

latro and ares

The Urth list — 13 messages, 5 voices, 08 May 2003

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maa32 — 08 May 2003, 15:43

I had the looming thought in the back of my mind that Latro was a god, probably Ares, and then the clincher was when Thamyris starts addressing Latro as Pleistorus in Chapter 24 of Soldier of Arete. Unless Ares is the guy with the lance that rides by Thamyris' castle while Latro is sneaking up there or he appears in the next 70 or so pages, I don't think (H)e makes an appearance in the books. I am especially interested in the almost random manner in which Wolfe associates Ares with Ahura Mazda, the singular God that embodies good as opposed to the plurality of lesser deities that proliferate on Olympos. Does that make Ares an incarnation of the "true" God instead of just an angelic being - thereby possibly making Latro much more than a man, but something like a trial run for Christ?

Also, I believe that Oior cannot look directly at Latro at one point in Soldier of the Mist because of the weird glow that suffuses Latro's body. The question is, how does latro's identity as Lucius tie in with the possibility of being Ares?

And yes, Aphrodite does seem particularly anxious to couple with Ares - whose "seed" must be preserved, according to Elata.

Marc Aramini

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 May 2003, 16:16 · follows maa32

Mark wrote in part...

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Slight correction ... Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd, other spellings) is not a "singular" god but one-half of a dualistic pair; the other being, of course, Ahriman, the god of Evil. The prophecies of Zarathustra suggest that Ahura-Mazda will be victorious in the final battle, but since everything else in the religion posits them as opposite equals, I've never quite understood how that's supposed to work out.

Does that make Ares an incarnation of the "true" God instead of just an angelic being - thereby possibly making Latro much more than a man, but something like a trial run for Christ?

I don't think so. Humans being possessed by or avatars of one of the greater but of-this-world beings called "gods" would not be the same kind or order of thing as a human incarnation of the one transcendent God.

Josh Geller — 08 May 2003, 17:21 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Thu, 2003-05-08 at 09:16, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
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It's not quite accurate. Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion.

Check out www.avesta.org.

J.

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--Blattid

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James Jordan — 08 May 2003, 17:11 · follows Josh Geller

At 12:21 PM 5/8/2003, you wrote:
On Thu, 2003-05-08 at 09:16, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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Whatever Z. may be now, or may have been in the 1st century, the question is what it was in Latro's day. Given the friendliness of the Persian rulers to the Jews, it seems that ur-Zoroastrians may have thought they were worshipping the same God under different names. Reading the works of Zarathustra, one wonders if he had not been influenced by diaspora Jews. Recall, for instance, that Yahweh manifests Himself in fire on the altar, and Z. sees fire as the manifestation of A-M. And there are other interesting things. No way to prove it, of course. The question is whether Wolfe thinks this so or not, and it is worth considering that he might.

Nutria

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 May 2003, 17:52 · follows James Jordan

I wrote then Josh wrote...

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It's not quite accurate. Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion.

Check out www.avesta.org.

Josh,

I believe that this is a question that isn't so simply answered. I admit to oversimplifying, because most people don't know much about Zarathushtra except that Nietzsche appropriated him as a character in his best-known book. Similarly, SF/F fans will mostly know the names of Ahriman and Ahura-Mazda from John Brunner's THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK.

The relevant question is this: Is the dualism frequently associated with the Daena Vanyuhi a product of human minds (as the Gathic tradition, to which avesta.org clearly subscribes, holds) or is it cosmic (as in the later Avestic tradition)?

Cheers,

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 May 2003, 17:59 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Nutria wrote:

Whatever Z. may be now, or may have been in the 1st century, the question is what it was in Latro's day. Given the friendliness of the Persian rulers to the Jews, it seems that ur-Zoroastrians may have thought they were worshipping the same God under different names. Reading the works of Zarathustra, one wonders if he had not been influenced by diaspora Jews.

Nutria, I would suggest that this is improbable on the face of things -- tradition holds that Zarathushtra lived ca. 1750 BC; this would place us well before the time of Moses, let alone the Diaspora. It is then much more likely that influence would have flowed in

the other direction, the quasi- or proto-monotheism of Zarathushtra helping to shape the monotheism of Abraham and Moses.

Josh Geller — 08 May 2003, 18:44 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On Thu, 2003-05-08 at 10:52, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Josh wrote...

Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion.

Check out www.avesta.org.

I believe that this is a question that isn't so simply answered.

Depends. People argue about it.

Non-Zoroastrian people, just about all of them.

I admit
to oversimplifying, because most people don't know much about
Zarathushtra except that Nietzsche appropriated him as a character
in his best-known book. Similarly, SF/F fans will mostly know the names
of Ahriman and Ahura-Mazda from John Brunner's THE TRAVELLER IN
BLACK.

None of that ought to apply to this crowd.

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the Daena Vanyuhi a product of human minds (as the Gathic tradition,
to which avesta.org clearly subscribes, holds) or is it cosmic (as in the
later Avestic tradition)?

The Gathas are pretty old. No one really knows how old.

Older than the Rg-Veda, according to some people. Show a lot of the same historical tradition,
too.

