LET THERE BE UPDATES
*The Howard Collector*

Glenn Lord published 18 issues of his ground-breaking REH fanzine between 1961 and 1973, which we reviewed before. [1] He put out a 19th number (Vol. 4, #1) in summer, 2011, in the same 5 ½ x 8 ¾ format with light gray textured softcovers and 52 pages for $20.00. The volume contains the original version of “Black Canaan” (first published in 2010 by the Robert E. Howard Foundation), an untitled verse, an untitled Breckinridge Elkins fragment, and a drawing, all by Howard from Lord’s collection. Critic Fred Blosser contributes reviews of *Steve Harrison’s Casebook* and *Tales of Weird Menace*, both edited by REHupan Rob Roehm and published in 2011 by the Foundation, as well as *El Borak and Other Desert Adventures* (2010) and *Sword Woman and Other Historical Adventures* (2011), both edited by REHupan Rusty Burke and published by Del Rey. Blosser observes that the detective-type stories in the first two books tend to be better the more REH concentrates on action and weirdness rather than sleuthing. Blosser thinks highly of the last two, but wishes that Burke had not corrected Howard’s French spellings.

THC #19 won Lord the 2012 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Aquilonian”) Award for Outstanding Periodical. [2]

A projected 20th issue, to include the original version of “Crowd-Horror,” was never published (“Crowd-Horror” would be published in 2013 in *The Collected Boxing Fiction of Robert E. Howard: Fists of Iron*), since Lord died of a heart attack December 31, 2011 at age 80. The founder of REH scholarship and steadfast pillar of Howard fandom, Lord has been the subject of obituaries, reminiscences, and panegyrics by present and former REHupans Barbara Barrett [3], Bill Cavalier [4-5], Frank Coffman [6], Mark Finn [7], Chris Gruber [8], David Hardy [9], Al Harron [10-11], Don Herron [12], Patrice Louinet [13], Dennis McHaney [14], James Reasoner [15], Roehm [16], Damon Sasser [17-18], Jeffrey Shanks [19], Steve Trout [20], and James Van Hise [21], as well as by *Locus* [22] and Keith West [23]. Lord became the foremost Howard collector in the world, published the first REH poetry book (*Always Comes Evening* [Arkham House, 1957]), was agent for the Howard heirs from 1965 to 1997 (during which his collection served as the source text of almost every REH work that appeared), published the first comprehensive REH bibliography (*The Last Celt: A Bio-Bibliography of Robert Ervin Howard* [Grant, 1976]), received the World Fantasy Convention Award in 1978, was a corporate director for Conan Properties, received the
2005 Cimmerian (“Black Circle”) Award for Lifetime Achievement, was Guest of Honor at Howard Days in 2006 and at PulpCon in 2007, was director emeritus for the Robert E. Howard Foundation, and contributed zines to REHupa (Costigan from 1972 to 1980), the Esoteric Order of Dagon (at least 35 issues of Zarphaana between 1974 and 1999), and the Hyperborian League (Ultima Thule between 1975 and 1978), among others. [24] In 2013, his collection of 14,000 pages of Howard typescripts, valued $26.8M, was donated to the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas. [25] Lord was buried in Humble, Tex. [26]

A handsome tribute to Lord, published for his 80th birthday and fortunately in time for him to see it, is Anniversary: Glenn Lord and The Howard Collector (ed. McHaney; Lulu.com, 2011), the first edition of which was a 50-copy paperback. It was followed by a hardback the same year. The 178-pa
on Lord as an agent, author, and editor, particularly of *The Howard Collector*. The anthology contains testimonials by Barrett, Blosser, Burke, Cavalier, Coffman, former REHupans Leo Grin and Paul Herman, Herron, REHupan Morgan Holmes, Lounet, McHaney, Reasoner, Roehm, Sasser, and comic book writer Roy Thomas, plus a history and index of *The Howard Collector* by McHaney, as well as five works of REH fiction first published in that journal.

For this book, McHaney received the 2012 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Valusian”) Award for Outstanding Anthology. [2]

Regarding Lord’s agentship for the REH heirs, Van Hise [21] provides an informative summary:

… I also kept Glenn apprised on the then in the works *Kull* movie as Glenn was fighting with both Conan Properties and the Howard Estate (who he felt had been poisoned against him by L. Sprague de Camp).

Glenn and de Camp eventually became adversaries because Glenn Lord was agent for all of Howard’s literary efforts while de Camp only saw money from the Lancer editions of Conan which were padded out with material written and edited by de Camp. De Camp believed he should have gotten more money since the Conan stories were what began the 1960s Howard Boom, and he was particularly annoyed when in 1977 Glenn Lord arranged for Berkley Medallion to begin publishing the unedited Conan stories scrubbed of all changes which de Camp had later made to them and minus all of the new stories and posthumous collaborations which de Camp and Lin Carter had done. Conan Properties was finally established in 1978 (of which de Camp was a member) and at his behest de Camp managed to get them to halt the Berkley Medallion series after three volumes so that Ace Books would then be free to reprint the books formerly published by the now bankrupt Lancer Books, editions which de Camp would share in the royalties from. Somehow it was established that Conan Properties controlled Conan while the heirs to the Howard estate controlled everything else. The in-fighting between Glenn Lord, de Camp and Conan Properties continued for years. …

Glenn outlived de Camp by eleven years and thereby saw de Camp’s legacy as a writer fade into obscurity. The Robert E. Howard Conan stories are now in print without the de Camp pastiches connected to them and the stories have thus finally been judged independently of the clutter de Camp added by riding on Howard’s legacy. (p. 2)

**REH: Two-Gun Raconteur**

Following the issues of this fanzine that we reviewed previously [27-28], *REH: Two-Gun Raconteur* #15 came out in the summer of 2011 and featured the color art of Michael L. Peters (front cover) and the B&W art of Nathan Furman (including a portfolio on Howard’s historicals), Petri Hiltunen, Clayton Hinkle, David Houston, John Lucas, Terry Pavlet, Robert Sankner, and Jeff Stewart. The issue ran 60 pages plus covers, with a print run of 200 copies, and sold for $20.50.

After the REH story “Sailor Costigan and the Yellow Cobra,” *REH:TGR* blogger Brian Leno comes on deck with his essay “Atali, the Lady of Frozen Death.” A popular practice of Howardists is to try to identify literary influences on the author, as well as possible sources of inspirations he may have had in writing particular pieces. As Leno says, “While the story is thrillingly told, it is the character of Atali that has given fans and scholars many restless nights as they vigorously toil trying to uncover the deadly lady’s literary
ancestors.” (p. 13) After first disposing of several other possibilities, Leno documents his thesis that the Conan tale “The Frost-Giant’s Daughter” was inspired by the 1928 story “Sweetheart of the Snows” by Alan Forsyth, a pseudonym for Leonard Cline, in the pulp *Ghost Stories*. It was originally titled “The Lady of Frozen Death” and has been reprinted in *The Lady of Frozen Death and Other Weird Tales* (Necronomicon, 1992) edited by Douglas A. Anderson.
For this article, Leno won the third-place 2012 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Hyrkanian”) Award for Outstanding Essay. [2]

A writer on films, horror, art, animation, music, biography, history, and science fiction, Paul M. Sammon authored the well-illustrated coffee-table book Conan the Phenomenon (Dark Horse, 2007), detailing Conan’s various appearances in books, magazines, comics, paperbacks, films, computer games, etc. In his article “Behind the Phenomenon,” Sammon gives us an overview of the making of his book and of his career, spent mainly promoting films. He also restores some text accidentally cut from Phenomenon.

After Furman’s portfolio, pulp historian Morgan Holmes is up next with “Top-Notch, Street & Smith and F. Orlin Tremaine” on the history of their magazines. Starting in 1910, Top-Notch was mostly a sedate second-stringer in Street & Smith’s lineup, though occasionally featuring Jack London, Harold Lamb, Sax Rohmer, and Rafael Sabatini. In the 1930s, things began to improve with the likes of Erle Stanley Gardner, Lester Dent, and Hugh Cave. The biggest change, though, came with editor F. Orlin Tremaine (1899-1956), who started recruiting the best writers from other pulps like Astounding Stories, Clues, and Cowboy Stories from the then defunct Clayton line. To these he added Gardner from Black Mask and Donald Wandrei and Frank Belknap Long, who had tired of working under the capricious Farnsworth Wright at Weird Tales, and later E. Hoffmann Price and Lovecraft. Howard submitted “The Valley of the Lost” to Astounding, which rejected it in 1933. His first character to appear in Top-Notch was Kirby O’Donnell in “Swords of Shahrazar” in 1934, followed by El Borak in “The Daughter of Erlik Kahn” in 1934 and “Hawk of the Hills” and “Blood of the Gods” in 1935. REH broke into another Street & Smith magazine, the new Complete Stories, with El Borak in “The Country of the Knife” (1936).

