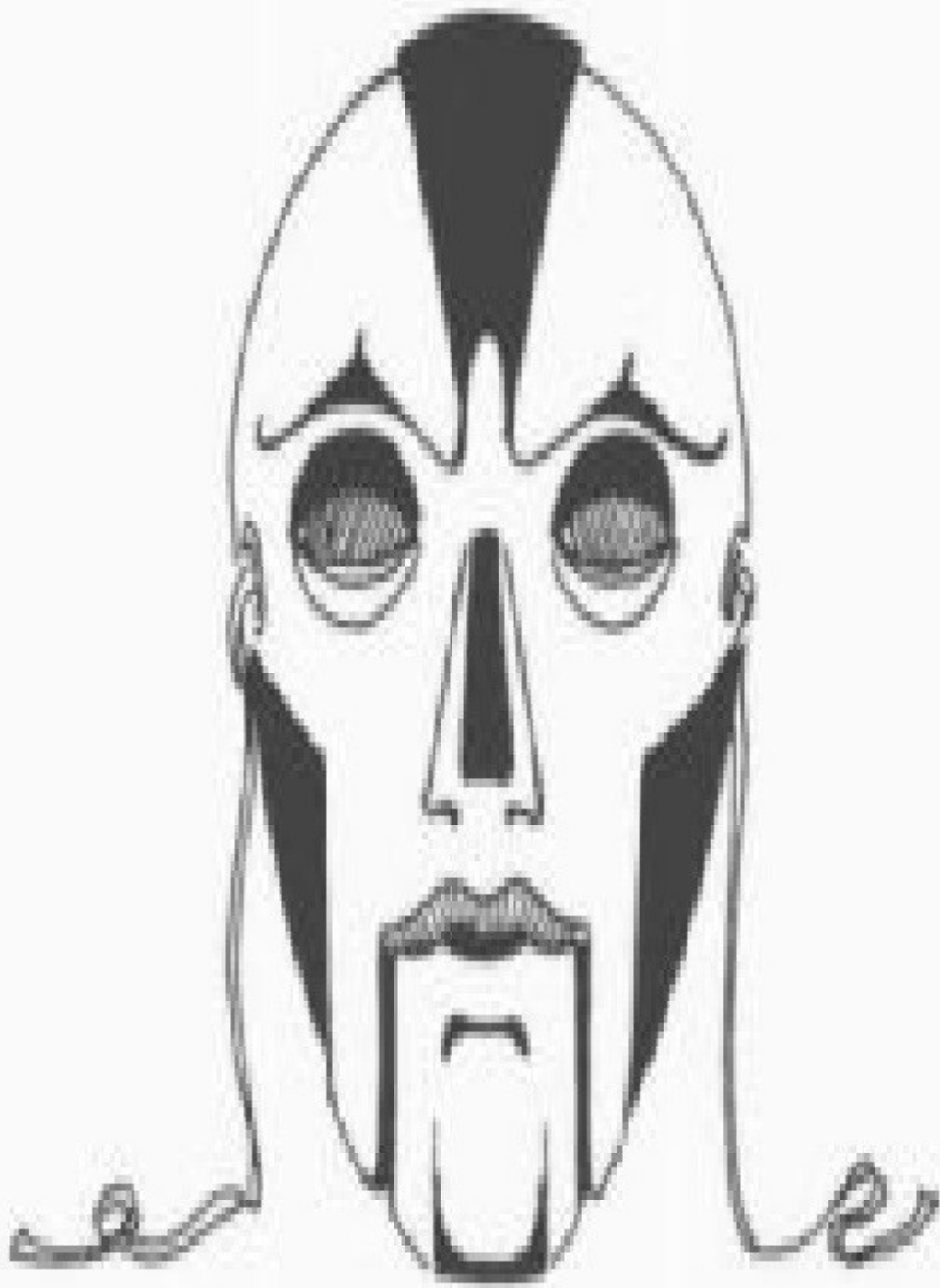


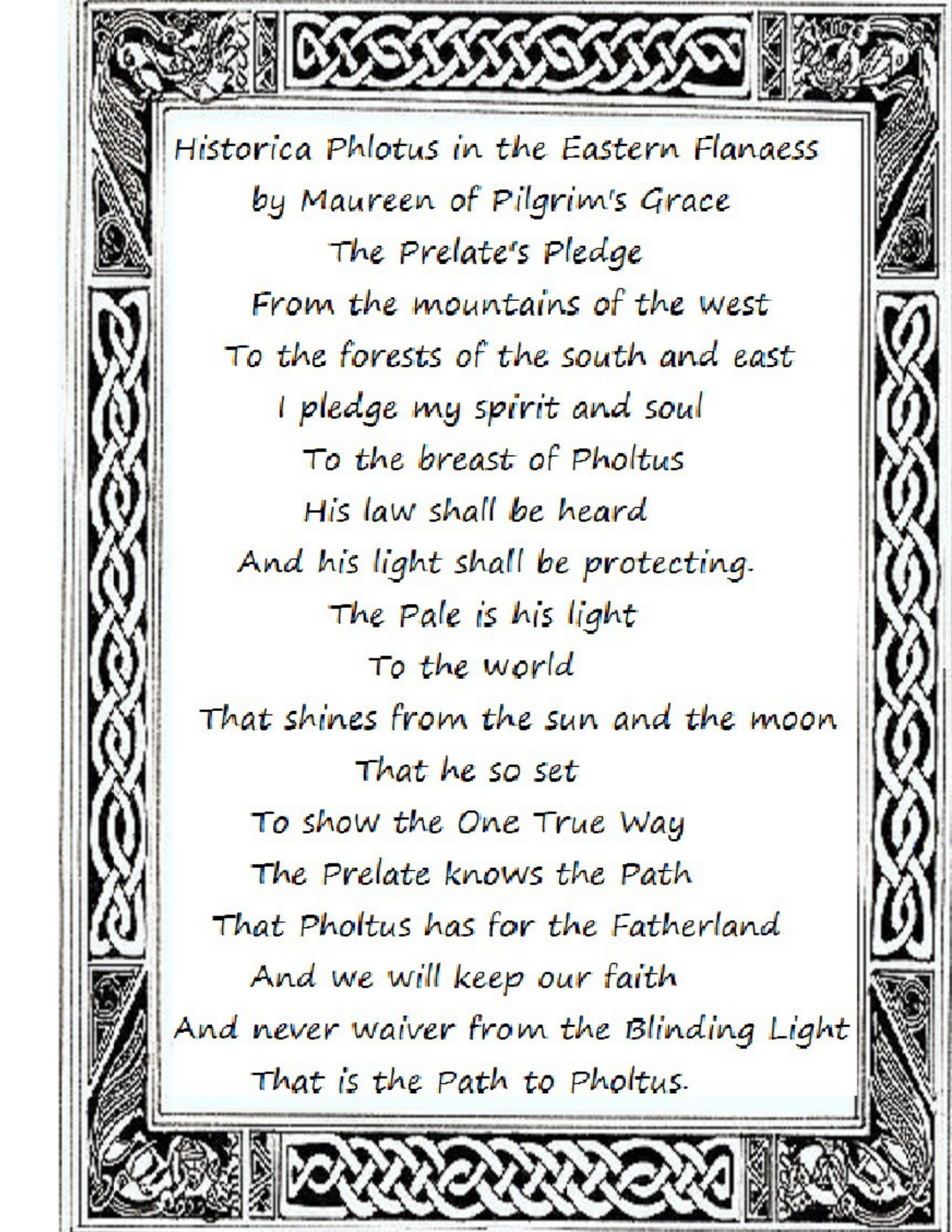
Historica Phlotus in the Eastern Flanaess



by Maureen of Pilgrim's Grace



The Mask Of Johydee



Historica Phlotus in the Eastern Flanaess

by Maureen of Pilgrim's Grace

The Prelate's Pledge

From the mountains of the west
To the forests of the south and east

I pledge my spirit and soul

To the breast of Pholtus

His law shall be heard

And his light shall be protecting.

The Pale is his light

To the world

That shines from the sun and the moon

That he so set

To show the One True Way

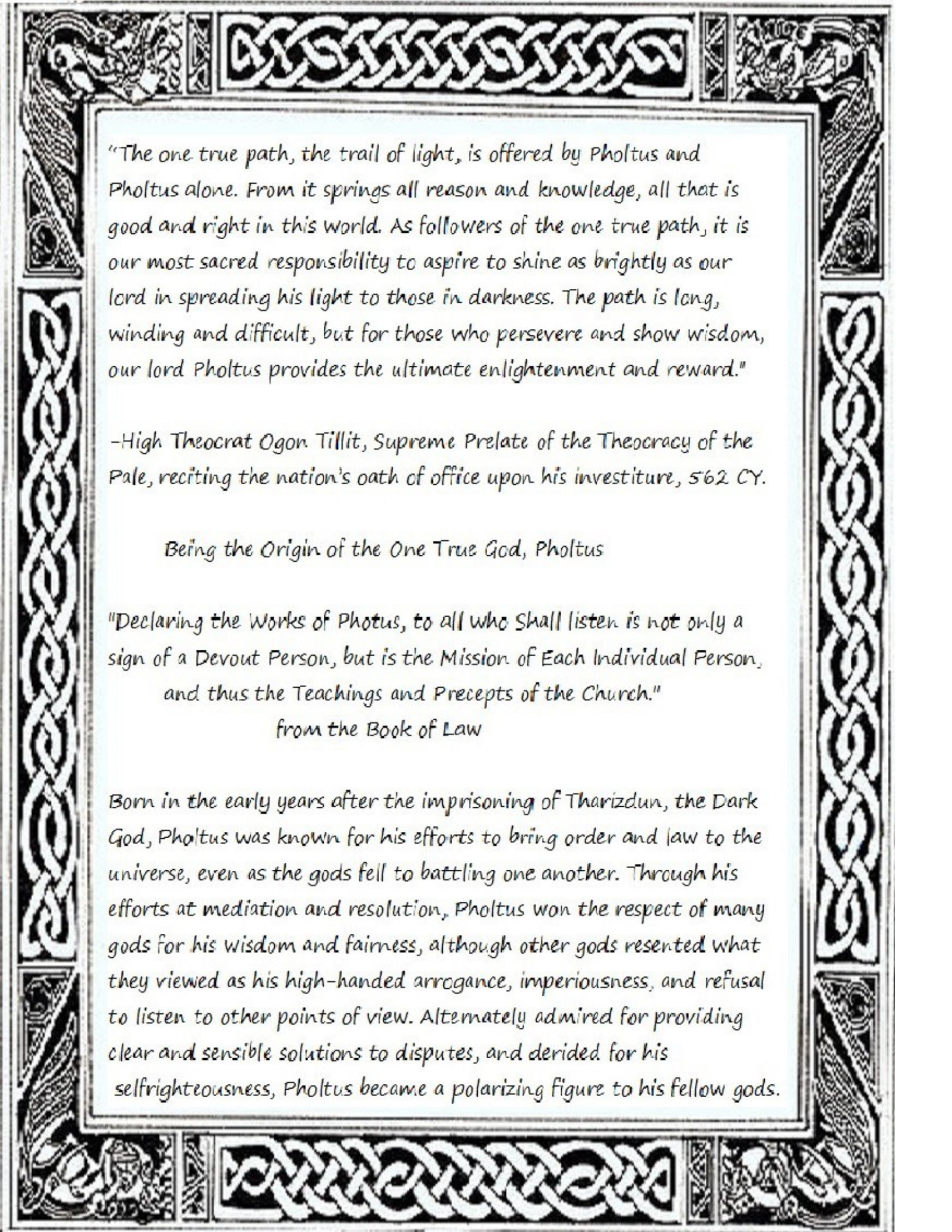
The Prelate knows the Path

That Pholtus has for the Fatherland

And we will keep our faith

And never waiver from the Blinding Light

That is the Path to Pholtus.



"The one true path, the trail of light, is offered by Pholtus and Pholtus alone. From it springs all reason and knowledge, all that is good and right in this world. As followers of the one true path, it is our most sacred responsibility to aspire to shine as brightly as our lord in spreading his light to those in darkness. The path is long, winding and difficult, but for those who persevere and show wisdom, our lord Pholtus provides the ultimate enlightenment and reward."

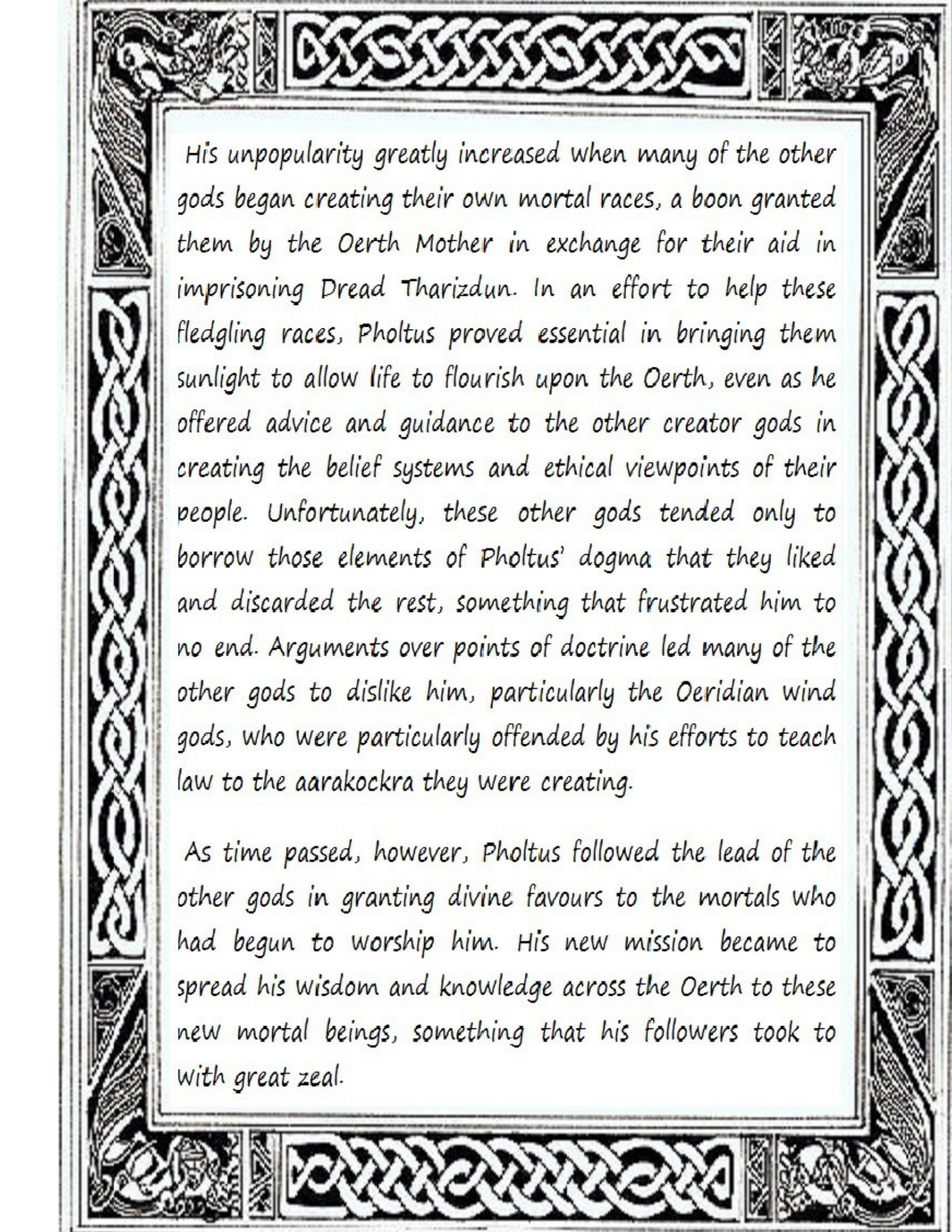
-High Theocrat Ogon Tillit, Supreme Prelate of the Theocracy of the Pale, reciting the nation's oath of office upon his investiture, 562 CY.

Being the Origin of the One True God, Pholtus

"Declaring the Works of Pholtus, to all who shall listen is not only a sign of a Devout Person, but is the Mission of Each Individual Person, and thus the Teachings and Precepts of the Church."

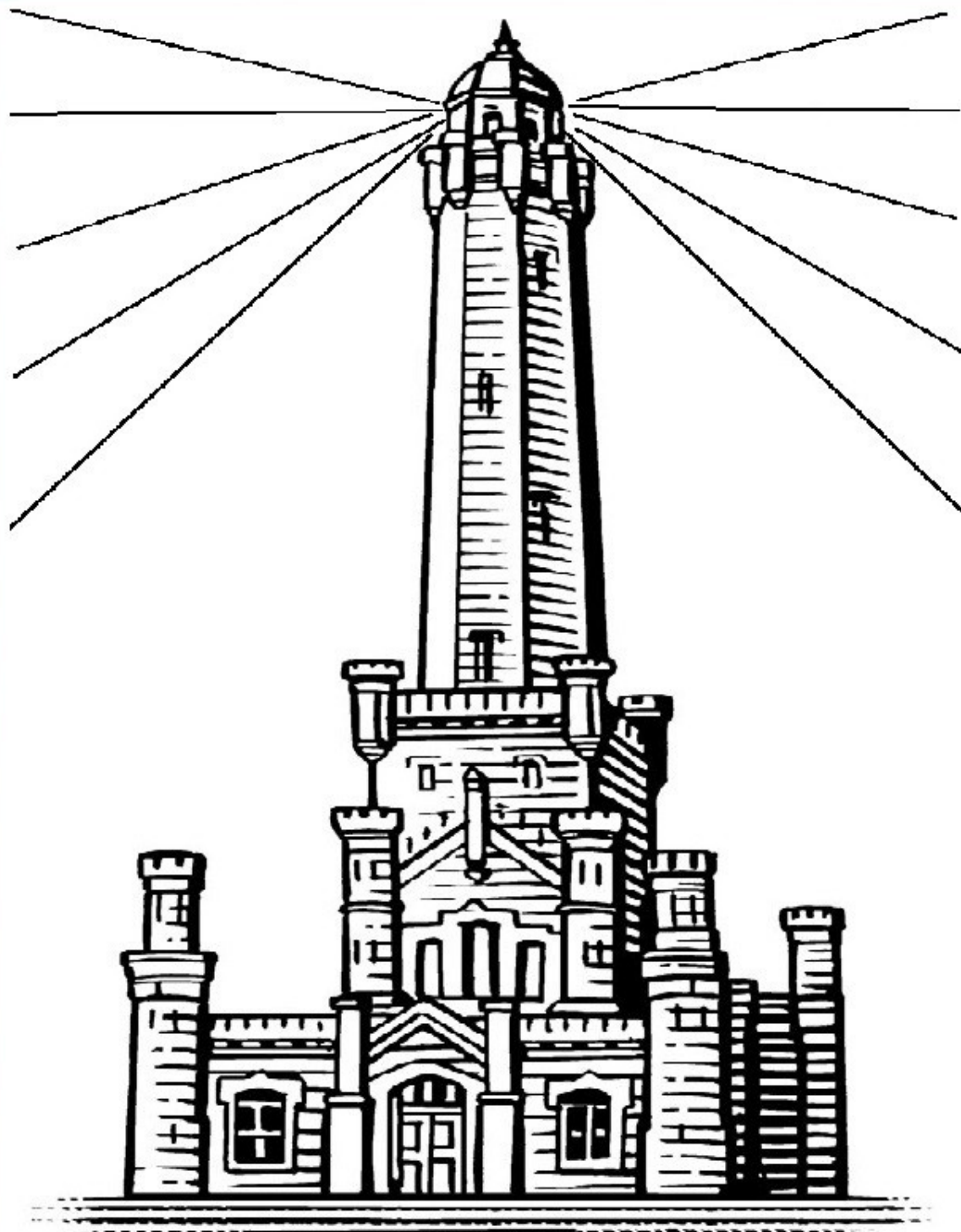
from the Book of Law

Born in the early years after the imprisoning of Tharizdun, the Dark God, Pholtus was known for his efforts to bring order and law to the universe, even as the gods fell to battling one another. Through his efforts at mediation and resolution, Pholtus won the respect of many gods for his wisdom and fairness, although other gods resented what they viewed as his high-handed arrogance, imperiousness, and refusal to listen to other points of view. Alternately admired for providing clear and sensible solutions to disputes, and derided for his selfrighteousness, Pholtus became a polarizing figure to his fellow gods.



His unpopularity greatly increased when many of the other gods began creating their own mortal races, a boon granted them by the Oerth Mother in exchange for their aid in imprisoning Dread Tharizdun. In an effort to help these fledgling races, Pholtus proved essential in bringing them sunlight to allow life to flourish upon the Oerth, even as he offered advice and guidance to the other creator gods in creating the belief systems and ethical viewpoints of their people. Unfortunately, these other gods tended only to borrow those elements of Pholtus' dogma that they liked and discarded the rest, something that frustrated him to no end. Arguments over points of doctrine led many of the other gods to dislike him, particularly the Oeridian wind gods, who were particularly offended by his efforts to teach law to the aarakockra they were creating.

As time passed, however, Pholtus followed the lead of the other gods in granting divine favours to the mortals who had begun to worship him. His new mission became to spread his wisdom and knowledge across the Oerth to these new mortal beings, something that his followers took to with great zeal.



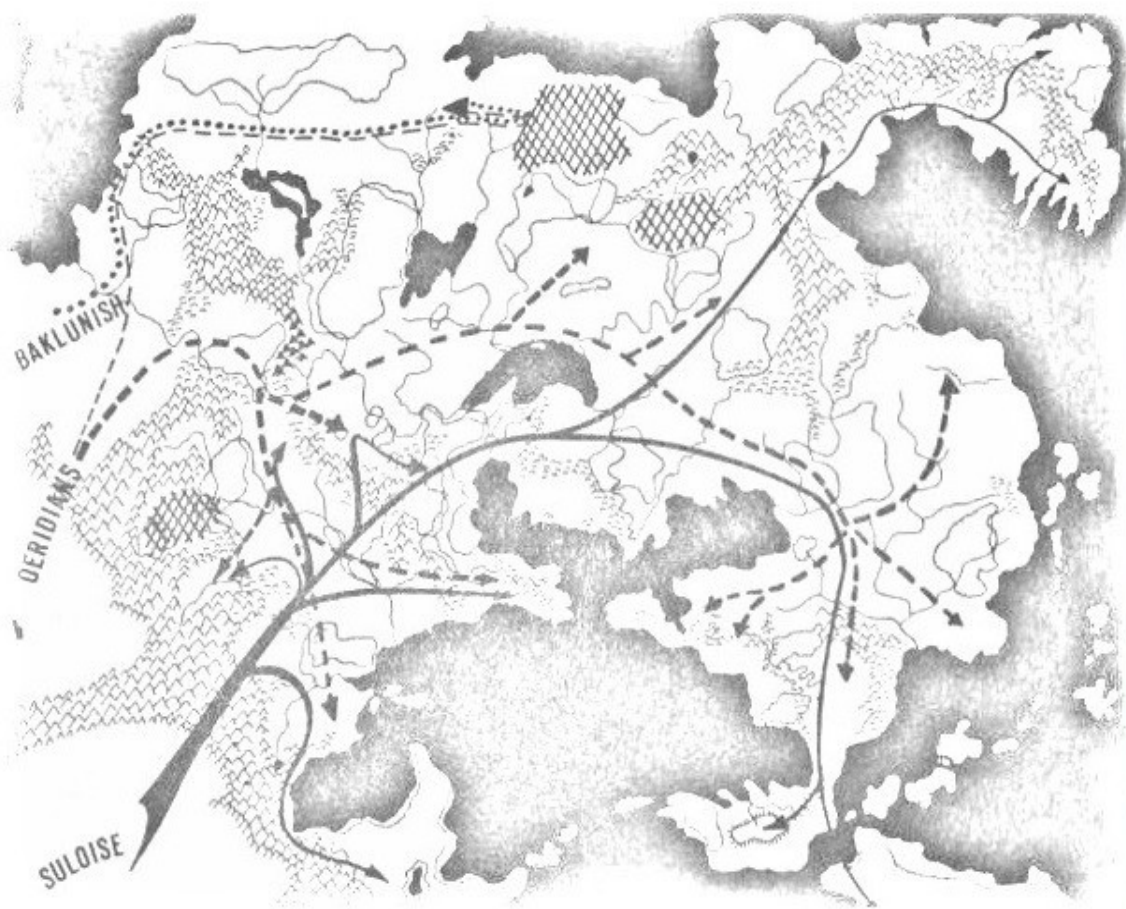
The Temple of Pholtus in Fleeth

"Light shall penetrate and overcome darkness."

from the Book of the Sun

From the Chronicle of Secret Times by Uhas of Neheli comes the tale of how a millennium and a half before the establishment of the Great Kingdom and the Pax Aerdy (1 CY), priests of Pholtus combined to, for a time, defeat the Ur-Flan lich Vecna at the siege of Fleeth, an ancient Flanae city. Dark Night also called Black Night, Star Night, and the Night of Hopeful Dawn, is observed on Goodmonth 11 and is described as a period in which Pholtus' power is at its lowest, causing the people of Fleeth to lose faith in the god. The priests of Pholtus compensated by completing a rite called the Ritual of Light in which the temple of Pholtus is transformed into a great beacon that destroys all "creatures of darkness", including undead, within a mile of the city, often blinding normal humans. The rite was performed every twelve years but is now lost to the priesthood of Pholtus. Only the 4th level spell Sunburst still remains of the original rite.

Vecna's assault on Fleeth took place on Dark Night, because that is when Fleeth's defences were at its lowest. However, the Ritual of Light was only a temporary setback for Vecna, badly wounding but not destroying him. In the aftermath of the rite, Vecna's left hand and eye were burned away by the light. He is saved by the Arch-mage Acererak.



The Great Migrations

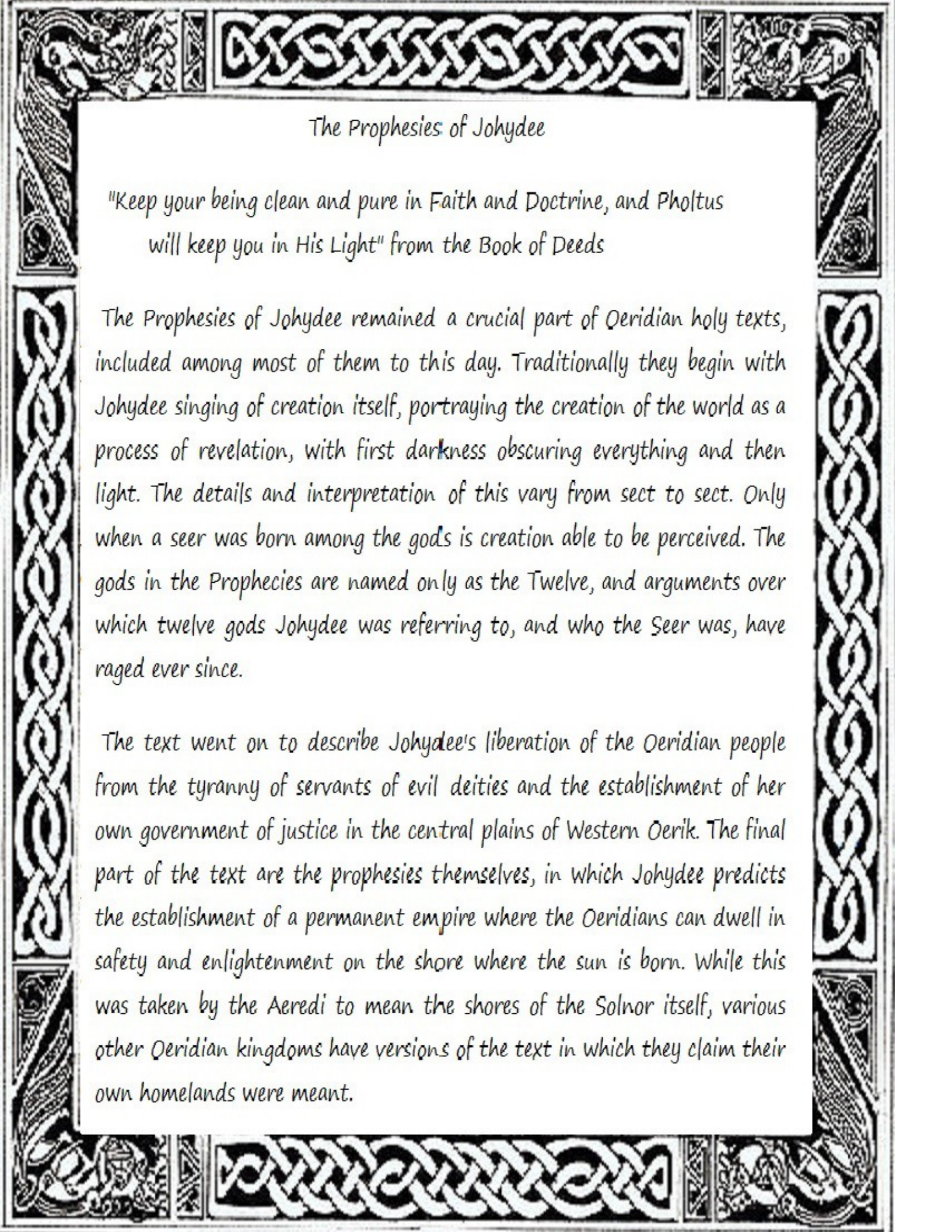
The Oeridians

"Knowledge is the only Path to Illumination."

from the Book of Knowledge

The Oeridians, as a migratory group of horse nomads, worshipped mainly gods of the winds and sky, of trade and travel. For the most part they honoured all of their gods equally. They had no formal temples, and so they would burn offerings to Celestian in the hope he would guide their dead to the afterworld, to Fharlanghn to guide their paths on Oerth, to the wind gods to ward off storms or celebrate the turning of the seasons, to Heironeous, Erythnul, and Hextor for victory in battle (though Heironeous and Hextor were rapidly eclipsing the old god Erythnul, hated outside of the fanatic Graeki tribe), to Zilchus in the hope of gaining wealth, status, and prosperity and to his dark brother Kurell in the hope of taking vengeance for that which was unjustly denied them.

Wherever they went they brought with them their great revelation, the Prophecies of Johydee named for the ancient queen who inspired them to travel to the edge of the eastern sea, that were initially written on the inside of Johydee's famous Mask. As the tribes began to disperse, driven by internal conflicts, attacks by non-humans, outraged natives, and the rival Suel and Bakluni, copies of the Revelations were made, each differing in crucial respects. When the Mask of Johydee disappeared, the Oeridians had no way of telling which copies were accurate and which were not. And so the first religious schisms formed among the Oeridian peoples.



The Prophecies of Johydee

"Keep your being clean and pure in Faith and Doctrine, and Pholtus will keep you in His Light" from the Book of Deeds

The Prophecies of Johydee remained a crucial part of Oeridian holy texts, included among most of them to this day. Traditionally they begin with Johydee singing of creation itself, portraying the creation of the world as a process of revelation, with first darkness obscuring everything and then light. The details and interpretation of this vary from sect to sect. Only when a seer was born among the gods is creation able to be perceived. The gods in the Prophecies are named only as the Twelve, and arguments over which twelve gods Johydee was referring to, and who the Seer was, have raged ever since.

The text went on to describe Johydee's liberation of the Oeridian people from the tyranny of servants of evil deities and the establishment of her own government of justice in the central plains of Western Oerik. The final part of the text are the prophecies themselves, in which Johydee predicts the establishment of a permanent empire where the Oeridians can dwell in safety and enlightenment on the shore where the sun is born. While this was taken by the Aeredi to mean the shores of the Solnor itself, various other Oeridian kingdoms have versions of the text in which they claim their own homelands were meant.

