

#250

Apr. 30, 1979

CDO

games
this
week:

Jihad

MTC

RUNESTONE

Only a couple of games this week, so I'll see what else I can fit in. There's lots of reader response to the last couple of sallies I made. So, right to the games:

Game (1978Hid), Spring 1903: AS PER USUAL, TWO OUT OF THREE'S NOT BAD!
(Toronto-montreal Challenge)

Austria (Cal White): a rom-tus; f apu-nap; a tri-tyo; a vie-gal;
a boh s a mun; a mun s Rus f bal-kie.

England (Robert Paquin): NMR! f bar, f nrg, a nwy & f ska hold unordered.

France (Raynald Provost): a bel-ruh; a par-bur; f mar-lyo; f was-tun;
a spa h.

Germany (Raymond Couture, but see below): f swe-fin; a ber-kie; a pru-ber.

Russia (Franco Cauz): f rum-bulec; f bal-kie; a sil-war; f stpac-bot;
a fin-stp, s by a mos.

Turkey (Mario Cauz): f nap-tyr; f ion-tun; f smy-eas; a ara-sev; a alb-tri.

Raymond Couture is resigning, and will be replaced by Alain Lafond, c/o M. Lafond, 2311 St-Donat, Montréal. Telephone (514)-351-4879.

Fall orders are due Tuesday, May 22.

EDTOTHESHOSPITALPERFORMEDTHEINTRICATEANDSUCCESSFULOPERATIONANDBECAMEKNOWNASTHE

Letters:

From Mike Smolin, AMNC: Your Emperor game is 1979 hg. ((Notice that this is an incomplete MN, as there should be an upper case letter or letters after the "1979". Can you give me a complete number, please?))

What other game needs a MN? ((The 5-player Madman game, which began in #231, December 18, 1979, and which I have brought to your attention monthly ever since. I also need a MN for the Sacred Rhino game which has since begun in #247, April 9, 1979.))

Something is wrong with your "Diadochi V" game's MN. You refer to it as 1978AShe. My records show it as originating 27 Dec. '77. If it is a 1978 game start, it should get a new MN. The "AS" is questionable anyway. ((I mistyped it on that one occasion; it's "1977AShe". Don't you keep a record of the MNs you have assigned?))

Sorry for delays. LoH in preparation.

From Robert Sacks, MNC (on leave of absence): No. (I was going to write a detailed answer, but I owe DW an article so I'm sending it there instead. I was about to resign in favour of Mike Smolin, but I have to settle some things, and correspondence with Eire (and Garvey) is temporarily stopped. ((Robert has sent me a copy of his DW article, which I'm not authorized to publish at present.))

From Fred Davis: I agree with half of your editorial in RUNESTONE about the
(over)

Game 1978Efk, Spring 638: MOSLEM HOLIDAY DECLARED! BYZANTINE ADMIRAL TEARS
HAIR! TOP O' THE MORNIN' TO CHARLEMAGNE!

