

Lexicon Urthus

The Urth list — 8 messages, 5 voices, 21 Jul 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4475>

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Maru Dubshinki — 21 Jul 2005, 21:11

What is the status of Michael "mantis" Andre-Driussi's "Lexicon Urthus"?

Does anyone know? Sirius Fiction has it listed as AWOL- no copies left, no fixed or second editions planned, and no second printing ever planned. Ebay hosts one copy (for a absolute minimum of a cool 105 US\$) , Abebooks demanding 150 \$US, and Amazon (as many of us know) has one reseller offering it at an exorbitant price. In short, "Lexicon Urthus", with its narrow, deep focus, aimed at a narrow audience (itself selected out of a narrow audience!) appears as dead as a doorknob commercially, and Andre-Driussi appears to have moved on; in essence abandonware, or somewhat like an orphaned work:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphaned_works

Now, what interests me here is not that I won't be able to get a copy (unless someone has tired of theirs), but rather the long-discussed FAQ for this list. Seems to me that LU could be a pretty good basis for it- would dispose of the entire genre of vocab -based questions at a shot (once corrected, that is). But there is the problem of copyright. (Drat! You knew there was a catch!).

I was not active on this list when mantis was, nor have my occasional trawls through the archive (is it just me, or are the archive digests broken? <http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v212.shtml> gives me a 404.) really revealed much of mantis' personality to me. Is it within the realm of possibility that he might release LU under the GNU Free Documentation License:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_Free_Documentation_License

<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>

or possibly a Creative Commons

<http://creativecommons.org/>

license such as this one:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/>

(non-commercial, share-alike, generic jurisdiction)

or this one:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>

(Allow commercial, share, generic jurisdiction)

Or, god willing, public domain?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain

So what do y'all think? Is this worth pursuing?

~Maru

mournings glory — 21 Jul 2005, 22:27 · in reply to Maru Dubshinki

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Does anyone know?

From

<http://lists.urth.net/htdig.cgi/urth-urth.net/2004-December/000159.html>:

"Michael Andre-Driussi confirms LEXICON URTHUS will probably appear as a Print On Demand title in the next 'year or three'."

(Nick Gevers was the poster.)

msg

Maru Dubshinki — 22 Jul 2005, 09:50 · in reply to mournings glory

On 7/22/05, mournings glory <mourningsglory at hotmail.com> wrote:

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<http://lists.urth.net/htdig.cgi/urth-urth.net/2004-December/000159.html>:

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Well, that's not perfect, but still not a fatal error; 'year or three', sounds, as you emphasize, like he doesn't really care and is in no particular hurry. Besides, one could make an argument that online copies would not cannibalize a print-on-demand edition. At least for me, physical text is superior to bits, and worth paying for.

~Maru

mournings glory — 22 Jul 2005, 10:26 · in reply to Maru Dubshinki

Adding yet another paragraph to the following sequence:

"Michael Andre-Driussi confirms LEXICON URTHUS will probably appear as a Print On Demand title in the next 'year or three'."

Well, that's not perfect, but still not a fatal error; 'year or three', sounds, as you emphasize, like he doesn't really care and is in no particular hurry.

I'm assuming one of the publishing arms of John Gregory Betancourt's Cosmos Books will be doing the POD of Lexicon Urthus (they did the Crowley critbook edited by Mr. Andre-Driussi and Ms. Turner) and that any delay in it being scheduled is more likely due to their workload than any alleged indifference of the sorely-missed mantis.

(On a Crowley note, anyone read Lord Byron's Novel yet? It's next on my list. But when-oh-when is Endless Things coming out?)

msg

Roy C. Lackey — 22 Jul 2005, 10:44 · follows mournings glory

I passed along the recent queries about LEXICON URTHUS to the author. Here is what he had to say:

What to tell the List:

The lexicographer is working on the Lexicon.

All the corrections (and most of the additions) of AE& series and NS-1 are going into it.

In addition, all the named characters.

It will most likely be a print on demand book.

No release date as yet. Probably a year or two away.

In the meantime, for those who need the information and cannot wait, signed and numbered photocopies (spiral bound) of the Lexicon are available for \$24 plus shipping (in US \$3 media mail, \$6 Priority Mail).

Thank you for your interest in Sirius Fiction.

=Michael=

-Roy

pthwndxrc1zp — 22 Jul 2005, 11:08 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Woo-hoo! That is *excellent*, both short-term and long!

Hey, Civet -- are you reading this? <grin>

On 7/22/05, Roy C. Lackey <rc1ackey at stic.net> wrote:

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Thank you for your interest in Sirius Fiction.

=Michael=

-Roy

Chris — 22 Jul 2005, 18:37 · in reply to pthwndxrc1zp

This is indeed good news, although I am more interested in the long term (expanded, corrected version) than in the short term (I am not **quite** fanatical enough to spend \$30 on spiralbound photocopies just to have it right this second).

Someone mentioned Doctorow, and there's certainly something to be said for that kind of publishing in principle, but to throw in my two cents: just because it works for one person (and in one genre) doesn't mean it will for another. Doctorow's expected audience is not the same as that of LU, even if there is some overlap. One has to respect the author's knowledge of his field and his audience; if he doesn't want to distribute on the same model as Doctorow it is because his **professional** opinion that it isn't for the best.

That said, I think the **availability** of an electronic format opens up enticing possibilities when it comes to Wolfe's work and the related materials. The ability to make citations and to look up vaguely-remembered counterpoints makes a huge difference in the kind of arguments we have here.

Actually even though I love paper books and insist on having physical copies of the books I love, a serious argument could be made that the lasting **value** I'd get out of an electronic version would be at least as much, or more, than I'd get out of the paper version.

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Thank you for your interest in Sirius Fiction.

=Michael=

-Roy

Maru Dubshinki — 22 Jul 2005, 20:40 · in reply to Chris

On 7/22/05, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Amen! This is the sort of thing I was trying to say, but I was afraid would come out sounding all wrong. But Doctorow shows that it works sometimes; we don't know for sure whether a reference would work- but has anyone tried? Nor can I say for sure that making LU electronic would boost sales (Wikipedia is an obvious reference example, but it is explicitly nonprofit, so not useful. But it certainly illustrates that communities can grow up around reference works, and that volunteers will give their time to improving a common reference.), but I can definitely assert that a LU online would be far superior to any POD edition, just on the amount of people who would be able to access it, to say nothing of further improvements such as being able to link entries, it being much more current, error fixes a lot faster, and if in a wiki, community-improvable.

~Maru