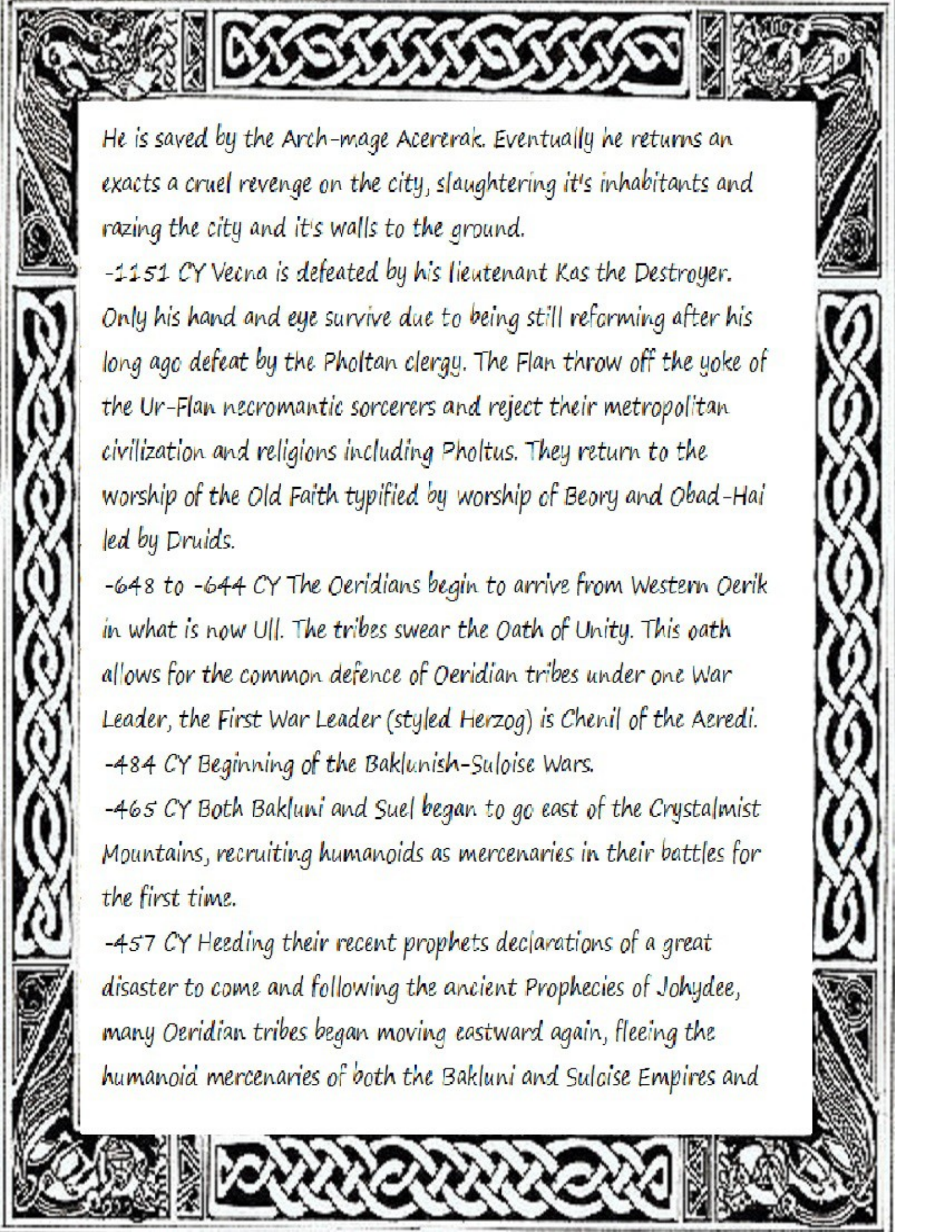
The Historica of the One True God in the Eastern Flanaess

"Every person is an integral part of society that demands responsibilities and sacrifices to the community."

from the Book of the Good

-2269 CY The years of Conquest and Prosperity of the Suloise Empire begin. No major foe opposes the might of the empire of the Suel, although they do not push eastward, because of some fear of the Olven hosts. Magic is rigorously pursued. And old Grey Olven texts are discovered and studied. The might and haughtiness of the Olves is copied in manner in the courts, but their wisdom is not. Slavery becomes common and widespread in the Suel lands; this continues for many centuries. The Oerid to the northeast and the Bakluni to the north of the Sulhaut Mountains, and several unnamed small tribes to the west and south all fall under the grip of the Suel fist. The entire of the western half of Oerik, is controlled by the Suel. But the Drow and darker forces halt the eastern expansion. The Oerid are the most oppressed of all Suel subjects. It is believed that Suel priests have foreseen greatness in these people which rivals that of the Suloise Empire.

-1671 CY The Ur-Flan warlock Vecna finally achieves lichdom and begins to subjugate corrupt and twist his people. He is for a time defeated by Pholtan priests at the siege of Fleeth using the Ritual of Light. Vecna's left hand and eye are destroyed by the blinding light.



He is saved by the Arch-mage Acererak. Eventually he returns and exacts a cruel revenge on the city, slaughtering its inhabitants and razing the city and its walls to the ground.

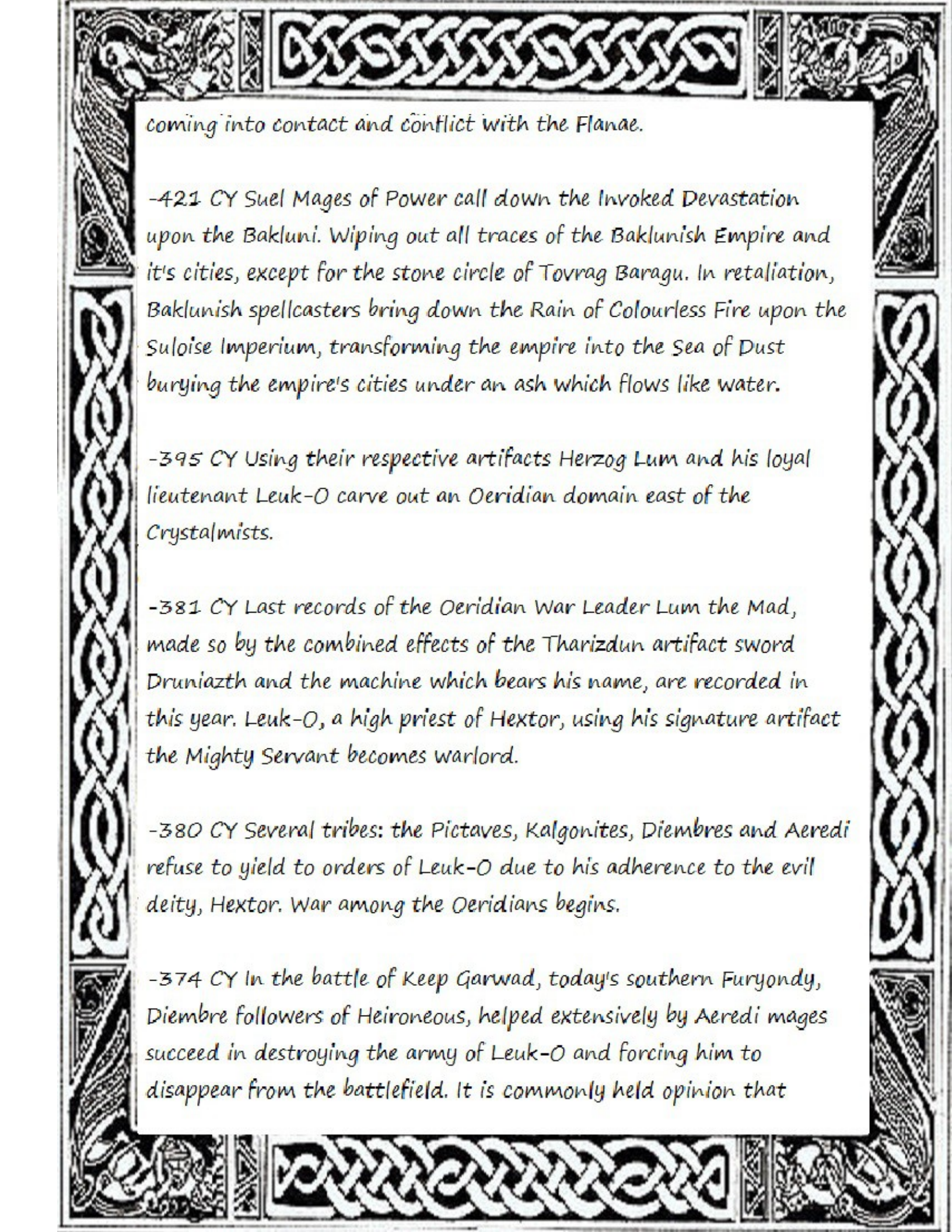
-1151 CY Vecna is defeated by his lieutenant Kas the Destroyer. Only his hand and eye survive due to being still reforming after his long ago defeat by the Pholtan clergy. The Flan throw off the yoke of the Ur-Flan necromantic sorcerers and reject their metropolitan civilization and religions including Pholtus. They return to the worship of the Old Faith typified by worship of Beory and Obad-Hai led by Druids.

-648 to -644 CY The Oeridians begin to arrive from Western Oerik in what is now Ull. The tribes swear the Oath of Unity. This oath allows for the common defence of Oeridian tribes under one War Leader, the First War Leader (styled Herzog) is Chenil of the Aeredi.

-484 CY Beginning of the Baklunish-Suloise Wars.

-465 CY Both Bakluni and Suel began to go east of the Crystalmist Mountains, recruiting humanoid mercenaries in their battles for the first time.

-457 CY Heeding their recent prophets declarations of a great disaster to come and following the ancient Prophecies of Johydee, many Oeridian tribes began moving eastward again, fleeing the humanoid mercenaries of both the Bakluni and Sulcise Empires and



coming into contact and conflict with the Flanae.

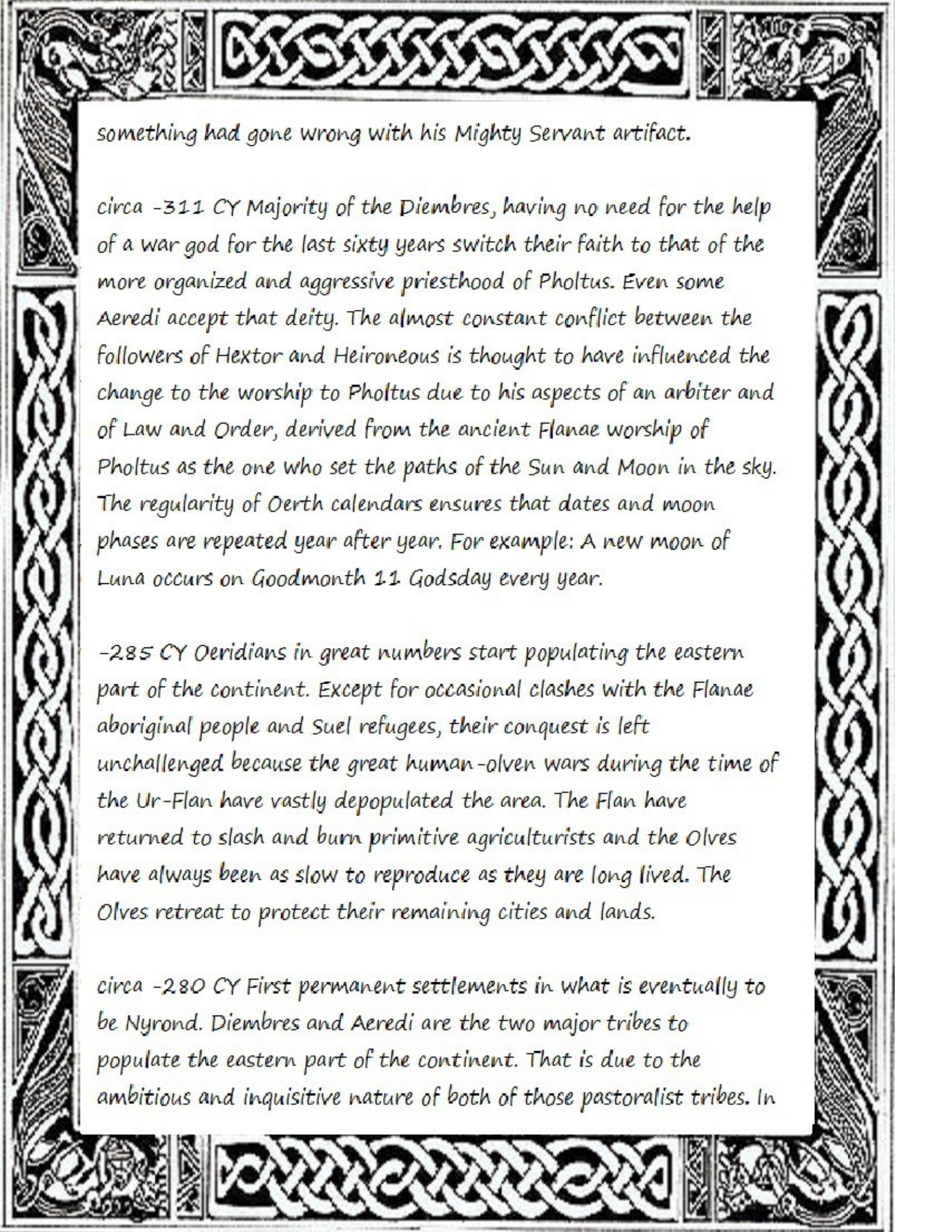
-421 CY Suel Mages of Power call down the Invoked Devastation upon the Bakluni. Wiping out all traces of the Baklunish Empire and its cities, except for the stone circle of Tovrag Baragu. In retaliation, Baklunish spellcasters bring down the Rain of Colourless Fire upon the Suloise Imperium, transforming the empire into the Sea of Dust burying the empire's cities under an ash which flows like water.

-395 CY Using their respective artifacts Herzog Lum and his loyal lieutenant Leuk-O carve out an Oeridian domain east of the Crystalmists.

-381 CY Last records of the Oeridian War Leader Lum the Mad, made so by the combined effects of the Tharizdun artifact sword Druniazth and the machine which bears his name, are recorded in this year. Leuk-O, a high priest of Hextor, using his signature artifact the Mighty Servant becomes warlord.

-380 CY Several tribes: the Pictaves, Kalgonites, Diembres and Aeredi refuse to yield to orders of Leuk-O due to his adherence to the evil deity, Hextor. War among the Oeridians begins.

-374 CY In the battle of Keep Garwad, today's southern Furyondy, Diembre followers of Heironeous, helped extensively by Aeredi mages succeed in destroying the army of Leuk-O and forcing him to disappear from the battlefield. It is commonly held opinion that



something had gone wrong with his Mighty Servant artifact.

circa -311 CY Majority of the Diembres, having no need for the help of a war god for the last sixty years switch their faith to that of the more organized and aggressive priesthood of Pholtus. Even some Aeredi accept that deity. The almost constant conflict between the followers of Hextor and Heironeous is thought to have influenced the change to the worship to Pholtus due to his aspects of an arbiter and of Law and Order, derived from the ancient Flanae worship of Pholtus as the one who set the paths of the Sun and Moon in the sky. The regularity of Oerth calendars ensures that dates and moon phases are repeated year after year. For example: A new moon of Luna occurs on Goodmonth 11 Godsday every year.

-285 CY Oeridians in great numbers start populating the eastern part of the continent. Except for occasional clashes with the Flanae aboriginal people and Suel refugees, their conquest is left unchallenged because the great human-olven wars during the time of the Ur-Flan have vastly depopulated the area. The Flan have returned to slash and burn primitive agriculturists and the Olves have always been as slow to reproduce as they are long lived. The Olves retreat to protect their remaining cities and lands.

circa -280 CY First permanent settlements in what is eventually to be Nyronnd. Diembres and Aeredi are the two major tribes to populate the eastern part of the continent. That is due to the ambitious and inquisitive nature of both of those pastoralist tribes. In

the empty, fertile land both of those tribes enlarge and prosper.

circa -230 CY Several other cities have been created by this year following the pattern of Rel Deven (est. -244 CY), the first true city of the Aeredi (high walls and narrow streets.) The most impressive are: Rel Mord in the west, Rel Astra on the far east and Rauxes, which is designed to be the major city for controlling all movement through what is known then as the central Aeredi lands". Many Diembres are assimilated into the Aeredi population of the cities and bring their dialect and their Pholtus worship. In the north-west this assimilation occurs to a lesser extent.

-209 CY Church of Pholtus established as the major faith of Aerdy; a magnificent temple to the sun-god is built in Rauxes. The faiths of Heironeous, Hextor and Zilchus are also predominant for their aspects of war (Heironeous/Hextor) and trade (Zilchus).

-78 CY The great Aerdy general Azharadian conquers the eastern lands of what is today's Theocracy of the Pale in one of his last great campaigns of unification.

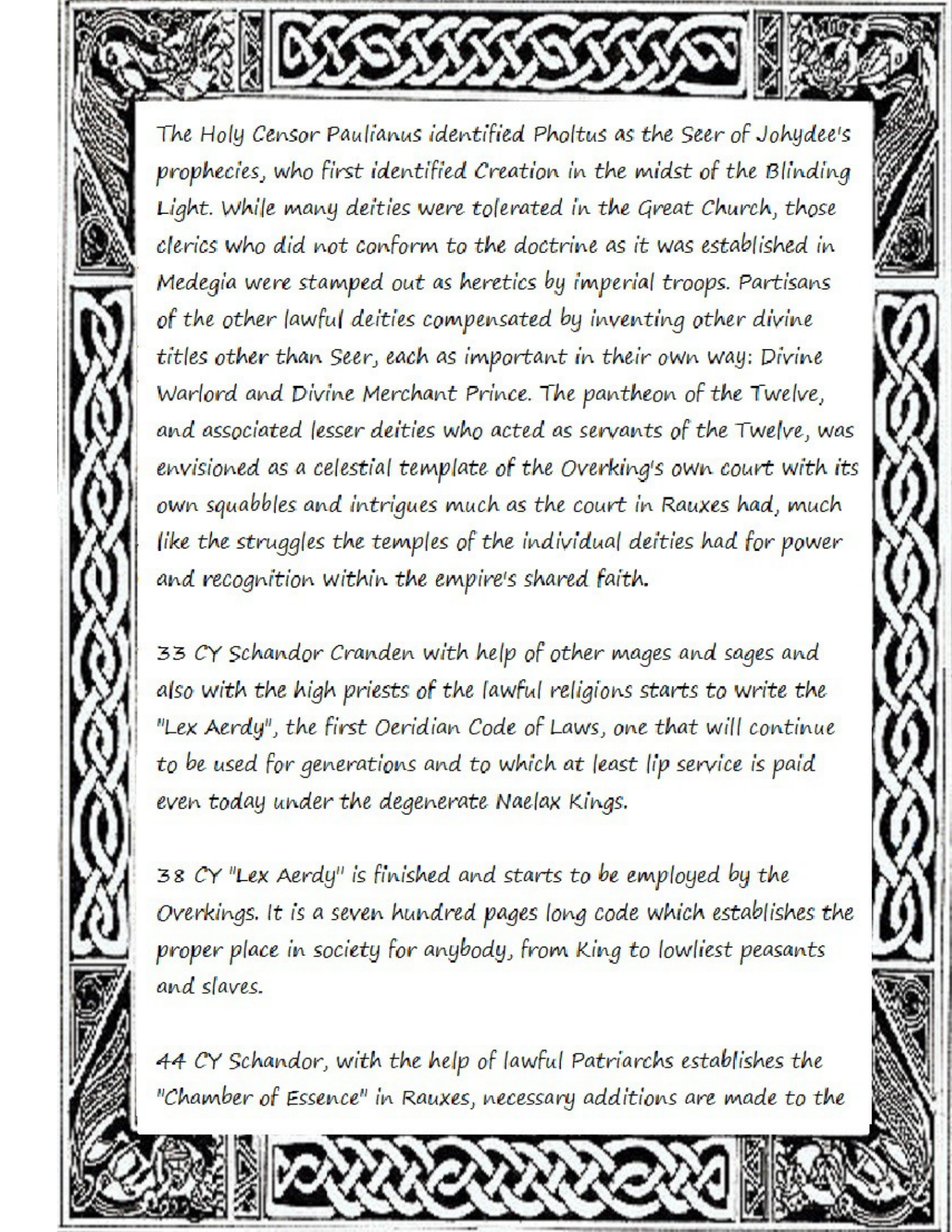


*Pax Aerdy and the Revelation of Pholtus as the Seer of
Johydee's Prophecies*

"There is only one True Idea of Pholtus as there is also only One True Path. Teaching and Preaching one without the Other is in no other words, Sacrilege." from A Declaration on the Scriptures of the Church of the One True Path by Theocrat Ogon Tillit

1 CY The Common Year is established as the system of reckoning by Grand Prince Nasran I of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy in 645 OR (1 CY), when he declares universal peace throughout his the land, and takes the title of Overking. At this stage the borders of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy extend all the way to Perrenland.

16 CY Even prior to the founding of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy, the Church of Pholtus had been one of the most prominent churches within the budding empire. The Church held sway over the courts, and its priests acted as scholars, keepers of the archives, and advisers. Universally they were considered men of wisdom. The priests held the ear of the Grand Prince as well as many within the reigning Celestial Houses. After 15 years of faithful and diligent work done in administering the courts on behalf of the Great Kingdom, the office of The Holy Censor was founded and the highest-ranking member of the church became the Holy Censor, holding a small fief outside of Mentrey, in the See of Medegia, to train all judges throughout the empire.

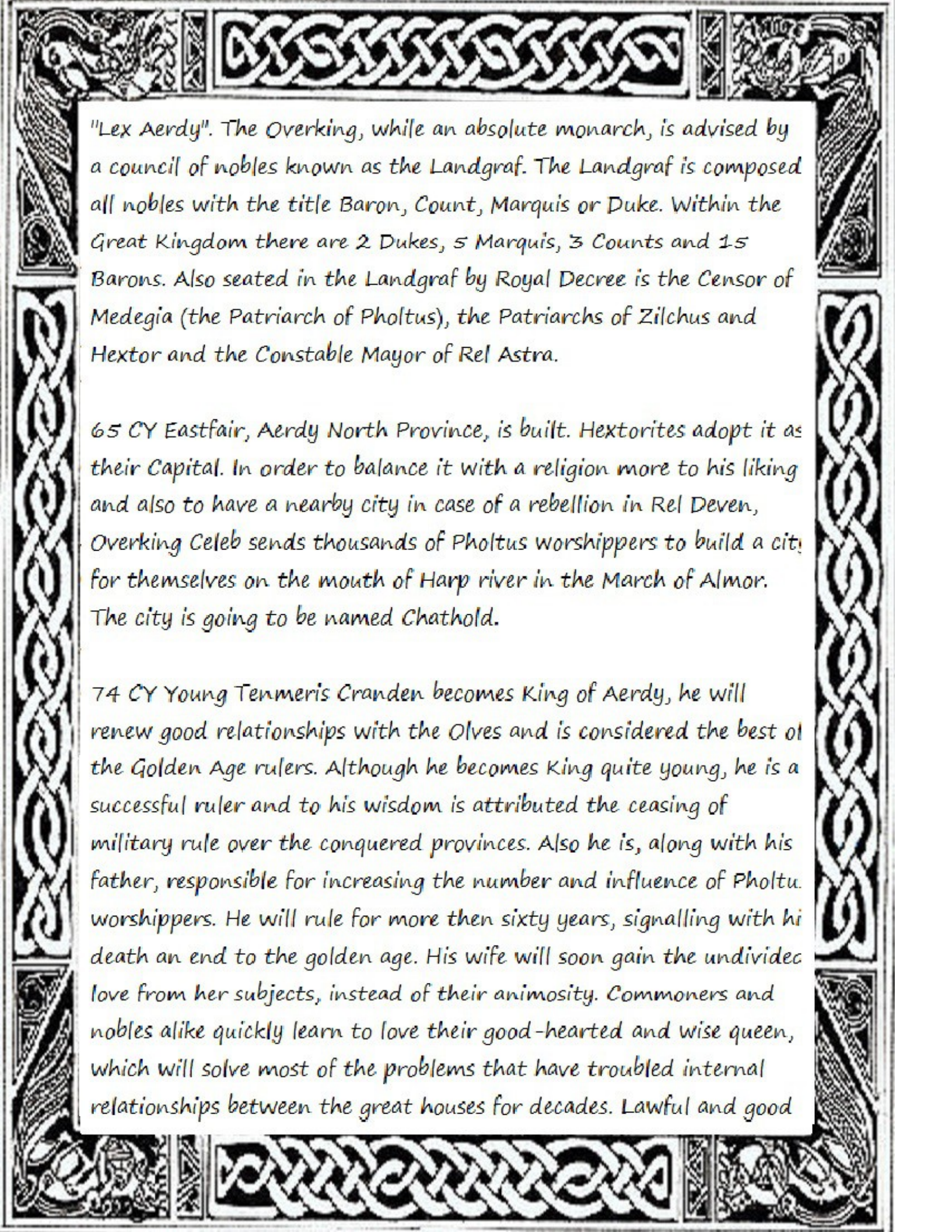


The Holy Censor Paulianus identified Pholtus as the Seer of Johydee's prophecies, who first identified Creation in the midst of the Blinding Light. While many deities were tolerated in the Great Church, those clerics who did not conform to the doctrine as it was established in Medegia were stamped out as heretics by imperial troops. Partisans of the other lawful deities compensated by inventing other divine titles other than Seer, each as important in their own way: Divine Warlord and Divine Merchant Prince. The pantheon of the Twelve, and associated lesser deities who acted as servants of the Twelve, was envisioned as a celestial template of the Overking's own court with its own squabbles and intrigues much as the court in Rauxes had, much like the struggles the temples of the individual deities had for power and recognition within the empire's shared faith.

33 CY Schandor Cranden with help of other mages and sages and also with the high priests of the lawful religions starts to write the "Lex Aerdy", the first Oeridian Code of Laws, one that will continue to be used for generations and to which at least lip service is paid even today under the degenerate Naelax Kings.

38 CY "Lex Aerdy" is finished and starts to be employed by the Overkings. It is a seven hundred pages long code which establishes the proper place in society for anybody, from King to lowliest peasants and slaves.

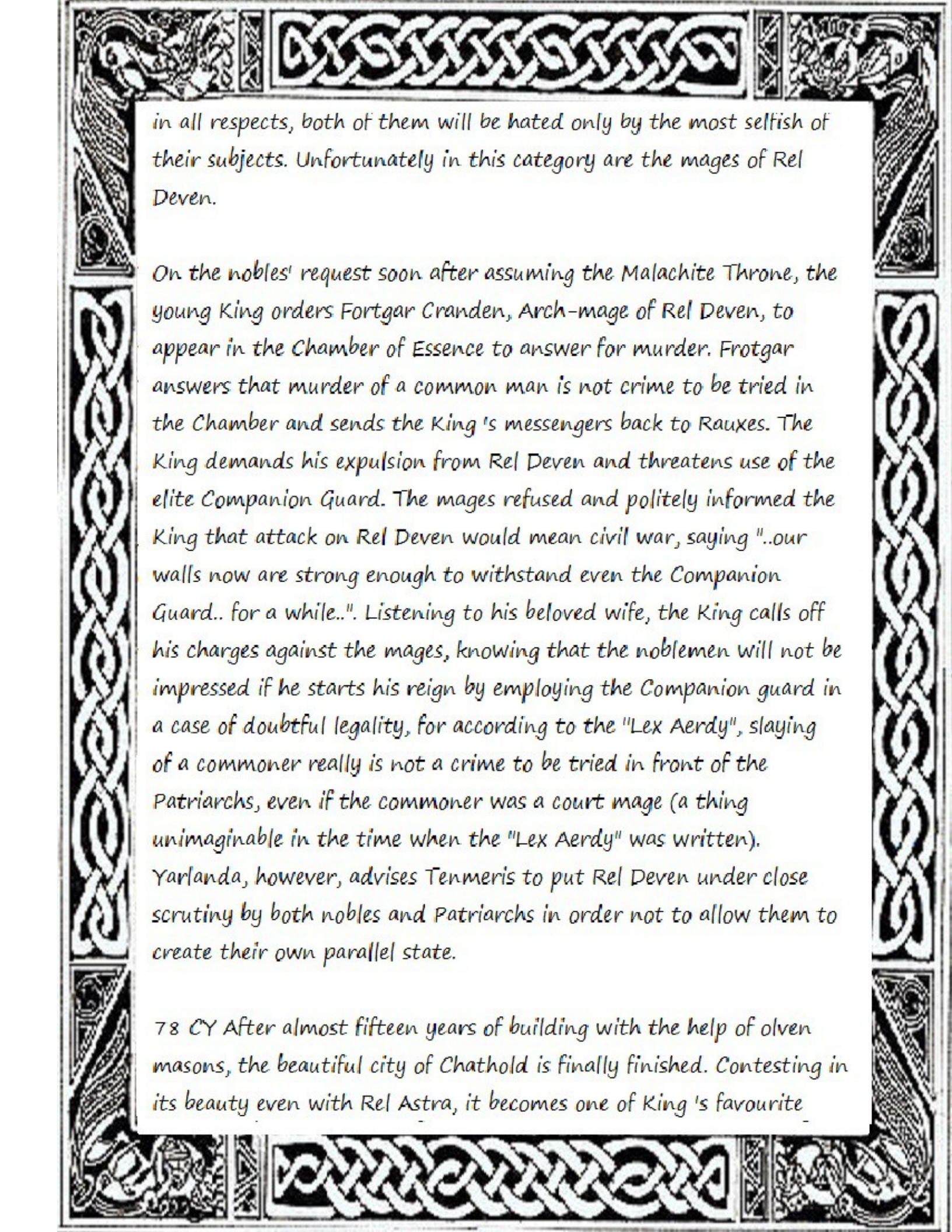
44 CY Schandor, with the help of lawful Patriarchs establishes the "Chamber of Essence" in Rauxes, necessary additions are made to the



"Lex Aerdy". The Overking, while an absolute monarch, is advised by a council of nobles known as the Landgraf. The Landgraf is composed all nobles with the title Baron, Count, Marquis or Duke. Within the Great Kingdom there are 2 Dukes, 5 Marquis, 3 Counts and 15 Barons. Also seated in the Landgraf by Royal Decree is the Censor of Medegia (the Patriarch of Pholtus), the Patriarchs of Zilchus and Hextor and the Constable Mayor of Rel Astra.

65 CY Eastfair, Aerdy North Province, is built. Hextorites adopt it as their Capital. In order to balance it with a religion more to his liking and also to have a nearby city in case of a rebellion in Rel Deven, Overking Celeb sends thousands of Pholtus worshippers to build a city for themselves on the mouth of Harp river in the March of Almor. The city is going to be named Chathold.

