

Maximinus Thrax

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 11 Jul 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5100>

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Matthew King — 11 Jul 2008, 14:23

Thrax, the name of the city to which Palaemon exiles Severian, is also the Latin name for Thrace. Alice Turner mentioned this in her mapping of the geography of Urth onto Earth (<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0001/0002.shtml>). Thrax was also the name of a son of Ares.

Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus Thrax, a.k.a. Maximinus the Thracian, rose from common birth to become emperor of Rome in the third century, A.D. Disreputable ancient historians claim him a giant, over eight feet tall, known to eat forty pounds of meat in a day. "[H]is thumb was so huge that he used his wife's bracelet for a ring". He was intelligent and a notably good military commander. During a war against the Gauls, the legions mutinied, slew the reigning emperor, and proclaimed Maximinus the new emperor.

I'm thinking of Baldanders, of course, but I don't recall anything in BotNS that would clinch this as a connection.

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Maximini_duo*.html

Images of Maximinus Thrax

<http://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=28983.msg188068#msg188068>

b sharp — 11 Jul 2008, 19:01 · follows Matthew King

Matthew King I'm not sure if this impacts your post but I think it is quite well established that The Commonwealth and Severian's journey in BotNS occurs in what would be South America on Earth. If we accept that Severian putting mountains in the east as a blunder then most of the rest of the geography, animals (even fossils), plants and human culture matches that continent.

I tried to trace his journey once using Buenos Aires as his Nessus starting point and Lake Titicaca as the clear model for Lake Diuturna. I found a town of Salto for Saltus, Asuncion might be the location of the House Absolute. Iguazu Falls are The Cataracts, the Pampas are the Pampas but I found Thrax to be a toughie. Maybe the city of Tarija, Bolivia is the best match.

-bsharp

Lane Haygood — 11 Jul 2008, 19:05 · in reply to b sharp

You know, something just struck me as I was rereading Dr. Talos' play, and now I don't have my book so I can't quote chapter and verse, but look at the section wherein Nod and the Prophet are talking. Nod is talking about the white fountain coming to cure the black hole at the heart of the sun, and admits that it will cause death and destruction (eschatology) but that this follows in the natural sequence of the world. Nod asks whether he should hate a wound because the wound does as it is its nature to do. Maybe from a more global perspective, the coming of the New Sun isn't something that's the result of conscious moral agentive choice, but rather just a

completely natural occurrence.

Of course, tucked in to Thomistic natural law hierarchy, this means that it is God's eternal nature which has decreed this to happen, so I'm not sure if God gets off the hook for eschatology, but certainly the Hieros and Severian are just cogs in the wheel if Nod is to be believed.

Lane

On Jul 11, 2008, at 2:01 PM, b sharp wrote:

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Matthew King — 11 Jul 2008, 20:27 · in reply to b sharp

On Fri, Jul 11, 2008 at 2:01 PM, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

Matthew King I'm not sure if this impacts your post but I think it is quite well established that The Commonwealth and Severian's journey in BotNS occurs in what would be South America on Earth. If we accept that Severian putting mountains in the east as a blunder then most of the rest of the geography, animals (even fossils), plants and human culture matches that continent.

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I apparently hadn't read all of the following interview until today, because I was surprised at a few of the things in it. It contains the most candid answers I've ever seen Wolfe give on any topic.

<http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/interviews/wolfe46interview.htm>

"Insofar as I was trying to create any kind of parallels with an actual historical period here on Earth and obviously I wasn't aiming at developing an exact analogy?I was thinking of

Byzantium. Incidentally, I also got into trouble with some reviewers over my presentation of the Ascians, who were my equivalent of the Turks. If you read the book carefully, it's clear that the action is taking place in South America and that the invading Ascians are actually North Americans."

Byzantium was located in Thrace. http://www.thracian.info/images/thrace_map.gif

All that may not be terribly germane to the "Giant Maximinus Thrax" reference.