

# GRAUSTARK

#254

1970BB, 1970BN, 1971BG

18 December 1971

1970BB "Winter 1912-Spring 1913"

BERLIN FALLS - END OF WAR NEAR

Following the "Fall 1912" moves, Austria-Hungary built A Vie and England removed F Nrg.

ENGLAND (Lasky): F Liverpool holds.

FRANCE (Mischel): F Nat-Mid; F Bre S F Nat-Mid; A Mun S GERMAN A Ber; A Bur S A Mun; A Gas-Spa.

GERMANY (Isby): A Kie S FRENCH A Mun; A Ber S FRENCH A Mun.

ITALY (Comber): F Spa(n.c.)-Gas; F Naf-Mid; F Por S F Naf-Mid; A Mar-Bur; A Pie-Mar; A Vie holds.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Nierenberg): A Mos-St.P; A Ukr-Mos; A War S A Ukr-Mos; A Pru-Ber; A Sil S A Pru-Ber; A Boh-Mun; A Tyr S A Boh-Mun; A Vie-Boh; A Tri S A Tyr; F Iri & F Wes S ITALIAN F Naf-Mid; F Tun-Naf; F Ion-Tun; F Alb-Ion.

RUSSIA (Shuldiner): A St.P-Fin; A Liv-St.P; F Eng S FRENCH F Nat-Mid; F Nth-Nwy; F Edi holds.

Underlined moves are not possible. The German A Ber is annihilated. The deadline for "Fall 1913" moves is 6 PM, MONDAY 27 DECEMBER 1971.

1971BG

"Winter 1901"

THE WAR GAME - EAST AND WEST

ENGLAND (Hodin): Builds F Lon.

FRANCE (Latin): Builds F Bre, A Mar, and A Par.

GERMANY (Schleicher): Builds A Mun and F Kie.

ITALY (Burley): Builds A Ven.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Berman): Builds A Vie and A Bud.

RUSSIA (Phillips): Builds A Mos and A St.P.

TURKEY (Nierenberg): Builds F Ank.

The deadline for "Spring 1902" moves is 6 PM, MONDAY 10 JANUARY 1972.

1970BN

"Winter 1908"

In GRAUSTARK #253 Norway was credited as a Russian supple center. It is actually English. England thus had just one removal, and Russia had one build.

ENGLAND (H. Anderson): Removes F Hel.

FRANCE (Nierenberg): Builds F Bre.

ITALY (Model): Builds A Rom.

RUSSIA (Buchanan): Builds A War.

The deadline for "Spring 1909" moves is NOON, SATURDAY 1 JANUARY 1972.

Players are reminded that that date is a holiday with no mail delivery.

Press releases are on p. 2.

During the next week I will be printing the 3rd issue of Wazir, the official bulletin of The Diplomacy Association. TDA membership, which includes a subscription to Wazir, is \$1 from John Beshara, Apt. 1021, 155 W. 68th St., New York, N. Y. 10023. New members will get the first 2 issues of Wazir at no additional charge.

Wazir #3 will have an article by Beshara on stalemate positions and how they develop.

Tom Eller and James Neale have subscription copies of GRAUSTARK coming to them. Where are they? Their issues have been coming back in the mail.

Robert Bryan Lipton announces that there will be a Diplomacy game at his home at 12:30 PM on Sunday 26 December. Interested players should take the Long Island train to Woodmere. Lipton's address is 556 Green Place, Woodmere, NY 11598; his phone number is 516-374-4723. Call him if you plan to come.

My apologies to Michael Willner, who was the author of the game analysis credited to Lipton in #253.

Hugh Anderson reports that about 30 Diplomacy players will get together today at Herb Barents' place for across-the-board games. A report will appear in a future issue.

## 1970BN - PRESS RELEASES

ST. PETERSBURG (31 Dec. 1908): Vladimir may at last have the key to Mr. Tapscott. He has heard from THE CULT!

ISSHEMEAL-KEP (Underground Rouch Rolling Press): We once again join our heros in the middle of the desert. They have been traveling now for quite sometime with out seeing anyone for over twenty-two days. They finally come upon a small town that has a water well so let us join them as Hasha says "well....."

there is a man standing there that then says "well?"

"I need some information" says Hasha

"Well" says he

"Could I have a drink?"

"Well, what you want? stoch and water?"

"Just the water I don't go in for that hard stuff"

Hasha takes a long drink. "Ah that is good, can my friends have a drink too? of Water that is!"

"Sure why not?"

At this 500,000 people come from behind the bushes that were ten feet away and start drinking.

