Drehl in Efan hereby declare:

1. The Prince shall for his long and natural life be the Viceroy of Gavan' Zarkhand (Haven of the Zarkhandu).
2. Trade shall begin immediately between Zarkhandu and Gavan' Zarkhand.
3. Military forces will stop any non-Zarkhandine foreign missionaries.
4. The Prince provide all instruments of government under his control to the Viceroyalty and to Zarkhandu as required.
5. A Mendicant Preaching Order will be created for the express purpose of converting the Saurians of the Parata to the Dread Forge and combating other Yagnarist heresies. This Order shall be assigned to the Viceroyalty.
6. The Viceroyalty shall consist of all regions it currently controls. Any future regions will be part of Zarkhandu proper subject to command and control.
7. Religious conversion will be funded by Zarkhandu.
8. The Viceroyalty will continue for the life of Prince Sharret. Thereafter there will be a permanent seat at Council for his line as the Duke of the Parata.
9. The Prince shall send the best leader on a best equipped and magically supported journey to the deserts of Efan in search of the Ruby Crown.
10. That all monies held in the name of Zarkhandu from the Efani deals be spent on needful projects in Efan such as increasing the public works

in the regions with towns or other projects at the Princes/Viceroy's discretion.

11. The general nature of this re-union be spread far and wide in both Efan and Sahûl to ensure the greatest and strongest union.

Prince Sharret Drehl,
Duke of the Parâta, Prince of Gavan' Zarkhand.
Gorvan Tannit,
Patriarch of the Countenance of Coals.

Decree of Reconciliation (1565)

WITH THE ASCENT of King Oband Tachg to the throne of Fell Zarkhandu and the reconforming of the Dread Forge to Our Will by Our beloved son Vihollinen, We hereby declare communion restored. So long as the King of Fell Zarkhandu remains obedient to the Will of Yagnar, so shall it remain.

As for the heretic Toban Zho: he will have an eternity to consider his foolishness.

Khurdân, Son of Yagnar.

The Quadrantid Ediçt (1565)

Preamble

DEIRN CARBERIC, BY FAVOUR OF DIVINE FATE and right of conquest, his August and Imperial Majesty, Prince of Cappargarnia, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lord of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Emperor of All the World by his majesty and power decrees the following ediçt for the regulation of the Empire. As in the days of old, if the Empire stands divided against itself, for its princes have become the companions of thieves. Fate has mingled among them the spirit of dizziness that they may grope in midday as if in darkness; and Fate has removed their candlestick from out of its place, that they may be blind and leaders of the blind. And those who walk in darkness stumble; and the blind commit crimes in their hearts which come to pass in time of discord.

We stand at a critical moment in Sahûl's history. The very stars tell it. It is clear that despite its promise, the *Great Charter* of 1534 has failed. It has embroiled the Empire in constant war, brought low the Electors, distracted the Peers, and created a Court that has been nothing but a source of misery, corruption, and division.

Inasmuch as we, through the office by which we possess the Imperial dignity, are bound to put an end to fu-

ture danger of discords among the realms of the Empire, we have promulgated and decreed the subjoined laws for the purpose of restoring unity within the Empire and of ending once and for all the aforesaid detestable discord and the various dangers which arise from it. This we have done in our solemn court at Sardarthion amid a numerous multitude of princes, counts, barons, magnates, nobles and citizens; after mature deliberation, from the fullness of our Imperial power, and sitting on the throne of our Imperial majesty.

We, therefore, and, by the present Imperial Ediċt, do from the plenitude of the Imperial power decree the following.

Chapter I. The Supreme Law

Article 1. The Great Charter Abrogated

This Ediċt abrogates and replaces the Great Charter of 1534, including all Enabling Ordinances unless repromulgated below.

Article 2. Enforcement

Any Eleċtor infringing this ediċt shall be excluded by his co-eleċtors from association with themselves, and he shall lose both his vote in the eleċtion and the position, dignity and privileges possessed by the other Eleċtors, according to the procedures described in this ediċt.

If any Realm does not fulfil their duties under this ediċt, proceeding may be instituted against them by means of fines or an Imperial Bann declared by the Emperor pursuant to the law, or by military execution known henceforth as an Imperial Doom. An Imperial Doom shall be ordained by the Imperial Diet and enforced by the Emperor. An Imperial Doom shall last for a period of no less than five and no more than twenty-five years, as determined by the law enaċting the Doom.

Any other prince or nobleman violating this ediċt shall likewise not be invested with fiefs which they shall obtain from the Empire or from anyone otherwise, and shall, in addition, be altogether deprived of all their rights, liberties, privileges, and favours obtained from the Empire, and both in their persons and in all their possessions shall incur the Imperial Bann.

Any Free City, County Palatine, or guild violating this ediċt shall likewise, by the aċt itself, have incurred the above penalties.

Any person on his own authority and without trial or the calling in of any magistrate may henceforth with impunity attack those whom, by the aċt itself, have been found to have deprived themselves of all their rights. And, in attacking them, he need fear no punishment on this account from the Empire or anyone else.

Article 3. Treason

Every attempt against the existence, the integrity, or the security of the Empire, or any offence committed against the Diet, or a member of the Diet, or a magistrate or public official of the Empire while in the execution of his duty, shall be judicially investigated and, upon conviction, punished by Imperial Doom.