- Arabs (Dave Pengelly): NMR! F Alx(sc) & A Ant dislodged; A Nej, A UEG,
A NSi, A Jer, A Mos, A Bag, A 29, A 30, A Eup, A 24, A 25, A Bas,
A Bah, A Yem & A Axu all hold unordered.
- Barbarians (Greg Brown): F BalticSea-Skaggerak, s by F Denmark; F Nwv-Nrg;
A 1 s A Den; A 2-Saxony; A 3-Bohemia, s by A Pannonia;
A Scythia-LowerMoesia, s by A UpperMoesia; A 4 s A UpperMoesia;
A WestArmenia h, s by A EastArmenia, & A 8; one army exists in
barbarian zones.
- Byzantines (Steve Norris): "F Euxine s A Constantinople-Colchis"; A Con-Col;
F Thrace(sc)-Constantinople; F Epirus-IonianSea; F AegeanSea-Crete;
F PamphylianSea-LevantineSea; F Rhodes-PamphylianSea;
F EgyptianSea s OST A Larn-Alx; A Hellas-Epirus;
A Macedonia-UpperMoesia, s by A LowerMoesia; A Pontus s A Awasin;
A Caesaria-Paphlagonia; A Cilicia-Antioch, s by A Awasin.
- Franks (Bear Peters): F IrishSea-Ireland; F Saxony-Denmark, s by F Nth
& F Nrg; A Noricum-Boh; A Rheatia s VIS A Massilia-CisalpineGaul;
A Venetia-Ravenna; A Alamania-Saxony, s by A Frisia & A Thuringia;
A Treveri-Alamania; F Alx h.
- Ostrogoths (Trevor Baillie): A Larnarica-Alexandria; A Carthage h, s by
A Leptis & F SyrtisGulf; F AeolianSea-PituevanSea, s by F Sardinia;
F SouthTyr-NorthTyr; A CisalpineGaul-Ravenna, s by A Etruria &
A Rome.
- Persians (Hugh Polley): A Assyria & A ZagrusMts s A Samarra; A Samarra holds
a party for visiting Vandals; A Susa holds captive Arab belly
dancers; A Nishapur s A Susa; F Elbur-MareCaspicum;
A Eobatana-Elbur; A Tahiriden-11; A Samarkand-12; A Rashtrakutas-
Gauda; A Hormuz-Somalia, c by F GulfOfOman & F WestArabianSea;
F Oman-PersianGulf; F GulfOfAden-RedSea.
- Visigoths (Steve Cartier): F NovaCartago-CapeNao; A Tingad-Carthage, s by
A Numidia & A Hippo; F Eyo-Sardinia, s by F PituevanSea;
A Massilia-CisalpineGaul; A Septimania-Massilia; A Valentia-
Septimania.

Retreats: Arab F Alx to SSi or disband; Arab A Ant to Dam or disband.

Arab standby orders are requested from Margaret Gemignani; addresses in #231
except for: COA: Greg Brown, 501 West Georgia, Phoenix, AZ 85013, USA. Fall
orders are due Monday, June 4.

King of Kings to Mecca: Give us back our beautiful capital, ^{Baghdad,} and we
will return your slightly used belly dancers.

Herat to Mecca: If you will turn ^{over} Basra, Baghdad and Mosul to our holy
administrators, we being a reasonable people will sign a peace treaty and
cease all action against our brave neighbour.

DOCTORWHOPUTTHEHEARTBEFORETHECOURSEBARFVOMITREGURGITATEUPCHUCKCOOKIETOSSLUNCHBLO

Fred Davis letter, continued: Miller Numbers. There is no doubt that the Miller
Numbers themselves are virtually worthless for anything other than to simply
give a postal game a designator. The meaning of the designator is unknown to
anyone without a Miller Number chart, and there are few people in the hobby
these days who have a complete chart.

I can also conceive that it might be possible to have the various Board-
man Number Custodians issue numbers for variant games. This is something

which can be decided only by joint discussions with all the BNCs and the people who have been tentatively picked to issue Variant Numbers, so I wan't get into that issue here.

I do wish to advise you that the task of completing an orderly, rational classification of the 550-odd known variants has been virtually completed. As you know, this job was begun by Hartley Patterson in England and by Conrad von Letzke, Rod Walker, Dick Vedder and myself in America. The final adjustments were made by Der Garvey of Cork, Ireland, who is now the World Variant Archivist. This new system has adopted, in theory, ((been adopted... pardon my typing.)) by the custodians of most of the world's variant banks. The only holdup has been a total postal strike in the Irish Republic, which has been in effect since at least March 1, 1979.

Garvey had sent out a draft of the Variant Number classifications to several people in the hobby, and wanted feedback and/or corrections from these people before preparing a final draft. Rod Walker, the N.A. Variant Bank - West custodian, had not made his reply as of the middle of February. I don't know whether this reply got to Garvey before the Irish postal strike began. In any event, the strike hit before the final draft could be released. We had initially hoped to have the Variant Number system in operation by March 1, 1979. Regardless of what decision is made about the issuance of numbers for postal games, the several V.B. Custodians will adopt the Variant Number system for their files, and all games will be referred to by their Variant Numbers in future references to them by virtually all of the bigwigs within the variant hobby. (i.e., everybody except Sacks & Co.)

