

Urth Digest, Vol 40, Issue 33

The Urth list — 6 messages, 3 voices, 21 Dec 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4962>

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Josh Young — 21 Dec 2007, 15:50

I might have missed the answer to this in the previous threads, (been busy and not following the threads) but I never got the feeling that Typhon's era had FTL at all-- I had assumed that FTL travel, from Urth, was part of the machine empire that existed in the distant past, and that Typhon was definitely post-machine era.

On Dec 21, 2007 7:53 AM, <urth-request at lists.urth.net> wrote:
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urth-owner at lists.urth.net

When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific
than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

1. Re: Typhon & the Whorl (Dan)
2. Re: Typhon & Whorl (Roy C. Lackey)
3. Re: Typhon & the Whorl (Roy C. Lackey)
4. Re: Typhon & Whorl (Pedro Pereira)
5. Re: Typhon & the Whorl (Pedro Pereira)
6. Re: Typhon & the Whorl (Pedro Pereira)

Message: 1

Date: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 00:54:38 -0600
From: Dan <autarch at vipn.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) Typhon & the Whorl
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Message-ID: <6.2.1.2.1.20071220230257.03b09b20 at pop.vipn.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"; format=flowed

At 04:48 PM 12/19/2007, thalassocrat wrote:

One thing which points the other way: chem soldiers were stockpiled
"for maybe 20 years" before being loaded onto the Whorl, according
to Hammerstone.

I think that is good evidence for how long it took to construct the Whorl, which reinforces my point that Typhon hijacked it. It wasn't built specifically as a personal monument to his grandeur or chariot to the stars. If anything, it seems like a living cultural museum to preserve Earth's social diversity. Given the rapidity of the decline and the length of time for construction it almost seems that there was extraterrestrial influence to motivate it's construction and then bring about the disaster which would necessitate it's existence. Like Noah's Ark and the great flood.

At 06:58 AM 12/20/2007, gwern wrote:

OK, here's another sticking point for me. We both agree Typhon's decline was swift, and so it's unlikely the Whorl was constructed during or after the period where he was stranded on Urth.

It somewhat follows from that that the whorl was not originally intended to be an escape vessel for some form of Typhon. But the Whorl is a STL ship! Why, in a period where there was FTL travel, and extremely capacious

FTL travel (the ship Severian travels on in Urth of the New Sun is just absolutely colossal) at that, would they have planned and begun to construct an STL vessel in the first place? Even if the available FTL vessels couldn't carry so much cargo, they might still best STL vessels given that they could make multiple trips.

I have a vague memory that in Citadel, there was a discussion about technology (which may have tied in with why the Hieros didn't use their ships to save the doomed population) with the point being that Earth couldn't make everything and some things had to be procured from other worlds. I think FTL technology would fall under this category and no doubt the Hieros would be reluctant to part with it. Especially to a tyrant like Typhon. The ones he had under his control may have been loaners or inherited from previous, more benevolent rulers. Besides, I don't see the Whorl as a lifeboat, more of a living museum. Far more people could be accommodated by better utilizing it's volume than wasting it to isolate culturally different city states.

thalassocrat wrote:

Abaia etc are in the oceans of Urth during Typhon's reign, and given that his family knows about them, presumably he does too (whereas in NS their presence seems to be a new thing for the "resurrected" Typhon).

I always thought Abaia et al was part of the plot against Typhon by his family. That plot got transcribed to the Whorl when they were digitally scanned. They knew about the creatures because it was in the works but the NS Typhon didn't because it never unfolded before he was, uh, dehydrated.

I

don't recall any indication that Pas knew about them. In Typhon's time they

were probably hiding, while in Sev's time they were more actively involved in the war and easier to discover. If Typhon knew of them before he wouldn't have hesitated a second to destroy them if he saw them as a threat. And I certainly doubt he would have given his digital family free run of mainframe if he suspected they were up to something.

As it is, I have to think that Wolfe didn't care very much about making the two series consistent. But if he didn't, then why the tie in at all? So maybe he had something else in mind which I can't

figure out.

It's a neat tie in to the previous series and provides one of those "hey wait a second" moments of revelation/realization. I do wish he would write a short story or novel exploring it further.

Pedro Pereira wrote:

As for the reason for constructing the Whorl, the major reason is that Wolfe wanted to write a story about a generation starship. The second is that Typhon wanted Immortality, he wanted to be Remembered. He was a megalomaniac. He wanted to be worshiped for Eternity. So he built the Whorl. Wolfe states so as the main reason in one of his interviews. With the whorl he installs a new colony in which people adore him as a god. As his empire grows, so does his cult. His name will not be a distant thing of no importance to people on the fringes of a nominal-only empire.

