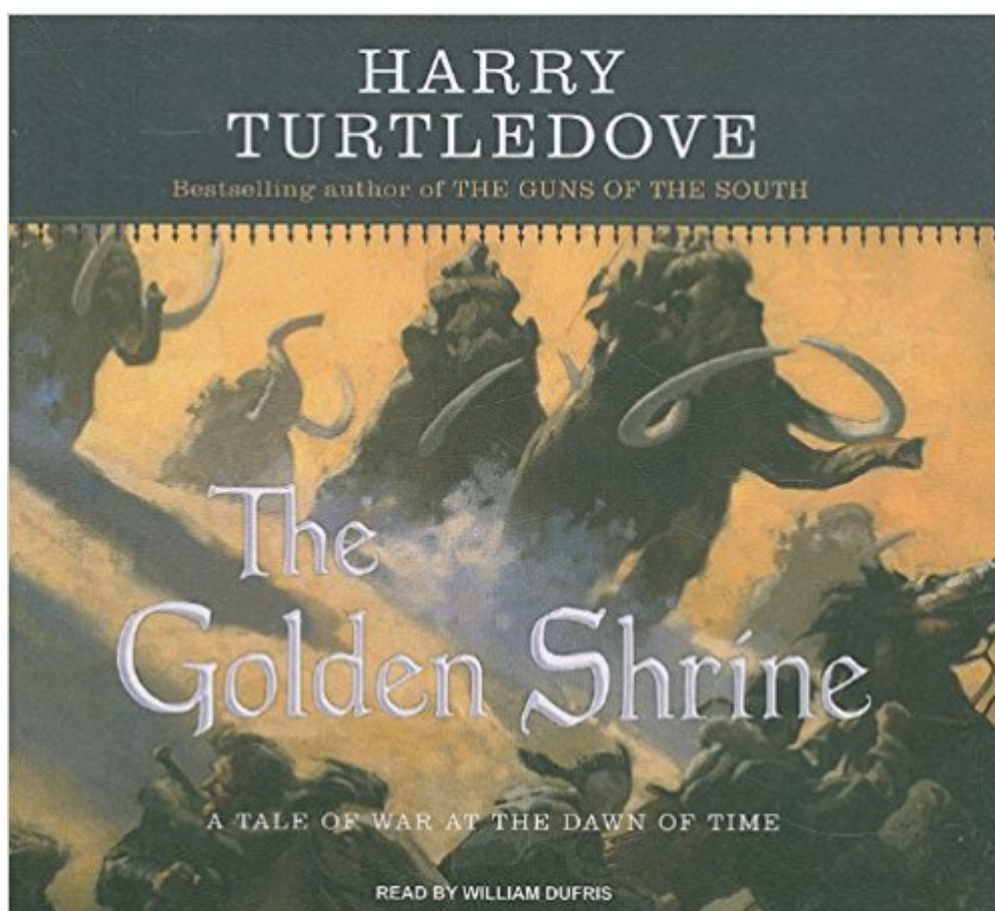


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# The Golden Shrine: A Tale Of War At The Dawn Of Time (Opening Of The World)



## Synopsis

The glaciers came and covered the world with ice. Now they are in retreat. North of the city of Nidaros, north of the forest, north of the steppes where the nomadic Bizogots hunt, a gap has opened in the ice-wall. And down through that gap come the men who call themselves "Rulers." Their terrifying cavalry rides wooly mammoths. Their bows can shoot arrows farther than those of the southerners. Their wizards wield power that neither the shamans of the Bizogots nor the wizards of Raumsdalian Empire can match-a magic that can melt the stone beneath a man's feet, call down blasting fire from the sky, or decimate a tribe with plagues that have no cure. Scattered survivors of the Bizogot tribes hide from the Rulers. The Empire is shattered. The feckless Emperor Sigvat II is in hiding. Against the Rulers stands Count Hamnet Thyssen and his small band of friends: Jarl Trasamund of the Three Tusk Bizogots; the adventurer Ulric Skakki; and, most important, Marcovefa, the female shaman of a cannibal tribe that lives atop the Glacier itself. Marcovefa has magic that the Rulers cannot counter. But there are many Rulers, and they have many wizards. Marcovefa is but one. Perhaps Hamnet and his allies can save their lands from the Rulers. But first they must seek out the legendary Golden Shrine-and the Golden Shrine has not been seen by human eyes since the time before the glaciers came.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Master alternate historian Turtledove stumbles with his third novel set in a parallel Bronze Age.