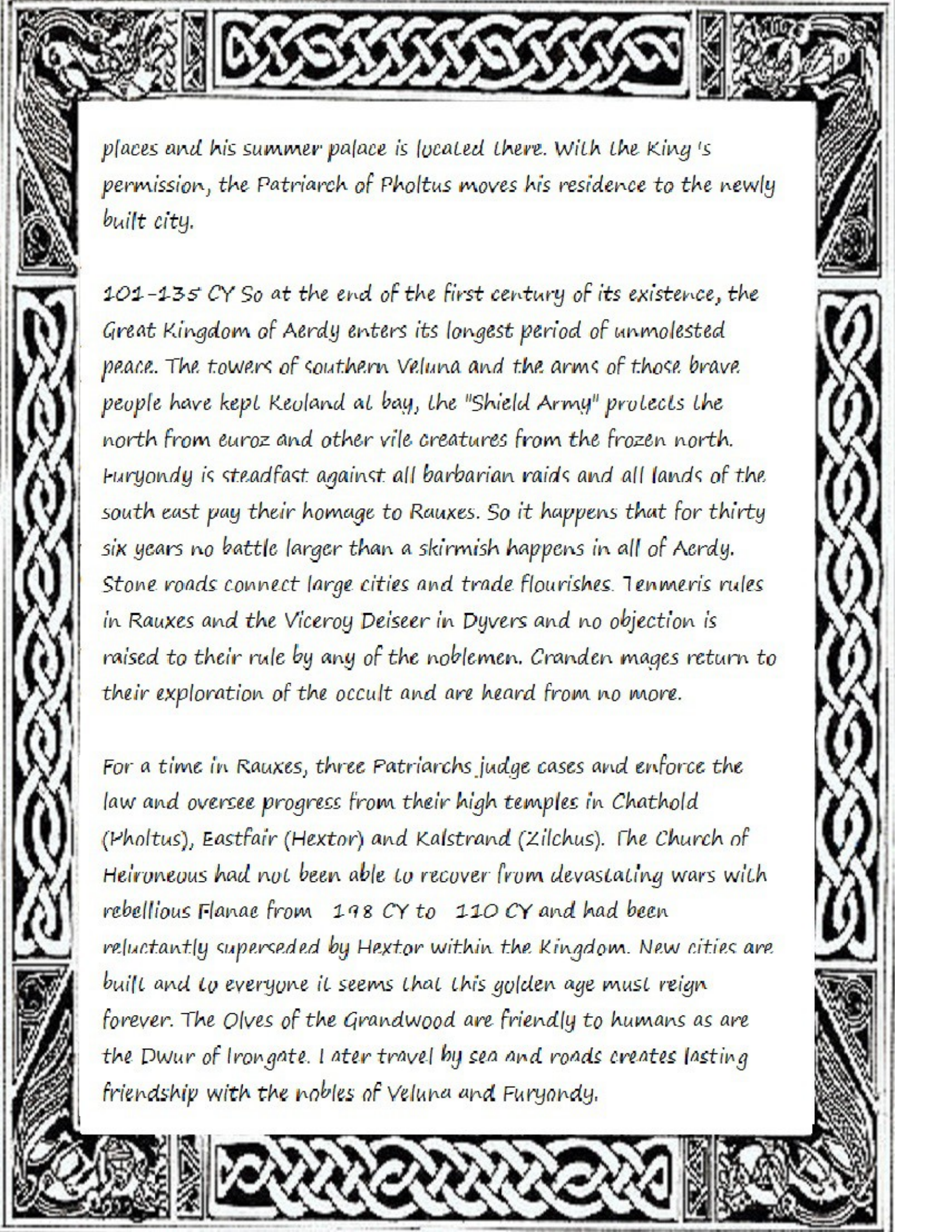
74 CY Young Tenmeris Cranden becomes King of Aerdy, he will renew good relationships with the Olves and is considered the best of the Golden Age rulers. Although he becomes King quite young, he is a successful ruler and to his wisdom is attributed the ceasing of military rule over the conquered provinces. Also he is, along with his father, responsible for increasing the number and influence of Pholtu worshippers. He will rule for more then sixty years, signalling with hi death an end to the golden age. His wife will soon gain the undivided love from her subjects, instead of their animosity. Commoners and nobles alike quickly learn to love their good-hearted and wise queen, which will solve most of the problems that have troubled internal relationships between the great houses for decades. Lawful and good



in all respects, both of them will be hated only by the most selfish of their subjects. Unfortunately in this category are the mages of Rel Deven.

On the nobles' request soon after assuming the Malachite Throne, the young King orders Fortgar Cranden, Arch-mage of Rel Deven, to appear in the Chamber of Essence to answer for murder. Fortgar answers that murder of a common man is not crime to be tried in the Chamber and sends the King's messengers back to Rauxes. The King demands his expulsion from Rel Deven and threatens use of the elite Companion Guard. The mages refused and politely informed the King that attack on Rel Deven would mean civil war, saying "...our walls now are strong enough to withstand even the Companion Guard.. for a while..". Listening to his beloved wife, the King calls off his charges against the mages, knowing that the noblemen will not be impressed if he starts his reign by employing the Companion guard in a case of doubtful legality, for according to the "Lex Aerdy", slaying of a commoner really is not a crime to be tried in front of the Patriarchs, even if the commoner was a court mage (a thing unimaginable in the time when the "Lex Aerdy" was written). Yarlanda, however, advises Tenmeris to put Rel Deven under close scrutiny by both nobles and Patriarchs in order not to allow them to create their own parallel state.

78 CY After almost fifteen years of building with the help of olven masons, the beautiful city of Chathold is finally finished. Contesting in its beauty even with Rel Astra, it becomes one of King's favourite



places and his summer palace is located there. With the King's permission, the Patriarch of Pholtus moves his residence to the newly built city.

101-135 CY So at the end of the first century of its existence, the Great Kingdom of Aerdy enters its longest period of unmolested peace. The towers of southern Veluna and the arms of those brave people have kept Keoland at bay, the "Shield Army" protects the north from euroz and other vile creatures from the frozen north. Furyondy is steadfast against all barbarian raids and all lands of the south east pay their homage to Rauxes. So it happens that for thirty six years no battle larger than a skirmish happens in all of Aerdy. Stone roads connect large cities and trade flourishes. Tenmeris rules in Rauxes and the Viceroy Deiseer in Dyvers and no objection is raised to their rule by any of the noblemen. Granden mages return to their exploration of the occult and are heard from no more.

For a time in Rauxes, three Patriarchs judge cases and enforce the law and oversee progress from their high temples in Chathold (Pholtus), Eastfair (Hextor) and Kalstrand (Zilchus). The Church of Heironeous had not been able to recover from devastating wars with rebellious Flanae from 198 CY to 110 CY and had been reluctantly superseded by Hextor within the Kingdom. New cities are built and to everyone it seems that this golden age must reign forever. The Olves of the Grandwood are friendly to humans as are the Dwur of Irongate. Later travel by sea and roads creates lasting friendship with the nobles of Veluna and Furyondy.

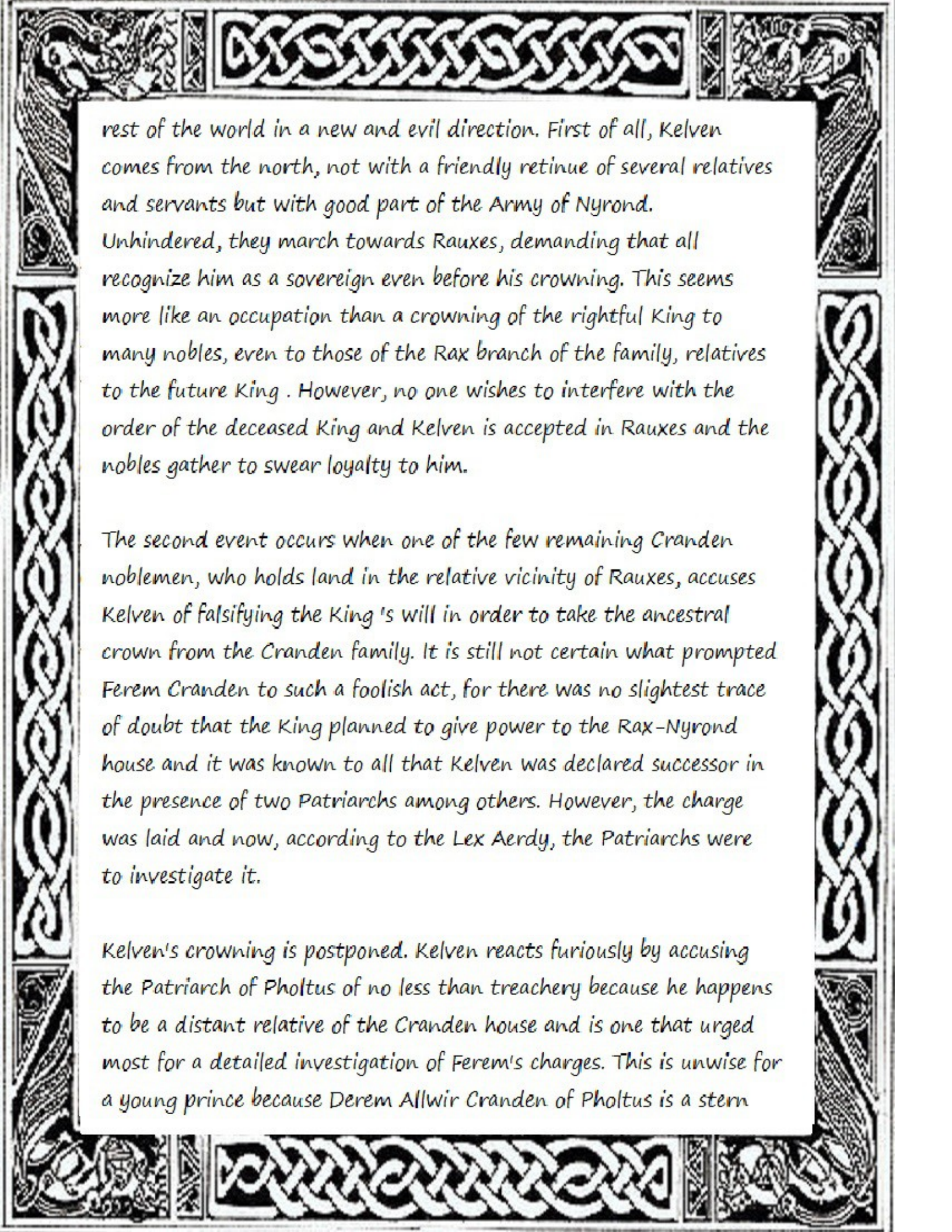
End of the Golden Age of the Great Aerdy Kingdom

"The 'One True Path' has its enemies of darkness, heathens one and all, they must be shown the way, to accept the truth, or suffer the consequences that Pholtus shall put into motion . . . through death and destruction by the hands of His faithful servants. Conform to the 'One True Path or die!'" from a Damnation of the Heretic sermon

(anonymous)

137 CY Tenmeris Cranden dies, the last Cranden to rule Aerdi, extending as far back as Queen Johydee, and also the last ruler of the golden age. He dies sitting on the Malachite Throne while listening to the court mage Estrandir's song and holding the hand of his wife and childhood lover Yarlanda. Although also in her ninth decade of life, Yarlanda still looks young or, better to say ageless, for the olven blood of her family has blossomed in her. However, after the King's death she feels that her youth has come to an end. She also sees that young Kelven is ready to assume the kingship and takes the body of her husband and leaves for the Grandwood without escort and never again is anything heard of her in all Aerdy. She bids Estrandir to remain and help the new King to rule wisely and the young elf accepts her bidding as he wishes her farewell.

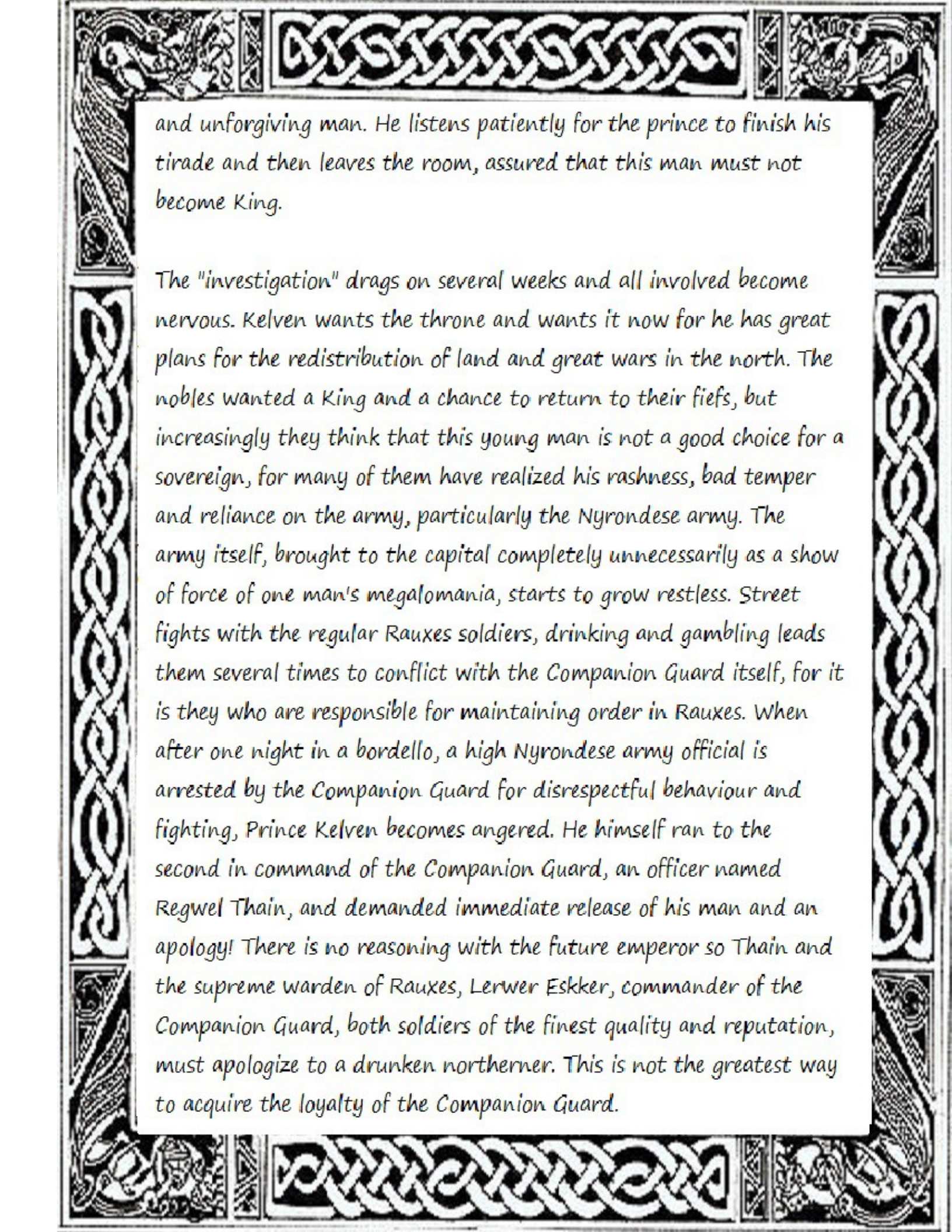
In Goodmonth of this year the Patriarchs meet in Rauxes to welcome and crown Kelven I as Overking of Aerdy. Then two things occur that will turn the history of the Great Kingdom and thus the



rest of the world in a new and evil direction. First of all, Kelven comes from the north, not with a friendly retinue of several relatives and servants but with good part of the Army of Nyronnd. Unhindered, they march towards Rauxes, demanding that all recognize him as a sovereign even before his crowning. This seems more like an occupation than a crowning of the rightful King to many nobles, even to those of the Rax branch of the family, relatives to the future King . However, no one wishes to interfere with the order of the deceased King and Kelven is accepted in Rauxes and the nobles gather to swear loyalty to him.

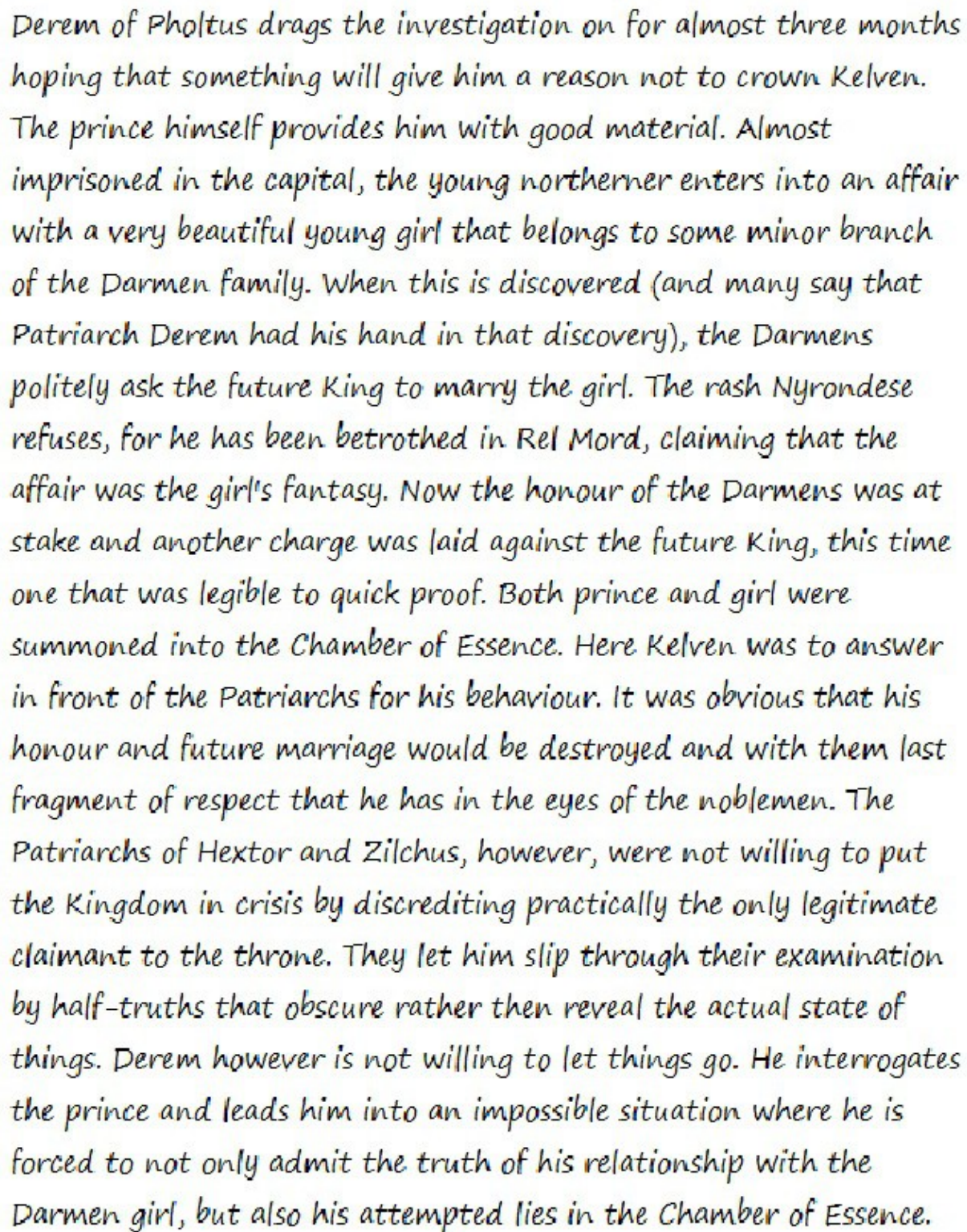
The second event occurs when one of the few remaining Cranden noblemen, who holds land in the relative vicinity of Rauxes, accuses Kelven of falsifying the King 's will in order to take the ancestral crown from the Cranden family. It is still not certain what prompted Ferem Cranden to such a foolish act, for there was no slightest trace of doubt that the King planned to give power to the Rax-Nyronnd house and it was known to all that Kelven was declared successor in the presence of two Patriarchs among others. However, the charge was laid and now, according to the Lex Aerdy, the Patriarchs were to investigate it.

Kelven's crowning is postponed. Kelven reacts furiously by accusing the Patriarch of Pholtus of no less than treachery because he happens to be a distant relative of the Cranden house and is one that urged most for a detailed investigation of Ferem's charges. This is unwise for a young prince because Derem Allwir Cranden of Pholtus is a stern



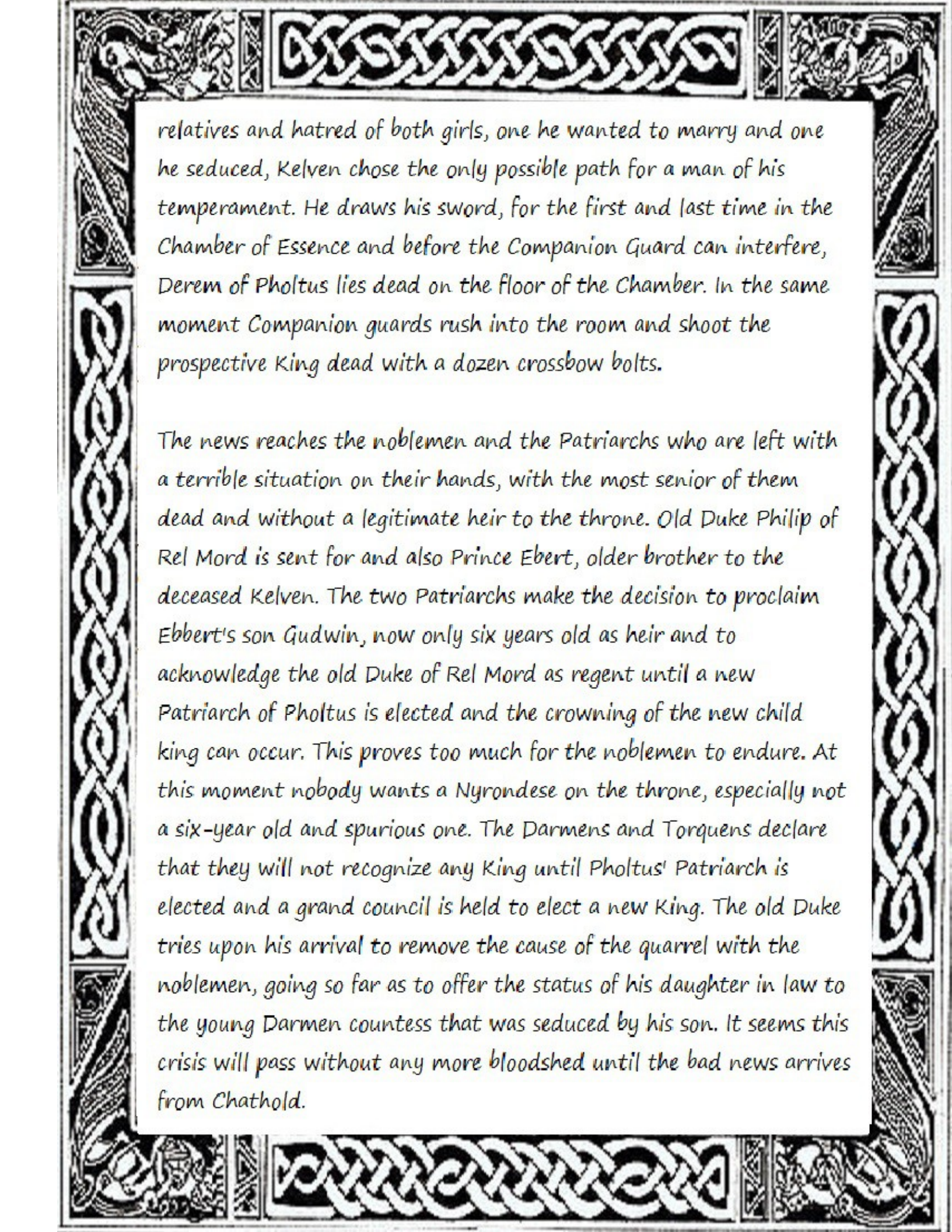
and unforgiving man. He listens patiently for the prince to finish his tirade and then leaves the room, assured that this man must not become King.

The "investigation" drags on several weeks and all involved become nervous. Kelven wants the throne and wants it now for he has great plans for the redistribution of land and great wars in the north. The nobles wanted a King and a chance to return to their fiefs, but increasingly they think that this young man is not a good choice for a sovereign, for many of them have realized his rashness, bad temper and reliance on the army, particularly the Nyronnese army. The army itself, brought to the capital completely unnecessarily as a show of force of one man's megalomania, starts to grow restless. Street fights with the regular Rauxes soldiers, drinking and gambling leads them several times to conflict with the Companion Guard itself, for it is they who are responsible for maintaining order in Rauxes. When after one night in a bordello, a high Nyronnese army official is arrested by the Companion Guard for disrespectful behaviour and fighting, Prince Kelven becomes angered. He himself ran to the second in command of the Companion Guard, an officer named Regwel Thain, and demanded immediate release of his man and an apology! There is no reasoning with the future emperor so Thain and the supreme warden of Rauxes, Lerwer Eskker, commander of the Companion Guard, both soldiers of the finest quality and reputation, must apologize to a drunken northerner. This is not the greatest way to acquire the loyalty of the Companion Guard.



Derem of Pholtus drags the investigation on for almost three months hoping that something will give him a reason not to crown Kelven. The prince himself provides him with good material. Almost imprisoned in the capital, the young northerner enters into an affair with a very beautiful young girl that belongs to some minor branch of the Darmen family. When this is discovered (and many say that Patriarch Derem had his hand in that discovery), the Darmens politely ask the future King to marry the girl. The rash Nyronnese refuses, for he has been betrothed in Rel Mord, claiming that the affair was the girl's fantasy. Now the honour of the Darmens was at stake and another charge was laid against the future King, this time one that was legible to quick proof. Both prince and girl were summoned into the Chamber of Essence. Here Kelven was to answer in front of the Patriarchs for his behaviour. It was obvious that his honour and future marriage would be destroyed and with them last fragment of respect that he has in the eyes of the noblemen. The Patriarchs of Hextor and Zilchus, however, were not willing to put the Kingdom in crisis by discrediting practically the only legitimate claimant to the throne. They let him slip through their examination by half-truths that obscure rather than reveal the actual state of things. Derem however is not willing to let things go. He interrogates the prince and leads him into an impossible situation where he is forced to not only admit the truth of his relationship with the Darmen girl, but also his attempted lies in the Chamber of Essence.

Faced with utter dishonour and probably losing forever his chances to assume the kingship and even more bitter, the scorn of his



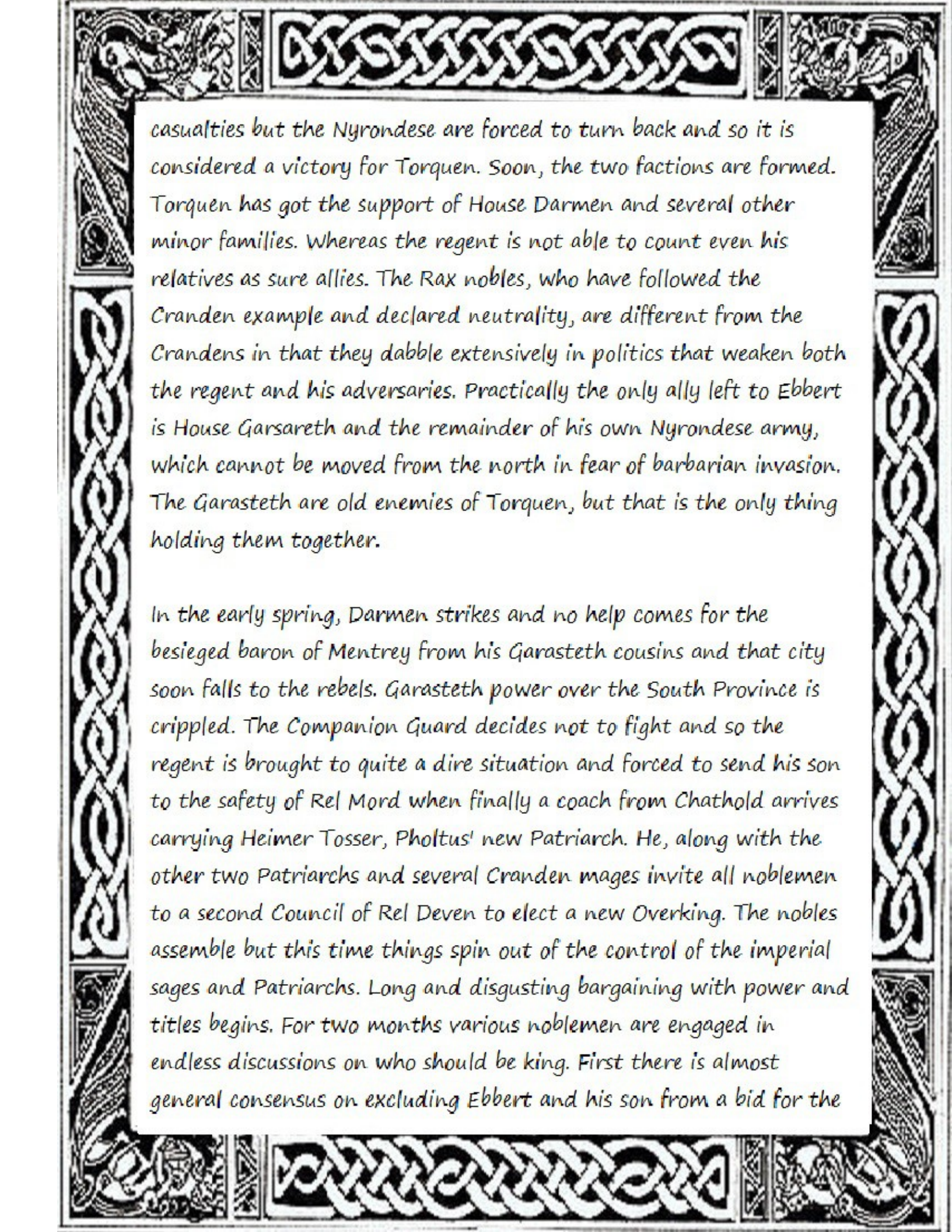
relatives and hatred of both girls, one he wanted to marry and one he seduced, Kelven chose the only possible path for a man of his temperament. He draws his sword, for the first and last time in the Chamber of Essence and before the Companion Guard can interfere, Derem of Pholtus lies dead on the floor of the Chamber. In the same moment Companion guards rush into the room and shoot the prospective King dead with a dozen crossbow bolts.

The news reaches the noblemen and the Patriarchs who are left with a terrible situation on their hands, with the most senior of them dead and without a legitimate heir to the throne. Old Duke Philip of Rel Mord is sent for and also Prince Ebert, older brother to the deceased Kelven. The two Patriarchs make the decision to proclaim Ebbert's son Gudwin, now only six years old as heir and to acknowledge the old Duke of Rel Mord as regent until a new Patriarch of Pholtus is elected and the crowning of the new child king can occur. This proves too much for the noblemen to endure. At this moment nobody wants a Nyrondeuse on the throne, especially not a six-year old and spurious one. The Darmens and Torquens declare that they will not recognize any King until Pholtus' Patriarch is elected and a grand council is held to elect a new King. The old Duke tries upon his arrival to remove the cause of the quarrel with the noblemen, going so far as to offer the status of his daughter in law to the young Darmen countess that was seduced by his son. It seems this crisis will pass without any more bloodshed until the bad news arrives from Chathold.

138 CY During an exceptionally mild winter, riders of Ket attack an unprepared Furyondy from the west and thus ends the longest period of Pax Emporium that has occurred within the Great Kingdom. However, at this moment for those in Rauxes, the more important connotation of the attack is that the high priest of Mitrik and the holy censor of Dyvers (of Pholtus) will not be able to attend a meeting in Chathold until spring at the earliest, when eventually the Feudal army will be able to strike back and drive the raiders back to their land. This implies that no Patriarch of Pholtus is to be elected and no emperor is to be crowned in the following months.

