

Old now is Urth, and none may count her days

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 31 Jan 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/328>

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Charles Dye — 31 Jan 1998, 13:14

Even Jove nods.

Unless someone (Dr. Talos? mantis?) is faking the geological and archeological evidence, there's a lot more time than that.

The only out I see for the geology is that during the era of starflight (as described in the "Pandora's Box" story -- remarkably like Cordwainer Smith's future, by the way), there was enough power and energy to resculpt the entire face of Urth, and someone did.

And the geological changes are trivial compared with the selenographical! The terraforming of Lune appears to be complete even in Typhon's reign.

The only out I see for the archeology is that a Trantor-like world-city grew and then died before someone started twiddling the geography.

But I still don't see this happening in two chiliads.

Severian drops numerous hints of an ancient Urth. Unfortunately, most are in throwaway lines that are easy to miss, easy to forget, and difficult to locate again when you want 'em. (Now where's that reference to "polychrome sand" again?)

For instance, at the end of chapter 13 of "Sword" Severian mentions the cessation of plate tectonics. The physician in chapter 36 of "Urth" seems to support this: earthquakes are much less frequent in Typhon's day than they had been previously, infrequent enough for the commoners to have largely forgotten them.

Is two millenia long enough for the oceans to cover beaches with powdered cokebottles? Maybe, but I don't see it. Could human beings degenerate to phosphorescent cave-apes in two thousand years? (Jonas and Severian agree that they have not been tampered with.) Worse, Jonas suggests that the man-apes predate Typhon. Stephen Jay Gould, watch out! Our equilibrium is about to be punctuated!

Wildest suggestion of antiquity: Severian's careless hint in chapter 1 that the universe no longer expands. File this one in the tens-of- gigayears-to-never range.

raster at highfiber.com

CRCulver — 31 Jan 1998, 21:22 · follows Charles Dye

Someone, I think Dave, said:

there was enough power and energy to
resculpt the entire face of Urth, and someone did.

I don't think the face of the Earth was entirely resculpted. We have little evidence in the form of graphical topography to substantiate this claim. We know that Korea is underwater, and Urth

has seven continents, both due to Jonas' comments in _Claw_.
The first few messages in the Urth Archive discuss a map. If someone would be as kind as to send that to me, or give me an URL for it, I would be grateful.

Charles Dye said:

Severian's careless hint in chapter 1 that the universe no longer expands.

File this one in the tens-of-gigayears-to-never range.<

That's news to me. Would you mind typing that sentence or paragraph in?

Christopher R. Culver <crculver at aol.com>

<http://members.aol.com/crculver/index.html>

"Ignorance, that light of fools steers a wayward path"

-Brendan Perry

Jim Jordan — 31 Jan 1998, 22:18 · follows CRCulver

Surely it is rather obvious that Wolfe's reference to 1 or 2 thousand years is not from "our" time to Severians, but from Typhon's.

Now, how old is it? Mantis says not as old as often thought, because of the black hole in the sun. I've asked him for evidence that this black hole was artificially introduced.

In Dr. Talos's play, Gabriel tells Nod that he has arrived 50 million years too late. So, when did human beings appear on earth/urth? You get human culture not much farther back than 6000 BC, being generous. I think the idea that human beings lived before then -- humans as we know them -- is pretty fantastic. People are builders, and also create generations. But, let's nod to ideas that Wolfe himself probably does not believe, and say that "Adam and Eve and Nod and Cain" lived a million years ago! We still have 49 million years to go to get to the time of Severian -- no matter how the black hole got into the sun. (Assuming Talos is correct, of course.) Nope. Until convinced otherwise, I'm assuming a Vancean "Dying Earth" in both scenario AND chronology.

Contentiously, nay, outright viciously,

Nutria

Charles Dye — 01 Feb 1998, 11:06 · follows Jim Jordan

CRCulver at aol.com asks:

Charles Dye said:

Severian's careless hint in chapter 1 that the universe no longer expands.

File this one in the tens-of-gigayears-to-never range.

That's news to me. Would you mind typing that sentence or paragraph in?

A more useful reference wouldn't hurt either, huh? That's chapter 1 of "Urth." Severian, recalling his determination to launch his manuscript entirely out of his universe, ponders:

... And I marveled to recall that all this had seemed too small for my ambition, and wondered whether it had grown (thought the mystes declare it no longer grows) or I had.

At first I figured that this is what comes of receiving your "scientific" education from leeches. But Severian credits "the mystes" for this tidbit, not Mal & Pal. He's either picked this up from a

book, or during his years at the House Absolute. (Still can't be right, though. Can it?)

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