Josh

James Jordan — 08 May 2003, 20:40 · follows Josh Geller

Nutria,
I temporarily cannot post to the list. Taking a page from Blattid's book,
would you mind posting this for me?

-- James Wynn

Marc pondered:

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? Anybody else think
Latro is divine?

And Nutria helps him along:

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.

Crush takes the other side:

I've only checked what I consider to be the relevant chapters of the Soldier novels to refresh my memory so I'm open to correction, however....

I'd say that Latro is for a time filled with the spirit of Ares, but not throughout the novels. I'll explain why:

(1)

I won't go into it here, but Wolfe ****was**** definitely aware of the of the story of Aphrodite's tryst with Ares by the time he wrote Exodus of the Long Sun. It would be remarkable, if Wolfe were unaware of this at the time he wrote the Soldier novels (considering his reliance on "The Greeks Myths" therein), and it is hard to imagine why he would cover up his knowledge of it if he were. Nevertheless, Latro and Aphrodite's "tryst" (SoM:20) does not ****actually**** involve the ****act**** per se. Also, there is an important element of the story that does not play out in their time together: Ares and Aphrodite were caught in a net by her husband (flagrante delicto) and forced to dangle in mid-air before all the other gods.

(2)

Secondly, I certainly don't believe Ares would have needed help from Odysseus and Heracles (as Latro received) to win fights.

(3)

Also, if he were Ares, surely some god or ghost would have let on about it. This is not proof on its own, yet even Artemis speaks of them as different personalities. Cynthia/Artemis says (SoA:6) :
"Latro named me a queen. Soon you'll meet another--you may rely upon me for that. She has a strong protector, and I intend to make use of him to flush a boar..."

IIRC, her "protector" was Ares -- as Marc pointed out, the Amazon's were daughters of Ares.

There ****is**** a connection here between Ares and the themes in the rest of the book, because Robert Graves ("The Greek Myths" 100:1) asserts that the name "amazon" does NOT come from a word meaning "breastless" but from an Armenian word meaning "moon women" -- so, as far as Graves is concerned, they were priestesses of the trideitic Moon goddess who is the major player the Soldier novels so far. Although I don't recall him saying so, I've no doubt Graves would be perfectly happy with the belief that Ares is the "Great Mother" in another form. The Moon Goddess is in some kind of struggle with Hera/Rhea/Demeter (who Graves also identifies as the "White Goddess" so it should not surprise us that their supposedly conflicting schemes run in strange collusion. Even King Kotys was, according to Graves', this same wondrous deity (look up Cotys in "The White Goddess".

(4)

FINALLY, Ares actually ****does**** make an appearance (SoA:9). Latro writes:
"...I told the black man and the rest about the rider I had seen, a big man with a lance on a big horse."
"That will be an Apsinthian," Hegesistratus said. 'He may even be a scout of their king's, though it's more likely he was just a petty

aristocrat out hunting. When we ford the river, we will be in their country.' ...I asked him then whether the Apisinthians hunted with lions as other men do with dogs, and he assured me that they do not. The beast that ran beside the rider's horse seemed a lion to me, but I did not speak of it then."

I don't remember the reference that assured me that lions were a symbol of Ares, but I was once so assured. Yet, it was certainly a lion and a god that Latro saw, based on his investigation later in the chapter:

"When we rode on, I looked for hoof marks where I had seen the rider, for near them I hoped to discover the footprints of the animal that had bounded beside his horse as well, and from them to decide whether it had been a dog, as Hegisistratus had said, or a lion, as I had thought it...The hoofprints of the rider's steed were...invisible, though I discovered the pug marks of a lion."

Since Latro sees Ares from afar, I think it is safe to assume that he and Latro are not one in the same.

Yet in chapter 24-25 Latro DOES flush the supernatural boar from Thamyris's throne room AND the Apsinthian's believe him to be Ares (and since this is a Wolfe novel, their naive mistake is proof enough for me), so I think it is also clear that at least during those chapters, he was ****inspired**** by Ares. I presume the inspiration first occurred when Latro saw the god in chapter 9.

--- Crush

James Jordan — 08 May 2003, 20:50 · follows James Jordan

"Zarathustra began his prophetic mission about the middle of the sixth century...." Olmstead, History of Persian Empire, p. 94. I.e., ca. 550BC. I think this is pretty much the consensus these days.

Nutricious

At 12:59 PM 5/8/2003, you wrote:

Nutria wrote:

Whatever Z. may be now, or may have been in the 1st century, the question is what it was in Latro's day. Given the friendliness of the Persian rulers to the Jews, it seems that ur-Zoroastrians may have thought they were worshipping the same God under different names. Reading the works of Zarathustra, one wonders if he had not been influenced by diaspora Jews.

Nutria, I would suggest that this is improbable on the face of things -- tradition holds that Zarathushtra lived ca. 1750 BC; this would place us well before the time of Moses, let alone the Diaspora. It is then much more likely that influence would have flowed in the other direction, the quasi- or proto-monotheism of Zarathushtra helping to shape the monotheism of Abraham and Moses.

