

"The Autarch's Face"

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Jul 1998

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Charles Dye — 11 Jul 1998, 13:42

So saith m.driussi at genie.com (mantis) :

This detail sparks other associations: for the current inquiry we will assume that the coins have Valeria's face. However, the mysterious coin of TBOTNS, which had a womanly face on it from a model never really identified, a coin given by Vodalus to Severian, turned out to be a fake coin. Who was the model? (People seem to assume that it is the old Autarch, unmanned and androgynous. Personally I think it is more likely to be Tzadkiel.)

Another mystery: How can Vodalus not recognize the Autarch whom he hates and wants to destroy? Especially if his profile is in circulation on the coinage? The old Autarch (oh, call him "Appian," I like the Claudian connection) is supposed to have acted as one of Vodalus's servants. Sounds like a recipe for assassination to me!

Putting someone else on the coins helps, but not much. Surely the court would notice, and Vodalus is not some farmer from Podunk. He'd hear rumors, right? Thea was *at* the court! "The face on the chrisos doesn't look much like the Autarch. He's chubbier, and he has thinner hair and no wings"

raster at highfiber.com

m.driussi — 11 Jul 1998, 21:27 · follows Charles Dye

raster,

Right, Appian is playing so many roles he rivals Kokkor Hekkus of THE KILLING MACHINE! Thea would certainly recognize Appian--after all, Thecla-in-Severian does--so does he therefore always meet Vodalus alone, in dark rooms?

This leads to the thread that "Vodalus is really Appian's selected heir (or one of them), as opposed to Baldanders (self-made man) and Severian (selected by someone else)." Vodalus does seem to be "in on" a game of some sort; even though at the same time he seems naive and flashy.

There is a bit of trouble in offering the Phoenix Throne to an exultant, however.

Back to the coin, I think having Tzadkiel's face on it would be like having a Liberty dime, that is, a coin with Liberty depicted on it as a lofty goal or guiding principle. Let alone a memento of the Trial. And a way to avoid being recognized by any citizen with a coin.

Tangent alert: hey, what do you think--maybe "Empires of Foliage and Flower" is actually set in what we know of as the Commonwealth! The Yellow Empire could be the Greco-Roman "Northwest Area" we all know and love so well; the Green Empire might be the Persian zone I

keep envisioning as being to the east beyond the mountains (homeland of people with names like Abdiesus). The Yellow Empire uses gold coins (like the Commonwealth); the Yellow Emperor travels incognito because of security reasons. So "Xanth" would be House Absolute or the city of the Monarch, and "Vert" would be a Persianesque city like Ctesiphon or Vathek. Then the war is over and the empires united, so that Persian troops could fight alongside the Europeanish city legions at Orithyia.

Just a thought.

=mantis=