Picking up shortly after the events of 2008's *The Breath of God*, the book continues the exploits of Count Hamnet Thyssen and his allies as they struggle to defeat the mammoth-mounted Riders, who are aided by powerful wizards. The count's ace in the hole is Marcovefa, a cannibal and shaman whose magic enables his forces to hold their own. The skirmishes with the enemy and the quest for a legendary Golden Shrine that holds promise for repairing their world form the bulk of the plot. Anachronistic word choices (You say the sweetest things, darling) consistently undercut suspension of disbelief, and while the imagined universe is accessible to newcomers, there's little to make readers rush out and read the earlier or future books. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Turtledove has proved he can divert his readers to astonishing places. He’s developed a cult following over the years; and if you’ve already been there, done that with real-history novelists Patrick O’Brian, Dorothy Dunnett, or George MacDonald Fraser, for your Next Big Enthusiasm you might want to try Turtledove. I know I’d follow his imagination almost anywhere.”  
“Vivid!”  
San Jose Mercury News  
Publishers Weekly on *The Breath of God*  
“Beginning a new alternate history series with this tale of two eras on the brink of catastrophic change, Turtledove brings an era to life.”  
Library Journal on *Beyond the Gap* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Turtledove continues his habit of giving you alternating points of view for multiple characters on either side of an issue. The book reads smoothly and each chapter, while rather long, is broken down into parts such that these points can be brought forward as the plot thickens. I have 90 Turtledove hard cover books. If he wasn't such a good writer how would you explain this?

Maybe really a three, but I still liked it even if I saw what was coming early on. Kind of ended on a whimper and many ends not tied up well. Harry's heart wasn't in it all the way to the end.

I've not enjoyed every Turtledove novel I've ever read, but I'd never seen one that was so badly written and falsely advertised that I felt I'd been conned out of the money I spent on it. The Grapple came closest, but I got that for free by winning a contest. (The one time I win a contest, and the prize is *The Grapple*.) But no, I'd never felt conned out of money by Turtledove. I can't say that anymore. The Grapple was bad in comparison with other TL-191 and Turtledove novels. The Golden

Shrine, however, was so hackneyed that far, far worse authors, like David Hagberg or Robert Conroy, would be ashamed to put their name to it. And unlike *The Grapple*, TGS is the finale of the series, so the shadow of its failure falls heavily across its two prequels. The book pretty much chucks the established themes of the first two novels and reveals that the story has always been driven by a prophecy that everyone's forgotten to mention till now. Marcovefa appears to be the prophet, but the Rulers know the prophecy too, and it's why they keep sending assassins after Hamnet. (Which they'd been doing since before Marcovefa was introduced.) The prophecy is that Hamnet will prove to be the Rulers' most dangerous enemy. Details are added in, but they're wildly inconsistent, changing as the plot requires them to. I have to think Turtledove used them to foreshadow scenes he'd thought of but hadn't written yet. When he wrote them he realized they didn't work as he'd planned and changed things around, but didn't bother going back to fix the prophecies. This could all be explained as the characters having an imperfect understanding of the prophecy, but instead no one seems to notice it keeps changing. Probably because they too change as the plot requires them to. The most interesting characters from the first two books, who need the least character development, get bogged down with non sequitur new character traits. The flat characters stay static as ever, including Hamnet--except now he's a whiny, juvenile thrower of hissy-fits, too. And all the characters contradict their established actions and personalities, sometimes several times on one page. Back to the prophecy, though. It hints that each of the main characters will play a vital role in defeating the Rulers and finding the Shrine (or rather, finding the Shrine and defeating the Rulers) but in the end most of them were just along for the ride. Only Marcovefa and Hamnet live up to their prophesied roles: Marcovefa by casting the spell that destroys the Rulers and uncovers the Shrine, Hamnet by enabling her to do so by--I can't believe I have to say this--having sex with her while she's in a Ruler-magic-induced coma to wake her up. THAT'S what makes him so special! The Shrine didn't feature in the defeat of the Rulers. (Neither does Hamnet's plan to release a female Ruler prisoner to go back to Rulerland and touch off a feminist rebellion against the misogynistic men; apparently she first decided to research what happened to bit players who led rebellions in Turtledove novels, and died of old age waiting for something to come of the many rebellions in the *Settling Accounts* novels.) Our heroes do find the Shrine right after--it's too busy being hokey to answer questions--and a high priestess says she's been with them, guiding their fates unnoticed, all along, like the Borg Queen saying she was at Wolf 359 after the fact. She gives Hamnet a message for Sigvat. It leads to his downfall in a way that's supposed to be awe-inspiring but is just confusing. At least he gets his just desserts. Gudrid may or may not get her comeuppance but at least what she gets shuts her up for the last few chapters. The rest of the characters go off on their own and try

to forget the whole story ever happened. I'm going to try very hard to do the same.

I was looking for something different to read and thought I would try this series, got hooked!! they were totally different from what I normally read but enjoyed them!!

I selected this book/series because of previous books by the author. The story line was good however the Kindle version had many typos that interrupted the flow of the action.

Lacks the punch of most his stories, but would fill in a wet weekend. guess it is worth its price, but I can imagine argument to the contrary.

Item as advertised delivery as quoted

Not one of Harry Turtledove's best ventures. I have read over 20 of his works, and this one, is a disappointment. It starts off well, and seems to be building momentum; but then begins to fall apart, and starts to be very predictable. The manner of finding of the "golden shrine" is a major disappointment, a riddle which is best left unsolved. The reference to the 5th chapter of Daniel makes very little sense, leading to the ending and a potential sequel which would be best unwritten. Mr Turtledove seemed to lose interest in the story, and needed a way out.

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