

Vironese names, _talus_, and Quetzal-queztions

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Nov 1996

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Dan Rabin — 28 Nov 1996, 19:49

About `Xiphias': The scientific name for the swordfish is Xiphias gladius. `Gladius' is Latin for a short sword.

More on names: Here's a relationship that Wolfe doesn't seem to do anything with: The Prolocutor's robe of office is dyed with mulberry, and SILKworms eat mulberry leaves.

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

It's probably a Latinized form of `Talos', as in Dr. Talos from The Book of the New Sun. Michael Andre-Driussi says in Lexicon Urthus that `Talos was the miraculous bronze (or brass) man who defended Crete for King Minos by hurling stones or fire at strangers, or by scorching them in his red-hot clasp.' This sure sounds like a Book of the Long Sun talus to me!

'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?

It's probably the bird-cage-like hoist that the airship lowers to bring passengers and goods aboard. I don't know whether the Trivigaunti terms are intended to come from some known Earth language. There is also an issue of whether the word is a local Trivigaunti term used in the Common Language, or whether it comes from the local aristocratic language which is Siyuf's mother tongue.

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.))

It's Latin for `anvil' as well.

I thought it was amusing that all the members of the Ayuntamiento bear the names of lower primates: Loris, Lemur, Potto, Galago, Tarsier. Potto comments on the fact that they're all related.

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?

I want to know that, and a lot more! What motivated an inhumu to do the good deeds that Quetzal did while also satisfying his need for blood? Why did he become Prolocutor? Why did he proscribe human sacrifice? Why did he try to prevent theophanies?

There's also the question of the correspondence of Green to St. Anne in The Fifth Head of Cerberus. That's the planet with the shape-shifting aboriginal race that might or might not have imitated humans.

Wolfe remarks in an interview that he regards The Book of the New Sun as happening in the remote past, but I don't know what this means for the relative timing of the Whorl's arrival and

the events of Fifth Head.

-- Dan Rabin

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