

EREWON

Number 60 ... 2 December 1971
---incorporating LILLIPUT---
*****circulation 103*****

Greetings, O hemisphere! This is EREWON, a capital journal of postal Diplomacy and other good feelings. Neighborly subscriptions are 7/91. Back issues are 10c each in lots of 2 or more. Available: 39-41, 43, 45-59; also available, at 30c each, are some issues of Volume III: 5-8, 10 (issues 25-28, 30) [issues 31-38 (Vol. IV, 1-8) were subzines of NUMENOR]. This is Pandemonium Publication #427, edited and published by Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Blvd., San Diego CA 92116; telephone, (714) 282-1921; member, NEFFGB, NEFFGDD, IFW, IFWDS, DA, PDRC.

*DIPLOMACY is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhauer and copyright by Gamea Research, Inc., 48 Warren St., Boston MA 02118. GRI will be happy to sell you a set, postpaid, for \$8.00. The new Rulebook is available from them for \$1.00. Conference maps are 10 for 50c or 25 for \$1.00.

This issue of EREWON is dedicated to President James Monroe. On 2 December 1823, President Monroe, in an address to the Congress of the United States, declared that European colonialism was no longer welcome in the Western Hemisphere and that further European expansion would not be tolerated by the United States. Although more practical expressions of American hegemony over the Hemisphere would not take place until a generation later, President Monroe's famous Doctrine is the first declaration that the United States, as it was destined to be, was the metropolis of the Americas. The Monroe Doctrine recognizes that the nations of the Americas are not mere appanages of Europe and that the United States, vastly the most powerful of the American nations, and uniquely endowed with democratic ideals and republican forms, was the natural leader and protector of the western continents. The bold and unequivocal nature of the Monroe Doctrine gave the newly-born nations to the south the sense of security and acceptance which they needed in their first uncertain years of independence. And in so doing, President Monroe laid the cornerstone of the American Empire.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. IS THIS A HABIT? I only publish this rag once a month, supposedly. But by mid-month, so much stuff piles up that I'll never get it in my little ten-page issue, so I have to publish every two weeks on the average. I don't hear any complaints except from Bonnie: "When are you going to stop typing and come to bed?"

2. A NEW RECORD! I was one of the victims, so perhaps I shouldn't crow about it. However, Rick Brooks has just set an almost unbelievable record in postal Diplomacy. In game-year 1909 in 1970AD (DIPLOPHOBIA's QEC), Rick, playing Austria, jumped from 14 supply centers to 22, a gain of eight. To my knowledge, nothing like this has ever happened before. Wow!

3. THE COVER OF #59 was by George Samuel Harter, postal Diplomacy's artist-in-residence in San Diego. George's work has been seen in MOOSLER ARCHIVES, XENOLOGIC, and the BIFCON IV Proceedings. More of George's work may be seen in EREWON, probably next issue.

4. ASCHLUSS, which I advertised last issue, is still looking for players for Origins of World War II. Joe Anrosiak's fee is \$3, and he will be operating on 2-week deadlines. Once a section of "Origins" is filled, Joe will be looking into Diplomacy variants. He has expressed an interest

Imperialism VII-R and in "Germany-Vs.-the-World", both games with World War II scenarios. Joe also indicates that the \$3.00 fee to "Origins" will probably be more than enough to cover the costs of the game, which will run only 12 issues, and that therefore players may receive a refund or a discount on another game. He will also be polling his players and subscribers as to what variants they'd like to play, so it would not hurt to let him know if you are interested in a specific variant.

