

reservoir tipped

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 22 Oct 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 22 Oct 1998, 09:54

From: "Mike" <lsanto at concentric.net>

The blade is inspired by an actual "weapons" (tool is more like it), the rounded tip is from French executioners blades (as used on Ann Boleyn--sp?). The internal reservoir filled with mercury comes from Chinese BCE era executioners swords. Both apparently worked quite well for their respective tasks.

Mike, didn't you once tell me (off-list) that Wolfe had at one point cited a specific reference work on an actual family of medieval executioners? I'm spacing on anything useful like a name or an author.

From: "Kieran Cleary" <kierannwn at tinet.ie>

isn't the tip of TE flat? Interesting about the Chinese swords.

Yes, another of the many "Chinese" features of the series.

I always found it interesting that Wolfe used the canonical torturer/executioner image (bare-chested, hooded, sometimes cloaked) but eschewed the customary axe. Or am I mistaken? Is the "canonical" torturer just as likely to be equipped with a sword as an axe?

Where did this image originate?

Dan, who is still actually trying to come up with a good "Whorl" name. Currently toying with "Shellac" (made from the excretions of the *Laccifer lacca*, and thus, seemingly as valid as "Silk").

Mark Millman — 22 Oct 1998, 13:39 · follows Dan Parmenter

On 22 October 1998 at 4:55 pm GMT,

Dan Parmenter wrote:

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In England (and in the Germanic countries generally, to a lesser extent) the axe was favored; on the Continent (and especially in the Romance countries) the sword was preferred.

The sword, of course, carries better symbolic freight for Wolfe's purposes, even leaving aside the South American (thus Spanish) cultural heritage of the

Commonwealth.

Where did this image originate?

I leave this for others to answer. (I think it may be an idealization of the actual appearance of executioners, but I'm far from sure).

Dan, who is still actually trying to come up with a good "Whorl" name. Currently toying with "Shellac" (made from the excretions of the *Laccifer lacca*, and thus, seemingly as valid as "Silk").

Mark Millman

(who would be using "Nacre" as a nom-de-Verticille if he were posting to the Whorl, and so supports Dan's "Shellac" without reservation)