

Feed Your Head or Go Ask Alga When She's 10 Feet Tall :-)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/997>

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Dan Parmenter — 16 Jul 1998, 09:49

Mantis wrote:

Actually I believe raster's primary concern re: authentic autarchs is the same as my own--the brain eating bit. It seems to define "autarch" as distinct from "monarch," "suzerain," "dictator of the proletariat," etc.; it also seems to figure into the equation of "how one person can represent many" in a concrete way rather than just the lip-service paid by representative democracy. The autarch =is= legion--it isn't just a metaphor.

From: raster at highfiber.com (Charles Dye)

And also provides a slick justification for the royal plural.

I notice that Severian drops that once he gets the various personalities in order and they retreat to the background. So "self-ruler" doesn't just mean free from restraints, it actually refers to ruling one's self, and all one's other selves.

Do you suppose that any of this would be "dynastic" Autarchs had their children eat their brains?

For that matter, given what we know about the Autarch being the only legitimate representative of Urth, what do you suppose would have happened if Severian had followed Appian's initial offer to go right to Yesod when he showed him the hierogrammate in the book? Would the hierogrammates have said "go back and tell that idiot to let you eat his brains first, oh and gain some more valuable life experience while you're at it and maybe rule the Commonwealth for a decade, THEN we'll talk." That incident has always troubled me. Appian knows who Severian is but seeks to extend his own reign. Is he just being foolish and vain and suffering last minute cold feet? "Oh, can't you just make him the new sun and let me live out my life as Autarch?" If this is the case, I'm assuming that some of the references to resuming the autarchy in Urth may reflect Appian's desires more than Severian's.

Prion wrote:

Has anyone noticed that the Autarch Appian's name is a homophone for apian (bee-like)? Any connection with the Honey Steward?

Bingo! Name pun -- Wolfe loves 'em. Also, of course, another Claudian reference.

I don't know if it's a homophone, and it's not quite a homograph either with that extra 'p', but terminological differences aside, I think that the connection is definitely intentional.

Bees show up in several places. More complicated sun imagery I think, though I'm not sure if I can pinpoint the mechanics of the symbolism in this case. I love the fact that the prisoners in the antechamber were fascinated by bees, thinking them as large as rabbits.

D