5. GAMERS GUIDE ON THE WALL, WHO'S THE CUTEST 'ZINE OF ALL? The poll by GAMERS GUIDE on postal Diplomacy 'zines and Gamesmasters has just been published in issue 22. The 7 best 'zines, according to GG's readers, are (in order): EREHWON, COSTAGUANA, GRAUSTARK, DIPLOPHOBIA, NUMENOR, DIE SCHULDIGKEIT..., and XENOGOGIC. The 6 best GMs (again in order): Walker, Boardman, Miller, McCallum, vonMetzke, and Peery. Interestingly, a poll of 11 wargaming 'zines was also conducted, and my NUMENOR was among them. Considering that it speaks to a very small audience, it did pretty well, ranking 7th overall (ahead of COURIER, THE GENERAL, EUROPE '44, and D-ELIM), 8 in quality (behind the slicks and mimeo 'zines, of course), 7th in content (ahead of INTERNATIONAL WARGAMER [?], SPARTAN INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY, EUROPE '44, and THE GENERAL), and 6th in value (tied with I.W., and ahead of the 4 others already named). Not bad....

6. NEW GAMES ALL OVER. In addition to the new games I've mentioned elsewhere, or to expand previous notices, we note:

GRAUSTARK's new games are open. GM Boardman has not followed his usual practice of noting a specific number of games open, some of them reserved for certain kinds of players. There are just game openings. The fee is \$6. GRAUSTARK is the only 'zine in the country, not excluding my own, whose games are worth that fee. John Boardman, 234 E. 19th St., Brooklyn NY 11226.

XENOGOGIC, Larry Peery, 816 24th St., SanDieto CA 92102. Larry has 3 games open: X-23, regular Diplomacy, \$5.00, and almost full. X-24, regular Diplomacy for novices, each of whom will be assigned a Consultant, \$5. XXX (no number), a 7-player 7-game supergame, or tournament, \$5.00 to register and \$5.00 after 1904. In this last, Larry is betting he can fill the game even though I have said I won't rate it (Burt Labelle will rate it as 7 games, however, and I think John McCallum will also). Again, \$5.00 is a high fee, but Larry is one of the best GMs in the country and well worth it.

THE JASTRZAB REPORTS, the world's most elaborate Polish joke, Stan Wrobel, 7 PolandVillage Blvd., Poland OH 44514. Regular games will open after the first of the year, and reservations will be accepted. The fee will be \$4.00. If there is interest, a section of Jeff Key's "Lord of the Rings" Diplomacy will be offered.

7. THE BEYERLEIN POLL III. It's time to vote for the 14 best players in the country again. PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS EXACTLY: List the 7 players, still active in postal play, whom you feel are the best players, in a verticle list under the heading "TOP BOARD". Then list the next 7 under "SECOND BOARD". Rate only active players. Sign your ballot. Mail it to Doug Beyerlein, 3934 SW Southern, Seattle WA 98116. It is due on 4 January 1972. Your vote can't be counted unless you send it, so do so now.

8. JOHN BESHARA IS A LIAR. So what's new? Anyway, Larry Peery notes to me that the long-expected campaign of villification and slander from the poison pen of everyone's favorite anti-Semite has finally begun. Instead of addressing himself to the issues of his gross mismanagement of the Diplomacy Association and his usurpation of power--issues on which he cannot win--

Chairman Beshara has instead launched into fantastic allegations about Larry Peery's personal life. Even if true, they are irrelevant to the issues which confront the Diplomacy Association, but Chairman Beshara is not one to be slowed down by silly questions such as truth, ethics, or propriety. I, too, have seen or heard such letters. They contain the most libelous sorts of statements about Larry's educational status, personal finances, morality, religion, and whatnot. None of these statements is true. John Beshara is a consummate, vicious, and incredible liar. I cannot believe the depths to which he has sunk in this matter. But then, what can you expect of a man who would willingly countenance the slaughter of the millions of Jews now resident in Israel? John Boardman once referred to Charles Reinsel as the "moral vacuum that talks like a man". I suggest that that phrase has found a more apt subject.