Following in the issue is my “Arrested Development: The Fanzines of Arnie Fenner & Byron Roark” about the history and contents of the fanzines REH: Lone Star Fictioneer and Chacal, the former being a semi-prozine and, by #3, a full-fledged prozine, enjoying a four-issue run in 1975-1976. Edited by Roark and published by Fenner, it was one of the prettiest, most ambitious, and most consistently good fanzines from the Howard Boom of the 1970s. It was studded with unpublished REH stories, an article on Howard by Glenn Lord, portfolios by various artists on REH characters, reviews of and interviews about Howard comics (including pastiches) and other REH zines, and interviews of Lord, L. Sprague de Camp, and Roy Thomas. Issue #3 featured Roark’s “Vultures over Cross Plains;” the first serious condemnation of pastiching and posthumous collaborations to see print (aside from one review by Fred Blosser). The fourth issue contained the first publication of the El Borak adventure “Three-Bladed Doom” (short version), though REH:TGR publisher and editor Damon Sasser discovered that Roark had secretly and significantly revised the text to “improve” it, delaying the publication of a definitive version by three decades. In 1976, Roark and Fenner founded a new prozine, Chacal, whose first issue included the first publications of Howard’s story “The Road of Azrael” and poem “The Ballad of Singapore Nell” and an interview of C. L. Moore that mentions REH. The last issue of Chacal, #2, by Fenner alone, sported two more unpublished Howard poems. Despite the focus of these zines, Roark and Fenner consistently displayed a condescending underestimation of REH’s abilities and accomplishments, an attitude all too common at the time and persisting to some extent to this day (e.g., S. T. Joshi). While Roark has disappeared, Fenner went on publish art books and, unfortunately, one Howard anthology, ... And Their Memory Was a Bitter Tree ....: Queen of the Black Coast & Others (Black Bart Books, 2008), whose introduction was a train wreck of ignorance and lack of appreciation.

Shanks debuts in REH:TGR with “Gouged Eyes and Chawed Ears: The Rough-and-Tumble World of Breckinridge Elkins,” about a type of no-holds-barred hand-to-hand combat that was popular in late 18th through mid-19th century Southern and frontier America and which Howard features in his Elkins yarns.
Next up is critic Don Herron with “Walk on the Wildside: A Brace of Reviews,” in which he delivers his characteristically acerbic assessments of _Two-Gun Bob: A Centennial Study of Robert E. Howard_ (ed. Benjamin Szumskyj; Hippocampus, 2006), _The Robert E. Howard Reader_ (ed. Darrell Schweitzer; Borgo, 2010), and _The Dark Man_ journal. Herron considers Szumskyj’s book to be a collection of mediocre essays (aside from Lord’s on _The Junto_), finds Schweitzer’s to be of almost no interest as up-to-date REH criticism (aside from Connors’s “Weird Tales and the Great Depression”), and thinks _TDM_ needs new editors. He makes further comments on Robert Weinberg (on his critical anthology about REH that never materialized), Szumskyj (on the necessity of driving such incompetents as he out of the field), S. T. Joshi (on his poor Howard credentials, his disparagement of REH fans for claiming Howard won the debate with Lovecraft about barbarism vs. civilization, and his general bias toward HPL over REH), Schweitzer (on his debate with Herron in _The Cimmerian_), and Scott Connors (on his lit-crit).

The issue closes with Howard’s poem “Miser’s Gold” illustrated by David Houston.

Van Hise reviews the issue in his _Sword & Fantasy #15_. [29]

Issue #16 of _REH:TGR_ came out 5 months late due to personal problems, as editor Sasser explains, in the winter of 2012. The color cover is by Terry Pavlet. The B&W cover and interior art is by the late David Burton, Bill Cavalier, Bob Covington, Nathan Furman, Clayton Hinkle, David Houston, Jim Ordolis, Richard Pace, Michael L. Peters (a “Rogues in the House” portfolio), and Joe Wehrle. #16 ran 56 pages plus covers, with a print run of 200 copies, and sold for $20.50.

Coming first is Howard’s unfinished “The Diablos Trail,” after which Hardy steps up with the essay “When the Dam Breaks: Violence and Wild Water,” in which he delves into REH’s 1933 story “Wild Water” that was at least partially inspired by the then recent construction of the dam which filled Lake Brownwood. The tale, unsold by Howard’s agent Otis Adelbert Kline, did not see print until 1975 in the zine _Cross Plains _#7. Set in Depression-era Texas, it is a story of revenge and violence culminating in an attempt at mass murder, making the tale seem like more of a prophecy than a period piece, given later events. Hardy analyzes the motivations, responsibilities, and psychologies of the major players in a plot that revolves around one character’s determination to blow a dam and kill the power elite he holds responsible for his economic plight. “The reader is led to question the assumptions of genre fiction about violence, and perhaps their own. … ‘Wild Water’ is a monument to the futility of violence.” (p. 12)

For “When the Dam Breaks,” Hardy was given the third-place 2013 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Hyrkanian”) Award for Outstanding Essay. [30]

Following this, Leno returns with “Introducing … in This Corner … Kid Socko!,” again searching for the inspiration for one of REH’s major characters, in this case Sailor Steve Costigan, hero of most of Howard’s boxing comedies. Loving boxing enough to read all he could about the sport and not only watch but participate in numerous matches himself, REH wrote dozens of stories about it both serious and humorous. Writers like Charles Francis Coe, H. C. Witwer, and Damon Runyon have been advanced as possible models for Howard’s pugilistic prose. But Leno finds that one source that has been overlooked is a boxing pulp that specialized, not in fiction, but historical fact, namely _The Ring_, which had been published since 1922 and which Howard is known to have read regularly and even to have sent a letter to. Still, _The Ring_ did present some fiction, and Leno zeroes in on some of it that he believes was REH’s inspiration for Costigan: a series of comical misadventures starring a fighter/manager named Kid Socko, by a once famous but now forgotten writer, James Kevin McGuiness. Copies of _The Ring_ are now hard to find, but Leno located a couple Kid Socko stories and notes enough similarities between the two characters and series that he makes a good case for Socko being the forerunner of Sailor Steve.
Continuing in the boxing story vein, Shanks returns with “Ace Jessel and the Ghost of Tom Molineaux,” in which he recounts the history of the boxer Molineaux, who is Jessel’s idol in Howard’s story “The Apparition in the Prize Ring.” The story’s original title was “The Spirit of Tom Molyneaux” (using a variant spelling of the fighter’s name) and was first published in the April 1929 issue of the pulp Ghost Stories under the pseudonym John Taverel, having been rejected by Fight Stories and Argosy. “In resurrecting Molineaux’s shade to help Ace Jessel, Howard was employing a mythic archetype: the return of the dead Hero King in a time of need (Arthur and Fionn mac Cumail are typical examples). He would use it again in ‘Kings of the Night’ when the long-dead Kull is summoned to aid Bran Mak Morn.
and in ‘Queen of the Black Coast’ when the ghost of Belit returns to save Conan.” (p. 24) As far as who served as a model for Jessel, Shanks says that Leno [31, p. 17] is likely correct when he suggests that Jessel is probably an amalgam of more than one fighter.

After Peters’s portfolio, Barrett contributes a poem, “Victory Revisited,” an answer to REH’s own “Victory.”

Then Roehm is on stage with “Robert E. Howard and the Lone Scouts: The Birth of The Junto,” about how membership in the Lone Scouts of America (an alternative to the Boy Scouts for isolated rural youths) by REH’s friends led to his participation in The Junto, an amateur essay, commentary, and poetry journal that ran from 1928 to 1930. Howard contributed 10 stories and 13 poems to 10 of the issues of The Junto that survive. Only one copy of each issue was produced. Subscribers to the monthly “travelogue” sent their submissions to the editor, who then typed them up into a single edition and then circulated them among the subscribers, who would add their comments. The editor was Booth Mooney and later Lenore Preece, sister of REH’s friend Harold Preece. The Lone Scouts had their own newsletter/journal entitled Lone Scout, and individual LSA “tribes” could issue their own “tribal papers,” which they increasingly did after Lone Scout ceased publication in 1924. Among Howard’s friends who joined the Scouts and published in their magazine were Ottie Gill, Herbert C. Klatt, Tevis Clyde “Clyde” Smith, Jr., and Wade Truett Vinson. Gill, Klatt, and Mooney wrote for tribal papers, with one of Gill’s containing at least one contribution from REH. One didn’t have to belong to the LSA to publish in their magazines, and, though Harold Preece claimed that Howard was a card-carrying member, Roehm doubts it on the basis of the lack of any contributions to Lone Scout and of any mentions in his letters. Looking for a similar literary outlet, Mooney founded The Junto in 1928, which, besides REH, featured submissions from Klatt, the Preeces, Smith, Vinson, and Howard’s cousin Maxine Ervin. As Roehm points out, without the Lone Scouts, many of connections between REH’s acquaintances would never have been made, and The Junto might never have existed.

