

A Witness of the Year 69, by the Everlasting Grace of our Divine Lord and Savior, and His Defenders of the Faith that hath made this record possible. It was a time of Wars and Rumors of Wars.

It is also known as the time of the Four Emperors...

69 A.D. was known by the title, "The Year of the Four Emperors". The politicking that reached the summit during Nero's reign as Emperor caused the entire Roman Empire to reach a crisis point. Would one ruler be able to control all of the various cultures and forces of such a vast and far reaching Empire, or would the divisive forces tear the Republic apart?

What Began It All

Nero began as the adopted son of Claudius, and was reviled by his brothers. His mother Agrippina succeeded in having Nero named as the successor to Claudius shortly before his death, on October 13 54 A.D., which may have been due to Agrippina's poisoning. All he had wanted to do with his life was to become an actor, but instead had been forced to become Emperor. Nero's early reign was marked by benevolence and justice, but the final years saw the absolute worst that human beings can imagine. The descent into moral decay may have begun as a result of his mother Agrippina's machinations, or by a manipulation by the astrologers that Nero sought out after his step brother Claudius Britannicus was murdered. Maybe he just grew tired of trying to be something he wasn't, and gave in to despair. Whatever the cause, the end of Nero's reign was marred by rampant assassinations and unjust edicts. Any who challenged the will of Emperor Nero was destroyed both physically and socially. This included his mother and his other siblings, who were assassinated when they had begun to conspire against him.

Chafing at the Yoke

The Conspiracy of Piso that had sought to return the Empire to the ideals and form of the Republic had failed 4 years prior, in 65 A.D. A massive hurricane followed by an equally massive cholera epidemic had also devastated the countryside near Rome and westward to the coast, in 67 A.D. The people grew tired of suffering from a god that had lost his touch with the land and the common man. Rebellion was in the air. In the Imperial Province of Britannia, a successful rebellion had been viciously liquidated only a few years prior, and while the Imperial Legions stationed in the Isles were victorious, they were also restive. In Iberia, the Governor Servius Sulpicius Galba of Tarraconensis was gathering the support of the Northern and Western Provinces in a transparent bid to subsume control of the Imperial throne for himself. In Germania the Legions only barely controlled the population centers and the Suebi Union was ever encroaching on Imperial lands. The Northern Marches, peopled by some of the fiercest fighters of the known world, were in a state of upset at the continued aggression by their towering southern neighbor, Rome, and have sworn retaliation at their slighted interests. The Parthian Empire (also known as the Persian Empire) influences all of the politics of the Eastern Kingdoms, and has always been a resolute aggressor. And finally the people of the Book, Israel, have rebelled in the face of massive insult to God by the rule of Nero. Their free state of Abilene stands as a bright flame in the face of the imminent arrival of the terrible armies of the Emperor commanded by Titus Flavius Vespasianus. Peace is not yet within reach.

As the world began to move with deft coordination to the ruination of Emperor Nero, he sat in his quarters pondering his fate. The Senate had finally moved against him, but their edicts lacked any force with the will of the Praetorian Guard backing Nero. Then, the wealthy Praetorian Prefect Nymphidius Sabinus bribed a majority of the Guard to revoke their support of Nero and to seek his death. Nero found himself alone in his throne room, having been given a few moments by the Guard to deal with things honorably. The ruler of the World, Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, killed himself with his scribe's gladius.

Enter Emperor Galba (Dec 24, 3 B.C – Jan 15, 69 A.D.)

Galba received the Imperial mantle in the summer of 68 A.D. Coming out of a stately retirement in doing so, he immediately began weeding out any threats to his sovereignty. Nymphidius Sabinus was executed

prior to his arriving at Rome for having disrupted the fidelity of the Praetorian Guard. Then many of the military representatives that sought favor with him were summarily executed for having the audacity to demand things from an emperor. His extreme age (71 years) left him dependant on his three advisors for many of his decisions and delegation of authority. This weakened his rule and ultimately brought out more opposition, since many saw this as a sign of weakness. Making things more difficult was the notable lack of an Imperial Treasury. Galba's main aim during his short time as Emperor became rebuilding the Imperial Treasury. Without the expected bribes the military and, most importantly, the Praetorian Guard were dissatisfied with the current arrangements. The Legions stationed in Germania then refused to swear fealty to the Emperor, instead declaring their popular commander Vitellius to be Emperor. Marcus Salvius Otho, governor of Lusitania, saw the opportunity in this chaos and bribed the military and the Guard into betraying Galba. Emperor Servius Sulpicius Galba, riding in a palanquin due to his extreme age, was slain by a mob supported by cavalry during his approach to treat with Otho at the Lacus Curtius. Hundreds claimed the ending of Galba's life.

Otho, Governor of Lusitania, Child of a Slave (April 25, 32 AD – April 16, 69 AD)

Long active in political circles, Otho had been expecting to be named Galba's successor. His fervor to garner political favor had even led him to involve his wife with Emperor Nero, a relationship that resulted in her eventual death and Otho's banishment to Lusitania. Otho had finally managed to negotiate a political marriage for himself to Galba's chief aide Titus Vinus, but Galba then anointed his heir Lucius Calpurnius Piso Licinianus to be the next Emperor. Otho only acted when, his political aspirations laid bare, he was marked for assassination by Galba's aides. His rash action set into motion events that would lead to his inevitable coronation as Emperor. This would also lead to his inevitable demise. The Senate conferred the mantle of Emperor upon Otho shortly after the death of Galba. Pages were paid to spread the news of Otho's exaltation. The people remembered the benevolent things Nero had accomplished more than they remembered the security programs and sedition sweeps of the Senate. They longed for the time of revelry and happiness again. Otho managed to become associated with that return of Imperial Benevolence that the people desired. Also during this time, Otho sought to create political alliances to strengthen his rule, and appeared to be making discreet headway in that regard. Then, while going through security dispatches that dated from the last days of Galba's reign, Otho saw a report about Vitellius from Germania that stated Vitellius's Legions were approaching the heart of the Roman Empire. In a panic Otho attempted to reason with the implacable General, and even after offering to divide the Empire between them Vitellius ignored the entreaties of Otho, keeping the Legions advancing ever further. Otho then did what no one else expected, he rallied the forces of Rome against Vitellius, who led the Germanic Legions (considered the finest in the Empire). After some initial victories, a force led by Fabius Valens managed to flank Otho's forces, and when Vitellius and his Legions met up with Fabius's forces, Otho's entire army was decimated at Bedriacum. Emperor Marcus Salvius Otho, who had been Emperor for only a scant three months, perished by suicide rather than fall into the hands of the resolute Vitellius.

Vitellius, the Emperor from Gaul (Sept 24, 15 B.C. – Dec 22, 69 A.D.)

Aulus Vitellius Germanicus began his career in 48 AD, during the time of Nero, and acquitted himself with honor as the Proconsul of Africa. He was sent to Germania in an attempt to re-infuse the Legions stationed there with the ideology of Rome, since the morale of the Legions stationed in the region had suffered under the constant assault by the native peoples. He was appointed as commander of the Legions of Germania Inferior, and immediately began asserting his control through official celebrations and feasts to the honor of Rome. Then Galba was recognized as Emperor by the Senate, and news followed that Emperor Nero had perished during the succession. The Legions of Germania Inferior (in what is today part of France) declared that Vitellius was indeed Emperor, rather than Galba. They began a march that would bring 6 Legions to assault the inner regions of the Empire. Vitellius sent his consul Fabius Valens, a genius general in his own right, south to hug the coast of the Mare Internum in command of two Legions, recruiting (usually taking freemen and slaves by force to bolster the Legion) as they traveled a secondary route to Rome. Vitellius then took four Legions on a very obvious route directly towards Rome, celebrating as they went. Scouts tracked Vitellius's main force, but Fabius and his two legions traveled undetected in the wake of all the attention that Vitellius gathered to himself. Then the entreaties began. Otho had become Emperor by destroying Galba, and was attempting to stave off his own inevitable destruction at the hands of Vitellius. Vitellius was a vengeful man, and was disinclined to forgive Otho his treachery during the rule of Galba, for Otho had killed the aging Emperor while Galba was attempting to parlay with him. As he approached the Province of Amelia, a sibyl proclaimed with fell words the fall of two emperors to come this year, while this gave Vitellius and his Legions a morale boost, they also grew wary. On the fields near Placentia the main force of Vitellius met the risen Legions of Otho and Rome, and during the ides of March thousands of men died. Vitellius was thrown back, and waited at Cremona. They waited for Fabius Valens; for dispatches had arrived stating he had finally entered the region. The final Gambit was on, and the titanic forces met again at Bedriacum, with the six Legions of Vitellius crushing the one remaining Legion of Otho. Otho suicided rather than let himself become captured, evoking recurrent thoughts of Nero during his last days, and setting the stage for the days to come. Vitellius delayed being officially given

the mantle of Emperor until the anniversary of the Battle of Allia (this resulted in the first ever sacking of Rome), and was aware of the importance of the Date, 18 July 69 AD.

