

DAGON

#661, APA-Q #571

February 2015

THE FOUR AND A HALF KINGDOMS - VIII

(reprinted from **Graustark** #624, 9 April 1994, itself a reprint from 1970)

During their consulship in 69 BCE, Pompey the Pompous and Crassus the Crass embarked on a massive reorganization of the Roman army. During the recent suppression of the Spartacisr revolt the legions has shown themselves to be of a low efficiency, and before troops could be sent to fight Mithridates the consuls had to tighten up discipline.

In the process they discovered a large number of misfits, malcontents, cowards, imbeciles and barracks lawyers who could not safely be sent east to to fight Mithridates or returned to civil society. So they organized all these into the XIII Legion, put them under the command of a well-connected but incompetent young nobleman named Julius Feclus, and sent them off into the Balkan Massif where, they hoped, he would lose the whole lot of them.

Feclus led his men through Impassible Pass (known to the Romans as the *Via Hernia*) and occupied Skandalutz, which had previously been protected by the impregnable mountains and the quite pregnable priestesses of the Mother Goddess. Earlier raiders had had their martial ardor reduced by the priestesses' highly unorthodox means of defending their country, but Feclus' army included enough men raised in the Greco-Roman tradition to make them immune to the wiles of the Mother Goddess worshippers. As part of the Skandalous surrender, Feclus agreed to have his most troublesome officer, Perennius Mutinus, chosen as King of Skandalutz.

This is Thus was founded the Roman Empire in the Balkan Massif, under the pro-
consulate of Julius Feclus. (This office was bestowed on him for life by the
Senate, on condition that he never return to Rome.) Administratively the
O At Romans were successively a part of the provinces of Pannonia, Illyricum, Nori-
P Great cum, Rhaetia, Germania Inferiorissima, and once, through a clerical error in the
E Intervals reign of Elagabalus, Lusitania.
R This The event from which the Temporary Roman Empire (properly "Empire
A Appears of the Temporary Rome") took its name was the deposition and flight of Nero
T To in 68 CE. After murdering his double. a slave named Falgaius, Nero fled to the
I Inflamm Balkan Massif and announced to its Roman inhabitants that he would lie low
O Optic there until he was called back. The anniversary of his arrival, the Kalends of
N Nerves July, are still kept as a holiday. The chief town, which until then had been
called Julia Augusta Septembra after after Feclus' daughter, sister,, and wife,
was renamed "Roma Temporaria". (Those were all the same woman.)

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Nero married Feclus' heiress and settled down to await the call to return, insisting that Roma Temporalia was the Empire's capital only until his re-establishment in Rome could take place. This fiction is still maintained by his successors, who refuse to recognize the barbarian occupation of the Roman Empire's other provinces.

From time to time a Roman Emperor bestirred himself to suppress the "usurping" line of Emperors descended from Nero in Roma Temporalia. However, other matters always intervened. Perhaps the nearest escape took place in the reign of Severus Vertebra, who was all set to march on the Balkan Massif with six legions when the Praetorian Guard went on strike demanding that Christian virgins be thrown to them instead of to the lions. The strike was called off when the Emperor demonstrated to the Guard that, owing to the spread of the Paulician Heresy, there were no Christian virgins. However, the respite had been gained, and the rival Emperor at Roma Temporalia, Sextus Ambisextrus, was saved.

(In his *Anekdotia*, Procopius claimed that Sextus Ambisextrus was giving considerable financial support to both the Paulician Heresy and the Roman Servicemen's Union.)

The fastnesses of the Balkan Massif saved Roma Temporalia from being overrun by the barbarians, though they lost some of their lands to the ancestors of the Massif's other three modern nations. The fact that the barbarians were almost all Christians has caused the Temporary Roman Empire to except Christians from their otherwise toleration of all religions under their policy of Syncretic Polytheism.) From time to time, Christians are still thrown to the lions in the Circus Minimus. The High Priest of Jupiter is the principal religious figure of the Empire, which still uses the Roman calendar.

Governmentally, the Temporary Roman Empire still holds to the institutions of the early Principate. There is an Emperor, a Senate, a couple of legions, a Praetorian Guard, and consequently frequent changes of Emperor through assassination, conspiracy, civil wars, or orgies. The Temporary Roman Empire maintains no diplomatic relations with governments which it considers to be in illegal occupation of Roman territories; its ambassadors to others of the Four And A Half Kingdoms are *de jure* (though not *de facto*) Legates to other provinces of the Roman Empire. Imperial currency is in denarii and sestertii. Slavery is legal, but there are in point of fact no slaves in the country, since the Empire would have to engage in wars to get them, and to fight wars with other countries the Emperor would first have to admit that they exist.

