

The ending of 'Soldier of Sidon' (spoilers)

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 15 Feb 2007

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Tom Foster — 15 Feb 2007, 09:02

Following on from my previous post concerning the ending of 'Soldier of Arete' (thanks to those who replied), I have now finished reading 'Sidon' and once again have a question about the book's conclusion: why do Qanju and the rest seem to go off and abandon Latro so readily, especially given that Wolfe has just spent two pages giving us the various principle characters' promises of aid to Latro (pp292-3)? Obviously, Sahuset has got what he wanted from Latro (the scroll - what exactly was on it?) but all seem to owe Latro rather a lot and it seems unlikely that they would be happy to leave him behind without even looking around for him a bit... I was pleased that Myt-ser'eu came back for him though!

Overall I thought that it was an enjoyable (and less confusing/demanding) read, but not as satisfying as the two Greek novels.

Tom

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 18 Feb 2007, 12:42 · follows Tom Foster

On Thu, 15 Feb 2007 20:02:32 +1100 Tom Foster
<tbfooster at ntlworld.com> wrote:
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I don't think we have enough info about why Latro was left behind; anyway, I couldn't come up with anything.

I found some things about Sidon a little disappointing. Eg:

- What happened to the memory palace? One of the things I never understood about Arete was Latro leaving his scrolls behind. Why would he do that? I could only guess that he had the memory palace thing working well enough to make them unnecessary. Perhaps the scrolls would in some way be available to him in the jar in the palace, just as they were deposited in the real version of the jar awarded to the Amazon queen. But not according to Sidon - Latro has abandoned the memory palace itself. It really demands some explanation, and we don't get one.

- Similarly, why would he leave behind the new scroll at the end of Sidon? And the whole device of the discovered scrolls is getting lame. If there is a Latro IV, I hope it gets replaced by something else.

- I don't like Wolfe's little childish whore-with-a-golden-heart thing. Myt-ser'eu is annoying. Why can't Latro have a Pharetra who doesn't get killed off almost immediately?

- The quest-y parts of the story don't add up to anything. He gets the shield-of-something-or-other and the scroll-of-something-or-other and Falcatta is now the sword-of-something-or-other, but as far as I can see there's nothing in this book which motivates why anybody should care about them. Too much is left blank for it to feel like a whole novel.

- Some of the interactions with gods seemed quite perfunctory. I want more from an epiphany of Isis than the couple of sentences we get. It all seems too much like some kind of adventure game - meet a god, get a blessing, move on - without any real significance to anything.

- There are some little writing glitches which I found quite jarring, given the beautifully polished prose Wolfe normally delivers.

Hopefully there is a Latro IV & a lot of the blanks do get filled in.

James Wynn — 27 Feb 2007, 15:54 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

why do Qanju and the rest seem to go off and abandon Latro so readily, especially given that Wolfe has just spent two pages giving us the various principle characters' promises of aid to Latro (pp292-3)?

I understood (based on Myt-ser'eu's statement in the last paragraph that Sahuset had bewitched the party to believe that Latro was aboard with them. I understood from Sabra's advice that Sahuset had Falcata and would never help Latro regain it despite his promises. That was the meaning of the god's claim that he already had the sword

J.