

Horn's Creation

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Apr 1997

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Doug Eigsti — 05 Apr 1997, 10:33

Tercel,

Your comment on Oreb's attack on Tick revives the issue of just how much of Horn's THE BOOK OF SILK depicts actual events, and how much is mere fabrication. You are correct, Oreb could not have given Horn his story for the sake of posterity, so the events seen through his eyes, must have been supplied by Horn.

I had originally thought that Horn might have interviewed the key players to fill in the gaps in Silk's story, but, aside from the few segments mentioned below, nowhere can I find the opportunity. There simply isn't enough time. Silk vanishes chasing Hyacinth just as Horn is leaving on the lander. Auk and Chenille went to Green. These, alone, would leave huge gaps in horn's account. Gaps that he would, of necessity, have had to try to piece together from the survivors on Blue.

He does mention, in "My Defense" (IV, p371.2), that "Many of you urge me to tell the story in my proper person, relating only what I saw, and in effect making myself my own hero." We know this to be false modesty. As I have posted earlier, he interjects personally flattering statements throughout the text. I submit that a story told in Horn's proper person would be brief indeed. He rightly set about to "recount the story of Patera Silk", (IV, p371.3), a more worthy protagonist. And a fine tale it is, even if it is fiction.

To Horn's credit, he does list some of his sources in "My Defense"

(IV, pp371 - 382): Marble reportedly relayed much while they served in the Calde's Palace together; Auk and Chenille on the flight to Mainframe (with an explanation of Auk's shriving); "Blood's conversations with Silk and Matera Marble were detailed to us by them", (although I still wonder when Silk found the time. No such event is described in the text, even though Horn's long conversations with Silk on the airship and in the manteion are.); Regarding Doctor Crane Horn "tried to convey something of" his character, implying that great license was taken in depicting him; Remora gave him much of Incus's character. (I chuckle trying to imagine Remora impersonating the sing-song metered speech of Incus); Horn knew Quetzal, recounting, in detail, his account of Quetzal's "vanishing". Remora, again, relayed further details concerning Quetzal. All told, these account for just a fraction of THE BOOK OF THE LONG SUN. Horn is to be commended for filling in the gaps so richly.

This leads to another question: How did the text, known as THE BOOK OF THE LONG SUN, get into our hands? Wolfe details how, in THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN, he acted merely as the translator for a manuscript that had "survived so many centuries of futurity". One must suppose a similar journey taken by Horn's tale, and, indeed, for THE URTN OF THE NEW SUN. Severian wrote two copies of his account. One was placed into a sealed leaden container and set adrift from Tzadkiel's ship as it plied time and space. Presumably this is the copy Wolfe obtained. (I forget the fate of the other copy. Any takers?) I am at a loss trying to construct a scenario for Horn's STARCROSSERS LANDFALL. How did it cross the stars in time and space to fall into Wolfe's land? I am sure Mr. Wolfe will explain all in THE BOOK OF THE SHORT SUN.

=Talon=

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com