Chapter II. The Empire

By long tradition and by divine right, all those lands contained within the continent of Sahûl, including the Underlands beneath it and those islands adjacent to it, are now and forever part of the Empire of Sahûl. Any prefecture that is part of the Empire but unowned and ungoverned shall be considered to be in the care of the Emperor, to dispose of as he sees fit. Further, those lands and prefectures beyond the continent of Sahûl shall be considered part of the Empire when they are ruled by a Realm owing allegiance to the Empire.

Article 1. Political Structure

The territorial components of the Empire fall into one of the following categories: Realms, Imperial prefectures (regions of the Imperial Domain), Independent prefectures (regions not part of any Realm or of the Imperial Domain), Ecclesiastical States, Counties Palatine, and Imperial Free Cities.

In accord with the previous articles of this present ediċt, all Realms, Ecclesiastical States, Counties Palatine, and Imperial Free Cities are maintained in all their customary rights and privileges.

Article 2. Imperial Realms

The status of Imperial Realm is attached to a particular territory and is a right of the owner or ruler of that territory. Consequently, if several individuals jointly rule the Realm they share the vote. Conversely, the owner of several Realms with votes attached exercises a corresponding number of votes. The vote is inherited by the next possessor of the Realm. At the present time, the Imperial Realms consist of:

- The Kingdoms of Aradéc, Hyrágec, Kéatoa, Pakoa, and Zarkhandu;
- The Queendoms of Chi'tixi and Itaxik;
- The Principalities of Cappargarnia, Duedhyn, Golmath, and Gavan' Zarkhand;
- The Grand Duchies of Araxes, Atuburrk, and Averen;
- The Duchies of Elphárec, Taneki, and Thace;
- The Counties Palatine of Ingazi, Kommolek, and Eleċtoral Thace;

- The Counties of Kicitchat, Murali, Pehuatoka, Pexiki, Tiryouglas, and Tokatl;
- The Landgravates of Lynnarvor and Sakkar;
- The Baronies of Gornya Knjažestvo, Iäthedain, and Irusa;
- The Lordships of Carcë, Oömigmak, and Yaminon;
- The Icemark of Yax'te;
- The Viceroyalty of New Ingazi;
- The Church Universal and Triumphant;
- The Veiled Masters of Yarni-Za; and
- The Iluvarian Orthodox Church.

Article 3. Admission of New Imperial Realms

New realms shall be admitted to the Empire only after a formal request to the Emperor, and with the advice and consent of a simple majority of the Electors. The Emperor must then, by exercise of Imperial Authority [2 IIP] ennoble the new realm and grant it recognition.

Admission to the Imperial Diet is not solely dependent on the Emperor's will but, except in the case of Imperial Free Cities, also requires qualification and approval by the Imperial Diet itself. Actual exercise of the rights to sit and vote is not necessary.

The creation of a new Electoral position requires the unanimous approval of the College of Electors. Only a realm that is currently a member of the House of Peers or a former member of the College of Electors shall be eligible for elevation to the status of Elector. In no case may an Ecclesiastical State or a Military Order be created an Elector.

The creation of a new prince with individual vote in the House of Peers requires the possession of a significant immediate territory and the approval of the House of Peers.

The Emperor may not make individuals into Realms without the possession of a territory; an Imperial knighthood is not sufficient to be declared a Realm of the Empire.

After qualification and approval, the quality of an Imperial Realm is retained, whether or not a seat in the Diet is taken or the power to vote exercised. Such status can only be revoked by an act of the Emperor [5 IIP] with the approval of the Electors and the House of Peers.

Article 4. Privileges of the Imperial Realms

The privileges of the Imperial Realms are guaranteed. These privileges are: to have seat and vote at the Imperial Diet; to be suspended or deprived of their status only in cases of misuse of rights like minting and tolls, and only by the Emperor or the Imperial court; to have their succession laws automatically approved by

the Emperor; precedence over all subjects of the Empire; autonomy with respect to their Clan or Hive affairs; the right to form alliances with other states of the Empire for peaceful purposes; to assemble themselves by college; to have equal access to Imperial Justice.

Article 5. Privileges of the Counties Palatine

The various Counties Palatine are maintained in their customary rights and privileges, most especially the right of Sovereignty, including judicial sovereignty: their subjects cannot be tried in Imperial courts, and no appeals can be made to the Imperial high courts except in cases of denial of justice.

Article 6. The Imperial Civil Service

For purposes of the Civil Service and of Imperial justice, the Empire is divided into 45 Provinces, each composed of approximately twenty Prefectures. Provinces, where they do not yet exist, are to be established as soon as is practical.

Provinces are administered by Governors appointed by the Emperor. He may appoint Governors from within the Civil Service [0 IIP], or he may appoint someone who is not part of the Civil Service, a "political appointment". [1 IIP]

Imperial Provincial Governorships, at the discretion of the Emperor, may be submitted en masse for review by the Peerage and Electors. Once the list is submitted by the Emperor, it will be the duty of the Chancellor, or the Speaker of the Peers if the Chancellor is not a Peer, to mediate between both the College of the Electors and the House of Peers until a list is produced that a simple majority of both houses can agree upon. Upon a simple majority of the quorum of the Peers and Electors voting in favor, all the Governorships so submitted shall be issued on the same Imperial appointment proclamation. [1 IIP]

Prefectures are administered by Prefects, promoted from the Civil Service Imperial Judicial Authority, with the Emperor retaining veto power. Candidates are subject to the Examination System. Desert and waste Provinces may not have Prefectures, but instead are administered directly by the Governor.