With this article, Roehm captured the second-place 2013 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Hyrkanian”) Award for Outstanding Essay. [30]

Artist David Houston then illustrates Howard’s boxing poem “All the Crowd.”

Louinet makes his first appearance in REH:TGR with “One Gent Too Many on Bear Creek,” an installment is his ongoing investigation of the various textual versions of Howard’s stories. Here Louinet focuses on the one anthology REH published, if posthumously: A Gent from Bear Creek (Jenkins, 1937). Howard had submitted a collection of Conan and other weird stories in 1933 and his Conan novel The Hour of the Dragon in 1934, both to Denis Archer of London, who rejected the first on the basis of the unmarketability of short-story anthologies there and the second because his firm had just gone out of business. Probably not wanting to spend much more time on a venture that was shaky at best, REH took nine of his humorous Breckinridge Elkins westerns already published in the pulp Action Stories, wrote four new yarns and inserted a love interest to add continuity, and put together the Gent anthology in 1935. Given the published versions by Action and Jenkins, the known typescripts and carbons (augmented by Paul Herman’s yeoman scanning of Glenn Lord’s collection prior to its donation to the University of Texas), and the typescript of the novel prepared by Howard’s agent Kline recently discovered by Herron [32], Louinet decided that a full-scale intercomparison was in order. One systematic discrepancy that emerged was the fact that changes Action introduced were not just limited to minor editorial emendations, but involved not only the deletion of whole sentences and paragraphs but the concoction of new ones. REH evidently read the Action versions when he prepared the anthology and removed most, though not quite all, of the additions, but kept the cuts. It was then submitted to the American publisher Caxton, who rejected it, but it was subsequently sold to Herbert Jenkins. The original typescripts of the Action and Jenkins
versions were destroyed on publication, as was the general practice. Eventually a pure-text version will be published by the Robert E. Howard Foundation.

The issue concludes with Holmes’s review of *Griots* (Mvmedia, 2011), a Sword & Soul anthology edited by Milton J. Davis and Charles R. Saunders, and with REH’s short-short story “Miss High Hat.”

Sasser was unable to publish an issue of *REH:TGR* in 2013 due to the illness of his wife Alma, who later died. The seventeenth issue, dated the summer of 2014, has a color cover by Michael L. Peters. The B&W cover and interior art is by Bill Cavalier, Bob Covington (a “Heroes of the Desert” portfolio), Stephen Fabian, Nathan Furman, Clayton Hinkle, Richard Pace, Terry Pavlet, and Robert Sankner. #17 ran 64 pages plus covers, with a print run of 200 copies, and sold for $21.00.

After Howard’s story “The Stones of Destiny,” Roehm reappears with “The Diabolical Blond,” wherein he investigates the identity of a girl REH had a crush on in 1928 at a Methodist Sunday School in Cross Plains, Texas. There are only a few vague references in his letters, one mention by Harold Preece in a letter to Clyde Smith, and Preece’s fanzine article “Women and Robert E. Howard” [33]. Roehm rules out de Camp’s identification of her as Ruth Baum and winds up predicting that her identity will never be known for sure.

Shanks shows up once more with “What the Thak? Anthropological Oddities in Howard’s Works,” surveying the appearances of ape-men in REH’s stories and examining the implications thereof. Howard had an avid interest in history, prehistory, and human evolution, and not only set most of his weird fiction in prehistoric times, but worked his ideas about the descent of man from ape-like ancestors into plots of several stories. These ideas were based on science, at least the theories current at the time, and were further filtered by his reading them in the popular press. Those popular sources were, first and foremost, H. G. Wells’s *The Outline of History* (1922) and G. F. Scott Elliot’s *Romance of Early British Life* (1909). REH based his earliest depictions of ape-like prehumans, such as in “Spear and Fang” and “Men of the Shadows,” on what was known about Neanderthals. The later drafts of “The Hyborian Age” describe evolution and devolution between apes and men occurring over the span of a few millennia, which was thought possible at the time. The most memorable appearance of an ape-man occurs in “Rogues in the House” (1933/34), in which the priest Nabonidus is killed by the creature Thak, who then impersonates his master. After dispatching Thak, Conan declares “I have slain a man tonight, not a beast.” Other man-like apes (or vice versa) are seen in “Iron Shadows in the Moon”/“Shadows in the Moonlight,” “The Servants of Bit-Yakin”/“Jewels of Gwahlur,” and *The Hour of the Dragon*.

Such creatures would have resonated with the readers of Howard’s time, who were still trying to come to grips with Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, which had reduced man from his central role in creation to the level of earth’s dominant animal. As Shanks observes, literary theorist Virginia Richter refers to the tension caused by this demotion as “anthropological anxiety,” which she points out as occurring in the works of such authors as H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, and Edgar Rice Burroughs, who are known to have influenced REH. She lists the manifestations of this anxiety as fear of biological or cultural regression or degeneration, body plasticity, blurring of the boundaries between human and ape in mind or body, and the threat of biological or cultural “pollution” through contact or interbreeding.

“Rogues in the House” exemplifies exactly the kind of anthropological anxiety fiction that Richter identifies in her research. In this and many other works Howard expresses this underlying cultural phenomenon that was so prevalent in the *zeitgeist* of the Victorian and Modernist periods as the post-Darwin generations wrestled with the implications of what it means to be human. As such, it is little wonder that apes and ape-men, degenerative races and cultures, and atavists and throwbacks, all play a prominent role in Howard’s
fiction. He was tapping into primal uneasiness and anxiety about mankind’s very nature and the tenuous rule our civilization enjoys over the planet. Howard’s hominins and ape-men continuously remind us that just below the surface of our human mask lurks the ape, roaring and red-handed. (p. 25)

This article won Shanks the 2015 Robert E. Howard Foundation (“Hyrkanian”) Award for the Best Print Essay of 2014. [34]
Herron again weighs in with more mordant commentary, this time on the sad state of REH-related literary criticism from academia which otherwise might have elevated Howard’s literary reputation. The title of his “Non Sequiturs inside the Academy Gates” refers to his 1990 essay “Swords at the Academy Gates; or, Robert E. Howard Is There, Where Are the Critics?” [35], coupled with a comeback at critic Winter Elliot for a non sequitur in a gibe she had made at Herron’s critical anthology The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology (Greenwood Press, 1984). Herron points out that “Swords,” directed at academics for their paltry response to The Dark Barbarian, still has elicited no response from academia. And there was little more reaction to his follow-up volume The Barbaric Triumph: A Critical Anthology on the Writings of Robert E. Howard (Wildside, 2004). Herron is unimpressed with Richard Mathews’s Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination (Routledge, 1997), which contains a chapter on REH that was reviewed by Tompkins [36]. Nor does Herron take much note of Conan Meets the Academy: Multidisciplinary Essays on the Enduring Barbarian (ed. Jonas Prida; McFarland & Co., 2013), admitting that he hasn’t read much of it; it contains Elliot’s aforementioned comment. (Still, the anthology was a start, with some meritorious content like Shanks [37], and there have been more academic contributions, at an increasing pace, since. And papers being presented at popular culture conventions by Howardists on both sides of the “gates” have been making further headway.)

After Covington’s portfolio, Barrett returns with “Robert E. Howard and Past Lives: Reincarnation, Dreams and Race Memories,” in which she investigates references to past lives in REH’s stories, poems, and personal statements in an effort to determine if he really did believe in reincarnation. The stories that have James Allison as a narrator all involve past lives, namely his as a barbaric warrior, such as “Marchers of Valhalla,” “The Garden of Fear,” and “The Valley of the Worm.” Howard’s interest in reincarnation, at least as a plot device, was apparently inspired by Jack London’s novel The Star Rover (1915). Others of his stories that refer to memories of past lives are “Children of the Night,” “The People of the Dark,” “The Cairn on the Headland,” “For the Love of Barbara Allen,” “The Shadow Kingdom,” “Three-Bladed Doom,” “The People of the Black Circle,” “The Thunder-Rider,” and “Lord of the Dead,” as do 49 of his poems, which Barrett lists.

