

Forgotten Names

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 28 Mar 1998

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m.driussi — 28 Mar 1998, 19:21

Reply: Item #2316394 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

raster,

Right re: Dux Caesidius. He died the year before Severian returned to Urth (and there was that dead assassin in the Second House; are these two deaths related?). In addition to the Claudius theme, I believe the scenario shows us that Severian hasn't fully learned the lesson of the Storm on Gyll south of Os, which was raised because of his jealousy regarding Burgundofara and Captain H. That is to say, the same sort of thing happens--Severian's "ID Monster" raises the dead assassin and allows it to kill Valeria for her infidelity, but in this case by way of a familiar (to Severian) mechanism exactly that of judge (who hands down death sentence, but doesn't execute it) and torturer (who executes but doesn't judge) which leaves two people "guiltless" (persons one step removed) and one person dead.

(Wasn't "Duxbellorum" one of historical King Arthur's titles?)

To which I'd like to add a new speculation regarding Holy Katharine, patron saint of Severian's guild. I remain puzzled as to Severian's rather quick and callous murder of Prefect Prisca (V, ch. 36), a move we know was instrumental in breaking the guild of jailers into the guild of torturers and the guild of witches (attributed to Ymar). I have failed to find any case of Jesus doing something like this womanslaying, nor any clear mythic link. Yet it just might be that this tyrannicide is transformed into the yearly atonement ritual for Holy Katharine.

Re: planets. I now tend to think Abaddon is the word for "subspace" (which makes much more sense). Don't forget "Serenus" aka Jupiter aka "Bethor."

Re: G17. Perhaps they have "Correct Thought" versions of politburo titles? (Since GW has said G17 comes from soviet politburo.) "Number 2 is dead--long live Number 2!"

Re: carbon dating personal names of Urth. The paradox of our world where such modern sounding names as "Catherine" are applied to such ancient saints, and saints of several centuries later have such unusual "ancient"-sounding, exotic names. As alga pointed out, Jonas is an Old Testament name, suggesting (perhaps tentatively) that this character comes from a pre-Conciliator period (let alone the whole issue of how the biblical "Jonah" story shapes the Urth adventures of Jonas).

So "modern" names can be ancient and "ancient" names can be modern, depending on the overall theory (i.e., "the what's-the-point? point" in vernacular) in play.

How about names for the quarters of Nessus? My newest theory is that "Algedonic Quarter" is the Latinate officialese form given to a dead (but not yet forgotten) quarter, referring in this

case to the torturers and the prostitutes to be found there. The people of a living quarter refer to it by some landmark: their use of the term "Old Citadel" implies there is a "(newer) Citadel" (presumably the citadel of the archon of Nessus); Dorcas goes home to "Oldgate," which is now a nameless ruin but had a living name when Dorcas was first there forty years earlier.

So across the river from the Algedonic Quarter we have the khan of Night and a lion pit as two famous features. What might the Latinate name of that quarter be?

Dead languages: on Urth we have quasi-Latin and pseudo-Greek in some use, both using alphabets; we also have a "crimson teratoid sign" referred to as "a glyph from some tongue beyond the shores of Urth" (II, ch. 18). What language analog does this belong to?

"Glyph" is used to describe elements of written Hebrew, I believe. But the hierodules, who use Hebraic terms for planets, seem to describe a sigil of "snake biting its own tail" as the symbol for Urth (III, ch.

33). True--a culture can use both symbol and glyph; or there could be two different cultures.

Hard to say. I should probably re-read Borges's THE BOOK OF IMAGINARY BEINGS, which Wolfe cites as the origin of Baldanders; maybe there's an answer therein.

=mantis=

C R Culver — 29 Mar 1998, 01:25 · follows m.driussi

Mantis said:

Severian's "ID Monster" raises the dead assassin and allows it to kill Valeria for her infidelity<<

Um, doesn't Severian find out she remarried *after* he revives the assassin? I blieve Odilo or Pelagia tells him after the Flood. And there always seemed something Christly about Severian's revival of the assassin, as he is giving even sinners a new life after death.

their use of the term "Old Citadel" implies there is a "(newer) Citadel"

(presumably the citadel of the archon of Nessus)<<

Are you sure "old" is capitalised? And yes, the archon has to be somewhere.

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Charles Dye — 29 Mar 1998, 18:11 · follows C R Culver

From: m.driussi at genie.geis.com
Subject: (urth) Forgotten Names

Re: planets. I now tend to think Abaddon is the word for "subspace" (which makes much more sense). Don't forget "Serenus" aka Jupiter aka "Bethor."

You're right on Serenus -- I'd completely forgotten that one. I'll have to disagree on Abaddon, as Severian lists it among "worlds" and "spheres of ... cindery hills where lava rivers flow" But perhaps the name of a planet was later applied to a plane, or vice versa.

How about names for the quarters of Nessus? My newest theory is that "Algedonic Quarter" is the Latinate officialese form given to a dead (but not yet forgotten) quarter, referring in this case to the torturers and the prostitutes to be found there. The people of a living quarter refer to it by some landmark: their use of the term "Old Citadel" implies there is a "(newer) Citadel" (presumably the citadel of the archon of Nessus); Dorcas goes home to "Oldgate," which is now a nameless ruin but had a living name when Dorcas was first there forty years earlier.

Given the definite article and the caps, I still assume that the Algedonic Quarter is a specific name for a specific part of the city: "the Echopraxia is in the Algedonic Quarter," not "the Echopraxia is an algedonic quarter." Moreover, I'm not even sure that the torturers' tower is really within that Quarter. The peltast on the bridge places the Old Citadel at the edge of the Algedonic Quarter, but Roche implies that the Citadel is outside the Quarter. Do you have a derivation for that word "algedonic?"

Topic veer: "algedonic" sounds like it might have been a name for a wing of the House Absolute, doesn't it? We have the Hypogeum Amaranthine and the Hypogeum Apotropaic. Would Master Ultan's stacks connect with a "Hypogeum Athenaeum?" Never mind.

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