After a while Hasha talks to the person that is known as Suplar Jocke. Suplar asks what Hasha is doing and of course Hasha says "I'm after the John!"

"Not the JOHN!"

"Yes the JOHN, why do you know of him or have any clues to his whereabouts?"

"I might"

"Well good man, let me know"

"For a price, I'll tell you all I know about the John of Brooklyn"

HASHA WATCH OUT REMEMBER WHAT THE CK SAID

will we be able to join our hero next time? wait and see in the issue of this magazine!

ISSMEAL-GAKA (Retired Rulers Press; Useless): In a letter sent to Brooklyn the Useless Retired Rulers Press stated that releases coming from their offices were wrongly credited to the Underground Rouch Rolling Press. The letter was harsh and demanded satisfaction or they would stop sending to the USA for TV's and stop the supply of grass from getting to Brooklyn.

H YUNDERABAD (Rouch): MJIX today left the city in a rage, followed by the Tharns that have taken over the city. It seems that he was after some one to rid the city of these monsters.

ASSHEALA (Rouch): Lorrie Lowly let the whole world in on her wercert love affair with MJIX. "we use to have so much fun all the time, but then it became a drag so I gave up on him because he had a hard time all the time and he couldn't do anything." so the book has been quoted.

## THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

John Richard Trtek, who plays England in the new game G-III, reports that from 15 December to 2 January he will be at 215 S. E. 24th Ave., Hillsboro, Ore. 97123.

\*

Rod Walker has a game opening in Wile 'N' Worry. The fee is \$4, but only \$3 to members of NFFFGBDD, IFW, or TDA. Write him at 5058 Hawley Blvd., San Diego, Calif. 92116. He also reports that DipCon V is being lined up for Chicago next July.

\*

Lewis Pulsipher, 321 Twin Towers, Albion, Mich. 49224, claims that his Blood and Iron and not Joseph Antosiak's Anschluss is the first 'zine based on the new Avalon-Hill game Origins of World War II. He sends along a copy of #1, and announces a subscription rate of 7 issues for \$1. Pulsipher also publishes Supernova, devoted to science-fiction and fantasy gaming, at the

game rules. Supernova #7 has a map for Middle Earth Diplomacy, based on Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. This game, and an earlier version of this map, first appeared in GRAUSTARK #76.

\*

"During the 160 years from December 1781 to November 1941, the United States was at war 11 years and 8 months... In the 30 years from December 1941 to November 1971, the United States, having shed its isolationism, spent 17 years and 10 months fighting wars." - Howard Goldstone; Ken, Brooklyn College, 13 Dec. 1971

\*

Gregory Warden, playing Italy in 1971EC, writes that his school address is Apt. 106, 4500 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. 19139. Players should use this address except during holidays, when the New Hope address in #253 is appropriate.

\*

GRAUSTARK, the oldest bulletin of postal Diplomacy, is published on alternate Saturdays by John Boardman, 234 E. 19th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11226. Subscriptions are 8 issues for \$1.00. Back issues are 15¢ each, or 15 for \$1.00. For information on available back issues, as well as the rules of postal Diplomacy as played in GRAUSTARK, see #252.

Openings for new postal Diplomacy games are still available at \$6.00. This publication is not edited under the supervision of Bangs Leslie Tapscott.

\*

For two months, beginning in early October, a strike of east coast dockers caused an embargo on surface mail to Europe. GRAUSTARK subscriptions of European readers were accordingly held up, and shipped at the end of the strike. However, the end was only temporary, and when a government-ordered "cooling-off" period ends the embargo may resume again. So European readers are again warned that a delay in their GRAUSTARKs may happen.

### THIRD NEW GAME OPENS

The continuing arrival of new game entries means that a third new game can now be opened. This game, "G-III" until Rod Walker assigns it a number, has the following players:

ENGLAND: John Richard Trtek, Apt. 13, 222 S. El Molino, Pasadena, Calif. 91106; 213-796-2593. (But see p. 2.)

FRANCE: Charles Vest, 5134 Merlin Dr., San Antonio, Texas 78218; 512-655-8659

GERMANY: Gary Tesser, 2455 Haring St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11235; 212-NI 6-4445

ITALY: Donald Horton, 16 Jordan Court, Sacramento, Calif. 95826

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Yale Edeiken, 2635 Cranston Rd., Philadelphia, Penn. 19131; 215-TR 9-3769

RUSSIA: Paul J. Wood, 24613 Harman St., St. Clair Shores, Mich. 48080

TURKEY: William Drakert, 159 Chelsea Rd., White Plains, N. Y. 10603

The deadline for "Spring 1901" moves is NOON, SATURDAY 15 JANUARY 1972. See the directions in GRAUSTARK #252 for sending in moves.

