

ship-building timeline for the Whorl

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 07 Nov 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3547>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 07 Nov 2002, 21:56

Roy wrote:

If Sev's prophecy was true, then Typhon had to have already been scanned into Mainframe and the ship launched; that or those things happened fairly soon after Sev made the prophecy.

Either way, it's hard to reconcile the NS and LS texts. We know that Marble and the other servant chems were older than the _Whorl_ itself, and Hammerstone told Silk that the soldier chems were being stockpiled for twenty years before coming aboard the ship. A painted canvas cloth at Orchid's place was "a crude mockery of Campion's celebrated Pas enthroned." The original showed two-headed Pas, along with a couple of mighty taluses "still at work upon the whorl".

This is a strangely literal take on a metaphorical painting! Unless you really think Typhon was out there driving a bulldozer at the end? <g> Iconically, the painting shows "Pas made the Whorl." There would be no point in showing a one-headed Typhon making the Whorl -- even though it is true, it would contradict the truth that the Cargo has been indoctrinated with: and the painting was presumably painted by Cargo =after= launch, wasn't it?

Now, the hollowing out of an asteroid and all the work needed to turn it into a giant spaceship, stocking it with flora and fauna, soil, water, etc., would have been the work of years. At what point in the construction of the _Whorl_ did Typhon get his second head? Clearly he had it before the ship was launched, but did he have it before construction started? That doesn't seem possible, because Typhon surely didn't have Piaton's body for twenty years or more; that certainly wasn't his plan.

If Typhon underwent the operation *after* construction started, how did that affect his original intent in building it? If the _Whorl_ took a long time to build, as it surely did, were his seven children the product of his original body or Piaton's?

And how is it that so massive an undertaking as the building, stockpiling, and launch of the _Whorl_ left no lasting echoes on Urth in Sev's day, just a thousand years later? Sev and the Commonwealth seem completely ignorant of it.

I don't understand the problem. He was building the generation starship in imitation of the old Empire, then he got the graft just before the Whorl was ready to launch, then he had himself scanned (or maybe even rescanned), and then the Worl was launched. Sometime after the Whorl was launched, the rebellion began and there were no ships with which to escape Urth.

When the Conciliator visits Urth the rebellion is in full swing, maybe even relatively close to its end.

Since you did not bring up the apparent biological ages of the scanned kids, that is not a part of your factoring.

As for lasting echoes, well gosh, the near total depletion of material resources on Urth would seem to cover this rather well!

=mantis=

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Roy C. Lackey — 08 Nov 2002, 05:24 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis wrote:

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IIRC, past ages of Urth were marked by the depletion of some natural resource, e.g., copper, uranium, etc., or am I confusing some other book with the NS? IIRC, then much of Urth's material resources were long gone before Typhon came on the scene. Besides, the insides of that asteroid probably provided a lot of material.

Let me restate the problem. The _Whorl_ took a long time to build. The stockpiling of chems shows that, minimally, twenty years passed between the planning stage and its launch. Also, Typhon so associated his face with his authority that he declined other means of extending his biological life; that is why he had his own head grafted to Piaton's body. He didn't anticipate that Piaton's strength might extend to "holding to the action of the heart". In other words, Typhon's two-headed state was never intended to be anything more than a temporary means to an end. Anyone as vain as Typhon didn't want his visage marred by a second head.

So, when Typhon decided to build the _Whorl_ (for whatever reason), he *did not* plan to have himself scanned as a two-headed god. At some point before the launch, events overtook him. He was forced to change his original plans and have himself scanned *after* he had been grafted to Piaton. (Why he didn't have himself poured into a custom-made, look-alike chem body, like Loris, and Potto, and the others, I don't know.) But, so far as I know, Typhon never set foot in the _Whorl_. There was *no reason* for his scanned, digitized personality to have been depicted as two-headed. Given Typhon's vanity, it doesn't make sense for it to have been done that way.

The entire pantheon of Pas and his family and friends is all the more a travesty, some sort of sick joke, apparently. Yet the manteions in the pre-fabricated cities were built before the human cargo was put aboard. The Sacred Windows, the gods in Mainframe, all of that seems to have

been planned from the beginning. Did Typhon's original plan call for him to be scanned as his one-headed self (with a new body)? Did he have time to have the Writings composed to reflect his two-headed godhead, create the whole mythology that permeates the _Whorl_? Why bother? If he wanted to play god, he didn't need to be two-headed to do it, and from his egocentric viewpoint, it wouldn't have been desirable.

Crush wrote:

IMO this is

because the provider of all Typhon's super-technology which was the secret behind his rise to power, had left on the Whorl --- Quetzal. The head was the last thing Q provided him with before he left. Hmmm "Q"? "The name's Typhon. Pas Typhon."

Uh, Quetzal was an inhum. The inhum have no technology. None at all. They are not good with their hands--probably because they don't have any in their natural state. <g> Not to mention that it was well over 300 years from the time the _Whorl_ was launched until Q was shot in the tunnels. I don't think they live that long.

Crush asks:

BTW: Is 1000 years from Typhon to Severian a firmly established time span?

The author of LEXICON URTHUS puts it at about 1,100 years. Close enough.

-Roy

James Wynn — 11 Nov 2002, 14:24 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy wrote:

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Crush answers

Since I haven't finished the SS yet, I'm sticking my neck out a bit... but clearly technology is not incomprehensible to inhum regardless of whether they *use* it on Green. Quetzal is an engineer, since he "designed himself" the intricate door latch to his Prolocutor quarters. Just as he also had no trouble figuring out human political systems sufficiently to manipulate them, I presume technology of other cultures would be transparent to Q.

I presumed that Q got on the Whorl by way of Urth (which would require -at least - exposure to technology and that he be very old) based on his discussion with Remora in LS3:1: Q ponders the "cyclic nature" of myth - that is, what was applicable before is now applicable today. In the story of "A-man" and "Wo-man" a "cobra" entices them to eat his fruit. Why (according to Q)? Because "he wanted them to climb his tree." But the story isn't finished yet according to Q: "they still have not yet climbed down". Perhaps I'm cursed with too much imagination but this sounds to me like the Plan of Pas. They "climbed the tree" means they took to the stars. "They haven't climbed down" means they have disembarked to Green - which apparently was also part of the plan. The cobra is clearly Q (note his "hooded" glances).

Well if Q enticed A-man and Wo-man to climb his tree, must have been to Urth to entice them to do it.

Did I cover everything?

Perhaps I need to be more clear. I never presumed Quetzal showed up at Typhon's door with a bag of trinkets like a serpentine Santa Claus. I only intended to posit that Typhon's super-technology, and, of course, the Whorl itself was of Typhon's design.

--Crush

James Wynn — 11 Nov 2002, 20:04 · follows James Wynn

Oops! I meant "was of Quetzal's design".

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