

latro and ares / mine of saltus

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 07 May 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3980>

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maa32 — 07 May 2003, 17:23

I'm reading the soldier books for the second time and I'm about 3/4 through Soldier of Arete. So far, the major gods conspicuous in their absence are Zeus, Hermes, and Ares. While there is a chapter entitled Ares and others, I'm pretty sure Ares doesn't make a direct appearance. Here is my question for the list - Is latro an avatar of Ares? He has all the qualities of Ares (thus Soldier of "Are"te.) There is that big discussion at the beginning of Soldier of the Mist where they talk about greeting a tradesman who has a family in a war by certain titles depending on where he is, and I thought this would apply nicely to Latro - he would seem to be a soldier, so everyone treats him as a soldier. Yet the gods don't treat Latro like just another soldier.

There is also a scene in Soldier of Arete in which someone states that Ares may be Ahura Mazda, the all good God, in disguise. There are other statements made that indicate Pleistorus is angry at the Thracian King Kotys for his treatment of the amazons and Latro - and note that Latro is especially troubled by the death of amazon women - they are the daughters of Ares. Also, in at least one place the claim is made that Pleistorus (or Ares) is "inside" Latro in some sense. Also, the ironic statement of Hypereides right before Part Three of Soldier of Arete (p 498 in the omnibus "'Pleistorus didn't come around to help us. I wish he had - we could have used him'" But I think he did.

The evidence against Ares being Latro must certainly include Latro's early memories of his childhood and his farmland. On the other hand, Nike always follows Latro invisibly, and I'm pretty sure Ares is at least living inside Latro or possessing him (if he is not entirely homoousious with Latro). Could it be that the Great Mother is mad at her son?

Also, on a different note, I'm pretty sure the dream of baldanders in the Inn is related to the mine at saltus: clashing teeth and broken bodies under the surface of the earth. later, he denies that he dreams, at the end of Shadow of the Torturer after Malrubius appears.

Anybody else think Latro is divine?

Marc Aramini

James Jordan — 07 May 2003, 21:01 · follows maa32

Hmmm. Interesting.

Latro is certainly linked with Mars, being a Roman and all. For me, that had been enough. Now I don't know.

Add to your data his tryst with Venus/Aphrodite, lover of Mars/Ares. I brought this up to Wolfe in my looong interview, mentioning that Venus was married to Vulcan and had adultery with Mars (plug in the Greek names as you wish). He acted confused, saying that he had thought Venus married to Mars, at least in some versions. I say, "acted" confused. It's hard to believe he did not know this. Which made me wonder if perhaps "more" were not involved.

Anyway, your suggestions add a Homeric twist to the novels, a conflict among the gods played out also in the world of humans. As with the Urth novels, I guess we'd better look again at what

the gods may be doing, for and against each other, in the Soldier books. As with the Severian, Silk, and Hornsilk narratives, it looks as if there is probably a "superplot" of divine conflicts going on "above" the scene.

At some point, Latro recalls learning from Persians (?) that the High God has a house with many servants. Compare one of the dreams in

Detective of Dreams. As with the gods in the other Wolfe books, these are ultimately servants of the High God, though allowed for a while to play their own games under His superintendence. I have assumed that we will get more hints about the Outsider/Increate (under a different name) when we get to Soldier of Sidon, Sidon being near Israel. But someone said that one will explore Egypt, and I guess we'll all have to brush up on the Egyptian pantheon next!

Nutria

At 12:23 PM 5/7/2003, you wrote:

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