GRAUSTARK's apologies to Don Berman, playing Germany in G-II, whose phone number was misprinted in #253. It is actually 201-679-4614. Don't call after 11 PM Eastern time.

Rod Walker has assigned the game number 1971EB to G-I and 1971EC to G-II. These designations should henceforth be used for these games.

Because 13 entries are still not assigned into games, several more new game openings are open at present. The entry fee is \$6. Anyone who wishes to enter as a stand-by player may do so for a fee of \$3. See #252 for information on stand-by status. Any new player who does not yet have a copy of #252 should write in for one.

\*

Celebrate the independence of Bang-Bang-Dish! Blow up an orphanage today!

## BOOK REVIEWS

From time to time, one issue of GRAUSTARK is devoted almost entirely to book reviews. These are not necessarily recent books, but have as a common denominator some historical, political, or war-gaming point which the editor's experience indicates is of interest to numerous readers. The last previous GRAUSTARKs containing book reviews were #231 and #246. All reviews are by John Boardman unless otherwise indicated.

THEIR MAJESTIES AND OTHER FOLK, by Varrel Lavere Smith (A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1969, \$7.50)

This is irreverent history in the tradition of Will Cuppy and Indro Montanelli. It deals with English kings from Egbert to Edward VIII (those more recent being "too much with us to be included here"). Like Montanelli's Romans Without Laurels, it is always enjoyable, frequently incisive, but plagued with a few factual errors, and additionally hampered by bad typesetting. (In one place, the whole point of an argument is upset by the substitution of "always" for "against", so that we read "The High Church Tories were always the dissenters at home and not too keen about being allied with such Protestants abroad.") Smith generally disapproves of Oliver Cromwell and approves of William III, although the two men staged their rebellions under quite similar conditions against much the same royal abuses. But Anglo-Saxon historiography generally tends to condemn the former usurper as a bloody tyrant and praise the latter as the founder of constitutional liberty. Smith also joins the general tendency to clear Richard III of the slanders laid against him by pro-Tudor historians and William Shakespeare, but fails to mention that Richard's nephews were generally believed in London to be dead a few weeks after he seized power, and two years before Henry VII dethroned him. Further, Scots will be surprised to learn that Culloden is in England ("...Culloden Moor, the last battle fought on English soil") and Americans will raise an eyebrow to learn that they were formally allied with France in 1812. Matters are not helped by Charles H. Anderson's illustrations, which assume that every English king wore whiskers, even the German Georges.

But, with these cavils out of the way, let us examine some of Smith's comments about English history:

"They had perished of natural causes - three hundred years of warfare."

"Dying was Harold's one great contribution to the welfare of the nation."

"Halley's Comet put in its famous appearance, which was hardly necessary as signs were already ominous enough."

"In favor of William it must be said that during his twenty-year reign he spent part of his time in Normandy oppressing his subjects there, too."

"When the king was found with an arrow in him, his companion of the day was seized by a sudden urge to go crusading."

"(Thomas à Becket) put in eighteen years of hard labor antagonizing the only man powerful enough to promote him to the rank of martyr."

"The story of how his cell was discovered by Blondell the minstrel is too well known to bear repeating and besides is pure bunk."

"Normandy fell, and shortly after so did Eleanor, the Queen Mother. It's hard to say which had seen livelier times."

"The Knights of the Temple was an ancient, honorable, and only slightly corrupt international institution."

"Word was later spread that Edward was put to death by the internal use of hot irons. I'd scream too."

"Uncle Thomas escaped the axe by being murdered in prison. Uncles and other close relatives should always be murdered in private."

"Some kings are more interesting than others, and this isn't one of them." (said of Henry IV)

"I'm inclined to believe that Prince Hal was an invention of Shakespeare's, and that Henry V never was a youth."

"Stanley...was a man of firm principle. He always defected to the side that seemed to be winning."

"Lambert Simnel made it to the palace all right. He was given the position of turnspit in the king's kitchen."

"(James I) was...a notorious coward, so afraid of weapons that he looked the other way when dubbing a new knight with the sword. Sir Kenelm Digby said that at his knighting he would have had an eye put out if a tactful bystander had not reached out and redirected the accolade."

"He saved vast sums of money by having no foreign policy at all."

"Monmouth landed 11 June at Lyme-Regis and was executed July 15. This is all the comment required on his soldierly qualities."

"The one action that was most successfully carried out during the on-tire war was the poisoning of the English sailors by their own food."

"Under Anne, England was ruled by three factions, the Whigs, the Tories, and the Churchills."