REH speaks as if he believes in reincarnation because of vivid memories of, supposedly, his own previous lives in letters to his friend Clyde Smith [38] and Lovecraft [39], in conversations with his girlfriend Novalyne Price Ellis [40-41], and in a statement recounted by Charlotte Laughlin [42, p. 17]. Yet he declares in letters to Lovecraft [43-45] that he is an agnostic with no belief in an afterlife, which would be consistent with his apparent adherence to existentialism. [46] Reincarnation would seem to require the existence of a soul, that part of a person which survives death, but memories of past lives could also be explained if they were genetically encoded and transmitted to one’s descendants, which appears to be how Howard regarded the process. Burke and Ellis agree that racial memories fit REH’s apparent beliefs better than does reincarnation. Howard also had vivid dreams, and wrote to Lovecraft: “I believe that many dreams are the result of ancestral memories.” [47]

(As I have posited before, it is more than likely that REH’s vivid memories of supposed past lives were actually manufactured memories produced by his fascination with and total immersion in historical studies, as was apparently also the case with George S. Patton. [48])

In an earlier review article of Howard’s reincarnation stories, Cabos [49] declined to say whether he thought Howard believed in ancestral memory, but said “it is very possible” that it was just a story idea. In her review of the evidence, Barrett states that “it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Robert E. Howard did in fact believe in past lives.” (p. 50) (However, in a letter to Lovecraft, he declared: “I have never been convinced that reincarnation is either a reality or a myth.” [44])

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Understandably in view of his Irish ancestry, REH took particular interest in the Battle of Clontarf that took place on 23 April, 1014 near Dublin. The battle pitted the forces of Brian Boru, king of Ireland, against a Viking-Irish alliance, ending with a rout of the latter, though Brian was killed. In Ireland, the battle came to be seen as an event that freed the Irish from foreign domination, and Brian was hailed as a national hero. In this old popular view, Clontarf was the culmination of a long, bloody struggle, not only between the Irish and the Vikings, but also between Christians and pagans. Modern historians see a more complex picture, in which many Vikings were Christians and the Irish were already absorbing the Scandinavians. Howard was aware of some of this, but the older romantic view offered tremendous storytelling potential. And so it was that Howard wrote no less than three stories about Clontarf, as well as mentioning it in three other stories and three poems. In 1931, in one of his most intensive and convincing uses of history, REH wrote the story “Spears of Clontarf,” starring Turlogh Dubh O’Brien, and had it rejected by the pulps Strange Tales, Adventure, and Argosy. To Howard, Clontarf was more than a historic battle; as he puts it in “Spears”: “The issue was greater than to decide whether Dane or Gael should rule Ireland; it was Christian against heathen, Jehovah against Odin. … [I]t was the titanic death throes of a passing epoch – the twilight of a fading age.” [50] Yet Ireland was to fall to the Normans, descendants of the Vikings. After the rejections of “Spears,” REH rewrote it as “The Grey God Passes”/“The Twilight of the Grey Gods” to have more of a weird atmosphere, and submitted it to Weird Tales, which also rejected it. Wright claimed that the plot and supernatural element were weak, the battle description was not gripping enough, and there were too many characters. “Spears” was first published as a chapbook by George Hamilton in 1978. “Grey” first appeared in Dark Mind, Dark Heart (Arkham House, 1962). Undaunted by Wright’s rebuff, REH recast the story as a racial-memory story in which narrator James O’Brien recalls experiencing the Battle of Clontarf in a former life; it was titled “The Cairn on the Headland.” Strange Tales editor Harry Bates accepted “Cairn” for his January, 1933, issue. The Robert E. Howard Foundation published “Grey” and “Cairn” in Swords of the North (2014), edited by Roehm with an introduction by Burke.

Hardy reappears to discuss the Battle of Clontarf next in the issue in his essay “Apocalypse on the Liffey,” referring to the river by which the climactic battle was fought. “Clontarf may have been a battle of races, but it had the intensity of a personal feud. Therein [lies] the drama that elevated a battle between a handful of local monarchs on the fringes of Europe into an epic combat that captured the imagination of Irish historians, Icelandic saga writers, and Robert E. Howard, the bard of Cross Plains.” (p. 53) Fritz Leiber declared that “Grey God” was part of the creative process that led to Conan, with the Celtic warrior Conn serving as his prototype. [51] Conn is a fugitive slave from the Vikings and an outlaw among his own people, as is Turlogh in “Spears.” REH’s Celtic heroes, despite achieving victory, feel only gloom and despair in a world full of violence and doom, characteristic of the melancholy and fatalism underlying Howard’s historical and fantasy fiction. Hardy adduces REH’s historical sources and demonstrates how closely he adheres to them, while using them as a platform to build his riveting tales of personal drama and conflict. One of Howard’s frequent motifs is that human existence and evolution take the form of struggles between rival peoples and races, culminating in either the enslavement, assimilation, exile, or extermination of the vanquished by the victors. This is certainly the case for his Clontarf stories, which have the added dimension of religious confrontation and holocaust. “Howard’s protagonists are Brian and the Irish. Yet for a triumph over a hated rival, the sense of victory at the end of “Spears” is muted to the point of despair. Though Conn has achieved his revenge, nearly every other sympathetic character is dead. … It is left for Turlogh Dubh to pronounce the valedictory:

And such a battle as have fought this day, the tribes of men shall never see again. The days of the twilight come on amain and a strange feeling is upon me as of a waning age. The king has fallen and all his heroes and though we have freed the land of the foreign chains, we too are as but ghosts waning into the night.

Victory, like defeat, leads to oblivion.” (p. 59)
Leno returns to close the issue with an article on champion boxer Battling Siki, who was the inspiration of similar characters in Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* and REH’s “The Apparition in the Prize Ring” and “Fist and Fang.” Then, after asking us to imagine the two authors and boxing buffs as friends and possible sparring partners, Leno concludes with:

But when these men decided to end their own lives, everything stopped. No more sparring/boxing matches, no more pounding of the typewriter keys, and no more stories. Once their typewriters were silenced everything ended – except, of course, what they had written before. And while what they left us with is certainly a legacy of literary riches, we’re still haunted by a question – and it gnaws at us like a freezing wind on bare skin – what more might they have done? (p. 64)

The next issue of *REH:TGR*, #18, appeared in summer, 2015 and featured color art by Bob Covington (front cover) and the B&W art of Bill Cavalier, Stephen Fabian, Charles Fetherolf, Clayton Hinkel, Richard Pace, Michael L. Peters (a Bran Mak Morn portfolio), Terry Plavet, Bryan Reagan, and Robert Sankner. #18 ran 48 pages plus covers, with a print run of 150 copies, and sold for $21.00.

After the Howard story “The Cobra in the Dream,” long-time pop culture writer William Michael Mott presents “The Hyborian Sage: Real-World Parallels between Howard’s Essay and Modern Discoveries,” the essay in question being “The Hyborian Age.” He spotlights REH’s use of the geological and anthropological concepts of *catastrophism* and *diffusion*, ideas popular in Howard’s time that are currently enjoying something of a comeback among mainstream and fringe historians. “Rather than history being largely linear and steadily progressive, it may in fact be cyclical and catastrophic, interrupted periodically by massive upheavals and periods of chaos, hardship, the displacement of populations, and the destruction of entire civilizations within a very short span of time.” (p. 9) Mott notes that REH was basing his fantasy world-building on his readings in *Theosophism* then being promulgated by occult seers like Helena Blavatsky and on theories about the supposed existence of highly developed civilizations in prehistory. [52] Some of the recent writings that Mott presents as partial vindication of Howard, such as the ancient astronaut theory of Erich von Däniken, are still considered fringe or pseudo-science today, despite their current popularity on television and the Internet. But Mott does cite several recent archaeological discoveries that appear to push back the advent of civilization to soon after the end of the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago. (There have been rises in sea levels that inundated many coastal settlements, but none of these cultures has been shown to be comparable in sophistication to those of later Antiquity, and some structures, like those at Yonaguni, are most likely natural formations.)

