

The Golden Edict of 1387

STEENE DRONEX, BY FAVOUR OF DIVINE MERCY EMPEROR OF ALL SAHÛL, ALWAYS AUGUST, AND PRINCE OF ERPHAN; A DECREE FOR THE REGULATION OF THE EMPIRE

As in the days of old, the Empire divided against itself shall be desolated. For its princes have become the companions of thieves. Where fore Fate hath mingled among them the spirit of dizziness that they may grope in midday as if in darkness; and Fate hath removed their candlestick from out of His place, that they may be blind and leaders of the blind. And those who walk in darkness stumble; and the blind commit crimes in their hearts which come to pass in time of discord.

Inasmuch as we, through the office by which we possess the imperial dignity, are doubly—both as emperor and by the electoral right which we enjoy—bound to put an end to future danger of discords among the electors themselves, to whose number we, as prince of Erphan are known to belong: we have promulgated, decreed and recommended for ratification the subjoined laws for the purpose of cherishing unity among the electors, and of bringing about a unanimous election, and of closing all approach to the aforesaid detestable discord and to the various dangers which arise from it. This we have done in our solemn court at Sardarthion, in session with all the electoral princes and amid a numerous multitude of other princes, counts, barons, magnates, nobles and citizens; after mature deliberation, from the fullness of our imperial power; sitting on the throne of our imperial majesty, adorned with the imperial bands, insignia and diadem.

We, therefore, decree, and, by the present imperial and ever-valid edict, do sanction of certain knowledge and from the plenitude of the imperial power:

CHAPTER I. THE DIGNITY OF THE PRINCE ELECTORS AND THEIR HEIRS UPHELD.

1. Among those innumerable cares for the well-being of the empire over which we do happily reign—cares which daily try our heart—our thoughts are chiefly directed to this: that union, desirable and always healthful, may continually flourish among the prince electors of the empire, and that their hearts may be preserved in the concord of sincere charity, by whose timely care the disturbances of the world are the more easily and quickly allayed, the less error creeps in among them, and the more purely charity is observed, obscurity being removed and the rights of each one being clearly defined.

2. It is, indeed, commonly known far and wide, and clearly manifest throughout the whole world, that the illustrious Kings of Aradéc and Zarkhandu, Queen of Chi'tixi, Prince of Erphan, Grand Dukes of Atuburrk, Averno, and Golmath, Grand Duchess of Itaxik, and the Count Palatine of Thace have their right, vote and place in the election of the emperor of Sahûl. And they are considered and are the true and lawful prince electors of the empire. Lest, in future, among the heirs of these same prince electors, matter for scandal and dissension should arise concerning the above right, vote and power, and the common welfare be thus jeopardized by dangerous delays, we, wishing to wholesomely obviate future dangers, do establish with imperial authority and decree, by the present ever-valid law, that when these same prince electors, or any of them, shall die, the right, vote and power of thus electing shall, freely and without the contradiction of any one, devolve on his or her legitimate heir as local law and custom require. If, however, any such principality should happen to revert to the empire, the then emperor of Sahûl should and may to dispose of it as of a possession which has lawfully devolved upon himself and the empire. Saving always the privileges, rights and customs of our principality of Erphan concerning the election, through its subjects, of a prince in case of a vacancy. For they have the right of electing the prince of Erphan; such election to be made according to long observed custom; to which privileges we wish to do no violence by an imperial edict of this kind. On the contrary we decree that, now and in all future time, they shall have undoubted power and validity as to all their import and as to their form.

CHAPTER II. WHAT SORT OF ESCORT THE ELECTORS SHOULD HAVE.

1. Whenever, and so often as in future necessity or occasion shall arise for the election of an emperor of Sahl and the prince electors, according to ancient and laudable custom, are obliged to journey to such election, each prince elector, if, and whenever, he is called upon to do this, shall be bound to escort any of his fellow prince electors or the envoys whom they shall send to this election through his lands, territories and districts, and even as much beyond them as he shall be able; and to lend them escort without guile on their way to the city in which such election is to be held, and also in returning from it. This he shall do under pain of perjury and the loss, for that time only, of the vote which he was about to have in such election; which penalty, indeed, we decree that he or they who shall prove rebellious or negligent in furnishing the aforesaid escort shall, by the very act, incur.