"The very year after taking the crown of England, George found that as Elector of Hanover he was committed to fight Sweden while by an earlier treaty as King of England he was pledged to assist the Swedes against their enemies."

"When told, 'We must fortify Annapolis,' the Duke of Newcastle is said to have replied, 'Certainly. Where is it?'"

"Wilkes...had a genuine feeling for the rights of man. He certainly had no respect for anything else."

"Bismarck admired Disraeli immensely. Anyone who can diddle the Russians out of something, you know."

"During the reign of George V the Irish question was settled at last, meaning that full-scale rebellion finally broke out."

"The famous unwritten British Constitution, which may seem so nebulous and complex, is really simple. It consists of whatever over the centuries the elected Commons have been able to get away with and make customary in the process of robbing the king of power."

THE GOBLIN TOWER, by L. Sprague de Camp (Pyramid, New York, 1968, 75¢)  
THE CLOCKS OF IRAZ, by L. Sprague de Camp (Pyramid, New York, 1971, 75¢)

Since the author of sword-and-sorcery fiction has to invent the sorcery anyhow, he may as well go ahead and invent imaginary realms in which his hero may show his prowess. Thus the literature of fantasy has been enriched by Howard's Aquilonia, Lovecraft's Kadath, Smith's Averaigne, and Carter's Lemuria. But for these two novels, de Camp has created no less than a dozen city-states, plus vast foreign realms in which his hero, Jorian of Ardamai, can do his derring-do.

A map in The Goblin Tower explains matters. Two mountain ranges protect the Novarian realms from the Shvenic nomads of the north (Nordics with a nomadic Mongol-type culture) and the southern nations of Fedirun (well, Arabs) and Mulvan (a thinly disguised version of India, upon which the author takes revenge for some unpleasant experiences while traveling there). The perpetual rivalry, commercial or military, among the Novarian states stimulates intellectual activity. Jorian's mentor in magic, an elderly Mulvanian wizard named Karadur, protests that Novaria needs "an emperor to rule the turbulent lot of you, to stop you from wasting your energies in cutting one another's throats." But Jorian explains that Novarians would never put up with such rule, and that their turbulence means that an individual feels he counts for more, and that new ideas and inventions can more easily take hold. "Compare unchanging Mulvan with the Twelve Cities; consider what in the last century we have accomplished in the arts and sciences, in literature and drama, in law and government, and you will see what I mean."

Obviously, Novaria is going to present better opportunities for swash-buckling than are more stable lands. The culture and technology seem to be from the time when the Middle Ages were merging into the Renaissance, except that fire-arms have not yet been invented - and, of course, magic is all over the place. For de Camp, magic and religion are separated; there are gods of great but not unlimited powers, who flourish or decline according to whether they are worshipped or ignored. But magic is in these stories a sort of technology, rivaling but coexisting with science. In The Clocks of Iraz, two rival schools are maintained by the King of Penembei, the School of Spirit and the School of Matter. The king hires three wizards from the former to keep water out of a crucial tunnel under a river, though the scholars of the latter college claim that they could do the job as easily with pumps.

The Twelve Cities have as many forms of government; the books mention such dignitaries as the Hereditary Usurper of Govannion, the Grand Bastard of Othomae, the Theocrat of Tarxia, the High Admiral of Zolon, and the Syndicate of Ir. Jorian's native Kortoli is ruled by a king but has no nobility. The Kortolian kings, however, have a hereditary penchant for hair-raising adventures, which provide much gist for the tales which Jorian tells of them in the course of these books.

The "classical" sword-and-sorcery novel introduces its hero in humble surroundings as a runaway slave, mercenary soldier, or disinherited princeling, and by degrees advances him until - if the book is true to form - he ends as a king. Jorian reverses this process. As The Goblin Tower opens, Jorian has been King of Xylar for 5 years, and is about to be ritually beheaded, so that his head can be tossed out to a crowd of men hoping to win the lot and succeed him. But, thanks to Karadur's spells and his own foresight and abilities, he escapes, having spent much of his reign acquiring the skills which will be needed by a wandering adventurer.

This escape provides the main plot for his tale. Since he has thoughtfully hidden the Xylarian crown and absconded with his own head, Jorian has thrown all Xylar's public business into confusion and must be hunted down and brought back for his execution. Meanwhile, he is trying to get back his wife Estrildis, a Kortolian sweetheart whom he left behind in his necessarily hurried departure from Xylar. All the elements of the usual sword-and-sorcery tale are here, but in a different order.