Descent Into Anarchy

After executing everyone associated with Otho's reign, Emperor Vitellius began celebrating his victory over his enemies. Three state sponsored feasts for most of Rome a day along with paid reveler mobs soon drained the Imperial coffers that Galba had attempted to restore just scant months prior. Debts were accrued faster than any money was coming in, and soon the disrupted economy burst, leaving many without food, and money lenders demanding repayment of the largesse. Vitellius was faced with a mob on his doorstep and no way to placate them. So he did what every level headed leader would do, he executed thousands in a ghoulish campaign of repression and resource gathering. Many of those killed were forced to declare the Emperor as their Heir before their torture and eventual death. Money began to come in, but the world was not deaf to the suffering of the people. The region of Egypt and the Middle East declared themselves for Titus Flavius Vespasianus, and this stopped the food shipments from the Nile region from coming to Rome. Vespasian was the Praetor that had subjugated Britannia for all time, mercilessly brought Imperial Africa to heel, and was currently poised to kill every last member of the Great Jewish Revolt in Abilene. Vespasian left Judea with his more than capable son Titus in charge of the final actions of the campaign versus the Jews, and marched with an indomitable force towards Rome. Sybils throughout the Empire declared fell prophecies proclaiming Vespasian the *Destroyer That Was To Come* and few of Vespasian's rivals stood against him in light of the voluminous Eldritch Visions and the popular inertia derived from his even handed but fierce rule.

The Rise Of Caesar Vespasianus Augustus

The best and fiercest Legions of the Empire were ensconced with Vitellius in Rome, the Legions Germanicus. Due to the treachery of the Praetorian Guard in recent months, it had been disbanded and replaced by Legio XV Primigenia, the strongest of the Germanic Legions. Tens of thousands of troops had declared for Vespasian, including the Legions of Moesia, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Egypt, and Judea (currently the Imperial Province of Judea is awaiting reconstituting after the Great Jewish Revolt is dealt with). This meant that a full two thirds of the Empire had declared for Vespasian, but the fight was far from a sure thing. In order to keep the Egyptian grain shipments away from Rome, Vespasian had to attend directly to the Imperial Egyptian Province or the grain traders would have taken advantage of the money to be made and sent grain to Rome with no regard to allegiance. While Vespasian dealt with the complex political situation of the Danubian Provinces, Judea, and difficulties with the Parthian Empire, he sent his chief sub-ordinate Marcus Antonius Primus in command of the bulk of his forces, some 50,000 troops and auxiliaries, along the coast to assault the Germanic forces of Vitellius, facing them once again in Amelia. What neither side had anticipated was that Vitellius's coddling of the legions under his command had damaged their combat readiness. Marcus Antonius Primus, in command of troops left battle hardened by the campaign against the rebellious Jews, destroyed all opposition at the second battle of Bedriacum.

The Burning Of Rome

This left only Rome, and the Legio XV Primigenia standing between Vespasian's uncontested rule of the Roman Empire and Vitellius, who was holding power by the slimmest of margins (fear works wonders, too). The Legio XV Primigenia controlled Rome with an Iron fist, and had not been dulled by good fortunes since they had been quelling the dissent that had been active since the early days of Vitellius as Emperor. Vitellius also desperately attempted to regain the favor of the Batavians of Imperial Germania in order to gain access to their world class cavalry, only to be rebuffed insultingly by a people that were done with Roman Politics. The Battle was met within the streets of Rome, as the forces of the Legio XV Primigenia and the Legions III Augusta (formed under Emperor Augustus) and I Macriana Liberatrix (the Liberators) fought to the bitter end. Strategic fires were lit around the city to trap the invaders, as the populace cowered in terror. The Temple of Jupiter was put to the torch by Legio III Augusta on incorrect information that Emperor Vitellius was in hiding within. The Liberators were engaged in a building by building search when Emperor Vitellius, his Imperial Purple robes stained by the filth from gutters and cisterns, was discovered hiding under the slats of a porch stairway. Vitellius was executed as portions of Rome burned to the ground, resulting in the death of Vespasian's younger brother Sabinus (who was there observing).

Emperor Vespasian, Fourth Emperor of 69 A.D. (Nov 17 9 BC – June 23 79 A.D.)

With the trouble caused by the splitting of Imperial Power over, Vespasian was free to clean up the diplomatic messes that were rapidly beginning to inconvenience the Empire, especially the border nations. The Parthian Empire is especially eager for chaos to envelop the strongest empire in the world. When Vespasian is anointed Emperor of Rome on 21 Dec 69 AD, he is the fourth Emperor of the Roman Empire. This event forces the people of the empire to realize exactly what they want from their rulers. The main pull of the Empire is the peace and prosperity that it brings, not the morals of the Emperor. When an Emperor intrudes on that peace, *only at that time* is action to be taken. The citizens of the empire are afterward are more tolerant than

ever of their leaders, even when they condemn the actions of said leader. After the initial settling down period Vespasian directs Titus in cementing Roman control over the Judean Province, destroying more Jewish towns than can be counted, and after the destruction is done there was no one left to give opposition to Roman rule of the area.

The Provinces of the Divine Roman Empire

The Latin Provinces

The Province of Latium

Latium, the seat of the Empire, is the land of Rome, the Empire's crown. Still recovering from a hurricane that slammed into the area a few years ago, the land is full of slave populated farms that churn out grapes and wine and smaller amounts of other foodstuffs. Many of the wells that dot the landscape still harbor diseases, like cholera and dysentery, but the farms are rebounding nicely. Somewhat marshy nearer the coastal areas, the coastline is well protected, and trade is brisk with people traveling to Rome and back from it again.

Rome

The Largest City in the World, Rome is a place of wonders and legends. From the numerous temples and catacombs, to the cisterns and aqueducts that supply and drain the city, Rome has been the recipient of much of the Empire's success over the years. From the million plus population of the sprawling city, to the vibrant slave trade and mercantile industry the region truly is the current seat of civilization for the world. Mainly the slaves and citizenry are well treated, but this year it has been different. Every one of the Emperors this year has embarked on a program of political repression and excess, followed by a damaged economy (with the exception of Galba, who skipped the festivities altogether). People will take advantage of anyone they can here, and any wealthy or influential person that travels the streets hires thugs to viciously beat people out of their way. Rife with intrigue and opportunity, Rome is a destination not to be overlooked or missed.

The Province of Lucania

This southern province along the western coast of the Italian Peninsula bears a rich and troubling history. The Oenotrian Mountains that make up the central portion of the province are scattered with ancient temples of the now extinct Oenotrians and Choni, which when they were flourishing were the scourge of the Greek traders that would sometimes settle along the coastline. The treaties with Rome that led to their admittance into the Empire are regarded largely as a mistake by the hill people, but the coastal cities, rich with trade, are wholly on the side of the Empire. Some fifteen noteworthy communities dot the inhospitable interior, near the mountains. Outside of the cities, civilization does not exist.

The Province of Apulia

Rumored to have been the final destination of the defeated refugees from the city of Troy, Apulia is a rocky land covered with sparse vegetation and an equally rocky people. Brindisium on the coast is an important port city, and the stockpiles of arms and materials justify a strong military presence. Ships bearing the makers mark of Brindisi plow the waters and wreak havoc on Rome's enemies. Trade is important for the region, and much of the province's wealth flows from this city along two garrisoned roads, the Via Appia and the Via Traiana. Rumbings from hidden places in the mountains occur frequently, to the prophetic wailing of the Sybils present.