TRETICK STRIKES OUT -- AGAIN

The Tretick "reputation" as "world's worst postal Gamesmaster" continues to receive support--from Tretick, of course. Postal game 1970AK, LA GUERRE's LRT (misrepresented as "1970BI" by Tretick) was last published (Spring 1905) in May of this year. Since then, letters from the players to Tretick about the status of the game have failed to elicit so much as a postcard. Accordingly, and in response to a request from one of the players in the game, transfer operations have been begun. We hope to have this long-stalled game under way again soon. Incidentally, none of Tretick's other 1970 games has progressed for the past 6 months, either, and we will shortly attend to them as well. Meanwhile, you-know-who makes off with the game fees

THE "ANONYMOUS" PLAYER -- BLEAH!

The idiot player who gafflates without telling anybody he's decided to quit is a universal problem. Some GMs have ignored the problem by pretending he hasn't left (and the game limps on). Others have met it squarely by providing a replacement player system. This latter necessarily entails one or more missed moves, however, unless General Orders were available, since the dropped player has got to miss deadlines before he can be replaced.

Some GMs have concluded that missed moves are a great evil--and it must be admitted they don't help the game--and seek to have moves made even if there is no player. This seems to me akin to a football player's running toward one goal because he can't get to the other. Despite the good intentions of the GM, the game may very well suffer.

The name of the game is "Diplomacy". Yet in some games, players are faced with moves being made by a nameless entity with whom they have not had a chance to conduct diplomacy! This is a very unwise procedure. Some GMs provide for negotiation with the "anonymous" one through themselves, but this is not satisfactory unless the deadlines are quite far apart. All in all, no moves at all seem better than anonymous ones.

Similar, and often worse, is the sometime practice of allowing a replacement player to make moves before any of the other players know who he is and have had a period for negotiation. EREHWON requires, for instance, that a replacement be known to the players at least two weeks before he submits any orders. This prevents the game being spoiled, perhaps, because the replacement makes moves out of the blue. How many times has it happened to you that moves have been made in a game by someone you didn't know was in the game before you saw his orders? Didn't it upset you? Didn't you feel you should have been allowed some time for diplomacy?

I hope GMs will take note of this problem, and that players will ask their GMs to avoid such surprises. The game you save may be your own.

THE "CONSULTANT" MESS ... AGAIN ... AND AGAIN ... AND AGAIN ... AND AGAIN ...

Well, if nothing else, the Diplomacy Association's "Consultant" program has provided a little controversy. We already have 3 letters, all of them quite long. I am printing them here, along with comments set off by brackets ([]). I hope everybody understands that I am not always going to have room to print everything I get. However, since the Diplomacy Association, or at least the Beshara minority faction, does not permit free and open discussion of anything, much less this sacred cow, I am giving it as much space as possible. By the way, Chairman Beshara is busy telling people that I never print the opinions of those who disagree with me. Sigh.... Truth may or may not be stranger than fiction, Johnny-baby, but it sure is preferable. Try it some time.

ERIC JUST, Box 131, Paoli OK 73074. "I have read with interest your series on the Consultant Program and I am moved, at last, to comment. I think that you are being unfair. It seems to me that you are letting your bad feelings for John Beshara stand in the way of any objective consideration of the programs of TDA [sic]. [Not so, Eric; if I were, I would not be printing this. What stands in the way of objective consideration is Chairman Beshara's determination to preserve a total information blackout.]

"Basically, the DA's Consultant program is the best thing to come out of Beshara's association. Now admittedly, as it now stands, it may not be perfect, but it is basically a good idea. It provides a service to novices which has formerly been available to only a few lucky persons who live near experienced players. These few have had 'consultants' for years, except for the fact that they have not been called that. Novices in the OklahomaCity area have asked Jeff or myself for advice on particular games, and we have given it freely. We did not inform the GMs whose game they were in that we had assisted these people, and nobody was the wiser. You have probably done the same yourself. And I'll bet you did it secretly, and I'll bet you didn't see anything wrong in your actions. [Partly wrong, Eric. I have in fact made a point of telling the GM concerned that I gave certain information or advice to such-and-such a player, although I did not do so in every case. The point is, I would have made no secret of it if asked. There is, in any event, a difference between mere failure to tell somebody and a conspiracy of silence such as we meet in the case of the DA.]