With the exception of the Provincial Governors, who may be political appointees, all appointments to positions within the civil service, including Prefects, are reserved to those who pass the examination appropriate to the position.

The examination system is maintained by the Auditors, free of any political interference, whether of Realms or of the Emperor. The Auditors are a special independent branch of the civil service tasked with investigating the civil service, and where appropriate eliminating corruption and inefficiency. This program

of audits and reform is maintained by the Auditors, free of any political interference, whether of Realms or of the Emperor. No individual Auditor may serve in the same Prefecture for more than five years, except the Minister and members of his staff, who may serve in the Sardarthion central office for no more than ten years.

Article 7. The Imperial Domain

The lands of the Imperial Domain are ruled directly by the Emperor. During interregna, the Demense lands are administered in trust by the Chancellor.

The Knights of the Empire are minor nobles whose direct overlord is the Emperor. They are maintained in all of their customary rights and privileges.

The election and coronation of the Emperor of Sahûl, and likewise his court, shall be held in the city of Sardarthion.

Whenever any Prince Elector or Peer, detained by a just impediment, is not able to come when summoned to the Imperial court, and instead sends an envoy, that envoy will be admitted in the place of his master, with all the dignity normally reserved to such an envoy.

Article 8. Imperial Military

The defense of the Empire is maintained by the Imperial Army, the Imperial Navy, the Emerald Watch, and the Feudal levy of the Realms of the Empire.

The Imperial Army is organized into two command structures, one each for Sahûl and Oratoa. They are commanded by Imperial Marshals appointed by the Emperor: Imperial Marshal of Thacia at Thûnd for Sahûl and the Imperial Marshal of the North (location to be determined) for Oratoa. [1 IIP]

The Imperial Navy is organized into three fleets under Lords Admiral appointed by the Emperor: the Lord Admiral of the Blue at Abrahim, the Lord Admiral of the Red at Sarsis, and the Lord Admiral of the Green at Nikatl. [1 IIP]

The Emerald Watch is that portion of the Imperial armed forces, ground, naval, and air, tasked with the defense and security of the Imperial Domain. They are led by the Colonel-in-Chief of the Watch, who reports directly to the Emperor.

The Feudal Levy consists of those forces provided by the Realms of the Empire for Imperial military service at the Emperor's request.

The Emperor is the commander in chief of the Imperial Military.

Article 9. Heraldry in the Empire of Sahûl

Heraldry and all associated arts are the sole purview of Most Ancient and Undaunted Imperial Order of Heraldry, under the leadership of the Tiger King of Arms. They are maintained in all of their customary

rights and privileges, free of any political interference, whether of Realms or of the Emperor.

Chapter III. The Emperor

The Emperor must be worthy sophont of majority age, alive and mortal, reside in the Empire, be of lay status, and not a divine avatar. At any point that a sitting Emperor chooses to prolong his or her life beyond a natural lifespan by whatever means, he must immediately abdicate and announce an election. The office of Emperor is not hereditary, but elective, with the right of election belonging to the Electors.

Article 1. The Emperor's Reign

An Imperial reign begins with the swearing of the *Imperial Coronation Oath*, an oath of duty sworn by the Emperor. The rulers of the Imperial Free Cities shall take an oath of loyalty at the time of the coronation, but not the other realms of the Empire, since each ruler takes such an oath at the time they inherit their fief.

The reign ends by death, abdication, or deposition of the Emperor. In the case of abdication, the Emperor must summon the Electors to meet and vote for his successor, and he must remain Emperor until the vote is completed. No member of the abdicating Emperor's house may be considered a candidate in this election. Deposition may be declared by a no-confidence vote of the Electors, according to Chapter IV, Article 7 of this present Edict.

Article 2. The Imperial Coronation Oath

"I do swear that I, to the utmost extent of my discretion and intelligence, and in accordance with the laws and traditions of chivalry and of the Empire, will defend and protect the Empire of Sahûl."

Article 3. Imperial Powers and Responsibilities

The Emperor, in consultation with the Imperial Diet, exercises the supreme authority over the Empire of Sahûl. The powers not herein delegated to the Imperial Diet are reserved to the Emperor alone.

- The Emperor shall take care that Imperial laws and rulings of the Empire are enforced.
- The Emperor shall appoint Imperial officers in accordance with law and tradition. [IIP per PRB §11.1.2.5]
- The Emperor shall publish to the Diet an accurate report of all revenue and expenditures from the Imperial Domain every five years.
- The Emperor may propose and promulgate laws; in particular, he has the right to withhold approval of any act of the Diet excepting his own deposition. [2 IIP]

- The Emperor may not levy taxes without approval of the Imperial Diet.
- The Emperor is the ultimate judicial authority.
- The Emperor has the right of pardon, as well as the right to confer exemptions and privileges (i.e., exceptions to the application of Imperial laws). [5 IIP]
- The Emperor may impose fines on any Realm that has broken the law, as provided for in the text of the law that was broken. [5 IIP]
- The Emperor may impose an Imperial Bann on any Realm that has broken the law. This prevents any other party from engaging in trade with the affected Realm, for a period not to exceed twenty-five years. [10 IIP]
- The Emperor shall represent the Empire among nations, declare war, and conclude peace in the name of the same, enter into alliances and other conventions with foreign countries, accredit ambassadors, and receive them. For declaration of war in the name of the Empire the consent of the College of Electors shall be required. Except in case of an attack upon the territory of the Empire.
- The Emperor is overlord of all Imperial fiefs.