The Province of Sabinum

Many well traveled citizens of the empire come away from this interior province that is so close to Rome with an uneasy feeling. Evidence of the people's Spartan ancestry are evident from many facets of the cultural lifestyle. Many speak their minds openly, and the common people protect their own. Worship of a mysterious Snake God is exemplified by ceremonial headdresses worn by officiating women at martial contests, and by a mystical geometry that their master potters practice. Abhorrent to many citizens of the Empire is the fact that the Samnites, which is the name of the tribe of people that inhabit this area, are monogamous. Many of the most famous Gladiators in Roman history came from this area, as freemen.

The Province of Picenum

The land bearing the marks of countless raids and invasions from the sea, Picenum is a land steeped in history. A Sybelline Oracle at Grottanmare is consulted by advisors to the Imperial court during times of trouble. Rumors persist that the Sybils may have originated from this province and spread throughout the world.

before the eventual subjugation of the region by the armies of Rome. Mining in the mountains is fruitful, with agriculture along the coastal plains generating the balance of the income for peoples of the province.

The Province of Umbria

Birthplace of some of the fiercest soldiers of the Empire, Umbria is a place of opposites. Enclaves of “independent” settlements dot the rough hillsides, while the large urban centers are popular recruitment sites for the Roman armies. Opinionated in the extreme, it is considered an insult to someone if they talk of a topic and you do not declare your position immediately. The people are also vehemently protective of their belongings and property.

The Province of Tyrrhenia

Homeland of the early Etruscan civilization, the land is dotted by ancient cities and mature communities. Rumors that the Etruscans might have come from the fabled Atlantis are only reinforced when it is noted that the early Etruscans designed the swamp draining Cloaca Maxima of Rome, and many other architectural feats thought impossible to many of the time. Many of the municipal areas of the province have their own developed sewage and drainage systems, and life here is considered to be the pinnacle of Roman living.

The Province of Amelia

Amelia (also known as Emelia) is the place where most of the invasions of the Italian Peninsula have begun. The land is lacking the vicious mountain barrier that the western Provinces hold, and as a result many have found it expedient to travel around the mountains and attack through this province. Rich farmland and horse ranches dot the landscape. Many of the younger inhabitants of the region long for the excitement of Rome, and every year children sneak away to the fabled city, after which many become slaves or indentured servants.

The Province of Liguria

The culture of Genoa dominates the region, and it’s maritime and mercantile industries shape many of the cultural forces in the area. The lack of large tracts of arable land also limits the options of the people that live there, but fishing and sailing are reliably profitable. Powerful merchant families dominate the politics for the region, and any that cross them are not an issue a very short time later. The people are gruff but honorable.

The Transpada Region

Consisting of the myriad hamlets and communities that make up the southern alps region, this province provides a natural barrier to large scale invasion of the Italian Peninsula. This region has numerous mines and caves, and wolves make their presence known every evening. The people are curmudgeonly, but honest and faithful if given a chance.

The Province of Venice

At this time containing the lands of Brescia and Mantua, the province of Venice is a solid Mercantile province, all the while containing some of the most prime farmland in the Empire. The roads that pass through this region bring much in the way of taxable goods and trade to the Empire. Along the coastline, however, are myriad small coves and islets that are difficult to observe from the sea. The growing threat of piracy looms ever greater to unprotected merchant convoys.

The Imperial Provinces

Imperial Sicily

This province was the first territory captured by the Romans that was not part of the Italian Peninsula, and it has always harbored ill will towards their conquerors. The societal makeup is predominately Greek by makeup, and beyond the farm communes there is little that the populace has to do with Rome on a daily basis. Of note is that there are no fewer than two oracles active deep in the Sicilian mountains. Their attending Sybils are consulted frequently by Ligurian advisors. The fields of this land produce much of what the city of Rome uses for food, be it grains, oranges, or olives. Pockets of entrenched resistance linger in the hills and inland areas, waiting for a Roman citizen to fall into their hands...

Imperial Macedonia

The Via Egnatia, the Roman road that delivers trade to and throughout the region, brings a pulse of life and prosperity to this province. The peace that Rome has brought to the land is welcome by all, after the previous centuries of strife and warfare. Fleets of small boats harvest a wealth of fish and food from the waters of the Aegean. Scattered throughout this region are also remnants of past eras. Examples of what can be found

on the myriad islands of this inner sea include an ancient Sybelline Oracle, descendants of the Anakim Giants, cannibals, and pirates.

Imperial Moesia

An important Border province, the safety and security of this sprawling land relies on a series of outposts along the Danube and associated tributaries. These outposts are maintained by periodic visits by Roman Naval vessels and a stationed Legion that is 22,000 strong. The economy of the province is dependant upon the Danubian Outposts, as well as legitimate trade through the area. Dacian patrols regularly test the mettle of the troops stationed along the border, and any weakness is immediately exploited. Piracy is common along the coastal areas, as the pirates and inhabitants of the region feed off of the traffic that passes through the Horse Sea, or Pontus Euxinus as it is called.

Imperial Pannonia

An 18,000 man strong legion guards the Pannonian frontier from the predations of the Jazyges, a recent arrival to the cultural and political landscape of the region. Another of the Border Provinces, the fortresses that dot the rivers of the area are an important barrier that protects the Empire from their less than courteous northern neighbors. Raids by the savage horsemen of the Jazyges are common, with their activity having brought all other illegal business to a halt. The impact of the Imperial troubles has had little impact on this province, since they are dealing with crisis every day in the defense of their lives.

Imperial Norica

A sprawling province that borders the aggressive Kingdom of Bohemia, the harsh features of this land breed a fierce, if restive people. Two Imperial Legions, Legio XXI Rapax (Raptors) and the Legio XIII Gemina are currently spreading their forces between the defense of Rhatia and Norica (manning the defense towers along the Danube) and suppressing the Helveti Revolt that erupted after the chief of the tribe became offended by negotiations for the seasonal tax adjustments. Tax officials in the region travel under heavy guard, but still come under attack with frequency. With relations normalized between the Empire and the Boii and Herumanti, the only hostile front is with Bohemia.

Imperial Rhatia

The Via Claudia Augusta has been changing the economic makeup of the province, as the money from the trade that has come influences everything from the price of apples to the makeup of the Provincial Government. Corruption has been more noticeable lately, as the cronyism of the Dux in charge of Rhatia has caused no amount of difficulty in the local supply chain. This province, as well as Norica, is affected by the Helveti Revolt.

Imperial Corsica and Sardinia

Inhabited by many and varied people, the islands of Corsica and Sardinia are under loose but firm Roman control. Under threat by the Roman governor, any mention of piracy or mercenary action has been totally suppressed. 18 different cultural groups share the islands uncomfortably, and while this may make the region a cultural paradise, it also makes it difficult to govern. Sporadic piracy conducted by reputable merchants occurs with frequency, although spot boarding by Roman interdiction vessels has lessened the practice somewhat. Almost anything can be found at the island bazaars, regardless of legality, and legal enforcement is lax unless someone is killed.

Imperial Belgica

A sprawling province, the land holds no fewer than 6 Legions on a normal basis, and now holds only 2 due to the removal of 4 of them by Vitellius for his assault on Rome. This has caused the region called Germania inferior to be subsumed into the Belgican government for the time being, and awaits reorganization. The Batavian Rebellion is just beginning, and Julius Civilis, fresh from the execution of his brother on questionable charges by Otho has caused the normally staunch Roman supporters to cease diplomacy with their rulers. While the rebellion is occurring in the region that normally encompasses Germania Inferior (south of Germania), the north of Belgica is not wholly exempt from Batavian foraging parties or the occasional Legion recruiter bent on forcibly enlisting a person's aid.

Imperial Lugdunensis

Also known as Gallia Lugdunensis, this province serves as the focal point for Western Roman culture. The home of an important Roman Treasury and Mint, as well as the Condate Altar (an ancient Relic that has been dedicated to the Imperial Cult of Augustus), Lugdunensis is the home of the regional Imperial Legate. Artifacts from the Gallic invasion of Rome in 390 BC occasionally turn up, as much of the loot from the city was taken back here.

Imperial Aquitane

Surprisingly peaceful, the former Praetor that rules this province sees it as a form of retirement. The lands have changed little since the Celtic Empire ruled these lands. Grapes and fruit are valued almost as much as the horses that come from this province. Little banditry occurs here, as there are plentiful jobs and there is little to no political unrest.

