

More Concerning the BOTNS Manuscript

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Jan 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/299>

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CRCulver — 22 Jan 1998, 18:41

Friends,

As usual, I discovered an answer to my question 10 minutes after mailing it to the list:

When Severian sets the manuscript upon "the seas of space and time," I assumed he was in Briah. This does not appear to be the case.

Severian was aboard the Ship. In its journeys to Yesod, the ship went outside any universe (into a kind of Meta-universe, which contained the others). Thus, he throws the lead coffer into this meta-universe. I suppose it simply floated along until it drifted into Our Universe (which I will in the future deem "Malkuth," after Mantis' appreciated help). Gene Wolfe, a guy in Malkuth, usual in all respects except he had just written a kick-butt novel called Peace, one day came upon the coffer. Thus, the story begins.

Said Mantis:

OTOH the appendix to book one (re the translation of the manuscript)

mentions that Gene Wolfe has examined artifacts from Urth, and in fact has been allowed to visit and photograph the era's few extant buildings.<

Yes, this presents an interesting problem. In the last few pages of Citadel and the opening parts of Urth, the main attention is on the lead coffer. The reader thinks the coffer is all that Mr. Wolfe got, and that he then translated the BOTNS and its coda using techniques much like those employed to decipher Linear B relics. Then, however, we go back to the first appendix, and learn Mr. Wolfe has indeed seen more than the manuscript. How shall we solve this problem? Is Briah Malkuth? Or did Mr. Wolfe get a visit from a guy(?) named Tzadkiel who had this really cool boat and wanted to take him for a ride? <g>

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"Ignorance, that light of fools steers a wayward path"
-Brendan Perry