In the course of his adventures, which range from stealing a trunkful of magic spells from a female were-snake to foiling a quadruple invasion of Penembei (a sort of Byzantine Empire), Jorian finds occasion to tell a number of tales about his homeland's kings. These stories have morals about how everything is good in moderation and nothing in excess, or how men of the best intentions can bring on disaster through flaws in their characters. As with the Gesta Romanorum, the tales are far more interesting than the morals. Jorian also goes in for poetry - most of it his own, but one a song from "the operetta, The Good Ship Petticoat, by Galliben and Silfero".

More adventures of Jorian are promised - and more stories within the stories, too. I am still wondering what happened when the half-troll Prince Fusarius met the lonesome lion.

THE JERUSALEM BIBLE (xvi + 498 pp., Doubleday, 1966) Also available in paperback. Reviewed by Dr. Terence Kuch

"They call me Strider, and I was born of a Virgin."

In the 50-some years since the 1920s more new English translations of the Bible have been published, by far, than in the previous 300 years. The reasons for this surge of activity are two:

- 1) The "King James" version, having been written in 17th-century English, is now hard to understand, and
- 2) Much new knowledge has been acquired, showing that James' translators worked with corrupt texts in many cases.



Of the various new translations, the only one that has achieved wide currency is the Revised Standard Version. Those of you who are old enough to remember its publication also remember the aggressive advertising campaign for it, featuring "pious" radio spots. The whole affair was calculated to uplift the minds of those with sham sanctity and annoy those who take the Bible seriously. The RSV, anyway, reads as if it had been written by General Eisenhower and edited by the staff of Our Sunday Visitor.

Hard to understand or not, I do not think it is possible, in this century, to write anything as well as the KJV was written, because of the deterioration in the English language since that day, or at least since the age of Pope, Johnson, Swift, and Gibbon. If you want to get the most in literary value from the Bible, the KJV is it.

However, as Alexander Jones points out in his introduction to The Jerusalem Bible, the greatest danger to Christianity, and the Bible, today, is to consider them relics, and to admire them in the way we admire the Roman Coliseum or the Gilgamesh Epic. Literary value, then, cannot be the prime consideration if it is linked to unintelligibility for the non-specialist.

There is therefore a need for a modern translation. The Jerusalem Bible, I'm happy to say, is the first one that is worth reading. In fact, it is not very much inferior to the KJV, and is head and shoulders above the New English Bible, the New American Bible, the RSV, and all those others.

You may be curious as to the name. This translation was originally done in French, by the Dominicans of Jerusalem. A committee of English scholars took the Dominicans' notes and apparatus over virtually intact, but went back to the best Hebrew and Greek texts for their translation itself, following the French only on points of interpretation and style, where a doubt arose. The names of the 28 committee members will be unfamiliar to American readers, except for that of J. R. R. Tolkien. I have not found any passage that is specifically Tolkien-esque, but the finished job seems to be the sort of thing he might have done.

The notes, indices, etc., are good, but do not include a concordance, without which I (and most others, I suspect) will be completely lost. Fortunately, concordances are available separately, although they use the KJV vocabulary.

Let's see how the KJV and The Jerusalem Bible compare in their narration of the story of the Tower of Babel:

King James:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

And they said to one another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime they had for mortar.

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

And the Lord said, Behold, the

Jerusalem:

Throughout the earth men spoke the same language, with the same vocabulary. Now as they moved eastwards they found a plain in the land of Shinar where they settled. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them in the fire". -- For stone they used bricks, and for mortar they used bitumen. -- "Come", they said "let us build ourselves a town and a tower with its top reaching heaven. Let us make a name for ourselves, so that we may not be scattered about the whole earth."

Now Yahwek came down to see the town and the tower that the sons of man had built. "So they are all a single people with a single language!" said Yahweh. "This is but the start of their undertakings! There will be nothing too hard for them to do."

people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth: and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

In TJB, this story is headed "The tower of Babel", and is followed by a new head "The patriarchs after the flood", whereas in the KJV it is merely headed "Chapter 11", and after the end of the story the text continues "These are the generations of Shem", as if that were part of the Babel legend.

(This is the story, by the way, not of people building a tower to heaven, but of a nomadic herding tribe relating their first failure to become an agrarian, settled nation, and explaining it by the fact that the tribes had different languages.)

On the whole, the King James Version is better prose than, but not so clear as, The Jerusalem Bible in this passage, which is fairly typical.