Now then, along comes Beshara offering this same service to others who are less fortunate, and you brand this with all sorts of nasty rumors about its potential for abuse. All Beshara is doing is publically declaring that he can offer this service which most of the rest of us have only done privately before. Far from being secretive as you claim, he is doing precisely what we have been doing, but he is doing it more openly than we have. [But his doing it on behalf of an organization gives the members the absolute right to know exactly what is being done. Further, The scope of the effort and the secrecy which shrouds it creates vast potential for abuse, and we have a right to know what safeguards exist against it.]

Now I will admit that it might be some kind of plot or scheme of self-glorification or underhanded revenge, but you have offered no proof of this. Furthermore, you have dared John to prove that he is innocent of the things you suspect him of doing. It may sound trite, but in this country a man is innocent until proven guilty. You have declared that John is guilty until he proves himself innocent. That's hardly fair. [Not so. I have accused Chairman Beshara of not meeting his public information obligations, which is certainly true. Leaving aside the question of specific assignments made, we have a right to know how the program is conducted. I have raised several

questions and possibilities in order to show the need for this information. Beyond that, I have accused Chairman Beshara of nothing beyond two specific items. First, he excludes from the "consultant" end of things anyone, regardless of qualifications, whom he regards as an "enemy". Second, he has in at least one case secured the assignment of a consultant/consultee playing in the same game. On the former there is cold documentation published by Larry Peery and Len Lakofka. On the latter, there has been no denial, and we all know that Beshara and Boardman believe that failure to deny constitutes proof of guilt. Q.E.D.]

"Do you have any hard facts that John is using the Consultant program for any of his own allegedly nefarious plots? If not, I strongly suggest that you limit your comments on this subject to those hard facts you do have. Perhaps you could find someone who claims to have been wronged or denied the service of IDA's Consultant program. You have implied that such persons might exist. Do you know of any? [That's not really the point. I don't want to find abuses, I want to prevent them. That can only be done by keeping the workings of the program, at least, under public scrutiny.]

"Finally, let me add that the real test of the value of IDA's Consultant service is the opinions of its users. Perhaps you could ask around to find out the relative numbers of satisfied vs. dissatisfied consultants. Another test would be to start another consulting service of your own, along the lines you have proposed in your series on the subject. Then by comparing the customer reaction to the two services, you could decide which form the players preferred." [Testing customer response presupposes knowing who they are. Fat chance. I'm sure we'll be getting "patent-medicine" testimonials out of Beshara, but don't count on him ever to publish any criticism. I am not, however, in the least interested in customer reaction, nor in creating a second consultant folly to match Beshara's. I am interested only in the right that members of the DA have to know what is going on. In terms of the value of the thing, see Brenton VerPloeg's perceptive letter, later.

KATHRYN PASSENHEIM, 5952 Castleton Dr., San Diego CA 92117. "I was extremely disappointed in some of your comments regarding some of the points I made about the Consultant program. Some of them were really nit-picking. Your remark that we do not know that a Consultant cannot pick a novice is a little ridiculous. In the first place, the Consultants don't even know the novices. And, more importantly, I have my own experience to verify the fact that neither I nor my Consultant had any knowledge of each other's existence before the assignment was made. [No doubt. That is of no consequence. The Consultant may or may not know the novice; who cares? The question is, does he know any of the other players in the game? Let us suppose that X, who is on Beshara's little team of Great Experts, sees a new game open with some novices in it. He further sees Y, a hated enemy, in the game. Can he or can he not write to Beshara requesting assignment to a novice in that game? Given Beshara's penchant for operating on the crony system, I suspect that X could in fact do exactly that. There may of course be some institutional safeguards against this sort of thing. Don't you think we ought to know?]