Article 4. Titles and Styles

The Emperor is styled “His August & Imperial Majesty, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lord of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Emperor of All the World.” The Emperor has precedence over all monarchs. The Emperor’s wife, the Empress, also has rank, and his children shall have the dignity of Archduke for their life, which dignity will rank just below that of Prince.

Article 5. Imperial Chancellor

The Chancellor retains all traditional rights, privileges, and duties of his office. In the absence of the Emperor, the Chancellor shall preside over meetings of the Imperial Ministers.

The Chancellor’s term of office ends the moment the Electors take up their duty to elect a new Emperor. When, by resignation, death, or other means, the office of Imperial Chancellor becomes vacant, it shall be the responsibility of the House of Peers to provide to the Emperor, with all speed, a list of three suitable nominees as candidates for said office. The Electors of the Empire shall not be eligible for nomination. If the House of Peers fails to make such list of nominees available to the Emperor within five years of the vacancy

of the Chancellor’s office, the Emperor shall appoint whomsoever he may wish.

The Emperor may select the new Chancellor from the list provided by the Peers or, if he desires, select someone else. [Peers’ Nominees: 0 IIP / Other non-Elector: 1 IIP / Elector: 2 IIP]

Article 6. Imperial Ministers

For the better governance of the Empire, the Emperor shall appoint [1 IIP each] from the members of the House of Peers a council of Ministers to advise him and to administer portions of the Imperial government as indicated:

- the *Minister of War* coordinates the military forces of the Empire and makes recommendations for their improvement and disposition;
- the *Foreign Minister* supervises the activities of the Empire’s ambassadors and consulates throughout the world;
- the *Minister of Development* makes recommendations and coordinates Empire-side projects aimed at the economic development of the Empire;
- the *Minister of Justice* shall advise the Emperor on all matters of law and justice and shall accept all petitions for same.

Ministers serve at the pleasure of the Emperor; he may dismiss them at any time [1 IIP], and their term ends immediately at the end of the Emperor’s reign.

The Emperor may, at his discretion, create entirely new Ministries [20 IIP].

Chapter IV. The Imperial Diet

The Imperial Diet is the legislative body of the Empire. Its decisions are binding on all subjects of the Empire, and it is the only institution with which the Emperor deals. The Imperial Diet is divided into three houses:

- the College of Electors,
- the House of Peers,
- the Council of Imperial Cities.

All members of the Imperial Diet or their envoys enjoy safe passage through any Imperial Realm going to and returning from Sardarthion on penalty of the Imperial Bann.

Article 1. Competence of Legislation

The Empire shall have the right of legislation according to the provision of this edict, and the laws of

the Empire shall take precedence of those of the individual Realms. The laws of the Empire shall be rendered binding by Imperial proclamation, such proclamation to be published in a journal devoted to the publication of the laws of the Empire (*Imperial Gazette*). The following matters are under the supervision of the Empire and its Diet:

- The right of Imperial citizenship; the issue and examination of passports; surveillance of foreigners within the Empire.
- Legislation concerning customs, duties, and commerce, and such imports as are to be applied to the uses of the Empire.
- Regulation of weights and measures.
- Banking regulations.
- Patents for inventions.
- The protection of literary property.
- The organisation of a general system of protection for Imperial trade in foreign countries and the organisation of a general consular representation of the Empire.
- Navigation upon those waters which are common to several Realms.
- The authentication of public documents.
- The Imperial military.

Article 2. The Dignity of the Prince Electors

Among those innumerable cares for the well-being of the empire over which we do happily reign—cares which daily try our heart—our thoughts are chiefly directed to this: that union, desirable and always healthful, may continually flourish among the prince electors of the empire, and that their hearts may be preserved in the concord of sincere charity, by whose timely care the disturbances of the world are the more easily and quickly allayed, obscurity being removed and the rights of each one being clearly defined.

The Emperor is chosen by the Electors, but in the unlawful times past some who had by right and custom served as Electors were stripped of their lawful dignity, some who had no right to Electoral dignity were raised to it, and some who ought to be of Electoral dignity were for reasons of expediency or avarice denied it. In one case, an Elector has acted so against all for which the Empire stands, that they cannot be allowed to remain in that dignity.

While our glorious predecessor Emperor Steene Dronex established nine electors, we feel ourselves unconstrained by his precedent and name the following

eleven realms as the true and lawful Prince Electors of the Empire:

- the King of Aradéc, by long tradition,
- the King of Hyrágec, as their noble realm founded the Second Empire,
- the King of Zarkhandu, by long tradition,
- the Queen of Itaxik, by long tradition,
- the Prince of Cappargarnia, by long tradition,
- the Prince of Golmath, by long tradition,
- the Grand Duke of Atuburrk, by long tradition,
- the Grand Duke of Averon, by long tradition,
- the Duchess of Taneki, for her wisdom and the might of her Realm,
- the Count Palatine of Thace, by long tradition,
- the Count of Murali, by reason of their learning and perception.

