

Dead Languages; Literally, "Apu-Punchau"?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Apr 1999

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Mitchell A. Bailey — 01 Apr 1999, 21:47

I was hip from the first with the fact that Latin was used in BNS as a stand-in for some language which to Severian was "dead", but from our perspective probably has not even come into existence yet.

Until some points made in the recent "Thorn" discussions, however, it never occurred to me to question the literal authenticity of the name "Apu-Punchau". The name is Quechua, the tongue of the Incas of Peru, and means roughly "Lord Sun-God". I'm not a Quechua scholar, but I am interested enough to own a book which includes a Quechua glossary.

I'm wondering if the use of Quechua is a substitution of the same sort for some future autochthonous language, or whether Sev actually traveled back in time to live among the pre-imperial Inca, c. 1200 AD?

For what it's worth, Chatelaine Thea thought English, a dead language remembered by a few scholars in her time, was amusingly ambiguous.

CRCulver — 09 Apr 1999, 22:07 · follows Mitchell A. Bailey

In a message dated 4/1/99 8:23:30 PM EST, MAB at lindau.net writes:

<< For what it's worth, Chatelaine Thea thought English, a dead language remembered by a few scholars in her time, was amusingly ambiguous. >>

Yes, she remarked that she didn't know how a language where "present" had two meanings ("now" and "gift") could endure such confusion.

<<I'm wondering if the use of Quechua is a substitution of the same sort for some future autochthonous language, or whether Sev actually traveled back in time to live among the pre-imperial Inca, c. 1200 AD?>>

The events at the end of _Urth_ mystify me even after I have finished my third reading of the BotNS. However, I thought it was pretty clear that Sev did go to 1200 AD South America, he has spoken on the time being that of the dawn of man, so it was certainly pre-20th century. Regarding his eclipse, wasn't there an eclipse during the 13th century that was total over much of the world? It rings a bell.

- Christopher R. Culver <crculver at aol.com>