

Two tombs

The Urth list — 15 messages, 7 voices, 03 Jul 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4660>

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Roy C. Lackey — 03 Jul 2006, 23:51

Last year there was some debate about whether or not the mausoleum where Cilinia was buried was the same mausoleum where Severian played as a boy. They are **not** the same, and I can prove it.

There were a total of five coffins in Sev's mausoleum, two open on the floor and three intact on shelves. These latter three were too heavy for him to even shift. (SHADOW, chap. II) Where Cilinia had been buried there were "lots of coffins. They were supposed to be up on stone shelves, but most of them were not, and a lot were empty." (RTTW, 391) "Lots" is, I think, more than five, and "a lot" is certainly more than two. At any rate, no matter how you parse it, the majority of the coffins in Sev's mausoleum were on shelves. The majority of the coffins in Cilinia's mausoleum were on the floor.

Plus, Cilinia's coffin was half the size of adult coffins.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 04 Jul 2006, 14:03 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Tue, 04 Jul 2006 09:51:19 +1000 "Roy C. Lackey"

<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

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where

Cilinia was buried was the same mausoleum where Severian played as

a boy.

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shelves. The majority of the coffins in Cilinia's mausoleum were on the

floor.

Plus, Cilinia's coffin was half the size of adult coffins.

Yep.

I've tried to make up stories about who the other coffins in Sev's tomb might belong to, but I can't find anything to go on. And why
two open?

Ideas, anyone?

don doggett — 04 Jul 2006, 18:27 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

--- thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

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coffins in Sev's
tomb might belong to, but I can't find anything to
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Ideas, anyone?

One is Severian's analog (Ymar, imo) or Sev himself,
the other his twin sister (probably Merryn, possibly
Valeria) though I feel strongly that the sex of Sev's
twin is variable. There's a lot of gender ambiguity in
Wolfe's work, it seems to me, beginning with 5HC.

Don

p.s. I've finished Soldier of Sidon, and I couldn't be
more pleased. If anyone else has read it, feel free to
write me offlist. Otherwise, I eagerly await the
October discussions.

b sharp — 05 Jul 2006, 20:50 · follows don doggett

thalassocrat and don write:

I've tried to make up stories about who the other

coffins in Sev's tomb might belong to, but I can't find anything to
go on. And why *two* open?

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the other his twin sister (probably Merryn, possibly
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twin is variable. There's a lot of gender ambiguity in
Wolfe's work, it seems to me, beginning with 5HC.

I don't have a good practical theory within the story regarding Severian's mausoleum but I
always think the five coffins are related to Five Heads in some way. And I think most agree that
the Five Heads of Cerberus are related in some way to Gene Wolfe.

Also, for some reason, I think the opened coffins have let someone out, while the other three

have a person/character not yet released. So maybe the first coffin is the Number 5 incarnation of Gene Wolfe and the second coffin is the Severian incarnation. Not very well supported, but...for what it's worth.

-bsharp

Roy C. Lackey — 06 Jul 2006, 07:26 · follows b sharp

Andrew wrote:

I've tried to make up stories about who the other coffins in Sev's tomb might belong to, but I can't find anything to go on. And why *two* open?

The clues about the mausoleum are few and scattered. The image of the man on the funeral bronze (we don't even know which coffin, if any, it may have been associated with) was said by Severian to look just as he looked at the time he was resurrected in Apu's tomb. By my calculations, Sev should have been about seventy years old at the time he was strangled as Apu. The logical implication is that Sev died not long after returning to Ushas and writing URTH; that or some cognate of himself who was that same age died somewhen in time and the body placed in the mausoleum by someone unknown, at an unknown time.

One bit of information comes from when Sev placed the skull before the closed door of the drowned mausoleum. (URTH, 335) He said that the flood had closed the long-jammed door, "having completed a motion begun perhaps a century ago." That implies that someone was messing around in the mausoleum something like thirty years before he was born. I assume that a body (or two) was removed. Who did it and why? But what I would really like to know is, *where are the bodies*?

It is possible that each of the five coffins at one time held the body of the same man -- Severian, from one or another of his incarnations. He was forever getting himself killed.

-Roy

b sharp — 07 Jul 2006, 11:45 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy says:

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I've thought about that but somehow the pieces don't seem to fit together. How many times does Severian die in the text? He says the first Severian didn't drown while swimming, and neither did he, because of Juturna. He postulates that the skull he found underwater was a boy who drowned in his place, then he puts the skull at the threshold of the now closed mausoleum as Roy noted. I wish I could tell if that showed the death of an incarnation or not.

