

An Irenosian Child's Primer on the History of Oikonia

by Phantias of Nymphydon

Introduction

We live in a wonderful and beautiful world filled with blessings and bounty. Yet, our world, Oikonia, is also dangerous and beset by evil. It was not made to be this way, but despite our own fault in corrupting this world Irenos in His grace has rescued us from our deepest troubles and will one day restore all things to perfect glory.

Every child--whether human, elf, dwarf, halfling, gnome, or even dragon--should know the basic history of Oikonia. One important reason is that it helps to give him a sense of place and belonging in the world. Even more important, however, is seeing the grace and mercy of Irenos unfold through history so that each child, trusting in Irenos, would then be moved to serve Irenos with humility, patience, diligence, and bravery. Knowing the facts of history, especially the truth of what Lutrowtis has done to save us, will equip the Irenosian child to live confidently in the grace of Irenos.

This primer's journey through history will visit and summarize each of the major ages, from the primordial First Age to our own current Fifth Age. The sad tale of constant rebellion against Irenos will be met by the incredible mercy of his rescue for mankind. Through each age, He has ever been our Maker and Redeemer. It is the hope and prayer that every child who knows this history trusts in Lutrowtis, and one day, under the grace of Irenos, we will pass into that unending Age of everlasting peace.

The First Age

Creation

As the Graphais plainly tell us, "In the beginning, Irenos created the heavens and the earth." Nothing existed, not even time, before Irenos spoke our world into being. There was naught but Irenos himself, the Triune God--Patros, Huios, and Pneumos--who from everlasting to everlasting exists and rules forever and ever, amen. By the power of his command, earth, water, plants, and animals all came to be.

However, when Irenos made mankind, he did something special. Within the council of His Trinity, each Person was given to make two races. The Patros, in His love, deferred to the Huios, whose first creation among mankind was humans. A single man was made by His hand, sculpted from the earth, and given the breath of life. Therefore, it was from the humans that each other race was derived. The human, having been formed first from the dust of the ground, became the basis for all the other original races, each of them taken and formed from his flesh, males made first, and then the females made from the flesh of their own race.

The Huios caused the first man to sleep. First, from his side, he created a woman, a female human. Then, using the flesh of the man, the Huios made a halfling male, and from the halfling male he made a halfling woman. The Patros once more deferred, this time to the Pneumos. From the flesh of the man, the Pneumos first made the gnome. A male gnome was formed, then a female from the male gnome's flesh. Next, the Pneumos made the dragons, male and female. Finally, the Patros, starting from the

flesh of men, made the elves and the dwarves. In each race--human, halfling, gnome, dragon, elf, and dwarf--the males were made first, given the breath of life, and then the females were made from the flesh of the males.

Thus, of the original races, twelve were made in all. Two each of human, halfling, gnome, dragon, elf, and dwarf, male and female.

All these lived in a perfect world without trouble or strife, without danger or fear, a world in total harmony with Irenos. All creatures of Oikonia were made to serve Irenos and to have fellowship with him.

Yet, another creation of Irenos, one of the seven mighty archangels, rebelled and became a demon. This rebellious angel-turned-demon, Diabolos, in great hubris and with vile lies won over other angels to his rebellion. They also became demons. Diabolos warred against Irenos... and lost. The planes of hell were made as prisons for him and his demons. Yet, they still retained the ability to have some influence on Oikonia. Thus, Diabolos set out to tempt the races Irenos had made, and lead them to plunge Oikonia into corruption and sin.

Corruption

At the center of the garden that Irenos had made for his creatures was the Dweomerstone. The Dweomerstone is the source of all magic in our world. There is magic inherent in every race, though it is expressed in different ways, and each race has its own separate capabilities. This magic flows from and to the Dweomerstone. Irenos had given the races but one command: do not use the Dweomerstone or you will die.

One day, as all from the races were enjoying each other's company, Diabolos came to them deceitfully in the form of a six-headed dragon. While such a sight would terrify even the bravest Paladin today, remember that no danger had existed in Oikonia at that time. The races were curious. They listened to Diabolos. He convinced them that, in fact, the Dweomerstone would make them as wise as Irenos. They had merely to all touch it and call upon its powers together. Having convinced them to disobey Irenos, the races did precisely that.

