

"Lives and Times of the Master Torturers" series

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 Aug 2000

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 19 Aug 2000, 13:27

Well, somebody has been busy! Looks pretty good.

A few almost random notes, which have no effect:

1) Among all the other more obvious ones, another reason why I peg P as 90ish is that he seems to belong to the age group "ancient," which should also apply to sprightly Lomer (of antechamber fame): it was my work on short story "The Cat" (ENDANGERED SPECIES) which led me to believe that Lomer is 90ish when Sev first meets him. (Another chart I only thought of, never actually drew--Different age groups in TBOTNS: for instance, those who knew the artist Fechin, etc.)

2) P is a strange fish, really. My guessing sense is that he somehow followed the original "Feast of Saint Catherine" (planned novella for ORBIT) storyline (outlined in CASTLE OF THE OTTER and CASTLE OF DAYS); he found something that somehow made the guild grudgingly take him back in. But even so, he was passed over for promotion--G was elevated in order to become the head of the guild just to keep P from becoming the head.

3) I also have a sense that P's mysterious time away from the Matachin Tower also resulted in him somehow obtaining "Terminus Est." This could not be the dingus that makes the guild take him back in, of course; although the =way= he obtained it could very well form the tale which blackmailed the guild into bringing him in.

If, =if=, P was the "silent man" who visited the Stone Town in 19 ps, he may have still been in his exile then (eleventh year thereof); then again, the datestamp on that item might be wildly off (since it is just the memory of a woman living in the wilderness near the ruins--even less calendar-based than the urban dwellers). The loss of eyesight (or at least "keen eyesight") might be a result of his mysterious adventures.

4) Ages and elevations: medieval guild models work great for all healthy Commonwealth guilds; medieval lifespans might not work as well. Because the torturers have been in decline for so very long, their age/rank groups may have been stretched-out a bit: when I was first researching, I was surprised that Sev was still an apprentice at around 20--the swimming-hole antics, the Vodalus incident, all that stuff seemed to me to belong to a Tom Sawyer-ish early teen, not a late teen (the world of difference between, say, the ages of 13 and 19 in these days). On further reflection, I could attribute some of this to the cloistered nature of the guild: they really are socially isolated.

There do seem to be a number of journeymen (iirc around 20?). What do they do all day? Well, the usual. But it is clear what they don't do: they don't regularly go off to become lictors, as they did in generations past. Which points to another administrative problem: if the only guildhall you have is the Matachin Tower, then there is a limit to how many Masters you can have (since a Master could head a guildhall somewhere else); the "too many chiefs, not enough

braves" problem. And there hasn't been a "Grand Master" in a long long time.

=mantis=