

Reply: Re: (urth) Dead Languages; Literally, "Apu-Punchau"? ...

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 02 Apr 1999

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Mitchell A. Bailey — 02 Apr 1999, 20:50

Mark Millman wrote:

On Friday 2 April 1999 at 5:47 am GMT, Mitchell A. Bailey wrote:

[snip]

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?

[snip]

My guess would be (and from this I'm sure that you can tell I tend toward the conservative in Wolfean criticism) that your first suggestion (i.e., that Quechua is a stand-in for some post-historic language) is the correct explanation. If the cities of the twentieth century are vanished into dust, I think it unlikely--though I admit not impossible--that any Incan city would remain to serve at the Stone Town. Furthermore, if there had been an "unscheduled" (so to speak) total solar eclipse in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, I'd imagine there would be some sort of record of it. Even if Tzadkiel had managed the Ship so that the eclipse were seen only in the Western Hemisphere, we could expect the Maya to have recognized it as unusual and to have recorded it, though of course the Inca or proto-Inca wouldn't have left such a record. I suppose it's possible that the Ship was so located that the eclipse was strictly local, but I don't think this likely; I'd argue for greater Ship size and distance from Urth during the eclipse, as mantis discussed yesterday.

Thanks Mark. When I considered that possibility, I recognized that it is problematic also, especially if you accept the "near future" theory. Consider: some very long, forgotten period of time prior to Sev's "native" time, long before the reign of Manarch Typhon as well, there existed an isolated primitive indigenous people somewhere on Earth presumably not far from the later Commonwealth. Typhon's empire was preceded by one or more super-technological epochs in

which all Earth's inhabitants presumably would have at least some access to advanced technology and contact with each other and the galactic human culture. Furthermore such a culture (even our present-day civilization) would no doubt take notice of Tzadkiel's ship approaching, and respond in some significant fashion. I envision an Earth nearly covered by cities and feats of civil engineering Trantor-style, perhaps broken up here and there by biome-parks.

For there to have later been autochthons as Sev described implies tht the first galactic empire fell hard and spectacularly, taking with it trade, travel, communications, and industry, leaving large numbers of people living at a neolithic level for many generations. Then at a much later time the grosser more decadent empire which eventually produced Typhon arose.

The text doesn't rule this out, in fact there could be some support for it. But it practically requires that Sev is of a future at least tens if not hundreds of millenia hence.