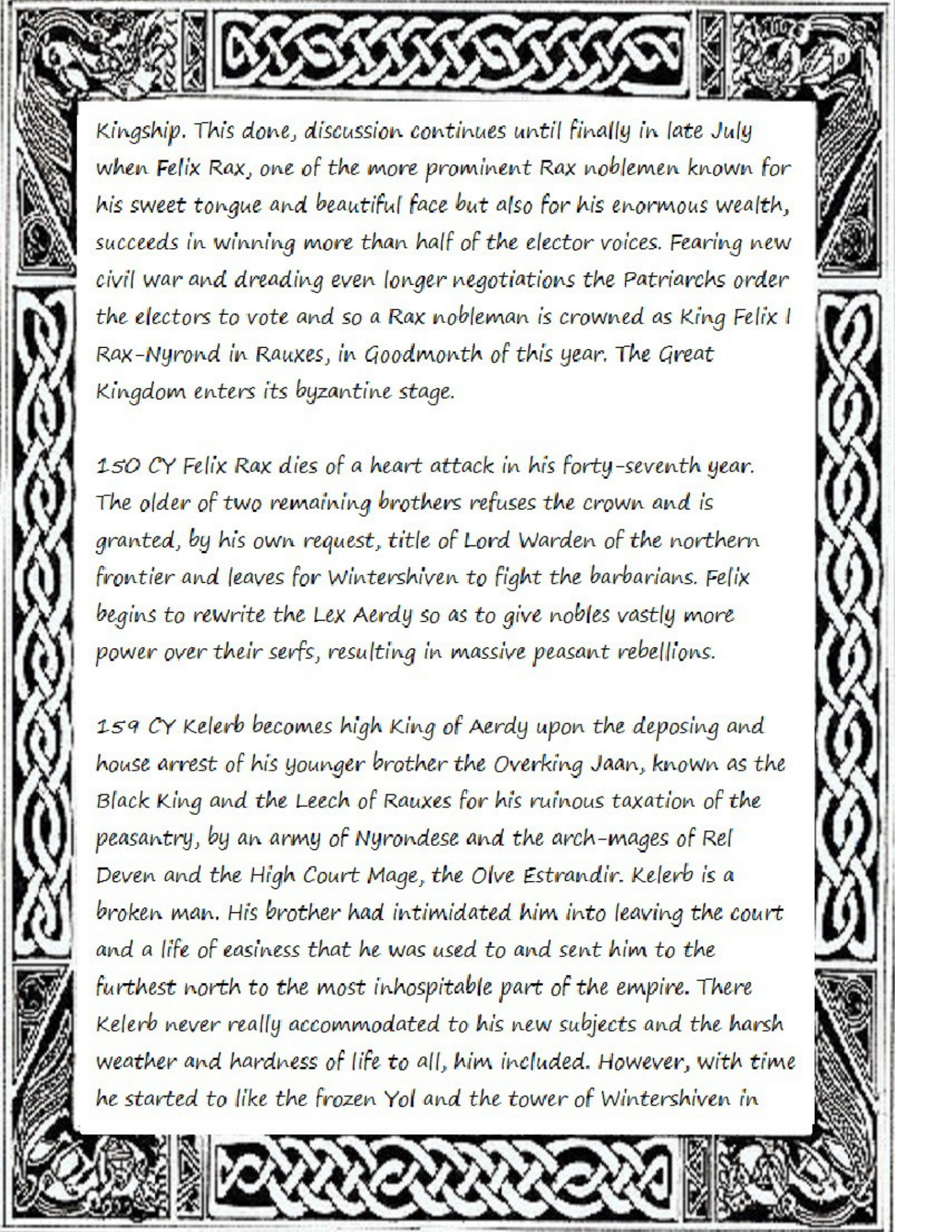
To make a bad situation even worse, Duke Philip dies late in Readying of this year. This leaves, by the dictate of the Patriarchs, the regent's position to Ebbert. A particular kind of stubbornness is manifest in Ebbert, not unlike that of his brother. He is rash and brave, believing in the supremacy of Rel Mord over all other cities in the land and in the glorious destiny of his house. Inevitably this leads to conflict. At first conflict arises with the Torquens. Ebbert insists on a personal oath of loyalty from Sever Torquen and is refused. Both request and refusal are equally dumb, for neither does the regent need a personal oath of loyalty from a nobleman to order him to do his bidding, nor would a refusal benefit the Torquens, for they are effectively independent until the election of the new King. Ebbert, however, reacts by dispatching his Nyrondeese soldiers to deal with the rebellious Duke, a duty reserved for the Companion Guard.

The first battle is fought near Winetha where both sides suffer heavy



casualties but the Nyronnese are forced to turn back and so it is considered a victory for Torquen. Soon, the two factions are formed. Torquen has got the support of House Darmen and several other minor families. Whereas the regent is not able to count even his relatives as sure allies. The Rax nobles, who have followed the Cranden example and declared neutrality, are different from the Crandens in that they dabble extensively in politics that weaken both the regent and his adversaries. Practically the only ally left to Ebbert is House Garsareth and the remainder of his own Nyronnese army, which cannot be moved from the north in fear of barbarian invasion. The Garasteth are old enemies of Torquen, but that is the only thing holding them together.

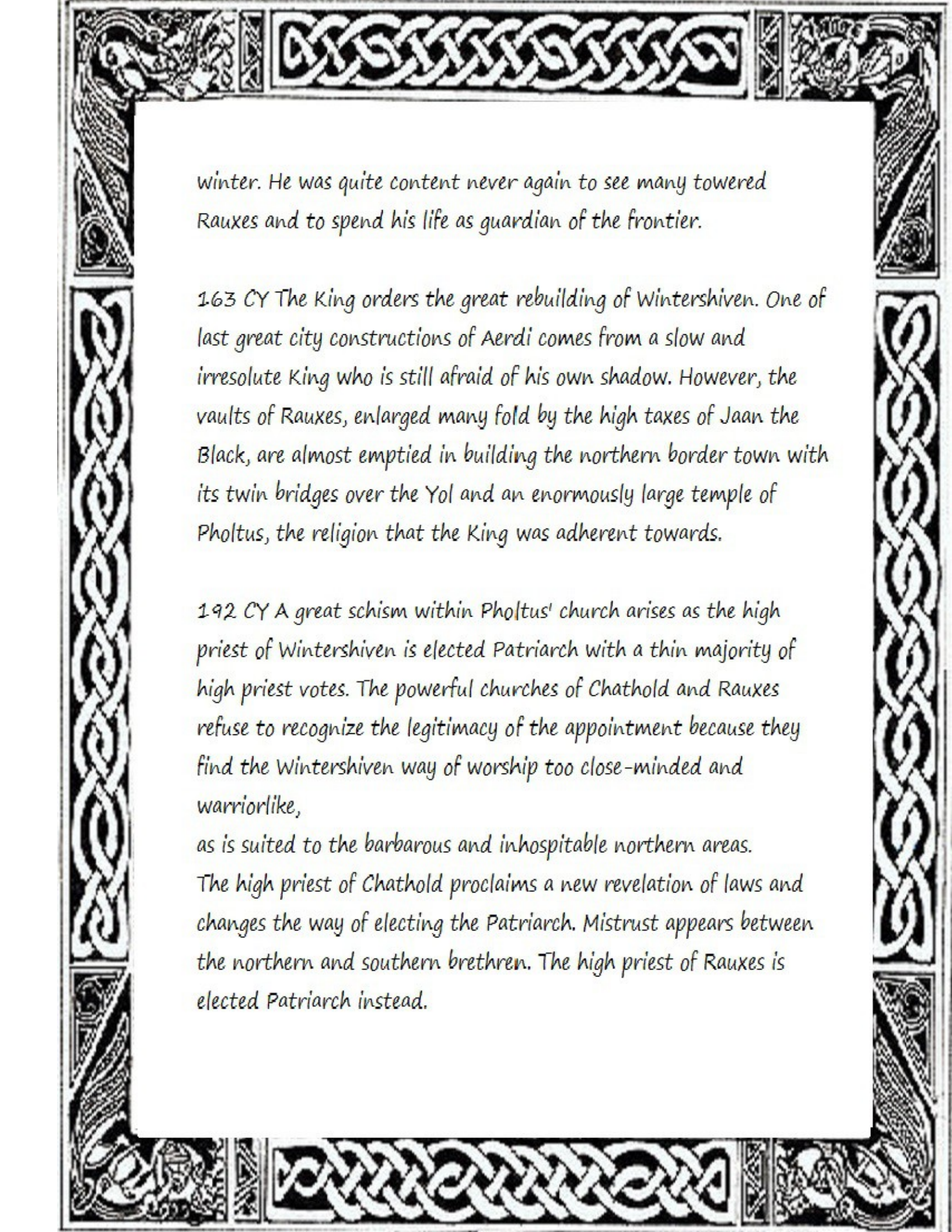
In the early spring, Darmen strikes and no help comes for the besieged baron of Mentrey from his Garasteth cousins and that city soon falls to the rebels. Garasteth power over the South Province is crippled. The Companion Guard decides not to fight and so the regent is brought to quite a dire situation and forced to send his son to the safety of Rel Mord when finally a coach from Chathold arrives carrying Heimer Tossier, Pholtus' new Patriarch. He, along with the other two Patriarchs and several Cranden mages invite all noblemen to a second Council of Rel Deven to elect a new Overking. The nobles assemble but this time things spin out of the control of the imperial sages and Patriarchs. Long and disgusting bargaining with power and titles begins. For two months various noblemen are engaged in endless discussions on who should be king. First there is almost general consensus on excluding Ebbert and his son from a bid for the



Kingship. This done, discussion continues until finally in late July when Felix Rax, one of the more prominent Rax noblemen known for his sweet tongue and beautiful face but also for his enormous wealth, succeeds in winning more than half of the elector voices. Fearing new civil war and dreading even longer negotiations the Patriarchs order the electors to vote and so a Rax nobleman is crowned as King Felix I Rax-Nyrond in Rauxes, in Goodmonth of this year. The Great Kingdom enters its byzantine stage.

150 CY Felix Rax dies of a heart attack in his forty-seventh year. The older of two remaining brothers refuses the crown and is granted, by his own request, title of Lord Warden of the northern frontier and leaves for Wintershiven to fight the barbarians. Felix begins to rewrite the Lex Aerdy so as to give nobles vastly more power over their serfs, resulting in massive peasant rebellions.

159 CY Kelerb becomes high King of Aerdy upon the deposing and house arrest of his younger brother the Overking Jaan, known as the Black King and the Leech of Rauxes for his ruinous taxation of the peasantry, by an army of Nyronde and the arch-mages of Rel Deven and the High Court Mage, the Olve Estrandir. Kelerb is a broken man. His brother had intimidated him into leaving the court and a life of easiness that he was used to and sent him to the furthest north to the most inhospitable part of the empire. There Kelerb never really accommodated to his new subjects and the harsh weather and hardness of life to all, him included. However, with time he started to like the frozen Yol and the tower of Wintershiven in



winter. He was quite content never again to see many towered Rauxes and to spend his life as guardian of the frontier.

163 CY The King orders the great rebuilding of Wintershiven. One of last great city constructions of Aerdi comes from a slow and irresolute King who is still afraid of his own shadow. However, the vaults of Rauxes, enlarged many fold by the high taxes of Jaan the Black, are almost emptied in building the northern border town with its twin bridges over the Yol and an enormously large temple of Pholtus, the religion that the King was adherent towards.

192 CY A great schism within Pholtus' church arises as the high priest of Wintershiven is elected Patriarch with a thin majority of high priest votes. The powerful churches of Chathold and Rauxes refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the appointment because they find the Wintershiven way of worship too close-minded and warriorlike, as is suited to the barbarous and inhospitable northern areas. The high priest of Chathold proclaims a new revelation of laws and changes the way of electing the Patriarch. Mistrust appears between the northern and southern brethren. The high priest of Rauxes is elected Patriarch instead.



St. Ceril battles the death knight Sir Maeril of Naelax

The Age of Sorrow and the Establishment of the Theocracy of
the Pale

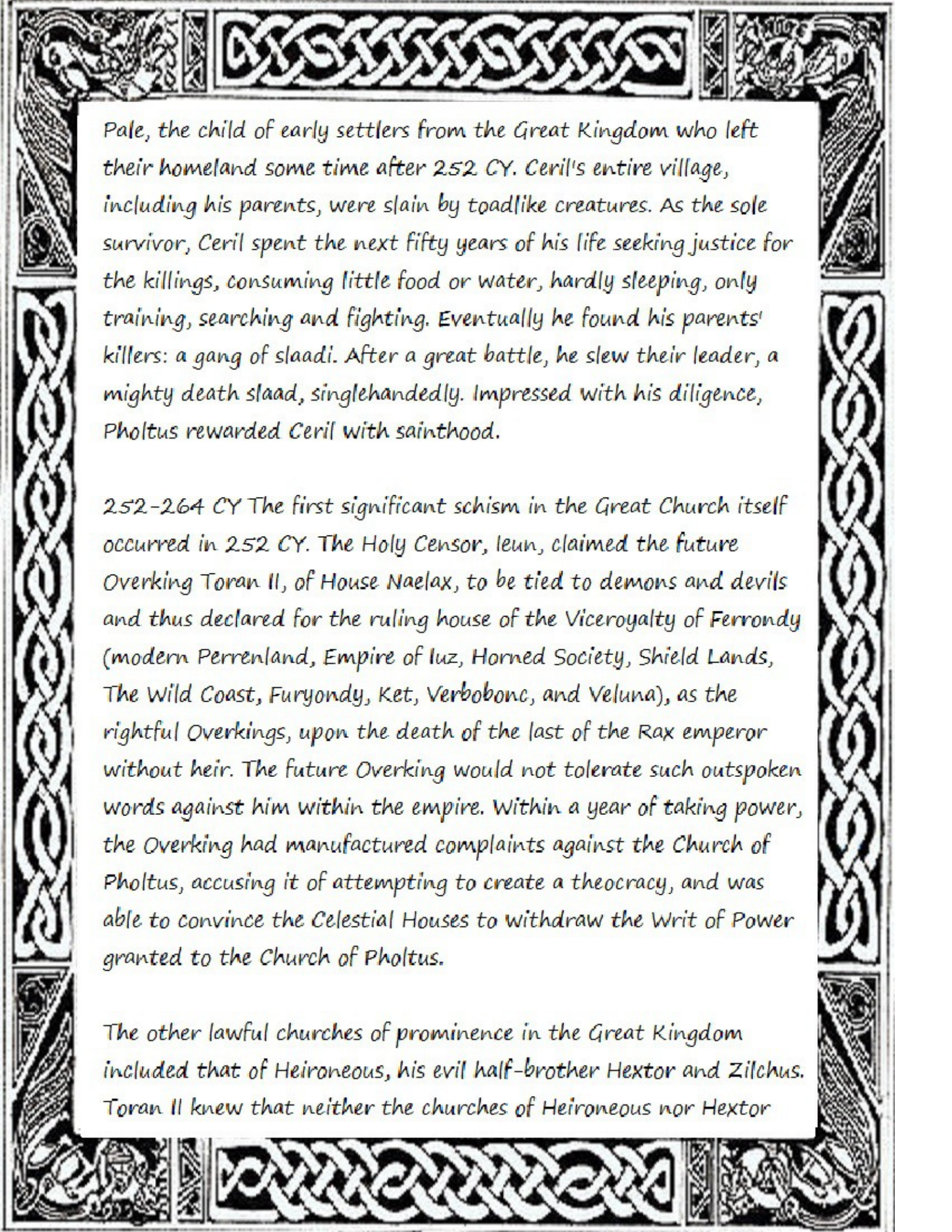
"The Prelate's Pledge"

"From the mountains of the west, To the forests of the south and east. I pledge my spirit and soul, To the breast of Pholtus. His law shall be heard And his light shall be protecting. The Pale is his light To the world That shines from the sun and the moon That he so set To show the One True Way. The Prelate knows the Path That Pholtus has for the Fatherland And we will keep our faith And never waiver from the Blinding Light That is the Path to Pholtus."

213 CY Age of Great Sorrow commences as a most terrible plague strikes Flanaess. Probably brought from the Amedio jungle by some Keolandish explorers, the plague strikes first southern Veluna and then spreads through the Great Kingdom, killing every fourth person in it's path. Clerics of Pholtus contributed their help to those cities in which the population is mostly Pholtan in their beliefs. Massive migrations towards Wintershiven begin.

219 CY Rel Astra is stricken with the terrible plague. In this year over seven thousand (more then one-third) of the inhabitants die. The Garasteth noble is replaced with the Censor of Pholtus as effective ruler of the city in return for the help in stopping the disease.

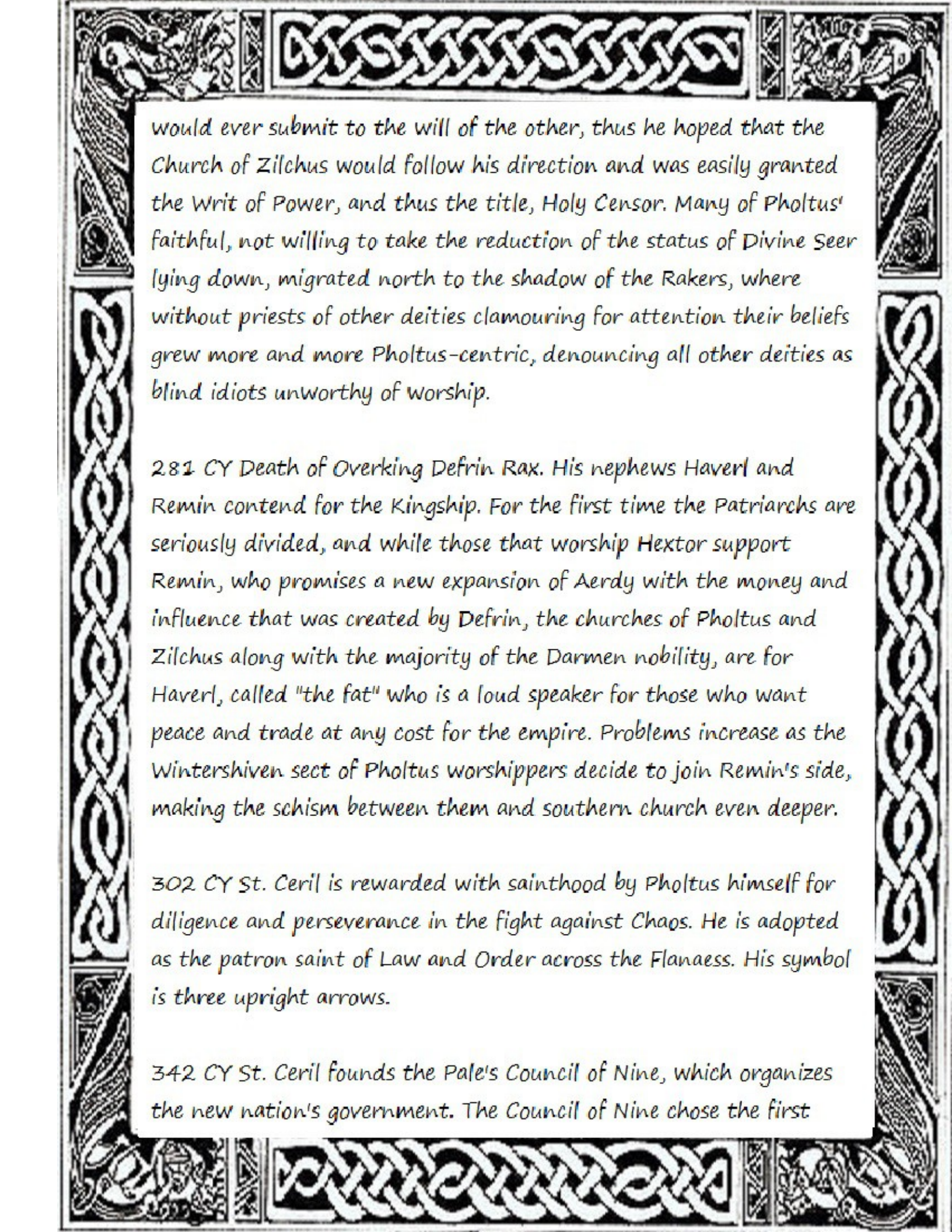
circa 252 CY Ceril was an altar boy in a village in what is now the



Pale, the child of early settlers from the Great Kingdom who left their homeland some time after 252 CY. Ceril's entire village, including his parents, were slain by toadlike creatures. As the sole survivor, Ceril spent the next fifty years of his life seeking justice for the killings, consuming little food or water, hardly sleeping, only training, searching and fighting. Eventually he found his parents' killers: a gang of slaadi. After a great battle, he slew their leader, a mighty death slaad, singlehandedly. Impressed with his diligence, Pholtus rewarded Ceril with sainthood.

252-264 CY The first significant schism in the Great Church itself occurred in 252 CY. The Holy Censor, leun, claimed the future Overking Toran II, of House Naelax, to be tied to demons and devils and thus declared for the ruling house of the Viceroyalty of Ferrondy (modern Perrenland, Empire of Iuz, Horned Society, Shield Lands, The Wild Coast, Furyondy, Ket, Verbobonc, and Veluna), as the rightful Overkings, upon the death of the last of the Rax emperor without heir. The future Overking would not tolerate such outspoken words against him within the empire. Within a year of taking power, the Overking had manufactured complaints against the Church of Pholtus, accusing it of attempting to create a theocracy, and was able to convince the Celestial Houses to withdraw the Writ of Power granted to the Church of Pholtus.

The other lawful churches of prominence in the Great Kingdom included that of Heironeous, his evil half-brother Hextor and Zilchus. Toran II knew that neither the churches of Heironeous nor Hextor

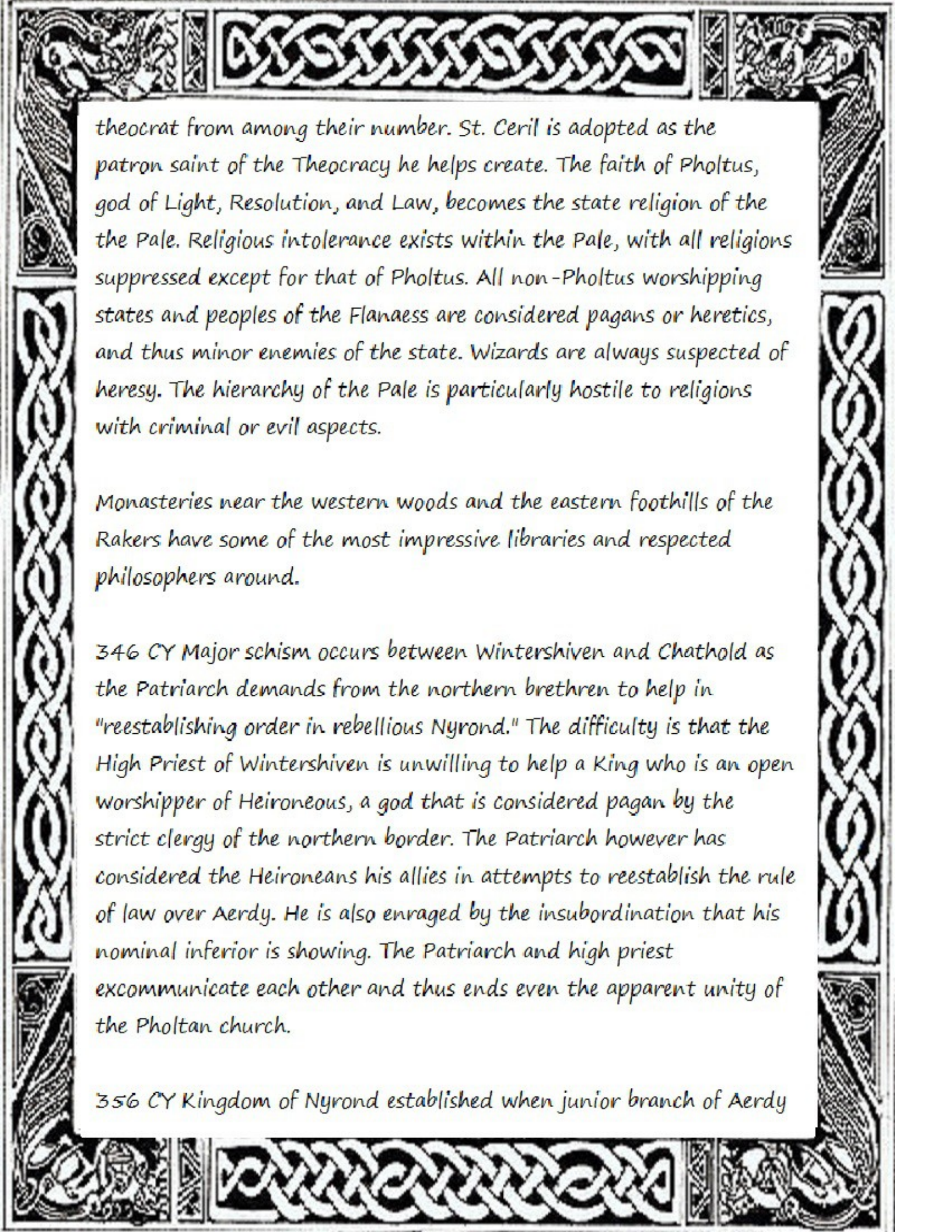


would ever submit to the will of the other, thus he hoped that the Church of Zilchus would follow his direction and was easily granted the Writ of Power, and thus the title, Holy Censor. Many of Pholtus' faithful, not willing to take the reduction of the status of Divine Seer lying down, migrated north to the shadow of the Rakers, where without priests of other deities clamouring for attention their beliefs grew more and more Pholtus-centric, denouncing all other deities as blind idiots unworthy of worship.

281 CY Death of Overking Defrin Rax. His nephews Haverl and Remin contend for the Kingship. For the first time the Patriarchs are seriously divided, and while those that worship Hextor support Remin, who promises a new expansion of Aerdy with the money and influence that was created by Defrin, the churches of Pholtus and Zilchus along with the majority of the Darmen nobility, are for Haverl, called "the fat" who is a loud speaker for those who want peace and trade at any cost for the empire. Problems increase as the Wintershiven sect of Pholtus worshippers decide to join Remin's side, making the schism between them and southern church even deeper.

302 CY St. Ceril is rewarded with sainthood by Pholtus himself for diligence and perseverance in the fight against Chaos. He is adopted as the patron saint of Law and Order across the Flanaess. His symbol is three upright arrows.

342 CY St. Ceril founds the Pale's Council of Nine, which organizes the new nation's government. The Council of Nine chose the first

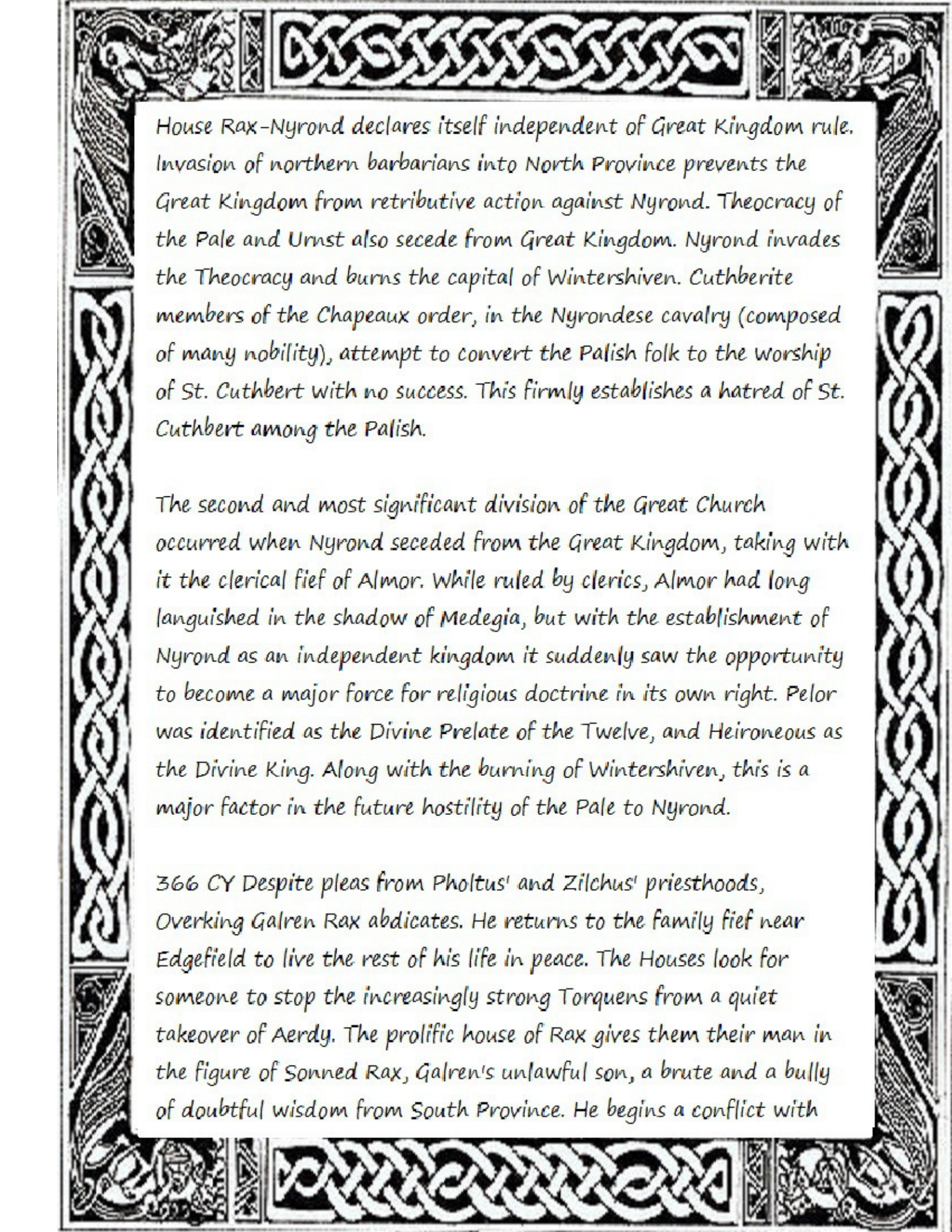


theocrat from among their number. St. Ceril is adopted as the patron saint of the Theocracy he helps create. The faith of Pholtus, god of Light, Resolution, and Law, becomes the state religion of the the Pale. Religious intolerance exists within the Pale, with all religions suppressed except for that of Pholtus. All non-Pholtus worshipping states and peoples of the Flanaess are considered pagans or heretics, and thus minor enemies of the state. Wizards are always suspected of heresy. The hierarchy of the Pale is particularly hostile to religions with criminal or evil aspects.

Monasteries near the western woods and the eastern foothills of the Rakers have some of the most impressive libraries and respected philosophers around.

346 CY Major schism occurs between Wintershiven and Chathold as the Patriarch demands from the northern brethren to help in "reestablishing order in rebellious Nyronnd." The difficulty is that the High Priest of Wintershiven is unwilling to help a King who is an open worshipper of Heironeous, a god that is considered pagan by the strict clergy of the northern border. The Patriarch however has considered the Heironeans his allies in attempts to reestablish the rule of law over Aerdy. He is also enraged by the insubordination that his nominal inferior is showing. The Patriarch and high priest excommunicate each other and thus ends even the apparent unity of the Pholtan church.

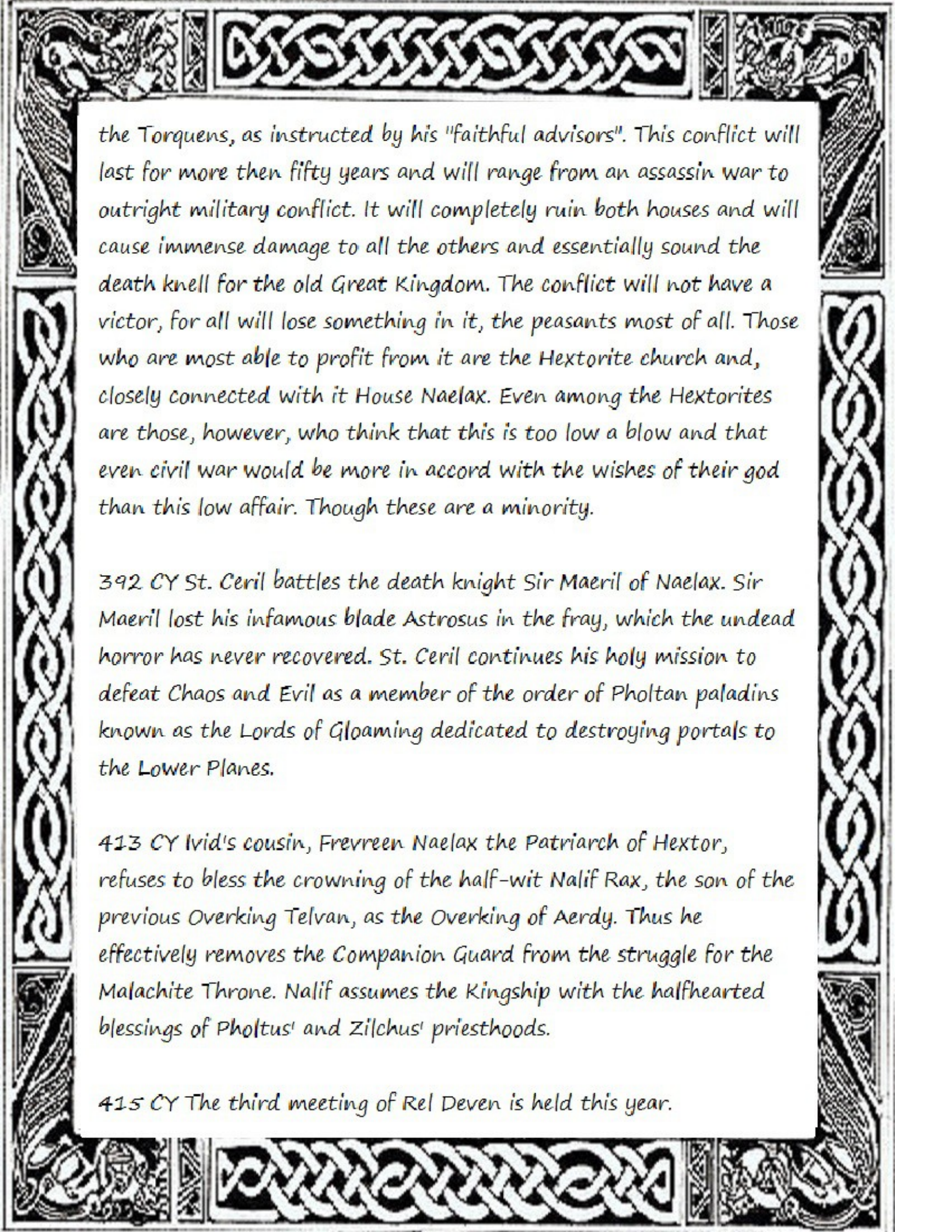
356 CY Kingdom of Nyronnd established when junior branch of Aerdy



House Rax-Nyronde declares itself independent of Great Kingdom rule. Invasion of northern barbarians into North Province prevents the Great Kingdom from retributive action against Nyronde. Theocracy of the Pale and Urnst also secede from Great Kingdom. Nyronde invades the Theocracy and burns the capital of Wintershiven. Cuthberite members of the Chapeaux order, in the Nyronde cavalry (composed of many nobility), attempt to convert the Palish folk to the worship of St. Cuthbert with no success. This firmly establishes a hatred of St. Cuthbert among the Palish.

