

# Autarch

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1010>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

---

J. Schultz — 19 Jul 1998, 22:42

It takes me a while to get around to reading all my mail. This is in response to the difference between Autarch and Monarch. As we have all figured by now Autarch means one who rules themselves. This idea works into one of the themes I see present in the first set of books (tBotNS). At each step in Severian's development we see him cast off the power of one authority after another. He breaks his ties from the authority of the guild, the Archon and his post as Lictor, Typhon, etc. It all leads up to the point where just before the Lake people attack the castle of Baldanders, when Severian says (to paraphrase) I began to follow the Increate's authority above all others. Severian has become his own man, as it were. He decides for himself what is right and wrong, moral and evil, with a personal relationship with God. Thus I feel that the title "Autarch" is symbolic of this change and that the title has more thematic meaning, rather than any real practical meaning in the way of legal procedure. A rose is a rose is a rose. Or, it doesn't really matter what you call him, the idea is that he is the top dog and no one is higher, the one man who rules himself. As we find out, however, the Autarch is the subject of the Hierodules and other higher powers (at least in some sense of the word). We can't forget that the message of tBotNS is basically spiritual and religious, whether we like it or not. In my mind it is the redemption of a torturer who is lost in an immoral and decaying world.

As far as what would have happened had Appian let Severian enter Yesod, he most likely would have failed having not learned the important lessons that were to come. However, He would have EATEN Appian's brains AT THAT TIME. Appian even says, "Gee, sorry I'm so shocked but I thought I had more time." Which leads me to believe that Appian knows that Sev will take the throne and he knows that to take the throne he (Appian) has to be dead. I would balk too if my replacement walked in the door and said, "Well, I'm ready, take me to the garden and get your brains ready." While Sev doesn't say this it is perceived this way by Appian.

Let me say that the story has already faded in my mind and mingled with half ideas, my own experiences, and the way I would like it to be. (as I'm sure happens to us all)

One timeless question (FunkMonkey steps in line behind hundreds of philosophers, ancient to modern) How much free will does Severian have? When does Tra. KNOW Severian has passed. Have they engineered him from the beginning and so no test is needed? He has some power from the White Fountain long before heading into space, as Sev himself says, 'as if the presentment of his future came back through time to him.' Assuming he raised Triskle from the dead he has had his 'powers' from the beginning. Everyone on Urth in Sev's time knows of the Conciliator. The Conciliator is Sev returning triumphant. Thus Severian has already succeeded before he begun! Or has he? Time travel always throws me through a logic loop. Like asking the question "If I went back in time and killed my past self, who would grow up to kill me?" Any thoughts? This could be an endless discussion.

FunkMonkey  
with the logical MonkeyWrench

J. Schutlz  
jschultz at wcnet.org