Everyone one of the original twelve together touched the corners of the Dweomerstone and began to draw upon its magical energies. They did not become wise like Irenos. Instead, the Dweomerstone shattered into six pieces, one for each race. Upon its shattering, corruption and sin spread through the entire world of Oikonia. The races themselves were no longer in perfect harmony. Mistrust and hate came between elf and dwarf. Greed and scheming came between gnome and dragon. Indifference and aloofness came between human and halfling. Worst of all, the races were no longer in perfect harmony with Irenos himself.

Irenos cursed Diabolos for his cunning and then gave a stunning promise to the races of his world. Rather than killing them instantly for their disobedience, he promised that a Savior would come from the race of man, the origin race. That Savior would cleanse the world of this corruption. Through trust in this Savior, the peoples of Oikonia would be spared from being sent to the prisons of the hellish planes. Though the races had caused incredible damage to Oikonia through their disobedience, Irenos in his mercy promised salvation.

The six pieces of the Dweomerstone, the Dweomershards, were taken by Irenos and each one given to the six faithful archangels. They were ordered to securely hide and seal away the Dweomershards, that they might not be easily stumbled upon and misused. In faithful obedience, his archangels did as Irenos commanded.

Meanwhile, the garden Irenos had made for his creatures withered under the corruption now introduced into the world. It was no longer fit for habitation, having become the Winterdust. Irenos also pronounced curses upon each of the races for disobeying his voice and listening to Diabolos. Life on Oikonia would now be difficult and dangerous and, eventually, all creatures must die for their sin.

The First Age, begun in perfection and harmony with Irenos, quickly descended into wild corruption.

Discovery, Expansion, and the first Aparneons

Very little is known about the early days of the First Age after the Corruption. What is clear is that the races began to procreate and spread out into the world. Here and there throughout the wild land, they subdued a position, tamed it, and built cities. But life was no longer easy as it had been in the garden originally. Not only did they have to contend against the land itself, but their own hearts and minds were filled with sin and selfishness.

Before long, many among the races began to rebel even further against Irenos. With darkened hearts and minds, some blamed Irenos for creating the Dweomerstone in the first place, or for placing it in the garden where it could be used. Others blamed Irenos for creating the archangels from which Diabolos came or for not sealing away Diabolos that he would be able to tempt them. Whatever their individual reasoning was, many began to refuse the promise of salvation given by Irenos. These malcontents and unbelievers who spoke out against the Word of Irenos were called Aparneons, "rebels."

Sadly, the number of Aparneons grew great. Before long, those who trusted in Irenos found themselves outnumbered.

Very early on, in the taming of the world, the dwarves established a kingdom under the earth below the western heights of the Hypsorian Mountains in Borealia to the north. The dragons also, made dens and homes in the eastern reaches of the Hypsorians. Meanwhile, on the Mesaymbrian continent, humans, halflings, gnomes, and elves established domains. Among these early kingdoms of the world, eventually the elves began to dominate. In due time, they began to conquer the entire Mesaymbrian continent and so establish Oikonia's first known empire, Aerloran.

Historians, thus, mark the end of the First Age with the establishment of the Aerlorian Empire of the elves and their dominion over all of Mesaymbria.

The Second Age

Folly of the Magos Kings

The elven kings of the Aerlorian Empire were mighty conquerors, the likes of whom the world may never see again. They were called the Magos Kings, for they were powerful wielders of magic. Many were the wonders they wrought with their spells and the great works they built in their cities, keeps, and palaces. However, the Magos Kings were also arrogant and ever desirous of greater knowledge and power.

In their pride and their lust for power, the Magos Kings began to search for the Dweomershards. They believed that with the Dweomershards at their command, they would ascend to new heights of magical power. Casting aside whatever they knew from the warnings of the fall into Corruption, they scoured the earth to find the Dweomershards. Of course, to do so, they needed to break the seals the archangels put in protection over the Dweomershards. They performed dark rituals to accomplish this and further corrupted their own souls. In time, over the course of centuries, all the Dweomershards were found.