The Temporary Roman Empire is for these reasons perhaps the most isolated of all of the Four And A Half Kingdoms. This accounts for the fact that Latin is still a living language there, though what they call "Latin" is in fact a rather archaic dialect of Romanian with an influx of German words from the Grand Duchy of Wogastisburg-Schlampenbüttel.

Roma Temporalia is the capital and principal city of the Empire. The Temporary Imperial Palace, the Temporary Senate House, the Temporary Temple of Jupiter, and the

Temporary Circus Maximus (actually the Circus Minimus) are all grouped in an imposing assembly of classical marble buildings around the Temporary Forum. In fact, the Emperor spends most of his time in the upper-class suburb of Neropolis, where his residence adjoins the Orgium.

Chief exports of the Temporary Roman Empire are antiques (made to order), Latin cribs keyed to every language of Europe, and filmed orgies. Chief imports are lions and Christians.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Dagon, a monthly fanzine of commentary on science, science fiction, fantasy, mystery novels, comic art, role-playing games (RPGs), and anything else that seems like a good idea at the moment, is published by John Boardman, 1910 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick, Maryland 21702-8249. My land-line telephone number is 301-662-8718. My cell phone number is 718-736-4901. **Dagon** circulates through **APA-Q**, an amateur press association (APA) which is edited once a month (if enough contributions come in) by Mark Blackman, Apt. #4A, 1745 E.18th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. The copy count for **APA-Q** is 18. For information about receiving and/or contributing to **APA-Q**, write to Mark.

Dagon also goes to others who have indicated an interest in its subject matter. Subscriptions are 10 issues for \$15 in the U. S., and for \$40 elsewhere.

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Ruth Berman's address was misprinted in the address list in the last issue of **Dagon**. It is 2809 Drew Avenue South, Minneapolis. MN 55416-4209. Also, Walter Buchanan's name was misprinted, and the name of Guy H. Lillian III should have been followed by "(T)".

As I had not previously known, my daughter Deirdre had been in the hospital for an operation, which is why she had not been able to supply me with stamps. However, on 31 December she was able to send me enough stamps so that I could mail out **Dagon** #660, and also several large envelopes of clippings which I mail to people to whom I supply things of interest to them which appear in the two daily newspapers I read, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. I hope that they are not overwhelmed by the several ounces of clippings which I sent. I will try to get smaller and more frequent such bundles to them in the future.

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I was mistaken when I reported in the last **Dagon** that none of the players in the Calhamer Memorial Postal Diplomacy Game had sent in "Fall 1906" moves. What actually happened was that Douglas Kent never received the "Spring 1906" adjudications and therefore could not pass them on to the other five players and set a "Fall 1906" deadline, I have just sent another copy of the "Spring 1906" adjudications to Douglas, who is playing Russia, and the other players will soon receive their copies. At present, none of the other players are on the

Dagon mailing list. I am therefore putting them on that list so Douglas and I can be informed if adjudications never reach them. They and their countries are:

ENGLAND: Jim O'Kelly, Unit A, 1401 W. Fillmore St., Chicago, IL 60607;
<Jimthegrey1013@yahoo.com>

FRANCE: Jim Burgess, 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908-4327; 401-351-0287

GERMANY: Melinda Holley, 11 South Muirfield Lane, Bear, DE 19701

ITALY: Harley Jordan, 109 Sunnyside Drive, Rochester, NY 14623; 585-475-9832

TURKEY: Hank Alme, 3822 Grosvenor Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21042-4915;
<lmehj@alumni.rice.edu>

(The player of Austria-Hungary had already been eliminated.)

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I want to thank all the people who sent me cards during the recent holiday season. Unfortunately, I was unable to send out cards. Unless I can get a ride to Frederick's business district, I have no way to buy cards, and as of the Christmas season I had not been able to get transportation for shopping trips from our daughters, who are my only sources of transportation. Moreover, they manage our money, including my pension and our social security payments. As of Christmas, it was over two months since they had visited or phoned me, or provided me with stamps. Fortunately, they did send stamps in adequate supply later.

