

eponyms as saints

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 26 Mar 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3096>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 26 Mar 2002, 19:09

Jerry Friedman quoted and wrote:

Seems to me that real-world eponyms are not devices to tell time, but by-products of time and culture. If the word is still in use, then the eponym remains: our busts of the eponyms would include de Sade, Quisling, Bowdler, et ali. If in a hundred years we no longer used the words sadism, quisling, and bowdlerize, then those busts would be removed, the eponyms forgotten along with their "words." (Note the memorial/funereal tinct here.)

This is interesting, but my guess is that the eponyms are saints, like the eponyms of San Francisco, Marylebone, people named James, etc.

That's funny, because I don't normally think of the people of the Commonwealth having saints (granted that they are all named after Catholic saints, but I have never seen this as a literal sign of the saints being resurrected, as James Jordan did in his early interview with Wolfe, but rather as a clever trick to get big history and alien-ness in one coherent, convenient package), so I used non-saint eponyms.

But of course you are right, they =do= have saints (well one: "St. Amand"), so the busts become perhaps a sequence of saints and commoners. From high to low, altitude-wise at least.

Still, another point I wanted to transmit was that while Nessus is "eternal," the quarters of the city are definitely not: they have a rather brief lifespan, in fact, and then they are abandoned to ruin as the city moves North. So the busts, despite their seeming antiquity, are not all that old, really, and were placed there by recent architects for recent tastes. (I mean, it isn't like they are as alien in culture/distant in time as Etruscan busts in medieval Italy.) With this, I would guess that the eponyms are known rather than unknown; and since Severian's time seems to be at a low-tide for churches, I suspect the eponyms to be more like guillotine, gerrymander, and shyster than St. Agia (although that would've made a neat moment!).

=mantis=

Jerry Friedman — 26 Mar 2002, 22:38 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

--- Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com> wrote:

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This is interesting, but my guess is that the eponyms are saints, like
the eponyms of San Francisco, Marylebone, people named James, etc.

That's funny, because I don't normally think of the people of the
Commonwealth having saints (granted that they are all named after
Catholic
saints, but I have never seen this as a literal sign of the saints being
resurrected, as James Jordan did in his early interview with Wolfe, but
rather as a clever trick to get big history and alien-ness in one
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convenient package), so I used non-saint eponyms.

You mean there's a Saint Baldanders and a Saint Foila?

But for Pete's sake and heavens to Betsy, if all the people of the Commonwealth are named
after Catholic saints, isn't it obvious who the eponyms are?

But of course you are right, they =do= have saints (well one: "St.
Amand"),
so the busts become perhaps a sequence of saints and commoners. From
high
to low, altitude-wise at least.

I don't remember St. Amand. From UotNS?

There's Holy Katharine (sp?), though, and it seems to me that at one point Severian mentions
Barbara as the patron of soldiers.

Still, another point I wanted to transmit was that while Nessus is
"eternal," the quarters of the city are definitely not: they have a
rather
brief lifespan, in fact, and then they are abandoned to ruin as the city
moves North. So the busts, despite their seeming antiquity, are not all
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guillotine, gerrymander, and shyster than St. Agia (although that
would've
made a neat moment!).

St. Agia of the Knife? Sorry, wrong series.

But we don't put up statues of Lynch, Boycott, or E. Clerihew Bentley. Though a monument to
the unknown eponym of "jerry-built" might be nice. (Okay, that's the last time I'll mention that, I
promise.)

Jerry Friedman is not named after the first abbot of Mayo.

Michael Andre-Driussi — 26 Mar 2002, 23:18 · follows Jerry Friedman

Jerry Friedman wrote:

You mean there's a Saint Baldanders and a Saint Foila?

Now you're just wise-cracking, or you are the new guard to come on duty in interrogating. I've been through that thread simply too many times. Baldanders is a bad guy, as signified by his fiction-derived name.

But for Pete's sake and heavens to Betsy, if all the people of the Commonwealth are named after Catholic saints, isn't it obvious who the eponyms are?

No, forgive me, it is not. I have never heard of saints categorized as eponyms for giving their names to countless individuals--as opposed to giving their name "to a tribe, nation, process, product, etc." (Name for a city, which you gave before, seemed close to tribe/nation, although greatly diluted.) If it is clear to you then that is enough.

St. Agia of the Knife? Sorry, wrong series.

=Saint Austregildis=, du-uh!

But we don't put up statues of Lynch, Boycott, or E. Clerihew Bentley.

Hugos, Edgars, Nebulas, and Oscars are halfway there. Maybe "Sons of Liberty" and "Knights of Columbus" and stuff like that. Elks Lodge. Freemasonry. Still, I would agree that we don't put up statues of the eponyms! It seems like a practice from the ancient world.

=mantis=

Jerry Friedman — 27 Mar 2002, 21:46 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

--- Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com> wrote:

Jerry Friedman wrote:

You mean there's a Saint Baldanders and a Saint Foila?

Now you're just wise-cracking, or you are the new guard to come on duty in interrogating. I've been through that thread simply too many times. Baldanders is a bad guy, as signified by his fiction-derived name.

I must've been absent that day. But now that you've mentioned it and I've spent a little time at a saint site, I'll look in the archives if I want more information.

But for Pete's sake and heavens to Betsy, if all the people of the Commonwealth are named after Catholic saints, isn't it obvious who the eponyms are?

No, forgive me, it is not.

I'll forgive you if you'll forgive me. Or should I forgive you first, since I actually said something obnoxious? Which is to say--sorry about that "isn't it obvious"?

I have never heard of saints categorized as eponyms for giving their names to countless individuals--as opposed to giving their name "to a tribe, nation, process, product, etc." (Name for a city, which you gave before, seemed close to tribe/nation, although greatly diluted.) If it is clear to you then that is enough.

"Etc." can cover a lot of ground, though you're right that "eponym" normally doesn't extend to the person someone is named after. On the other hand, if there's a canonical list of names

(which seems suggested though not proven by Wolfe's use of saints' names, including the apparently well-known pairs Agilus-Agia and Severian-Severa), all of which are names of admired people of the past (not suggested anywhere that I know of), and if you didn't want to call those admired people saints, what would you call them? ...

But we don't put up statues of Lynch, Boycott, or E. Clerihew Bentley.

Hugos, Edgars, Nebulas, and Oscars are halfway there. Maybe "Sons of Liberty" and "Knights of Columbus" and stuff like that. Elks Lodge. Freemasonry. Still, I would agree that we don't put up statues of the eponyms! It seems like a practice from the ancient world.

(Just Hugos, Edgars, Oscars, and the K. of C.)

Jerry Friedman