Imperial Tarraconensis

Tarraconensis, being an important province, remains in a leadership vacuum after the departure of Galba for Rome in the summer of 68 A.D. The mining towns in the Pyrenees supply the Empire with a host of minerals, as well as a distinctive marble that Emperors have loved for many years. A chthonic cult dedicated to the cyclopean spirits of Brontes, Stereops, Arges, Hesiod, and Acamas is based here, and boasts members as far away as even Rome. This cult is not officially recognized by the Empire, even though the priests were driven here from Greece. The priests of Jupiter have sworn the downfall of this cult, being that the deities are titans. No physical evidence has been shown supporting the cult, although there is much anecdotal proof available.

Imperial Galicia

Galicia is the home of a tribe of Celts that follow the Cyrene Earth Mother. Her troops are valued by the Empire for their ferocity, and their cult enjoys a scattered following throughout the Empire. The power vacuum left by the departure of the powerful Galba from Tarraconensis has necessitated the creation of this province, led by Pliny the Elder as Proconsul. Pliny's influence in academic circles draws many of the brightest of the scholars of the Roman Empire to this province, who also seek out this haven from the court intrigue that plagues Rome at this time.

Imperial Lusitania

Otho's dismissing to lead this region was not an accident. Lusitania is considered to be a place where even time becomes forgotten slowly. Subject to occasional predations by pirates and the periodic barbarian sortie, the security of the region lies squarely in the hand of the militia commanders. Horse breeding is common here, as is fishing.

Imperial Cartaginensia

Known for its horse breeding and the numerous mines that speckle its foothills, Cartaginensia was also a major territory of Carthage during better times. Much of the land here is controlled by Roman aristocrats, and the bulk of the population here is either slave or freemen working on one of the giant estates. Sheep herding is popular in the nonagricultural regions, and the irrigation methods that are currently being implemented by the Romans are bringing a resurgence of life to the province.

Imperial Andalusia

Safeguarding the passage to the Mare Interum, the province of Andalusia serves as the primary jumping off point from Europe to Africa. The assimilation of the Kingdom of Mauritania is being conducted through the government of Andalusia, and the influx of aristocrats and Roman money has done much good for the economy of the region. The official attention has insured a low incidence of corruption, and the stable environment has benefited all. The official exports, wool and slaves, have also prospered (the slaves, however, have been gathered from the length and breadth of Iberia).

Imperial Achaia

Five generations ago the Roman Army, in stopping a general rebellion of the southern Greek cities, laid waste to the length and breadth of Greece and sold its sons, fathers, daughters, and mothers into slavery. The few who were left offered no resistance. The treasure from mines for copper, lead, iron, and exquisite marble flow out from the province. Relics from Greece's past flow out to adorn the wealthy Roman aristocratic estates. The people remember with the shadow of the ache that comes from a lost limb. They do not resist, but their children remember. The magicks that await strangers in the hills are not as forgiving. From the shrines that were damaged or looted, to the sites of power that are now left unattended there is a stream of consciousness that lingers.

Imperial Asia

Gateway to the Bounty of Rome. Asia is given actually decent leadership in order to facilitate smooth operations. Every kind of goods can be found here, from silk to swords, or from food to slaves. Everything can also be found, regardless of cleanness. Mercenary work is plentiful here, as are the chances to prove one's mettle. Remnants of the power of the once great city of Troy can be seen occasionally in the hills, as shrines to long forgotten gods dot the hillsides.

Imperial Bythinia

The remnant of a Thracian territory, Bythinia has prospered from the waters and trade of the Pontus Euxinus. Government and administration for the Kingdom of Pontus have been routed through here. The region is mostly civilized and little crime occurs here that is not directly associated with one of the trading houses.

Imperial Galatia

In the 3rd century BC immigrants from Aquitaine and Narbonne left their homeland and made the difficult passage to Macedonia, to support Bythinia in their struggle versus a large bandit force led by the King's brother. The Gauls ended up settling there, and quickly rose to rule the region, both by force of arms and through cultural influence. Mercenary groups operating out of Galatia are sought after throughout the Roman Empire, and admittance to one of these groups is considered a high honor.

Imperial Cilicia

The Roman legate stationed here attempts to curb the rampant piracy that is endemic to the region, but has been having little impact due to the terribly high rates of corruption in the local government. Agriculture has been promoted in the inland regions, with cotton, barley, citrus, and olives being the most prevalent crop.

Imperial Crete

Home of the ancient Minoan civilization, and the source of most of the copper that made it to the rest of the early world Crete lies just off of the Aegean. The island serves as an important harbor for vessels traveling to Africa and the region of Judea, and has enjoyed relative peace since the Mithridatic Wars of 70 B.C. Crete is (for tax purposes) governed along with Cyrene, on the North African Coast.

Imperial Cyrene

Important for the Silphium herb as lately as 30 years ago, the province of Cyrene still has not recovered from the loss of this important export. The encroaching desert has also made life very difficult here. Many of the inhabitants are leaving, and the inland towns are taking on a cadaverous look. The coastal cities benefit from having garrisoned troops, and from the Imperial monies that flow along with them. Besides this, however, times are tough in the province of Cyrene.

Imperial Cyprus

Home to the popular cult of Aphrodite, Cyprus is a popular place to visit, and serves as a harbor for ships unwilling to come close to the pirate ridden coastline of eastern Macedonia. It is also home to a small but notable group of Christians that were the ones to take in Paul, Barnabas, and St. Mark the Apostle.

Imperial Bosphori

The lead source for the grain and slaves coming from the Parthian Empire and Scythia, which lies beyond, Bosphori has the job as a protective filter for the public of the Roman Empire. Imperial tax agents check the shipments for anything illegal or unnatural. Being on the fringe of the Empire, a large amount of troops guard the roads and passages of the Province, standing always ready for Parthian aggression or barbarian attack.

Imperial Egypt

Bereft of the Ptolemaic leadership that had protected Egypt from the predations of Roman Society, Egypt and its plentiful supplies of grain and other foodstuffs are of critical importance to Roman security. Vespasian (who will be Emperor by the year's end) has been involved with the governing of the province for years. The rich history of the region is as apparent as the towering structures are that tower above the sands and heads of the peasants. The shifting sands conceal magic that has been thought lost to man, but forces are present that seek to awaken those forces and bring down the Empire.

Imperial Africa

Africa has been subjugated physically, but not spiritually. The indigenous Berbers have staged numerous small rebellions in the previous years, but the legion that is stationed there is strong. The loss of Berber autonomy a generation ago still rankles many of the youth. Roman enclaves stay separate from communities of locals, who are denigrated at every chance in a variety of ways. The economies are also separate, as little blending has been allowed by the Consul.

Imperial Syria

Juxtaposed between the Roman and Parthian Empire, Syria is a fortress province. Cities and towns are walled, and the legion stationed there is ready for anything. Small raids by troops wearing no insignia but ethnically Parthian have been reported by scouts near the border, and many small herders have been abandoning their homes in favor of safer if poorer pastures.

Regions of Loose Imperial Control

Imperial Germania

Germania Superior was nominally under the command of Vitellius. With the removal of four legions (about 100,000 troops and auxiliaries) by Vitellius from the region, and the rebellion of the Batavians the remaining Legions have found themselves trapped in their legion fortresses. The Suebi Union also supplies the member nations of the region of Germania with men, arms, and supplies. The towns and cities of the province are bolstered by Roman troops, but travel through the countryside is at the discretion of the enemy. The rich farmland that blankets the area, like the lush forests, is populated by people that just want to live and are independent of the current politics.

Gaza

This coastal region was recently purified by the forces of Vespasian. Ethnic Jews that are not devout make up the majority of those that survived the action. Burned and gutted towns and communities litter the countryside as the survivors try to rebuild. Religious observances by anyone are difficult, as the Hebraic Armies destroyed all the roman temples they could find, after which Vespasian's Legions destroyed all the Yeshivas and Jewish Temples. Food is scarce from the "requisitioning" that was common in the presence of both armies, but there is little population remaining to need large food sources.

Nabateans

The tribes of the Nabateans make up the larger portion of the inhabitants of the Sinai Peninsula. They have entered into a diplomatic relationship with the Roman Empire, and receive official protection from Roman Legions. The countryside is tough, but areas near oases are verdant paradises. The hills hide sites of ancient power, and secret fortresses dot the wastelands with many having been forgotten over the passing of the ages.

Boii (*pronounced Ba -e*)

The women of this tribe only rule when they have a husband. Marriage by men of this tribe is sought after, since a man can only have authority within the tribe if he has a wife, with the wife then having authority over her husband. Romans are seen as being godless, with the Gods of the tribe refusing of late to deliver omens regarding diplomacy with the Roman Emissaries. Strangers are not welcome, but will only come under attack if they interfere with the tribesmen or damage a shrine. Currently the Boii trade with the Romans for metal tools in exchange for hunted meat and information on what happens along their borders.

