

Hethor

The Urth list — 16 messages, 12 voices, 05 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4583>

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b sharp — 05 May 2006, 13:41

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Like Roy, I don't find the Purn-Hethor connection satisfying. It is all based on the name Purn and that he is a sailor. There is no physical resemblance nor psychological resemblance to twisted, mysterious Hethor. To me Purn seems to represent the simple, average Urth resident who would instinctively fight to save Urth without much care or thought to deeper issues or personal demons. Also, Gunnie has dark eyes, not violet, and is a very big, strong, aggressive woman. Hardly a good candidate for a poppet doll with small hands who lays in a lemonwood box all day waiting to spend the night with Hethor. (But perhaps a childish version of Thecla is...)

However, Hethor as a shape shifter is satisfying to me for a few reasons. Even Severian wonders how Hethor is able to transport his larger pets around. There are some interesting early (SotT) statements Hethor makes to identify himself. Stammering, he says something like "I the old captain, the old lieutenant, the old cook, feeding the dying pets." I take this to be a true description, though I can't tell whether Hethor is describing a series of promotions or demotions on the ship. But I think he was, at some point, captain.

In UotNS we find in Tzadkiel, another ship captain, an angelic, shapeshifting being (as is the angel in Melito's story). I think this lends credence to the idea of captain Hethor also being a winged, shape shifting creature, perhaps the obverse of Tzadkiel...a fallen angel?

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So what was the limping ship Hethor was the captain of? Some suggest it was the ship that crashed leaving the ancestors of the antechamber prisoners and that Hethor's real name is KimLeeSoong. This could be the case, but then he would be a normal human not a shapeshifter.

There is another ship which looms very large in BotNS but seems so far to have avoided attempts at explanation through all these years. This is The Citadel. I take The Citadel to be a ship on a par with the Quasar due to its large size and irregular shape (contrast to the Hierodule's ship which is like a flying saucer). I think the Citadel ship is an alternate version of the Quasar, with Hethor as its captain. This ship was apparently poorly captained, flew too close to Urth (to retrieve his stolen paracoita?) and got stuck.

bsharp

Macronaut — 05 May 2006, 15:01 · in reply to b sharp

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Macronaut

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Rex Racer — 05 May 2006, 15:28 · in reply to Macronaut

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Duncan Truter — 05 May 2006, 15:31 · in reply to Rex Racer

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mournings glory — 05 May 2006, 15:35 · in reply to b sharp

From: "b sharp"

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Pterodon does yield the letters to form the homologous snippet, p-e-r-n. But perhaps even more interesting the word "purn" itself means "bone, skull" in proto-Dravidian. I'd been looking for a Korean or Chinese linguistic connection, and never mentioned the proto-Dravidian "purn" before because I couldn't connect it with Hethor/Purn until you brought up the "mitre of bone" angle. My thanks.

Like Roy, I don't find the Purn-Hethor connection satisfying. It is all based on the name Purn and that he is a sailor. There is no physical resemblance nor psychological resemblance to twisted, mysterious Hethor.

However, Hethor as a shape shifter is satisfying to me for a few reasons. Even Severian wonders how Hethor is able to transport his larger pets around.

I'm not crazy about the evidence for shape-shifting (such creatures populate Wolfe's universe like ants), but if it is so beguiling to you, you should have little trouble accepting the fact that one could appear as either small and gray-haired (Hethor) or more solidly-built and blond-haired (Purn).

In regards to Mr. Lackey's earlier dissatisfaction with the Purn=Hethor theory, I find it sound and well-reasoned. However, the fact that Wolfe brings up the beast-summoning mirrors in front of Purn and implies he is somewhat jealous when Gunnie bestows a kiss upon Severian suggests he wants us to at least consider the parallels between him and Hethor. Perhaps the nameless, but mysterious, little gray-haired man also noted to be aboard the Quasar simply overhears Sev talking about the mirrors, as well as sees Burgundafora kissing him, and it's he who's actually Hethor.

[snip]

Some suggest... that Hethor's real name is KimLeeSoong.

Never quite understood the tenuous connection here -- mostly because I don't understand how, in the concatenation of names, one arrives at "Hethor" from "KimLeeSoong."

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I believe the Quasar could easily contain the Citadel in one of its smaller bays, but now that you mention it once wondered if the Wall around Nessus might not have been an ancient spaceship cradle -- perhaps built to hold the early stages of Typhon's Whorl?

em

Andy Robertson — 05 May 2006, 15:37 · in reply to Duncan Truter

Duncan Truter writes:

agreed. the 'towers' were individual spaceships, from what I gathered.

In the visionary section at the end of the Long Sun books, the Matachin Tower is described as "the Malacic Transport" or some such thing. I can't remember the exact word but the implication is clearly that the Citadel is a spaceport and the towers are individual ships.

pthwndxrculp — 05 May 2006, 16:52 · in reply to mournings glory

I always assumed the Whorl was constructed entirely in orbit around Urth. Though I realize now this assumption was not based on anything actually stated in the books.