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The January issue of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** leads with Paul Cardwell's Annual Report, a long report which takes up many aspects of RPGaming, and also the many activities of the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games. CAR-PGa still needs a correspondent with access to Nexis, a mass media database, for information about the occasional accusations against RPGaming as somehow evil. Many of these claim that "first-person shooter" videogames somehow will turn players into actual first-person shooters. Also, there are still claims out there that Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) and other RPGs are actually satanic worship services which invoke *real* demons among the menaces that players must deal with. Fortunately, "the anti-game bias of the past seems to be over for now." RPGs are even returning to prisons, some of which had tried to ban them. Increasing female participation in RPGaming is also discussed.

Each issue of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** contains a listing of upcoming RPGaming conventions. To receive **CAR-PGa Newsletter**, which is published monthly by Paul Cardwell for the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games. Send \$1.50 a copy or \$15 a year to him at 1127 Cedar, Bonham, TX 75418. (Costs are \$2.25 a copy and \$20 a year to addresses outside the United States.) Each issue contains a long listing of gaming conventions and sites. Paul also offers a subscription anywhere by e-mail for \$5.

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When we still lived in Brooklyn, I was in correspondence about limericks with Gershon Legman, the greatest limerick scholar since Edward Lear. But I have lost his address, and would like to resume discussion about limericks with him. Since he was of advanced years, I would like to know whether he is still alive, and if so what his address is.

*

In April I saw on Maryland Public Television a ballet version of Sir James M. Barrie's (1860-1927) classic 1904 drama *Peter Pan*, presented by the Milwaukee Ballet. On looking up Barrie's work, I was surprised to find that it was originally presented as a play, rather than as a book. As a child I had read a book version of *Peter Pan*, and had taken for granted that it was the original.

Peter Pan has been filmed four times, once (1953) in Disney animation, and three times with the indicated actress or actor in the title role: 1924 (Betty Bronson), 1960 (Mary Martin), and 2003 (Jeremy Sumpter). But on the evening of 4 December 2014, NBC-TV presented a fifth *Peter Pan* film, now apparently available on DVD. It presented several songs, though I do not know whether they were the songs that had appeared in previous film versions of the story. And there were so many dance numbers that I thought its arranger might have worked in the style of a Chinese "opera", actually a sung ballet. There were no fewer than three *corps de ballet*: the Lost Boys, Captain Hook's crew of pirates, and the original inhabitants of Neverland, written as original Americans ("Indians") by Barrie but not so described in this production, and led as always by their princess Tiger Lily. Barrie was one of many European authors who seemed to have been fascinated by the original Americans, probably because they interacted with settlers of European origin whose civilized ways made a sharp contrast with the natives, and thus also contrasted with Europeans, who had not interacted with uncivilized tribes on their own soil in living memory. Compare the German author Karl May, whose very popular "western" novels also made use of this contrast, or a Russian author whose name I cannot recall, who wrote stories of interactions between white Americans and a native tribe led by Chief Hobry Oryol ("Brave Eagle").

(Europeans' interactions with less civilized peoples in Europe may have taken place a few thousand years ago, when Indo-European speakers from Asia moved into Europe and encountered natives. Compare Keltic and Norse legends about conflicts with "giants" long ago.)

Peter Pan opens in the nursery of the Darling family. In Barrie's time, all the younger children of well-to-do parents lived together in a nursery, a room where they all ate, played, read, and slept, under the care of a nursemaid. (Curiously, in *Peter Pan* the nursemaid is a large dog, Nana, but the realities of live production required a human nursemaid also.) The NBC production did not mention, and other productions do not emphasize, that Wendy will

soon have to move from the nursery into her own room, as sufficiently mature children did at the beginning of adolescence. Wendy in *Peter Pan*, like Clara in *The Nutcracker*, is thus the heroine of a drama of maturation. For girls, this move from the nursery probably was caused by menarche, though of course this is not mentioned in productions of *Peter Pan*. (The actress who plays Wendy in the NBC production has a rather more developed frontage than most 12-year-old girls would have, but an older actress is probably unavoidable in casting so complex a part.)

Peter Pan flies in through the window, and explains who he and the Lost Boys are, thus introducing another theme of maturation - or of a way to avoid it. The Lost Boys, it seems, are boys who ran away from home because they did not want to grow up. Remaining boys in Neverland, they have to have a mother, and Peter Pan persuades Wendy to take the job. Aided by "fairy dust", they fly off to Neverland, along with Wendy's younger brothers John and Michael. (Peter Pan explains to Wendy that girls are too clever to get lost.)

