

More on textual reliability, lack of

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3134>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 09 Apr 2002, 15:44

Okay ... we have two textual data from SHORT SUN:

- 1) We have the third-hand report that Green at conjunction is 30,000 leagues away from Blue.
- 2) We have the direct report that Lune appears much bigger in Urth's sky than Green does in Blue's

Now, add this to the mix:

Not a glimmer showed upon the waters of the lake,
save for the green, reflected light that fell from
the myriad leaves of the Forest of Lune, fifty
thousand leagues away.

-- THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR

Timescape h/c, p. 253

(n.b., as has been noted, the Moon currently orbits at a mean distance of 238,877 miles, or a smidge under eighty thousand leagues from the Earth. Not that that's particularly relevant, though it means that Lune is rather bigger in Urth's sky than Luna is in Earth's...)

Okay, so if we stipulate that Green is Lune, then one of three things is true:

- 1) the third-hand 30K league figure is wrong;
- 2) the 50K league figure is wrong;
- 3) Green, to appear smaller when 40% closer, is much smaller than Lune.

Now, the third of these is contra hypothesis. We know that the 30K league figure is third-hand and have no especial reason to trust its original source; contrariwise, we know (see his night on the mountain after escaping from Thrax) that Severian has had at least some minimal education in astronomy. Ergo, if Lune is Green, the thirty-thousand league figure is wrong.

Marc, take your pick; I don't think you can save both.