Herumanti

The Herumanti are treaty bound with the Romans. Their region controls 3 places that had been identified as principle mining sites for iron and other minerals. Trade through the region is slight, and the Herumanti receive all duty from taxation of trade and mining. Tense interactions between the Roman forces in the region and tribesmen are common.

The Wandering Tribes of the Great Sahara Desert

The indigenous people of the dunes and oases of the Sahara trade in many things: camels, people, gold, antiquities are just some of the riches brought to the Empire by them. There are a great many dangers of the high desert, though. Evil spirits claim vast stretches of the land as their domain, treating all who enter as slaves or even food depending on their whims. Only experienced tribesmen guide caravans through the desolate stretches, as their experience helps them and those under their protection to avoid the pitfalls of the uncontrolled desert. Rumors of riches and great power come from the lands beyond, and many are the people, both wealthy and destitute that make the dangerous journey.

Dependant Kingdoms of the Roman Empire

Kingdom of Mauritania

The Berber Kingdom of Mauritania is currently finishing the process of being incorporated into the Roman province of Andalusia. Most of the industry is due to fishing and trade with the Saharan interior. The Roman forces present within the country are dealt with cordially, special notice having been given to the Roman treatment of the Hebrews in Judea. The land is scrub like, with forested regions close to the coasts being the most heavily populated.

The Kingdom of Lycia

Formerly an ally of Troy, the Kingdom of Lycia came to the attention two generations ago when Gaius Caesar (head of the Equestrian Order and son of the Emperor) was slain by Lycian troops while fleeing from a battle. Lycia is much smaller now than it had been in the past, and keeps many of the most sensitive of its

secrets away from foreign eyes. A chief supporter of the Sybilline oracles, their ancestry can be traced to the people of the Lycian Cliffsides, who form communities out of the living rock and live off of fish and fowl brought up from below.

The Kingdom of Cotii

The Kingdom of Cotii has successfully resisted Roman rule for several generations by unifying under a Celtic mercenary captain that had been formerly betrayed by a Roman Prefect. The people unified as a result of Roman demands to turn a necropolis into a temple dedicated to the cult of the Emperor Claudius. Notable features of the land are the Gallic Necropolis and the Valley of the Arc.

The Kingdom of Swabia

A rough land with a tough people, The Kingdom of Swabia has only cursory relations with the Roman Empire, deferring mostly to their cousins in the Suebi Kingdom. Diplomacy has been determined on the basis of force. With the withdrawal of most of Rome's forces Swabia has received a sort of respite, during which the King plans to reinforce the Keeps and strong places in preparation for the Roman Serpent to come once again.

The Kingdom of Scordisia

Trapped between the Roman Empire and the scourge known as the Jazyges, the Scordisian people did what they had to do and treated with the people that had a chance of protecting them from the darkness. The land is rugged with little ideal farmland. Most of the common people make their living through the raising of livestock.

The Kingdom of Thracia

Former ally of the erstwhile City State of Troy, Thrace is considered to be one of the regional powers. Their trade fleets ply the Aegean and they conduct a good deal of trade through the Bospori Imperial Province. The subjugation of Thrace occurred a mere 20 years ago when the wife of the last Thracian King Roimitalkes III killed her husband just prior to a declaration of war and betrayed to Rome the positions and strengths of the Thracian army. Several thousand men were slaughtered before a general surrender was announced, and the takeover is well underway. People are bitter about the political changes, but are fearful of the 70,000 Roman Legionnaires in Moesia. The land has a history rich in mysticism and legends, and many are the opportunities for experiences.

The Kingdom of Pontii

Currently engaged in the assimilation into the Roman Empire, Pontii's social engineering is being conducted through Bythina. Sporadic resistance is being waged by naval forces that are all that remains of the Kingdom's Naval forces. They hide amongst the bountiful islets and small coves and blend in with the existing pirates of the area.

Kingdom of Cappadocia

Once the seat of the Hittite Empire, Cappadocia sits at the heart of the Macedonian landscape. The vulnerability of the kingdom from attack has been countered by the creation of underground cities, many of which were first constructed in the time of the fall of the Arsawan Empire, which was destroyed by fire from the heavens. Banditry is common in the wilderness areas and the artisans of Cappadocia work ceaselessly on export goods for good money from Roman traders. Incorporation as a province is well underway, with the population centers under firm control but the pastoral areas being mostly unregulated.

The Kingdom of Comagene

In the final stages of Roman assimilation, Comagene will be fully incorporated into the Imperial Province of Syria in 3 years (after the solidification of authority by Vespasian). Parthian influences are noticeable in this land, as agents of their divine emperor walk openly through the countryside. Roman interests are not ignored, as the region gears up for the expanded trade authority and privileges of Roman overlordship.

The Kingdom of Armenia

One of the few countries to accept Christianity openly, the people have a number of religious preferences, with Christianity being a potent underground movement. Rome is seen as a savior and protector from the depredations of the Parthians, and as such Armenia has allied herself with Rome. Mount Ararat, viewed as holy by many of the locals, has seen some rather odd happenings as of late. Strange lights appear in the sky, and herds of goats sent to graze on the mountainside have not been returning.

The Kingdom of Osroene

The capital city of Edessa is a center for culture in a mostly barbaric wilderness. Allied with Rome, Osroene is ethnically Assyrian. Goat herding is the principle source of income for many Osroenes. Trade with

the Parthians and Rome bring most of the taxes in to the government coffers, and the laws are stricter here than in most other places.

The Kingdom of Palmyrene

A restive land, the monarchy has mostly gone underground to avoid subjugation by Roman forces. Parthian reinforcement has enabled the Kingdom to resist complete takeover by the Romans, but it is a touch and go situation. A network of underground tunnels helps the resistance move undetected, and the people protect the monarchy vehemently.

The Kingdom of Decapolis

Recently retaken by Roman forces under the command of Vespasian, Decapolis houses many of the 150,000 legionnaires that await the final push to invade Abilene, the Jewish people's homeland. Food is scarce here, as much of the available local food and livestock has been seized to feed the army. The people are downtrodden, and there is an outflow of people fleeing the battles.

The Kingdom of Regni

All that remains of the vicious rebellion that swept Britain just a scant few years ago, the Kingdom of Regni is currently being re-integrated into Roman society. Crime is rampant in the barely controlled countryside, and traders make caravans and recruit mercenaries to ensure their safe travel.

The Lands of Celtic Resistance

The Kingdom of Caledonia

The old ways persist in this place, along with all their eldritch customs and ways. Travelers have brought stories about bizarre funeral rites and inhuman associations. The trade mostly revolves around extensive import/export with overseas suppliers. Fishing fleets troll the surrounding waters, and their hauls keep the kingdom well fed. The monarchy is somewhat insular, having little to do with the lower class populace. The people keep mostly to themselves, and are not unfriendly to outsiders.

The Kingdom of the Danus

The Danu keep to themselves, and inspire fear in the hearts of the Roman invaders. Their distinctive artwork is sought after in parts of the Roman Empire, as the "art of the Celtic Barbarians", and trade has continued fitfully despite the hostilities between the two empires. The people do NOT like outsiders, and trespassers are subject to immediate attack if caught on Danu land.

The Kingdom of Robogdi

The land of the Robogdi is marshy and inhospitable. What income the people receive comes from fishing and trade with distant lands. Not much is known from travelers to that land, as strangers are not welcome. Shrines to strange gods and ancestor worship are common in the hills, and the neighboring nations trade with them, but do not form permanent alliances with them out of unease about their religion.

Cóiced Ol nEchmacht

This kingdom will be known in future years as Connaught. Vicious warriors, they make their living raiding their neighbors and through hunting and some agriculture. Barley fields are a common sight in the openings of the forests.

The Land of the Eblani

Caught between the inscrutable Robogdi and the predatory Cóiced Ol nEchmacht, the Eblani protect themselves with small earthen fortresses and walled towns. Their agriculture feeds themselves and serves as a big export to the other Irish countries. Worship still tends to the old Celtic Gods, and the equinoxes are special festival times here. The people are civilized and peaceful at heart.