The second and most significant division of the Great Church occurred when Nyronde seceded from the Great Kingdom, taking with it the clerical fief of Almor. While ruled by clerics, Almor had long languished in the shadow of Medegia, but with the establishment of Nyronde as an independent kingdom it suddenly saw the opportunity to become a major force for religious doctrine in its own right. Pelor was identified as the Divine Prelate of the Twelve, and Heironeous as the Divine King. Along with the burning of Wintershiven, this is a major factor in the future hostility of the Pale to Nyronde.

366 CY Despite pleas from Pholtus' and Zilchus' priesthods, Overking Galren Rax abdicates. He returns to the family fief near Edgefield to live the rest of his life in peace. The Houses look for someone to stop the increasingly strong Torquens from a quiet takeover of Aerdy. The prolific house of Rax gives them their man in the figure of Sonned Rax, Galren's unlawful son, a brute and a bully of doubtful wisdom from South Province. He begins a conflict with

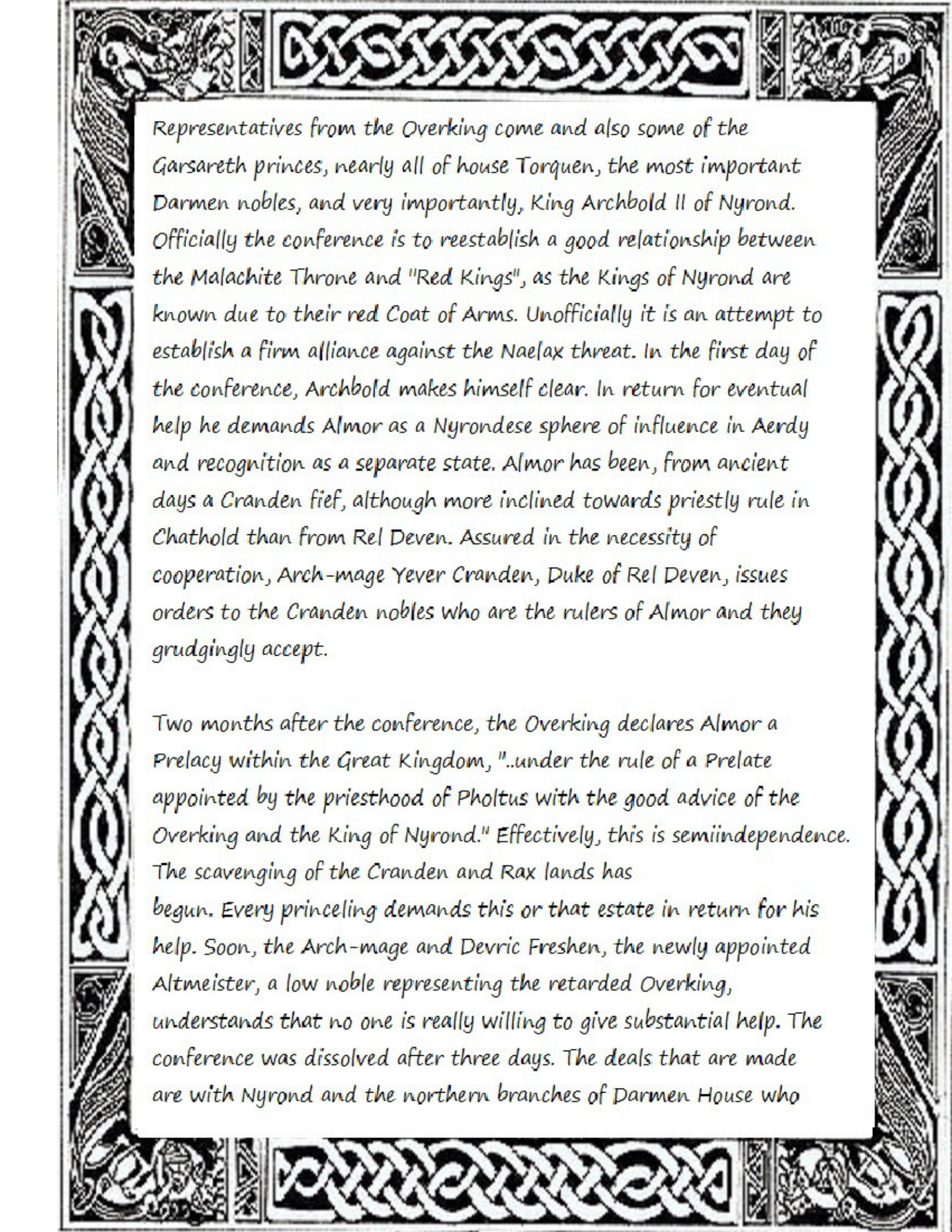


the Torquens, as instructed by his "faithful advisors". This conflict will last for more than fifty years and will range from an assassin war to outright military conflict. It will completely ruin both houses and will cause immense damage to all the others and essentially sound the death knell for the old Great Kingdom. The conflict will not have a victor, for all will lose something in it, the peasants most of all. Those who are most able to profit from it are the Hextorite church and, closely connected with it House Naelax. Even among the Hextorites are those, however, who think that this is too low a blow and that even civil war would be more in accord with the wishes of their god than this low affair. Though these are a minority.

392 CY St. Ceril battles the death knight Sir Maeril of Naelax. Sir Maeril lost his infamous blade Astrosus in the fray, which the undead horror has never recovered. St. Ceril continues his holy mission to defeat Chaos and Evil as a member of the order of Pholtan paladins known as the Lords of Gloaming dedicated to destroying portals to the Lower Planes.

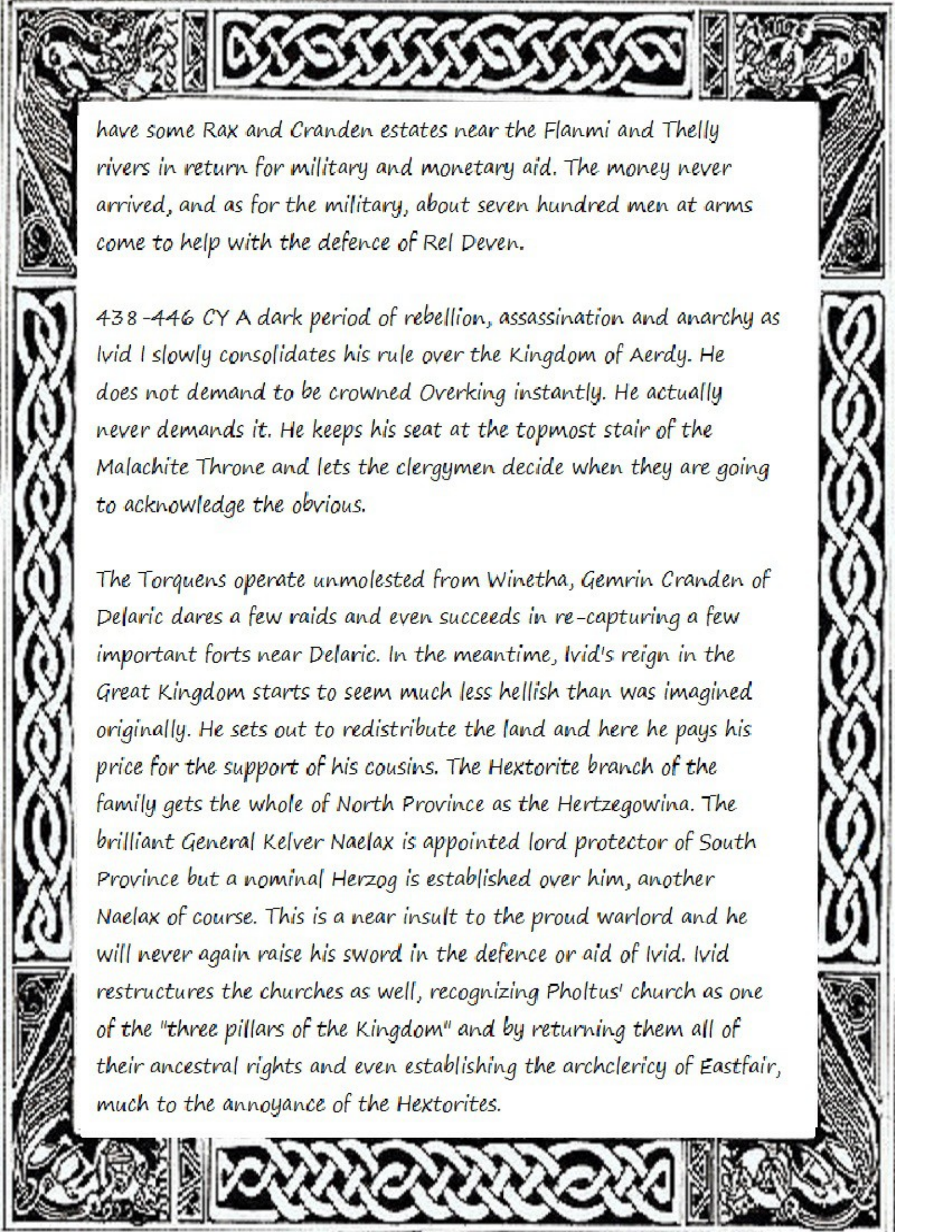
413 CY Ivid's cousin, Frevreen Naelax the Patriarch of Hextor, refuses to bless the crowning of the half-wit Nalif Rax, the son of the previous Overking Telvan, as the Overking of Aerdy. Thus he effectively removes the Companion Guard from the struggle for the Malachite Throne. Nalif assumes the Kingship with the halfhearted blessings of Pholtus' and Zilchus' priesthoods.

415 CY The third meeting of Rel Deven is held this year.



Representatives from the Overking come and also some of the Garsareth princes, nearly all of house Torquen, the most important Darmen nobles, and very importantly, King Archbold II of Nyronnd. Officially the conference is to reestablish a good relationship between the Malachite Throne and "Red Kings", as the Kings of Nyronnd are known due to their red Coat of Arms. Unofficially it is an attempt to establish a firm alliance against the Naelax threat. In the first day of the conference, Archbold makes himself clear. In return for eventual help he demands Almor as a Nyronndese sphere of influence in Aerdy and recognition as a separate state. Almor has been, from ancient days a Cranden fief, although more inclined towards priestly rule in Chathold than from Rel Deven. Assured in the necessity of cooperation, Arch-mage Yever Cranden, Duke of Rel Deven, issues orders to the Cranden nobles who are the rulers of Almor and they grudgingly accept.

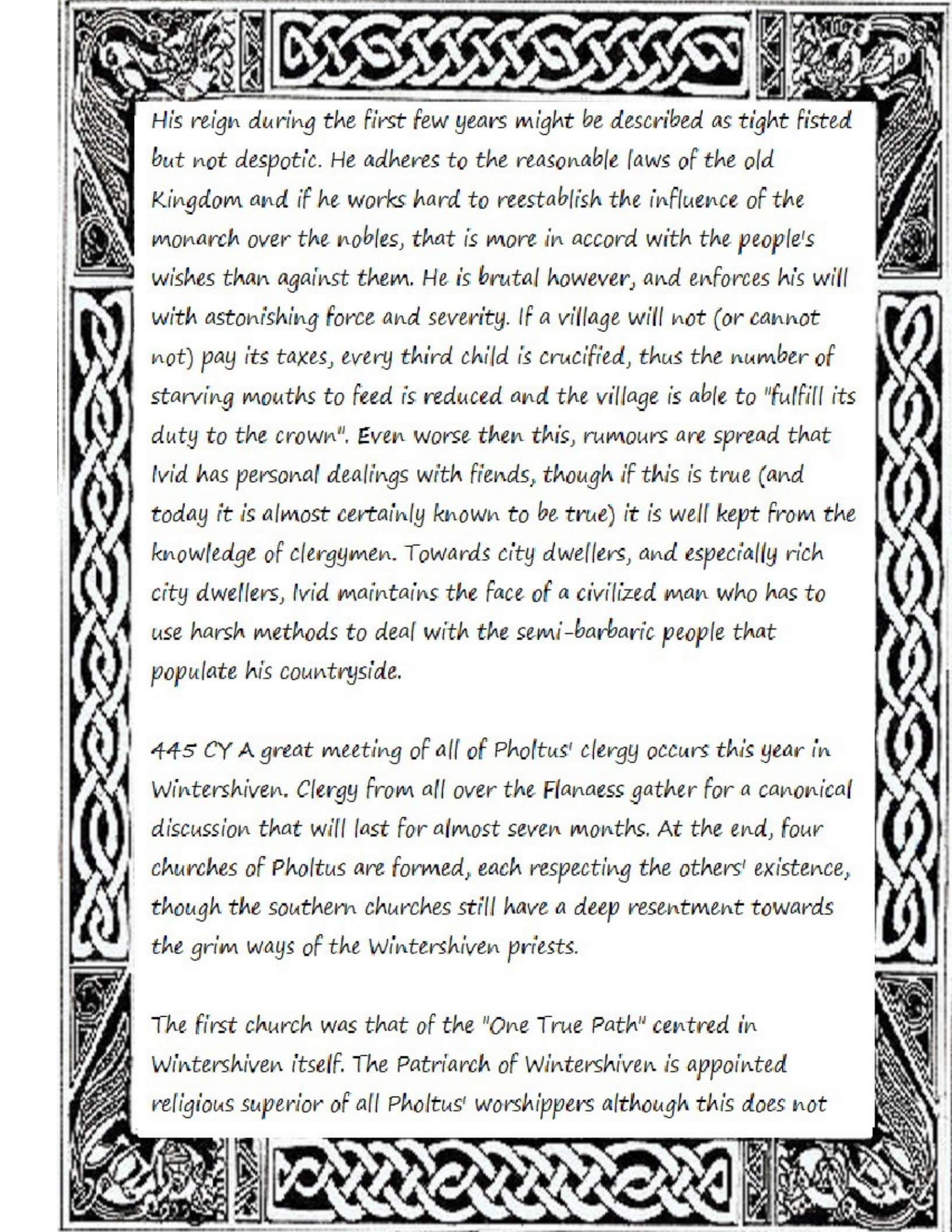
Two months after the conference, the Overking declares Almor a Prelacy within the Great Kingdom, "...under the rule of a Prelate appointed by the priesthood of Pholtus with the good advice of the Overking and the King of Nyronnd." Effectively, this is semiindependence. The scavenging of the Cranden and Rax lands has begun. Every princeling demands this or that estate in return for his help. Soon, the Arch-mage and Devric Freshen, the newly appointed Altmeister, a low noble representing the retarded Overking, understands that no one is really willing to give substantial help. The conference was dissolved after three days. The deals that are made are with Nyronnd and the northern branches of Darmen House who



have some Rax and Cranden estates near the Flanmi and Thelly rivers in return for military and monetary aid. The money never arrived, and as for the military, about seven hundred men at arms come to help with the defence of Rel Deven.

438-446 CY A dark period of rebellion, assassination and anarchy as Ivid I slowly consolidates his rule over the Kingdom of Aerdy. He does not demand to be crowned Overking instantly. He actually never demands it. He keeps his seat at the topmost stair of the Malachite Throne and lets the clergymen decide when they are going to acknowledge the obvious.

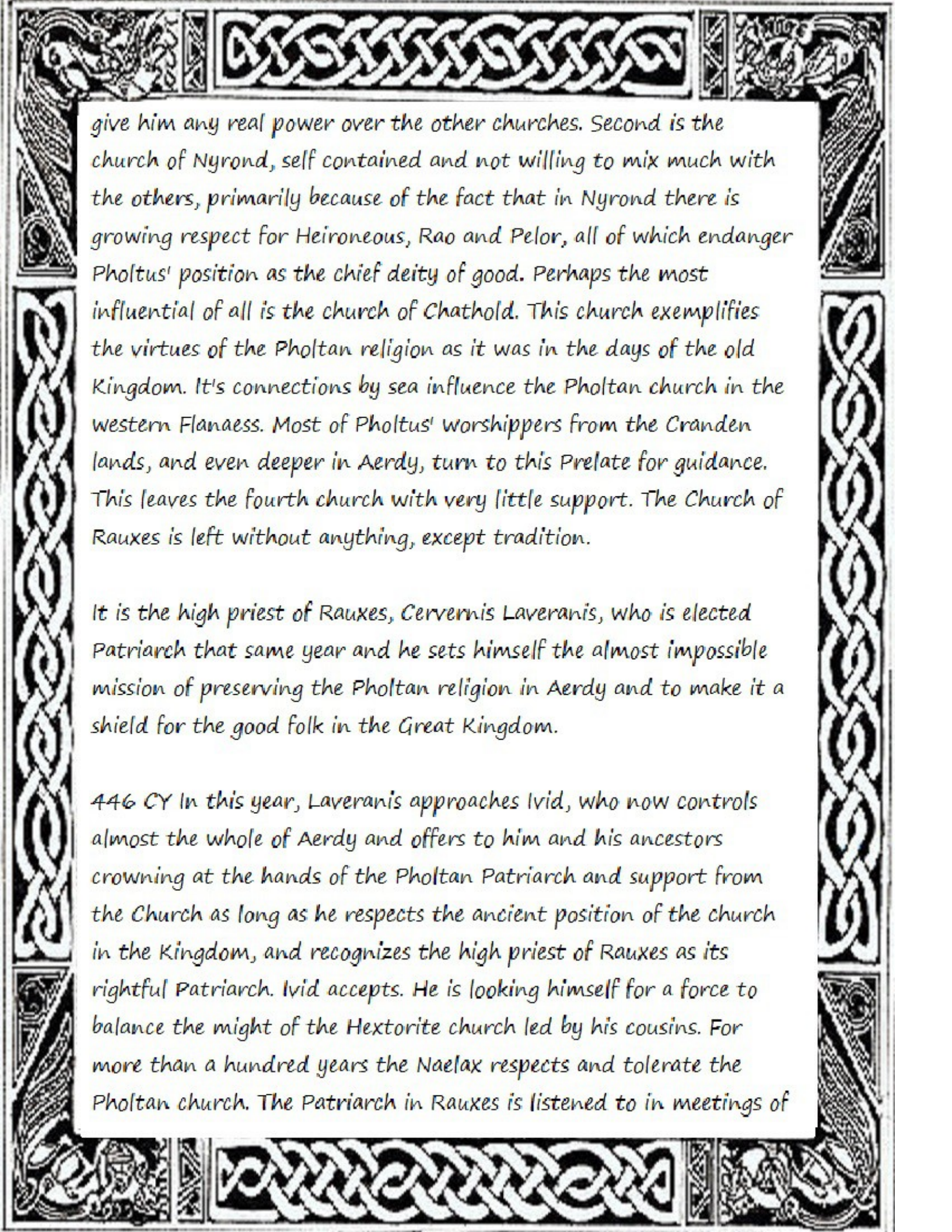
The Torquens operate unmolested from Winetha, Gemrin Cranden of Delaric dares a few raids and even succeeds in re-capturing a few important forts near Delaric. In the meantime, Ivid's reign in the Great Kingdom starts to seem much less hellish than was imagined originally. He sets out to redistribute the land and here he pays his price for the support of his cousins. The Hextorite branch of the family gets the whole of North Province as the Hertzegowina. The brilliant General Kelter Naelax is appointed lord protector of South Province but a nominal Herzog is established over him, another Naelax of course. This is a near insult to the proud warlord and he will never again raise his sword in the defence or aid of Ivid. Ivid restructures the churches as well, recognizing Pholtus' church as one of the "three pillars of the Kingdom" and by returning them all of their ancestral rights and even establishing the archclericy of Eastfair, much to the annoyance of the Hextorites.



His reign during the first few years might be described as tight fisted but not despotic. He adheres to the reasonable laws of the old Kingdom and if he works hard to reestablish the influence of the monarch over the nobles, that is more in accord with the people's wishes than against them. He is brutal however, and enforces his will with astonishing force and severity. If a village will not (or cannot not) pay its taxes, every third child is crucified, thus the number of starving mouths to feed is reduced and the village is able to "fulfill its duty to the crown". Even worse than this, rumours are spread that Ivid has personal dealings with fiends, though if this is true (and today it is almost certainly known to be true) it is well kept from the knowledge of clergymen. Towards city dwellers, and especially rich city dwellers, Ivid maintains the face of a civilized man who has to use harsh methods to deal with the semi-barbaric people that populate his countryside.

445 CY A great meeting of all of Pholtus' clergy occurs this year in Wintershiven. Clergy from all over the Flanaess gather for a canonical discussion that will last for almost seven months. At the end, four churches of Pholtus are formed, each respecting the others' existence, though the southern churches still have a deep resentment towards the grim ways of the Wintershiven priests.

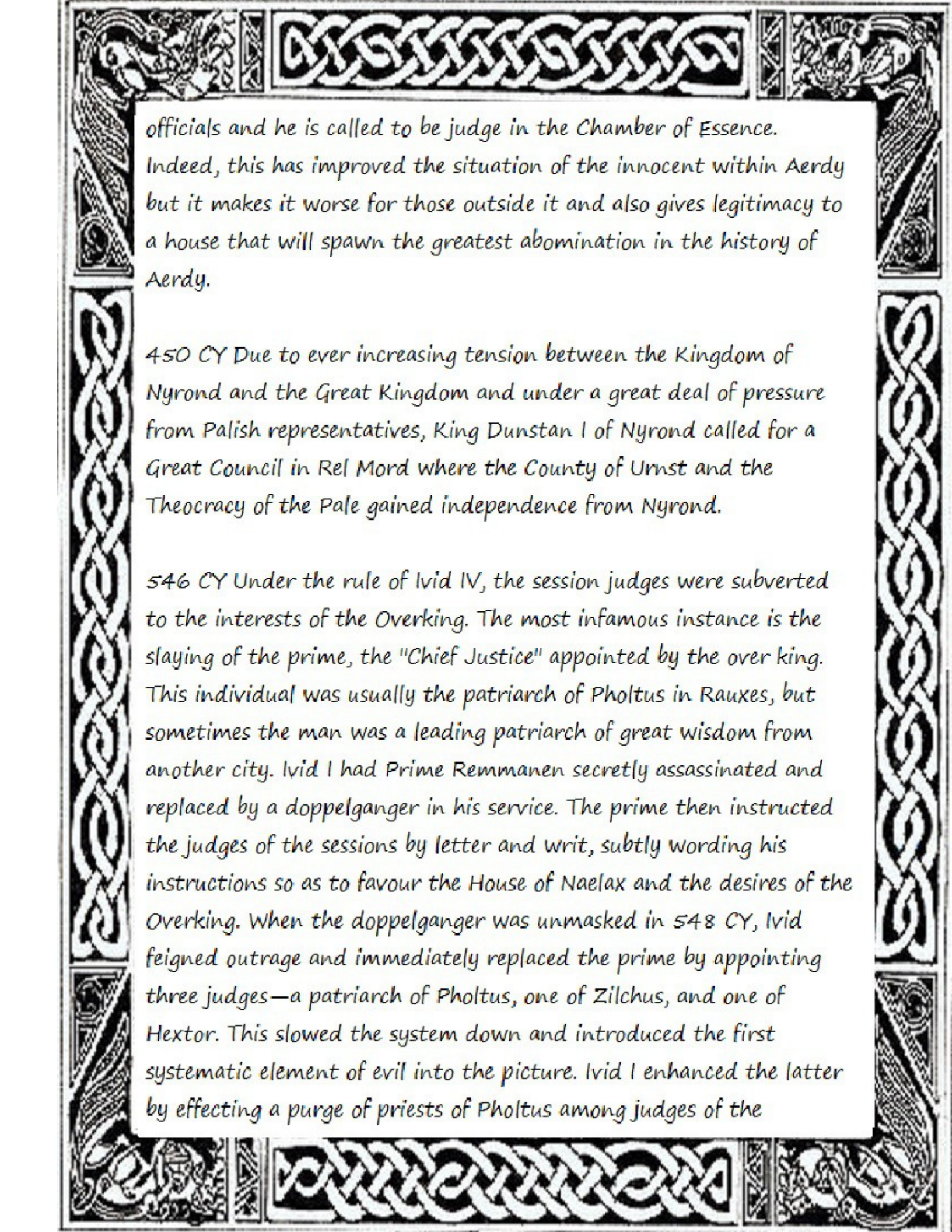
The first church was that of the "One True Path" centred in Wintershiven itself. The Patriarch of Wintershiven is appointed religious superior of all Pholtus' worshippers although this does not



give him any real power over the other churches. Second is the church of Nyronnd, self contained and not willing to mix much with the others, primarily because of the fact that in Nyronnd there is growing respect for Heironeous, Rao and Pelor, all of which endanger Pholtus' position as the chief deity of good. Perhaps the most influential of all is the church of Chathold. This church exemplifies the virtues of the Pholtan religion as it was in the days of the old Kingdom. It's connections by sea influence the Pholtan church in the western Flanaess. Most of Pholtus' worshippers from the Cranden lands, and even deeper in Aerdy, turn to this Prelate for guidance. This leaves the fourth church with very little support. The Church of Rauxes is left without anything, except tradition.

It is the high priest of Rauxes, Cervernis Laveranis, who is elected Patriarch that same year and he sets himself the almost impossible mission of preserving the Pholtan religion in Aerdy and to make it a shield for the good folk in the Great Kingdom.

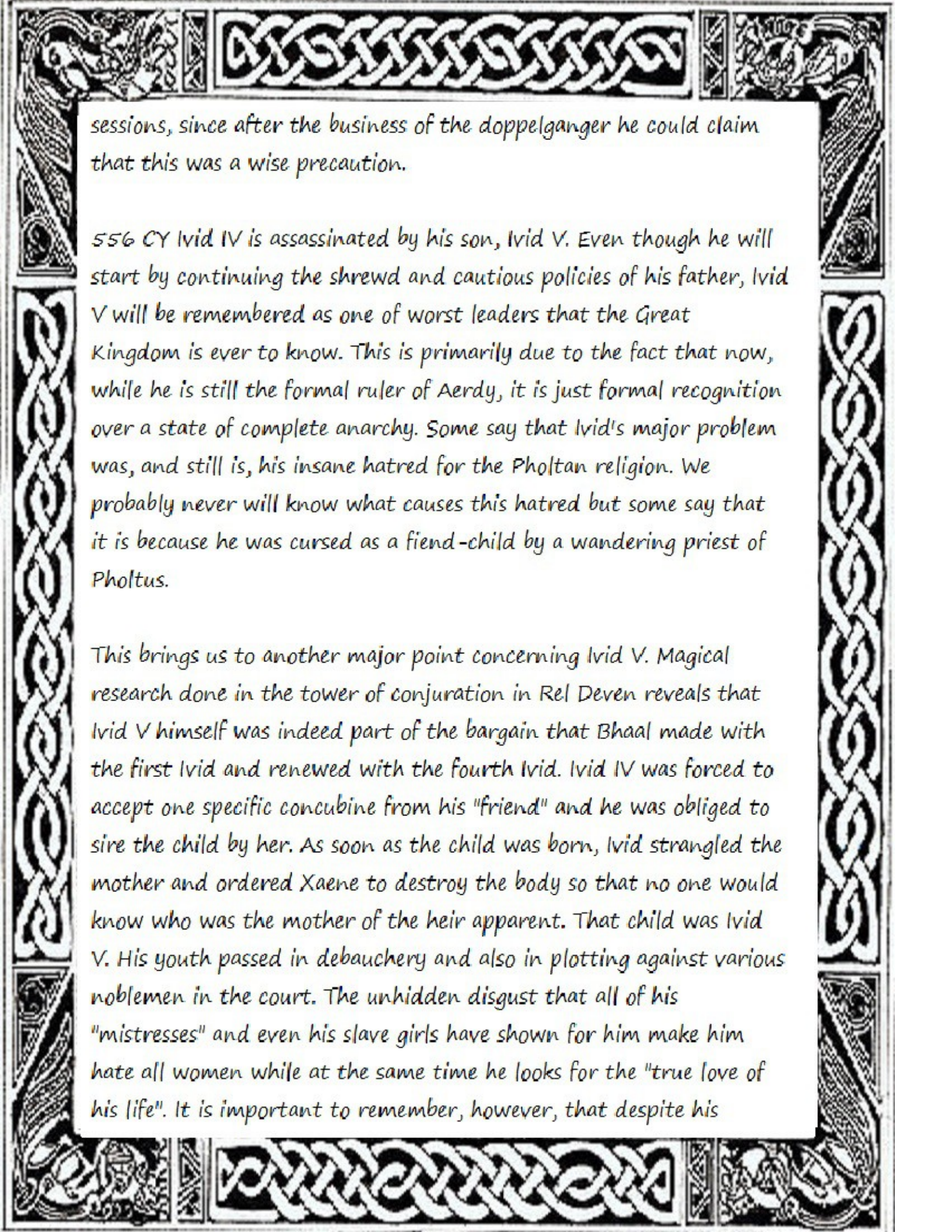
446 CY In this year, Laveranis approaches Ivid, who now controls almost the whole of Aerdy and offers to him and his ancestors crowning at the hands of the Pholtan Patriarch and support from the Church as long as he respects the ancient position of the church in the Kingdom, and recognizes the high priest of Rauxes as its rightful Patriarch. Ivid accepts. He is looking himself for a force to balance the might of the Hextorite church led by his cousins. For more than a hundred years the Naelax respects and tolerate the Pholtan church. The Patriarch in Rauxes is listened to in meetings of



officials and he is called to be judge in the Chamber of Essence. Indeed, this has improved the situation of the innocent within Aerdy but it makes it worse for those outside it and also gives legitimacy to a house that will spawn the greatest abomination in the history of Aerdy.

450 CY Due to ever increasing tension between the Kingdom of Nyronnd and the Great Kingdom and under a great deal of pressure from Palish representatives, King Dunstan I of Nyronnd called for a Great Council in Rel Mord where the County of Urnst and the Theocracy of the Pale gained independence from Nyronnd.

546 CY Under the rule of Ivid IV, the session judges were subverted to the interests of the Overking. The most infamous instance is the slaying of the prime, the "Chief Justice" appointed by the over king. This individual was usually the patriarch of Pholtus in Rauxes, but sometimes the man was a leading patriarch of great wisdom from another city. Ivid I had Prime Remmanen secretly assassinated and replaced by a doppelganger in his service. The prime then instructed the judges of the sessions by letter and writ, subtly wording his instructions so as to favour the House of Naelax and the desires of the Overking. When the doppelganger was unmasked in 548 CY, Ivid feigned outrage and immediately replaced the prime by appointing three judges—a patriarch of Pholtus, one of Zilchus, and one of Hextor. This slowed the system down and introduced the first systematic element of evil into the picture. Ivid I enhanced the latter by effecting a purge of priests of Pholtus among judges of the



sessions, since after the business of the doppelganger he could claim that this was a wise precaution.

556 CY Ivid IV is assassinated by his son, Ivid V. Even though he will start by continuing the shrewd and cautious policies of his father, Ivid V will be remembered as one of worst leaders that the Great Kingdom is ever to know. This is primarily due to the fact that now, while he is still the formal ruler of Aerdy, it is just formal recognition over a state of complete anarchy. Some say that Ivid's major problem was, and still is, his insane hatred for the Pholtan religion. We probably never will know what causes this hatred but some say that it is because he was cursed as a fiend-child by a wandering priest of Pholtus.