Article 3. Rights & Powers of the Prince Electors

When these same prince electors, or any of them, shall die, the right, vote and power of thus electing shall, freely and without the contradiction of anyone, devolve on his or her legitimate heir as local law and custom require. If, however, any such principality should happen to revert to the empire, then the Emperor of Sahûl should and may dispose of it as of a possession which has lawfully devolved upon himself and the empire.

The solemn duty of the Prince Electors to elect the Emperor shall not be challenged. The powers and rights of the Electors are:

- the right of Election: the Electors choose the Emperor in accordance with the mandates of this present Edict;
- the right of Sovereignty: Electors may create Marches and Dependencies;
- the right of Vassalage: Electors may accept the fealty of any non-electoral Realm;
- the right of Law over their vassals;
- royal rank and precedence;
- the right to propose legislation and to be consulted on all important affairs by the Emperor;
- the right to give their assent without the rest of the Imperial Diet in certain cases (tolls, minting privileges);
- the right to meet on their own initiative;
- the right to enjoy in their territories regal powers, and in particular judicial sovereignty: their subjects cannot be tried in Imperial courts, and no

appeals can be made to the Imperial high courts except in cases of denial of justice.

- the right to be suspended or deprived of their status only by their Electoral peers according to Chapter IV, Article 8 of this present Edict (except in cases of misuse of rights like minting and tolls, in which case the Emperor or the Imperial court can order the suspension).

Except as elsewhere specified in this Edict, any action by the College of Electors shall require the votes of not fewer than six Electors to be considered legal and binding.

No privileges or charters concerning any rights, favours, immunities, customs or other things, conceded under any form by Emperor or the Diet to any persons of whatever standing, pre-eminence or dignity, or to a corporation of cities, towns, or any places, shall or may, in any way at all, derogate from the liberties, jurisdictions, rights, honours, or dominions of the Prince Electors.

Article 4. Particular Rights of Cappargarnia

The right of the subjects of the Principality of Cappargarnia to freely elect their Prince upon a vacancy in that office are guaranteed by the Emperor, by the Imperial Diet, and by each individual Elector.

Cappargarnia may not be removed from its dignity as a Prince Elector by any means.

The Doom against Cappargarnia is ended effective immediately, and all her lands are to be restored, including those territories claimed by the Baron of Ebmadh and the Burgrave of Adndar, who are declared outlaw unless and until they submit to the lawful authority of the Prince of Cappargarnia. Kitchat's *Consul Edict of the Kitchat Dominion of Erediar* (1556) is hereby declared null and void.

Article 5. The Method of Imperial Election

Upon the death of the Emperor, the Electors gather in Sardarthion to choose his successor. The Electors are free to elect anyone they wish. Electors may, nevertheless, pledge their vote in advance. A minor's vote is cast by his regent.

The Chancellor of the Empire at the time of the Emperor's death shall, within one month, announce the need for an election to the different Prince Electors by letters patent, sent through the Heralds. The letters shall state that, within one year, each of the Prince Electors ought to be settled at Sardarthion, or to send their lawful envoys, at that time and to that place, with full and diverse power, and with their letters patent, signed with the great seal of each of them, to elect an Emperor of Sahûl.

If the Chancellor should chance to be negligent or remiss in carrying out his duty in sending the summons, those same Prince Electors of their own accord shall, even without summons, by virtue of the fealty which they owe to the Empire, come together in Sardarthion within one year.

No Prince Elector or his envoys may enter Sardarthion with more than five hundred armed retainers.

If a Prince Elector, called and summoned to an election, and neither coming to it nor sending lawful envoys with letters patent, sealed with his greater seal and containing empowerment, full, free and of every kind, for the election of Emperor of Sahûl; or one who comes, or perchance sends envoys, to the same, but who, afterwards goes away from the place of election before an Emperor of Sahûl has been elected, and does not formally substitute a lawful envoy and leave him there, shall forfeit for that time the vote or right which he had in that particular election.

The citizens of Sardarthion are enjoined, with faithful zeal and anxious diligence, to protect and defend all the Prince Electors in general and each one of them in particular from the invasion of the other, if any quarrel shall arise between them; and also from the invasion of any other person, and also with regard to all the followers whom they or any one of them shall have brought into the city.

The said citizens of Sardarthion, moreover, throughout all that time when an election is being conducted, shall not admit, or in any way permit anyone, of whatever dignity, condition or standing he may be, to enter the city, the Prince Electors and their envoys and retainers alone being excepted. If, after the entry of the Prince Electors, or while they are present, any stranger shall be found in the city without legitimate business, the citizens themselves shall without delay bring about his exit, under penalty of all that has above been promulgated against them.

After the Electors or their envoys shall have entered the city of Sardarthion, they shall meet together in the Imperial Palace on the following day at dawn. The Chancellor of the Empire shall give to them the form of the oath, and they, or the envoys of the absent ones, shall take the Electoral oath in common.

The electoral oath: "I, a Prince Elector of the Empire (or, a lawful envoy of same), do swear that I, by my allegiance to the Empire of Sahûl, do intend, to the utmost extent of my discretion and intelligence, and in accordance with the laws of chivalry and of the Empire, to elect one who will be suitable, as far as my discretion and discernment can tell, as Emperor of Sahûl. And my voice and vote,

or said election, I will give without any pact, payment, price, or promise."