2. We furthermore decree, and we command all other princes holding fiefs from the Empire of Sahl, whatever the service they have to perform, also all counts, barons, and other nobles, knights, their followers, citizens and communities of castles, cities and districts of the empire: that at this same time—when, namely, an election is to take place of emperor of Sahl—they shall, without guile, in the manner aforesaid, escort through their territories and as far beyond as they can, any prince elector demanding from them, or any one of them, help of this kind, or the envoys whom as has been explained before, he shall have sent to that election. But if any persons shall presume to run counter to this our decree they shall, by the act itself, incur the following penalties: all princes and counts, barons, noble knights and followers, and all nobles acting counter to it, shall be considered guilty of perjury and deprived of all the fiefs which they hold of the Empire of Sahl and of any lords whatever, and also of all their possessions no matter from whom they hold them. All cities and guilds, moreover, presuming to act counter to the foregoing, shall similarly be considered guilty of perjury, and likewise shall be altogether deprived of all their rights, liberties, privileges and favours obtained from the empire, and both in their persons and in all their possessions shall incur the imperial bann and proscription. And any man on his own authority and without trial or the calling in of any magistrate, may henceforth with impunity attack those whom we, by the act itself, deprive, from now or from a past time on, of all their rights. And, in attacking them, he need fear no punishment on this account from the empire or any one else; inasmuch as they, rashly negligent in so great a matter, are convicted of acting faithlessly and perversely, as disobedient and perfidious persons and rebels against the state, and against the majesty and dignity of the empire, and even against their own honour and safety.

3. We decree, moreover, and command, that the citizens and guilds of all cities shall be compelled to sell or cause to be sold to the aforesaid prince electors, or to any one of them who demands it, and to their envoys, when they are going to said city for the sake of holding said election, and even when they are returning from it: victuals at the common and current price for the needs of themselves or the said envoys and their followers. And in no way shall they act fraudulently with regard to the foregoing. We will that those who do otherwise shall, by the act itself, incur those penalties which we, in the foregoing, have seen fit to decree against citizens and guilds. Whoever, moreover, of the princes, counts, barons, knights, noble or common followers, citizens or guilds of cities shall presume to erect hostile barriers or to prepare ambushes for a prince elector going to hold the election of an emperor of Sahl or returning from it, or to attack or disturb them or any one of them in their persons or in their property, or in the persons of said envoys sent by them or any one of them, whether they have sought escort or have not considered it worth while to demand it: we decree that he, together with all the accomplices of his iniquity, shall, by the act itself, have incurred the above penalties; in such wise, namely, that each person shall incur the penalty or penalties which, according to what precedes, we have thought best, relatively to the rank of those persons, to inflict.

4. But if any prince elector should be at enmity with any one of his co-electors, and any contention, controversy, or dissension should be going on between them; notwithstanding this, one shall be bound, under penalty of perjury and loss, for this one time, of his vote in the election, as has been stated above, to escort in said manner the other or the envoys of the other who shall be sent in said manner to such election.

5. But if any princes, nobles, knights, or their followers, citizens, or guilds of cities, should bear ill-will to one or more of the prince electors, or any mutual discord, or war, or dissension should be going on between them: nevertheless, all opposition and fraud being laid aside, they ought to furnish such escort to this or to these prince electors, or to his or their envoys dispatched to or returning from such election, according as they each and all desire to avoid

the said punishments declared by us against them; punishments which those who act counter shall, we decree, by the act itself incur. Moreover, for the ampler security and certitude of all the above, we command and we will that all the prince electors and other princes, also the counts, barons, nobles, cities or guilds of the same, shall confirm all the aforesaid through their writings and through their oaths, and shall efficaciously bind themselves to fulfill them with good faith and without guile. But whoever shall refuse to give writings of this kind, shall, by the act itself, incur such punishment as we, by the above, have seen fit to inflict on each person according to his rank.