"Secondly, I suggested that a novice be allowed the services of a Consultant no more than 5 times. John tells me that because of the small number of available Consultants relative to the large number of novices, novices will be allowed the services of a Consultant only once. This is even better than I had suggested. [Since one must be passionately attached to The Master before one can be a Consultant, the phrase is, "The shrinking number of available Consultants". However, Bingo! You got a fact (we hope)

out of Chairman Beshara. We should all be so lucky. If we're really lucky, he was telling the truth.]

"Your harping on the possibilities of abuse really bothers me. It is obvious to any mental midget that nothing of any value is subject to abuse. You insist that because John is making Consultant assignments there must of necessity be something wicked going on. Yet you have never offered on shred of proof that there has been even one improper action in the Consultant program. As for your challenge to tell whether or not I have a Consultant for the XENOGOGIC game--I have stated that I am enjoying the services of a Consultant, but I refuse to state whether the services pertain to the XENOGOGIC game or the ATLANTIS game. Why should I give my opponents the benefit of that information? [If you can accept the known abuses with equanimity, fine. If you believe that a proven and consummate liar can run the program honestly, splendid. It is also possible to believe that Joe McCarthy had "205 names".]

"You bring up one more petty point: the Consultant program is a device to force novices to join TDA [sic]. Unfortunately this statement is a semantic trick on your part to put the most degrading interpretation on any activity of John's. Of course one must join TDA to enjoy the services of a Consultant. Why not? That's one of the benefits that membership brings. If being a member of TDA doesn't have some extras to offer, why should anyone join? The Consultant program is certainly one of those extras. [This of course leaves the novice an unpleasant choice: join the DA, despite its unsavory dictator and unwholesome reputation, or forego the advantages--if any--of a DA Consultant. Luckily, there is developing a third choice. The real Diplomacy Association, under Walt Buchanan and Larry Peery and others, is moving to duplicate the Consultant program. Edi Birsan has offered his services unconditionally to novices. And so on. You may rest assured that Chairman Beshara will either ignore these other programs or criticize them. He wants to have a stranglehold on this, as on all aspects of the hobby.]

"One more thing: you keep harping on this business of secrecy. The assignments must be made in secret to insure their success. Even so much as the publication of the Consultant list gives potential opponents an advantage, permitting them to look for tell-tale signs of the playing style of some well-known player. What difference does it make anyway? By the way, have you offered your services to become a Consultant? Perhaps if you were genuinely a part of the organization you wouldn't be so distrusting." [I have already noted, above, my objections to the furtive, clandestine, and conspiratorial aspects of this program and everything else Chairman Beshara does. Since Chairman Beshara has stated that he would not accept my services as a Consultant, I see no need to make the futile offer. Besides, as Diplomacy Editor of STRATEGY & TACTICS, I have spent the last three years and more "consulting" with hundreds of Diplomacy player in the open. My advice and help was for all, not for a select few. The final point is this: the Consultant Program has always been meereest hogwash. See Brenton Ver Ploeg's letter, below.]

BRENTON VER PLOEG, 520 Parker Ave, #202, San Francisco CA 94118. [Mr. VerPloeg is a former Director of the Diplomacy Association.] "Your comments on the Consultant program, as well as the letter which engendered them, have moved me to comment on something which has bothered me for some time. I happen to think that the consultant program is a waste of time except perhaps in the area of getting newcomers interested in the game, and even then its uses are pretty arguable.

"Somewhere, without my noticing it, the 'novice' has become distinct from the 'expert'. May I ask on what grounds? I think that Beshara first engendered this thought by his consultant program. The speed with which the concepts have been adopted, however, imply to me that these thoughts were being harbored by many players long before John said anything about them. [That's correct, Brent. The concept, if not the term, appeared in the literature long before Beshara made use of it. My columns in S&I were aimed deliberately, for the most part, at beginning players.]

"Chess, of course, has experts and novices. So, I imagine, does bridge and a host of other games. From a very strict viewpoint, perhaps Diplomacy does. If so, I think it's a meaningless distinction based solely on the time one has played the game. [That, too, is correct. When a player enters his first postal game, he is a novice regardless of whether he has played FIF for years or only a month. There is some rationale to this, since there is some difference between the way the postal game is played and the FIF game is played. I'm not sure this difference is significant.]