Those Magos Kings who wielded a Dweomershard did increase their power in magic, but they became

dark and evil creatures. Among other things, they used the Dweomershards to craft their own corrupted creations. It is from them that the first monsters came into the world. These were not mere animals, but magical beings of great evil, some of them even capable of thought, emotion, and will, just like the original six races. In the hands of the Magos Kings, the Dweomershards further corrupted Oikonia with evil.

The Skiagens

With such great and tempting power perhaps it was inevitable, that one of the Magos Kings would attempt to horde all the Dweomershards for himself. Indeed, it was not merely a Magos King, but one of the Emperors of Aerloran. Emperor Ethoral Mythanathas through scheming, thievery, and even outright warfare, gathered together the Dweomershards one by one.

As the historians tell us, Ethoral's hubris was in believing he would not simply use the power of the Dweomershards, but that he would perform a magic ritual to fuse the Dweomerstone back into one and then cleanse Corruption from the Dweomerstone and from Oikonia entirely. Indeed, it seems that is precisely what Ethoral tried to do.

The ritual required preparation. First, Ethoral forged the Etherbrooch, a necklace with a setting designed to hold the pieces of the Dweomershards together. With this complete, he placed the shards together into the brooch. At the same time, Ethoral had constructed a large, circular dais with a grand and complicated series of symbols and runes to both focus and contain the magical energies he intended to call forth. Finally, he brought to the ritual several hundred representatives of each race, from whom he thought he would draw magical energies to cleanse the Dweomerstone. With these preparations made, he began the ritual.

The ritual failed spectacularly. Ethoral's magic did not fuse the Dweomershards back into a single Dweomerstone, nor did he cleanse Corruption from the Dweomerstone and restore the world to its former glory. Instead, the corruption of the Dweomershards was actually intensified, drawn from the wicked heart of Ethoral himself. To make matters worse, far from cleansing Oikonia, the magical energies unleashed by his ritual took the hundreds he had gathered for the ritual and corrupted them further as well.

Those who were there and who participated in Ethoral's ritual became the Skiagens, the Shadow Races. Elves were corrupted into dark elves, the Drow. Dwarves were corrupted into the cunning and evil Duergar. The gnomes participating that day were twisted into the Svirfneblin. The dragons lost their metallic sheen, becoming the evil and cruel chromatic dragons. Halflings were transformed into the sneaky and dastardly Corovine rat-men. Humans were twisted into orcs. Ethoral himself became a being of dark undeath and the father of necromancy.

Returning to his palace with his new Skiagen army, Ethoral thought he would now rule a dark and even more deeply corrupted empire. His mind, twisted beyond all sanity, was plunged into complete darkness and evil. Some of the Magos Kings pledged themselves to this new Dark Emperor and all looked lost.

Historians mark this as the end of the Second Age.

The Third Age

The Prophets of Irenos

As Ethoral attempted to reassert new power in his more deeply corrupted state, Irenos sent his prophets with power to several of the Magos Kings. By the Holy Word of Irenos, some of these Magos

Kings were converted from Aparneonism to trust in Irenos. Dubbed by historians as Epangelians, they warred against Ethoral in order to bring down his dark designs. The Aerlorian Empire was torn asunder in civil war, many of its wonders and works destroyed, hurled under the earth by incredible magics, or sent to planes unknown. Though the battles were fierce and the war was dire, and despite the courage of the Magos Kings and their forces, despite their faith in Irenos, they appeared to be losing.

The tide turned when the Duergar, gripped by the folly of greed, drew the dwarves of the Hypsos Mountains into the war. To this point, the dwarves had mostly ignored the Aerlorian Empire from a political point of view. They had, of course, been trading with the Aerlorians for quite some time. To be sure, a fair number of dwarves also lived throughout the Aerlorian Empire. However, the dwarven kings under the Hypsos mountains paid no fealty to the Aerlorian Emperor and were so concerned with their own mining, the vast majority of them paid little attention to what took place on the surface of Oikonia. Thus, when the Duergar attacked them the wrath of the Dwarves was roused against Ethoral and the Skiagens. This was a fatal mistake.

