

War With The Ascians as a Proxy War?

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 10 Jun 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3304>

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James Wynn — 10 Jun 2002, 18:38

Just to fill out the background material on pagan:

Henry Chadwick is the author of the Penguin-published "History of the Early Church" (a book I thoroughly enjoyed-but I can't find my copy suddenly). When I originally read HOTEK I was familiar with the etymology of pagan which Andrew quoted. But I seem to remember that I was persuaded to Chadwick's explanation because he insisted that the term goes back at least to the early 3rd century, when Christianity was still a capitol offense. If his dating is accurate, and the term was used by the military as he claimed (and I chose to take his word for it) then it seemed unlikely that the term was a snub to rustic "superstitions" since most prominent city-dwellers held the same beliefs at the time.

Anyway, I'm really enjoying the discussions on this list. :)

-Crush

Andrew Reeves wrote:

I'm going to throw in a bit of pedantry here. The origin of "pagan" came from "paganus" meaning "rube" or "rustic." Since Christianity started in the cities, eventually, the term for country dweller came to be associated with that of those who still clung to the old rites.

----- Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote: I am not knowing from Henry Chadwick. Merriam-Webster's online gives this for the etymology of Pagan:

Middle English, from Late Latin paganus, from Latin, country dweller, from pagus country district; akin to Latin pangere to fix -- more at PACT

Under PACT, we find this:

Middle English, from Middle French, from Latin pactum, from neuter of pactus, past participle of pacisci to agree, contract; akin to Old English fOn to seize, Latin pax peace, pangere to fix, fasten, Greek pEgnynai

So, wow: "pagan" turns out to be related to "peace." But, more to the point, Andrew's "bit of pedantry" seems to be pretty accurate.

Andrew Reeves — 11 Jun 2002, 12:23 · follows James Wynn

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

That brings up another thought. The Ascians are definitely baddies.

But if Erebus is, say Kim Il Song,

Okay, whoa, hee-haw, stop right there. The analogy I was drawing there almost certainly does not apply at the level of equating fictional character X to historical character X'. I was suggesting rather that Mr Wolfe's actual experience in such a proxy-war might make him more likely to portray such a war in his fiction, and pointing out some specific features that make me think that the war between the Commonwealth and Ascia is such a portrayal, and is colored by Mr Wolfe's experiences. But to try to draw character-level allegorical correspondences seems to me on about the level that tries to draw such correspondences from The Lord of the Rings to World War II.

Yeah, it would be goofy to try to draw a 1:1 correspondence between the imagery of BOTNS and anything happening here in the present. Nonetheless, if you've ever listened to Radio Pyongyang on short-wave (no, I don't remember the frequency), it sounds creepily close to Loyal to the Group of Seven. It seems that almost every other phrase is "Kim Jong Il wee dae han soo ryong nim" (=the Great Leader Kim Jong Il) and a series of other horrid totalitarian clichés.

But no, there's no one to one correspondence, I was just sort of writing down my ramblings.

Andrew

--Blattid

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Adam Stephanides — 11 Jun 2002, 14:01 · follows Andrew Reeves

on 6/7/02 10:49 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes at ddanehy at siebel.com wrote:
I do not have a clear answer to that, but can answer a variation on the question: I think Wolfe clearly wants us to assume that, whatever the motives of the angelic beings may be, humanity's best interests are best served by allying with the hieros.

Of course, the hieros do plan to wipe out 99.9% of Urth's population. But Wolfe may be taking the "Live Free or Die" view (not to mention the various reasons why this mass murder is a Good Thing that have been proffered).

--Adam