There follow the balletic scenes, in which the Lost Boys ally with the "Indians" and both fight the pirates. As usually happens in productions of *Peter Pan*, Captain Hook steals the show. Sometimes this production calls him "James Hook", though I cannot recall his given name being mentioned in other productions I've seen. Could this production have mischievously hung Barrie's own given name on Hook, or is this a reference to the intrepid 18th-century explorer Captain James Cook?

Eventually the Lost Boys discover that they really do want to grow up, thus echoing Wendy's maturation. Peter Pan brings them all back to the Darlings' nursery, thus wishing several more sons on the family. He promises to return someday to visit Wendy, but his lack of a time-sense delays this for several years. When he does return, Wendy is a grown woman, with her own daughter in that same nursery, and after a short reunion Peter Pan flies off with Wendy's daughter to Neverland. I have heard of, but never read or seen, sequels in which a grown Wendy has children who meet Peter Pan.

The name "Pan", by the way, is the Greek word for "all" or "everything", and was the name of an ancient Greek nature god who did not conspicuously resemble Peter Pan. A personage with a goat's horns and hindquarters, who chased and often caught nymphs, may have fit Barrie's plans for the powers and diversity of Peter Pan's personality, but would not fit the innocence of his story, its characters, or its eventual viewers.

This production, despite my misgivings, is probably well worth watching for the balletic scenes, and as a comparison with the earlier versions. The film with Mary Martin as Peter Pan is probably regarded as the best.

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The current uproar about fatal police brutality has elicited opposition from people whose attitude seems to be "Anything the police do is all right with us!" And anyone criticizing

police killings of young, unarmed African-Americans, including Mayor Bill De Blasio of New York City, is being regarded, especially by New York City police, as “anti-police”. And police have been retaliating against this supposed insult by turning their backs on the Mayor, as at the funeral of two police officers killed by the usual sort of gun nut. There is no need to dismiss such officers. It would be sufficient to suspend them without pay for a few weeks. There would be no loss of police presence, as the police have met supposed mayoral disrespect by causing arrests and summonses to drop precipitately in number. This means a loss of police presence in the face of increased activity by fanatical Islamic terrorists, but that apparently does not bother the police anyhow.

I am waiting for a book to surface. This book was written and published more than 100 years ago, and can probably be found in the dusty back files of a southern library, or in the bottom drawer of the desk of a southern police chief. It would be a compendium of all the old southern white racist views about African-Americans, who would probably be called “colored people” in the book. And it would use these views to justify police brutality towards, and the occasional killing of, African-Americans in the course of routine police work. This would turn out to be the source of all the attitudes that make fatal police brutality towards unarmed African-Americans possible.

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Several people seem to have been creating or quoting limericks as part of contemporary controversies. Gene Weingarten’s column in the *Washington Post Magazine* of 4 January 2015 included light verse on topics of interest. One was this limerick by Max Scanlan, obviously dealing with people who refuse to accept the fact of evolution:

It’s difficult coming to terms
 With knowing that segmented worms
 Were forebears. And yet
 There are people we’ve met
 Who embody what Darwin confirms.

And apparently one bawdy limerick had been used by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to make a point in one of his famous fireside chats. Roosevelt was advocating the adoption of a new policy - on what, I do not now recall. He characterized the rejection of this idea as leading to disasters, saying sententiously “...again and again and again.” This *had* to be a reference to a famous limerick:

There was a young lady from Spain
 Who said, "Let us do it again,
 "And again and again,
 "And again and again,
 "And again and again and again!"

*

Will Shortz, the crossword puzzle editor of the *New York Times*, has outdone himself yet again. Below are some of the clues of the puzzle of 18 December 2014, and the answers as published in the next day's *Times*:

Clue	Answer	Clue	Answer
X-ray	Jalopies	Airway	Deteriorate
Ashtray	Rip to pieces	French, e. g., to Brits	Smog
eBay	Live and breathe	Spoonful, say	Dollop
Outlay	Knuckle dragger		

Another of the clues refers some of these answers to itself, and its answer is "Pig-Latin". If so, it is a dialect of "Pig-Latin" which I never studied. Referring clues to the answers of other clues is a feature that gets into Shortz's puzzles altogether too often.

