

Soldier: Hegesistratus the Lane Lycanthrope

The Urth list — 14 messages, 7 voices, 31 Mar 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4551>

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aramini1 at cox.net — 31 Mar 2006, 05:59

Just had a revelation from one passage of Soldier of Arete. Tell me if you guys think it is conceivable, or if Io's warning about Hegesistratus to latro means something else besides possible lycanthropy in Hegesistratus.

Let's start with the prophecy at the start of the book: "King, nymph, and priest shall gather round! Wolf, faun, and nymph, spellbound."

Elata is the nymph, the faun is the goat man Aglaus, but Oior, the wolfman son of Scoloti, by the time we meet Aglaus or Elata, has been long dead at Latro's merciful hands.

One possibility is that Latro is the wolf ... but despite Borski's argument, Lucius does not mean wolf, and I remain unconvinced at the evidence in the text. There is another character who could be the wolf: Hegesistratus the mantis with the lame leg. At first, it seems that Latro's attacks on him are completely unwarranted based on the influence of Tisamenus with the order to kill the man with the wooden foot.

Io warns him about how, at the temple of the war god, Hegesistratus was able to leave without being molested by the Thracian troops, and a dog was calling outside. She then makes a rather interesting warning that Latro should keep in mind that dogs were calling if he meets Hegesistratus again (is this a warning about Hegesistratus' intentions? Is he the wolf that will wish Latro woe rather than Oior?) (Latro in the Mist, 521-2)

"You told me you heard a dog outside, and Hegesistratus went out, and the Thracians didn't try and stop him. You and me and the black man talked about that, but we really didn't decide anything. ... "Did you hear the dogs last night? ... I did, and so I thought you should know and write it down, just in case you should meet Hegesistratus again when I'm not with you."

Remember that hegesistratus is the lame character: he "cut" away his foot to get out of his shackles. This is very similar to a wolf eating its foot. Is Hegesistratus in league with the Thracians, is that why he can leave unmolested, or does the calling of the dogs have something to do with it? Also, this is after the introduction of the shapeshifting boar Xalmoxis. Has Xalmoxis succeeded in taking someone's place ... and if so, could it be Hegesistratus the mantis?

Marc Aramini

mournings glory — 31 Mar 2006, 07:31 · in reply to aramini1 at cox.net

A true son of Rome (but not of Greece) Marcus Aramini writes:

One possibility is that Latro is the wolf ... but despite Borski's argument, Lucius does not mean wolf

I've yet to receive my order of Long & Short & Everything In Between, but one of my students handed in a midterm on Keat's "Lamia" last week, and in it the Lamia's lover is named

Lycius--which absolutely means "wolf". I know because we googled it and received over a hundred confirmations, with lots of citations about Apollo the Wolf-God. Given as well that the upsilon in Greek can be translated as *either* "y" or "u" it seems to me "Lycius" and "Lucius" are almost certainly equivalent.

Keat's "Lamia" also appears to be at least one of the inspirations for Wolfe's Eurykles. (Or has Crush already pointed this out on his site? Can't remember.)

<There is another character who could be the wolf: Hegesistratus the mantis with the lame leg.>

How does lycanthropy work if you're maimed in either your human or bestial form? Would a limping human also limp as wolf? Would a foot you gnawed off as a werewolf also remain absent when you morphed back into human? Who's our resident loup-garou authority?

Also don't know if any of you caught this, but there was a manuscript copy of Soldier of Sidon up for bid on eBay recently.

The winning bid topped out at \$108.50, which may well be indicative of how much people are looking forward to this long-delayed title.

mu sigma gamma <up late -- it's spring break for another 24 hours, woohoo!>

aramini1 at cox.net — 01 Apr 2006, 04:04 · follows mournings glory

Interesting. Thanks for the information about Lycius. Certainly Drakaina is the lamia that supplants Eurykles.

That actually makes more sense if Lucius is the wolf in terms of the prophecy, because Hegesistratus isn't really around much when Elata (as the pythia or whatever it is she has become at the temple) and Aglaus are fooling around with Lucius/Latro at the end of Soldier of Arete. Thus, Wolf, nymph, and faun spellbound. But what is the spell?