"Unfortunately, this has very little to do with success in the game of Diplomacy. And, unless you're Andy Phillips, it has little to do with an enjoyment of the game. One does not learn how to negotiate with people! It is true that a player can be told how to negotiate [in specific circumstances], I suppose, but will anyone seriously contend that this does the player much good? Knowing whom to trust at what time, which alliance is firm and which is not, whether a player is going to stick with you, what HIS (H&R) abilities are vis-a-vis convincing other players--that is what the game is about.

"It has long been my theory that the 'novice' is a misnomer. In about 90% of the cases, I think that a very good player who is a novice will shine through regardless of which players considered 'experts' are ranged against him. I know of at least one player I consider an expert, though he has yet to finish a single game. I know of several score that are quire experienced, but will remain novices as long as they live, or until they drop out of the game. A good Diplomacy player is a combination of intuition and charisma. The former had better function accurately if the latter does not. Now I ask you, how does one coach that?

"Ah, the tactics. The lovely tactics. No player, it seems to be said, can learn the involutions of this game without studying the tactics of each move. Bleh! Or since Christmas is coming up, maybe I should say HUMBUG. You and I have differed before on what sort of tactician I am. I still confidently maintain that I am abysmal, and couldn't care less. I have never read an edition of the rules. This sometimes leads to rather surprising results, but given my philosophy of play, it would be hypocritical not to roll with the results. The vast majority of people I play [with] in this game are easily my equals at tactics. A great number are my superiors, and I know it. Some are ridiculously superior to me, but I try not to let it get me down. Long ago, when I started this game, my ownly real desire was to win as many games as possible out of a limited number, and then settle down with one game and maybe run a magazine.

"The other person's move has NO 'significance', as you put it, outside of his intent. Oh, it may have tactical ramifications, but no true Diplomacy player will allow himself to be more than fleetingly concerned with such odious and noxious subjects. The intent, I suggest, can be adequately gleaned from their letters, or lack thereof. Sure, it helps to be canny so far as moves are concerned, but it's not essential. Save for the locked positions, two countries will beat one country--so what's the point in having a consultant tell you that?

"The best consultants, I think, come across more adequately under fire. How many people would bother to keep track of somebody else's games just to be nice? Maybe I am being overly cynical in regard to this matter, but I sure as hell wouldn't. There are a great number of things I would rather do, thank you. Gene Prosnitz, however, taught me a very great deal about Diplomacy in the first game I was ever in. When you are in a game with a good player he will usually respond to sincere flattery, it seems to me. The ego probably demands it. I don't recall such callous thoughts in 1968CI, but the things Gene told me were well remembered, and very useful. [Since a "novice" has a Consultant in only one game, this cuts down the work load you speak of, Brent. Of course I'm sure you will agree that it also cuts down the value of the program, if any, a lot more than it cuts the work.]

"Even that is not essential, though, if one reads Diplomacy magazines. HOOSIER ARCHIVES is really all the consultant program anyone needs, and I am not referring to my piddling efforts therein. Prosnitz has a series of three articles there which are as good as anything that will be found. After the 'novice' reads them, he is on his own. I seriously cannot imagine that a poor player will be helped by a consultant, nor that a good player would benefit therefrom. Poor players, by and large, have a tendency to drift out of the field. It's natural, it's inevitable, and it's probably beneficial. When a player loses interest, he's not much fun to have around anyway.

"Last and least--Diplomacy tactics are really pretty simple. The difference between a superb tactician and a rotten one is as small in Diplomacy as in any game of which I am aware. Since that's not the area that most Diplomacy players need help in anyway, why bother?"

