

Concrete

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 29 Oct 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5768>

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Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 29 Oct 2010, 20:42

Howdy listers, lurkers, and layabouts,

As I've mentioned previously, I'm working on some illustrations related to New Sun... I have another question for you scientifically "hard" minded readers.

Concrete. Is there some reason that I've not yet thought of that would prevent concrete casting from being a viable technology on Urth in Ymar's or Severian's time It strikes me that concrete casting is a method that humanity would not lose, and I can't think of any reason why it wouldn't be used on Urth.

This came to mind when reading the Innovation comic, where the Oubliette is pictured with medieval stone masonry. The thought of a spaceport built on walls of rounded stone just seems wrong to me. No, the citadel would have tons and tons of concrete along with it's unsmeltable metal.

Am I wrong?

~Son of Witz

David Stockhoff — 29 Oct 2010, 20:55 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

I agree that concrete is a tough technology to lose. The Romans had it. If anything, modern improvements have only produced weaker, shorter-lived but quicker-setting concrete.

I also agree that the spaceport would have included a flat concrete pad at one time. Whether it still exists in Severian's time is another question. But surely there wouldn't be any stones UNDER the rocket ships that form the towers of the Citadel.

IMHO.

On 10/29/2010 4:42 PM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 29 Oct 2010, 22:04 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

From: <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

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I agree. Unless some futuristic technology makes it really easy to cut perfectly-shaped stone blocks!

(I always liked how in World of Warcraft the blasted fortress of Auchindown is seen to be constructed of reinforced concrete - it was a slight surprise in a fantasy world but I thought it worked very well.)

- Gerry Quinn

Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 30 Oct 2010, 03:49 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Thanks. I done forgot about them Romans having cement.

On Oct 29, 2010, at 1:55 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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Jeff Wilson — 30 Oct 2010, 06:43 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

On 10/29/2010 3:42 PM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org wrote:
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Speaking as a playtester for GURPS LOW-TECH (coming to a gamestore near you!): concrete is ancient; many Roman buildings include concrete and mortar construction, but it is very time consuming and labor intensive to make. Once motorized mixing is available (there are any number of still-moving machines on Urth), the chief expense becomes transporting the component earths from where they may be found (a problem with the roads closed in the Commonwealth) *if* they may be found after chiliads of construction.

I think the oubliette can be explained by having the ship-towers grounded in a field that is the remains of the old port, and the Citadel was made by putting up the unsmeltable walls and the inside covered over and built on like San Francisco after the 1906 quake. The oubliette and tunnels beneath it may not be literally and directly beneath the tower, but to one side, extending down from the lowest entrance hatch.

If the ships landed in pits, then there might be only a couple feet of crumbling concrete rubble in most places of the former ground level, easy enough to break through with the remaining bits of tech in the Commonwealth if it wasn't cleared away at the time the unsmeltable slabs were put up.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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