

Location of Commonwealth

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Feb 1998

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Jim Jordan — 06 Feb 1998, 16:25

At 02:24 PM 2/6/98 -0500, you wrote:

While you are absolutely right that TBOTNS's South America isn't ours, I think it's safe to say it fills the role of South America on Urth. Recall that while Severian's universe isn't necessarily (maybe even certainly) ours, it is also stated that each successive universe resembles all the others, even down to minor details.

Well, Wolfe has stated that it is South America, so that should settle it. Alga is right that there are allusions to Byzantium and Alexandria. There are also allusions to Jerusalem and Israel (cp. the gates of Jerusalem in the book of Nehemiah; also the fact that God has selected this tiny land to be the place where the whole future of Urth is determined; etc.). But geographically, it is S.A.

But, what S.A. Well, not ours, as the map in *Plan[e]t Engineering* reveals. The river flows to the Pacific, not the Atlantic, putting Nessus in Chile, apparently.

I have another theory, however. The mountains are not the Andes, of course, because these mountains have been uplifted in historical times. The strata of human civilizations are seen in the mountains. How does this happen? Well, back in the ice age when I was in college, we were taught that large rivers deposit silt in their deltas for millennia. The delta becomes bigger and deeper and heavier, and starts to press down into the mantel. After a while, the mantel pushes back, and the delta is thrust up as a mountain range.

Now, take our present SA, and imagine a million years of delta from the Amazon and Parana (Buenos Aires), then all that area's being thrust up as mountains, while the land to the west (present SA) sinks into the sea. In this way, the whole continent would move one step to the east. The location of Buenos Aires would remain the same, but the continent would now be eastward of it instead of westward, agreeing with the map in PE.

(I'm assuming this map is Gene's. I can't imagine it's being put in a book to honor him if he did not agree with it.)

Nutria