RAMAGE, by Dudley Pope (Lippincott, New York, 1965)

THE TRITON BRIG, by Dudley Pope (Doubleday, New York, 1969)

TO GLORY WE STEER, by Alexander Kent (Putnam, New York, 1968)

FORM LINE OF BATTLE!, by Alexander Kent (Putnam, New York, 1969)

ENEMY IN SIGHT, by Alexander Kent (Putnam, New York, 1970)

Since the death of C. S. Forester in 1966, other authors have tried to write "Hornblower-type" stories. And, to quote words written by Fletcher Pratt in another context, "as usual with military copyists, it was the detail that was imitated, not the ensemble."

Imitations of Horatio Hornblower would be difficult under any circumstances. However, Forester was able to get away with it. Hornblower obviously copies Lord Nelson in many respects. Nelson was the son of a country parson, so Hornblower was the son of a country doctor. Both Nelson and Hornblower hid complex personalities behind deceptively diffident exteriors, both were married to unattractive and unpleasant women, both had vast personal popularity among their crewmen and officers.

Yet Hornblower is not Nelson. On the other hand, Lord Nicholas Ramage and Richard Bolitho are so obviously imitation Hornblowers that the reader is forever drawing comparisons, invariably to the detriment of Forester's presumptuous imitators. In 1795 Mr. Midshipman Hornblower takes part in an ill-planned French Royalist landing at Muzillac, on the same day which in actual history saw an ill-planned French Royalist landing a few miles to the west at Quiberon. So in Form Line of Battle! Captain Bolitho is involved in a British attempt to support French Royalists at St. Clar, an imaginary seaport in Rousillon, while in actual history Admiral Hood is trying to support French Royalists some distance to the east in Toulon.

The backgrounds of Ramage and Bolitho are rather self-conscious attempts to be as un-Hornblowerish as possible. Both men are from higher social



levels than Hornblower: Ramage is the son of an earl, while Bolitho comes from an ancient Cornish family. Furthermore, both are of old naval traditions. Ramage's father, Admiral the Earl of Blazey (Blazey, fercrissake!) had been disgraced during the American War as unjustly as Byng had been, save that he had escaped execution. And Bolitho also lives under a shadow; his elder brother was a bad apple who killed another officer in a duel and then deserted to the colonial rebels.

Bolitho's elder brother Hugh, in fact, seems to turn up in Kent's novels as frequently and as unexpectedly as Henry Burlingame does in The Sot-Weed Factor. By the third book, a bastard son of his also puts in an appearance. As the Bolitho naval tradition apparently extends back at least to the battle of Sluys, we will probably see more of the family in future books.

There is, however, one major difference between Kent's Bolitho tales and the Hornblower corpus. Hornblower is almost always in a position of lonely command - far from superiors, on his own resources, a prey to his own self-doubts but invariably able to overcome anything that gets in his way. He has achieved command by the third book in his series, and post rank by the fourth; thenceforth he is the solitary man in charge. (Those who are familiar with the television show Star Trek will recognize that the character of James Kirk did not spring from nowhere.) On the other hand, though Bolitho enters the first book as a seasoned post captain of 26 (having started as a 12-year-old midshipman) he is generally in a situation where he has to put up with the immediate supervision of a pompous, cowardly, and/or stupid admiral or commodore in his immediate vicinity.

As if to compensate for a bad run of superior officers on his neck, Bolitho has an ability to change geography to suit himself. For him was created not only the port of St. Clar, but a barren island off its coast where he can base his support of the port's Royalists. For him the Dutch acquired a West Indian colony on St. Kruis island, a place unknown to my atlas. (It cannot be St. Croix of the Virgin Islands, for that was Danish in 1795.) For him the Venezuelan inland town of Las Mercedes was moved to the coast and surrounded by an impenetrable swamp, which Bolitho nevertheless penetrates. This is to be contrasted with Forester's pedestrian acceptance and use of actual geography, as discussed in his The Hornblower Companion (1964).

Nicholas Ramage is too obviously a counter-Hornblower. Mathematics is his weak point, whereas Hornblower takes a positive joy in solving problems in navigation, and plays a grimly logical game of whist. Since Hornblower, for all his travels, never went to Italy, Ramage opens with its hero the Third Lieutenant of a light frigate that has just been blasted out of the water by a French 74 off the Tuscan coast in 1796. Nevertheless, as senior surviving officer he leads the remnants of the crew to shore and rescues some Tuscan aristos who seem to believe that Buonaparte marches with a load of portable guillotines. Like Bolitho, he is Cornish; like Bolitho he is accompanied by a faithful cox'n - in Ramage's case an American, oddly enough, which will lead to lively times if the series runs as far as 1812. But Ramage is much less a strain on the credibility than Bolitho; Pope, after all, is not only a novelist but also a historian of standing, whose account of the notorious Hermione mutiny is well worth the reading.

