

Quadrifons & Juturna

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 21 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3700>

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Andrew Bollen — 21 Dec 2002, 02:57

Did anybody ever work out what the deal with Quadrifons is? Going back thru the archives, I see suggestions that Quadrifons is the name of a cherub. I'm sure that's true, but I'm also sure that the more relevant association is with Janus, in his four-faced aspect - Janus Quadrifons. After all, the text describes Quadrifons as "the god of doors and crossroads, and much else", which sounds pretty much like Janus to me.

Assuming the connection with Janus is intended, why "Quadrifons" rather than the more usual "Bifrons"?

Janus was married to the nymph Juturna, the goddess of springs and wells. Wolfe presumably knows this, but what's it supposed to mean? Like all of these speculations, anything you can make of it is based on the flimsiest textual evidence; but I wonder if Juturna is the Undine Scylla and Silk speak with at the end of RTTW; and whether somehow Juturna's interest in Severian stems from this? Dunno!

James Jordan — 21 Dec 2002, 14:53 · follows Andrew Bollen

At 08:57 PM 12/20/2002, you wrote:

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Cherubim have four faces. Sphinxes are a one-faced form of the cherub. Being cats, they guard crossroads (as you know if you have a cat; look where he/she likes to sit: where he can watch up and down the halls and into the rooms). Cherubim guard doors, particularly the door into Eden.

Nutria

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Josh Geller — 21 Dec 2002, 16:05 · follows James Jordan

On Sat, 21 Dec 2002, James Jordan wrote:

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My first thought, which apparently did not occur to GW, was Trimurti (the syncretic Brahma/Vishnu/Shiva: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva being the One God (or reasonable facsimile of same) in various Indian religions), Who is always represented with **four** faces rotated ninety degrees from each other. There are a number of different readings as to why four faces; the most mundane one is so that three of them will be visible from any point around a freestanding idol. Some of the more interesting ones have to do with more-than-three-dimensional geometry (as do some of the more interesting reasons why Indian gods generally have a multiplicity of limbs).

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