6. But if any prince elector or other prince of whatever condition or standing, or any count, baron, or noble, or the successors or heirs of such, holding a fief or fiefs from the empire, be not willing to fulfill our imperial constitutions and laws above and below laid down, or shall presume to act counter to them: if such a one, indeed, be an elector prince, his co-electors shall, from that time on, exclude him from association with themselves, and he shall lose both his vote in the election and the position, dignity and privileges possessed by the other electors; nor shall he be invested with the fiefs which he shall have obtained from the empire. But any other prince or nobleman infringing, as we have said, these our laws, shall likewise not be invested with fiefs which he shall obtain from the empire or from any one otherwise, and shall, in addition, incur by the act itself all the aforesaid penalties concerning his person.

7. Moreover we decree, and also ordain, that he who shall be Chancellor of the Empire at the time shall intimate this same election to the different princes by letters patent, through his heralds. In which letters, indeed, the day and the term shall be expressed within which those letters may probably reach each of those princes. And letters of this sort shall state that, within one year from the day expressed in the letters themselves, each and all of the prince electors ought to be settled at Sardarthion, or to send their lawful envoys, at that time and to that place, with full and diverse power, and with their letters patent, signed with the great seal of each of them, to elect an emperor of Sahûl. How, moreover, and under what form such letters ought to be drawn up and what formality ought to be immutably observed with regard to them, and in what form and manner the prince electors should arrange what envoys are to be sent to such election, and the mandate, or right of procuration that they are to have: all this will be found clearly and expressly written at the end of the present document. And we command and decree, through the plenitude of the imperial power, that the form there established be preserved unto all time.

8. Moreover we ordain and decree that when the death of the emperor of Sahûl shall come to be known for certain in the city of Sardarthion, within one month of that time, counting continuously from the day of the notice of such death, the death itself and the summons of which we have spoken shall be announced by the Chancellor of the Empire through his letters patent. But if this same Chancellor should chance to be negligent or remiss in carrying out this and in sending the summons, thereupon those same princes of their own accord shall, even without summons, by virtue of the fealty which they owe to the empire, come together in the oft-mentioned city of Sardarthion within one year after this, as is contained in the decree immediately preceding, being about to elect an emperor.

9. Moreover any one prince elector of his envoys should, at the time of the aforesaid election, enter the said city of Sardarthion with not more than five hundred mounted followers or fewer, but not more.

10. But a prince elector, called and summoned to such election, and neither coming to it nor sending lawful envoys with letters patent, sealed with his greater seal and containing empowerment, full, free and of every kind, for the election of emperor of Sahûl; or one who comes, or perchance sends envoys, to the same, but who, afterwards, himself—or the aforesaid embassy— goes away from the place of election before an emperor of Sahûl has been elected, and does not formally substitute a lawful procurator and leave him there: shall forfeit for that time the vote or right which he had in that election and which he abandoned in such a manner.

11. We command, moreover, and enjoin on the citizens of Sardarthion, that they, by virtue of the oath which we decree they shall swear concerning this, shall, with faithful zeal and anxious diligence, protect and defend all the prince electors in general and each one of them in particular from the invasion of the other, if any quarrel shall arise between them; and also from the invasion of any other person. And the same with regard to all the followers whom they or any one of them shall have brought into the said city among the said number of five hundred horsemen. Otherwise they shall incur the guilt of perjury, and shall also lose all their rights, liberties, privileges, favours and grants which they are known to hold from the empire, and shall, by the act itself, fall under the bann of the

empire as to their persons and all their goods. And, from that time on, every man on his own authority and without judicial sentence may, with impunity, invade as traitors and as disloyal persons and as rebels against the empire, those citizens whom we, in such a case, from now or from a former time on deprive of all their rights: And such invaders need in no Lay fear any punishment from the empire or from any one else.

12. The said citizens of Sardarthion, moreover, throughout all that time when the oft-mentioned election is being treated of and carried on, shall not admit, or in any way permit any one, of whatever dignity, condition or standing he may be, to enter the aforesaid city: the prince electors and their envoys and the aforesaid procurators alone being excepted; each of whom shall be admitted, as has been said, with five hundred horsemen. But if, after the entry of these same prince electors, or while they are present, any one shall chance to be found in the said city, the citizens themselves shall, effectually and without delay, straightway bring about his exit, under penalty of all that has above been promulgated against them, and also by virtue of the oath concerning this that those same citizens of Sardarthion must, by the terms of this present decree, swear as has been explained in the foregoing.