He definitely died on the Sanguinary Field from his avern wound. As he dies he hears bells and sees the world as an Easter egg with all the artist's colors flashing. This is the only death where

we have another observer to help us. Dorcas tells, "I remember seeing the leaf, a horrible thing like a flatworm made of iron, half in your body and turning red as it drank your blood. Then it fell away. I don't know how to describe it. It was as though everything I had seen had been wrong. But it wasn't wrong. I remember what I saw."

What happened there? Maybe it was the nascent power of his claw/star working to shift time back a little, to where the avern didn't fully penetrate? Doesn't seem like an eidolon could have been created and Severian's dead body spirited away without the crowd and Dorcas seeing.

His death in the flood in the throne room seems to me to be the last gasp of his claw/star resurrection power. Again there are bells which have rung, though he sees only blue color this time. That sort of resurrection wouldn't leave a body.

He definitely dies and leaves a body on Tzadkiel's ship and as Apu Punchau so if somebody is collecting his old bodies and putting them in the mausoleum, that would account for two coffins. Anyone have thoughts on the third?

-bsharp

Roy C. Lackey — 08 Jul 2006, 05:46 · follows b sharp

bsharp wrote:

He definitely dies and leaves a body on Tzadkiel's ship and as Apu Punchau so if somebody is collecting his old bodies and putting them in the mausoleum, that would account for two coffins. Anyone have thoughts on the third?

The body of strangled Apu came back to life when the first light from the White Fountain reached Urth, so we don't really know what may have happened to it after Sev used the Corridors of Time to get back to Ushas. The revived Apu was exactly equal in knowledge and power to the newly made eidolon, equal at least up to the moment he was strangled. So if eidolon Severian could walk the Corridors, so could he. Who knows where/when he may have gone?

An obvious candidate for one of the coffins is the person for whom the mausoleum was built in the first place. In the second chapter of SHADOW we learn:

"Our necropolis is said to be the oldest in Nessus. That is certainly false, but the very existence of the error testifies to a real antiquity, though the autarchs were not buried there even when the Citadel was their stronghold, and the great families--then as now--preferred to inter their long-limbed dead in vaults on their own estates. But the armigers and optimates of the city favored the highest slopes, near the Citadel wall; and the poorer commons lay below them until the farthest reaches of the bottom lands, pressing against the tenements that came to line Gyoll, held potter's fields. As a boy I seldom went so far alone, or half so far."

Autarchs had never been buried on Citadel Hill, which eliminates Ymar; neither were exultants. The mausoleum was evidently built during the period of the autarchy, by or for an armiger or optimate. Neither armigers nor optimates were normally classed as "servants of the throne", but neither does that exclude them; after all, the cacogen Inire was such a servant.

There are scattered hints in URTH that Sev, in the future, would do some time traveling that was not related in the manuscript. One or more of those trips may have been directly related to the building of the mausoleum. This theory is reinforced by the three graven images above the door, which point directly to Sev and which would have no special significance for anyone else. I don't know what position he may have held during the early autarchy or how he died, if he did

die (it may have been a cognate), but it earned him a position high on Citadel Hill.

Another candidate for a coffin is the "first Severian" who was not (who *could not*) be returned to his own time after failing in Yesod.

-Roy

don doggett — 08 Jul 2006, 07:29 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

The body of strangled Apu came back to life when the
first light from the
White Fountain reached Urth, so we don't really know
what may have happened
to it after Sev used the Corridors of Time to get
back to Ushas.

He returned to Springfield and the Quickie Mart of
course. . .

Sorry, but I absolutely could not resist that.

Don

Jeff Wilson — 08 Jul 2006, 17:20 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett wrote:

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

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first light from the
White Fountain reached Urth, so we don't really know
what may have happened
to it after Sev used the Corridors of Time to get
back to Ushas.

He returned to Springfield and the Quickie Mart of
course. . .

Sorry, but I absolutely could not resist that.

"Please do not offer peanuts to my god."

Has anyone ever found the etymology of "punchau"?

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

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 09 Jul 2006, 04:56 · follows Jeff Wilson

On Sat, 08 Jul 2006 15:46:48 +1000 "Roy C. Lackey"
<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:
The mausoleum was evidently built during
the period
of the autarchy, by or for an armiger or optimate.