The oath having been taken by the Electors or their envoys, they shall then proceed to the election. From that point on they shall not disperse from Sardarthion until the majority of them shall have elected the Emperor of Sahûl, who shall hold no less than six electoral votes. If they shall fail to do this within thirty days, counting continuously from the day when they took the electoral oath, from that time on they shall live on bread and water, and by no means leave the city unless first through them, or the majority of them, an Emperor shall have been elected.

After the Electors, or the majority of them, shall have made their choice, such election shall in future be considered and looked upon as if it had been unanimously carried through by all of them, no one dissenting.

If any one of the Electors or their aforesaid envoys should happen for a time to be detained and to be absent or late, provided he arrive before the said election has been consummated, he shall be admitted to the election in the stage at which it was at the actual time of his coming.

He who shall have been elected Emperor of Sahûl, shall, directly after such election shall have been held, and before he shall attend to any other cases or matters by virtue of his Imperial office, without delay or contradiction, swear the Election Capitulation and confirm and approve, by his letters and seals, to each and all of the Prince Electors, all their privileges, charters, rights, liberties, ancient customs, and also their dignities and whatever they shall have obtained and possessed from the Empire before the day of the election.

And he shall renew to them all the above after he shall have been crowned with the Imperial adornments. Moreover, the elected Emperor shall make such confirmation to each Prince Elector in particular; and, in these matters, he shall be bound by no means to impede either those same Princes in general or any one of them in particular, but rather to promote them with his favour and without guile.

Article 6. Right of Escort

Whenever the Prince Electors are obliged to journey to Sardarthion for the election of an Emperor, each Elector shall be bound to escort any of his fellow Prince Electors or the envoys through his lands, and even as much beyond them as he shall be able; and to lend them escort without guile on their way to the city, and also in returning from it. This he shall do under pain of perjury and the loss, for that time only, of the vote which he was about to have in such election.

All other peers holding fiefs from the Empire of Sahûl and all other nobles, knights, their followers, citizens and communities of castles, cities and districts of the Empire shall, without guile, in the manner aforesaid, escort through their territories and as far beyond as they can, any Prince Elector, or their envoy, demanding of them help of this kind. If any persons shall presume to run counter to this, they shall, by the act itself, incur the following penalties: they shall be considered guilty of perjury and deprived of all the fiefs they hold of the Empire and of any lords whatever, and also of all their possessions no matter from whom they hold them.

All cities and guilds presuming to act counter to the foregoing shall similarly be considered guilty of perjury, and likewise shall be altogether deprived of all their rights, liberties, privileges and favours obtained from the Empire, and both in their persons and in all their possessions shall incur the Imperial Bann and proscription. Any man on his own authority and without trial or the calling in of any magistrate may henceforth with impunity attack those whom we, by the act itself, deprive of all their rights. And, in attacking them, he need fear no punishment on this account from the Empire or anyone else.

Article 7. Votes of No-Confidence

Any Elector may make a motion to call for a vote of no-confidence in the Emperor. The second to such a motion may not be of the same religion as the Elector who made the original motion. Similarly, a vote of no-confidence may be referred to the Electors by the Peers according to Chapter IV, Article 13 of this present Edict.

The motion having been made and seconded, or having been referred by the Peers and seconded, and the College of Electors having been called into session by the Chancellor in the same manner as for an Imperial Election, and the Emperor (if he is an Elector) having recused himself, a vote of not fewer than nine of the Electors is sufficient to depose the Emperor.

Article 8. Loss of Electoral Status

Any Elector may make a motion to call for a vote to challenge the status of another Elector for high crimes and misdemeanors infringing the rights or status of another lawful Realm. The second to such a motion may not be of the same religion as the Elector who made the original motion.

The motion having been made and seconded, and the College of Electors having been called into session by the Chancellor in the same manner as for an Imperial Election, and the challenged Elector having recused himself, a vote not fewer than nine of the remaining Electors shall be required before any suspension or

deprivation of any rights or privileges elsewhere granted by this Edi&t. Only the right to elect the Emperor, and to propose legislation and be consulted on all important affairs by the Emperor, shall be suspended by such action. Any and all other powers and Rights of the Electors shall not be infringed.

Such suspension or deprivation shall be limited to a span not greater than twenty years, or until the death of the present Leader of the challenged Realm, whichever shall occur first; after twenty years, or upon ascension of the lawful Heir, full rights and privileges are immediately restored. The voluntary abdication of the censured ruler shall not reinstate Electoral status.

If any Elector's rights are under suspension, then no further Censure may occur without a unanimous vote of all remaining Electors, excepting the Elector being so censured.

Permanent revocation of any established right or privilege of any Electoral Realm shall only be by unanimous vote of the Electors (the challenged Elector having recused himself) and approval of the Emperor. In the event that the Electoral status of an Elector has been permanently revoked, it shall be the first priority of the Electors to meet together to elevate an Imperial Peer to the College of Electors.

Article 9. The House of Peers

The second house of the Imperial Diet is composed of the assorted nobles who rank as Imperial Realms. No increase to the membership of the House of Peers is possible without a majority of the Peers assenting. No Realm can be removed from membership in the House of Peers without a majority of peers assenting and the approval of the Emperor [5 IIP], unless that Realm is removed by virtue of elevation to Electoral status. The members of the House of Peers are:

- the Kingdoms of Kéatoa and Pakoa;
- the Queendom of Chi'tixi;
- the Principalities of Duedhyn and Gavan' Zarkhand;
- the Grand Duchy of Araxes;
- the Duchies of Elphárec and Thace;
- the Counties Palatine of Ingazi and Kommolek;
- the Counties of Kicitchat, Pehuatoka, Tiryowglas, and Tokat;
- the Landgravates of Lynnarvor and Sakkar;
- the Barony of Gornya Knjažestvo;
- the Lordships of Carcë and Yaminon;

and others as may be lawfully determined by the Imperial Diet.