The Kingdom of the Brigantes

Followers of Brigid, they have been staging their own rebellion in their ancestral lands of the north of the Roman holdings, south of the Danu holdings. The Brigantes territory in Ireland has been funneling men and resources all year into the north of Britain, awaiting the time to strike. The unrest caused by the year of the four emperors is providing the perfect opportunity. If the Brigantes King Venutius can avoid his treacherous wife Cartimandua that is...

The Lands of Hibernia

Never formally organized as a country, the land is made up of small independent tribes with a large, organized tribe that rules the coastal areas. From these ports the Hibernians raid Roman shipping, and their fierce fighters strike with almost impunity only avoiding the strongest of fleets. The land is fertile, and produces what the people need without too many in want.

The Lands of Germania

The Land of Frisia

The Frisians have nominally cordial relations with the Romans. The trade that Rome brings has been welcome to this cold land. A campaign to reclaim the marshy land that abuts the Mare Germanicum has begun, if ever so slowly. The terps (raised portions of land surrounded by water) that the Frisian towns are situated on are relatively safe from assault, and the fishing fleets bring in everything the populace needs.

The Kingdom of the Chamavis

The peaceful cousins of the exiled Bructeri, who had left to join the Batavian rebellion in Belgica, the Chamavis farm their land and defend it from Roman aggression. Supplies from the Suebi union arrive infrequently, but their army here is well armed as a result. The remaining warrior clans strike at Roman outposts with relish, only leaving after bitter defeat or upon the destruction of the outpost. Worship of Odin is suppressed, that being the Patron of the Bructeri, after several incidences of berserk mayhem erupted during simple raids. Freya is the Patron of the Chamavis, and their agriculture is seen as a form of devotion. The killing of birds is prohibited, and is punishable by death.

The Kingdom of Sugambria

Two cities fell to Roman invaders fifty years ago, but that did little to quench the Sugambrian spirit. The King's court keeps the standard of Legio III Gallia (Twin), which had been destroyed at Sugambrian hands during the Battle of the Rhine years earlier. Many legends surround the acquisition of that standard, none the least of which that Loki himself stole into the Roman encampment and in the resulting confusion surrounding its loss the Sugambrian cavalry swept into the Legion and decimated them. The Sugambrians are a strong, proud people, and will deal with strangers fairly unless that person is haughty or selfish, then the Sugambrians will cheat the foreigner mercilessly.

The Land of Ubia

The Ubian tribes hold their own against Roman raids, with support from the Suebi who are distant cousins. Known by some as "the Forest People", the Ubians faced the brunt of a Roman invasion force and survived somewhat, losing most of the ruling council in the process. Stealthy warriors, they owe their success to a fierce upbringing and close ties with the land.

The Suebi Union

The Land of the Chauci

The bulk of the Chauci troops are with the Batavians for their assault on Roman interests in the Region. Chauci joined the Suebi Union to protect their interests against an aggressive Roman Empire. The people make their towns and communities on terps, like the Frisii, but also raise horses and livestock in the highlands. They have created an enviable cavalry for their commitment to the common army the Suebi Union provides its members. The people are treacherous, and unless a hostage is taken (ceremonial – not to be harmed on pain of war) every able bodied person – including children – will attack any visitor to their lands.

The Kingdom of the Langobards

The Longbeards as they were sometimes called, the Langobards control their Kingdom with fairness and strength. A people of honor, they respect their heritage by allowing no implement of metal to touch their hair. Whether this is due to some otherworldly factor, none can say. They contribute swarthy warriors to the Suebi Union's army.

The Kingdom of Cheruscia

Only recently have the Cheruscia mitigated the actions for which they were made a pariah years ago. Partly the forced emigration of the Bructeri absolved this, since the Cherusci were the source of the cult of Odin that caused the problem. Also the banishment of Italicus, a Roman puppet ruler, helped the Cherusci diplomatic effort. For years Roman money had fostered infighting among the princely lines of the kingdom, until the conflict ended with the assassination of Cherus Arminas, a battle lord of the Cherusci that had destroyed three Roman Legions at the battle of the Angrivarian Wells in 18 A.D. The Roman envoy had managed to have

Italicus declared King in Arminas's absence, but his election did not sit well with her people. In 67 A.D. Italicus was driven into the forest towards a Roman outpost naked and shivering. He was never seen again. Cheruscia honors its commitment to the Suebi by dedicating livestock and grains to supply the army.

The Kingdom of Chattia

A responsible people, the Chattia live for warfare. Their entire culture revolves around the worship of the god Thor, and the Tree called Thor's Oak from whose living wood Mjolnir's haft was reputed to be made of. Travelers report that the people train with the sword and hammer from the age of 3 years old, preparing for the day when they will meet Thor on the battlefield in a contest of Honor. Their fierce warriors that are dedicated to the Suebi Union are famed for having been the first Germanic troops to bring their own food and medical supplies with them to battle. Their example was imitated by the remainder of the army shortly thereafter.

The Kingdom of Varistia

The people of this Kingdom show the wear and tear that comes from generations of warfare. Known after all this time as the "*People of the Border*" for their tenacity in the face of the Roman aggression, the Varistia have only become ever more determined over the years of attacks. They hold a portion of the Danube for themselves, and annihilate any ships that attempt to pass through their region. They worship Freya and hold her holy days as sacred. The killing of birds or the damaging of trees here is forbidden, punishable by hard labor or death.

The Kingdom of Hermonduria

Home to most of the agricultural capacity of the Suebi Union, the Hermonduri grow grains and harvest nuts and berries from the forest. The Hermonduri pride themselves on their peaceful existence. The primary trade routes into and out of the Suebi Union run go into the Kingdom of Bohemia and back again. Life in this region is good.

The Land of the Semnomes

A place of darkness and shadow, the Land of the Semnomes sometimes feels as black as the hearts of her people. The thick forests that cover the inland areas hide the inhabitants from the light of the Sun, as if that would be enough to absolve them of their acts. The Semnome people have been consorting with a particularly nasty people known as the Juthungi, and practices like blood sacrifices have now become commonplace in some areas, along with a form of cannibalism. The Semnome Council of Elders has directed the people to assist their brethren for the time being. The Suebi Kingdom is allowed to dock ships at Semnome ports, and the Flag of the Suebi Union has been seen as far south as Africa and as far east as the Sinai.

The Kingdom of the Suebi

Chief among the People of the Union in technology and political might, the Suebi are vehemently opposed to Roman Aggression. They are the main reason for the profitable trade with Bohemia, and the rewards that has engendered for all. After fleeing their home along the Danube almost a century ago, their lands are finally starting to appear civilized. Towns with a feel of home are springing up with regularity across the wide open spaces, and the people are happy. Trading fleets from the North Coast ply the waters of Europe from Semnome ports on the Mare Suebicum and from their cities on the rivers of the Rhine region.

The Northern Marches

The Kingdom of Bohemia

The Bohemians are a swarthy people, and rear top class horses as well as top class warriors. Their raids on the Roman frontier always are rewarding, given that their men-at-arms have the sense to avoid a Legion patrol. Trade with the Suebi Union and the Roman Empire through an extended trade network bring a delightful variety of items home to the populace.

The Lands of the Angia

Tribes huddled in caves somewhat sums up the Angi Experience. The hunter gatherer lifestyle of the Angi and their extreme mysticism keep the people away from technological advancements like metal, but their warfare and cannibalistic practices give their enemies pause. The land is rough, filled with beasts and fell spirits, and the people are not known to smile.

The Kingdom of Lugia

An important part of the Amber Trade route that brought the wonderful material to the Roman Empire from the mines of the Lemurians, The Kingdom of Lugia is a caste based society. The ruling caste is made up of the Warrior families of the Omani, with their Prince, Marcomman having absolute rulership over the Kingdom. The next in line are the Diduni, who make up the majority of skilled professionals and the merchants. The least of the Lugians, the Buri, make up the peasantry. The surname of a Lugian tells what caste they belong to. To mis-identify a Lugian (calling them of the wrong caste) can result in a Challenge of Honor.

The Kingdom of the Vandals

The Vandals are one of the mighty of the tribes of the Northern Marches, and are heavily recruited for their mercenary skills. They are also kidnapped by Roman slavers when possible to be made into Gladiators. Their Kingdom borders the great Wilderness, and the constant attacks by wild animals and numerous types of beasts keep the people ready with their weaponry. Traders usually travel the region heavily protected, and the loss of an entire caravan is not unheard of.