On 5/5/06, mournings glory <morningsglory at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Rex Racer — 05 May 2006, 17:01 · in reply to pthwndxrculp

Actually I believe it was mentioned, or apparent from context.. I seem to remember Mamelta maybe telling Silk about the landers coming and going (Why don't I just get a second copy of them all here for my office?!) . It is a hollowed out asteroid, so it would seem almost senseless to bring it down, fill it up and launch something like a small moon into orbit. The mind boggles alone on the energy required to get something of that size to 7miles/sec (escape velocity)

And the Wall around Nessus? Well- it is probably just a wall (though a feat of engineering that one could live their whole life in). Wolfe hides things in things, very, very true, but sometimes I think too much is read into things that just are themselves.

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Duncan Truter — 05 May 2006, 17:05 · in reply to Rex Racer

<snip snip>

Rex Racer wrote:

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well said, I've felt like saying that already today :)

Roy C. Lackey — 05 May 2006, 19:00 · follows Duncan Truter

Rex Racer wrote:

I can claim no authoritative position without the books at hand to reference,

but I remember nothing to indicate the whole Citadel being a massive ship on par with the Quasar, rather than Nessus old space port.<<

That is correct. The Citadel was the old space port. See, URTN, chapter XXXV, p-251.

-Roy

Tristan Davenport — 05 May 2006, 19:27 · in reply to Rex Racer

Actually I believe it was mentioned, or apparent from context.. I seem to remember Mamelta maybe telling Silk about the landers coming and going (Why don't I just get a second copy of them all here for my office?!) .

Perhaps Mamelta said so, but I seem to remember a flashback from Maytera Marble, too (instead?). She was herded onto the lander and has a clear memory of admiring one of the chem soldiers who was standing guard. I think that was in Lake or Calde otLS

Tristan

tristan_davenport at hotmail.com

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Jeff Wilson — 06 May 2006, 04:55 · in reply to Rex Racer

Rex Racer wrote:

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The Wall, with the peculiar positioning of the guardsmen inside it, could be a huge, grounded spin-gravity generation ship, similar to the Whorl, but hollow on the inside and roofed over. During flight gravity would be outward, along the radius, rather than along the axis, so some furnishings and fixtures would be seen as pointing the wrong way, or swiveling crew compartments could likewise be worth remarking on.

Any sizable ship landing under thrust would clear the ground for some distance around, so its possible that you have a circular ship forming the wall around Nessus, only it landed far outside of town, then the town grew out to meet and enter it. Or it could merely be the wall of the Citadel, created when smaller ships landed inside it to avoid blasting the countryside or to be convenient to the other ships and shared utilities.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

maru dubshinki — 06 May 2006, 07:38 · in reply to Macronaut

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Macronaut

I agree with the others. The only textual support I can possibly see would be the intricate tunnel systems being actually corridors and tubing etc. But that's pretty thin.

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mournings glory — 06 May 2006, 16:37 · in reply to maru dubshinki

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From: "maru dubshinki" <marudubshinki at gmail.com>

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Totally unsure if this is relevant or not, but at the end of *_Shadow_*, as Sev and his friends approach the Nessus Wall, we are told "It is of black metal, like the walls of the Citadel, and for this reason it seemed less terrible to me than it would have otherwise--the buildings I had seen in the city were of stone or brick, and to come now on the material I had known from earliest childhood was no unpleasant thing."

Now in a resource-depleted world, walls of metal seem odd to me -- especially one that seems to make the Great Wall of China look like a child's miniature. Then again maybe/probably both walls were constructed at a much earlier time by the same technology and design team? Dunno.

It also seems to me that when Severian enters Nessus in *_Urth_*, there is no Wall in place. Plus Baldanders seems to imply he knows why the Wall was built and it's his pele tower at Lake Diuturna upon which the saucer ship of the Hierodules parks itself.

ehm

b sharp — 07 May 2006, 03:28 · follows mournings glory

Thanks to Macronaut and mourning's glory for those posts on Hethor. So it seems we have two contenders for Hethor on Tzadkiel's ship. Is one a red herring?

One is big blonde Purn (if only he was Pern...) who feeds the dying pets (though seems unlikely to be a cook). And the other is "a little man with dirty gray hair like Hethor" who might be a lieutenant...to a captain of the jibers, who is subsequently killed...elevating Hethor to captain? Would Wolfe be so devious as to disguise Hethor with a simile?

Also that little gray guy is in a very weird scene which I forgot about. Sev is alone after scaring off Zak when a forcefield seems to catch and hold him. He is captured (or maybe killed again?) by a group of jibers and forced to watch a movie clip showing a "semblance" of himself as autarch in his court. He is told to imitate the semblance or be killed.

What is all this about and why is this "semblance" so important as to rate its own chapter?

Stanislaus — 10 May 2006, 16:23 · in reply to b sharp

Hello bsharp,

Friday, May 5, 2006, 3:41:10 PM, you wrote:

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bsharp

Citadel is not a ship, but a starport. Some of the towers (Matachin Tower, but not the witches' tower) are ships, or better - atomic rockets.

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

Poznaj Stefana! Zmien komunikator! >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f1924>