People

will actively worship him even if he never pays a visit in 100 years.

I'd certainly like to read that interview as it directly refutes one of my views on the issue.

Dan

Message: 2

Date: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 01:57:40 -0600

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Typhon & Whorl

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID: <005601c843a7\$2b7ef880\$63c85a42 at rclackey.stic.net>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

Andrew wrote:

I just find it really difficult to match up the NS and LS/SS scenarios.

You've said as much in the past. I agreed with you then and I agree with you still, fwiw.

[snip]

Abaia etc are in the oceans of Urth during Typhon's reign, and given that his family knows about them, presumably he does too (whereas in NS their presence seems to be a new thing for the "resurrected" Typhon).

Exactly right.

[snip]

As it is, I have to think that Wolfe didn't care very much about making the two series consistent. But if he didn't, then why the

tie in at all?

I don't know if Wolfe really thought SS would be "lame" without the visit to Urth or if he was just bowing to pressure from readers, particularly those on this list. I think LS/SS was confusing enough without muddying the waters even further with the NS link.

-Roy

Message: 3

Date: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 02:15:52 -0600

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Typhon & the Whorl

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID: <007701c843a9\$b68eb940\$63c85a42 at rclackey.stic.net>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

Dan wrote:

[snip]

I have a vague memory that in Citadel, there was a discussion about technology (which may have tied in with why the Hieros didn't use their ships to save the doomed population) with the point being that Earth [snip]

I believe you meant Hierogrammates, not Hieros. The Hieros were the humans who cruelly fashioned the Hierogrammates in another universe that collapsed.

The Hierogrammates were the only things that mankind had made that survived

that universe. Tzadkiel was a Hierogrammate. Yesod is where they reside.

It

is outside the universe of Briah, which is where Urth is located.

-Roy

Message: 4

Date: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 14:40:33 +0200

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Typhon & Whorl

Jeff Wilson — 22 Dec 2007, 05:01 · in reply to Josh Young

Josh Young wrote:

I might have missed the answer to this in the previous threads, (been busy and not following the threads) but I never got the feeling that Typhon's era had FTL at all-- I had assumed that FTL travel, from Urth, was part of the machine empire that existed in the distant past, and that Typhon was definitely post-machine era.

Possible - Typhon's "dry" dialogue indicates he is familiar with some form of suspended animation that might allow STL travel between multiple stars by a particular person, but there still needs to be time for the news of Typhon's need to travel to many worlds and the various doctors from each of them to travel back with enough time left to perform the procedure. Typhon's natural lifetime could have been extended by divers means, but given his face orientation, it seems unlikely he would have hibernated while on Urth, waiting for the physicians to arrive.

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

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 22 Dec 2007, 06:06 · follows Jeff Wilson

On Sat, 22 Dec 2007 16:01:52 +1100 Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

Possible - Typhon's "dry" dialogue indicates he is familiar with some form of suspended animation that might allow STL travel between multiple stars by a particular person, but there still needs to be time for the news of Typhon's need to travel to many worlds and the various doctors from each of them to travel back with enough time left to perform the procedure. Typhon's natural lifetime could have been extended by divers means, but given his face orientation, it seems unlikely he would have hibernated while on Urth, waiting for the physicians to arrive.

And also: how could he have been the ruler of many worlds without some kind of FTL travel?

Jeff Wilson — 22 Dec 2007, 06:14 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

And also: how could he have been the ruler of many worlds without some kind of FTL travel?

The way it was done by rules from Alexander to Victoria: by proxy through stationary vassals, the individual territories garrisoned with loyal forces superior to any the locals are likely to raise.

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

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 22 Dec 2007, 06:48 · follows Jeff Wilson

On Sat, 22 Dec 2007 17:14:07 +1100 Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

And also: how could he have been the ruler of many worlds without some kind of FTL travel?

The way it was done by rules from Alexander to Victoria: by proxy through stationary vassals, the individual territories garrisoned

with
loyal forces superior to any the locals are likely to raise.

How does that work with travel times of perhaps hundreds of years?

Jeff Wilson — 22 Dec 2007, 15:46 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

On Sat, 22 Dec 2007 17:14:07 +1100 Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>
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The way it was done by rules from Alexander to Victoria: by proxy
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How does that work with travel times of perhaps hundreds of years?

The more infrequent the contact the more important the technological edge the garrison has
over the locals, and the stronger the ties between
the vassal and the absentee ruler must be. Bribes help, too. DUNE and the Foundation series
have some examples.

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