This brings us to another major point concerning Ivid V. Magical research done in the tower of conjuration in Rel Deven reveals that Ivid V himself was indeed part of the bargain that Bhaal made with the first Ivid and renewed with the fourth Ivid. Ivid IV was forced to accept one specific concubine from his "friend" and he was obliged to sire the child by her. As soon as the child was born, Ivid strangled the mother and ordered Xaene to destroy the body so that no one would know who was the mother of the heir apparent. That child was Ivid V. His youth passed in debauchery and also in plotting against various noblemen in the court. The unhidden disgust that all of his "mistresses" and even his slave girls have shown for him make him hate all women while at the same time he looks for the "true love of his life". It is important to remember, however, that despite his

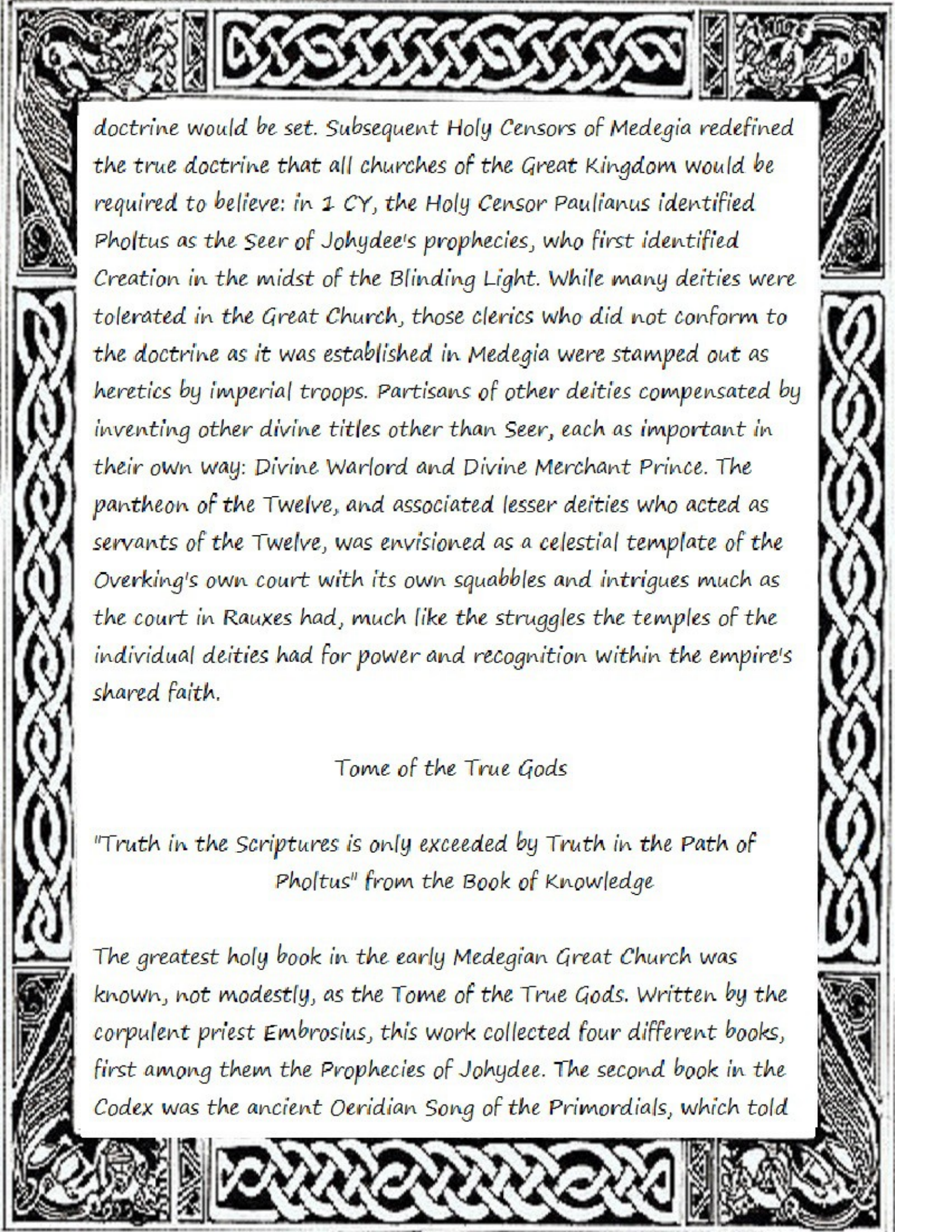
emotional instability and his outbursts of hysteria, Ivid is not at all a stupid man. He is an expert at low blows in politics, but he is unable to play the same game between the Pholtan and Hextorite church as his father had, and that will prove to be his downfall.

582 CY The Patriarch of Pholtus in Rauxes, Emasstus Carcosa, pronounced heresy on Ivid, denouncing him openly as being insane and allied with fiends. He called upon the servants of all non-evil powers to ally and oppose the Overking. Ivid had him arrested for treason and subversion and organized the systematic looting of temples of Pholtus in all lands, though in Ahlissa and Medegia he was defied in this matter. The fate of Emasstus is unknown but it is assumed he is suffering the Endless Death, forced to wear a Ring of Regeneration and tortured possibly forever. It is said that in the dungeons of Rauxes torturers are tormenting men whose grandfathers had tormented.

Holy See of Medegia

"There is but One True Path, and it is only through Pholtus that you will find it." from the Book of the Law

In the eastern Flanaess, where the Aeredi founded their Great Kingdom, religion has always been hierarchical and statist. When Prince Mikar of Rel Astra conquered the Medegian Bladelands, the resulting Kingdom of Aerdy was decreed the fulfillment of Johydee's prophecy and Medegia was declared the Holy See where all true

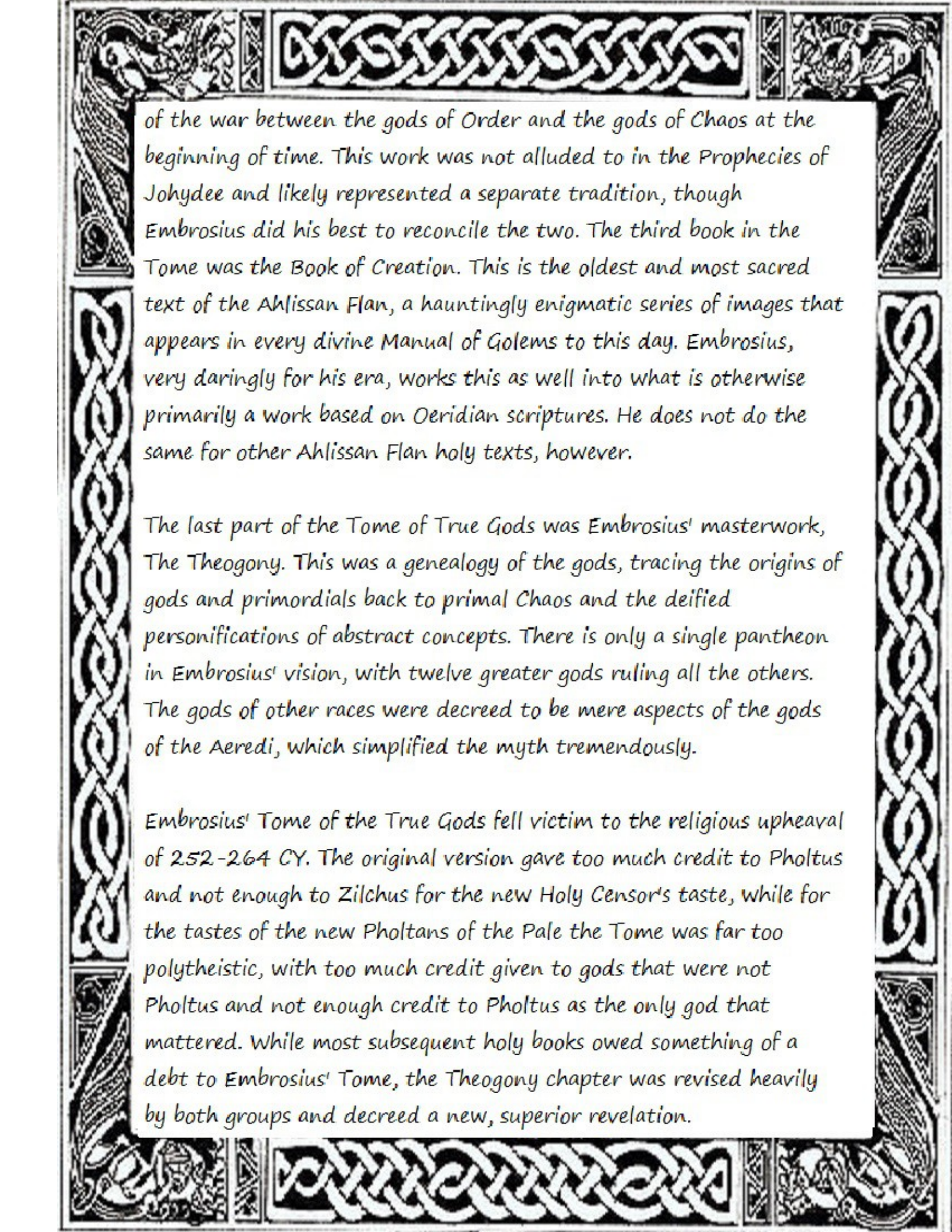


doctrine would be set. Subsequent Holy Censors of Medegia redefined the true doctrine that all churches of the Great Kingdom would be required to believe: in 1 CY, the Holy Censor Paulianus identified Pholtus as the Seer of Johydee's prophecies, who first identified Creation in the midst of the Blinding Light. While many deities were tolerated in the Great Church, those clerics who did not conform to the doctrine as it was established in Medegia were stamped out as heretics by imperial troops. Partisans of other deities compensated by inventing other divine titles other than Seer, each as important in their own way: Divine Warlord and Divine Merchant Prince. The pantheon of the Twelve, and associated lesser deities who acted as servants of the Twelve, was envisioned as a celestial template of the Overking's own court with its own squabbles and intrigues much as the court in Rauxes had, much like the struggles the temples of the individual deities had for power and recognition within the empire's shared faith.

Tome of the True Gods

"Truth in the Scriptures is only exceeded by Truth in the Path of Pholtus" from the Book of Knowledge

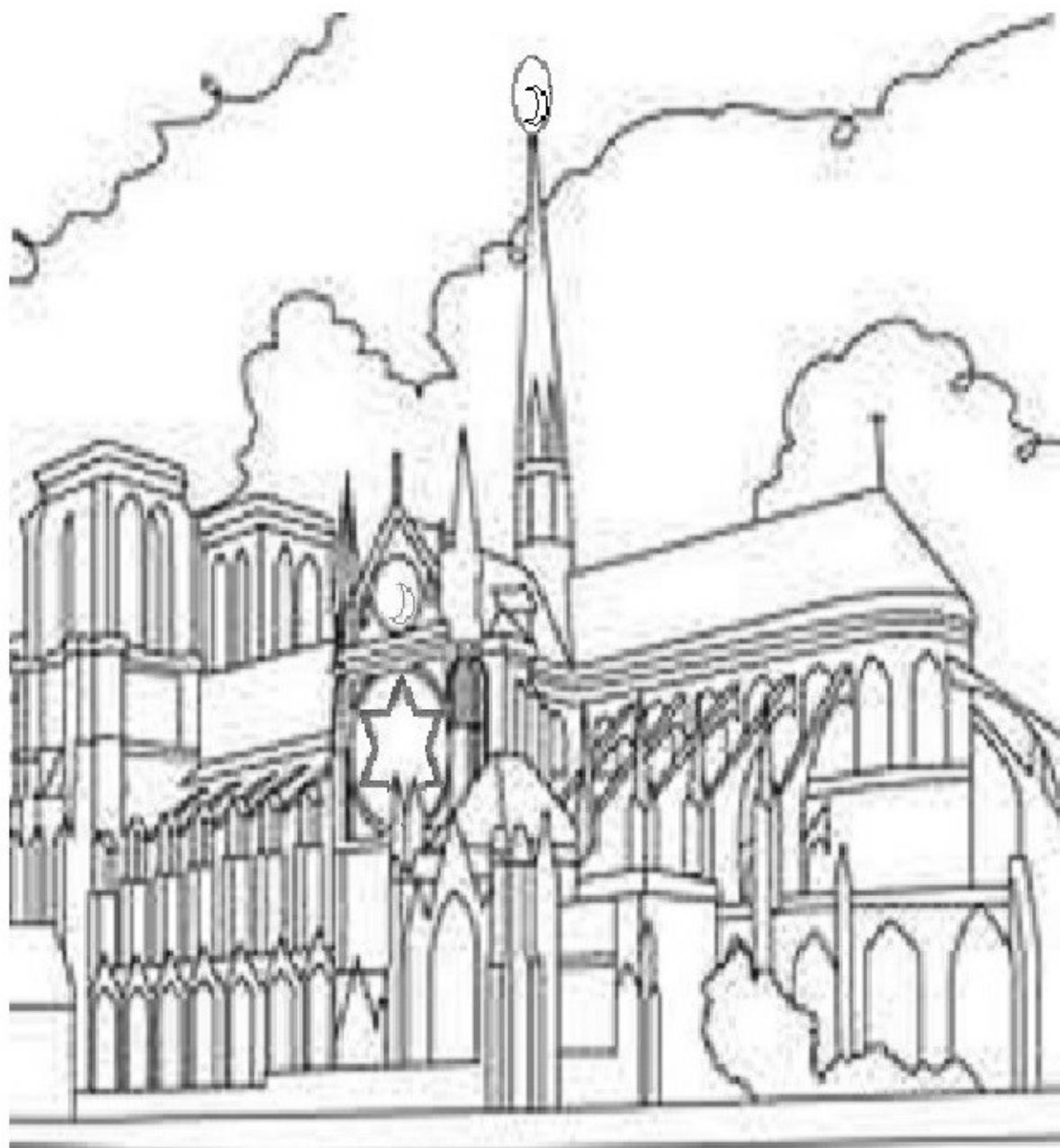
The greatest holy book in the early Medegian Great Church was known, not modestly, as the Tome of the True Gods. Written by the corpulent priest Embrosius, this work collected four different books, first among them the Prophecies of Johydee. The second book in the Codex was the ancient Oeridian Song of the Primordials, which told



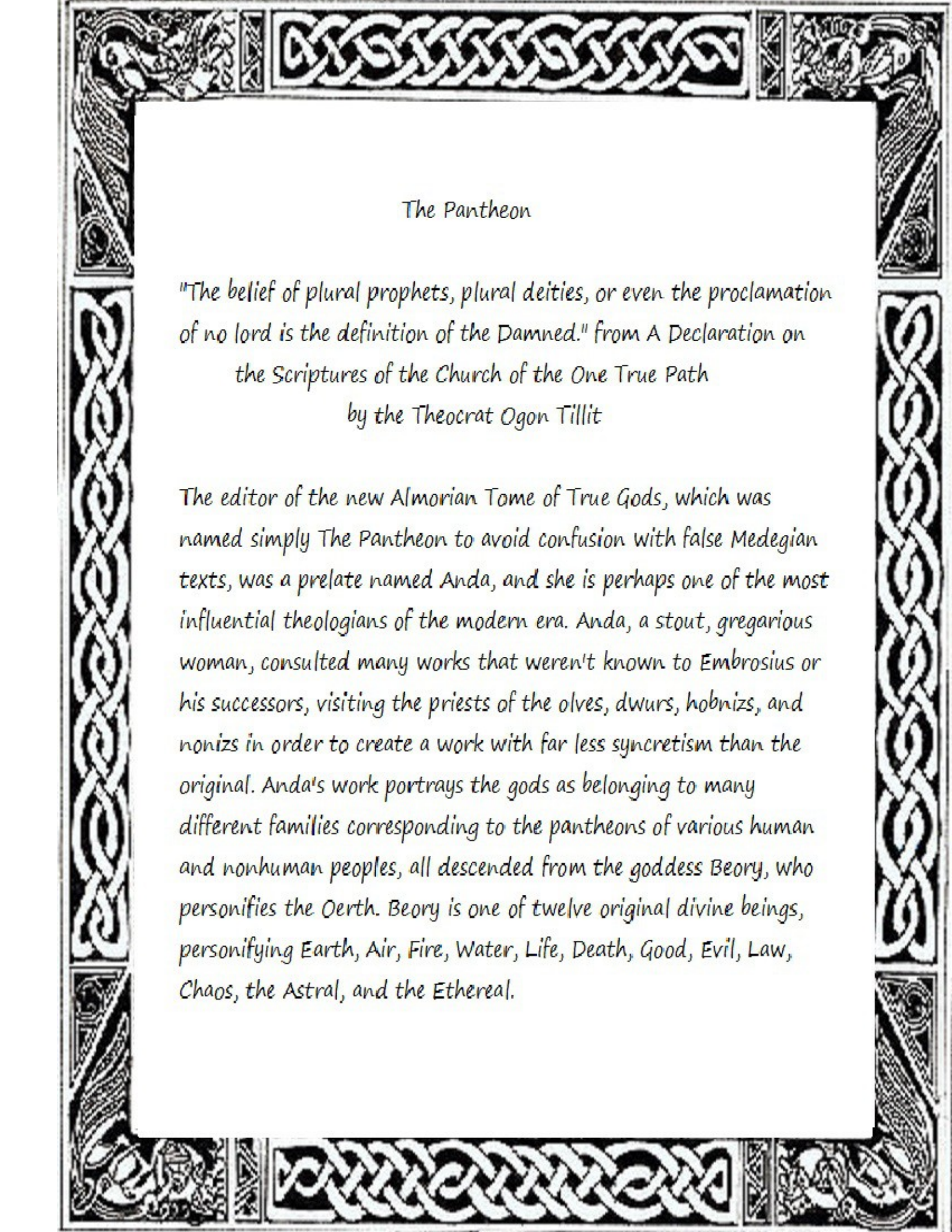
of the war between the gods of Order and the gods of Chaos at the beginning of time. This work was not alluded to in the Prophecies of Johydee and likely represented a separate tradition, though Embrosius did his best to reconcile the two. The third book in the Tome was the Book of Creation. This is the oldest and most sacred text of the Ahlissan Flan, a hauntingly enigmatic series of images that appears in every divine Manual of Golems to this day. Embrosius, very daringly for his era, works this as well into what is otherwise primarily a work based on Oeridian scriptures. He does not do the same for other Ahlissan Flan holy texts, however.

The last part of the Tome of True Gods was Embrosius' masterwork, The Theogony. This was a genealogy of the gods, tracing the origins of gods and primordials back to primal Chaos and the deified personifications of abstract concepts. There is only a single pantheon in Embrosius' vision, with twelve greater gods ruling all the others. The gods of other races were decreed to be mere aspects of the gods of the Aeredi, which simplified the myth tremendously.

Embrosius' Tome of the True Gods fell victim to the religious upheaval of 252-264 CY. The original version gave too much credit to Pholtus and not enough to Zilchus for the new Holy Censor's taste, while for the tastes of the new Pholtans of the Pale the Tome was far too polytheistic, with too much credit given to gods that were not Pholtus and not enough credit to Pholtus as the only god that mattered. While most subsequent holy books owed something of a debt to Embrosius' Tome, the Theogony chapter was revised heavily by both groups and decreed a new, superior revelation.



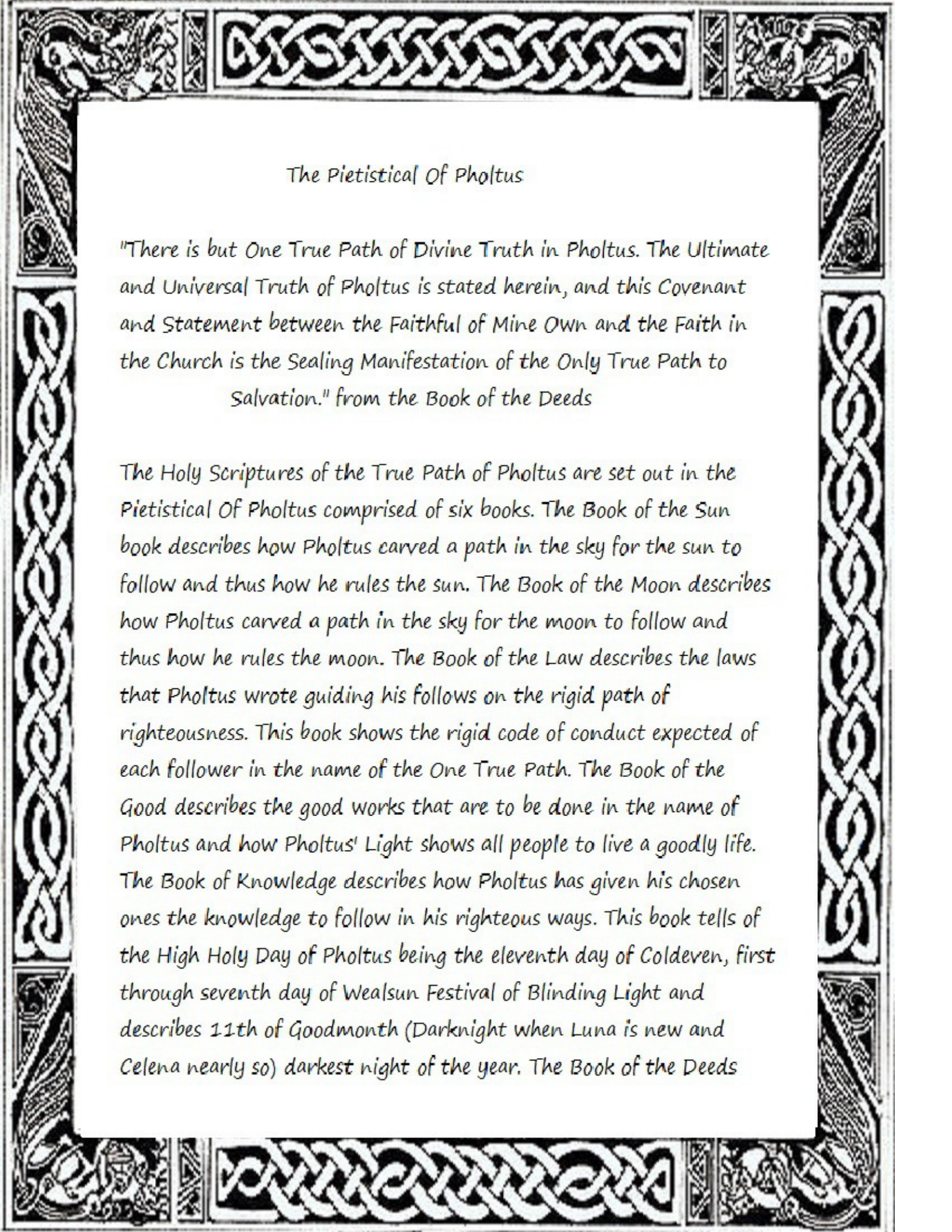
The Basilica of Light in Wintershiven



The Pantheon

*"The belief of plural prophets, plural deities, or even the proclamation of no lord is the definition of the Damned." from A Declaration on the Scriptures of the Church of the One True Path
by the Theocrat Ogon Tillit*

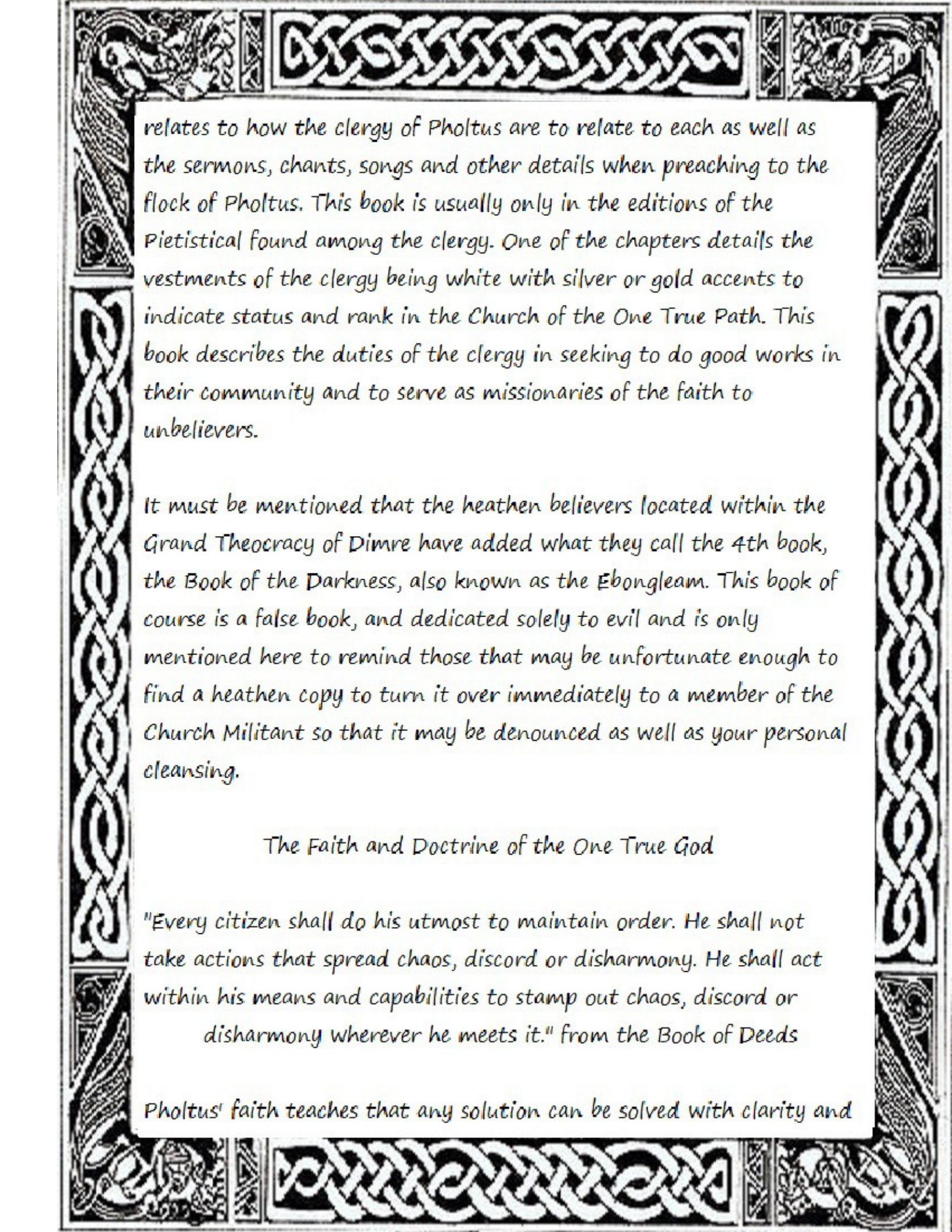
The editor of the new Almorian Tome of True Gods, which was named simply The Pantheon to avoid confusion with false Medegian texts, was a prelate named Anda, and she is perhaps one of the most influential theologians of the modern era. Anda, a stout, gregarious woman, consulted many works that weren't known to Embrosius or his successors, visiting the priests of the olves, dwurs, hobnizs, and nonizs in order to create a work with far less syncretism than the original. Anda's work portrays the gods as belonging to many different families corresponding to the pantheons of various human and nonhuman peoples, all descended from the goddess Beory, who personifies the Oerth. Beory is one of twelve original divine beings, personifying Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Life, Death, Good, Evil, Law, Chaos, the Astral, and the Ethereal.



The Pietistical Of Pholtus

"There is but One True Path of Divine Truth in Pholtus. The Ultimate and Universal Truth of Pholtus is stated herein, and this Covenant and Statement between the Faithful of Mine Own and the Faith in the Church is the Sealing Manifestation of the Only True Path to Salvation." from the Book of the Deeds

The Holy Scriptures of the True Path of Pholtus are set out in the Pietistical Of Pholtus comprised of six books. The Book of the Sun book describes how Pholtus carved a path in the sky for the sun to follow and thus how he rules the sun. The Book of the Moon describes how Pholtus carved a path in the sky for the moon to follow and thus how he rules the moon. The Book of the Law describes the laws that Pholtus wrote guiding his follows on the rigid path of righteousness. This book shows the rigid code of conduct expected of each follower in the name of the One True Path. The Book of the Good describes the good works that are to be done in the name of Pholtus and how Pholtus' Light shows all people to live a goodly life. The Book of Knowledge describes how Pholtus has given his chosen ones the knowledge to follow in his righteous ways. This book tells of the High Holy Day of Pholtus being the eleventh day of Coldeven, first through seventh day of Wealsun Festival of Blinding Light and describes 11th of Goodmonth (Darknight when Luna is new and Celena nearly so) darkest night of the year. The Book of the Deeds



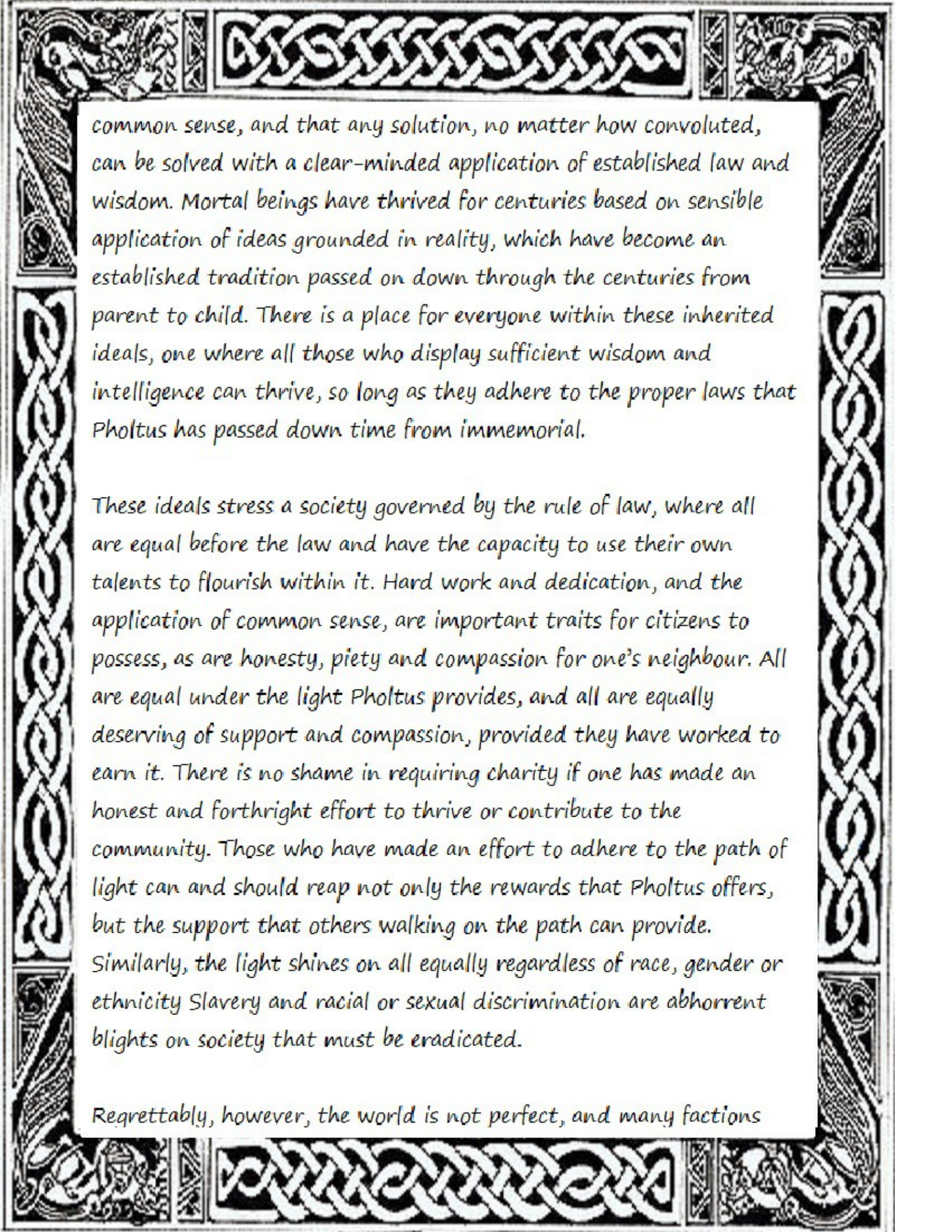
relates to how the clergy of Pholtus are to relate to each as well as the sermons, chants, songs and other details when preaching to the flock of Pholtus. This book is usually only in the editions of the Pietistical found among the clergy. One of the chapters details the vestments of the clergy being white with silver or gold accents to indicate status and rank in the Church of the One True Path. This book describes the duties of the clergy in seeking to do good works in their community and to serve as missionaries of the faith to unbelievers.