Free-lance journalist and Dutch fan David Scherpenhuizen weighs in next with the provocative essay “Conan der Übermensch.” The *übermensch* or superman of Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy is a sort of *homo superior* individual who is so well bred and accomplished that he should not be considered as bound by the constrictive mores of society’s common man, lest his potential to advance mankind be squandered. Scherpenhuizen describes Conan and Kull as “ruthless, strong-willed men who through their will-to-power carve out kingdoms for themselves. They rule vast, martial nations who [sic] conquer all those weaker than themselves. Not surprisingly, in light of the ferment of nationalist and proto-fascist ideas in which they were born.” (p. 19) He claims that REH was influenced by the *völkisch* or folk (people)-conscious ideas prevalent in pre-WWII Austria and Germany that would be used to justify the racial cleansing and other atrocities by the Axis Powers. This ideology had its roots in romantic notions that races were defined not by geography but by blood and shared traditions and beliefs. This ethnocentric thinking was easily perverted, leading to assertions that some races were superior to others who then deserved not only to be treated as subjects, but as those with no claim to rights, dignity, or even life. “The key virtues were a love of nature, bravery, ruthlessness, racial cohesion, obedience and a compulsion to conquer by strength of
arms. It was a warrior’s creed, not a charitable one.” (p. 19)

(One can certainly see Darwinian concepts such as survival of the fittest having a part in Conan’s and, hence, Howard’s worldview, as was common at the time, and understand that REH would regard corrupt rulers and priests of decadent civilizations as immoral debauchees deserving of deposal and even death. But I contend that Scherpenhuizen goes too far when he states that Conan’s “primitive code of honour ... has misogynistic and racist traits” (p. 19), that Conan believes “[o]nly the strong and daring are fit to survive” (p. 19), and that Conan “is not dogged by the morality or consequences of his actions” (p. 21), as
if the strongest have the right to oppress or exterminate those they regard as inferior. Howard’s heroes never act in this way, nor does REH ever state that he believes as much. In his essay “King Conan and the Aquilonian Dream,” Trout quotes extensively from the Conan stories to demonstrate convincingly that King Conan’s view that kingship should be based on the consent of one’s subjects, Conan’s favoring of only restricted imperialism, and Conan’s antipathy to slavery were Howard’s way of expressing the Western and, especially, American ideals of liberty, equality, and justice. HOEF REH’s fervent and peculiarly American belief in individual freedom and exceptionalism generally prevents him from making more than a limited endorsement of the racialist thinking common in his time. Given his existentialist beliefs, he would probably agree that man does not need religion to define or require moral behavior, but he would hardly think that this would be carte blanche for amoral, much less immoral, acts. Quoting myself in a commentary on an essay by Nicholas Moll which searched for Nietzschean themes in Howard:

While his heroes might be looked upon as examples of the übermensch or Superman advanced by Nietzsche, only the most revenge-driven of them acted as if morality were irrelevant or as if might did make right. Conan in particular, strong and self-motivated as he was, never abandoned his rough code of ethics and only became more morally responsible as he rose to positions of power in society. Thus, it is hard to see him as such a Superman figure acting as if he were outside the limits of conventional morality, which Nietzsche thought was imposed by the confines of a Herd mentality, especially when REH himself believed the will of the people to be a positive force.

To his credit, Scherpenhuizen states that racialist depictions in REH’s stories “do not necessarily express Howard’s ideas on race because his sympathies clearly lie with barbarism” (p. 19) and that he himself does not contend that REH was a fascist. But others do, notably Alpers and Bowden, and we need to be aware of and be able to counter their claims, which are not only untrue but dangerous to our cause.)

After Peters’s portfolio, Roehm returns with an article on Howard’s first published poem, “The Sea,” which earned honorable mention in a poetry contest held in 1923 by the Baylor College for Women at Belton, Texas. The poem was apparently published in Baylor’s weekly The United States, though no copy of it has surfaced. REH, then in his 11th (senior) year at Brownwood High School, thought enough of it to submit it to the Cross Plains Review newspaper, which published it on 29 June, 1923. Its next appearance had to wait until Glenn Lord printed it in Echoes from an Iron Harp (Grant, 1972).

Next up is Dierk Guenther, an associate professor at Japan’s Tokushima University, with his “A Farewell to the Old West – The End of the ‘Old Frontier’: Robert E. Howard’s ‘Old Garfield’s Heart.’” The Western frontier was a frequent topic of conversation between REH and H. P. Lovecraft during their wide-ranging, almost six-year-long correspondence, relating as it did to Howard’s love of history and his region of the country. Their discussion of it inevitably became embroiled in their debates over barbarism vs. civilization and physical vs. intellectual prowess, as HPL extolled the advantages of modern living in a civilized society over past life in a dangerous, uncivilized environment, while REH defended his preference for living in older, wilder times. Their lack of understanding of each other’s viewpoint was partly caused by Howard himself as he indulged in reporting the escapades of outlaws and violent episodes in frontier life. Guenther observed that REH’s 1933 weird western “Old Garfield’s Heart” can be read as an affectionate farewell to the Old West. “When Howard tried to explain to Lovecraft why he preferred the Old Frontier period to the times he lived in, three thoughts stand out: the Old Frontier offered more personal freedoms, in the time of the Old Frontier men were not judged by their social status but by their values as men, and people living during … the Old Frontier era were better people than their descendants living in modern times.” (p. 32) Guenther cites passages from the two men’s letters to illustrate these conclusions, as well as from a history of Texas. He finds further justifications in the authentic setting, local color and background, and autobiographical elements of “Heart,” adding that the story is probably predictive of the direction REH’s
literary career would have taken as he left the fantasy genre behind.

Then Gruber begins a series featuring the prizefighters Howard regarded as being the top 12 of all time, as he put forth in a letter to a 1926 issue of The Ring magazine. Having just co-edited the four volumes of The Collected Boxing Fiction: Fists of Iron (Robert E. Howard Foundation, 2013-2015), Gruber is well-equipped to discuss not only REH’s tastes in and knowledge of boxing, but all aspects of the history, appeal, and tactics of the “sweet science.” As we’ve mentioned, boxing was not only a sport Howard was well-read on, but also one that he observed firsthand, to the point of participating in it with his friends and locals. In the current installment, Gruber explains the allure of the competitive pastime and the historical and personal backgrounds of the lowest two boxers on REH’s ranking: Louis Angel Firpo and Jess Willard. One comes away with a deeper appreciation for Howard’s interest in the sport and the impact it had on both his life and his writings.

The issue concludes with Reasoner’s essay, “Not Your Ordinary Gun-Dummy: The Western Heroes of Robert E. Howard.” A western author himself, Reasoner opines that REH’s western stories were 10 to 15 years ahead of their time, given that their gritty, hard-boiled, noirish nature made them more characteristic of the western pulps of the late 1940s. This may well explain Howard’s relative lack of success in marketing his serious westerns, in contrast to his popular tall-tale yarns starring such characters as Breckinridge Elkins. Not only did REH’s plots not fit his era, but his heroes did not fit the mold of the time, which Reasoner describes as the “gun-dummy,” namely a man, almost always a cowboy, who is honest, clean-living, and exceptionally good with a gun and who has drifted into a situation where he has to battle a gang of outlaws or rescue the comely daughter of a beleaguered rancher. Early on, Howard’s protagonists started departing from such wooden stereotypes and his plots varied from the formulas his pulp markets expected.

Sasser’s REH: Two-Gun Raconteur journal won the 2013 and 2015 Robert E. Howard Foundation “Aquilonian” Award for Outstanding Periodical. [30,34]

In order to inform and stay in closer touch with his readers about fan activities and interests in general, Sasser started theblackcoastpress Yahoo.com discussion group in 2003. This led to his erection of the rehtwogunraconteur.com Web site, where he posted articles of interest and sold copies of REH:TGR. To this he added a blog in January, 2007, which he revamped in 2010 with a classy design by Infocreek. In his blog, Sasser keeps readers abreast of the latest REH-related publications and activities. He then expanded this to cover many fantasy-related activities and publications, tributes to individuals, and finally all manner of Texas-related items about history and of local color. He has even been doing his own literary criticism [e.g., 58] and documenting his own research, such as his finding that Byron Roark’s tampering with REH’s wording of “Sword Woman” was even more sweeping than it was with “Three-Bladed Doom” [59] and his discovery of an index card at Greenleaf Cemetery showing that Howard’s father Isaac had purchased their family’s burial plots, not Howard himself, as has long been supposed. [60] For his blog posts on the REH:TGR and REHupa sites, Sasser won the second-place 2012 REHF “Cimmerian” Award. [2] Sasser and his colleagues collected the 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 REHF “Stygian” Award for Outstanding Web Site. [2,30,61,62,34] And in 2013, Sasser garnered the REHF “Black Circle” Award for Lifetime Achievement. [30]

Brian Leno came on board the Blog in January, 2010, writing mostly on boxing and collectibles. He got the third-place 2012 REHF “Cimmerian” Award for his posts, as well as a 2014 “Cimmerian” Award for his 10-part “Out of the Shadows – Finally, ‘Kid’ Dula.” [2,62]

