

Abaia & co.

The Urth list — 15 messages, 10 voices, 19 May 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4600>

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Roy C. Lackey — 19 May 2006, 06:43

mourning's glory quoted Dan'I and wrote:

I do wonder about this. Is there any specific (textual) reason to suppose that the Megatherians, at least some of them, _don't_ survive the coming of the White Fountain? Thematically it makes some sense, but it also makes thematic sense that at least some _do_ survive --

Survive, yes; thrive, no. "Their power surpasses understanding, and I know now that they could crush us in a day if it were not that they count only enslavement, and not annihilation, as victory." So if a flood wiped out all of their current slaves (the Ascians), as well as most of their potential future ones (everyone else), they probably wouldn't even stay -- certainly, unless they were irretrievably stranded, they would have little reason to prolong their mission.

This is one of those areas where Wolfe strains my credulity a tad thin. I mean, Abaia & co. are reputed to be literally as big as mountains. Even Jonas affirmed that improbable size. I don't know if the upheaval of continents occasioned by the passage of the white fountain would harm a "mountain" or not, but if they did survive and wanted to leave Ushas, how could something(s) that big ever get off the planet? If they did die with Urth, there must have been a monumental stench in the early days of Ushas.

Typhon said something that implied that they had not been on Urth in his era. "But I have lived almost a day [since Severian revived him] and have sent my thought into far places. There are powers in the seas now who would rule. They will become our slaves, and the hordes of the north are theirs." (SWORD. chapter XXVI) That "now" suggests to me that they were something new to him.

The undines as "brides" of Abaia strikes me as ludicrous unless bride is meant metaphorically, in the sense that nuns are said to be brides of Christ. Juturna was big -- about sixty feet tall at the Cephissus -- but still quite small in comparison to a mountain. Undines as sexual playthings? On the last day of Urth, Baldanders had grown to about twelve feet tall, and the rest of his body seemed to be in proportion to his height. His eardrums had grown so thick he was almost deaf. Even so, as a sexual partner for Juturna, I don't think he would measure up.

As for Severian and Juturna; perhaps I lack sufficient imagination, but I just don't see him as being of much use to that scarlet-eyed hussy. <g>

-Roy

nastler — 19 May 2006, 08:32 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I'm enjoying the reheated discussion about Baldanders and the megatherians.

Baldanders as a "kind of baby Abia" is an important

theory, but what if he IS Abia? This has been proposed before (I can't find the ref, but it must have been Borski, right?), and Sev as eventual Lake God (Oannes?)

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rlackey at stic.net> skrev:

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b sharp — 19 May 2006, 12:27 · follows nastler

So we are on undine mating habits, hm..I think Robert Borski is of the opinion that Baldanders mated with one of them, which gave him the ability to breath underwater. Severian acquired that ability also, so did he also mate?

Elephant seal males (up to 10,000 lbs) mate with females (closer to 1000 lbs) so maybe Baldanders and Juturna (yes, Diuturna) were able to do it. Severian, well.....creates a very awkward visual, to say the least.

Severian does dream of undines when he first meets and sleeps with Baldanders. There is the suggestion that dream was originally intended for Baldanders but found a more enticing target. In Eschatology and Genesis we find that Meschianne, Jahi and the Contessa are all competing to mate with Meschia (Severian) as the end of the world approaches. Perhaps Juturna wants to get in on the action? What exactly DID she want from him at the river Cephissus? "only your love, only your love...."

Regarding mating with Abaia, I think also in that dream, the undines proclaim that they are daughter-brides waiting until they have grown big enough to mate with him.

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before (I can't find the ref, but it must have been Borski, right?), and Sev as eventual Lake God (Oannes?)

Could the giant baby found in Baldander's castle be the infant Abaia? As Severian tells us, "I left this boy where I had found him, and to this day I have no notion of what may have become of him." Pronouncements like this by Wolfean characters make me very suspicious, and if his mother is Juturna and experiences time backwards, he could evolve widdershins fashion into Abaia -- a rather nice irony, if Severian is his father. This would also make the undines mother-aunts more than sister-brides -- or maybe not, given the novel's many incestuous couplings.

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Again, I think you're thinking too rigidly biological here. Severian couples with Apheta, and their child is the White Fountain. Explain the genetics of that one.

Re 14 vs 17, and minotaur math:

I guess that makes more sense: 14 is as high as the Minotaur can count. Ten fingers, two hooves, two horns.

What? No pizzle? Guess that makes him related to Appian-the-bull in at least two respects, no?

emotaur

Macronaut — 19 May 2006, 16:02 · in reply to mournings glory

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I agree with that, and I don't think you even need to resort to stellar/metaphysical coupling, basic physical biology will do. As a fan of H.P. Lovecraft, Abaia make me think of big Cthulhian monsters floating around in the sea with lots of psuedopods. Just because Abaia is the size of a mountain doesn't mean his sexual organs need to be.

Not to mention that if Tzadkiel can shed pieces to

form smaller, more manageable versions of himself, a big floating monster like Abaia might be able to as well.