Renewed by the vigor and numbers of the dwarves, the war began to turn back in favor toward the Epangelians. The Epangelian Magos Kings eventually wrested the Etherbrooch from Ethoral and defeated him.

Knowing they held onto an object of great evil, the Epangelian Magos Kings pulled the Dweomershards out of the Etherbrooch and gave them to the good metallic dragons to hide away throughout the earth. Though they would not be sealed away as strongly as the archangels once did, perhaps no power like Aerloran would ever rise again to misuse them. Disturbingly, the Etherbrooch went missing, however.

As for the Skiagens, they were driven away. Indeed, at the time, few knew precisely where they had gone. They would not stay hidden forever.

The Epangelian Confederacy

Since the dwarves had turned the tide of the war, and because they preferred to once more be left alone, they brokered a new peace within the shattered remains of Aerloran. Under the guidance of the dwarves, the Aerlorian Empire was dissolved and independent states for each race were drawn up. Many secrets and magicks of the Aerlorians had been lost in the war and an agreement was made to let the secrets pass away or lie buried wherever they were. No one wished to repeat the many mistakes and heinous sins of Aerloran. With all seemingly set in place, the dwarves returned to their holds under the Hypsos Mountains.

It is at this time that we begin to see the contemporary differentiation in the races. The remnants of the elven aristocracy from Aerloran are today known as the Gray Elves. Others from that great empire became the Wood Elves, Wild Elves, and High Elves of today. Dwarves who had come to love the surface world in their travels became the Hill Dwarves, living more of their life in the sun's rays. Forest Gnomes and Hill Gnomes took each to their particular environments, with Forest Gnomes delving into woodland secrets and Hill Gnomes learning great acumen in naval pursuits. Each had their own domain, but each pledged themselves in alliance, and thus was born the Epangelian Confederacy.

As the Aerlorian Civil War receded into the past, some rulers of the Epangelian Confederacy were tempted into Aparneonism. Several times Irenos raised up a prophet to warn them of coming disaster and to trust in the promise of salvation. It is in this period that some of the most striking prophecies about Lutrowtis were given. Yet, for all the mercy of Irenos in giving his Word, Aparneon unbelief increased more and more.

The Great War with the Skiagens

As the Epangelian Confederacy's spiritual condition decayed, the Skiagens had their own history. Almost all of this is obscure to us, but it seems that they built a great empire of their own deep below the surface of the earth. What dark deeds transpired there very few living under the sun know or can know. However, once their power had been amassed, they poured forth in great numbers from below the earth and attacked the Epangelian Confederacy.

Their first strike was against the dwarves. In hatred and revenge for the fact that the dwarves had turned the Aerlorian Civil War against them, they made a coordinated and massive attack against the dwarven holds of the Hypsos Mountains. The Corovine had secretly made many strategic tunnels to open up attack on the dwarves in several places all at once, causing extreme confusion and making it difficult to rally to defensive positions. Since the dwarves were mostly disconnected from the other races and since the Skiagens made no other strikes on the surface at first, the dwarves were quickly defeated and driven from the Hypsos Mountains to the lesser holds of the Dhurakkian Heights on Mesaymbria.

Having defeated the dwarves, the Skiagens then turned their wrath upon the Epangelian Confederacy at large. In the decadence of Aparneonism, the kingdoms of the Confederacy were ill prepared. The war went badly for the Confederacy from its earliest days. Indeed, this was probably in no small part because, unbeknownst to the Confederacy, the Skiagens had managed to find and reassemble all the Dweomershards into the Etherbrooch, for it was they who had originally stolen the Etherbrooch at the end of the Aerlorian Civil War.

