

Of lost books and millenia

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 04 Feb 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/347>

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Tony Ellis — 04 Feb 1998, 09:58

03/02/98

09:36

Of lost books and millenia

Alga wrote:

teliss, I love your locution, but Ultan's mythic Alexandrian Library is hardly Thecla's "local library!"

<g>

The point I was really trying to make is that you don't ask for a "lost" book from any kind of library. If Ultan's library really does extend to other times and places, well and good, but if even someone as un-academically minded as Thecla knows that you can find TBOTNS there, TBOTNS is surely not lost.

I suppose one answer might be that Thecla never asked for TBOTNS by name, but for some differently-named book which just happened to be a BOTNS text, or perhaps simply for "a book on the Conciliator".

David Lebling wrote:

On geography, to CRCulver: The action of the tetralogy takes place in South America, and yet there is a great river that flows southwestward over a plain, and great mountains to the north and east of the plain. This isn't _our_ South America.

I hate to use the "C" word, but is there any chance you could provide citations for the mountains-to-the-east claim? Or at least point me in the right direction?

Deep Time: The hardest thing to believe about TBOTNS taking place 50 million years in the future is that _so little_ has changed. People are still people, exactly as they are now. The average species lasts on the order of three million years. Even with all sorts of advanced technology, would 50 million years have changed so little?

The average species hasn't discovered civilisation. Evolution requires a nasty, cutthroat competitive environment, where the least genetic advantage or disadvantage decides who survives and who doesn't. Humanity more-or-less stopped evolving when it started caring for the sick and the weak.) Whoops, that sounds a tad pro-Nazi, sorry...)

Having said that, I think you're right anyway that 50 million years is just too damn far in future. My money is on any number between two to nine million.

Mantis wrote:

Re: the polychrome sand, I know what you mean, but no, I don't know where it is at the moment.

TCOTA, the chapter near the end where Severian is on the beach and re-discovers the Claw. I think.

Date: 02/02/98 22:23

To: Tony Ellis

From: urth at lists.best.com

!!! Original message was too large.

!!!

!!! It is contained in the enclosure whose name

!!! is the same as the subject of this message.

!!!

!!! A preview of the message follows:

----- BEGIN urth.v006.n026 -----

001 - m.driussi at genie.geis.com - (urth) Cumaeon's Star

002 - raster at highfiber.com (Cha - Old now is Urth, and none may count her days

003 - David_Lebling at avid.com - Time

004 - m.driussi at genie.geis.com - (urth) Time & Map Tidbits

005 - Paul C Duggan <pduggan@wo - 1000 to 2000 years from Typhon to Severian

006 - "Kieran Cleary" <kierannw - Re: (urth) Time

007 - "Alice Turner" <al@interp - Deep Thoughts: The Play, the Worm, the Rose

008 - "Alice Turner" <al@interp - p.s.on The Play

009 - "Kieran Cleary" <kierannw - Re: (urth) Time

010 - "Kieran Cleary" <kierannw - Re: (urth) Time

URTH Digest -- for discussion of Gene Wolfe's New Sun and other works

----- MESSAGE urth.v006.n026.1 -----

From: m.driussi at genie.geis.com

Subject: (urth) Cumaeon's Star

Date: Sun, 1 Feb 98 15:45:00 GMT

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

Christopher,

The Cumaeon might be addressing the White Fountain in a metaphoric manner, but on the surface the real star she is talking about is the Fish's Mouth, aka Fomalhaut (or "Formalhaut" for eopots of the typos--you know who you are). The target of their ftl (faster than light) telephone call attempt; once again, unobstructed line of sight is required.

Nutria,

You are raising most of the points about posthistory that I raised in "Additions, Errata, &cetera: volume 2," which I applaud. Now all that remains is for you to whip up the timeline that you believe strongly enough to take the whipping for! Go to! Look forward to seeing it!

=mantis=

----- MESSAGE urth.v006.n026.2 -----

From: raster at highfiber.com (Charles Dye)
Subject: Old now is Urth, and none may count her days
Date: Sun, 1 Feb 1998 11:06:49 -0700 (MST)
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

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?)

raster at highfiber.com

----- MESSAGE urth.v006.n026.3 -----

From: David_Lebling at avid.com
Subject: Time
Date: Sun, 1 Feb 98 13:37:54 -0500
In-Reply-To: <199801311711.JAA10043 at lists1.best.com>

What a great flurry of new activity! And some new blood as well. Yumbo!

On the illness of the sun: It is stated in several places that the sun is being devoured by a black hole. That much is impossible to argue with. The debatable point is whether it's natural causes or murder. It seems pretty clear to me that it was done on purpose to weaken Typhon's empire. The coincidence is too unlikely otherwise. Who dunnit? The obvious SFnal idea is that it's "the rebels," whomever they might be. The unobvious idea is that it's Severian himself, or more generally the forces of good. It's pretty clear that the sort of empire Typhon was ruling is one you don't want as a neighbor, so...

On the mountains: This may just be me reading things into the text that aren't there (what! never!), but the mountains are clearly "all" carved in the shape of people. And it isn't just autarchs, either. You could look it up.

On geography, to CRCulver: The action of the tetralogy takes place in South America, and yet there is a great river

Jason Voegele — 06 Feb 1998, 00:58 · follows Tony Ellis

David Lebling wrote:

On geography, to CRCulver: The action of the tetralogy takes place in South America, and yet there is a great river that flows southwestward over a plain, and great mountains to the north and east of the plain. This isn't _our_ South America.

I hate to use the "C" word, but is there any chance you could provide citations for the mountains-to-the-east claim? Or at least point me in the right direction?

I think this crops up when Severian comes to Typhon's little home in the mountains. I've heard two theories. One, Urth's magnetic poles have flip-flopped, thus North and South have taken on the opposite meaning that we are accustomed to. Two, Severian has some sort of depth-perception problem (sorry, can't recall the technical term) which causes him Somehow to confuse left/right/east/west etc.

Jason Voegele

CRCulver — 06 Feb 1998, 16:39 · follows Jason Voegele

Two, Severian has some sort of depth-perception problem (sorry, can't recall the technical term) which causes him Somehow to confuse left/right/east/west etc.<

The idea that Severian is spatially dyslexic has arisen before. I believe the example used then is how he got lost on the Ship even when he had the correct directions and remembered them perfectly.

One, Urth's magnetic poles have flip-flopped, thus North and South have taken on the opposite meaning that we are accustomed to.<

According to estimates I have heard. This would take at least 100,000 years.

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