There has been a tentative decision to appoint three Variant Number Custodians: one for Continental Europe, one for North America and one for the U.K. Ireland, Australia and the rest of the world. I don't want to say who these people will be, as the appointments may not be official yet. It is my personal opinion that it's better to have special custodians issue the designators for variant postal games, to ensure that the correct doing ((?)) is used. However, if the present BNCs are interested in volunteering to do that job, that is their choice, and I would neither oppose nor favour their doing so.

((I have not heard anything from the Agostas as yet; hope they'll respond, at least to say whether or not they'd be amenable if public opinion favoured the idea.))

From Steve Norris: Your solution to the Miller Number problem is excellent. It has the following advantages:

(1) The two lower case letters used to designate the variant were worthless. Most variants are played only once or twice, so most designations wind up being used for only one game. If a variant is played several times, it usually has been amended, given a Roman number (eg. Jihad II) and becomes listed as a separate variant. Of what use was a classification with only one or two members per class?

(2) The endless efforts to classify variants would never succeed because the entire hobby would never agree on a system.

(3) There being no effective way for the hobby to really agree on any course of action, the only way to do something is just to go ahead and do it, and hope for acceptance. The Boardman Number Custodian is in a unique position to arbitrarily start using your proposal, and would have to be recognized as assigner of variant numbers by anyone who uses Miller Numbers.

Thus, the solution is for Dennis Agosta to simply announce that he will assign Boardman Numbers to variants. As he is obviously more reliable than Robert Sacks, who has made a mess of the Miller Numbers, he would, I believe, become universally recognized as assigner of variant numbers. Of course, it would be best if Robert Sacks and Michael Smolin would voluntarily relin-

(over)

quish their authority to Dennis. They might well be willing to do this, as Robert has indicated his desire to devote time to other areas, and Michael is apparently overwhelmed by the task.

As for variant classification, it might be a good project for the Variant Bank Custodians to catalogue variants by type. ((Great minds think alike - see Fred Davis' letter.))

From Mark Berch: Your editorial in #245 makes a great deal of sense, though I am generally unfamiliar with the variant scene. My only reservation is that I would not like to see more work given to the current ENC. He (presumably) got quite a backlog of work from Cal White, and has not published an issue of EVERYTHING... on his own yet. In view of your comments in #243 on the subject of people pressing other people to take additional hobby duties, I wonder if you asked the present ENC if he wanted the job before you wrote the editorial?

((No, although I discussed the idea briefly and confidentially with Cal back when he was ENC, and he was not averse in principle. However, my editorial was written purely theoretically. Also, it would be possibly for Dennis to appoint an Associate Custodian for the variants area, as various ENCs have done in the past for various geographical areas.))

From Konrad Beumeister: In a way I sort of agree with Mark Berch as he expressed his views in the letter printed in RUNESTONE #243. However, you have repeatedly stated that the zine was primarily for the players and not for the readers. What it boils down to is that you stuck to your promise, as outlined in the flyer all new subbers/traders get. Those that are disappointed in the current lack of reading material in RUNESTONE aren't really being forced to subscribe to it, are they? And so if Mark won't accept your heavy workload at this time, then I guess he could do something about it. ((Such as come and play my gigs or keep my girlfriend happy? Naw...))

(For my part, I don't really care too much what's in RUNESTONE; I read what I get, and will continue my trade for it as long as you are willing to do. I'd like to see more to read in the zine, but it's not like I'm going up a wall.) All in all, I think what Mark is driving at is that you have a very good reputation as a readers' zine, which he states ain't true. I have a feeling that this will only be temporary.

((On the other hand, some readers have commented that they prefer all games and no b.s....))

CHIMO!

RUNESTONE,
John Leeder,
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Printed Matter

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