--Blattid

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 May 2003, 21:12 · follows James Jordan

"Zarathustra began his prophetic mission about the middle of the sixth century...." Olmstead, History of Persian Empire, p. 94. I.e., ca. 550BC. I think this is pretty much the consensus these days.

Not, at any rate, among Zoroastrians. H'mmm. A bit more research is called for here.

Okay, here's one answer, from avesta.org:

According to Bruce Lincoln,
"At present, the majority opinion among scholars probably inclines toward the end of the second millennium or the beginning of the first, although there are still those who hold for a date in the seventh century." (Death, War, and Sacrifice, 1991, pg 150)

Humbach and Ichaporia seem to favor the Xanthos date of 1080 BC but mention the 630 date also. (Heritage, 1994, pg 11).

A commonly given date is the seventh century B.C.E. I think Boyce has convincingly shown the seventh century date to be an error. Humbach also discounts the basis of this calculation in his Gathas 1991 (pg 30). Boyce has wavered on an actual date: between 1400 and 1000 BC (1975), between 1700 and 1500 (1979), around 1400 BC (1988), between 1500 BC & 1200 BC "with the latter more likely" (1992).

From w-z-o.org:

THE founder of Zoroastrianism, Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster as the Greeks rendered the name, cannot be ascribed any precise date and dating is a hotly contested issue. Academic opinion, which bases its case on linguistic analysis of the oldest texts, suggests a date roughly around 1500 BCE. Other suggestions, based on Greek sources, arrive at dates as far apart as 6000 BCE and the sixth century BCE.

More detail from pyreantha.com:

No one knows where or when the Prophet was born. Some legends place his birth in western Iran, perhaps near Tehran; others, which are somewhat more likely due to the eastern Iranian language of his poetry, place his birthplace in the east. As for the date of his birth, it has been since ancient times a matter of controversy. Greek sources placed him as early as 6000 B.C., a reckoning derived from poorly transmitted Zoroastrian legends; few if any scholars take that date seriously. The traditional Zoroastrian date for Zarathushtra's birth and ministry is around 600 B.C. This is derived from a Greek source that places him "300 years before Alexander" which would give that date; other rationales for the 600 BC date identify the King Vishtaspa of Zarathushtra's Gathas with the father of the Persian King Darius, who lived around that time.

As the linguists of both Europe and India worked on the Gathas, however, it became clear that the language of the Gathas attributed to Zarathushtra was far older than the language spoken in Iran at the time of King Darius' father. Gathic Avestan was very close to the Sanskrit of the Indian Rig-Vedas, which can be dated from the period 1500-1200 BC. This would mean

that Zarathushtra lived far earlier than the "traditional" date. Some scholars have said that the 600 BC date is still plausible if Gathic Avestan was actually an artificially preserved sacred language, somewhat like Latin, which continued in literature and rituals thousands of years after it had ceased to be spoken.

Recent work by Martin Schwartz and Almut Hintze tends to discount this theory, as the linguists show that the Gathas are not the work of an academic writing in a dead language; they show all the signs of poetry composed and recited in an oral tradition, similar to the heroic poetry of Homer or the Rig-Vedas. These studies would confirm the earlier date for Zarathushtra.

The problem of Zarathushtra's time will never be solved, unless some improbable archaeological find turns up. Most scholars agree on a time-frame for Zarathushtra which could be as early as 1700 B.C. or as late as 1000 B.C.

Josh Geller — 08 May 2003, 22:22 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On Thu, 2003-05-08 at 13:50, James Jordan wrote:
"Zarathustra began his prophetic mission about the middle of the sixth century...." Olmstead, Hstory of Persian Empire, p. 94. I.e., ca. 550BC. I think this is pretty much the consensus these days.

It's not, though. It used to be.

People still argue about it fiercely, and an absolute date is hard to come by, but linguistically the Gathas are from about the same era as the Rg-Veda, if not slightly earlier. A date sometime in the 16th or 17th century BC seems a lot more reasonable than 6th century.

Josh

James Jordan — 08 May 2003, 23:18 · follows Josh Geller

Okay, I don't have a lot invested in this either way, though I lean toward a later date for a number of reasons, which are moot here. The only real question is what Wolfe may be operating with; to wit, if he sees that Zoroastrianism which was contemporaneous with Latro as something close enough to his Judeo-Christian notions that Ahuramazda can betoken the True God (Yahweh, Outsider, Pancreator, etc.). And I have no idea what he thinks on this.

Nutria

At 05:22 PM 5/8/2003, you wrote:
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Josh

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Jeff Wilson — 09 May 2003, 04:15 · follows James Jordan

From:

"Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <katbarx at hotmail.com>

Slight correction ... Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd, other spellings) is not a "singular"

god but one-half of a dualistic pair; the other being, of course, Ahriman, the

god of Evil. The prophecies of Zarathustra suggest that Ahura-Mazda will be victorious in the final battle, but since everything else in the religion posits

them as opposite equals, I've never quite understood how that's supposed to work out.

They are opposites in that Ahriman is as foolish as Ormuzd is wise, and their agreement to make war to decide rulership of the world was slanted to favor Ormuzd, but Ahriman accepted anyway.

Jeff Wilson - <http://www.io.com/~jwilson>

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