

Cumaeans

The Urth list — 14 messages, 9 voices, 05 Feb 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5334>

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David Stockhoff — 05 Feb 2009, 21:26

Tim

My assumption---or rationalization---has always been that the Cumaean was an alien of a different sort than the Inhum. Or else just a being of power---she is named after a witch out of the New Testament, after all. The faces and lack of wings or any serious attempt to disguise herself lead me to that.

Beyond that, I dunno. It's possible Wolfe hadn't worked out the details yet. Who would the thing feed on?

I also have always assumed that the great toothy butterfly-creature Severian sees flying through the pages of Father Inire's mirror book was an Inhumu. Is there any consensus on that? Was it Tzadkiel?

Message: 7

Date: Thu, 5 Feb 2009 11:49:40 -0000

From: "O'Donnell, Tim \(\BOSI\)" <Tim.O'Donnell at bankofscotland.ie>

Subject: (urth) Wolfean theologies

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID:

<63FB9AC7E0AEC7459DBCC99DC44247CA01F6B695 at BOSIDEXDB.Bankofscotland.ie>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

SonOfWitz, as a long standing member of the Church of Odin (I am due to receive my celebratory pair of imitation ravens this weekend in the Valhalla Restaurant and Public House) I take serious offence to your remarks on Satanists. While the Odinists broke away from the Satanists in the great schism of 4003 BC (on our first anniversary) in what has since been described as the "Dirty Hanky" scandal (this pivoted on whether cleanliness was indeed next to godliness - an issue that occupied our immoral philosophers for some time) I still recognise myself as belonging to the greater Satanic church and so would like you to retract what you said.

Seriously though, I have my private beliefs which I would prefer not to discuss and I have some knowledge of various religions (most particularly Catholicism) having become very interested in the topic in my early 20s. But I recognise the difference between what I believe and what I understand that other people believe. Instead of arguing this out with people on the list can we not leave the "Wolfe as Catholic writer" vs "Wolfe as writer with many influences, many of them Catholic" to the realm of "Are Blue/Green Urth/Lune?" in the camp of intractable Lupine questions?

I would prefer to discuss other items than to argue about beliefs and disappear into tangents on the Church in the world today.

So in that spirit I asked about the following passage in BOTNS a while back and there were no takers:

As I had suspected, the Cumaeen was not a woman at all; yet neither was she one of the horrors I had beheld in the gardens of the House Absolute. Something sleekly reptilian coiled about the glowing rod. I looked for the head but found none, though each of the patternings on the reptile's back was a face, and the eyes of each face seemed lost in rapture.

Dorcas woke while I looked from one to another.

I have long hoped that this was an Inhumu (Inhumi?) on Urth in the time of Severian.

Reasons it is possible:

- * Reptilian in nature
- * Element of Soul Travel seems to be occurring here

Reasons it may not be an inhumi:

- * The description of the faces on the reptile's back does not tie in with BOTSS, unless it is the faces of the Inhumu's victims?

Any takers?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 05 Feb 2009, 21:42 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David,

No; the Cumaeen is not named for a witch out of the New Testament. Rather, she is named for the priestess-prophetess of Apollo at Cumae.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumaean_Sybil

As such, she might well be a "being of power." I had concluded (assumed?) that she was of the same order of being as Father Inire.

On Thu, Feb 5, 2009 at 1:26 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
Tim

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

David Stockhoff — 05 Feb 2009, 22:16 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

aha! Thanks. I never could figure out what that witch had to do with anything.

Of course, what do we know of Father Inire?

Message: 5

Date: Thu, 5 Feb 2009 13:42:37 -0800

From: "Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <danldo at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Cumaeans

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID:

<1f7617370902051342y6909c26bubd20b528f961aba0 at mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1

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-- Dan'I Danehy-Oakes -----

Matthew Groves — 06 Feb 2009, 05:16 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

And her rod looks like the Rod of Asclepius.

On Thu, Feb 5, 2009 at 3:42 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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Roy C. Lackey — 06 Feb 2009, 06:28 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

I also have always assumed that the great toothy butterfly-creature Severian sees flying through the pages of Father Inire's mirror book was an Inhumu. Is there any consensus on that? Was it Tzadkiel?<<

No inhumu. It was Tzadkiel.

"And it was pleasant indeed to sit upon that bank, occasionally refreshing my laboring tongue with the cold, clean water of the brook, and recount to Tzadkiel how I had seen her first between the pages of Father Inire's book, and how I had helped to capture her aboard her own ship, and how she had been male and called herself Zak, and how she had cared for me when I was injured." (URTH, chap. XL, p.-283)

-Roy

O'Donnell, Tim BOSI — 06 Feb 2009, 14:17 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Thanks for that!

On the Cumaeen I always think it is great that Wolfe introduces these beings with various powers but doesn't bother chasing them down, explaining them, etc. They are accepted as part of the milieu and the reader can get on with it. But yeah, it would have been ambitious indeed had it been an Inhumu, I don't know how many of the details of the Inhumu Wolfe had in mind when writing the original series, nevermind BOTLS and BOTSS!

On the fact that it was Tzadkiel, I think Wolfe often lays down these details without necessarily following them up. Then 5 books (in his good time) later you get a pay-off. Wonderful! 5th pass through BOTSS and I am still only getting to grips with some of the details in there.

May have been mentioned here before but has anyone seen the film "Primer"? All about time loops and whatnot, it is not amazing but a fan of Wolfe may enjoy untangling the various strands laid down.

David Stockhoff wrote: >> I also have always assumed that the great toothy butterfly-creature Severian sees flying through the pages of Father Inire's mirror book was an Inhumu. Is there any consensus on that? Was it Tzadkiel?<<

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Feb 2009, 14:20 · in reply to O'Donnell, Tim BOSI

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All about time loops and whatnot, it is not amazing but a fan of Wolfe may enjoy untangling the various strands laid down.

