

Larane, 728

The Capture of Ithiko

On the 3rd of Larane, the Earl of Tormau appeared before the walls of Ithiko with an army and put it under siege. The castle garrison was unprepared for the siege, and fell thirteen days later on the 16th of Larane. Herrin Barzak, the earl, and his eldest son, Sir Geyal Barzak, were captured by the Earl of Tormau.

The Royal Council Meets

The King lost no time responding to Tormau's treason. Baron Cedric of Findumon, commander of the I Legion inspected his troops and made preparations for the arrival of the VI Legion. Those two would form the core of the Royal Army that would march against Tormau, while the II Legion would garrison Coranan. Meanwhile, the Earl of Techen returned to his estates and called together his knights with the Earl of Gerium doing the same. The Earl of Daenshire would remain at Coranan *in loco regis*. Lastly, the knights of the Duchy of Shiran would assemble under the command of Sir Tomas Eltham.

Messengers were dispatched to both Shostim and Golotha with orders for Sir Hadas Nyvall, commander of the VIII Legion to defend both places.

The Gates of Golotha Close

After Sir Hadas took some of the Golotha garrison to the defense of Shostim, the remnants of the Agrikan fighting orders – many of whom had been in hiding – reentered the city, joined those already there, and with the help of forces loyal to the Earl of Tormau from Henwe, clashed with the legionnaires in the streets of the city. The hard-pressed legionnaires took

refuge in Caer Chaftar where they were safe, but with less than 200 effectives.

The Royal Army Assembles

On the 10th of Larane, the Royal Army, which included the I and VI Legions as well as knights and men at arms from the Duchy of Shiran, marched out of Coranan south through Kuseme to Heroth where it was met by the Earl of Gerium and his forces. Arriving at Menekod on the 14th, the Royal Army was there met by the Earl of Techen and his vassals, the Baron of Omnis and the Baron of Thiri. At this time the Royal Army's effective strength stood at nearly 500 knights and more than 3000 men at arms. After listening to the counsel of his nobles, the King ordered that the army would march against Golotha first to secure its loyalty. The Royal Army laid siege to Golotha on the 18th of Larane.

The Siege of Shostim

On the 21st of Larane, after marching from Ithiko, the Earl of Tormau besieged Shostim. Sir Hadas Nyvall, with most of the VIII Legion at his disposal, rode out to engage Tormau.

The VIII Legion had the advantage of freshness over the Tormauro, but the Earl's army was flush from its quick victories over Winen and Ithiko. Greatly outnumbered, the Legionnaires fought until dusk and were forced to retreat to the castle after suffering nearly 80% casualties. Where 700 men had rode against Tormau scarcely 150 returned. Yet the Earl of Tormau lost approximately the same number.

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The Fall of Golotha

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Chakta keep on the south bank of the Thard was still held for the King by Sir Blors Manfrungtane, the Sheriff of Zabinshire although a token attempt had been made to seize it by the Agrikans. Troops ferried across the river were quickly able to secure the outlying villages of Golotha and lay effective siege from all landward sides of the city. The Earl of Gerium took command of the troops in Caer Chaftar, the rest of the VI Legion remained to the south at Caer Chakta under Sir Helt Mogens along with Sir Blors and knights he had been able to summon from Zabinshire. The forces of the Earl of Techen and part of the I Legion assembled to the east under the command of the King. The Baron of Findumon, with the remainder of the I Legion, took command of the seaborne element.

On the 5th of Agrazhar the assault was launched. Sir Helt and Sir Blors attacked the Dedergon Gate from the south across the Dedergon Bridge. Some of the best archers in the VI Legion were stationed on the walls of Caer Chaftar and provided covering fire for the Baron of Findumon and his I Legionnaires to assault the Northaven Wharf by sea. At the same time, the Earl of Techen and his forces assaulted the Kalphor Wharf and the rest of the I Legion stormed the Gate of Chafin with the King himself leading the charge across the bridge.

The Agrikans, knowing that the eastern half of the city was the most vulnerable, had stationed the majority of their forces in that area. The fighting was very heavy, with the King and his troops managing to break through the gate, but being unable to secure the gatehouse, were forced to withdraw. Lord Findumon, with the aid of the archers, secured the Northaven Wharf, and tried to fight his way down Khi Way to the Chafin Gate. The Earl of Techen by contrast, after gaining control of the

Kalphor Wharf, was unable to make headway along Kalphor Street and thus was forced to fight up Oraena Street. The fighting was particularly intense in this area, and the Earl, after taking Chafin Square, found himself fighting with his back to the canal. Many of his men were killed, and some were forced into the pool, including the Earl himself. Dozens drowned, though the Earl and some others clambered onto nearby barges, fighting their way back to the Kalphor Wharf. The men remaining in Chafin Square were annihilated.

The next day the assault was renewed with elements of the VI Legion reinforcing the Earl of Techen on the Kalphor Wharf and the Baron of Findumon continuing to fight his way to the Chafin Gate. Once more, the King led the charge across the bridge, and once more battered his way through the gate. This time, the two halves of the I Legion hooked up with each other, and when that happened, the entire northeastern part of the city fell before them and with the Earl of Techen fighting up from the Kalphor Wharf again, by nightfall, the entire eastern portion of the city was in the hands of the King. The Chafin Gate was renamed the 'Arren Gate' by universal acclamation of the army.

Casualties in the assault had been heavy, and of those men who had fallen into the canal, including the Earl of Techen, fever and dysentery had begun to take hold. Many men were sent outside the city due to illness, including the Earl of Techen and the Baron of Omnis.