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Numerous wars will be commemorated in this decade, and commemorative stamps will accordingly be issued. The bicentennial of the War of 1812-1814 and the British invasion of Maryland have already been commemorated, and I have used stamps marking the 200th anniversaries of the Battles of Lake Erie and Fort McHenry to mail previous issues of **Dagon**. Every year from 2011 to 2015 has been marked by two stamps commemorating events in the suppression of the Slaveholders' Rebellion. There will probably also be a stamp memorializing the murder of President Lincoln by Corporal John Wilkes Booth of the Confederate army. In 2017 we can expect stamps marking the 100th anniversary of American entry into World War I, while events of World War II will have their 75th anniversaries in 2016-2020.

By contrast, while the supply holds out this issue will carry, for domestic mail, stamps commemorating the 75th anniversary of the *Batman* comic books.

GETTING CAUGHT UP

Blancmange #489 (Blackman): Perdita knew Mike Nichols when they were both at the University of Chicago in the early 1950s, and involved in drama there. Perdita, who was then married to Ray Nelson, did costumes for some of Nichols's dramatic presentations. (This was before Nichols teamed up with Elaine May.) Incidentally, Perdita was wondering whether Ray is still among the living; she has heard nothing about him for several years.

Your account of Lunarians' difficulties would have been easier to follow had it been written in more and shorter sentences. Also, the small print that you employ makes it a little difficult to follow your comments.

Does Lunarians still have its own post office box? There had been a subscription to **Dagon** by Lunarians (meaning by its present management, if any) but a copy came back in the mail, so the subscription lapsed.

The problem with JEHoover was not his alone; it applies to the whole FBI. The only lasting solution would be the dissolution of this mad-dog agency.

Vernor Vinge's s-f novel *A Fire upon the Deep* is an ingenious but unconvincing attempt to get around the velocity of light as a speed limit. It cannot really be called *science-fiction* if a major scientific fact like this speed limit is persistently ignored by writers and fans.

Some films about the American Revolution show the British flag as today's Union Jack, rather than the older one showing only the English cross and the Scottish saltire. This inevitably draws complaints from vexillologists.

Whatever became of all the Omni-APAns? These are or were fans who tried to get all current APA-zines, and frequently contributed to all the APAs. If **APA-Q** is often down to only two contributors per Distribution, and 18 or 15 copies per Distribution, it would seem that either most **APA-Q** readers read it on line, or that there are not as many Omni-APAns as there once were.

There are persistent accusations that the English edition of the Jerusalem Bible is a translation of the French edition, not from the original languages. (Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, Greek for the New Testament.) The translators of the English edition may have checked their work against the French edition, but my understanding is that the English edition is a translation of the original languages.

Woodrow Wilson's private correspondence has come to light, and it now seems that he vigorously tried to get the U. S. into World War I almost as soon as it began, finally succeeding in April 1917. His aim seems to have been persuading the European powers that America had equal status with them as a world power. In this he was supported by ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, for whom war was a lively sport that gave him a great deal of pleasure. Had Cousin Teddy not died in 1919 at the age of 61, he was an odds-on favorite for the Republican

nomination in 1920, and for election. Alternate-history buffs can try to play around with this might-have-been. His obvious target would have been the brand-new Soviet Union.

(Yes, I'm afraid, "Cousin Teddy". Every President except Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Reagan came from a Protestant family of English or Dutch ancestry, which was in America before the Revolution. On his mother's side this is even true of Obama. Other people of this background, including myself, are therefore likely to be related to a President. Theodore Roosevelt is the only one I've been able to trace a connection with, but there are probably others as well.)

Canada would be a likely refuge for draft-eligible Americans only if conscription is resumed, as it might be if the U. S. gets involved in a major war in the Muddle East. Canada would probably return military deserters to the U. S. since desertion is also a crime in Canada. But Canada has not had a draft since World War II, and so draft evasion would not be an extradictable crime there. During the American invasion of Vietnam, American deserters successfully sought refuge in Sweden, so this might again be a refuge if the draft is resumed.

In mentioning "Alan Keyes" do you mean Alan King, which I recall as the name of a former Republican Representative from Florida who lost his seat in 2012?

The latest adventure of Baruch Rogers, Space Rabbi is printed in even smaller type than **Blancmange** #489.

How to... #113 (Del Grande): It would simplify matters greatly if the NFL developed a system of minor leagues, comparable to the minor leagues in professional baseball, and regard college football as strictly an amateur sport.

Dagon #661

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you may find something of
interest to you on p. _____.