

ARMÉES

JEAN-PIERRE DIONNET, PICARET & JEAN-CLAUDE GAL



HUMANOIDS

LONG AGO, THE CONQUEROR'S ARMIES SET OUT TO VANQUISH THE WORLD...



NO ONE KNEW WHO THEY WERE OR FROM WHENCE THEY CAME, ONLY THAT ONE DAY THEY WOULD ARRIVE.



SOMETIMES THEY WERE HALTED, SOMETIMES THEY RETREATED, BUT ALWAYS THEY REEMERGED.

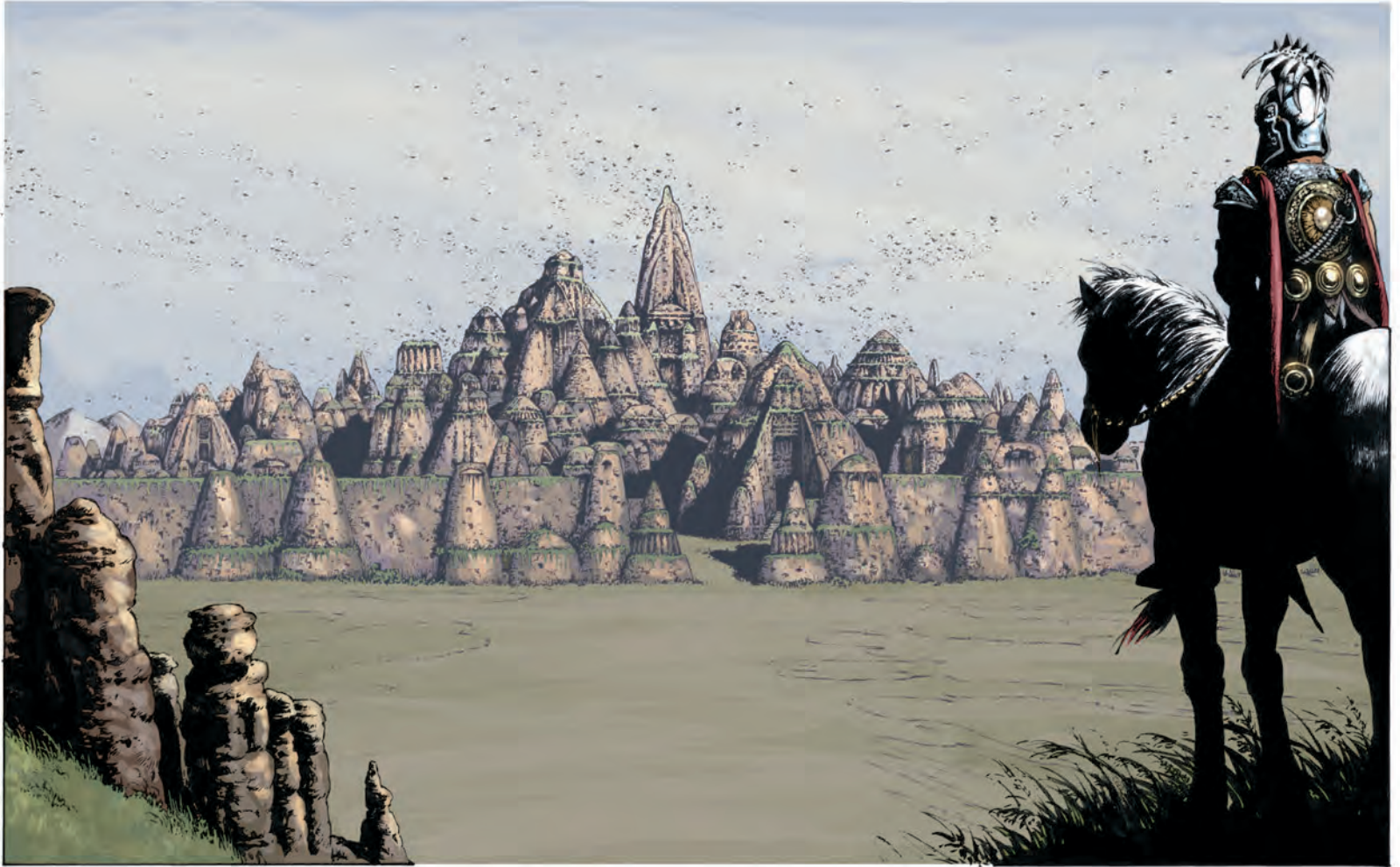


THOSE THEY DEFEATED CAME TO SWELL THEIR RANKS.



ONE DAY, THE SECOND ARMY'S VANGUARD CAME TO A CITY DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE LAND...





NOT A SOUL,
NOT EVEN A LOOKOUT...
THIS TELLS ME NOTHING
OF USE...

NOR I. THE CITY IS STRONG;
THEY COULD HOLD US AT BAY...
A TRAP, PERHAPS?

