

The Power Behind the Phoenix Throne II

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Jun 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1683>

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Mitchell A. Bailey — 12 Jun 1999, 17:42

Inire probably arrived at about the same time as, or shortly after, the sun started to gutter. Inire seems to have openly appeared on Urth at about the same time, no coincidence, as Ymar rose to power. Inire no doubt recognized Ymar as the Conciliator's chosen one and put all his temporal thaumaturgy at Ymar's disposal from the start. It would seem that the higher powers who chastise the Urth by crippling the Sun at the same time provide a hope and plan for redemption through the mission of Inire.

One thousand years later, Severian, the Epitome, departs for his appointment, leaving Inire as regent. However, Inire, his work already done, soon dies or departs to the stars whence he came. Since Valeria did not have the opportunity to consume Severian's memories, she could not become truly an Autarch. Severian, by becoming the New Sun, has already fulfilled the higher purpose of the Autarchy, so she would actually be superfluous as Autarch.

The Autarch has been cultivated by Father Inire not merely as a ruler but as the Epitome from whom will spring the New Sun and the blessings of the Hieros' forgiveness. As Severian announced at his examination, the Autarchs represent and take responsibility for all the peoples of Urth. I will speculate that this is the purpose for the memory-transfer custom. Quotes Malrubius-aquastor, "In you all the divergent tendencies of our race _may_ have achieved synthesis" (emphasis mine. Thanks, Tony Ellis!). This, I presume, is the reason for the title Epitome claimed by Severian at his examination in UNS. Perhaps that abstract-sounding goal is accomplished in the concrete sense by producing a person in whom a broad representative spectrum of past lives and experience are present.

(As has been exhaustively discussed before by Mantis, Tony Ellis, Peter Stephenson, and others, and others, an eidetic memory such as Severian's could have been a necessary property for that individual finally sent to plead for Urth, for whatever reason. I like Tony's suggestion that Sev's memory gives him more allies to fight for him, a trial by ordeal as it were. I do think Peter's idea of Severian as Everyman come closest to the explanation I'm using, but that's a side issue here. My point is, Inire's mission seems to have been to guide and cultivate (but not control!) this process of shaping the Epitome..)

The best comparison which comes to my mind is from Tolkien. Inire could be compared to Gandalf, sent by the Valar to guide the free peoples of Middle-Earth through crisis. Like Gandalf, Inire seems to be a messenger for celestial powers, is preternaturally long-lived, possesses knowledge beyond the grasp of even the wisest, travels extensively into difficulty and danger, and wears grey when not disguised. Inire's misty difficult-to-see grey robe furthermore suggests the Elvish camouflage featured in LOTR and Silmarillion. Like Gandalf, Inire departs after his task is done. I truly wonder if Mr. Wolfe didn't have Gandalf in mind, just a little.

Just as Gandalf inspired and coordinated resistance to Sauron, Father Inire guides the Autarchs toward that point where they could be reconciled, on behalf of all the peoples of Urth, with the Hieros, ending "the epic penance of mankind". Then Urth could join, harmoniously this time, in

the greater society of the peoples of the universes and as a bonus vanquish the “megatherian” enemies of mankind and escape the icy fate of a prematurely dying sun.

It is easy to see an emissary of the Hierogrammates on a mission here, taking a very personal interest in the fate of the peoples of Urth.

On the other hand, by establishing the Autarchy and the House Absolute, Inire engineers himself a venue for indulging, with impunity and to his heart’s content, his penchant for underaged exultant girls.