

inhuma in brazil

The Urth list — 9 messages, 5 voices, 20 Jul 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3374>

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j e — 20 Jul 2002, 17:35

Reading Brazilian Adventure late last night (by Peter Fleming - about an exploration of central Brazil in the early thirties) there's a section where the writer describes some of the birds they see while travelling on the Araguaya river. Among the birds is the inhuma, which is:

...a gigantic and mysterious fowl, bigger than a cock capercaillie but built on more or less the same lines. These would take refuge in the tops of trees and thence utter a strange, murmurous and rather asthmatic crooning. Whether they are good to eat I can not say.

I tried a google search on inhuma and Brazil but all I came up with is a reference to a Lake Inhuma. Still, I'm always thrilled to find something like this - a possible clue. Like the time I found a section on decision trees in a book on math for engineers. There was a "source to sink" diagram which struck me as similar to the kabbalah's tree of life. From that I had a moment of intuition about Severian's judgement in Urth. When Tzadkiel says (I paraphrase)_that we have examined your future and determined that the probability of your bringing a new sun is high_, I see the corridors of time viewed as a great decision tree. (It's interesting that the masters of Briah acknowledge some uncertainty and of course it fits the god does play dice model).

While I'm de-lurked here, I have another conjecture. Does Olivine's manner of speech indicate we are to hear it as an echoing from an incompletely configured voice generator rather than a processing defect where she begins a sentence, doesn't register that it's begun and repeats it. Her character makes me sad and to think of her voice beginning as an hollow, broken sound that echos just a little more audibly makes me want to weep.

I think the focus on speech mannerisms is an effort of Wolfe's to have us hear the words, rather than read them flat. And there is likely a philosophy behind it rather than it just being a device to give depth to a realization. I don't find any of them embarrassing or laughable as some have stated here. In the interview with Nick Gevers recently he said Remora and Incus were based on people he'd met. Anyone we might have heard of?

Joe Eull

James Wynn — 22 Jul 2002, 17:54 · follows j e

Joe Eull said:

"Among the birds is the inhuma, which is:

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http://www.net-serv.com/mcintyre/brazilian_adventure.htm

The only link I could find on this subject was a site created by an elementary school teacher on

Peter Fleming's book. She describes the Inhumas as "mysterious", "said to have talons on it's wings", and an "object of some sort of superstition among the Carajas"

Perhaps a book on the Carajas would yield more information. But this does smell like the sort of thing that would attract Wolfe's attention.

Nice find!

--- Crush

Phoebe Davis — 22 Jul 2002, 22:54 · follows James Wynn

A bird question - how wonderful! The inhuma is more commonly known as the Horned Screamer, *Anhima cornuta*. I saw the link that Crush found but was dissatisfied -- I wanted to see a picture of the bird as I wanted to see a picture of Oreb some posts back.

I found that Inhuma and Inhumas are cities or at least villages in Brazil - their current weather can be viewed on the internet. Determined, I kept going. The connection between the horned screamer and the inhuma, which I surmised from a link using yet another google search, was confirmed by this excerpt from the capoeiradobrasil.com.br/dicionario of inhuma or lúna, translated by Google:

<<< lúna - s. f. Corruptela of inhuma or anhumã . [Of tupi ña ' one , ' black bird ' , with aglutinação of the article] 1. Anseriforme bird, of the family of the anhimídeos (*Anhima cornuta*). Master Maneca Brandão (" I sing It of the lúna - the Saga of a Capoeira " , Itabuna/BA, 1ª ed.) he adds: " symbol of the wit and the matreice , (...) the bird really exists and inhabits heaths, charcos, lagoons, etc. The term " lúna " is one corruptela of its true name: Inhuma or Anhumã . It has the transport of a Peru, with long legs and feet of great fingers, with two carpianos esporões in each wing, beyond a long córneo thorn in the high one of the head. Its plumage is bruno blackish and black. [Sin.: alicorne, anhima, cametau, cauintã, cavitantau, cauintau, inhaúma, inhuma, licorne, unicorne, unicórnio.] 2. Name given to one has touched of berimbau, very melodioso, used in the game of the capoeira. Touch created by Bimba Master, for rasteiro, on game and with balloons, used only for masters of Capoeira. >>>