Article 10. Votes in the House of Peers

Each of the Peers holds an individual vote. Any vote undertaken by the House of Peers shall require a quorum of not less than fifty percent of the current membership of the House, rounded upward. Except in cases of the creation of new Realms, advice concerning the choice of the Chancellor, or the election of their Speaker, any act of the Peers requires a two-thirds majority of those voting. Votes shall be open for a specific number of days announced in advance and set at the pleasure of the Speaker.

Article 11. Election of the Speaker

The House of Peers shall elect a Speaker, who shall preside over the House of Peers. This vote shall be by simple majority (fifty percent plus one). The Speaker shall serve at the pleasure of the House, and he is subject to a vote of no-confidence.

The Speaker may propose other officers to similarly serve at the pleasure of the House.

Article 12. Advice to the Emperor Regarding the Appointment of the Imperial Chancellor

In keeping with tradition and this present edict, the Peers may furnish the Emperor advice regarding the appointment of the Imperial Chancellor.

Article 13. Peers Vote of No-Confidence

Any Peer may make a motion to call for a vote of no-confidence in the Emperor. The second to such a motion may not be of the same religion as the Peer who made the original motion. The motion having been made and seconded, it succeeds by simple majority vote and is thereby referred to the College of Electors for their disposition.

Article 14. The Council of Imperial Cities

The Council of Imperial Cities consists of the representatives of each of the various Imperial Free Cities. The Council is advisory only, and it may not prevent the passage of any legislation of the Imperial Diet. The Council may furnish advice to the Emperor, the Electors, or the Peers on any issue affecting them.

In the Council of Imperial Cities, Each of the Cities holds an individual vote.

The Imperial Free Cities are maintained in their customary rights and privileges.

Chapter V. Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 1. Lawful Money

All realms have the right, in every place and part of their territories, all lands subject and dependent, of coining and circulating gold and silver money, provid-

ing all weights and values are compliant with the standards set by the Empire.

Article 2. Property of the Electors

All future Prince Electors forever shall have the right of buying or purchasing, or of receiving in gift or donation for any reason, or in bond, from any princes, magnates, counts or other persons, any lands, castles, possessions, estates or goods, under the usual conditions with regard to such lands, castles, possessions, estates or goods: that, namely, alods shall be bought or received as alods, freeholds as freeholds; that holdings in feudal dependency shall be bought as fiefs, and shall be held as such when bought. The Prince Electors shall themselves be bound to regard and to render to the Empire its pristine and customary rights over these things, lands, etc. which they shall, in this way, have bought or received, and have seen fit to add to their realm.

Article 3. Unjust War

Each and every unjust war and feud is prohibited, as well as all unjust burnings, spoliations and rapines, unlawful and unusual tolls and escorts, and the exactions usually extorted for such escorts, under the penalties by which the sacred laws prescribe that the foregoing offenses, and any one of them, are to be punished.

Determination in any specific case of what constitutes just and unjust war, unlawful tolls and escorts, and all other such offenses, shall be judged by the Emperor.

Article 4. Settlement of Disputes

Disputes between the different Realms of the Empire shall be settled by the College of Electors, at the request of one of the parties.

Article 5. Definitions

“Censure” means, for the purposes of this present edict, a suspension of the rights, privileges, and dignities of an Elector by a lawful action of the College of Electors subject to this edict.

“Lay status” means, for the purposes of this present edict, someone who is not a priest, priestess, monk, nun, friar, or other ordained member of a Church or other religious organization.

“Significant immediate territory” means, for the purposes of this present edict, at least one recognized prefecture or Free City.

“Sophont” means, for the purposes of this present Edict, a member of the Kit’ixi, Saurian, Wenemet, Yaminon, Thalari, Gornya Rogami, Human, or Turéhu Kindreds. Additional Kindreds who demonstrate a grasp of civilization may be recognized as sophonts by simple majority vote of the College of Electors.

Article 6. Continuing Ordinances

The *Shards Ordinance* and the *Ordinance of Common Sense*, originally issued with the *Great Charter* of 1534, remain in effect. The *Edict of the Sheathed Sword* (1542) remains in effect, and it shall be construed to forbid uninvited missionaries in any Realm.

Article 7. Immediate Appointments

All current Imperial appointees remain in their posts.

The Prince of Duedhyn is hereby appointed Imperial Chancellor.

The following ministers are hereby appointed:

- To Minister of War: Count Palatine of Kommolek;
- To Foreign Minister: Countess of Tokat;
- To Minister of Development: Landgrave of Sakkar;
- To Minister of Justice: Count Palatine of Ingazi.

GIVEN BY OUR HAND AND UNDER OUR SEAL IN OUR city of Sardarthion for the greater glory of the Empire on the twenty-fourth day of October in the one thousand five hundred and sixty fifth year since the Shatterment, being the sixteenth year of our reign as Prince and first as Emperor.