When I read Soldier of Arete again, it really, really seemed to me as if Lucius is somehow an avatar of Pleistorus, but I can't reconcile his home life memories with the gods. Interesting that his families god was a tutelary spirit between a dog and an ape called Lars. Interesting also that in Wizard Knight, the cat identifies himself as a tutelary lars. Hmm.

I'll find some more quotes to back up the idea that Latro is Plesitorus later. Especially interesting is when Io talks to Latro about how players at a play wear normal masks to hide what they really are. It really reminded me of the ironic scene in Claw of the Conciliator where Severian wonders what the Conciliator come again would do dressed at a costume party, not even knowing he was the conciliator.

Marc

From: "mournings glory" <mourningsglory at hotmail.com>
Date: 2006/03/31 Fri AM 02:31:20 EST
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Soldier: Hegesistratus the Lame Lycanthrope

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Chris — 01 Apr 2006, 21:29 · in reply to aramini1 at cox.net

Well, one thing that I supposed was possible was that Ares might have been possessing Latro (the way he was wont to do in the Iliad) at the time when Latro received his injury. And perhaps that injury prevented him from leaving, or recognizing who he was.

Or maybe Latro just seems like Plesitorus because he has so much arete.

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aramini1 at cox.net — 01 Apr 2006, 21:50 · follows Chris

From: "Chris" <rasputin_ at hotmail.com>

Well, one thing that I supposed was possible was that Ares might have been possessing Latro (the way he was wont to do in the Iliad) at the time when Latro received his injury. And perhaps that injury prevented him from leaving, or recognizing who he was.

I rather like this idea - Ares gets stuck in his head because of the injury. Hmm.

The only other cogent solution I can think of is that, since Ahura Mazda is the God of good, and Pleistorus is rumored to be ahura mazda, then perhaps latro is a trial run for the theoanthropos: God tests out a human life cycle, and changes in the process from the old, violent God to the compassionate one of Christianity. I wish there were some indication for exactly how long Pleistorus has been missing. If it is only a year or two, then clearly he was simply possessing Latro. If it was closer to twenty, he could have incarnated himself as a human in Rome, which will eventually create the Pax Romana - the entire world must be at peace for Christ to be born, as it purportedly was.

Marc

Chris — 01 Apr 2006, 22:22 · in reply to aramini1 at cox.net

Well, when thinking about Ares, also recall what Diokles has to say about him in S. of Arete - met with, I believe, some approval from Latro:

"Old Ares isn't some kind of monster, see? Think of him as a plain man that wants to win the war and get back home to Aphrodite. He's for training, discipline, and fair play with the men. And he whistles when he loses just like he whistles when he wins."

There is some compassion, or at least justice, in this figure.

Now that you mention it though, the bit about whistling when he loses just like he whistles when he wins stirs up some memory I can't quite recall. Isn't there some statement or other that the (Christian) man of faith always hopes for the best, but nonetheless is never disappointed if he doesn't happen to get it, treating each with a sort of happy equanimity? I am of course paraphrasing, because I just can't bring it to mind. The reason this stands out a bit to me is that I don't know whether Ares had that sort of equanimity associated with him, historically. Most of the gods were pretty sore losers.

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Marc

Iorwerth Thomas — 04 Apr 2006, 11:18 · in reply to Chris

From: "Chris" <rasputin_ at hotmail.com>

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Isn't there some statement or other that the (Christian) man of faith always hopes for the best, but nonetheless is never disappointed if he doesn't happen to get it, treating each with a sort of happy equanimity?

It _sounds_ like some elements of Kierkegaard, but it may not have been original to him.

-lorwerth

Matthew King — 04 Apr 2006, 17:08 · in reply to lorwerth Thomas

On Apr 4, 2006, at 4:18 AM, lorwerth Thomas wrote:

From: "Chris" <rasputin_ at hotmail.com>

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-lorwerth

The whistling bit reminds me particularly of the Knight of Faith in Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling. I don't recall any exact analogues, but a specific passage does come to mind, which I'll paste below. Terminology note: By "knights of infinity" in the second paragraph, SK is referring to what he more usually calls the Knight of Infinite Resignation. An example of the KoIR is Agamemnon, sacrificing his daughter for the good of the cause. His counterpart Knight of Faith is Abraham, offering up his son for no good reason other than a personal request, BUT with the full and absurd expectation that he will receive Isaac back (Paul says by resurrection, though that turned out to be unnecessary in this case).