According to the description, the horned screamer is similar to other almost prehistoric looking birds of South America - it has claws on each wing (the carpianos esporoes) as well as a hornlike (how apropos) extrusion, called a thorn above, on its head. It has been partially domesticated and used to protect flocks of chickens. It certainly has mystical associations for the Carajas and some connection to the game or dance of capoeirado, although links are in Portugese or non-existent. Here are a couple of links

-the first to a photo, the second to a drawing, the third to a recording of its most astounding call: <http://www.stockpix.com/stock/animals/endangeredspecies/9601.htm>
<http://www.interaktv.com/birds/speciesaccounts/hornedscreamer.html>
<http://www.junglephotos.com/sounds/hscreamersound.html>

After my research (it was a slow day at work) I personally believe that the similarity in name between our flyers and the obscure name of a rather prosaic domesticated bird to be coincidence. Glad to be convinced otherwise. Inhuman, Inhuma seems clear to me. Different of course from the night chough which seems clearly picked for the species' mythological connections. IMHO of course!

Phoebe

--- James Wynn <crushtv at HotPOP.com> wrote:
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James Wynn — 23 Jul 2002, 19:31 · follows Phoebe Davis

Phoebe Davis said:

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I'm a little sorry to find out it's not a crypto-zoological creature. You're probably right. It probably has nothing to do with Lupine Inhuma, but I'm still going to make it a long-term goal to learn what "mystical associations" they bore for the Carajas.

--Crush

Phoebe Davis — 23 Jul 2002, 20:44 · follows James Wynn

Great -- I'd love to know what you find out.

Phoebe

--- James Wynn <crushtv at HotPOP.com> wrote:

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Jerry Friedman — 26 Jul 2002, 22:57 · follows Phoebe Davis

--- James Wynn <crushtv at HotPOP.com> wrote:

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believe that the similarity in name between our flyers and the obscure name

of a rather prosaic domesticated bird to be coincidence.

I think you're right that it's a coincidence, but "prosaic"? Did you look at a picture, like the one at <<http://www.stockpix.com/stock/animals/endangeredspecies/9601.htm>>? Well, maybe it's no weirder-looking than a turkey. ...

Jerry Friedman

Fernando Q. Gouvea — 26 Jul 2002, 23:22 · follows Jerry Friedman

I'm 100% sure that the common name is a coincidence. Not only is the derivation of inhumo/inhuma/inhumi pretty clearly from in+human, but also the Brazilian bird is i-nhu-ma, with the "nh" getting pronounced like the spanish n with a tilde. The completely different sound is the reason why I never made the connection even though I'm sure I had heard about the bird. (The name is presumably from some native language; it doesn't sound like Portuguese.)

Fernando

Fernando Q. Gouvea

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fqgouvea at colby.edu

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If you live to the age of a hundred you have it made because very few people die past the age of a hundred.

-- George Burns

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James Wynn — 21 Aug 2002, 22:11 · follows Fernando Q. Gouvea

Ok. I think it is (to me) absolutely conclusive that Gene Wolfe took the word "Inhuma" from the Amazonian bird described in Peter Fleming's "Brazilian Adventure". In fact, I think it is probable that "Brazilian Adventure" was his source.

<http://www.visualclick.com/~jwynn/GeneWolfe/LongSun/>

-- Crush

-----Original Message-----

From: Phoebe Davis [mailto:meezer_gal at yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2002 3:45 PM

To: urth at urth.net

Subject: RE: (urth) inhuma in brazil

Great -- I'd love to know what you find out.

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--- James Wynn <crushtv at HotPOP.com> wrote:

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Phoebe Davis — 27 Aug 2002, 12:38 · follows James Wynn

Thank you Crush - excellent detective work and a compelling conclusion. I'm a believer!

Phoebe

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