

The Old Autarch and Paeon

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 28 Aug 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4702>

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Dan Rabin — 28 Aug 2006, 22:56

I have always interpreted the passage mentioning Paeon the honey-steward to be saying that the Old Autarch received instruction regarding the succession from someone he knew to be an aquastor of Paeon, his trusted teacher from his youth.

In other words, Paeon is to Old Autarch as Malrubius is to Severian.

This has seemed completely obvious to me since my second reading (which was the first for catching many internal references).

Independently, I'm one of those who doesn't think that the Old Autarch is Appian, precisely for the reason already cited that Appian's name is mentioned as a historical autarch, but the Old Autarch's name is never mentioned in any scene where he is present or even definitely referred to.

I have toyed with the idea that there's some sort of taboo on names of Autarchs during their reigns, but Severian wouldn't have to observe such a stricture at the time he's writing. Perhaps he has trouble distinguishing the Old Autarch from himself ever since the successional encephelophagy.

In case anyone needs another puzzle to speculate about, it has long annoyed me that Severian describes the Autarch on the counterfeit chrisos from Vodalus as androgynous, which I have (since second reading) always assumed to mean that it's the Old Autarch (the only one since Ymar to take the test in Yesod), yet Severian needs Thecla's memories to recognize the guy as the Autarch when he actually meets him.

-- Dan Rabin

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 28 Aug 2006, 23:42 · follows Dan Rabin

On Tue, 29 Aug 2006 08:56:46 +1000 Dan Rabin <wolfe-lists at danrabin.com> wrote:

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A quick "me too"; I don't see how this can be in dispute, but maybe I'm missing something.

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And how is it that people around the House Absolute don't recognize the the servitor as the Old Autarch? I think maybe there are some "continuity" glitches here.

Dr. C. Radish Mosswalls — 29 Aug 2006, 17:47 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Dan said, *"In case anyone needs another puzzle to speculate about, it has long annoyed me that Severian describes the Autarch on the counterfeit chrisos from Vodalus as androgynous, which I have (since second reading) always assumed to mean that it's the Old Autarch (the only one since Ymar to take the test in Yesod), yet Severian needs Thecla's memories to recognize the guy as the Autarch when he actually meets him."

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The general impression I get is that the profile of the Autarch on the coinage never changes. And to me it makes sense for an unchanging, androgynous image since the Autarch isn't just one guy, but a whole group of different people in one body. Just an idea.

-Jessie