The Kingdom of Lemuria

The source of much of the Amber that is brought to Rome by the Amber road, the Kingdom of Lemuria is thick with ancient relics and totems of power. The architecture of the towns is uncomfortable to the eye, as is the gait of the local inhabitants. They are superb miners, however, and they are well respected by their neighbors. The Lemurians do not sail if they can avoid it, as ships carrying them have an uncanny habit of sinking. Rumors of their descent from a chthonian titan have come from mystics in Lugia, but they have not been corroborated.

The Kingdom of Rugia

A pestilence has settled over the coastline of this land, and the Rugians are leaving the Kingdom in trickles and droves. The Goths are killing them on sight, rags wrapped around their faces, to prevent them from carrying their disease to their lands. The ruling family has been decimated, and the leadership of the country is in disarray. Piracy along the coast is rampant, and the smuggling of Amber stolen from Lemurian caravans is a noted problem (for the Lemurians).

The Kingdom of Burgundia

Caught between the very powerful neighbors of the Goths and Vandals, the Burgundians are frequently raided for livestock and plunder. The army of the Kingdom focuses on protecting the larger towns and villages, even though this leaves many of the farming communities to their own devices. The payment of protection monies to Vandal or Goth groups is common practice.

The Kingdom of the Goths

The Goths are easily the best fighters of the Known World. Their raiding parties are unequalled in savagery and their naval fleets are the equal of any Roman task force. They just lack numbers... The Goths are a very strict society, eschewing many of the pleasures that power could give them in favor of physical training and strengthening the will. Goth mystics are rumored to even bargain with the very spirits of nature to empower their forces to even greater levels of ferocity and savagery.

The Kingdom of Sciria

Made up of pathological social purists, the Scirians will stone a person if it is suspected that they have had intimate dealings with people of a neighboring nation. They settled here after a failed invasion of Roman lands (by accident) and have regretted it ever since (some 250 years). After some horrific experiences at the hands of those whose lands the Scirians traveled through, the ruling clan decided that the Scirii would remain pure in the face of the impurity of their neighbors. This means that they have almost no diplomatic relations with the other nations of the Northern Marches, and their trade suffers as well. The people are poor and stiff necked, but it is not unheard of for an entire family to leave Scirian lands in the middle of the night to avoid persecution for their choice of lifestyle.

The Kingdom of the Aesthir

The Aesthiri are regarded with a sense of awe by their less advanced neighbors, their lineage reputedly having incorporated the people of the Old Gods of the Norse. Aesthir men standing over 7 feet tall are not uncommon, and their smithing technology is unparalleled even in the Roman Empire. Roman Envoys that have survived the trek to their inhospitable shores have only been rebuffed as barbarians by the stately people. Trespassers are not welcome, in Aesthir lands, but the penalty (unless someone is attacked) is rarely more than an escort off of their property. Aesthir traders are responsible for the greatest of the Goth Kings weapons, and such things are treasured indeed.

The Kingdom of Herulia

The Herulians claim direct descent from the people of Asgard. While this may seem farfetched, relics of ancient and powerful descent litter the countryside. Replete with numerous barrows and eldritch shrines, the land of Herulia does not look kindly on invaders or travelers. Traders, however, are more than welcome, and will even receive free room and board at many of the towns they would stop at.

The Kingdom of the Suisse

The capital of the Suisse stands next to the *Well of Souls*, where every year on the spring equinox a young, perfect boy is placed within its waters. If the body disappears, then the request that was made before the sacrifice will be honored. If it does not disappear, the boy will emerge unharmed from the water, but will be unable to speak for the remainder of his days. Religion is important to the Suisse, and any that would interfere with a celebration or insult their faith will come under immediate attack. Precious metals from mining and ivory from hunts in the bitter cold wastelands make up the majority of Suisse exports, while grains are imported from the Suebi Union or from Venedia (by river routes).

The Land of the Finnish Tribes

A loose coalition of fierce Finnish Tribes inhabits this region. The leadership rotates between clans upon the death of the current leader, and the King is blessed by the Stone of Blood, which will bleed if the Gods decide the chosen Person will indeed rule. Very superstitious, the Finns will attack with fire any that attempt to call to them through or in a fog, assuming them to be spirits. The unnatural world impacts life here directly, and no Finnish home would be seen without at least 5 charms protecting the inhabitants from a variety of Spirits and ills. Trade is uncommon in this region, but a trickle of furs and ivory does make it to Roman markets every year.

The Kingdom of the Teutons

Having been viciously defeated and decimated by the Roman Legions during an abortive march of conquest several hundred years prior, the warlike Teutons have returned to their homelands for now, seeking to once again rise to the stature of Conquerors. Raiding the Chauci seemingly at will, the Teutons hold little regard for human life. They would rather kill an injured countryman than see him die from illness, as they would not be able to reach Valhalla. The people live in close communities and have a rich oral history.

The Kingdom of Cimbria

Also known as Cimmerians, the Cimbrians were not Germanic, but Celtic in origin. Their weapons and culture are decidedly Celtic also. Celebrating the spirits of hearth and glen, their mystics and priests tend to the health of the land and the people together. The practice of Warfare is seen as the utmost in worship, as they follow Odin both as the Wise and Knowledgeable God, and as the devastating Berserker who is Unmatched in Earthly Combat. Furs and armor are considered casual wear, as the use of heavy garments only renders additional strength to the bearer. The people are honorable and stalwart, and travelers are tolerated here.

The Wilderness

A mostly unpopulated region of land in the Serbian Mountains, the place known as the Wilderness, or Great Wilderness, keeps many secrets. Armies have entered the region in search of safe passage only to disappear entirely with no record of escaping survivors. Mystics living near the region will sometimes enter on Vision Quests, but on the whole no one visits the peaks and valleys of this inhospitable place.

The Parthian Expanse

The Great Parthian Empire (also known as Persians)

Ruled by an Emperor revered as a God, the Parthians rule a vast Empire that encompasses almost as much territory as that of the Romans. Ceaselessly aggressive, they seek to acquire territory by any means necessary. The envoys successful in their endeavors will receive greater station by Vologases I, the Parthian Emperor. Conflict with the Romans has just ended 6 years ago in Armenia, where he had tried to usurp Roman rule by installing a Parthian subjugant to the title of King. Vehemently anti-Greek, Vologases I intermittently dispatches the Parthian army to destroy sites dedicated to Greek deities. Offers of assistance to Vespasian in exchange for ownership of Judea have been rebuffed politely, as Vespasian does not want to weaken the Empire in exchange for unneeded assistance just to benefit the Parthian Empire. Slavery is even more prevalent in the Parthian Empire than in the Roman Empire, as claimed men inhabit all manner of positions in the Parthian Empire. Parthian gold is frequently given as bribes to Parthian favoring regimes in the Expanse.

The Free State of Abilene (Nominally the Province of Judea)

The Jews have been enveloped in a vicious civil war during the whole of 68 A.D. and most of the leadership in the south of the state has been deposed. They stand free for a time, as Vespasian's forces under

the command of his son are waiting for the civil unrest to be finished (since the ones that seem to be losing are the leaders of the rebellion). Food is being hoarded in anticipation of the Roman invasion, and the Christians of the region are facing extra persecution as they have been accused of working with the Roman authorities. The Judean Sybilline Oracle has been taken by Roman forces, and she is giving detailed advice to the Roman commander in charge. After Vespasian burns down the Temple of Jupiter, in Rome, the Judean Sybilline Oracle will be forced to deliver close to 3000 pages of the future to be stored, once again, in Rome for times of dire need. When the Romans invade, they will seek out any that defy Roman rule, burning entire country sides that refuse to bend to Roman Will. Parthian envoys have been at work in the area, and the civil unrest is considered to be mostly of their doing, due to the prevalence of Parthian coins in the affected areas. In 70 A.D. the Temple of Solomon will be desecrated and destroyed under Imperial Edict, and the last remaining Jewish Stronghold will fall, resulting in the deaths of all within.

The Kingdom of Venedia

The Venedians are under constant threat of invasion by the Nomadic Tribesmen of the Steppes. Grain from Venedia supplies markets throughout the region, even making it as far as Caledonia in the holds of their ships. The horsemen of the Venedia are respected, if not feared by many.

