

Catherine the Weal

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David_Lebling — 16 Dec 1998, 11:09

Does anyone have any thoughts on Clute's "Catherine the Weal" theory? I've only now had a chance to read his essay in _Strokes_ where he propounds it.

What do I think? As I read it I became more and more convinced he's right, but less and less sure after I finished. Some questions...

* Don't we know "for sure" that the old Autarch was probably a bee-keeper in the House Absolute, probably named Appian? As I recall, most of the evidence for this is post-_Strokes_, so Clute couldn't have known of it.

* Aren't we pretty darn sure that Sev's mother was an exultant or at least an armiger, because of his height? We know his paternal grandparents, and neither was of high (e.g., tall) social class, though his father resembles him. So, his height presumably comes from his mother's side. The old Autarch isn't terribly tall (or is he?). On the other hand, the "girl from the town" who plays Holy Catherine (another popular candidate) isn't described as being tall or looking at all high-class.

* On the other hand, the old Autarch is described so often in terms either feminine or androgynous that I can see Clute's point. Wolfe seldom wastes so many words pointing to nothing. Of course, he is also described as being "not like other men," (by which the speakers generally mean, "a eunuch," that maybe that's all there is (ha!)).

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