

Long Sun Names

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 Nov 1996

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Ranjit Bhatnagar — 27 Nov 1996, 21:06

I've been trying to figure out how various characters and other things on the Whorl got their names. I'll make a list on the web page if you send your contributions.

Master Xiphias -- he implies that Xiphias is a kind of fish (in Exodus, he misinterprets Moly as Mollie and jokes that it could be a relative). Turns out that xiphos is Greek for sword, which fits. A xiphias is probably a sword-shaped fish.

Azoth -- an alchemical term for mercury. My best guess is that it's a punning reference to Terminus Est, Severian's sword in the New Sun books. (Master Gurloes translated "terminus est" as "this is the line of division," but I like to imagine Arnold Schwarzeneger translating it as "I am the Terminator." Anyway, the azoth is certainly a line of division.)

Tussah - a kind of rough SILK, the word comes from Hindi for "shuttle" (as in weaving). I wonder if, besides the obvious Silk connection, Wolfe was thinking of the space shuttles that would carry Tussah's adopted son and his followers off the Whorl? Eh, too oblique.

Talus -- either an ankle bone or a sloping pile of debris. I can't figure it out. Any ideas?

Calde -- I've been told it's derived from the Spanish for "Mayor" (alcalde?)

'ishsh -- in Exodus, after Silk & Co have been captured by the Trivigauntis, they're waiting to be taken up to the airship as soon as they lower the "'ishsh." What's that?

Chough -- is pronounced "chuff." I had to look it up. The dictionary says it has red legs; Wolfe gives it a red beak too, but the cover artists seem to have missed that.

Incus -- a bone in the inner ear. (Patera Jerboa thought it might be some kind of creature that sneaks around stealing eggs from nests. (A jerboa is a leaping rodent with a long tail.))

Quetzal -- a brightly colored Central American bird. How did Quetzal get on the Whorl, anyway? Did he or one of his ancestors advise Pas back on Earth, telling them where to find a habitable planet?

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Whorl Web: <http://moonmilk.volcano.org/whorl/>
Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com