It must be mentioned that the heathen believers located within the Grand Theocracy of Dimre have added what they call the 4th book, the Book of the Darkness, also known as the Ebongleam. This book of course is a false book, and dedicated solely to evil and is only mentioned here to remind those that may be unfortunate enough to find a heathen copy to turn it over immediately to a member of the Church Militant so that it may be denounced as well as your personal cleansing.

The Faith and Doctrine of the One True God

"Every citizen shall do his utmost to maintain order. He shall not take actions that spread chaos, discord or disharmony. He shall act within his means and capabilities to stamp out chaos, discord or disharmony wherever he meets it." from the Book of Deeds

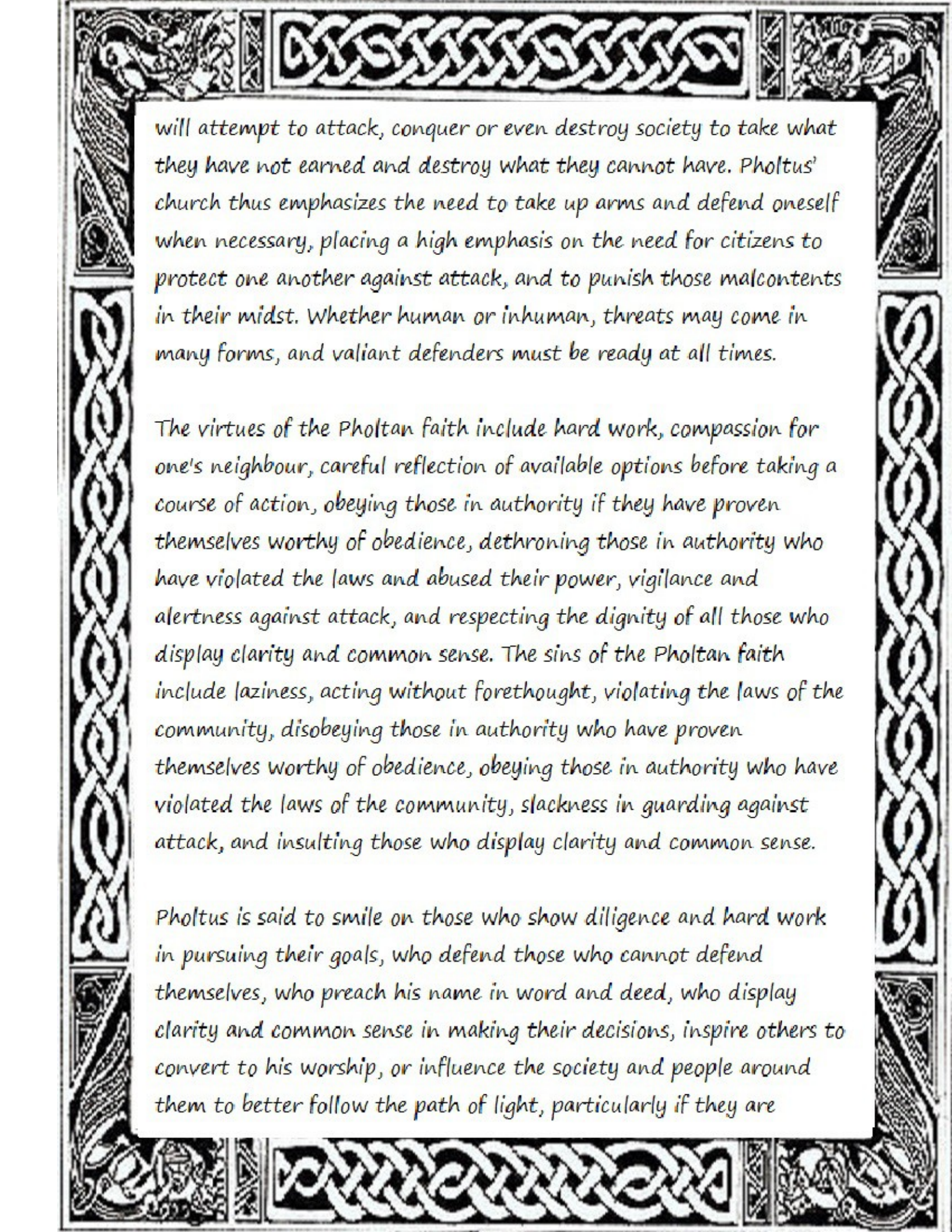
Pholtus' faith teaches that any solution can be solved with clarity and



common sense, and that any solution, no matter how convoluted, can be solved with a clear-minded application of established law and wisdom. Mortal beings have thrived for centuries based on sensible application of ideas grounded in reality, which have become an established tradition passed on down through the centuries from parent to child. There is a place for everyone within these inherited ideals, one where all those who display sufficient wisdom and intelligence can thrive, so long as they adhere to the proper laws that Pholtus has passed down time from immemorial.

These ideals stress a society governed by the rule of law, where all are equal before the law and have the capacity to use their own talents to flourish within it. Hard work and dedication, and the application of common sense, are important traits for citizens to possess, as are honesty, piety and compassion for one's neighbour. All are equal under the light Pholtus provides, and all are equally deserving of support and compassion, provided they have worked to earn it. There is no shame in requiring charity if one has made an honest and forthright effort to thrive or contribute to the community. Those who have made an effort to adhere to the path of light can and should reap not only the rewards that Pholtus offers, but the support that others walking on the path can provide. Similarly, the light shines on all equally regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. Slavery and racial or sexual discrimination are abhorrent blights on society that must be eradicated.

Regrettably, however, the world is not perfect, and many factions



will attempt to attack, conquer or even destroy society to take what they have not earned and destroy what they cannot have. Pholtus' church thus emphasizes the need to take up arms and defend oneself when necessary, placing a high emphasis on the need for citizens to protect one another against attack, and to punish those malcontents in their midst. Whether human or inhuman, threats may come in many forms, and valiant defenders must be ready at all times.

The virtues of the Pholtan faith include hard work, compassion for one's neighbour, careful reflection of available options before taking a course of action, obeying those in authority if they have proven themselves worthy of obedience, dethroning those in authority who have violated the laws and abused their power, vigilance and alertness against attack, and respecting the dignity of all those who display clarity and common sense. The sins of the Pholtan faith include laziness, acting without forethought, violating the laws of the community, disobeying those in authority who have proven themselves worthy of obedience, obeying those in authority who have violated the laws of the community, slackness in guarding against attack, and insulting those who display clarity and common sense.

Pholtus is said to smile on those who show diligence and hard work in pursuing their goals, who defend those who cannot defend themselves, who preach his name in word and deed, who display clarity and common sense in making their decisions, inspire others to convert to his worship, or influence the society and people around them to better follow the path of light, particularly if they are

confused and lacking guidance in their lives..

Pholtus is the dominant national faith of the Theocracy of the Pale, where its rigidity and discipline have contributed to this nations' formidable fighting forces. The faith is also well-established in the Gran March, Greyhawk, Dyvers, Nyron, and the Shield Lands, although it is typically viewed with some suspicion by the authorities due to the activist nature of its clergy and its opposition to the religions these states favour. The faith is outright banned in Luz, the Horned Society, the See of Medegia, Ahlissa, Northern Aerdy, Rel Astra and the lands of the Sea Barons, and everywhere else it is either unknown or too small to be worth mentioning.

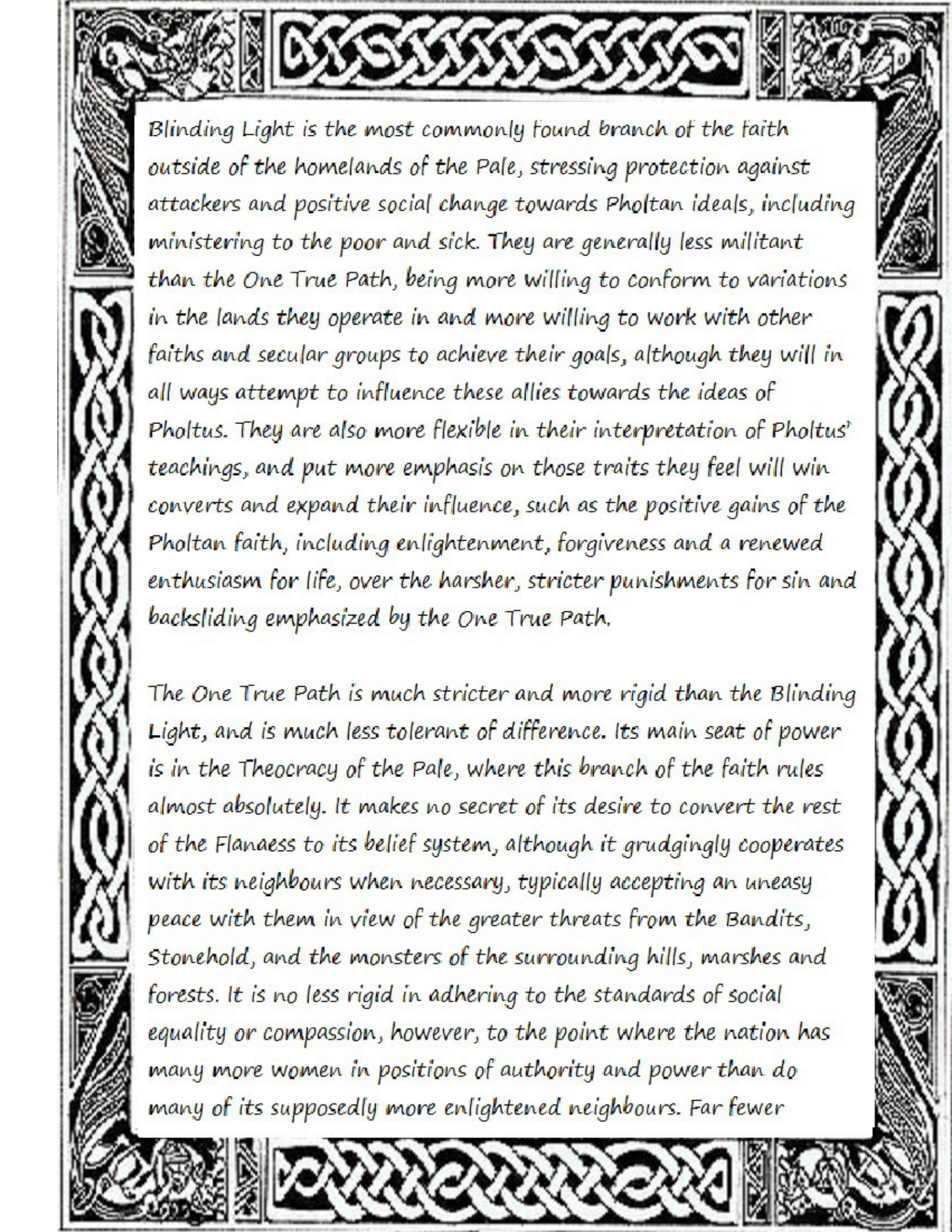
Pholtus' most prominent temples in the Flanaess are in Wintershiven, Hatherleigh, Greyhawk, Dyvers, Rel Mord, Critwall and Hookhill.

Variant Sects and Heresies

"Worshippers of Pholtus, lend me your ears. Yes! It is the One True Path, which leads us to salvation and glory. The ways of Pholtus are truly Just. He lets his Divine Light shine upon the righteous and unrighteous alike. Pholtus truly illuminates our lives with his glory."

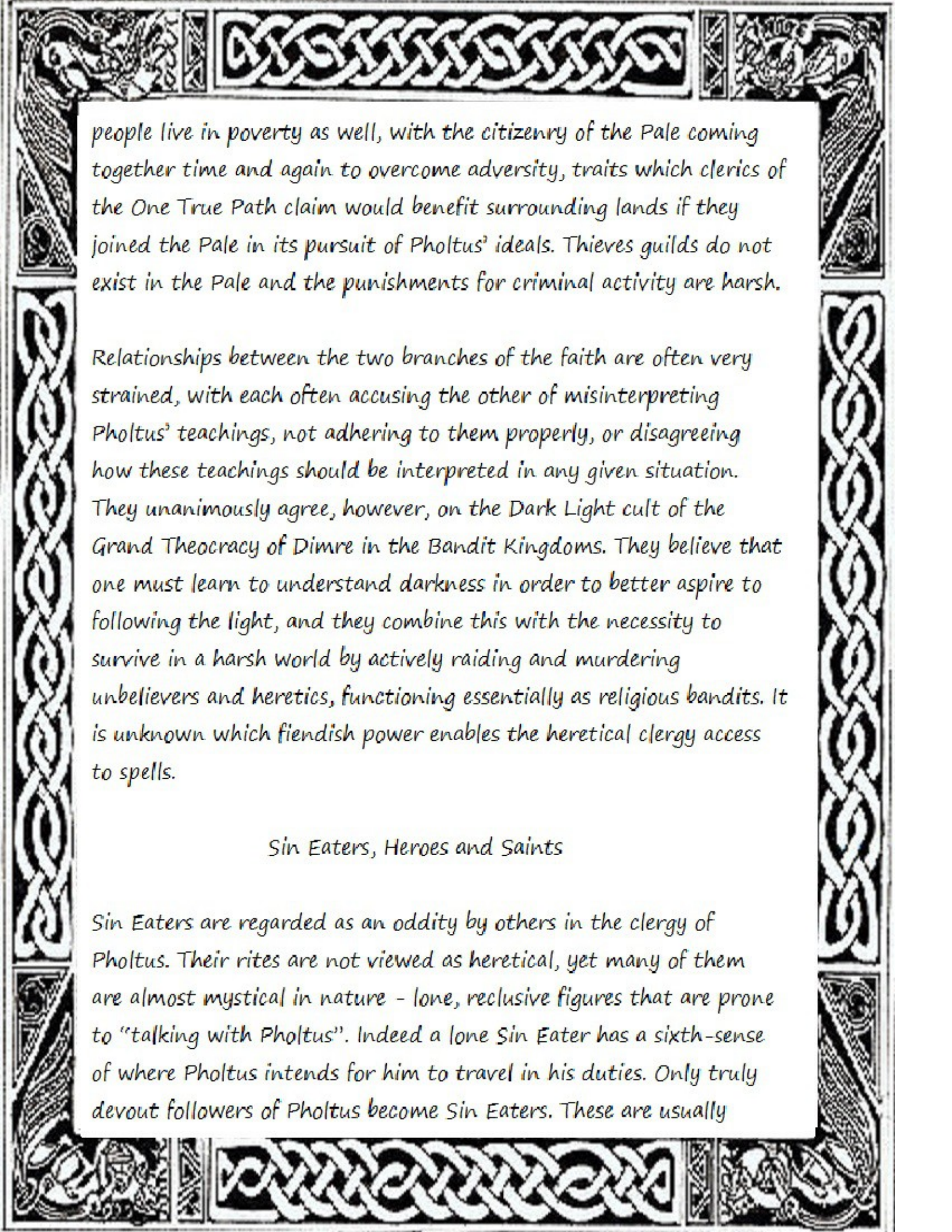
True Path sermon (anonymous)

The notions of clarity and common sense, which are bedrocks of the Pholtan faith, have paradoxically divided the church into several distinct sects, whose relations range from strained to hostile. The



Blinding Light is the most commonly found branch of the faith outside of the homelands of the Pale, stressing protection against attackers and positive social change towards Pholtan ideals, including ministering to the poor and sick. They are generally less militant than the One True Path, being more willing to conform to variations in the lands they operate in and more willing to work with other faiths and secular groups to achieve their goals, although they will in all ways attempt to influence these allies towards the ideas of Pholtus. They are also more flexible in their interpretation of Pholtus' teachings, and put more emphasis on those traits they feel will win converts and expand their influence, such as the positive gains of the Pholtan faith, including enlightenment, forgiveness and a renewed enthusiasm for life, over the harsher, stricter punishments for sin and backsliding emphasized by the One True Path.

The One True Path is much stricter and more rigid than the Blinding Light, and is much less tolerant of difference. Its main seat of power is in the Theocracy of the Pale, where this branch of the faith rules almost absolutely. It makes no secret of its desire to convert the rest of the Flanaess to its belief system, although it grudgingly cooperates with its neighbours when necessary, typically accepting an uneasy peace with them in view of the greater threats from the Bandits, Stonehold, and the monsters of the surrounding hills, marshes and forests. It is no less rigid in adhering to the standards of social equality or compassion, however, to the point where the nation has many more women in positions of authority and power than do many of its supposedly more enlightened neighbours. Far fewer

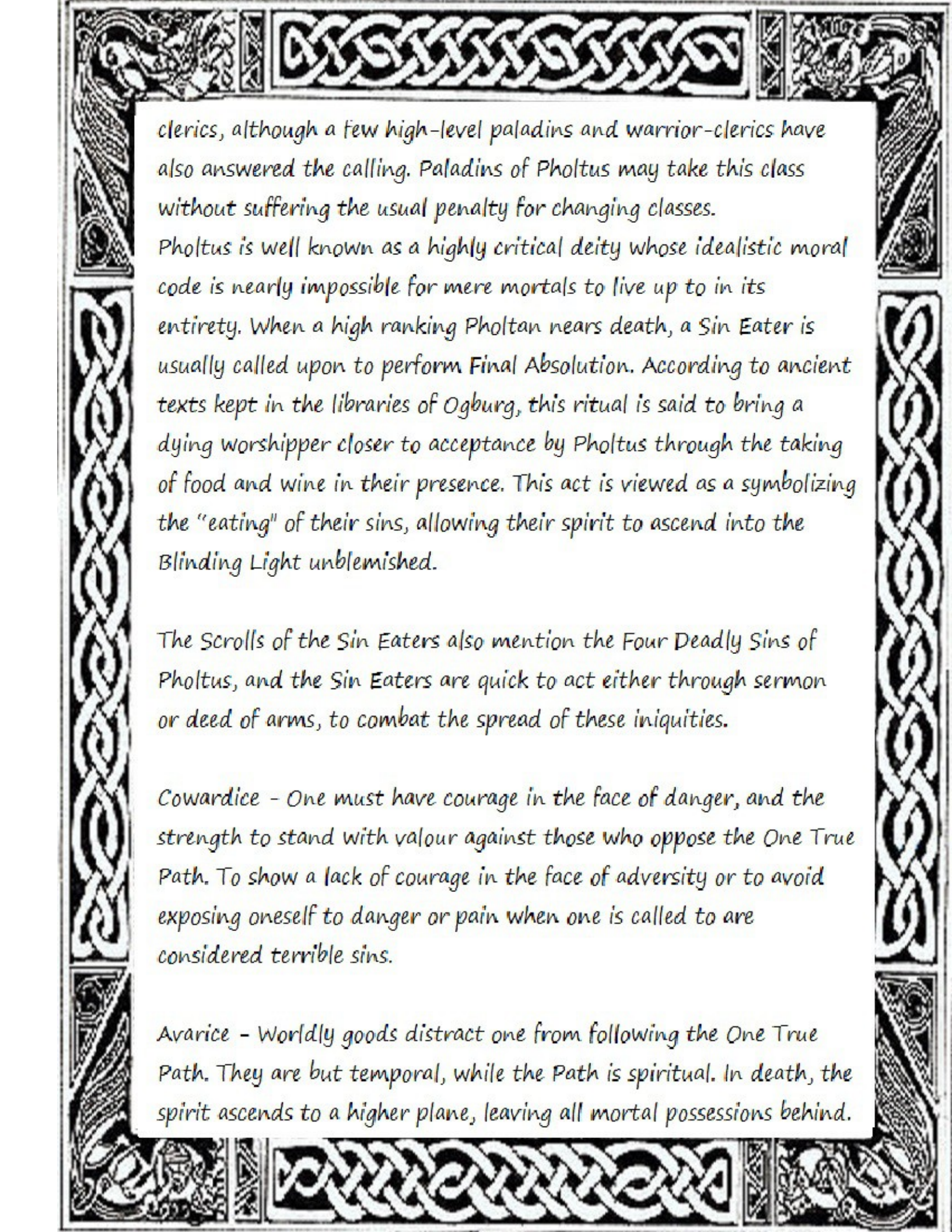


people live in poverty as well, with the citizenry of the Pale coming together time and again to overcome adversity, traits which clerics of the One True Path claim would benefit surrounding lands if they joined the Pale in its pursuit of Pholtus' ideals. Thieves guilds do not exist in the Pale and the punishments for criminal activity are harsh.

Relationships between the two branches of the faith are often very strained, with each often accusing the other of misinterpreting Pholtus' teachings, not adhering to them properly, or disagreeing how these teachings should be interpreted in any given situation. They unanimously agree, however, on the Dark Light cult of the Grand Theocracy of Dimre in the Bandit Kingdoms. They believe that one must learn to understand darkness in order to better aspire to following the light, and they combine this with the necessity to survive in a harsh world by actively raiding and murdering unbelievers and heretics, functioning essentially as religious bandits. It is unknown which fiendish power enables the heretical clergy access to spells.

Sin Eaters, Heroes and Saints

Sin Eaters are regarded as an oddity by others in the clergy of Pholtus. Their rites are not viewed as heretical, yet many of them are almost mystical in nature - lone, reclusive figures that are prone to "talking with Pholtus". Indeed a lone Sin Eater has a sixth-sense of where Pholtus intends for him to travel in his duties. Only truly devout followers of Pholtus become Sin Eaters. These are usually



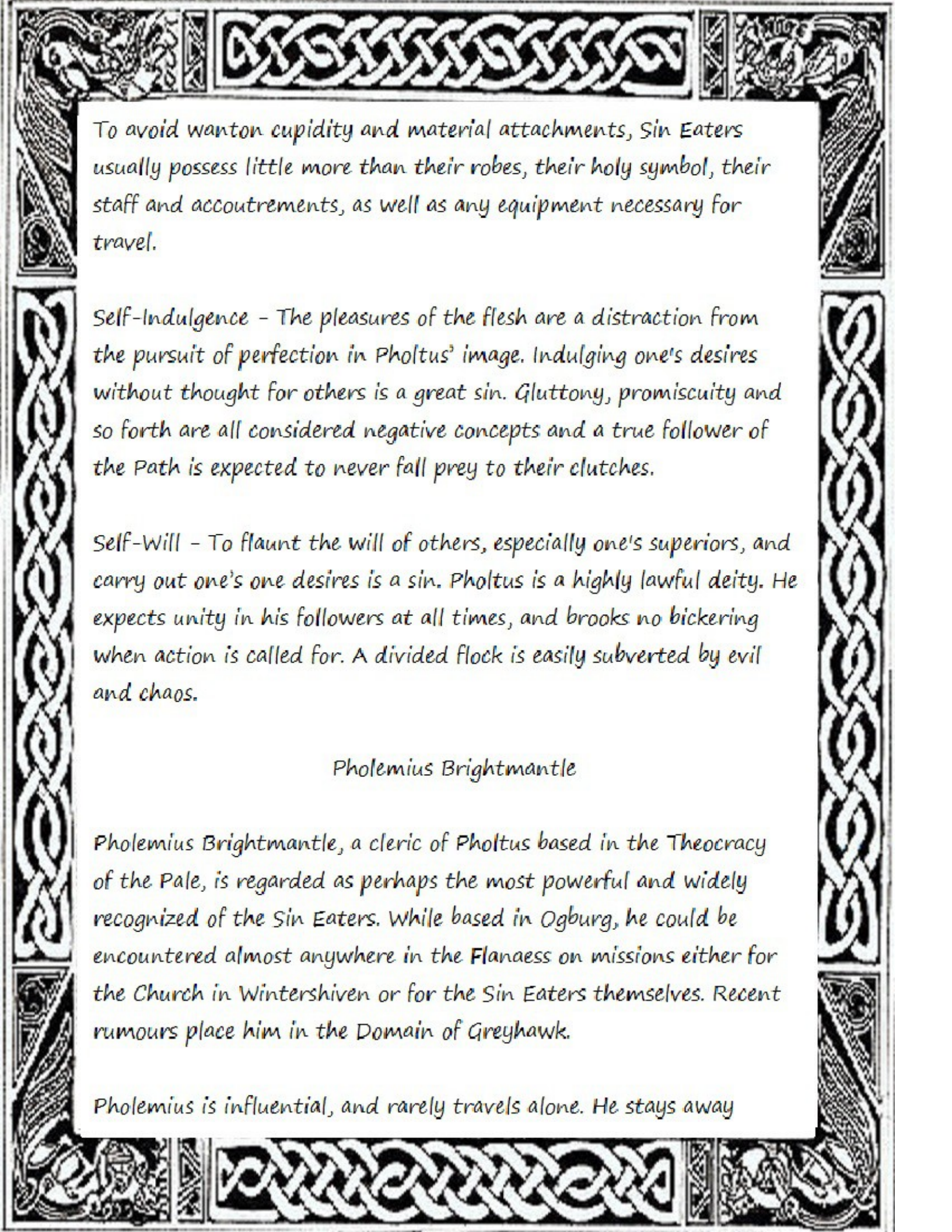
clerics, although a few high-level paladins and warrior-clerics have also answered the calling. Paladins of Pholtus may take this class without suffering the usual penalty for changing classes.

Pholtus is well known as a highly critical deity whose idealistic moral code is nearly impossible for mere mortals to live up to in its entirety. When a high ranking Pholtan nears death, a Sin Eater is usually called upon to perform Final Absolution. According to ancient texts kept in the libraries of Ogburg, this ritual is said to bring a dying worshipper closer to acceptance by Pholtus through the taking of food and wine in their presence. This act is viewed as a symbolizing the "eating" of their sins, allowing their spirit to ascend into the Blinding Light unblemished.

The Scrolls of the Sin Eaters also mention the Four Deadly Sins of Pholtus, and the Sin Eaters are quick to act either through sermon or deed of arms, to combat the spread of these iniquities.

Cowardice - One must have courage in the face of danger, and the strength to stand with valour against those who oppose the One True Path. To show a lack of courage in the face of adversity or to avoid exposing oneself to danger or pain when one is called to are considered terrible sins.

Avarice - Worldly goods distract one from following the One True Path. They are but temporal, while the Path is spiritual. In death, the spirit ascends to a higher plane, leaving all mortal possessions behind.



To avoid wanton cupidity and material attachments, Sin Eaters usually possess little more than their robes, their holy symbol, their staff and accoutrements, as well as any equipment necessary for travel.

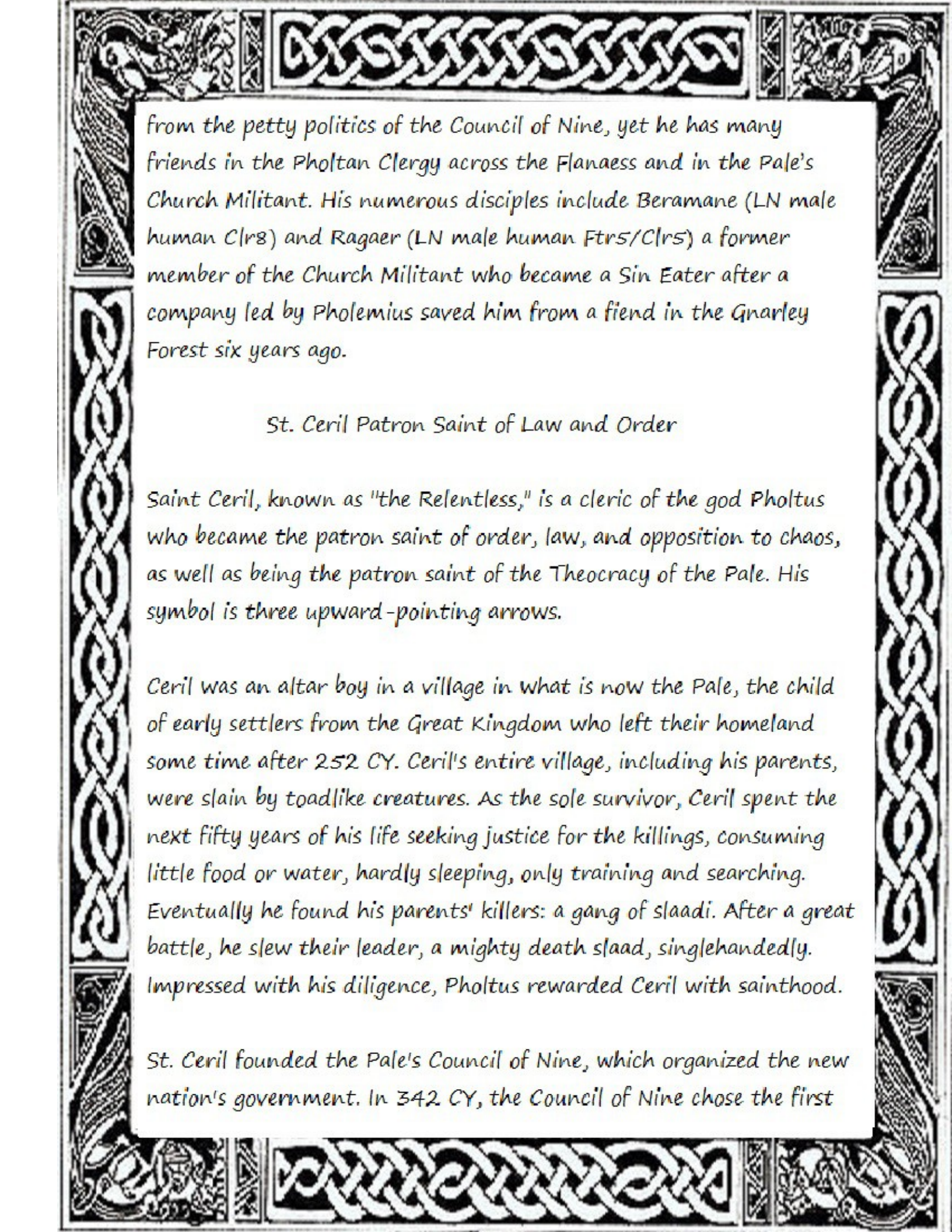
Self-Indulgence - The pleasures of the flesh are a distraction from the pursuit of perfection in Pholtus' image. Indulging one's desires without thought for others is a great sin. Gluttony, promiscuity and so forth are all considered negative concepts and a true follower of the Path is expected to never fall prey to their clutches.

Self-Will - To flaunt the will of others, especially one's superiors, and carry out one's own desires is a sin. Pholtus is a highly lawful deity. He expects unity in his followers at all times, and brooks no bickering when action is called for. A divided flock is easily subverted by evil and chaos.

Pholemius Brightmantle

Pholemius Brightmantle, a cleric of Pholtus based in the Theocracy of the Pale, is regarded as perhaps the most powerful and widely recognized of the Sin Eaters. While based in Ogburg, he could be encountered almost anywhere in the Flanaess on missions either for the Church in Wintershiven or for the Sin Eaters themselves. Recent rumours place him in the Domain of Greyhawk.