Why do you assume that? Assuming continuity between BOTNS and LS/SS, I think we can safely assume that in pre-Autarchial days, the necropolis could be a resing place of the highest status. Why else would Typhon's daughter have been interred there (in what I guess was probably Typhon's family mausoleum)? The tomb might have belonged to some very high-ranking,

pre-Autarchial figure, however related to Sev.

Roy C. Lackey — 09 Jul 2006, 21:23 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Andrew quoted and wrote:

The mausoleum was evidently built during
the period
of the autarchy, by or for an armiger or optimate.

Why do you assume that?

The images above the door, for one thing. If they represent Tzadkiel's Ship, the White Fountain and the Claw, they had no meaning before Typhon's era. The cult of the Conciliator didn't exist until Severian was sent from Yesod to Typhon's era for the express purpose of establishing the legend. The thorn that became the Claw and founded the Pelerines was also delivered then. There was no need for a White Fountain before then, or a Ship to take someone to Yesod to earn it.

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was probably Typhon's family mausoleum)? The tomb might have
belonged to some very high-ranking, pre-Autarchial figure, however
related to Sev.

Apart from Cilinia's burial on the hill, I don't think there exists another shred of textual evidence in the twelve books to connect any rulers, by whatever title or name prior to Sev, with any mausoleum in the necropolis. I don't know how much time passed between Typhon's unceremonious demise behind his curtain and Ymar's rise to power, but I don't see anyone on Urth erecting a burial monument on his behalf. He was both feared and hated while he lived, and we know he wasn't buried anywhere.

After Sev the Conciliator prophesized Typhon's death behind the curtain, Typhon's retort indicates that, if he were to die at all, he expected he would be interred in the skull cavity of his mountain. (URTH, 275) So if a "family mausoleum" was constructed on Citadel Hill, it must have been done while he still was alive, and it was intended to house only his family, not himself. Cilinia died young, whether in consequence of her revolt against her father or not. I suspect the former. If that is true, it is quite possible that most, if not all, of his family who may still have been on Urth at the time of his death died before him. At any rate, none of them seem to have had an impact on Urth's future history.

But this is all conjecture. I still see no reason to suppose Sev's mausoleum existed prior to Typhon's era, and his mausoleum was not the one where Cilinia was buried.

-Roy

Stanislaus — 09 Jul 2006, 21:31 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Hello Jeff,

Saturday, July 8, 2006, 7:20:26 PM, you wrote:
don doggett wrote:

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

Has anyone ever found the etymology of "punchau"?

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

"In Inca mythology, Inti was the sun god, as well a patron deity of Tahuantinsuyu. His exact origin is not known. The most common story says he is the son of Viracocha, the god of civilization. ...

Inti was also known as Apu Punchau, which means "leader [of the] daytime". Inti is represented as a golden disc with a human face. A great golden disk representing Inti was captured by the Spanish conquistadors in 1571 and was sent to the Pope via Spain. It has since been lost."

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

Zobacz, gdzie mieszka Twoja dziewczyna!
<http://map24.interia.pl/>

don doggett — 10 Jul 2006, 03:14 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rlackey@stic.net> wrote:
(regarding Typhon's family)

At

any rate, none of them
seem to have had an impact on Urth's future history.

This isn't quite true since, as the gods of mainframe on the Whorl, they helped to shape Silk and thus Severian, if the last book of the SS is to be believed. But that's not really what you meant by your statement, I imagine. You mean the immediate influence of their mortal lifespans, no?

Don

Mo Holkar / UKG — 10 Jul 2006, 08:25 · in reply to Stanislaus

At 22:31 09/07/2006, you wrote:
Inti was also known as Apu Punchau, which means "leader [of the] daytime".

Merryn: "The Mother has told us that his name means the Head of Day."

Is it generally accepted that the Apu-Punchau episode takes place in Earth's 'real' Inca period, rather than in some future-historic period for which Inca signifiers are used in the same way that Latin is?

Mo

Jeff Wilson — 10 Jul 2006, 08:30 · in reply to Mo Holkar / UKG

Mo Holkar / UKG wrote:
At 22:31 09/07/2006, you wrote:
Inti was also known as Apu Punchau, which means "leader [of the] daytime".
Merryn: "The Mother has told us that his name means the Head of Day."

Is it generally accepted that the Apu-Punchau episode takes place in

Earth's 'real' Inca period, rather than in some future-historic period for which Inca signifiers are used in the same way that Latin is?

I think it is, except for (as the author says) it being the previous cycle of creation, before our latest Big Bang. Though I am not sure if he is speaking as the same GW who is the notional translator.

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