

The Seven Dancing Severians

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 May 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 04 May 1998, 09:49

Here's a question or two in relation to some other less well-defined "other Severians". I apologize for going a little afield from strictly "technical" definitions and I've been awed by some of your analytical skills, but I'd still like to look at these things in relation to a couple of other questions:

Could one of Severian's predecessors have been Palaemon? We know that Palaemon did wander at one time in exile from the guild, and we even hear a bit of his exploits from the Pelerine's slave who had at one time been whipped by Journeyman Palaemon. I've often wondered if perhaps Palaemon's story was essentially the novella that Wolfe started out to write, as recounted in CASTLE OF THE OTTER (wherein clever readers were encouraged to solve his "locked citadel" dilemma, though I never came up with anything). So I'm not saying that Palaemon was Sev1, but that perhaps Severian was not the first torturer to come close to bringing the new sun, or at least achieving a kind of grace, and so perhaps Sev1 was the next in line. Mal and Pal (as someone here once called them) are just about the only positive role models Severian has early on in his life since Gurloes is more or less presented as a fraud.

And where did Palaemon get Terminus Est anyway?

Another somewhat unrelated observation: it's tempting to equate the Ascians with the Red Chinese and their "little red book" of Mao's quotations, especially with added observations about the double meanings inherent in actual old Chinese "stratagems"; however, I'm now convinced that Wolfe could just as easily offer the King James bible as an example, when you consider the extent to which its words shape our own words.

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