Pholemius is influential, and rarely travels alone. He stays away



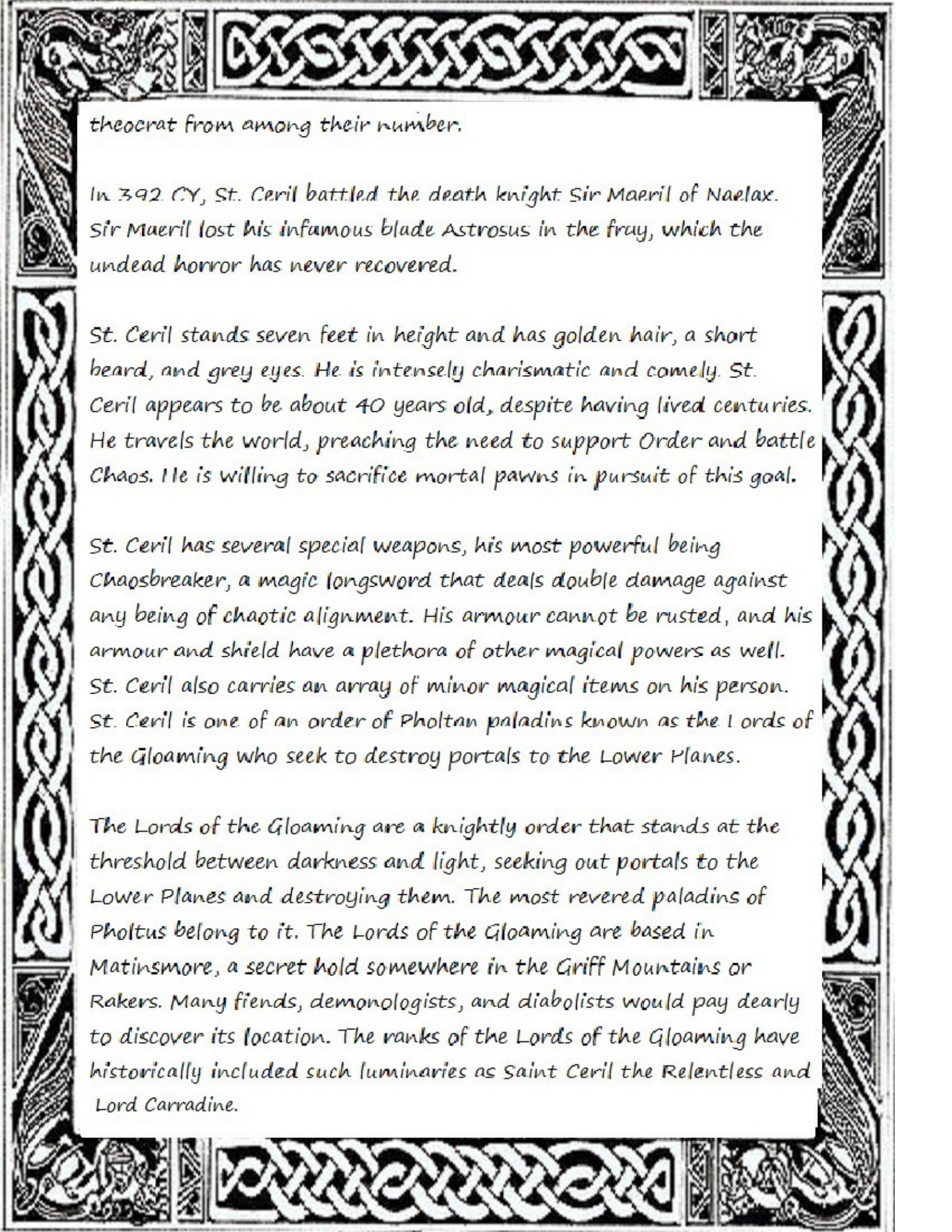
from the petty politics of the Council of Nine, yet he has many friends in the Pholtan Clergy across the Flanaess and in the Pale's Church Militant. His numerous disciples include Beramane (LN male human Clr8) and Ragaer (LN male human Ftr5/Clr5) a former member of the Church Militant who became a Sin Eater after a company led by Pholemius saved him from a fiend in the Gnarley Forest six years ago.

St. Ceril Patron Saint of Law and Order

Saint Ceril, known as "the Relentless," is a cleric of the god Pholtus who became the patron saint of order, law, and opposition to chaos, as well as being the patron saint of the Theocracy of the Pale. His symbol is three upward-pointing arrows.

Ceril was an altar boy in a village in what is now the Pale, the child of early settlers from the Great Kingdom who left their homeland some time after 252 CY. Ceril's entire village, including his parents, were slain by toadlike creatures. As the sole survivor, Ceril spent the next fifty years of his life seeking justice for the killings, consuming little food or water, hardly sleeping, only training and searching. Eventually he found his parents' killers: a gang of slaadi. After a great battle, he slew their leader, a mighty death slaad, singlehandedly. Impressed with his diligence, Pholtus rewarded Ceril with sainthood.

St. Ceril founded the Pale's Council of Nine, which organized the new nation's government. In 342 CY, the Council of Nine chose the first



theocrat from among their number.

In 392 CY, St. Ceril battled the death knight Sir Maeril of Naelax. Sir Maeril lost his infamous blade Astrosus in the fray, which the undead horror has never recovered.

St. Ceril stands seven feet in height and has golden hair, a short beard, and grey eyes. He is intensely charismatic and comely. St. Ceril appears to be about 40 years old, despite having lived centuries. He travels the world, preaching the need to support Order and battle Chaos. He is willing to sacrifice mortal pawns in pursuit of this goal.

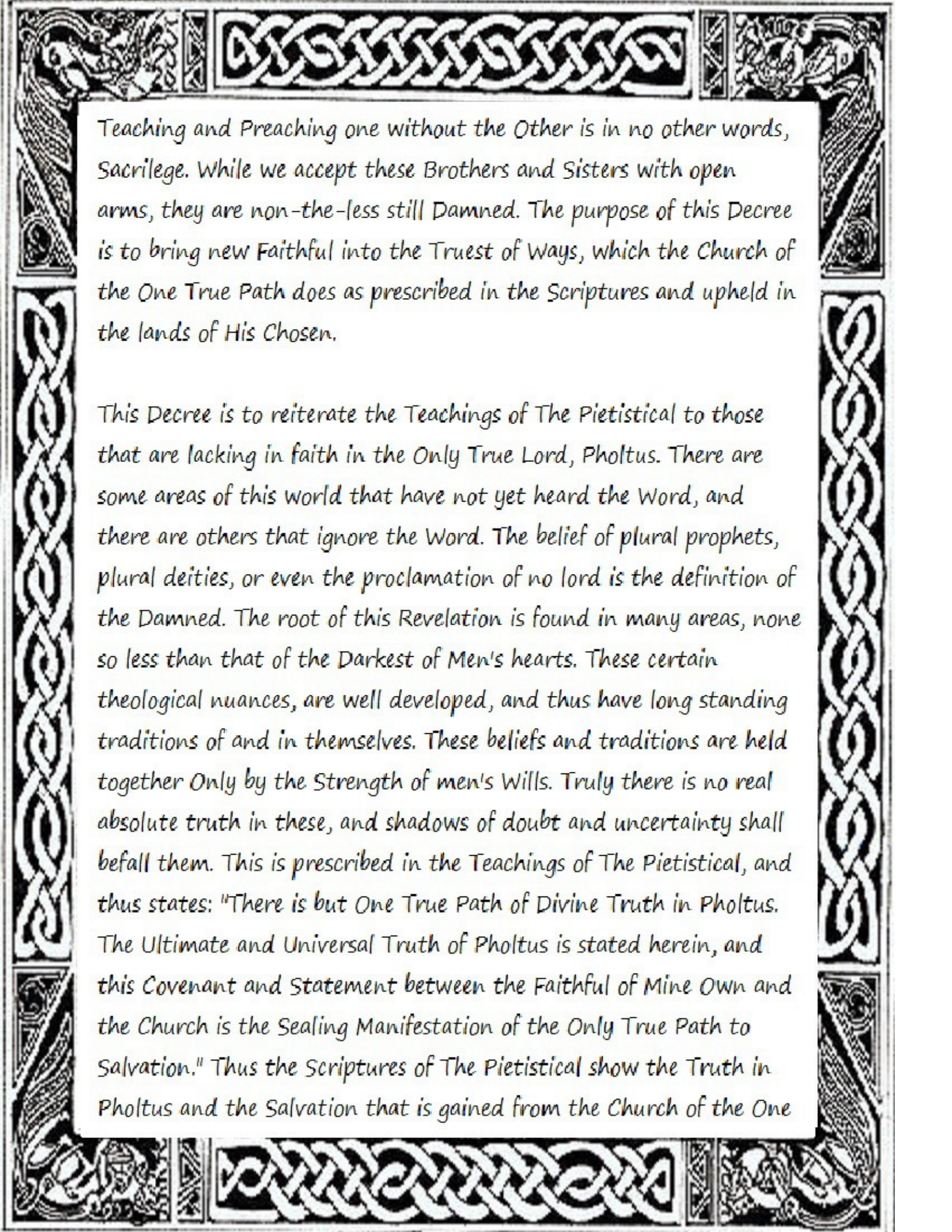
St. Ceril has several special weapons, his most powerful being Chaosbreaker, a magic longsword that deals double damage against any being of chaotic alignment. His armour cannot be rusted, and his armour and shield have a plethora of other magical powers as well. St. Ceril also carries an array of minor magical items on his person. St. Ceril is one of an order of Pholtan paladins known as the Lords of the Gloaming who seek to destroy portals to the Lower Planes.

The Lords of the Gloaming are a knightly order that stands at the threshold between darkness and light, seeking out portals to the Lower Planes and destroying them. The most revered paladins of Pholtus belong to it. The Lords of the Gloaming are based in Matinsmore, a secret hold somewhere in the Griff Mountains or Rakers. Many fiends, demonologists, and diabolists would pay dearly to discover its location. The ranks of the Lords of the Gloaming have historically included such luminaries as Saint Ceril the Relentless and Lord Carradine.

A Declaration on the Scriptures of the Church of the One True Path as Described in The Pietistical

The Church of the One True Path in Pholtus, as proclaimed in the Theocracy of the Pale, has over the course of its existence, proclaimed the Holy Scriptures of the True Path of Pholtus to all with reason and solidarity. This proclamation across the Flanaess has met with resistance from many nations, mainly those with Greed and Corruption in place. Those nations known to the world, as "goodly" are however still suspect in their teachings. Many people profess loyalty to Men, Kings, Lords and Gods, and thus face certain damnation. As prescribed by the Holy Scriptures of Pholtus in his most holy work, The Pietistical, it states "Declaring the Works of Pholtus, to all who Shall listen is not only a sign of a Devout Person, but is the Mission of Each Individual Person, and thus the Teachings and Precepts of the Church." It is my duty as Prelate of the Church of the One True Path, to inform the people of the Flanaess as to Pholtus' Words and Teachings.

As is the Way of the World, there is a difference between the Church of the One True Path in the Pale and that of the many faithful in less Holy Lands. While we do understand the theoretical ideas of those who Preach the One True Idea, it is not the Same as the One True Path. There is only one True Idea of Pholtus as there is also only One True Path.



Teaching and Preaching one without the Other is in no other words, Sacrilege. While we accept these Brothers and Sisters with open arms, they are non-the-less still Damned. The purpose of this Decree is to bring new Faithful into the Truest of Ways, which the Church of the One True Path does as prescribed in the Scriptures and upheld in the lands of His Chosen.

This Decree is to reiterate the Teachings of The Pietistical to those that are lacking in faith in the Only True Lord, Pholtus. There are some areas of this world that have not yet heard the Word, and there are others that ignore the Word. The belief of plural prophets, plural deities, or even the proclamation of no lord is the definition of the Damned. The root of this Revelation is found in many areas, none so less than that of the Darkest of Men's hearts. These certain theological nuances, are well developed, and thus have long standing traditions of and in themselves. These beliefs and traditions are held together Only by the Strength of men's Wills. Truly there is no real absolute truth in these, and shadows of doubt and uncertainty shall befall them. This is prescribed in the Teachings of The Pietistical, and thus states: "There is but One True Path of Divine Truth in Pholtus. The Ultimate and Universal Truth of Pholtus is stated herein, and this Covenant and Statement between the Faithful of Mine Own and the Church is the Sealing Manifestation of the Only True Path to Salvation." Thus the Scriptures of The Pietistical show the Truth in Pholtus and the Salvation that is gained from the Church of the One

True Path of Pholtus, and it's Holy Ways.

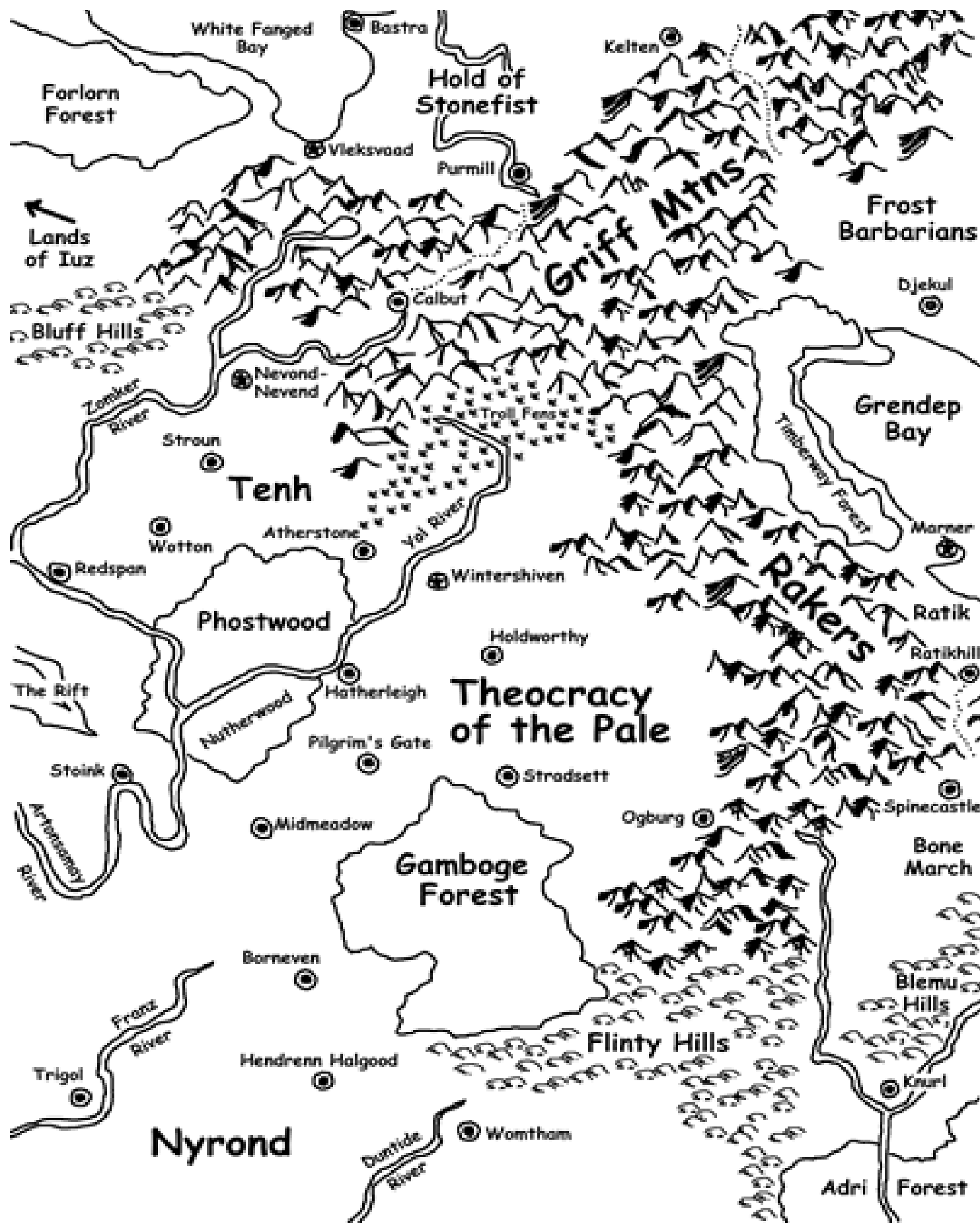
From the Chosen lands of the Theocracy of the Pale, to the Wilds of the Amedio Jungle, to the Treacherous ways of the Suloise in the Scarlet Brotherhood, Truth of the Holy Scriptures and the Holiest of Works, The Pietistical, shall come forth and Radiate and Reflect the Glory of the One True Path, that of His Blinding Light, Pholtus. Men, Take this Writ, this Decree to your Hearts and Embrace these Teachings and Lessons and hold fast unto his beliefs. The Holy Prophets of Pholtus will show you the Path to the Glorious Light and Embrace you as one of Our Own, the Chosen.

Prescribed this Day, 16 Fireseek CY590, with Knowledge and Understanding of the Teachings and Declarations of the Holy Scriptures of Pholtus as written in his Holiest of Works, The Pietistical.

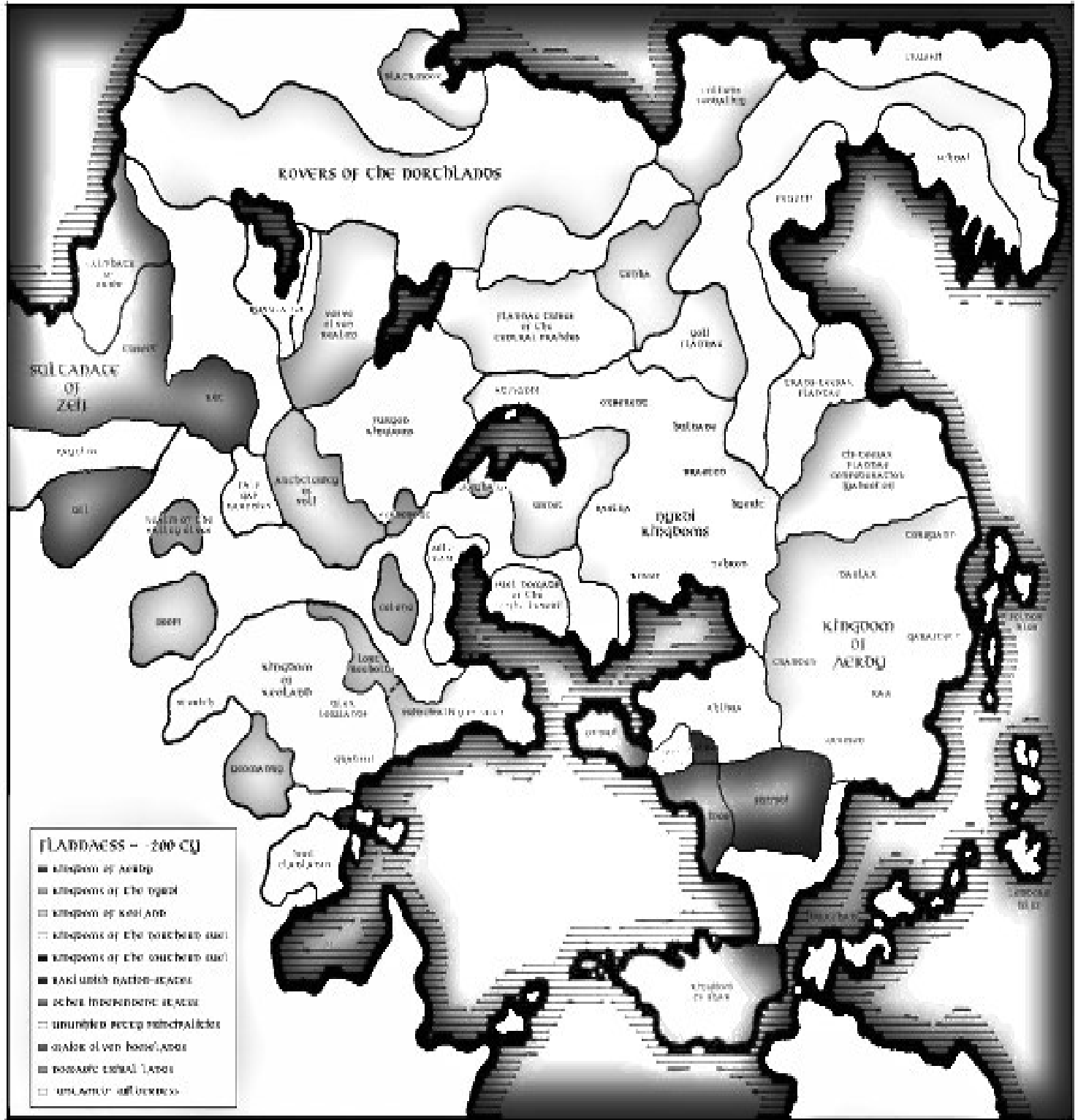
*His Worshipful Mercy, Supreme Prelate of the Pale,
Theocrat Ogon Tillit*



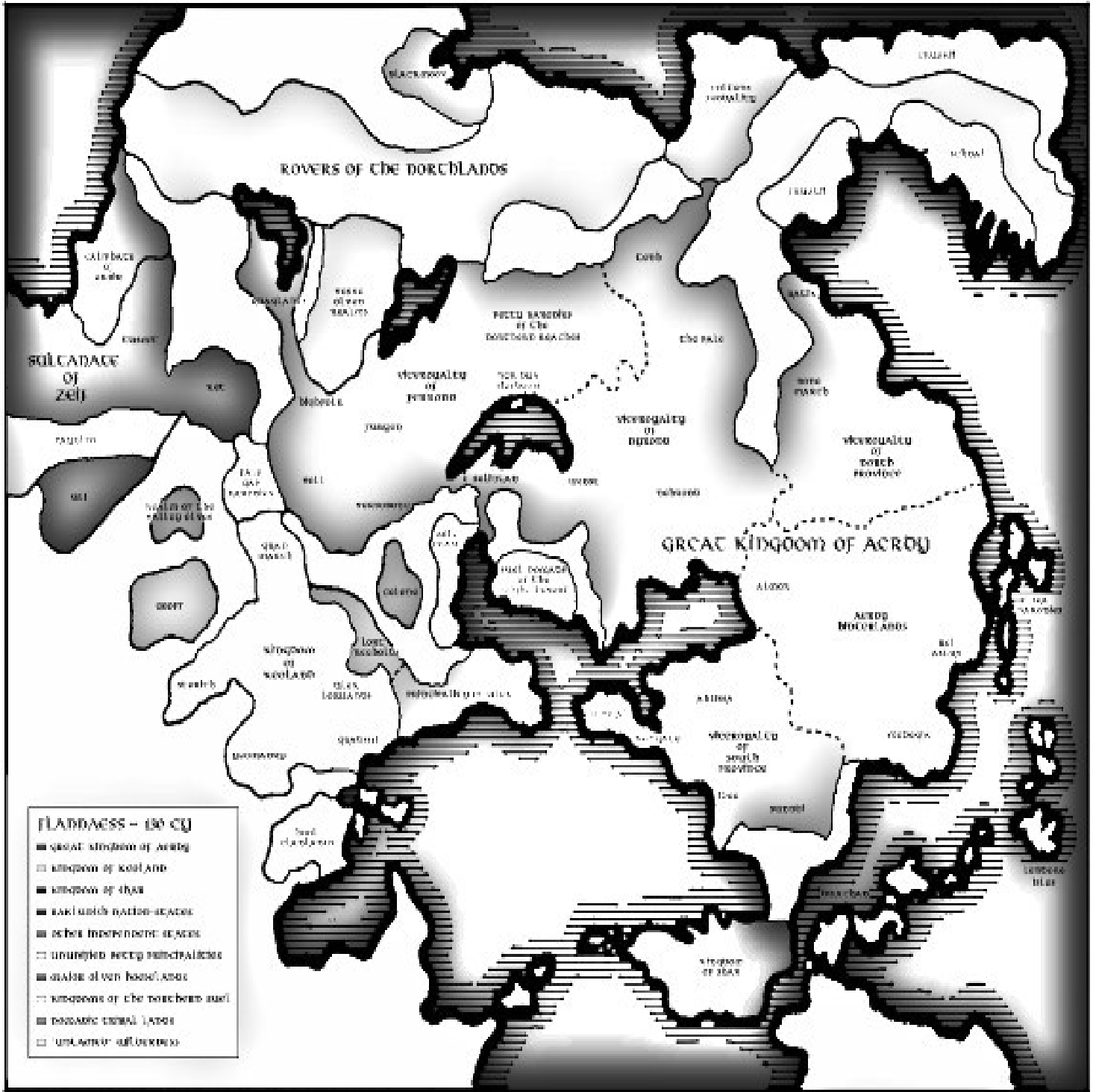
The Fate of the Fiend at the Hands of the Faithful

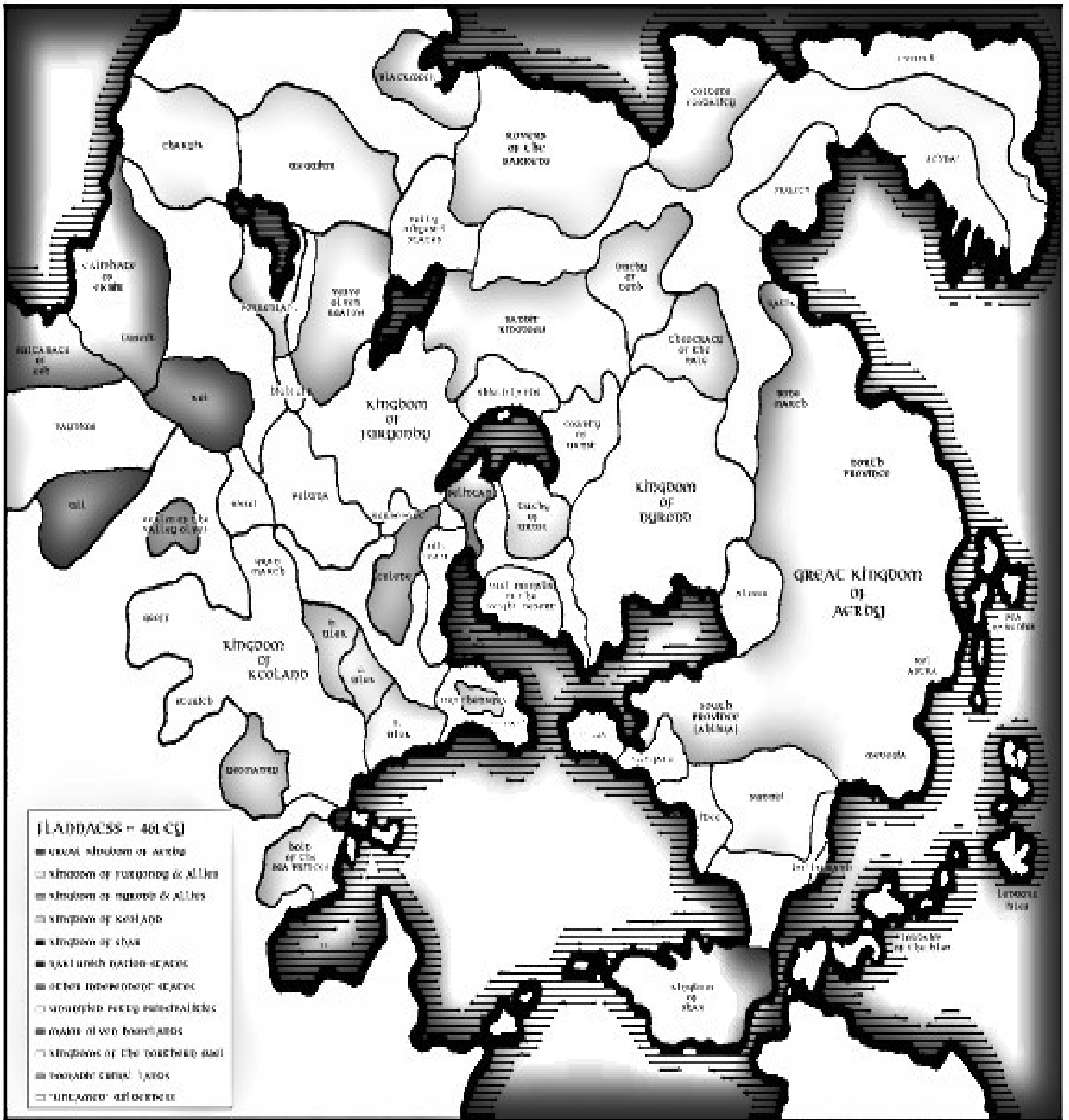


*The Rise and Fall of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy
in maps*



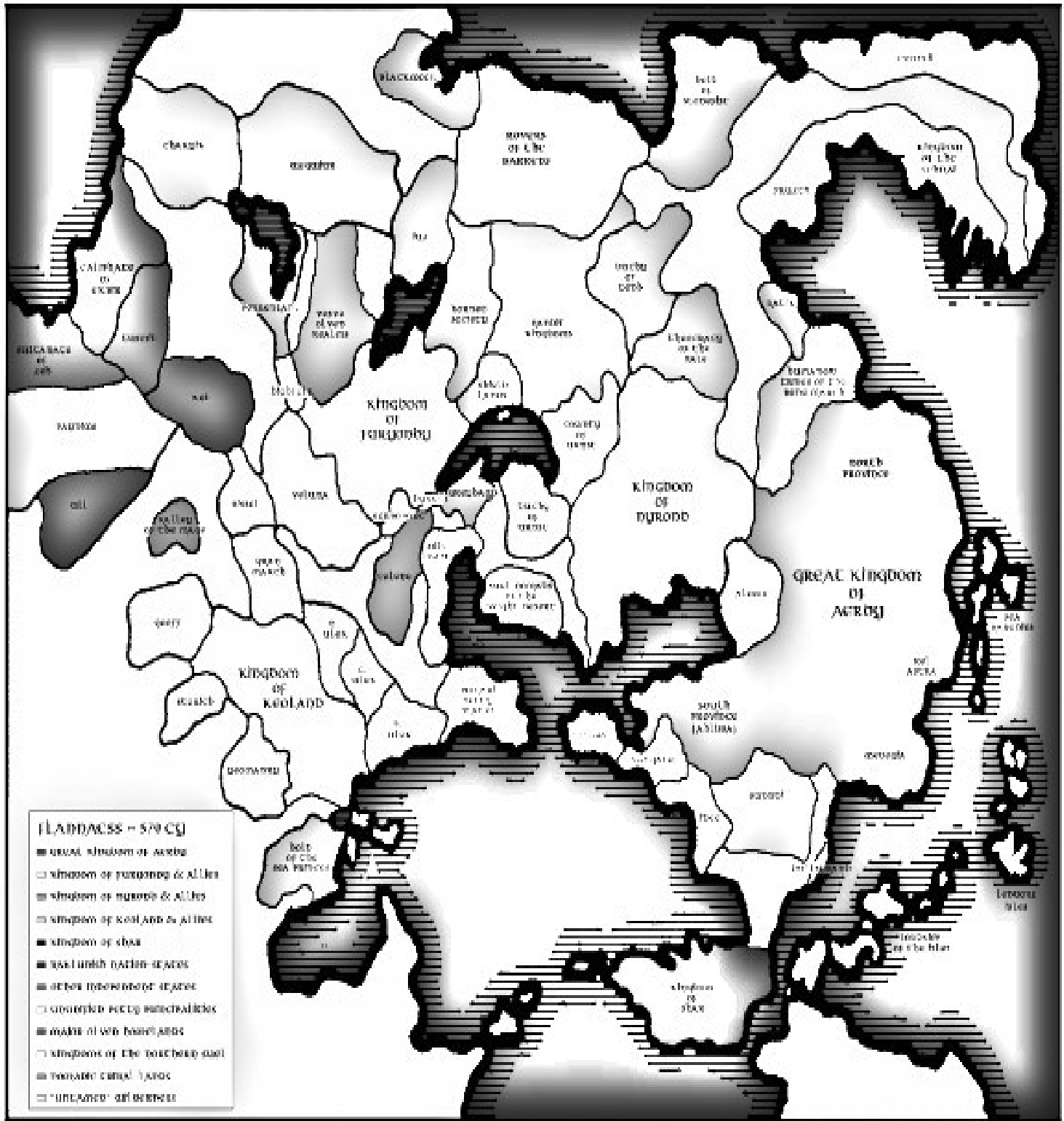






FLADDACSS - 401 CE

- Great Kingdom of Aedh
- Kingdom of Connaught & Allies
- Kingdom of Meath & Allies
- Kingdom of Leinster
- Kingdom of Ulster
- Síl nGobtha tribal spaces
- Síl nDála tribal spaces
- Síl nMála tribal spaces
- Mainland boundaries
- Kingdom of the Síl nDála
- Síl nMála tribal spaces
- "unclear" tribal spaces





HAIRDAESS - SHICU

- successor states to Amlia
- kingdom of Ferganah & allies
- kingdom of Koolahb & allies
- kingdom of Aghab & allies
- empire of Fuz
- lands of the Arabian sea
- Baki-unish nation-states
- other independent states
- lands of the old sea contract
- state lands beyond lands
- kingdoms of the northern sea
- nomadic central lands
- lands in cities
- major sea-human lands
- land areas - old borders

