

god(s) and gods

The Urth list — 17 messages, 8 voices, 28 Nov 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5781>

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Jane Delawney — 28 Nov 2010, 02:49

Not at all sure what this means but anyway ...

Why is Typhon known as Pas on the Whorl?

(btw, I am sure there was a thread regarding this question on the list fairly recently, but I'm darned if I can find anything on it in my archive, so apologies if this is a Previously Solved Problem.)

The noxious kind-of-canines which roam the Whorl's ventilation / heat-exchange system are known by the Whorl's chem soldiers (and also by Vironese convicts consigned to the Pits) as gods, because they are the exact reverse of what one would normally expect a domesticated dog to be (ferocious instead of benign, unmanageable rather than obedient, and so forth). Silk is a little leery of this designation for obvious reasons, but uses it none the less because there is no other name for them.

'Pas' is Serbo-Croat for 'dog'. And Typhon/Pas is in most ways the exact reverse of what many would expect a father-god to be; he's a 'dog' rather than a 'god'.

Would not be at all unlike GW to introduce this kind of bilingual pun ... just because. It gets all of us scratching our heads, and is pretty amusing once one has figured it out - yet it has no deeper significance at all, it's just Typhon (or rather GW through 'Typhon') having a laugh.

Any views?

JD

Jack Smith — 28 Nov 2010, 10:19 · in reply to Jane Delawney

I think "Pas" is a corruption of "Pan", the Greek god of rustic places. "Pan" means everything, as in "pandemic" or "pandemonium". Scylla, possessing Chenille, explains about the gods being members of Pas' family on Urth and says "with Daddy to be the god of everything--that's what his name meant--and boss over everybody." (LotLS, ch. 11)

Perhaps "Pas" is also meant to suggest the French "pas" (meaning "not") to indicate a negative quality.

On Sat, Nov 27, 2010 at 9:49 PM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:
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Andrew Mason — 28 Nov 2010, 18:04 · follows Jack Smith

Jack Smith wrote:

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'Pas' is the masculine form of 'all'; 'pan' is the neuter form. I believe the name of Pan, the god, has a different origin (it certainly declines differently), but the interpretation of it as meaning 'all' goes back a long way.

I'm sure this is the central meaning of the name of Pas, but this does not rule out its having other meanings as well.

Lee Berman — 29 Nov 2010, 03:36 · follows Andrew Mason

Ack, so many new threads. Had to pick one subject line to respond to all. *god(s) and gods* seemed most inclusive.

With regard to Inhumis on Urth, I guess I should clarify that I meant I think beings corrupted by inhumis have populated Urth. By corrupted I mean had their consciousness shared via blood feeding as we see in Short Sun. (Gerry the nature of Shadow Children has been discussed before; I think it is safe to say there is debate on the issue. I tend to think they are not human but a first attempt to imitate humans by a predatory native spirit/creature. Abos are a more successful imitation, but with that success they have mostly forgotten their true nature).

I was just reading Borski. He thinks Blue is the home planet of Typhon (based in part on the multiplied body parts). I might agree. I think Blue is the home planet of the megatherians, based on the giant Mother creature there. I am guessing seeds of this giant being (or beings) made it to Urth in the form of pinched-off buds in human form (what else could fit in a spaceship?). Once on Urth they were able to

start the process of gaining great size and godhood, eventually necessitating their oceanic abode. I think the end of RttW sort of demonstrates this as Typhon's daughter, the girl, Cilinia/Scylla, goes out to meet her alter ego, "Great Scylla" in the ocean who is in the process of budding off her own little army of undines. They are wearing black robes which I think is a play on words- the Islamic black robe called an Abaya used to hint at great beast Abaia.

Interesting debate on whether some Nephilim giants survived the flood by breathing underwater or whether new ones were created after the Flood as we continue to be plagued by fallen angels/demons. The example of Baldanders living under water seems relevant. I assume it has been discussed somewhere in the history of this board that part of the legend of mermaids is that their kiss can convey the gift of underwater breathing to drowned sailors. Surely Juturna's offer to Severian is related to this. We can probably find significance in the fact that Severian was able (with Dorcas' help) to resist the offer while Baldanders, perhaps, did not. Anyway, I think Wolfe continues to use giants, be they nephilim, Nod, Baldanders or godlings, to convey the idea of transitional (false) god-figures.