By the power of the reassembled Dweomershards and the Etherbrooch, the Skiagens had made even more horrific monsters. Continuing in the dark arts of the Aerlorians, they produced many creatures of war. They also twisted and corrupted some creatures into new horrors just to satisfy their depraved minds. Under the tyranny of the Skiagens, our Oikonia became yet more dangerous.

Throughout the war there were some victories for the Confederacy, but the Confederacy was losing. By all appearances, the vast number of Skiagens would soon overrun all of Mesaymbria and Borealia.

The Deep Magic of Lutrowtis

With very little attention, however, the prophecies about Lutrowtis had already begun to come true. Already, some decades before the War of the Skiagens, Lutrowtis had been born. Lutrowtis, who is the Huio in human flesh, had been born of a humble virgin in the city of Solonassa. When the Great War with the Skiagens broke out, he gathered to himself the White Company, two males of each race. Together, Lutrowtis and the White Company found one of the Skiagen entrances to their underground empire and descended.

For the full story of Lutrowtis's life and adventures and how he called and led the White Company into the underground empire of the Skiagens, one should read the Graphais directly. For the purposes of this primer, it is enough to say that Lutrowtis successfully confronted the Dark Mages of the Skiagens, won from them the Etherbrooch fitted with the Dweomershards and brought it back to the surface. Having taken the Skiagens' most powerful weapon in the war, he brought it to an ancient hold in the Winterdust, a place which since the Aerlorian Civil War had itself been deep underground. This was the very place of the Dweomerstone's original home. In the Dweomerchamber Lutrowtis carried out the Deep Magic that would be our salvation.

This was not the magic of Ethoral or contemporary mages. This magic was something more primal, something more deeply connected to Irenos and his holiness. However, the spell also meant the death of Lutrowtis... for a time.

The Deep Magic of Lutrowtis drew out all the evil energies of the corrupted Dweomershards and pulled them into the Etherbrooch. The death of Lutrowtis, whose Deep Magic put upon himself the corruption of all the races, was necessary in order to cleanse the Dweomershards and reforge them again as the Dweomerstone. However, this process did not take place in the matter of a few minutes or hours. No, indeed, the Deep Magic of Lutrowtis worked itself out over the period of thirty-three years.

The Skiagen Over-Empire Crumbles

While the Deep Magic of Lutrowtis was being wrought, the Skiagens won the war on the surface. They overran the Epangelian Confederacy. They set themselves up as rulers and enslaved the other races. They set about to building their rule.

Many among the races thought that the prophecies of Lutrowtis had failed. As such, many rejected Irenos. Many even adopted the false gods of the Skiagens. Their problem was not that Irenos and Lutrowtis had failed them, their problem was that they were poor readers of the Graphais. They did not see that these things must take place. They did not believe or understand that Irenos, the almighty God, cannot fail.

At the moment that the Deep Magic of Lutrowtis completed, the Skiagens were immediately cursed. The Drow, Duergar, and Svirfneblin were caused to receive extreme pain from the sun and they could no longer live on the surface during the day. The chromatic dragons were given torpor and enchantment over their treasure hordes, so that they rarely rouse themselves either for or against anyone. The Corovine and Orcs were given over to intense hatred for other tribes of their own kind, so that they withdrew to their own lands and areas, mostly fighting each other rather than the other races. In this way, much of the surface world was very quickly emptied of the Skiagens. The races of human, halfling, gnome, dragon, elf, and dwarf once more found themselves in command of the surface world. Those Skiagens who attempted to simply hide during the day and come out at night were eventually killed or driven away.

Yet because so many had abandoned hope in Lutrowtis, few knew the reason that this had happened. Few were aware of what had caused this. Some said a mighty sorcerer had wrought a spell to undo the Skiagens (which was half-true, in a way). Others said the Skiagens had angered their gods. What so many did not know or realize was that it was the Deep Magic of Lutrowtis that had restored the Dweomerstone, buried the Etherbrooch and its evil deep below the Winterdust, and had atoned for the sins of all the races.