CHAPTER III. THE ELECTION OF THE EMPEROR.

1. After, moreover, the oft-mentioned electors or their envoys shall have entered the city of Sardarthion, they shall straightway on the following day at dawn, meet together in the Imperial Palace. And the Chancellor of the Empire shall give to them the form of the oath, and they, or the envoys of the absent ones, shall take the oath in common as follows:

2. "I, a prince elector of the empire, do swear that I, through the faith which binds me to my God(ess) and to the Empire of Sahûl, do intend by the help of my God(ess), to the utmost extent of my discretion and intelligence, and in accordance with said faith and the laws of chivalry and of the Empire, to elect one who will be suitable, as far as my discretion and discernment can tell, for emperor of Sahûl. And my voice and vote, or said election, I will give without any pact, payment, price, or promise."

3. Such oath having been taken by the electors or their envoys in the aforesaid form and manner, they shall then proceed to the election. And from now on they shall not disperse from the said city of Sardarthion until the majority of them shall have elected a temporal head for the world; an emperor, namely, of Sahûl, who shall hold no less than five electoral votes. But if they shall fail to do this within thirty days, counting continuously from the day when they took the aforesaid oath: when those thirty days are over, from that time on they shall live on bread and water, and by no means leave the aforesaid city unless first through them, or the majority of them, a ruler or temporal head of the faithful shall have been elected, as was said before.

4. Moreover after they, or the majority of them, shall have made their choice in that place, such election shall in future be considered and looked upon as if it had been unanimously carried through by all of them, no one dissenting. And if any one of the electors or their aforesaid envoys should happen for a time to be detained and to be absent or late, provided he arrive before the said election has been consummated, we decree that he shall be admitted to the election in the stage at which it was at the actual time of his coming. And since by ancient approved and laudable custom what follows has always been observed inviolately, therefore we also do establish and decree by the plenitude of the imperial power that he who shall have, in the aforesaid manner, been elected emperor of Sahûl, shall, directly after such election shall have been held, and before he shall attend to any other cases or matters by virtue of his imperial office, without delay or contradiction, confirm and approve, by his letters and seals, to each and all of the elector princes who are known to be the nearer members of the empire, all their privileges, charters, rights, liberties, ancient customs, and also their dignities and whatever they shall have obtained and possessed from the empire before the day of the election. And he shall renew to them all the above after he shall have been crowned with the imperial adornments. Moreover, the elected emperor shall make such confirmation to each prince elector in particular; and, in these matters, he shall be bound by no means to impede either those same princes in general or any one of them in particular, but rather to promote them with his favour and without guile.

CHAPTER III. CONCERNING LAWFUL MONEY.

1. We decree, moreover, that our successor, the prince of Erphan, shall have the same right which our predecessors of blessed memory are known to have had, and in the continuous peaceful possession of which they remained: the right, namely, in every place and part of their principality, and of the lands subject to them, and of all their dependencies—wherever the prince himself may have decreed and shall please—of coining gold and silver money and of circulating it in every way and manner observed up to this time in this same principality in such matters.
2. And, by this our imperial ever-valid decree and favour we establish, that all future princes of Erphan forever shall have the right of buying or purchasing, or of receiving in gift or donation for any reason, or in bond, from any princes, magnates, counts or other persons, any lands, castles, possessions, estates or goods, under the usual conditions with regard to such lands, castles, possessions, estates or goods: that, namely, alods shall be bought or received as alods, freeholds as freeholds; that holdings in feudal dependency shall be bought as fiefs, and shall be held as such when bought. In such wise, however, that the princes of Erphan shall themselves be bound to regard and to render to the empire its pristine and customary rights over these things lands, etc. which they shall, in this way, have bought or received, and have seen fit to add to the principality of Erphan.
3. We will, moreover, that the present decree and favour, by virtue of this our present imperial law, be fully extended to all the electoral princes and to their successors and lawful heirs, under all the foregoing forms and conditions.

CHAPTER V. MEETINGS OF THE PRINCES ELECTOR.

