

Regency Plot Thickens

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 10 Jul 1998

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m.driussi — 10 Jul 1998, 14:23

Okay, things become more complicated!

The quote raster mentions (ch. 34 in URTH) has a context: Severian still thinks he has returned to his era (he doesn't guess he is in Typhon's); he has a sense of failure (since the white fountain cannot arrive to his era in time); and he is wondering about this "Monarch" people are talking about, thinking that Inire wouldn't do such a thing. (In a real sense, a presentiment of what he will find when he gets closer to home-time.) (We will skip over all possible excuses, like: Severian, hearing a masculine title "Monarch," envisions the first =male= candidate of succession, Inire, rather than the first candidate, Valeria.)

Of course I may be over-reading raster (throw me a bone!), but the suggestion is (I believe):

Severian's Reign from 1 S.R. to 10 S.R.

Inire's Regency from 10 S.R. to — S.R.

Valeria's "pseudo-autarchy" from — S.R. to 50 S.R.

Severian returns 50 S.R.

First of all, let me point out the "Odysseus Returns to Ithaca" mode at work in Severian's return to Urth. He becomes angry because his Penelope has usurped his throne and married again--his "Id Monster" reanimates the dead assassin before he understands that he has been gone forty years rather than the hundred days he has experienced; Valeria is killed for her infidelities.

With that out of the way--Inire as regent: what a dumb idea! Poor little wry-neck Inire, ancient and twisted! They only live a score of years! (That's 20, for you ultramoderns--so Inire is what, 19 or 21 already?) Serving autarchs since Ymar, skipping through the corridors of time! All reinforcing the notion that the trip to Yesod was thought to take less than a year.

We need dates here. Is there any suggestion in the text that Inire died--if so, when? Can we date Valeria's rise to the throne? Is there some text to support Feeley's notion that Valeria's time on the throne lasts only ten years: from 40 S.R. to 50 S.R. (I will be surprised, since I've voiced to him disagreement on that point and he never provided text, nor brought up this Inire angle).

Odilo's tale (ch 44, URTH) makes mention of Inire, but no word of his demise.

Eata's tale (ch. 46, URTH) strongly suggests that Valeria was on the throne and gold coins had her face and some man's on them when Eata got back from the Xanthic Lands circa 10 S.R. The feast on Iubar Street might have been a wedding feast celebrating Valeria's remarriage (what else could it have been--the annual "bread and circuses" block party?).

IF Valeria's reign is from 10 S.R. to 50 S.R., then the argument boils down to simply the use of the term "regency" (as committed by Feeley and myself) rather than some more-accurate-but-not-yet- specified word.

=mantis=

adam louis stephanides — 11 Jul 1998, 11:04 · follows m.driussi

On Fri, 10 Jul 1998 mantis wrote:

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But when the assassin is reanimated, Severian has no idea that Valeria is Autarch or has remarried; he doesn't even know if she's still alive. Or is the idea that Severian's unconscious somehow knows the future? If so, this would be ironic, since his conscious guesses as to the future are generally wrong.

Incidentally, as long as we're on this chapter (41) who is the mysterious lovely woman Severian sees in the Secret House? (I just came across this passage by chance, so maybe the answer is made obvious elsewhere in the book, or maybe it's been discussed on this list; if so, I apologize.)

--Adam