

Urth bibliography update/alert

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 13 Dec 1999

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 13 Dec 1999, 14:26

Some FAQs can be relatively debate free--the struggle 'round here has been due to the fact that the subject matter is "Mysteries" rather than, say, Publishing Facts.

Q: Where can I find out more about Gene Wolfe? Is there a survey of his work?

A: Joan Gordon's GENE WOLFE by Starmont Press. "Urth-Man Extraordinary" is the working bibliography of Gene Wolfe by Phil Stephensen-Payne & Gordon Benson Jr. (They can be tricky to find, but that is another Q&A).

Q: Are there any recorded songs relating to Urth?

A: Yes. At least two by, oh, I'm blanking out on her name. She's a published sf author, she also plays acoustic guitar, she records professional quality cassette tapes on her own label . . . one song is "Terminus Est" . . .

Q: Are there more stories about Urth?

A: Yes. And if you already have a copy of "Urth-Man Extraordinary" (UMX, since UME usually means "Ultra Marine Edition") then I want you to add these additions and corrections =right now.= I'm not kidding--this is important.

UMX lists, under "C. Series":

"C2. Books [omitted here]

Stories: A14, B12"

Correction: that A14 ("Bernard A. French" of BIBLIOMEN) should be A16. And then add some more after that.

The corrected string should look like this: "A16, A20, A44, A51, A88, A137, B12"

Which means:

A16 = "The Boy Who Hooked the Sun"

A20 = "The Cat" (in ENDANGERED SPECIES [hereafter "ES"]) A44 = "Folia's [sic] Story: The Armiger's Daughter" A51 = "The God and His Man" (in ES) A88 = "The Map" (in ES) A137 = "The Tale of the Student and His Son" B12 = EMPIRES OF FOLIAGE AND FLOWER

. . . and there is also "The Old Woman Whose Rolling Pin Is the Sun," which doesn't have a UMX number yet.

Why this is important: well, I've had plenty of warning over the last ten years or so, but until this morning it didn't register and I didn't remember that A51 is an =Urth= story--I incorrectly

recalled it as being an Urth-ish fable along the lines of "The Legend of Xi Cygnus" (gosh, I'd better go recheck that one, too, asap); with less direct reference to Urth than, say, the non-Urth stories "A Solar Labyrinth," or "Procreation," or "The Sailor Who Followed the Sun" (if I got that title right--it seems I've failed to note it in my UMX), or even "My Book."

And I mean Urth in the sense that it says "Urth" within itself. Which is why "The Old Woman Whose Rolling Pin Is the Sun" is an Urth story, because it says there is a planet named Skuld; nothing vague about that.

So A51 really should have been included in the Lexicon, but it wasn't, due to some strange oversight on my part. And that is a pity.

While I'm opening a vein, I might as well mention a new mistake I've discovered: my dear, dear friend "Fish's Mouth," where I wrote: "Fomalhaut . . . is a white (A3) star in the Piscis Austrinus constellation. The fact that it is red when seen from Urth indicates a degree of stellar evolution and the gulf of time separating Earth from Urth" (p. 106).

Well, no. I mean, the first sentence is mostly true; and because I am an amateur astronomer-by-books rather than -by-telescope, it didn't really occur to me that the very familiar stellar class "A3" could possibly produce a red light (since "red" is associated with stellar classes K [orange] and M [red]).

But it can and it does. You can go outside tonight and see it. Or at least, that is what another book says, one written for telescope-using astronomers:

"[Fomalhaut] Alpha [Piscis Australis], 1.3 [magnitude], reddish" (STAR-NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS, p. 345).

"Well blow me down," as the sailor said when . . .

Sorry to have let everybody down! The Lexicon, or even one of the supplements, really should have entries for: "Isid looo loooE" (a god); "Maser"; "Master" (a weapon); "Tarnung" (a magic cloak); "Zed" (a world).

Furthermore: A51 might have some relevance to OBW; Zed, although just a sketch, seems rather like Blue (and the adventures that narrator has there are rather like those that Man has on Zed). Plus, a special bonus for alga: direct applications to THE DEEP.

=mantis=

William H. Ansley — 16 Dec 1999, 23:54 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

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mantis,

Surely you can't believe that the fact that the "enchanted" sword in _The God and His Man_ is referred to as "Master" instead of "Maser" the first two times it is mentioned is anything but a (particularly annoying) typo.

Sorry. I shouldn't make any assumptions about others' beliefs. But *I* can't believe it. The only

way I'll accept the idea that Wolfe meant to use both names for the sword is if he said so somewhere (and I'll lose a degree of respect for him as an author at the same time).

I have always assumed that the name of the sword Maser comes from our term maser (Microwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation; just like a laser but with microwaves instead of light). I am pretty sure a real maser emitter couldn't be made the size of a swordhilt and I don't know if it would behave as Maser is described to; I am assuming the term will become generalized to mean any energy-beam weapon.

I won't deny I could be way off here. Certainly "Tarnung" doesn't suggest the name of any piece of present day technology to me. Unless it's Romulan for "cloaking device."

However you slice it, Maser sure sounds like an azoth to me. "... the enchanted sword ... whose blade is as long as the wielder wishes it (though it weighs nothing) and against which not even stone can stand."

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"Isid looo loooE" has long plagued me. It seems as if it is a puzzle Wolfe is setting us and one he expects us to be able to solve (like the name Eyebem in the story of the same name). I have always suspected that the answer involves replacing the capital Is in the second and third parts of the name with 1s and the lower-case os with 0s. Thus I get ISID 1000 1000E, if I make the first part uppercase at the same time. Unfortunately, this doesn't suggest anything definite to me either, although it does look like the identifying number of a machine, a computer model number, for example. Certainly Isid looo loooE is an artificially intelligent computer (or something very much like one) as well as a god.

Double-trunked elephants are found on both Zed and Blue does. It is a pity that we are not told how many legs Zedian elephants have.

William Ansley