WE SHALL
SEE...



**TO ARMS, SOLDIERS
OF THE CONQUEROR,
AND ADVANCE!**

A large illustration of a city with stone buildings and a rider on a horse. The scene is set in a lush, green environment with tall, pointed stone structures. A rider on a white horse is in the foreground, facing away from the viewer towards the city. In the background, other riders on horses are visible, some on a hillside. The sky is filled with birds. The overall style is that of a comic book illustration.

GREETINGS, DEAR PRINCE,

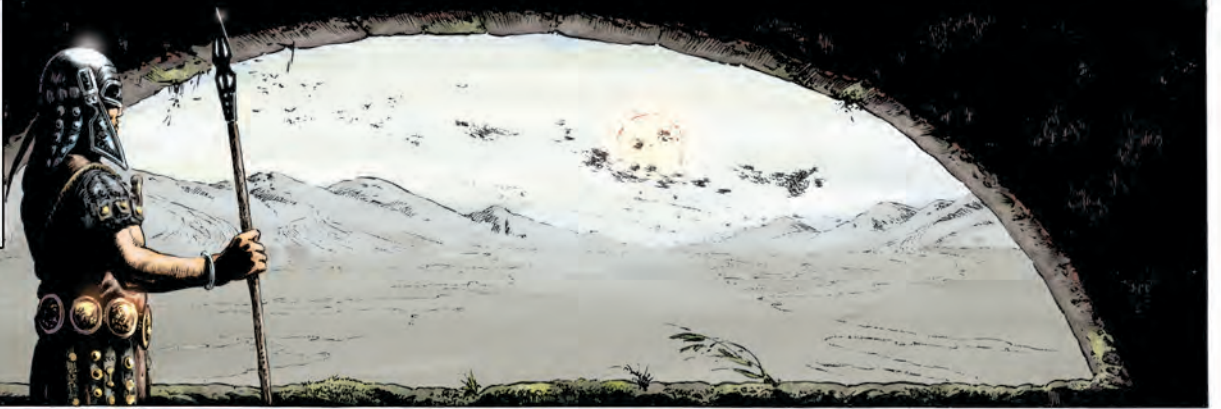
WE HAVE SEIZED THE CITY CALLED JERIM BY ITS INHABITANTS, WITHOUT COMBAT. OUR APPROACH SIGNALLED NO ALARM, THE RAMPARTS REMAINED EMPTY AND THE GATES OPENED BEFORE US. IT TOOK BUT LITTLE TIME TO SURROUND THEM.

THE NATIVES EXITED THEIR HOMES AND SURRENDERED TO ME, YOUR EMISSARY.

WE SHALL SPEND THE WINTER HERE, AND AWAIT YOUR ARRIVAL. SHOULD YOU WISH IT, THE MESSENGER CAN TELL YOU MORE.



FROM THE WALL THAT OVERLOOKED THE PLAINS, THE SENTINEL, RIGID AND SAD, STOOD GUARD. HE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO CELEBRATE THE VICTORY WITH THE OTHERS, WHOSE SHOUTS AND LAUGHTER CARRIED UP FROM BELOW...



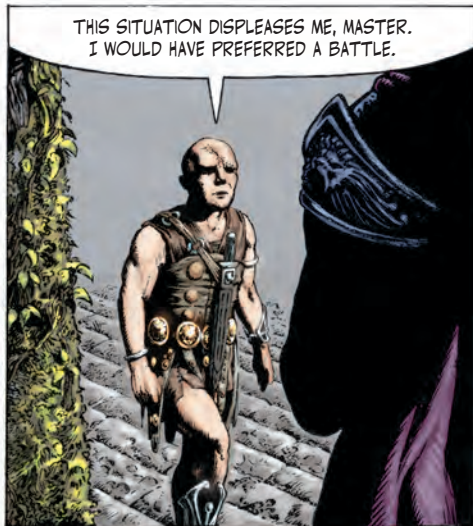
I HAD FORBIDDEN PILLAGING. I HAVE A MIND TO...

LEAVE THEM... THEY CROSSED THE DESERT AND HAVE NOT SEEN HOME FOR A LONG TIME. THEY ARE ENTITLED TO *SOME* AMUSEMENT!





AND YOU, SOLDIER, WHAT ARE YOU PONDERING? YOU LOOK SAD... SPEAK FREELY.



THIS SITUATION DISPLEASES ME, MASTER. I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A BATTLE.