<http://home.ddc.net/ygg/etext/fear.htm#Problemata>

Toward evening he walks home, his gait is as indefatigable as that of the postman. On his way he reflects that his wife has surely a special little warm dish prepared for him, e.g. a calf's head roasted, garnished with vegetables. If he were to meet a man like-minded, he could continue as far as East Gate to discourse with him about that dish, with a passion befitting a hotel chef. As it happens, he hasn't four pence to his name, and yet he fully and firmly believes that his wife has that dainty dish for him. If she had it, it would then be an invidious sight for superior people and an inspiring one for the plain man, to see him eat; for his appetite is greater than Esau's. His wife hasn't it strangely enough, it is quite the same to him.

. . . Most people live dejectedly in worldly sorrow and joy; they are the ones who sit along the wall and do not join in the dance. The knights of infinity are dancers and possess elevation. They make the movements upward, and fall down again; and this too is no mean pastime, nor ungraceful to behold. But whenever they fall down they are not able at once to assume the posture, they vacillate an instant, and this vacillation shows that after all they are strangers in the world. This is more or less strikingly evident in proportion to the art they possess, but even

the most artistic knights cannot altogether conceal this vacillation. One need not look at them when they are up in the air, but only the instant they touch or have touched the ground then one recognizes them. But to be able to fall down in such a way that the same second it looks as if one were standing and walking, to transform the leap of life into a walk, absolutely to express the sublime in the pedestrian that only the knight of faith can do and this is the one and only prodigy.

Stanislaus — 07 Apr 2006, 16:22 · in reply to aramini1 at cox.net

Hello aramini1,

Saturday, April 1, 2006, 6:04:26 AM, you wrote:

When I read Soldier of Arete again, it really, really seemed to me as if Lucius is somehow an avatar of Pleistorus, but I can't reconcile his home life memories with the gods. Interesting that his families god was a tutelary spirit between a dog and an ape called Lars. Interesting also that in Wizard Knight, the cat identifies himself as a tutelary lars. Hmm.

Lars and Penates were the generic names of the household gods of Rome. Those are not proper names. In other words, Latro's god was a lars, and each family got one.

By the way, Zalmoxis was originally a sorcerer who persuaded Thracians that he could give them immortality by staging a resurrection. He built an underground tomb with a lot of food and lived there for a year.

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

Pan pozna Pania. Czeka... ;-) >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f1922>

Stanislaus — 07 Apr 2006, 16:30 · in reply to Chris

Hello Chris,

Saturday, April 1, 2006, 11:29:12 PM, you wrote:

Well, one thing that I supposed was possible was that Ares might have been possessing Latro (the way he was wont to do in the Iliad) at the time when Latro received his injury. And perhaps that injury prevented him from leaving, or recognizing who he was.

Or maybe Latro just seems like Plesitorus because he has so much arete.

Exactly! That was the way Greeks thought of their gods - when someone was in battle-madness, he was Ares, a bold thief was filled by Hermes etc. Spartans didn't like Ares, by the way, because battle madness causes the soldiers to break line, and this was the greatest crime for them.

In Illiad it is a bit different - the gods don't possess men, but temporarily replace them, take their shape. But Illiad is a very literary version of Greek religion.

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

Poznaj Stefana! Zmien komunikator! >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f1924>

Stanislaus — 07 Apr 2006, 17:18 · in reply to Chris

Hello Chris,

Sunday, April 2, 2006, 12:22:55 AM, you wrote:

Well, when thinking about Ares, also recall what Diokles has to say about him in S. of Arete - met with, I believe, some approval from Latro:

"Old Ares isn't some kind of monster, see? Think of him as a plain man that wants to win the war and get back home to Aphrodite. He's for training, discipline, and fair play with the men. And he whistles when he loses just like he whistles when he wins."

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Greeks seem to really dislike Ares, so they tend to ridicule him. He hates to lose personally in Homer, but he doesn't care whether the side he fight for does win. He likes to switch sides to support the losing side, so that the battle is longer.

Names of Ares and his cult.

<http://theoi.com/Cult/AresTitles.html>

It appears that Spartans worshipped Ares more than other Greeks, if not very much. All sacrificed to him before battle, of course.

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

Chcesz wysylac darmowe SMSy bez wchodzenia na strony operatorow?
<http://stefan.interia.pl/> - sprawdz i gimnastykuj palce!