Moreover, there are from time to time off-hand references to Hornblower in the Ramage books. Pope apparently intends that Ramage and Hornblower exist in the same "universe" as greatly diverse characters: Hornblower as the cool, diffident, calculator, and Ramage as the reckless, self-confident aristocrat. Put aboard a brig with a near-mutinous crew, Ramage sets his ship adrift in the serene confidence that the men will make sail at his orders rather than be wrecked on a lee shore. Under similar circumstances in Lord Hornblower, Forester's hero tricked the French into

(continued on p. 11)

O LITTLE WHAT OF BETHLEHEM?

At this time of year, the "Star of Bethlehem" is one of the most commonly encountered symbols. Naturally, astronomical records have been searched to determine what might be referred to in Matthew 2:1-12, the original source of this legend. Such records would also help in determining the exact date of the birth of Jesus.

Of one thing we can be certain - the traditionally accepted date of 25 December 1 BC is wrong. This date was determined in the 6th century by the Scythian monk Dionysius Exiguus. The fact that Passover began on a Thursday evening (for the "Last Supper" was simply a seder) strongly indicated the year 783 AVC (after the founding of Rome) as the year of Jesus' crucifixion. Dionysius then counted backwards 30 years, using Luke 3:23: "When he started to teach, Jesus was about thirty years old." He thus settled on 753 AVC as the year of Jesus' birth. Acting on a tradition already old in his day, Dionysius set the birth of Jesus at 25 December 753 AVC, and called the next year "1 AD".

This, however, is too late. Matthew records that Herod I was king at the time Jesus was born. But Josephus records that an eclipse of the moon took place shortly before Herod's death. This eclipse must have been in the Jewish month of Adar (March, approximately) since just after Herod's death his successor had to put down rioting at Passover, which takes place at the full moon of the next month, Nisan.

Two candidates present themselves for this eclipse: a total eclipse on 23 March 5 BC and a partial eclipse on 13 March 4 BC. (If the interval between the eclipse and the riots is extended, a total eclipse of 9 January 1 BC is remotely possible, but dating Herod's death in 1 BC presents impossible chronological difficulties.) The 5 BC eclipse was in the early evening; the 4 BC eclipse took place between 2 and 4 AM. The virtually universal consensus of chronologers accepts 4 BC as the year of Herod's death.

Continuing this astronomical argument, what could have been the celestial event called "the Star of Bethlehem"? It might have been a real star, one which was normally far too faint to be seen, but which had exploded into unusual brightness. Such exploding stars, called "novae", are rare but well-known. However, ancient astronomers have left us no record of such a nova in either the Greek or the Chinese records. Such records were kept; Hipparchos observed a nova in Scorpius in 134 BC, and one was seen in Ophiuchus in 123 AD.

It is unlikely that the star was a comet; the ancients did not consider comets to be celestial bodies, but disturbances in the atmosphere. Halley's comet did put in an appearance in 11 BC, but this is too early; Luke was not exact about Jesus' age at the time of his ministry, but he said "about thirty" rather than "forty".

The most likely "Star" was a planetary conjunction, and an uncommon one did occur in this period. In 7 BC there were no fewer than three conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn, on 27 May, 5 October, and 1 December. (Both planets were retrograde at the time, which explains there being 3 conjunctions.) These two planets, the slowest known to the ancients, shine from the same direction only once about every 60 years, so astrologers considered their conjunction as most portentous. The conjunctions of 7 BC all took place in Pisces.

But an even rarer situation was in store for the next year. On 20 February 6 BC Mars overtook and passed Saturn, and on 5 March, Mars conjoined Jupiter. These three bright planets were a spectacular sight in those weeks, shining close together low in the west just after sunset. "We have seen his star in the east" (Matthew 2:2) could mean that the three wise men were in the east when they saw this configuration, and followed it westward.

Yet another circumstance suggests a February date. According to Luke 2:8, "In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the

fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night." Now unless shepherds and sheep have changed substantially in 2000 years, shepherds watch their flocks by night only during lambing season, which takes place at just that time of year.

Why, then, has 25 December become traditional for Christmas? It is simply because Christian missionaries tried to make their product acceptable by making as little change as possible in the daily lives of their potential converts. By the traditional Roman calendar, 25 December was the date on which the sun again began moving northward in the sky - the Winter Solstice, as we would say. Since no element of Christian doctrine depends on the date of the birth of Jesus, it could be arranged so that a feast in honor of his birth might replace the traditional celebration of the rebirth of the sun.