The origin of the name Pas is certainly a thorn in my side. The text hints that it is related to the god Pan, though I suspect Wolfe knows Pan's name has more of a connection to the word "panic" than the prefix for "all". Pan's name may have a connection to "pastoral" and that is the source of the name of Pas. But I also note the connection between Typhon and his Persian cognate Pazuzu. "Pas" could be short for that nasty wind god/demon. But I think I'm alone in that guess. Even James Wynn and his attraction to the wind aspect of Typhon doesn't share my interest in Pazuzu here.

James Wynn — 29 Nov 2010, 18:42 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Jane Delawney-

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This is not unlikely.

I have elsewhere posited that the name of the city "Viron" is associated with the word for werewolf, "vironsusi". Wolfe would have either come across this term while researching the werewolves in Herodotus or became interested in Herodotus for the same reason he would be researching foreign words related to "wolf". <http://urth.org/whorlmap/viron>

For the same reason, he be expected to look up foreign words, especially European words, for "dog", since European grey wolves are the ancestors of all dogs.

I like this reference a lot, Jane, since I have always thought there was too little to firm ground for Wolfe choice in this analogy. "Pas = dog" and "god=dog" provides an etymological reason that the dogs of the underworld are reverse of the celestial Whorl gods (who are themselves daemons/demons, because a daemon is a spirit and a programming function).

<http://urth.org/whorlmap/bufe.htm>

And additionally, of course, as we discussed before, "pas" is Koine Greek for "all", that is Pan, and Pan is the only god to die in historical time. Also, Zeus's died as well and his grave was honored in Crete. Layer upon layer.

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David Stockhoff — 29 Nov 2010, 19:09 · in reply to James Wynn

I like the idea too. My only concern is that you can find words that match just about anything if you search them all. So, why Serbo-Croatian? Is there a strong pattern of (1) dog words (2) "random" languages?

As for the first, we can be sure there are strong patterns of both puns and wolf references. These are general in Wolfe, and although I'd rather see a pattern that is specific to LS/SS, it's a strong start. For the second, I would answer myself, Why Melanesian? (as with Abaia).

On 11/29/2010 1:42 PM, James Wynn wrote:

Jane Delawney-

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James Wynn — 29 Nov 2010, 19:46 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 11/28/2010 9:36 PM, wrote:
Lee Berman-

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I _do_ like the connection between Pas and Pazuzu. I mean, it works so sweetly as a connection between Pas and Typhon. BUT I find the connection between Pas and Pan so compelling that I find it hard to believe he would not have settled on that name even if the name were not at hand. The association with "pas" and "dog" seems likely to be compelling to Wolfe on many levels and adds depth to an analogy that --to my mind-- needed it.

ON THE OTHER HAND, while Pazuzu nice, it's not as solid as I have come to expect Wolfe's puns. It's like associating "inhuma" with "inhuman". It's is there, and it is convenient association. But it's not the primary way Wolfe plays with words. So I don't think it could have been more than an afterthought. It would not surprise me if Wolfe noted the association, though.

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António Pedro Marques — 29 Nov 2010, 23:37 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote:

But I also note the connection between Typhon and his Persian cognate Pazuzu. "Pas" could be short for that nasty wind god/demon. But I think I'm alone in that guess.

Just because nobody commented on it doesn't mean nobody finds it interesting/possible.

António Pedro Marques — 29 Nov 2010, 23:41 · in reply to Jack Smith

Jack Smith wrote:

I think "Pas" is a corruption of "Pan", the Greek god of rustic places. "Pan" means everything, as in "pandemic" or "pandemonium". Scylla, possessing Chenille, explains about the gods being members of Pas' family on Urth and says "with Daddy to be the god of everything--that's

what his name meant--and boss over everybody." (LotLS, ch. 11)

A little too straightforward to be true, inn'tit?

To this day I haven't found an explanation I like for Pas. At the same time, the name makes an enormous amount of sense to me. I can't help thinking there must be some obvious association we're missing completely.

James Wynn — 30 Nov 2010, 00:09 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 11/29/2010 5:41 PM, António Pedro Marques wrote:

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To this day I haven't found an explanation I like for Pas. At the same time, the name makes an enormous amount of sense to me. I can't help thinking there must be some obvious association we're missing completely.

I really don't understand why some people have a problem with Pan = Pas. I supposed it is because people have come to think of him as a minor woodland deity dancing around with wooly pants and goat feet. It is true that Zeus and the other Olympians superseded him in importance but at one time he was a major major diety for the Arcadians.

"pas" and "pan" are the same words. Pas the the masculine form.

