

Urth Digest, Vol 73, Issue 54

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 Sep 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5759>

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Andrew Mason — 27 Sep 2010, 14:51

Jane Delawney wrote:

On 9/26/2010 2:24 PM, Andrew Mason wrote:

It's not clear to me that Autarchs eat the brains only of Autarchs: the stated aim of the practice is to make the whole Commonwealth present within one person. Though of course this raises the question who might have maintaining a chain of brain-eaters before Ymar's time.

Is there any evidence that anyone did? I don't see it. There's that 'perhaps' in Severian's musing (really, he has no idea at all how far back the 'inherited' memories go; he has no direct access to Ymar for instance - as Conciliator, Sev doesn't even recognise the guy at first, when he's supposed to have ingested Ymar's memories alongside those of all the other Autarchs) and while someone, somewhere, has to have introduced the tradition along with its essential mediator, the alzado, it's not at all clear when this happened.

I take it the 'perhaps' means Severian is unsure how far back the earliest memory he can retrieve goes - on the uncertainty of that I totally agree with you - not that he's unsure when the process of transmission started. That he should even consider the possibility of memories going back before Ymar suggests he has some inside knowledge about the history of the practice; if it weren't for that the natural thing to think would be that Ymar was the first.