

# Greek to me

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 29 Mar 1998

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Alice Turner — 29 Mar 1998, 14:31

3) Valeria's second husband (who \*was\* he? any ideas?)

This one, at least, we know. Dux Caesidius was one of Severian's military commanders during the Ascian War. He never appears in the texts, but we do know that he looks something like Severian himself.

"Dux" is, I believe, a Latin word meaning "leader," a cognate to "duke."

Yes, "dux" means "leader" in Latin, and is still used for "head boy" in Scottish schools (OED).

4) The names of the planets beside Urth, Verthandi, Skuld, and Dis.

6) The previous Lictor of Thrax.

7) Cyriaca's husband.

8) The name of Dorcas' ("Cas") husband.

9) The Cumaean's real name, if any.

I think she may be an unhumu ;-).

10) The name (and purpose) of Baldanders' undine.

Oddly enough, one of the undines has essentially the same name as the lake where Baldanders's castle stands: Juturna = Diuturna, as "diurnal" became our "journal."

It really is the same name, which indicates to me that she was the nymph of the lake before she grew so large, thus by extension she does in a way belong to Baldanders, or maybe he to her.

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

Yes. With the words separated, I think.

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.

Hmmm. Does that mean that you did find biblical/mythological links to most of Sev's other deadly acts? Gosh....what about the sizzling of li'l Sev?

Re: planets. I now tend to think Abaddon is the word for "subspace" (which makes much more sense

Yes, it does. It's Milton's word for the pit of hell (Hebrew: destruction). Of course, TBOTNS is full of hell imagery.

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.

Well, the "alge" part of the word in Latin refers to cold, which would work here. But in Greek, it refers to pain, which I think works better. (OED again)

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?

Noxious? Leontine?

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?

Greek. It means "monstrous" and refers to medical malformations.

"Glyph" is used to describe elements of written Hebrew, I believe.

Glyph is also Greek, used to describe carvings or symbols.

I'd say Greek wins in a walk.

Thanks, Damien, for stations of the cross. And for lively Peace piece!

Seth, Disclave is dead for this year. And if you're going to join our list (I hope you do), it would be wise for you to skim the Archives. If you had done so, you'd already know that.

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