[Thank you, Brent, for a lucid presentation. I have had very much the same reservations about the program. I did not express them, however, because I felt that the thing ought at least to be given a chance and because I felt that opposing it would just be viewed as another facet of Beshara's feud with me. As it is, you have said it more clearly and forcefully than I could have. There is no need for the Consultant program. Your comment on HOOSIER ARCHIVES is very well taken--except the statement about your own work. We should all be able to turn out such "piddling efforts". What we really need is a large publication, on the order of a large pamphlet or a small book, which reproduces the good material which has been written by our people over the years. This could be available to all novices, and not just a select and favored few, and would be completely public and not subject to the power politics and secret plottings of a John Beshara or any other would-be overlord of postal Diplomacy. As usual, Brent, you have cut right to the core of the matter and told it "like it is". The one practical problem with H.A. is that there are limits to the scope of its distribution, unfortunately. Insofar as the DA is concerned, you can bet that the next issue of WAZIR, if Beshara ever gets off his ass and produces it, will not even mention it, much less recommend it (H.A., that is) for what it is: the finest Diplomacy genzine in the world. We must remember that questions of fairness or objectivity do not stir Beshara's soul (if any), and that the DA was not created to benefit its members but to create power for Beshara in a pathetic attempt to become a big toad in a very small pond. This will be a partial barrier to informing novices about the really first-rate material they can get if they want it, and for which the Consultant program is only a pale surrogate. If every Diplomacy Gamesmaster were to drop a line about H.A. once in a while, he would be doing his players a great service. Meanwhile, Brent, plans to provide even more general material for players at large are afoot and will, I hope, eventually bear fruit which will make totally unnecessary John Beshara's secret Klan.]

Part 13 -- Alberic of Turin and the Shepherd's Crusade

The role of Alberic of Turin in the Shepherd's Crusade is crucial to the history of Poderkagg, which is the only country in which that particular crusade was of any importance. Alberic himself is one of those mysterious people who drop up in history for the express purpose of making people wish he hadn't. His contribution is doing it again and again.

Alberic's origins are obscure, which is probably just as well. As Blah-meri-Tustep, he is known to have been chief architect of the first pyramid built in Egypt, as well as most subsequent pyramids. The purpose of the pyramid, as Will Cuppy sagaciously noted, was to protect for all time the body and treasure of the Pharaoh in a tomb "so conspicuous that it could hardly be missed by graverobbers and other ghouls". Alberic was, of course, Head Graverobber of the country, and thanks to his intimate knowledge of the pyramids (and of the priestesses who watched over them), he was able to loot them all.

No less important was his role in the Peloponnesian War, during which he convinced the Athenians of the wisdom of an invasion of Sicily. It was also Alberic who introduced the leaders of Syracuse to the delights of germ warfare. And you know, of course, who it was that said, "Let's beach the ships" at Aegisopotami.

Alberic's penchant for pseudonyms (which he much prefers to aliases) is well known. Many of our readers may be familiar with his more modern exploits, as recounted in GRAUSTARK. He is known there, of course, as "Alföns Ignobel". Alberic is presently alive and well in Cairo. But I digress.

The Fifteenth Century was a succession of triumphs for Alberic. In 1401, for instance, he convinced Sultan Bayazid I of Turkey to go to war with "that pipequeak" Tamurlane. In 1415 he talked the French into attacking the English at Agincourt, a feat he duplicated in 1444 when he got King Ladislav V of Hungary to challenge the Turks at Varna. It was while commanding the Turkish cavalry during the pursuit of the Serb contingent at Varna that Alberic first heard of Poderkagg. His interest helped lead to the Shepherd's Crusade.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453, during which Alberic played a key role in the last phase (the pillage), had caused a great upsurge of interest in a crusade. Pope Calixtus III (1455-1458) and Pope Pius II (1458-1464) preached crusades with the same vigor with which they practiced nepotism. Alberic could not help but be attracted to such grandiose undertakings (he had some experience with crusading; for instance, Alberic was the one who suggested a certain river crossing to Frederic Barbarossa).