Since joining the REH:TGR Blog in February, 2010, Roehm has posted extensively on such matters as the trips he and often his parents made both to Howard Days and to many towns in Texas (including all those REH ever visited), his historical and genealogical research on Howard, his family, and his associates.
that he has been pursuing on those trips and on the Internet, REH’s *Howard Payne Yellow Jacket* stories and Brownwood High School *The Tattler* stories, *The Fantasy Fan, The Cimmerian* Blog, the discovery of a new REH letter, a thirteen-part series on the agents for the Howard heirs Otis A. Kline and Oscar J. Friend, an eight-part series on REH’s legendary trunk, and a seven-part series on *The Junto*, among many other topics. He won the first-place 2011 and 2012 REHF “Cimmerian” Award for his posts, as well as the first-place 2012 “Hyranian” Award for Best Essay for his eleven-part “The Vinson Papers,” as well as the second-place 2013 “Cimmerian” Award for his three-part “My Name is Earl” and a 2014 “Cimmerian” Award for his thirteen-part series “The Business,” and the 2014 and 2015 “Cimmerian” Awards for his eight-part “The Legend of the Trunk,” all on the Blog. [2,30,34,61,62]

Louinet signed up the next month, with revelations then and later about unknown photographs of Howard he had turned up in his own historical and genealogical research. That April he announced his acquisition of a copy of the ultra-rare Jenkins 1937 edition *A Gent from Bear Creek*. In the five-part series “The Long Road to Dark Valley” that commenced in January, 2013, Louinet deduces that REH never lived in Dark Valley, as he had claimed. He has also posted on Howard juvenilia.


Mark Finn joined in October, 2010, with “A New Robert E. Howard Manifesto” on critically acceptable articles about the author. Keith Taylor started his series of historical expositions riffed off Howard characters, props, or settings in January, 2011. He was given the third-place 2013 REHF “Cimmerian” Award for his “The Ring of … Set?” and the 2013 “Cimmerian” Award for his three-part “Barbarism Must Always Triumph,” both on the Blog. [30] Shanks began posting in June, 2012 and has had articles on REH Days, the Howard Museum, Miguel Martins, and Theosophy. He was given a 2014 REHF “Cimmerian” Award for his post on Mexican Conan comics. [62] REHupan Karen Joan Kohoutek has submitted articles on Howard’s conjure/voodoo and peacock deity stories, helping gain her the 2015 REHF “Varianium” Award for Emerging Scholar. [34] I contributed reports on Howard Days 2014 and 2015. REHupans Ben Friberg, Deuce Richardson, Todd Vick, and Gary Romeo came on board in October, 2014 and January, May, and July 2015 respectively, as did pulp historian Bobby Derie that July.

In short, Sasser’s *REH: Two-Gun Raconteur* journal and Blog have become the dominant mainstays of current Howard scholarship.

Leno removed his posts in October, 2015, in response to Barrett’s part in the Vox Day controversy then taking place in REHupa. [63-67] This also incurred the removal of all posts by Barrett, Finn, Harron, Roehm, and Shanks from *The Cimmerian* Blog, which was then renamed The Best of *The Cimmerian* Blog by Grin. (I might be able to supply copies of deleted items to interested parties, depending on the wishes of the copyright holders.)

*The Dark Man*

The earlier issues of *The Dark Man* journal were reviewed previously. [68-70] The last issue therein, Vol. 6, #s 1 & 2, was later published with a new cover, reproduced below.

*The Dark Man* journal continued to be published by the printer-on-demand Lulu.com and sponsored by the University of Le Verne. Its Vol. 7, #1 of 2012 came in at 72 pages plus color covers in an upsized
format of 6 × 6 inches, costing $10. With this issue, e-book versions purchasable from Lulu.com started being available, as were e-book versions of earlier sold-out issues for free.

The opening essay is by former REHupa David C. Smith, author, with Richard L. Tierney, of the Black Vulmea pastiche The Witch of the Indies (Zebra, 1977), the Bran Mak Morn pastiche For the Witch of the Mists (Zebra, 1978), and the Red Sonja novels The Ring of Ikribu (Ace, 1981), Demon Night (Ace, 1982), When Hell Laughs (Ace, 1982), Endithor’s Daughter (Ace, 1982), Against the Prince of Hell (Ace, 1983), and Star of Doom (Ace, 1985). Smith’s article, “The Writer’s Style: Sound and Syntax in Howard’s Sentences,” is a welcome and overdue study of REH’s prose style on a level higher than the usual topic of stylometric analyses—words—but lower than that usually focused on by critical studies, such as settings.

Cover by

Scotty Henderson
and plot. Smith shows how Howard relies on sentences that typically progress in natural, speechlike order (subject – verb – object) and use active voice verbs and a simple, direct vocabulary, stripping the form to fit the action and generating his well-known narrative drive and descriptive efficiency. “In executing his fiction in this way, Howard is very much a modern popular writer,” anticipating much of twentieth-century prose and, posthumously, influencing it. “In relying generally on a direct style of expression for his stories, Howard is right where he should be, presenting characters and plots that entertain and inform without pretension.” However, unlike many of his contemporaries like Hemingway, REH makes calculated departures from this template to achieve variety, color, and special effects. He intersperses longer sentences in order to build momentum. He may invert the natural word order or shift to the passive voice when he wants to delay revelation of the actor of a verb in order to create special effects.
suspense or uncertainty or to spring an unpredictable outcome. He may also use order inversion to add archaic or poetic flourishes, e.g. “From the raiders came yells of exultation.” Moreover, Howard utilizes poetic devices like alliteration and consonance to give his passages memorable rhythm and forward-driving strength, making excellent use of the sounds of words because he is a natural poet. He even chooses between short Anglo-Saxon words and longer Latinate words depending on whether the effect he wishes to achieve is direct and concrete or abstract and discursive. Another of his strategies is to shift from the omniscient third-person past tense to the present tense, lending a sense of immediacy and verisimilitude to his descriptions. All this demonstrates how much thought and effort he put into his work as a prose stylist, making him far more than just a simple storyteller.

Next up in the issue is REHupan Patrick Burger with “‘I ‘n’ I A-Liberate Zimbabwe’: Motifs of Africa and Freedom in Howard’s ‘The Grisly Horror’,” wherein he looks at one of the author’s lesser tales for evidence of progressiveness in his portrayal of blacks. He finds that, if anything, the tale is a step backward in that regard, but it at least involves the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. In stories like “Queen of the Black Coast,” *The Hour of the Dragon*, “The Hills of the Dead,” and “The Footfalls within,” the protagonist does take positive action with respect to the freedom or safety of black characters. Burger attributes Howard’s opposite stance in “Grisly” to his concession to the sympathies of the majority of his own class and his target audience in *Weird Tales*. (Footnote 4 in this essay states: “Howard’s naming strategies for his fiction by re-writing mythical and historical terms is evident throughout his oeuvre, most famously in his shortening of ‘Hyperborea’ to ‘Hyboria.’” However, Hyperborea was one of the countries on REH’s map of the Hyborian world. Howard actually took “Hyborians” or “Hybori,” not from Hyperborea, but from “Hy-,” meaning “descendants of” or “of the clan of,” and “Bori,” who was an ancient leader of the Hyborians that was elevated, with time, to the status of a god. The Hyborians were descendants of a race of Neanderthal-like savages that had inhabited the northern reaches of the Thurian continent.)

Then Roehm is on deck with an article on Howard and the Lone Scouts of America, an organization that was formed in 1915 for boys too far out in the country to join local Boy Scout troops and that lasted into the 1930s. Howard never said whether he was a member, but those who were members included his friends Herbert Klatt, Harold Preece, Clyde Smith, and Truett Vinson. Preece claimed that REH was a member [71], though Roehm doubts this because otherwise Howard would surely have published something of his own in the organization’s magazine *Lone Scout*. But he did not, even though his friends did in it and in other zines of theirs that were modeled on *Lone Scout*, namely Smith’s *The All-Around Magazine*, Vinson’s *The Toreador*, and REH’s own *The Golden Caliph* and *The Right Hook*. Lone Scouts could get together to form their own “tribes,” some of which published their own papers. Howard did submit material to at least two of these, including at least one poem.