The Fourth Age

Persecution Under the New Confederacy

At the moment that his Deep Magic finished, Lutrowtis also rose Himself from the dead. While clerics are capable of raising others, this incredible miracle is something only the Huios Himself could do. The White Company, who had been sealed away in the Dweomerchamber during the Deep Magic, were awakened and came forth. Sent as heralds of Lutrowtis's victory, they began to tell the good news of what Lutrowtis had done.

They were not immediately embraced by many. Indeed, the vast majority of people did not even believe they had been with Lutrowtis. A good many did not even acknowledge that Lutrowtis had come and lived in the flesh. Perhaps this is understandable, as the actions of Lutrowtis and the White Company had not been widely known during the Great War with the Skiagens. So, when members of the White Company claimed that Lutrowtis had come and fulfilled the prophecies, many simply did not believe them. Yet even in this, the power of Irenos and His Word shone forth, for while most did not

believe, many did, and trust in Lutrowtis for the forgiveness of sins and for the coming of a new Paradise began to spread.

Meanwhile, mankind was busy rebuilding a new Confederacy. The leaders of the various races had abandoned even the idea of being "Epangelian," that is, of even pretending to trust the Word of Irenos. As such, the gospel proclaimed by the White Company was often not welcomed by the authorities. In various places and from time to time, persecutions against the new "Irenosians" would break out. The new Confederacy was decidedly Aparneon.

The Rise of the Irenosian Empire

However, the Confederacy would not last. In the year EC (Etos Charis) 317, the Solonassian King Nicanor marched against the Marsonian Dominus, Amulius III. After nearly losing his life in a brief skirmish, yet coming out unscathed, King Nicanor was shaken. One of his generals, an Irenosian named Athamas, comforted him with the gospel of Irenos and that night Nicanor was converted and baptized.

King Nicanor won his war against the Marsonian Dominion, but in mercy refused to rule the land if Amulius III would also convert, put his faith in Lutrowtis, and become an Irenosian. A priest of Irenos was brought to teach Amulius III the true faith, and he became an Irenosian.

With this, the seeds of the Irenosian Empire were planted. The Church of Irenos now became the only sanctioned religion of both Solonassia and Marsonia. Solonassia was renamed "Irenosia," and the city of Solonassa, its capital, given the same name. Together with Marsonia, the new Irenosia funded missionaries of the true faith and sent them to the other nations. By the preaching of the Word of Irenos, the faith continued to spread in number.

In some cases, the faith took hold with such vigor that entire nations came into concord with the Irenosian Empire with little difficulty. For example, the Wood Elves of the Houses of Enedeithel joined the Empire of their own accord.

Still, not all accepted the truth quickly or easily. The High Elves of the Throne of Londor felt threatened by the rising power of the Irenosian Empire and together with a similarly wary Kingdom of Keldhaven launched a bloody and vicious war against the Irenosian Empire. In the end, the Marsonian phalanxes proved the key to victory. The Londorian Throne and Crown of Keldhaven were given to an Irenosian High Elf and to an Irenosian Keldan respectively, and they, too, came under the Empire of Irenosia. Though it was an unfortunate route to the spread of the faith, nonetheless the Church grew now throughout five countries in the Empire.

The gnomes of Torraldia and the Grey Elves of Aerylondan joined the Irenosian Empire by treaty, just as the Houses of Enedeithel had done, but in hindsight this was probably too quickly accepted by Emperor Phaestus who signed the treaties. Aparneonism remained a stubborn callous in the hearts of those countries and does to this day. Their fealty to the Irenosian Empire remains largely a political practicality.

Meanwhile, those races without their own country eventually came under the wing of the Irenosian Empire as well, with mixed results. The Wild Elves within the forests of Enedeithel remain largely unconverted, though there are communities and individuals who do believe the true faith. The vast majority of halflings readily accepted the Word of Irenos, and it is difficult to find an Aparneon halfling, though they do exist. Hill Dwarves also largely believe, though they often lack piety. Little progress was made with the Aparneon Barbarians of Borealia before the Anomostian Heresy made their conversion even more difficult. One way or another, as the faith spread, the countries united under the banner of Irenos.