References:

Asimov, Asimov's Guide to the Bible, Vol. II (1969)  
 Ginzel, Spezieller Annon der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse (1899)  
 Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews and The Jewish War  
 Tuckerman, Planetary, Lunar, and Solar Positions 601 BC to AD 1 (1962)  
 (linear interpolations have been used)

BOOK REVIEWS (continued from p. 9)

firing on the mutinous dogs.

Pope is also careful with the facts of geography. When Ramage chases privateers from Grenada to Martinique in the Windward Islands, each island along the way is described in detail.

In sum, while the jacket claims for Kent's Bolitho as a successor of Hornblower are vastly inflated, and while neither series seems as stepped in its times as was Forester's, the historical novel fan may find Pope's Ramage stories interesting reading.

As a footnote to this entire genre, why on earth is the Napoleonic conflict considered the only proper setting for this sort of fiction? With the exception of To Glory We Steer, which takes place in 1782, all of these novels are set during the early years of Great Britain's struggle with revolutionary-imperial France. There is no lack of other wars of wooden ships for the historical novelist who isn't afraid of research.

LEGENDARY ISLANDS OF THE ATLANTIC, by William H. Babcock (American Geographical Society, New York, 1922)

The author of this informative little book has collected together a large number of myths about the geography of the North Atlantic Ocean, ranging from Plato's fabulous continent of Atlantis to garbled but genuine reports of such real islands as the Azores and Madeiras.

The author adheres rigidly to the facts, unlike those who have tried to make the pre-Columbean Atlantic almost as well traveled as the Long Island Expressway. His arguments against a genuine Atlantis are probably already familiar to most serious readers, and can be found in a more modern and accessible form in de Camp's definitive work on the subject, Lost Continents (1954). In fact, the case against Atlantis is even stronger from a geological point now than it was when Babcock wrote. In his time, similarities between faunas or floras of widely separated continents were accounted for by "land bridges", one of which Atlantis might conceivably have been. The continental drift theory has since disposed of the need for "land bridges".

This is  
 O At  
 P Great  
 E Intervals  
 R This  
 A Appears  
 T To  
 I Inflamm  
 O Optic  
 N Nerves  
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Plato's Atlantis, like Swift's Brobdingnag, was simply a literary device on which the author hung his pet ideas about philosophy and government. Only two millenia of difference in time has prevented Swift's geographical creations from achieving the same credence.

The primitive state of medieval navigation gave rise to most of these legendary islands. Two different voyagers to the Canaries or the Azores might give two different reports on their position, and so numerous spurious islands began to dot the maps. And, since cartographers as a profession seem to be extremely conservative, once these islands got on the map they tended to stay there. The sickle-shaped island of Mayda, allegedly due west of Brittany, is an extreme case; it showed up on a map as recently as 1905!

Babcock sorts out such confused tales as the myth of St. Brendan and the various sagas which mention Vinland, and demonstrates what facts may lie behind them. Despite the fact that most of Brendan's travels were supposed to have taken place in the Arctic, Babcock shows that his island can most likely be sought in the Madeiras.

In common with most geographers, Babcock regards the "Zeno Narrative" as a forgery. This manuscript and map, "discovered" by a Venetian named Nicolo Zeno in 1558, purport to tell of voyages made in the late 14th century by his ancestors. If you can believe that in 1395 there was a European kingdom in Newfoundland, whose king had Latin books in his library, you can believe anything.

Needless to say, credulous types like Frederick Pohl\* and Charles Boland have swallowed the "Zeno Narrative" whole. Their standards of historiography are best illustrated in Boland's They All Discovered America (1961). Boland takes almost all his "evidence" from the work of amateur societies on local history, whose members are not interested in establishing the facts but in glorifying their localities as the sometime home of Phoenician, Roman, or Viking pre-Columbians. He thus finds himself defending the authenticity of the Kensington Stone, and claiming that Vikings built the Round Tower of Newport - despite the fact that a clay pipe has been found beneath the lowest row of foundation stones! \*\*

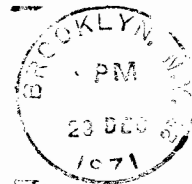
It's a pity, in a way, because the legendary North Atlantic was dotted with fascinating place names: Icaria, Grocland, Daculi, Drogeo, Scora-fixa, and the Isle of Demons. Two, Brazil and Antilla, even were attached to real lands once the Age of Discovery began.

\* - NOT the science-fiction writer but another man of the same name.

\*\* - By this time someone has probably asked why I haven't mentioned Samuel Eliot Morrison's recent book on this topic. So, why doesn't somebody out there send in a review of it? Should I do all the work around here?

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Postal Diplomacy game  
openings are still  
available. (See p. 3)