The issue concludes with reviews of the books *Sword Woman and Other Historical Adventures* (Del Rey, 2011) by former REHupan Charles E. “Chuck” Hoffman and *Solomon Kane: The Castle of the Devil* (Dark Horse, 2009), *John Carter of Mars: Weird Worlds* (Dark Horse, 2011), and *Reflections in a Glass Darkly: Essays on J. Sheridan Le Fanu* (Hippocampus, 2011) by former REHupan Charles A. Gramlich. Hoffman finds much to recommend in *Sword Woman*, an anthology containing the historical fiction REH so loved to write when he could sell any. “Howard’s achievement in writing historical fiction was to put a human face on history” (p. 63), especially when such a face was that of a common man or, in this case, woman. The Kane and Carter volumes collect comic book stories, the former completing an REH fragment.  

*TDM*, Vol. 7, #2 of 2014 leads off with an obituary for Larry Richter (1949-2014), a former REHupan and former member of the journal’s editorial board who, editor Mark Hall says, was “always perceptive and insightful when reviewing submissions.” (p. 74) Burke agrees that Richter was “one of the most
perceptive Howard analysts and critics of the past 20 years.” (p. 76) Richter was also an active commentator on the online Robert E. Howard Forum (conan.com) and often helped Burke and others with such things as bibliographical searches.

Following this in the issue is the best of Richter’s critical essays, “The Least of Bob Howard” which sheds much light on REH’s thinking and the literary techniques he employed to achieve the effects he did.

First Richter admonishes:

One thing that is perfectly clear is that a Howard story is a work of the emotions, expressly built with a strong call to passion. These works are not meant to be read by a dispassionate observer, and, though it is possible to enjoy them as gorgeous assemblies of words, they make use of devices intended to convert an observer into an active emotional
The principal techniques Richter says that Howard utilizes are: (1) *compression of story elements* by eliminating anything that does not serve to advance the work. “In Howard’s hands the power builds to the ending, or is used to drive a situation that builds more power while leading closer to the ending. Howard avoids intermediate destinations.” (p. 85); (2) *alteration of language* to speed up the reader’s comprehension time to better match the speed of the described action, usually by strategic word or grammar choices, skillful bridging phrases, and choreographing the action “not for visual presentation as is presently common, but for vividness, speed, and clarity.” (p. 86); (3) *daring dips into cliche* in order to compress and shorten description, such as use of particularly strong or broad words like “black” or “grim,” and of limited, efficient descriptive passages:

Howard wants the reader to do a lot of the work in description of scenes and characters. His limited but powerful descriptions will tend to be part of the emotional import of the thing described rather than of the physical parameters of the place or object. They will have light and color, but not much other visual detail. Swords gimmer and glitter, which, incidentally, if polished weapons are presented to you unawares, is how they are visually perceived.

He tells you what the element is needed for in the story, and seems to ask if you have one to supply. He doesn’t want you to drag his ideas around like baggage throughout your reading unless they have real importance. He wants you to supply whatever scene you have in your head that will serve the needs of the story because this works faster, does not present you with a point to argue with the author on, and is seamless, and Bob knows it. (p. 87-88)

and (4) the “Yeah!” factor: REH makes his few and well-chosen surprises strike like blows, never cheaply or for minor effects. “Howard does not carefully set up his story’s ending at his story’s beginning, as is common in fantasy, and then work slyly toward his pre-prepared exit. He often sets up a real train wreck, and then works with what survives.” (p. 89) He sets up dangers so readily apprehensible that the reader feels almost like REH was right there with you and you were helping him with the work.

This kind of approach does limit the subjects one can treat, since they have to be important in a mythic sense. “It is drop-dead effective in fiction of high adventure, set in a land of the author’s devising. All elements there may be bent and tuned to project more power.” (p. 91) This would have presented challenges had he gone on to deal with real-life experiences in the regional fiction he was tending toward during the final phase of his life. “I think that if he had met these challenges, and had in his age turned his attention once or twice back to Conan, the results would have been sublime.” (p. 92) Howard’s overall message was simple and particularly American, at least in the West of his time:

I think it was about the necessity for courage in the face of adversity, though it only be the courage to recognize the need to flee; about the obligation of the strong to defend, not oppress, the weak, and perhaps to make an end of the other strong, who do oppress; about the need for passion, character, and resolve as qualification for leadership and humanness, rather than cunning, preparation, favor, and facile practice; and about the individual nature of life itself, and the loneliness of its challenges, above and beyond all conveniences and advantages of a life led in concert with the actions of others. (p. 93)

Shanks steps up next with an addendum to his “Theosophy and the Thurian Age” [72], presenting evidence that Howard probably acquired the knowledge of Theosophic ideas about prehistory and human
evolution he needed to do his world-building, not directly from writer William Scott-Elliot as Shanks had thought, but from Theosophy in Outline (1923) by Frederick Milton Willis, #477 in a popular line of chapbooks about various topics called Little Blue Books. Though there is no proof that REH ever read Willis, Shanks cites choices of topics and descriptions in Howard stories and letters that make such a connection likely.

The last essay in the issue is my “The Cromlech: The Story of the First Scholarly Robert E. Howard Journal” first presented in REHupa [73], concerning the run of three issues of the fanzine Cromlech edited by Marc A. Cerasini, Hoffman, and Robert MacNair “Bob” Price between 1985 and 1988. The issue concludes with Finn’s book review of The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories (Tor, 2011) edited by Jeff and Ann VanderMeer. Finn finds a number of really good stories in the anthology, at least half of them being new, different, and usual, but faults the collection for lacking any Howard. The VanderMeers explain this as being due to their impression, based on a few stories, that REH was a racist, even though, as Finn points out, there are several qualifying REH stories that shouldn’t have given the VanderMeers any trouble.

The Dark Man has fallen back from its peak publication schedule, semiannual, to the biennial one that had hampered it previously. It has maintained its academic standards, but if nothing changes its scholarly impact will continue to be limited. Furthermore, it needs to be listed in the JSTOR (Journal Storage) site to give it visibility to both academic libraries and academia generally. [74] Shanks has predicted that an infusion of new blood among the contributors and on the journal’s review board will revitalize TDM. [75]

New Fanzines and Other Venues

The International Robert E. Howard Fan Association is issuing a new fanzine entitled The Hyborian Gazette (Carnelian Press), edited by Steve Dilks. Issue #1 was published in October 2015 for $18.00 postpaid, with all profits going to Project Pride in Cross Plains for upkeep of the Howard Home and Museum. A new weird fiction journal Skelos is forthcoming from Skelos Press.

Other paper publications relating to Howard studies recently have been confined to efforts by certain scholars to breach the gates of academia in an effort to improve the visibility of the Texas author and gain him the literary recognition he deserves, much as has already been done for Lovecraft by Joshi and other academicians. The difficulties in doing so mainly involve getting critics to consider popular literature as worthy of study rather than as the output of hacks; drawing attention to studies by non-academic Howardists when academicians tend to focus on the work of their peers; and placing Howardist publications with academic presses and in university libraries where students will be able to encounter them when searching for paper and thesis topics. [76] One major strategy is to present papers on REH at popular culture colloquia, such as those of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association and the International Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts, which attract academicians and frequently publish the presentations, and to participate in panels at conventions like NecronomiCon, PulpFest, the Windy City PulpCon, and the World Science Fiction Convention. Foremost in these efforts have been the present or former REHupans Barrett, Burke, Coffman, Scott Connors, Finn, Gruber, Kerr, Kohoutek, Tom Krabacher, Rick Lai, Louinet, and Shanks, as well as academicians Jason Ray Carney, Nicole Emmelhainz-Carney, Dierk Guenther, Jonathan Helland, Justin Everett, Daniel Look, Daniel Nyikos, Deke Parsons, Jonas Prida, Paul Shoqlin, and Daniel Weiss. Recent academic works containing papers on Howard include Critical Insights: Pulp Fiction of the 1920s and 1930s (ed. Gary Hoppenstand; Salem, 2013); Conan Meets the Academy: Multidisciplinary Essays on the Enduring Barbarian (ed. Prida; McFarland, 2012); Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness (by Helen Young; Taylor & Francis, 2015), Robert Howard and the Birth of Modern Fantasy: Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy #47 (by
Parsons; McFarland, 2015), Undead in the West and II: They Just Keep Coming (ed. Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowden Van Riper; Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), and The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales: The Evolution of Modern Fantasy and Horror (ed. Everett and Shanks; Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

And of course much Howardist effort that used to go into fanzines is now sublimated in blogs such as Blackgate (Blackgate.com), Harron’s The Blog That Time Forgot, The Robert E. Howard Foundation Blog (rehfoundation.org), and Todd Vick’s On an Underwood No. 5 (onanunderwood5.blogspot.com), as well as Coffman’s e-zine site REHeapa (robert-e-howard.org). Facebook hosts pages for REHupa, the Howard Readers Group, the International Robert E. Howard Fan Association, REH: Two-Gun Raconteur, the Robert E. Howard Comics Group, and Robert E. Howard Days. And Jon, Josh, and Luke at Cromcast (thecromcast.blogspot.com) are in their fourth season of monthly audio podcasts dedicated to REH and other weird fiction.