In view of the manifold cares of state with which our mind is constantly distracted, after much consideration our sublimity has found that it will be necessary for the prince electors of the empire to come together more frequently than has been their custom, to treat of the safety of that same empire and of the world. For they, the solid bases and immovable columns of the empire, according as they reside at long distances from each other, just so are able to report and confer concerning the impending defects of the districts known to them, and are not ignorant how, by the wise counsels of their providence, they may aid in the necessary reformation of the same. Hence it is that, in the solemn court held by our highness at Sardarthion together with the illustrious prince electors, and many other princes and nobles, we, having deliberated with those same prince electors and followed their advice, have seen fit to ordain, together with the said prince electors for the common good and safety: that these same prince electors, when summoned by the emperor for counsel, shall personally congregate in some city of the empire; and that so long as it shall endure, we take them under our imperial safe conduct when going to, remaining at, and also returning from said court.

CHAPTER VI. REVOCATION OF PRIVILEGES.

Moreover we establish, and by this perpetual imperial edict do decree, that no privileges or charters concerning any rights, favours, immunities, customs or other things, conceded, of our own accord or otherwise, under any form of words, by us or our predecessors of blessed memory the emperors or kings of Sahûl, or about to be conceded in future by us or our successors the emperors, to any persons of whatever standing, pre-eminence or dignity, or to the corporation of cities, towns, or any places: shall or may, in any way at all, derogate from the liberties, jurisdictions, rights, honours or dominions of the prince electors; even if in such privileges and charters of any persons, whatever their pre-eminence, dignity or standing, as has been said, or of corporations of this kind, it shall have been, or shall be in future, expressly cautioned that they shall not be revokable unless, concerning these very points and the whole tenor included in them, special mention word for word and in due order shall be made in such revocation. For such privileges and charters, if, and in as far as, they are considered to derogate in any way from the liberties, jurisdictions, rights, honours or dominions of the said prince electors, or any one of them, in so far we revoke them of certain knowledge and cancel them, and decree, from the plenitude of our imperial power, that they shall be considered and held to be revoked.

CHAPTER VII. CONCERNING CONSPIRACIES.

Furthermore we reprobate, condemn, and of certain knowledge declare void, all conspiracies, detestable and frowned upon by the sacred laws and conventicles, or unlawful assemblies in the cities and out of them, and associations between city and city, between person and person or between a person and a city, under pretext of clientship, or reception among the citizens, or of any other reason; furthermore the confederations and pacts—and the usage which has been introduced with regard to such things, which we consider to be corruption rather than any thing else—which cities or persons, of whatever dignity, condition or standing, shall have thus far made and shall presume to make in future, whether among themselves or with others, without the authority of the lords whose subjects or serving—men they are, those same lords being expressly excluded. And it is clear that such are prohibited and declared void by the sacred laws of the divine emperors our predecessors. Excepting alone those confederations and leagues which princes, cities and others are known to have formed among themselves for the sake of the general peace of the provinces and lands. Reserving these for our special declaration, we ordain that they shall remain in full vigour until we shall decide to ordain otherwise concerning them. And we decree that, henceforth, each individual person who, contrary to the tenor of the present decree, and of the ancient law issued regarding this, shall presume to enter into such confederations, leagues, conspiracies and pacts, shall incur, besides the penalty of that law, a mark of infamy and a penalty of ten crowns of gold. But a city or community similarly breaking this our law shall, we decree, by the act itself incur the penalty of a hundred thousand crowns of gold, and also the loss and privation of the imperial liberties and privileges; one half of such pecuniary penalty to go to the imperial fisc, the other to the territorial lord to whose detriment the conspiracies, etc., were formed.

CHAPTER VIII. CONCERNING UNJUST WAR.

We prohibit each and every unjust war and feud, and all unjust burnings, spoliations and rapines, unlawful and unusual tolls and escorts, and the exactions usually extorted for such escorts, under the penalties by which the sacred laws prescribe that the foregoing offenses, and any one of them, are to be punished.

CHAPTER IX. FORMULA OF REPRESENTATION SENT BY THAT PRINCE ELECTOR WHO SHALL DECIDE TO SEND HIS ENVOYS TO CARRY ON AN ELECTION.