Stanislaus — 18 Apr 2006, 21:18 · in reply to Stanislaus

Friday, April 7, 2006, 7:18:31 PM, you wrote:

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I found an interesting website about Greek practice of binding Kolossos - "voodoo dolls".

<http://www.cs.utk.edu/~mclennan/BA/GP.html>

They used to bind even gods in that way:

"Sometimes Kolossoi are used to restrain a dangerous deity, who may cause harm or is believed to be favoring your enemies. Thus Ares, as God of slaughter and death on battlefield, may be bound to bring safety in battle, or to decrease the probability of war.

Protective deities also may be bound to restrain Them from leaving. ... Ares is sometimes bound in this way as a protector, and, in the absence of an inscription, it may be difficult to tell whether He is being bound as a hostile or a friendly force. Perhaps He may be bound in both aspects at the same time: constrained to stay here to protect us and prevented from going to the enemy's side. "

"Second, Kolossoi can also be used to restrain ghosts and other Hikesioi Apaktoi (hostile visitants). Again, they cannot be killed (since they are already dead), but they can be bound. For ghosts especially, the binding ceremony may follow funerary customs, and so help to ensure that the ghost is properly laid and departs for the Land of the Dead.

Third, Kolossoi are used to restrain mortal enemies. Such might either be a Goes (Sorcerer), who has sent an Eidolon or Phasma (Phantom) against someone, or it might be a mundane enemy (e.g. in a lawsuit)."

"An example of this is the yearly binding of Ares for the protection of the city of Syedra; He is unbound once a year during a period of general license analogous to the Saturnalia. (This may be symbolized in the story in Book 5 of the Iliad, where Ares is bound in a cauldron for thirteen lunar months.) "

"Often the head is twisted backward, or at least extremely far to the left, to cause confusion. It is also common for the feet to be backward, and sometimes the arms or the entire torso. (So Hephaistos is sometimes shown with His feet backward.) In some cases the Kolossos is made with these parts backward, but usually they are made normally and then twisted around.

The figure is often pierced with nails or needles (13 is a popular number), typically made of iron or bronze, though animal fangs and other materials may be used. Each nail or needle transfixes some part of the body representing a faculty, which it thereby paralyzes, but without destroying it. For example, nails through the eyes, ears and mouth paralyze cognitive faculties, while one through the heart might restrain will, and nails through the limbs cause paralysis or loss of strength. "

"The spell may take the form of a prayer to some deities to restrain the subject; often the Subject is handed over or committed to the deity (as though being put under arrest) — a wise thing to do, since then responsibility for the binding resides with the Gods. Although any God or Goddess might be petitioned, it is particularly appropriate to appeal to Hermes Katokhos (Restrainer) in the consecration. Other deities called on for binding are Hermes Khthonios, Ge, Hecate (Khthonia) and Persephone. "

I would surmise, that Latro is used to bind Ares, as a kind of miniature or likeness of him. Ge seems to be often used to bind subjects.

Best regards,
Stanislaus <mailto:sbocian@poczta.fm>

James Wynn — 19 Apr 2006, 17:40 · follows Stanislaus

Stanislaus said:

I would surmise, that Latro is used to bind Ares, as a kind of miniature or likeness of him. Ge seems to be often used to bind subjects.

Now that is definitely a wicked twist!

But I still don't understand the focus on Ares. Marcus acknowledged that besides Ares, Zeus and Hermes are also not present in the story so far. Although actually I **do** believe Ares has made an appearance in SoA as Pleistorus.

Furthermore, in "Soldier of the Mist" Latro is more often associated with Dionysus than Ares. Is it because Latro is a soldier? Well, he is also a thief (via his name) and a writer and a lover and a wizard (creating Draikana).

J

Stanislaus — 20 Apr 2006, 16:08 · in reply to James Wynn

Hello James,

Wednesday, April 19, 2006, 7:40:05 PM, you wrote:

But I still don't understand the focus on Ares. Marcus acknowledged that besides Ares, Zeus and Hermes are also not present in the story so far. Although actually I **do** believe Ares has made an appearance in SoA as Pleistorus.

Obviously. Greeks thought Ares was born in Thracia, and Pleistorus is Thracian Ares, so Pleistorus is the original version.

Best regards,
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