The Fifth Age

The Anomostian Heresy

The beginning of our Fifth Age starts with the rise of the Anomostian Heresy. Ever scheming behind the scenes, Diabolos and his archdemons were not content to simply let the true faith spread quietly through Oikonia. Diabolos, by his temptations and wiles in this world, led astray a certain bishop of the Church, one Bishop Lysander of Faypond.

When Lutrowtis cleansed and reforged the Dweomerstone, he also carried upon himself the guilt of all the corruption of the races. When Lutrowtis died, the guilt of the corruption was paid for. Through trust in Lutrowtis, every person receives forgiveness of sins and the promise of Paradise to come. However, every person still fights against their corruption here and now. Only in the resurrection and in Paradise, will we be free of that corruption.

Bishop Lysander began teaching that "true Irenosians" can free themselves of all corruption now. They no longer need the Commandments or any laws at all from Irenos because Lutrowtis has already done away with Corruption. To prove his point, Lysander said that even the Etherbrooch's magic could be used by a true follower of Irenos without any ill effects.

He vigorously sought to prove this point. Although Lysander was removed from the priesthood for his heresy, he gathered to himself some evil but powerful minions and together they went into the Winterdust. They found the Dweomercamber and recovered from it the Etherbrooch. Contrary to his claims, Lysander was not able to handle the Etherbrooch and its magic without any ill effects.

Lysander and his followers were corrupted in a way even the Skiagens had not experienced. As he tried to use the magic of the Etherbrooch, his body and the bodies of his followers became nightmare horrors, twisted in unspeakable ways. Their minds were given over to insanity. Yet, the great danger they had unearthed is that those who were touched by the magic Lysander drew from the Etherbrooch claim to experience intense physical and mental pleasures. They crave these sensations, and so twist and mutate their bodies even further as they expose themselves more and more to this evil magic.

Lysander, driven not only by the evil in his own heart but also now by the evil of the Etherbrooch, began spreading his heresy throughout Keldhaven and beyond. He built up for himself an army of twisted chaos warriors and began to conquer. Huge areas of Keldhaven came under his sway. Within three years he had a horde of insane, twisted, chaos legions marching on Irenosia.

The difficulty in dealing with Lysander is that by his magic he could twist the mind of those who opposed him. The ecstatic feelings caused by his magic would draw the victims to him, turning loyal soldiers of the Empire into gibbering chaos warriors of Lysander. As Lysander marched on the Imperial City of Irenosia, dread spread quickly through the people and victory did not at all look certain.

The situation was reversed not through mankind's might or power but by the blessing of Irenos. A faithful and simple priest named Meidias prayed that Lutrowtis would grant him a spell to ward minds against Lysander's corrupting magic. Because of his pious life and particularly because of his humble faith, Lutrowtis granted Meidias his request. Meidias was able to work a mighty spell that protected people from Lysander and the Etherbrooch.

With his assistance, the Imperial armies were able to drive Lysander and his chaos hordes north into Borealia. Unfortunately, Lysander himself survived with the Etherbrooch. Unwilling to chase him into the barbarian lands of Borealia, nor to get close to the Skiagen haunted halls of the Hypsos mountains, the Empire built Northreach wall between Borealia and Mesaymbria. However, from time to time, chaos cults of Lysander and their twisted bodies and magicks still rise up within the Empire. Beyond

Northreach Wall, little is known about the terrible hordes that may be gathering.

Peace with Decay

With the defeat of Lysander at Irenosia, the Empire has experienced mostly political peace since then. However, it is merely a political peace. Over the centuries, Aparneonism has grown. Too many do not attend services at church, and a shameful number of people deny the faith outright. One suspects that many kings, rulers, and even some of the Emperors give only lipservice to trusting in Lutrowtis. Even the existence of the Skiagens is questioned by some who claim they are only a metaphor for dark and evil kingdoms of the past.

One thing only is certain about the future: Lutrowtis shall return in glory one day and remake the world as the Paradise it was always intended to be. Even Skiagens who trust in him--and there are rumors that some have over the centuries--will be received into that Paradise. Until then, the future of Oikonia will be written by generations to come.