The take-away from all this is that, while there are still successes to be achieved, the state of Howard studies is as vital as ever. And despite all that has been done, there seems to be no end to the opportunities and intricacies afforded by the life and works of the bard of Cross Plains.

AN REH PHOTO FOUND AND THEN LOST AGAIN

While cataloging Howard photos, I ran across one on the Conan Forum (www.conan.com) that I didn’t recall seeing before called “Robert E. Howard in the Snow.” When I asked about it on Dennis’s REHupa mailing list, Jim Keegan replied:

Back around 2000, Glenn Lord loaned me almost all of his original photographs so that I could create a set of high-res scans, but this picture wasn’t among them. Nonetheless, I know that it did come from Glenn’s collection. I don’t recall when, but at some point Glenn found that picture among his things (which were apparently fairly disorganized), and loaned it out to David Gentzel for scanning. I never did get to scan the picture, but wanted to use it as the cover of Sentiment (published by the REH Foundation in 2009), so I asked Glenn if he could loan it to me, but he wasn’t able to find it again among his things. Thankfully David still had the scan he made, but David’s scan was fairly small and didn’t quite have enough resolution for printing (David was only scanning it for his own purposes, and not for printing). He was nice enough to send me his scan, and I worked on it and managed to just barely get it to a point where I was able to use it as the cover for Sentiment.

I never saw the original, but it’s always been my understanding that it was a loose piece of negative film (though you’d have to ask David to confirm that). The words “Ansco Safety Film” are printed on the side of the film (just outside the picture area), in reverse. At that time, I thought this meant that the picture had been flopped, and flopped it back for publication. Since that time, I’ve come across other pictures shot on Ansco, and I think I made a mistake. Now, I’m almost certain that the words should be backwards when the photo is right reading. In other words, I’m sorry to say that I think the picture is backwards on the cover of Sentiment.

In terms of publication history, I’m pretty sure that David ran that picture in REHupa first (again, you’d have to ask him), and later I used it on Sentiment. I don’t know if it appeared anywhere in between.
If Dave ever published it in REHupa, I haven’t been able to find it. If Glenn got it back, it’s most likely still in one of his storage lockers with the rest of his collection, unless it was lost.

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[19] Shanks, Jeffrey, “Glenn Lord (1931-2011),” An Age Undreamed of #11, pp. 1-2 in REHupa Mailing #233 (Feb., 2012)


[21] Van Hise, James, “Glenn Lord Nov. 17, 1931-Dec. 31, 2011” in his The Road to Velitrium #79, pp. 2-13 in REHupa Mailing #233 (Feb., 2012); reprinted in his Sword & Fantasy #11 (James Van Hise, Yucca Valley, Cal., Dec., 2013), pp. 40-52 [erratum in latter: Lord’s fanzine referred to as being included is not]

[22] Locus #613, Vol. 68, #2 (Locus Press, Oakland, Feb., 2012), p. 81


[34] Sasser, Damon C., “Roll out the Red Carpet for the 2015 REHF Award Winners!,” http://www.rehtwogunraconteur.com, 12 June, 2015


[53] Trout, Steve, “King Conan and the Aquilonian Dream” in his *Beltric Writes #45*, pp. 5-13 & #46, p.3 in REHupa Mailing #96 (Mar., 1989); reprinted in *The Dark Man #1* (ed. Rusty Burke; Necronomicon Press, West Warwick, R.I., Aug., 1990), pp. 10-16


[63] Holmes, Morgan, *Son of Aryas #16*, p. 4 in REHupa Mailing #253 (June, 2015)


[65] Barrett, Barbara, 19 Sep., 2015 post on rehupa@yahoolgroups.com

[66] Holmes, Morgan, 20 Sep., 2015 post on rehupa@yahoolgroups.com

[67] Herron, Don, 13 Oct., 2015 post on donherron.com


[69] Shanks, Jeffrey H., “Theosophy and the Thurian Age,” Parts One & Two in his *An Age Undreamed of #3*, pp. 1-11 in REHupa Mailing #225 (Oct., 2010) & *An Age Undreamed of #4*, pp. 1-14 in REHupa Mailing #226 (Dec., 2010) with an Addendum in *An Age Undreamed of #10*, pp. 3-6 in REHupa Mailing #232 (Dec., 2011); reprinted as “Theosophy and the Thurian Age: Robert E. Howard and the Works of William Scott-Elliot” in *The Dark Man, Vol. 6, #1/2* (ed. Charles A.


[75] Shanks, Jeffrey H., An Age Undreamed of #33, p. 2 in REHupa Mailing #255 (Oct., 2015)

### THE ROBERT E. HOWARD BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES, PART XXI

The list of articles below is complete insofar as it contains all items relating to Howard, excepting those by Howard himself (being primary references and cataloged elsewhere) and those inspired by Howard, such as poems by others (being primary references by those authors). It is in alphabetical order by author and then by title. The abstract, if any, is in brackets.

*The Howard Collector #19, REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #s 15-18, and The Dark Man, Vol. 7, #s 1 & 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gruber, Christopher</td>
<td>“Iron Man Roll Call” [discusses REH’s tastes in and knowledge of boxing, esp. as it applies to prizefighters Firpo &amp; Willard in his ranking of the top 12 boxers of all time] in <strong>REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #18</strong>, Vol. 1, #18 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2015), pp. 38-44</td>
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<td>Guenther, Dierk</td>
<td>“A Farewell to the Old West – The End of the ‘Old Frontier’: Robert E. Howard’s ‘Old Garfield’s Heart’” [that weird Western story viewed as REH’s affectionate farewell to the American Old West &amp; the life &amp; values that made him prefer it to more modern times] in <strong>REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #18</strong>, Vol. 1, #18 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2015), pp. 30-37</td>
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Herron, Don “Non Sequiturs inside the Academy Gates” [disappointing progress in elevating REH’s literary reputation in academia, esp. as reflected by recent literary criticism pubbed by academics] in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #17, Vol. 1, #17 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2014), pp. 27-29


Leno, Brian “Introducing … in This Corner … Kid Socko!” [argues that Sailor Steve Costigan was inspired by the Kid Socko boxing stories by James Kevin McGuinness in the pulp The Ring] in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #16, Vol. 1, #16 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., winter, 2012), pp. 14-19


Mott, William Michael “The Hyborian Sage: Real-World Parallels between Howard’s Essay and Modern Discoveries” [i.e. REH’s essay “The Hyborian Age”; spotlights REH’s use of Theosophism, geological catastrophism, and diffusion of peoples in that
essay & his fantasy stories; cites recent archaeological discoveries that appear to push back the advent of civilization to soon after the end of the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago] in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #18, Vol. 1, #18 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2015), pp. 9-16

Reasoner, James

“Not Your Ordinary Gun-Dummy: The Western Heroes of Robert E. Howard” [opines that REH’s Westerns were 10 to 15 years ahead of their time, given their gritty, hard-boiled nature & unstereotypical plots & protagonists] in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #18, Vol. 1, #18 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2015), pp. 46-48

Roehm, Rob


Roehm, Rob


Roehm, Rob


Sammon, Paul M.


Scherpenhuizen, David

“Conan der Übermensch” [asserts that REH heroes like Conan & Kull were effectively intended to be examples of the Neitzschean übermensch or superman who acted as if might makes right & that the social morality of the common man did not apply to them] in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #18, Vol. 1, #18 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2015), pp. 19-21

Shanks, Jeffrey


Shanks, Jeffrey

Shanks, Jeffrey

“What the Thak?!, Parts 1-4” [ape-men in REH stories & how they relate to REH’s interest in prehistory & human evolution, esp. in view of Victorian & contemporary anxiety about Darwinism as expressed in literature] in his An Age Undreamed of #s 12 (pp. 2-6), 13 (pp. 6-9), 14 (pp. 8-13 w/photo), & 17 (pp. 1-6 w/photo) in REHupa Mailings #s 234-236 & 239 (Apr., June, & Aug., 2012, & Feb., 2013); revised as “What the Thak?: Anthropological Oddities in Howard’s Works” in REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #17, Vol. 1, #17 (ed. Damon C. Sasser; The Black Coast Press, Spring, Tex., summer, 2014), pp. 16-26