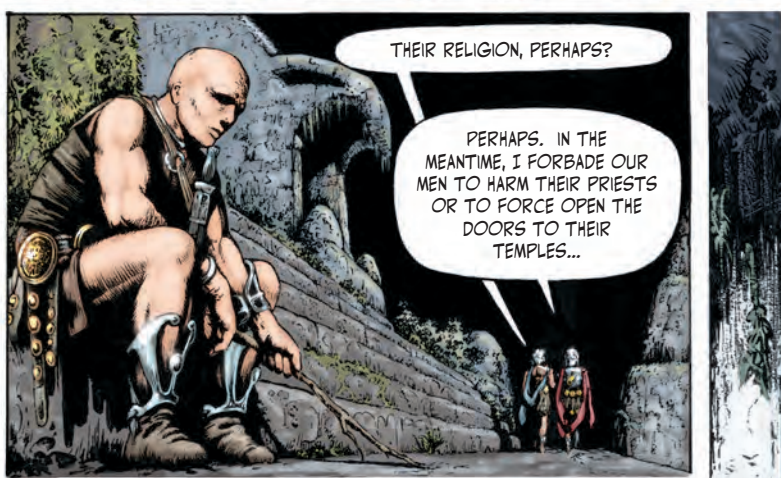


THIS RING. I TOOK IT FROM A CORPSE WHEN WE ENTERED KALETH. ALL THE WORTHY MEN ARE DEAD! HERE THEY SAY NOTHING. THEY SEE US AND THEY OBEY.



I DO NOT LIKE THIS...

HE'S RIGHT... THESE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE RESISTED.



THEIR RELIGION, PERHAPS?

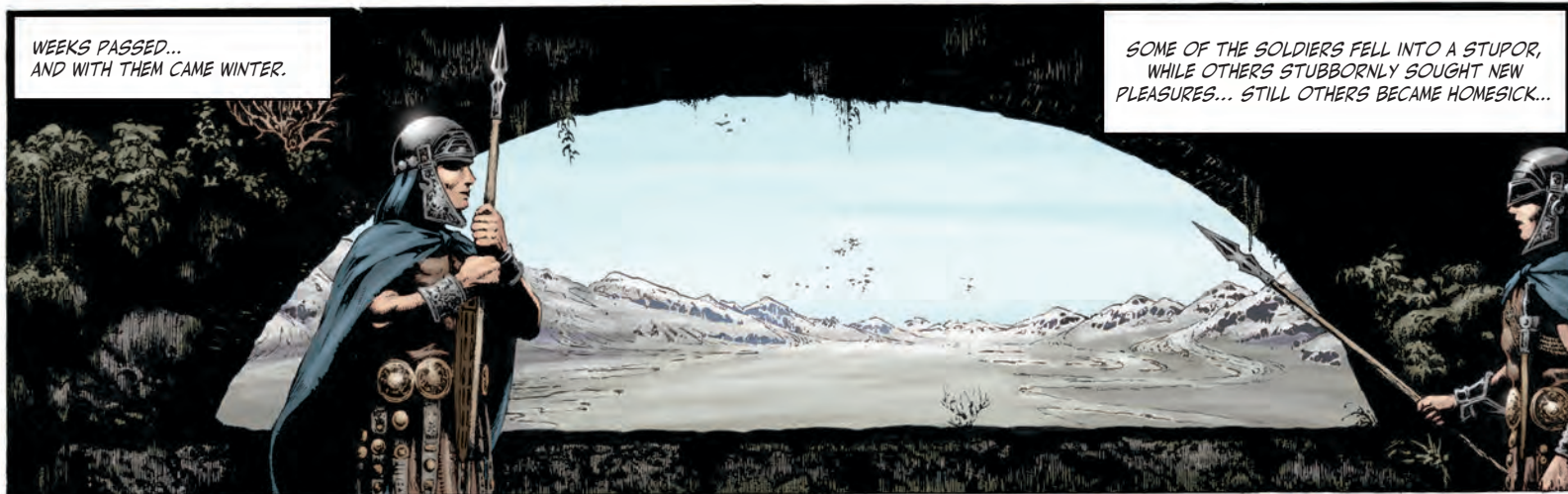
PERHAPS. IN THE MEANTIME, I FORBADE OUR MEN TO HARM THEIR PRIESTS OR TO FORCE OPEN THE DOORS TO THEIR TEMPLES...



BUT I HAVE ALSO DOUBLED THE GUARD.

WEEKS PASSED...
AND WITH THEM CAME WINTER.

SOME OF THE SOLDIERS FELL INTO A STUPOR,
WHILE OTHERS STUBBORNLY SOUGHT NEW
PLEASURES... STILL OTHERS BECAME HOMESICK...





YOU PLUNGE THE IRON DIRECTLY INTO THE WATER? DOES IT NOT RENDER IT BRITTLE?



I WAS ALSO A BLACKSMITH ONCE... THAT IS NOT HOW WE DO IT WHERE I COME FROM...

COME IN, I WILL SHOW YOU.



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? I GAVE STRICT ORDERS FOR THIS DOOR TO BE GUARDED AT ALL TIMES, AND YET THERE IS NO ONE HERE!



I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT, SIR...