On the third day of the assault, resistance was light as most of the rebel forces were either killed or in hiding. As a result, the rest of the city fell quickly, the only exception being the northern section, which was completely walled. Access was limited to one small bridge across the

Rusu Canal or the causeway from Caer Chافتار. At this time, word came that the Earl of Tormau had lifted the siege of Shostim and was marching south to Golotha.

Rather than be caught in the city, King Arren decided to march north to meet Tormau in the field. He ordered the Sheriff of Zabinshire and Sir Helt Mogens to continue the siege of the northern part of the city. To march against Tormau the King took the entire I Legion, now numbering some 780 men, the knights of the Duchy of Shiran, the rest of the VI Legion with nearly 500 men, the remnants of the Earl of Techen's army under the Baron of Thiri numbering no more than 100 men, and the full force of the Earl of Gerium which had suffered no casualties, perhaps 1800 effectives in all.

The Earl of Tormau received word that the King had raised an army against him and had marched to capture Golotha. On the 7th of Agrazhar the Earl marched south with all but 300 of his men who were left behind to besiege Shostim.

The Battle of Retu

By the evening of the 8th, King Arren and his army had reached the outskirts of the village of Retu, which stood on a small neck of land with the Golotha-Shostim road running north-south. Boka Bay lay to the west and the large Lake Meril to the east. King Arren deployed his troops along the narrowest place in the neck such that he would have wider terrain to his rear. At the same time, he denied such terrain to his opponent so that if Tormau was forced to retreat, he would have nowhere to go but back up the neck. In such a confined place, his troops would be extremely vulnerable in any retrograde action. Further, the marshy, uneven terrain to the east of Lake Meril would prevent the Earl from marching around to

the rear of the Royal force. The army of the Earl of Tormau – twice as large as the King's - arrived late in the day to discover the Royal quarry blocking its path. As a result, both armies settled into a defensive posture for the night; combat was all but certain the following morning.

On the morning of Agrazhar 9, 728 the two armies drew up across from each other. There was a light rain, and the day was overcast. The Earl of Tormau, seeing his numerical superiority would not help him as much in the narrowness of the neck, put his best knights in front, promising baronies to the ones that distinguished themselves best, and an earldom for the one that killed Arren, "the whelp of the murderer of good King Chafin." Behind these knights went the men at arms and the feudal levy. To the right and to the left, Tormau put small numbers of mounted archers.

King Arren divided his army into three wings with the Baron of Findumon in command of the right wing, the Earl of Gerium in command of the left wing, and himself in command of the center. He placed all of the archers to the rear to provide them the cover of the army so that they might fire without interference. Before the battle, King Arren addressed his soldiers, reminding them of the great victories of his father, and telling them that although they were few in number, the greater the share of honor it would be for each of them.

The battle raged throughout the day, with the King's archers raining death upon Tormau's host. Many of Tormau's troops, despite their recent successes, still lacked experience, and proved no match for the trained and veteran troops of the King, especially in such close quarters. The heavy foot of the I Legion, most of whom had fought with Arren I, butchered Tormau's men at arms while the great

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part of the feudal levy fled the field. The Baron of Thiri did battle with the Earl of Tormau himself and was slain. The Baron of Zaza was killed by the Earl of Gerium. Lord Findumon captured both the Baron of Quiso and the Baron of Quste. Sensing his forces ebb, the Earl of Tormau sought out King Arren in desperation. The two fought savagely, neither High Deryni able to gain an advantage against the other. Eventually, the King's youth, quickness, and power told, and the Earl of Tormau was slain amidst the crackling energy of the king's magical onslaught. When his troops saw the Tormau standard go down, they surrendered, the troops dazzled by the display. The day belonged to the King.

Azura, 728

Aftermath

After the Battle of Retu, King Arren marched his army north, first to Ithiko, and then to Tormau. All of the remaining Tormauri forces surrendered before the royal host. The Earl of Ithiko was restored to his lands and titles and Ithius keep, which the Earl of Tormau had seized years before, was also restored to Ithiko. Zaza was reintegrated with the Earldom of Ithiko.

The Earldom of Tormau was dissolved by the King, and in its place, the Earldom of Westmarch was created and bestowed upon Cedric Arlen, the Baron of Findumon who had so distinguished himself during the campaign. The Barons of Quiso and Quste, after submitting to the King, were pardoned and restored to their lands and titles.

Word of the results of the Battle of Retu had meanwhile reached Golotha, where the Heptarchial Council, in a sudden display of energy, "arrested" the

ringleaders of the rebellion and surrendered them to Sir Blors and Sir Helt, claiming to have been loyal to the crown all along. King Arren II returned to Golotha, and consulted with the Lady Marliese Tansel, the Laranian Bishop of Perinore and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as the Earl of Daenshire who rode from Coranan. With the new Earl of Westmarch in agreement, the King rescinded his decree abolishing the Heptarchial Council and reinstated its ancient privileges. It was clear that that city could not be ruled without the Morgathians who had held sway there for centuries, and that any Lord Mayor would be quickly assassinated. The only alternative would be to live himself in the city, and this the King was not prepared to do. The Haleans were given back their seat as was the Agrikan Order of Mamaka, which had not, in theory, participated in the revolt. The King considered a Laranian member of the council, but Bishop Tansel advised that no pious Laranian could possibly serve in good conscience. The Morgathians would be allowed their traditional privileges, but with a Royal constable in Caer Chaftar. The King appointed Sir Hadas to the post.