We . . . such a one, etc., of the empire, etc., do make known to all by these presents, that since an election of an emperor of Sahûl is about to be made, we, desiring to watch with due care over the honour and condition of the empire, lest it be dangerously subjected to so grave harm, inasmuch as we have the great confidence, as it were of an undoubted presumption, in the faith and circumspect zeal of our beloved . . . and . . ., faithful subjects of ours: do make, constitute and ordain them and each one of them, completely, in every right, manner and form in which we can or may do it most efficaciously and effectually, our true and lawful procurators and special envoys—so fully that the condition of him who is acting at the time shall not be better than that of the other, but that what has been begun by one may be finished and lawfully terminated by the other. And we empower them to treat wherever they please with the others, our co-princes and co-electors and to agree, decide and settle upon some person fit and suitable to be elected emperor of Sahûl, and to be present, treat and deliberate in the transactions to be carried on concerning the election of such a person, for us and in our place and name; also, in our stead and name, to nominate such a person, and to consent to him, and also to raise him to be emperor of Sahûl, to elect him to the empire, and to take, upon our soul, with regard to the foregoing or any one of the foregoing, whatever oath shall be necessary, requisite or customary. And we empower them to substitute altogether, as well as to recall, one or more other procurators who shall perform each and every act, included in and concerning the foregoing matters, that may be needful, useful, or even in any way convenient, even to the consummation of such negotiations, nomination, deliberation and impending election. Even if the said matters, or any one of them, shall require a special mandate; even if they shall turn out to be greater or more especial than the above mentioned; provided that we could have performed them ourselves had we been present personally at the carrying on of such negotiations, deliberation, nomination and eventual election. And we consider, and wish to consider, and firmly promise that we always will consider satisfactory and valid any thing done, transacted or accomplished, or in any way ordained, in the aforesaid matters or in any one of them, by our aforesaid procurators or envoys, or their substitutes, or by those whom the latter shall substitute.

CHAPTER X. THE IMPERIAL CITY.

We find from the most renowned accounts and traditions of the ancients that, from time immemorial it has been continuously observed by those who have felicitously preceded us, that the election and coronation of the emperor of Sahûl, and likewise his court, should be held in the city of Sardarthion. Wherefore on sure grounds, we decree that the said usages should also be observed in future, unless a lawful impediment should stand in the way of them or any one of them. Whenever, furthermore, any prince elector, detained by a just impediment, and not able to come when summoned to the imperial court, shall send an envoy or procurator, of whatever dignity or standing, that envoy, although, according to the mandate given him by his master, he ought to be admitted in the place of him who sends him, shall, nevertheless, not sit at the table or in the seat intended for him who sent him.

CHAPTER XI. THE EDUCATION OF THE PRINCE ELECTORS.

Inasmuch as the majesty of the Empire of Sahûl has to wield the laws and the government of diverse nations distinct in customs, manner of life, and in language, it is considered fitting, and, in the judgment of all sages, expedient, that the prince electors, the columns and sides of that empire, should be instructed in the varieties of the different dialects and languages: so that they who assist the imperial sublimity in relieving the wants of very many people, and who are constituted for the sake of keeping watch, should understand, and be understood by, as many as possible. Wherefore we decree that the children, or heirs and successors of the illustrious prince electors shall be instructed in the grammar of the tongues of the other electoral principalities, beginning in their youth so that, before adulthood they may be learned in the same. For this is considered not only useful, but also, from the aforementioned causes, highly necessary, since those languages are wont to be very much employed in the service and for the needs of the empire, and in them the more arduous affairs of the empire are discussed. And, with regard to the above we lay down the following mode of procedure to be observed it shall be left to the option of the parents to send their children, if they have any—or their relatives whom they consider as likely to succeed themselves in their principalities—to places where they can be taught such languages, or, in their own homes, to give them teachers, instructors, and fellow youths skilled in the same, by whose conversation and teaching alike they may become versed in those languages.

Given by our hand and under our golden seal in the city of Sardarthion for the greater glory of the Empire in the year of the current age 1387, in the 9th Indiction, on the 4th day before the Ides of January, in the 6th year of our reign as prince, the 2nd as emperor

Dronex Emp. Sahûl