Entering Hungary in 1464 (the year Pius II died of apoplexy because nobody wanted to join his crusade), Alberic preached the Shepherd's Crusade, sometimes called the Simpleton's Crusade. His line was that the common people of the earth, led by the shepherds (who had once led the way to Bethlehem) would liberate Constantinople and the holy places. Alberic preached long sermons about the Sultan's licentious sex life, which probably got at least as many crusaders who were interested in sharing in such goings-on as in preventing them. Alberic also claimed that the Moslems were opposed to Christianity because Jesus once refused a \$500 loan to Muhammad. This quite naturally infuriated the masses, a good many of whom promptly became Moslems.

The Crusade did not attract many followers until it reached Poderkagg, in 1465, during the reign of Duchess Salame I. The Duchess naturally had

several midnight suppers with Alberic, whose unusual anatomic features were said to have fascinated her. Salome's third husband, Mudgrub of Pollutidar, who had similarly unusual features, is noted in Salome's memoirs as having been completely outclassed by Alberic.

The shepherds of Poderkagg flocked to Alberic's banner, followed by the nation's goatherds and pigherds, not to mention herds of Poderkaggian pigs, for use as "shock troops". Nearly half of Poderkagg's herding population joined the crusade, which then marched off toward Thessalonika.

Skillfully avoiding Turkish fortresses, and marching through territory amazingly devoid of resistance, Alberic reached Thessalonika in September of 1465. With unbelievable ease, the Crusading Army captured the city (the gates were carelessly left open), and pursued the few cowardly Turkish soldiers on duty through the streets, to the docks, and right into the hundreds of seemingly empty ships standing to shore. The few Poderkaggian and Hungarian survivors report that after the Crusaders chased the Turks into the holds of the ships, the ships instantly set sail and were never heard of again. Alberic was last seen accepting several large bags of gold from Hassan Laghri, a Turk of doubtful occupation.

The only group of Crusaders smart enough to realize what was happening was, predictably, the pigs, who turned aside and ravaged the town, eating more than a third of the citizens before they were killed. Their bodies were thrown into the bay, which remained polluted and devoid of marine life for 25 years thereafter.

Naturally, when word of the disaster reached Poderkagg, everyone blamed the shepherds. This precipitated the First Sheep-Herder's War (1466-1468), the First Goat-Grazer's War (1469-1470), the Second Sheep-Herder's War (1472-1478), the First Pig-Slopper's War (1473), the Third Sheep-Herder's War (1478), the Second Goat-Grazer's War (1478), the Third Goat-Grazer's War (1478-1479), the Fourth Sheep-Herder's War (1480), and several other wars in Poderkagg. Life in the capital and the main cities, of course, continued as before. In a situation in which sheep, pigs, and goats, as well as shepherds, goatherds, and pigherds, are being killed in great numbers, there would be plenty of mutton and bacon available, so long as one were not too particular where it came from.

Next: The Life and Times of Duchess Salome I.

and now, we run out of Hannibal in:

HOW TO GIVE CARTHAGINIANS A THOROUGH TROUNCING

Chapter II (The Second Punic War), Part IX. Ahrydd Pedant

Hannibal has been described as a very even-tempered man who only became really angry on three occasions.³⁸ He was a recluse and loved being alone with his elephants. He was not very tall, but looked quite imposing when riding an elephant.

A lot of people hated Hannibal: Livy calls him a scoundrel and a treacherous dog.³⁹ Livy seldom agreed with Polybius, our Greek friend from Chapter I. William Morris notes several stories Livy tells are not noticed by Polybius, which is not surprising, since Polybius died 67 years before Livy was born. A great many people compared Hannibal with Napoleon.⁴⁰ For instance, read Vie d'Annibal, by Napoleon. //We'll finish Hannibal next issue.//

³⁸Remember when he crucified the guide. That wasn't one of those occasions. He was only a little angry then.

³⁹Livy is the one who thinks faith and faithlessness are synonyms.

⁴⁰They were the same height. *30*