It is a truly remarkable film. You have to pay attention.

.

Stuart Hamm — 06 Feb 2009, 14:23 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Anyone catch "Time Crimes"??

???? Mobile — (415) 786-3624
???? Skype? stuart.hamm
myspace.com/stuhamm
? ??? stuarthamm.net

--- On Fri, 2/6/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

From: brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org>
Subject: Re: (urth) Cumaeans
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Cc: urth at urth.net
Date: Friday, February 6, 2009, 6:20 AM
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O'Donnell, Tim BOSI — 06 Feb 2009, 14:34 · follows Stuart Hamm

Up until I saw it the film with the best thought out timeline I had seen had to be Back to the Future. I know it may seem like a kid's film but they really thought through their timelines. While we are on the subject of films that tie in with Wolfe, did anyone think of the short story EyeBeEm when watching the Spielberg film AI?
I know alot of people hated that film but I thought it was great! And such a grim ending (especially for Spielberg!).

brunians at brunians.org

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b sharp — 06 Feb 2009, 17:53 · follows O'Donnell, Tim BOSI

I thought the winged creature in the book was more angelic-looking than lepidopterous. I really don't remember it being "toothy". There was a predatory butterfly sort of creature Severian encounters on Tzadkiel's ship. Perhaps there was a mix-up of these two?

I am of the view that Father Inire, as an ancient god of the arts (Apollo)/alien analog, appears in various guises throughout the story, mostly as monkeys or monkey-like and/or artsy human characters such as Fechin, Isangoma, the boatman, the cowed cenobite, the masked jungle guide and perhaps Rudesind.

If the Cumaean is Inire's fellow analog, ancient god of medicine/alien I expect her also to have an animal alter ego and to appear in other guises. Aside from an incidental snake here and there, her most likely alter egos would be the old leech/pedophile and Ceryx as they are all obsessed with raising the dead. Her attraction to young men could be a parallel to Inire's obsession with young women. (so many greek gods seemed to share the same sort of pedophilia)

Moreover the mythical Cumaean Sybil had requested long life (1000 years) from Apollo in exchange for her virginity (when she reneged on the deal, he let her live but shrivel). Apollo is, of course, also associated with prophesy. Also, Ceryx means "herald" and the Cumaean Sybil was known as an early herald of Christ.

John Watkins — 06 Feb 2009, 18:04 · in reply to b sharp

On Fri, Feb 6, 2009 at 12:53 PM, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, which contains the Sybil's supposed prophesy of Christ, also praises Apollo. Severian has as much Apollo imagery around him as Christ imagery, so the reference may have been especially tempting.

Windows Live?: E-mail. Chat. Share. Get more ways to connect.
http://windowslive.com/online/hotmail?ocid=TXT_TAGLM_WL_HM_AE_Faster_022009

David Stockhoff — 07 Feb 2009, 14:29 · follows John Watkins

You're right:

As he spoke, something shaped itself in shining air above the open pages. It was neither a woman nor a butterfly, but it partook of both, and just as we know when we look at the painted figure of a mountain in the background of some picture that it is in reality as huge as an island, so I knew that I saw the thing only from far off---its wings beat, I think, against the proton winds of space, and all Urth might have been a mote disturbed by their motion. Then as I had seen it, so it saw me, much as the androgyne a moment before had seen the swirls and loops of writing on the steel through his glass. It paused and turned to me and opened its wings that I might observe them. They were marked with eyes.

Message: 3
Date: Fri, 6 Feb 2009 12:53:00 -0500
From: b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com>

Subject: (urth) Cumaeans
To: <urth at urth.net>
Message-ID: <COL109-W96E92BFD70636B56D876AD7C10 at phx.gbl>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="Windows-1252"

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herald of Christ.

David Stockhoff — 07 Feb 2009, 14:59 · follows David Stockhoff

Also, is this Father Inire?

*His tone betrayed him as much as Thecla's thoughts. I wanted to kneel, but he clapped his
hands, and a bent little man slipped silently into the room. He wore a cowled habit like a
cenobite's. The Autarch spoke to him, something I was too distracted to understand.*

Doesn't resemble the Cumaeon. Nor do the Cumaeon's faces resemble Tzadkiel's eyes, though
they are suggestively similar, I guess.

Incidentally, as far as Inire's name:

/present active/ **ineo-**, /present infinitive/ *ini-re
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/inire#Latin>>*, /perfect active/ *inii-
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/inii#Latin>>*, /supine/ *initum
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/initum#Latin>>*. (irregular
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/irregular>>)

1. I enter <<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/enter>>, go
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/go>> into
<<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/into>>.
2. I begin <<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/begin>> (an activity,
enterprise, business)

And I like the Cumaeon's herald-of-Christ-connection. She is present "now" but is associated
with Apu-Punchau ...

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From: b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com>
Subject: (urth) Cumaeans
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b sharp — 10 Feb 2009, 16:30 · follows David Stockhoff

David S. writes:

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into the room. He wore a cowled habit like a cenobite's. The Autarch spoke to him,
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Well I have always thought this was the most obvious incarnation of Father Inire- the physical
description matches and they are in Father Inire's portion of the House Absolute. The Cumaean
seems to be more of an outdoor dweller. The other little, bent monkey-like and/or artistic guys
are a bit harder to identify as Inire but it helps make sense to the story for me if they are.

As I see it, the old Autarch with his multiple roles in Commonwealth society is a weak imitation
of Father Inire, whose shape changing ability allows greater diversity in his various roles.
Likewise Father Inire is a weaker version of Tzadkiel, who has even greater shape changing
ability and multiple roles to be played.

-bsharp