The Kingdom of Navaria

A Kingdom of Walled cities and fortresses, the warrior women of Navaria protect the borders of the Kingdom mercilessly. Rumors abound of male subjugation by the women priestesses from the now defunct Scythia, and sacrificial offerings are made to their Eldritch Gods of captured males. The population of Navaria is happy and content. The women are possessed of unnatural beauty, and the numbers of men are thinned to keep only the best possible partners for continuing the house lines. Men are not permitted to attend scholarly instruction, but are provided with everything they need. Old men care for the children and cook the meals. Women fill all leadership roles, including that of diplomats.

The Kingdom of Sarmatia

The primary inheritor of the old Scythian Empire, Sarmatia and its policies are pervasive throughout the region where the Parthian influence wanes. Sarmatian foot soldiers are feared for their stamina and resistance to pain in battle, and their horsemen have no concern for human life. Sporadic border clashes with Parthian forces occur frequently along their common border. Trade caravans carry Sarmatian weapons and goods throughout the region. Slavers prowl Sarmatia looking for sacrifices for Navaria and the snake priests of Sarmatia, as well as for Roman Gladiator camps, for which the slavers receive a premium rate.

The Kingdom of Siracia

One of the nations that make their living off of the Pontus Euxinus, Siracia has tense relations with both the Parthian Empire and the Roman Empire. A bulk of the income that comes into the Kingdom comes from piracy and a network of bandits that the Siracian Kingdom supports. People here are secretive and untrusting. Travelers here face harsh conditions just in trying to survive.

The Nomadic Tribes

Nomadic horsemen prey on all forms of civilization within this region, making it difficult for any group to become powerful enough to halt their attentions. The major Empires of the South, such as Parthia and Rome, have no desire to subjugate the region.

The Dacian Sphere of Influence

The Kingdom of Dacia

The Kingdom of Dacia represents the majority power of the region. Rome has been forced to station close to 75,000 troops and auxiliaries along the Danube in order to hold this kingdom in check. Dacian phalanxes are greatly feared throughout the region. Trade with Dacia dominates the economy of upper Macedonia, even extending into Roman areas where Dacian goods are sought after by some communities.

The Land of the Roxolians

The tribal elders of the Roxolians have decided to ally themselves with Dacia against the Roman legions stationed in Moesia, committing close to 5,000 troops to the effort. The impending war effort has drained the local economy of money, food, and metal implements as these have been converted into weapons. The decision to go to war stems from the rape and murder of an entire family of one of the elders by Roman legionnaires. The soldiers were pursued and the flesh was flayed from their bodies, but that was not enough to sate their desire for revenge.

The Kingdom of Bastarnia

After a combined invasion of Bastarni and Scirii failed to uproot the Romans in Pannonia, the leaders of the Bastarni were seized by the Scirii and sacrificed to appease their angry gods. The Bastarni wandered for a time, until an oracle came among them and bade them settle along a region of the Pontus Euxinus. Relations with the Romans are tense, as cross border raids are common and bloody. The Bastarni have no navy, and few fishing vessels. The people are poor and the King holds a lottery to sacrifice to the Oracle every solstice.

The Kingdom of Getia

The Kingdom of Getia has fallen from the greatness of its more prosperous past. Caught between the aggressive Roxolians and the equally aggressive Roman Legions of Moesia, the Getians are simply trying to survive. Originally the sister kingdom of Dacia, after the Jazyges passed through the region killing and plundering there was little left for the Getians to rebuild with. This was *after* the region was devastated by Alexander the Great hundreds of years prior. They hold great faith in the spirits of the land and waters, and offer peaceful sacrifices to them at scattered shrines during the equinoxes and solstices.

The Kingdom of Qadis

Originally a simple tribe of ethnic Scythians that preyed on caravans passing to Bohemia from the Dacian Kingdom, the Kingdom of Qadis has evolved into a somewhat peaceful land of merchants and stone cutters. The land is heavily mountainous, and passage through the region is enabled through the use of Qadi trackers and bodyguards. Spirits are rumored to rest within the high mountain passes, and the shamans of the Qadis keep them placated through the sacrifice of sparrows.

The Kingdom of Carpis

Deep in the Carpathian Mountains (which were named after them) rests the Kingdom of Carpis. Descended from Scythian and Dacian traditions, the Carpians fear the influences that twisted their Scythian ancestors, and cling to the shamanism that has been imported to them from the Qadis. Occasionally, scattered personages embrace their Scythian heritage to the eventual tragic end, but that is the exception rather than the rule.

The Land of the Jazyges

The barbaric Jazyges left Sarmatia when the Kingdom became civilized, and cut a path through everyone in their way until their Priests chose this land to settle in. The Romans reinforced the Pannonian Legions upon their establishment, and the Scordisians treated with Rome for protection. Human sacrifices occur every fifth day at the High Temple on Mount Bielsxia, mostly consisting of slaves or hostages captured during a Jazyges raid. The Priests that control the Land permit no displays of gaiety or affection, seizing such people for the next round of sacrifices. Any strong enemy is stewed and eaten by the body of the Priests, in order to gain their spiritual strength.

The Kingdom of Costobocia

Also known in occult circles as the Lipiti, the Costobocians reside in a thin stretch of arable land that borders the Northern border of Dacia. They trade peaceably with their southern neighbors, even though their origins were a tribe that had been banished from the Dacian Lands for savagery. The populace is peaceful and productive, as the Kingdom is relatively new. Exports include wool, precious stones, and wood incense that is important to many of the Dacian Ceremonial Rites.

A Note on Times and Calendars...

The dates used for this time are based on the Gregorian Calendar that began to see use on February 24, 1582. The Romans used the Julian calendar until the development of the Gregorian, which was implemented in 46 BC, as well as counting the years by the reign of the current Emperor, as in "the 4th year of Nero's reign". This was done for convenience sake, rather than as an oversight. To use Julian Dates (simplistically) subtract 753 years from the date you wish to use.

The list of the months of the year, in order, is: Januarius, Februarius, Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Julius, Augustus, September, October, November, and December.

A Note on Currency...

The currency used during this time was based on the Augustan value system set up during his reign.

The three most common coins were the gold aureus, the silver denarius, and the copper aes (pronounced "ace"). 1 aureus was equal to 25 denarii. 1 denarius equaled 16 asses, and 1 aureus was equal to 400 asses.

1 Aureus = 25 Denarii
 1 Denarius = 16 Asses
 1 Aureus = 400 Asses

This is similar to the pound, shilling, pence (£ s d) system of later years, except that a denarius was worth 16 asses (pronounced "aces"), while a shilling equaled 12 pence, and there were 25 denarii to a aureus, while there were 20 shillings to a pound. The denarius was originally equal to 10 asses, and later equal to 12 asses, but after the Carthaginian wars the currency was debased and its value was set at 16 asses. The complete table of Roman currency is included below.

Augustan Values (27 B.C. – 14 A.D.)

	<i>Aureus</i>	<i>Quinarius Aureus</i>	<i>Denarius</i>	<i>Qunarius Argenteus</i>	<i>Sestertius</i>	<i>Dupondius</i>	<i>Aes</i>	<i>Semis</i>	<i>Quadrans</i>
<i>Aureus</i> (gold)	1	2	25	50	100	200	400	800	1600
<i>Quinarius Aureus</i> (gold)	½	1	12.5	25	50	100	200	400	800
<i>Denarius</i> (silver)	1/25	2/25	1	2	4	8	16	32	64
<i>Quinarius Argenteus</i> (silver)	1/50	1/25	½	1	2	4	8	16	32
<i>Sestertius</i> (bronze)	1/100	1/50	¼	½	1	2	4	8	16
<i>Dupondius</i> (bronze)	1/200	1/100	1/8	¼	½	1	2	4	8
<i>Aes</i> (copper)	1/400	1/200	1/16	1/8	¼	½	1	2	4
<i>Semis</i> (bronze)	1/800	1/400	1/32	1/16	1/8	1/4	½	1	2
<i>Quadrans</i> (copper)	1/1600	1/800	1/64	1/32	1/16	1/8	¼	½	1

The Roman barter system was also still used in many parts, the standard unit of exchange being the pecus (cattle).

On the peripheries of the empire, foreign nations used the barter system as well, but also minted their own currencies, most of which was based on the Greek system. Celtic mercenaries in Phillip's army brought back coins which were copied, and Alexander the Great introduced the Greek monetary system into the east.

The Celts in the north and the Parthians in the east used the gold Stater, and the silver Drachm. 1 stater equals 20 drachms, and this is similar to the pound (£) being equal to 20 shillings.