

Terminus Est

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 17 Oct 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1204>

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Robert Borski — 17 Oct 1998, 18:36

Anybody have any notions how Terminus Est came into the possession of Palaemon? The sword, after all, is no mere carnifical sword, but a valuable weapon, owing to its smithing by Jovinian (Agilus claims it's worth a villa). But Palaemon is a mere torturer and the guild itself appears to be in rather dire finances; Gurloes must doctor the books in order to receive more operating capital and half of all apprentices die, suggesting the Matachin Tower is anything but the Mariott Urth. One also wonders why Palaemon hasn't attempted to sell the sword before, since it would obviously help replenish the guild's coffers. He apparently doesn't use it himself (or else Severian probably would have mentioned this) and he can't have received Terminus Est as an heirloom; torturers have no families. And is it likely he could ever have earned enough as a torturer to purchase such a prize, even if we include the years he spent in exile? It seems as well an unlikely gratuity for services well rendered. So how did he acquire it?

Thoughts, opinions, conjectures? (I'll spare you mine, not wanting to incur the ire of this list's megatherians.)

Robert Borski

Matthew Malthouse — 28 Oct 1998, 00:59 · follows Robert Borski

Robert Borski wrote:

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My first thought - not much helpful - is that it is clearly an executioner's blade and has little other practical use. So a carnifex, or by extention Torturer, as that it what they are often seen as outside the Citadel, would be the hands in which one would expect to find such a thing. Similarly Palaemon may not have thought that aa appropriate buyer could be found.

We really don't know that much about Palaemon's time outside the Citadel. Were it a gift it seems a likely one from a figure such as the Archon of Thrax or another noble to whom it would be a trifle, Were it bought it might be that the seller simply didn't know the value of what he was selling. Did Palaemon even? He certainly treasures it, but that doesn't mean that he knew it's monetary value - if Agilus wasn't lying.

Matthew

Jonathan Laidlow — 03 Dec 1998, 17:25 · follows Matthew Malthouse

Just because the Biblical and historical evidence does not support our reading of 'Terminus Est' as a deliberate echo of the Latin translations of the Biblical 'Consumatum Est'/It is finished, surely that does not mean that 'Terminus Est' does not deliberately echo Jesus' words, albeit in a different language.

Surely the eclectic religious symbolism used in the Book supports this. Its not as strong a point as the original one that there is a direct correlation, but I believe the general point is sound.

Or am I missing the point somewhat?

Jonathan

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Kevin J. Maroney — 03 Dec 1998, 12:50 · follows Jonathan Laidlow

At 05:25 PM 12/3/98 GMT, Jonathan Laidlow wrote:
Surely the eclectic religious symbolism used in the Book supports this. Its not as strong a point as the original one that there is a direct correlation, but I believe the general point is sound.

Actually, that's a good point--even if Wolfe didn't mean the connection to be there, it's a nifty one anyway.

I would still like to know whether "it is finished" really is a good translation for "terminus est", though.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>

mary whalen — 05 Dec 1998, 09:46 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

This is Sean Whalen (prion).

Has anyone mentioned a possible connection for Terminus Est with a planet's terminator before? A terminator is the line on a planet (or other round body) dividing the lighted day side from the dark side. It's not a permanent line, or anything; it changes as the planet moves in relation to the sun.

prion