

Appian's Proxy?

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 20 Aug 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4693>

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Rex Lycanthrosaurus — 20 Aug 2006, 18:45

Colleagues:

When Severian goes to Yesod, he designates his wife Valeria to be his proxy, and she is even given the title of Autarchia. Apart from Ymar, she is probably the only person in a thousand years to occupy the Phoenix Throne without first taking the alzado-laden derivative that contains all the memories of the previous autarchs. Or is she? After all, the autarch who is Severian's predecessor (and whose name never actually appears in either tBotNS or its sequel) also undertakes the same journey. But who is it that rules in his absence? And do we have any sense how long the former honey-steward is absent from Urth? Or at what stage in his own reign he leaves? Severian waits a decade before he journeys out and does not return for forty years. But surely his predecessor is not gone for a similar amount of time.

I ask this because there's a passage in _Urth_ where Severian writes "...I would now be permitted to reclaim the Phoenix Throne, as I had in the person of my predecessor" (XXIII, 4th paragraph from the end). But who is Appian reclaiming the throne from? Who has been his acting proxy or regent?

Rex Lycanthrosaurus
lycanthrosaurus at fastmail.fm

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b sharp — 21 Aug 2006, 03:27 · follows Rex Lycanthrosaurus

Regarding Appian, Rex asks:

who is it that rules in his absence? And do we have any sense how long the former honey->steward is absent from Urth? Or at what stage in his own reign he leaves? Severian waits a decade >before he journeys out and does not return for forty years. But surely his predecessor is not gone >for a similar amount of time.

I don't think Wolfe intends to be clear on these issues. To even try to answer them I am drawn to the scene where Severian meets Appian in the House Absolute. Severian wants to go to "the garden". Appian misunderstands and says, "I will show you the way to the Garden, though I am by no means sure you will be permitted to enter". Appian pulls out his mirror book, shows Tzadkiel to Severian and says, "Go if you dare".

The Garden..hm..more Genesis allusions? Anyway I always took this to mean that Appian used that book to travel to Yesod and take his test. No need for a proxy ruler. He could have been there and back in hours (returned in altered form, unfortunately). Anyway, in Urth, Tzadkiel makes it clear Appian's test was a boondoggle intended only to help Severian, through acquired memory, later. (though I don't see how it did help Severian). So I think there was no need for 10 years of preparation or a long voyage through space for Appian's trip. If someone has to lose his manhood, best it be done quickly as possible, yes?

-bsharp

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Aug 2006, 05:42 · follows b sharp

Rex Lycanthrosaurus wrote:

When Severian goes to Yesod, he designates his wife Valeria to be his proxy, and she is even given the title of Autarchia.

Not so. He left Inire in charge. (URTH, 239, chapter XXXIV, 3rd paragraph)

all, the autarch who is Severian's predecessor (and whose name never actually appears in either tBotNS or its sequel) also undertakes the same journey. But who is it that rules in his absence?

I assume that it was also Inire.

And do we have

any sense how long the former honey-steward is absent from Urth? Or at what stage in his own reign he leaves? Severian waits a decade before he journeys out and does not return for forty years. But surely his predecessor is not gone for a similar amount of time.

He need not have been gone any significant amount of time at all, what with time travel involved, and apparently wasn't. He evidently went to Yesod shortly before Severian was born. See CITADEL, chapter XXIV, about three pages in. Sev was gone from Urth for forty years only because the Hierogrammates deliberately returned him to Typhon's era to establish the Conciliator legend. That, and the fact that Sev wasn't very adept at using the Corridors of Time.

-Roy