Since everyone is on the subject of Megatherians these days, did anyone ever solve the mystery of what the giant walking thing was in the Saltus mine? Our only clues, as I recall, were:

- 1) it took steps (or at least flopped around loudly)
- 2) the man-apes were afraid of it (and therefore seemed to have some idea what it was)
- 3) Severian thinks "he now knows what it was".

Didn't he also ask Jonas about it, who had some idea but wouldn't say?

Macronaut

Daniel D Jones — 19 May 2006, 22:15 · in reply to mournings glory

On Friday 19 May 2006 11:43, mournings glory wrote:
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Cattle have cloven hooves, too. Ten fingers, four hoof-parts(1), two horns, one pizzle. 17. Would have worked out nicely. Too bad reality had to intrude.

(1) What's the word for half of a cloven hoof? Wolfe probably knows it but I don't.

Daniel D Jones — 19 May 2006, 22:17 · in reply to Macronaut

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I always thought it was a Talus, but I can't recall at the moment what convinced me of that.

Daniel D Jones — 19 May 2006, 22:24 · in reply to b sharp

On Friday 19 May 2006 08:27, b sharp wrote:
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opinion that Baldanders mated with one of them, which gave him the ability to breath underwater. Severian acquired that ability also, so did he also mate?

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Regarding mating with Abaia, I think also in that dream, the undines proclaim that they are daughter-brides waiting until they have grown big enough to mate with him.

Perhaps the approach is something like this:

"Disrobed, I will love it as if it were a dwarfish man. I will draw staring eyes and a smiling mouth. I will anoint it with sweet oils, cozen and kiss it, beg its love.... Erupting it will bathe me in semen, and I will praise and kiss the more, saying how happy it has made me and begging it not to go."

Daniel D Jones — 19 May 2006, 23:20 · in reply to Matthew King

On Friday 19 May 2006 20:35, Matthew King wrote:

On May 19, 2006, at 3:24 PM, Daniel D Jones wrote:

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For those who don't immediately recognize the source, the quote is from the Wizard Knight. That's even scarier out of context than it was in.

Scary? Probably not the adjective I would have chosen but it certainly demonstrates that Wolfe doesn't necessarily consider gross discrepancies in size to be a barrier to mating.

Matthew King — 20 May 2006, 00:35 · in reply to Daniel D Jones

On May 19, 2006, at 3:24 PM, Daniel D Jones wrote:

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Adam Thornton — 20 May 2006, 00:43 · in reply to Daniel D Jones

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Reality SUCKS.

Waaaah.

Adam

Transentient — 20 May 2006, 01:11 · in reply to Daniel D Jones

On May 19, 2006, at 6:24 PM, Daniel D Jones wrote:

On Friday 19 May 2006 08:27, b sharp wrote

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What I find most disturbing here is that this wouldn't result in impregnation, unless the giant's semen behaved similarly to the giant's blood.

And I dearly wish I hadn't ever realized that...

Daniel D Jones — 20 May 2006, 18:05 · in reply to Transient

On Friday 19 May 2006 21:11, Transient wrote:

On May 19, 2006, at 6:24 PM, Daniel D Jones wrote:

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Not exactly dinner table conversation, is it? However, considering the copious amount of semen that would be produced and the fact that the female is disrobed, I think it quite likely that a sperm could, ah, find it's way to the appropriate location to cause conception. I'm reasonably certain that there have been cases of pregnancy documented where no penetration occurred.

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I appreciate the effort, but its like that bedroom closet door in the first Poltergeist movie that I saw when I was way too young - nothing is going to make me "unimagine" this bit of horror. :)

Giant's blood is noted to be inhabited by numerous small loathesome creatures. I get the impression that this fauna is not OF the giant, but are more like parasites or symbiots of some kind. The giant's vital fluid is simply a microcosm of life.

But (correct me if I am misremembering), but the giants themselves rose from hacked-up bits of Angr herself originally, right? A bit of John Carpenter's visualization of The Thing going on here.

So which is it - is the blood of the Angrborn animated itself, is it inhabited by species of critter that are basically small organisms of the same flesh as the giant, similar to how the Angrborn themselves are remnants of Angr, or are the organisms that dwell in the blood of a giant some external species? Any thoughts?

In "The Legend of Xi Cygnus" from Innocents Aboard, which features a giant much like the Angrborn, they are described as "those small creatures that dwell in the blood." It seems more like these are parasites or symbiots - they aren't PART of the giant, they just live in his veins. I am not sure how much connection between this short and Wizard Knight I should read into it, but in the short story, I was left with the idea that the giant, the king, was symbolic of the Earth. And the dwarves were the human race, and the last line of the story was a rejoinder to be gentle on her old bones. (Well, the giant could be other things, too, that the human race has abused and defiled at its own peril.)

But at any rate - should the semen of a giant be similarly inhabited by squirming wriggling things that would be active participants in the consumation of a marriage between a giant and a human female, I wonder if they are actually OF the giant or merely creatures that live there in his um...

Tristan Davenport — 20 May 2006, 19:53 · in reply to Daniel D Jones

From: Daniel D Jones <ddjones at riddlemaster.org>
Reply-To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Abaia & co.
Date: Sat, 20 May 2006 14:05:34 -0400

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On May 19, 2006, at 6:24 PM, Daniel D Jones wrote:

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Certainly there have, many involving hot tubs.

~Tristan