Carberic Emperor,

His August & Imperial Majesty, Emperor Carberic, Lord Deirn, Burgrave of Punchega, Electoral Prince of Cappargarnia, Sovereign of Sahûl, Lord of the Nine Hills of Sardarthion, Holder of the Emerald Throne, and Emperor of All the World.
Sardarthion.



Imperial Strength Index

| # | Realm | Player | Forum Name | Continent | ISI |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <i>The Great Powers</i> | | | | | |
| 1 | Thace, Elector (all) | Gareth Anderson | kolgrim | Sahûl | 2,234.0 |
| 2 | Aradéc | Charles Hurst | Xanthi | Sahûl | 2,574.3 |
| 3 | Church Universal & Triumphant | Anne Porter | Cupcake | Sahûl | 2,238.9 |
| 4 | Zarkhandu (all) | Theo Moriarty | Mandala of Blood | Sahûl | 2,202.7 |
| 5 | Averon | Kevin Lawrence | Averon Inc | Sahûl | 2,106.7 |
| <i>Major Powers</i> | | | | | |
| 6 | Ingazi (all) | Henry Jago | jago | Sahûl | 1,995.3 |
| 7 | Araxes | Christopher Hord | chordam7 | Sahûl | 1,938.3 |
| 8 | Taneki | Don Wynne | meriden | Sahûl | 1,831.8 |
| 9 | Golmath | Federico Giunchi | Waalar | Sahûl | 1,816.2 |
| 10 | Chi'tixi | Steven Cagg | Priest King | Sahûl | 1,791.8 |
| 11 | Atuburrk | Adam Sherman | Gonnagle | Sahûl | 1,777.2 |
| 12 | Cappargarnia / Emperor Carberic | J.T. Tucker | Cappargarnia | Sahûl | 1,575.0 |
| 13 | Elphárec | Anthony Dunn | Arandur | Sahûl | 1,495.7 |
| 14 | Kicitchat / Empress K'ivik | David Harrington | Kicitchat | Sahûl | 1,450.9 |
| 15 | Tiryowglas | Marc McKinley | Count Sarrik III | Sahûl | 1,433.1 |
| 16 | Itaxik | Michael Warner | Galen | Sahûl | 1,348.7 |
| 17 | Thace, Duchy | Jenny Gibbons | Tenebra | Sahûl | 1,226.6 |
| 18 | Kommolek | Cortlandt Winters | Aeg Ungwe | Oratoa | 1,169.7 |
| 19 | Dread Empire | Matt Sievers | Malleas | Oratoa | 1,127.4 |
| 20 | Pouákaitoa | Robert Kalcevic | Dawnwalker | Oratoa | 1,115.3 |
| 21 | Veiled Masters | James Hazeltine | Von Malvalken | both | 1,075.3 |
| <i>Regional Powers</i> | | | | | |
| 22 | Ebmadh | Clay Phillips | Scrivener | Sahûl | 964.0 |
| 23 | Hyrágec | Paul Copenhagen | Wombatia | Sahûl | 953.1 |
| 24 | Yaminon | Miles Luna | Ryushi | Sahûl | 951.9 |
| 25 | Pakoa | Joshua Bradt | | Oratoa | 934.4 |
| 26 | Murali | James Mueller | hobnail | Sahûl | 890.4 |
| 27 | IOC | Tabitha Rosa | Tabitha Rosa | Sahûl | 872.4 |
| 28 | Lynnarvor | Joseph Heiselt | Cadeous | Sahûl | 742.2 |
| 29 | Gúako | James Kahelwai V | ExLibrisMortis | Oratoa | 738.4 |
| 30 | Kéatoa | Robert Weatherby | urukexpress | Oratoa | 689.7 |
| 31 | Kachar | Daniel Jones | Drunken Monkey | Sahûl | 607.8 |
| 32 | Duedhyn | Ryerson Schwark | Crow | Sahûl | 584.6 |
| 33 | Thacian Oratóa (Viceroyalty) | Gareth Anderson | kolgrim | Oratoa | 576.2 |
| 34 | Puritan Commonwealth | <i>This Realm is open for a player with violent tendencies!</i> | | | Sahûl 557.4 |
| 35 | Carcē | <i>This Realm is open for a player!</i> | | | Sahûl 521.9 |
| 36 | Sakkar | Nelson Merritt | Iluvarian Sakkar | Sahûl | 514.0 |

Minor Powers

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| 37 Tokatl | Shelley Woodberry | Skipperway | Sahûl | 473.2 |
| 38 Pehuatoka | Fiona | FCMB | Sahûl | 330.1 |
| 39 Whutoa..... | Kipp Curran..... | MinapisMan..... | Oratoa..... | 300.5 |
| 40 Rotkarrru..... | Ed Allen | Touca Tuki..... | Oratoa..... | 285.5 |
| 41 Iâthedain | <i>This Realm is open for a player!</i> | | Sahûl | 285.0 |
| 42 New Ingazi (Viceroyalty) | Henry Jago | jago..... | Oratoa..... | 245.9 |
| 43 Iruša | <i>This Realm open for a very clever or masochistic player!</i> | | Sahûl | 223.6 |
| 44 Gornya Knjažestvo | Joy Rose..... | Gothelittle | Sahûl | 186.2 |

Note that ISI bonuses for Viceroyalties are included in the ISI of the parent Realm.

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