When the story opens, Pas is dead. Pan is significant as the only god who has died in historical time, recorded by Plutarch as having died during the reign of Tiberius. Christians viewed this as being significant since it heralded the coming of the crushing of the false gods with the true god who was crucified and resurrected during Tiberius' reign. Pan also makes an appearance in Herodotus's book on the Persian Wars, meeting a runner on his way to Athens. Wolfe mentions this event in his introduction to Soldier of the Mist.

And now, thanks to Jane Delawney we have an etymology that connects "pas" to dogs. And Wolfe, in my experience, if there is a potential dog/wolf reference, he will make it.

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Gerry Quinn — 30 Nov 2010, 03:31 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

With regard to Inhumis on Urth, I guess I should clarify that I meant I think

beings corrupted by inhumis have populated Urth. By corrupted I mean had their consciousness shared via blood feeding as we see in Short Sun. (Gerry the nature

of Shadow Children has been discussed before; I think it is safe to say there is debate

on the issue. I tend to think they are not human but a first attempt to imitate humans

by a predatory native spirit/creature. Abos are a more successful imitation, but with

that success they have mostly forgotten their true nature).

I think that's quite a stretch - the text pretty much spells out what the Shadow Children are.

Interesting debate on whether some Nephilim giants survived the flood by breathing

underwater or whether new ones were created after the Flood as we continue to be

plagued by fallen angels/demons. The example of Baldanders living under water seems relevant. I assume it has been discussed somewhere in the history of this board that part of the legend of mermaids is that their kiss can convey the gift of underwater breathing to drowned sailors. Surely Juturna's offer to Severian is related to this. We can probably find significance in the fact that Severian was able (with Dorcas' help) to resist the offer while Baldanders, perhaps, did not. Anyway, I think Wolfe continues to use giants, be they nephilim, Nod, Baldanders or godlings, to convey the idea of transitional (false) god-figures.

Not the most essential of points but: "There were strange scars about his neck and ears". Baldanders has already provided himself with gills in preparation for the time when, even with the aid of his anti-gravity belt, the land can no longer carry him.

Later he discards his belt and leaps into Lake Diuturna after the fight with Severian, and thereafter is seen no longer on land.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 30 Nov 2010, 03:32 · follows Gerry Quinn

James Wynn: I really don't understand why some people have a problem with Pan = Pas. I supposed it is because people have come to think of him as a minor woodland deity dancing around with wooly pants and goat feet.

Yes, that was my problem with it, on first reading. But if Pan is conflated with Dionysus and his thousands of years of gnostic global religious influence the problem disappears. I don't find the Pas for Pazuzu shortening as implausible as you- for me that disguising nickname is reminiscent of Wolfe using Cas for Dorcas. But, in Dionysian light, I am quite willing to grant Pazuzu second banana status.

Pas is dead at the beginning of Long Sun. And "The Great God Pan Is Dead!" is certainly an important heraldic cry in the history of Christianity. (Though my understanding is that the Wiccans feel their Dionysian goat god, Green Man, Lord of the Vine, etc. came before the Olympians and outlasted them and will return to outlast the temporary ascension of the patriarchal, monotheistic, Middle East religions.) I had long thought the Sun series was meant to depict a universe fumbling toward Christianity. Lately I have some doubts (but only some).

James your Quezal article is chock-full of interesting associations. For some reason, in the description of the inhuma bird and its horn-like head crest I was reminded of the godling who wears "a peaked hat that was in fact a claw". Well, maybe a connection. If not, I suppose we must at least think of Severian a little.

Hound asks about the reason Silk is sometimes referred to as Silver Silk and Silent Silk. My guess is that this is an allusion to a couple satyrs/fauns who are associated with the Dionysus cult, Silvanus and Silenus.

I think you are on to something here. I don't know what. But I smell game.

Yeah, about the same here. There seems to be some connection between Father Inire and Typhon/Pas and The Outsider. But it is hard to pin down. With the current exploration of gnostic religion I am trying to find a connecting role in regards to Dionysus and the Demiurge.

Where does Inire go after Severian leaves Urth? Where was Inire before Ymar? Did Typhon have a mystical vizier during his reign? (Ceryx perhaps?). Are vertical pupil goat eyes the reason Father Inire's various incarnations must keep their eyes hidden? The extreme female beautification trend in The Commonwealth keeps me thinking of fallen angel Azazel as he was known for bringing that. He was also goat-associated...

Well, a bunch of puzzle pieces. But not quite fitting together yet.

Gerry Quinn — 30 Nov 2010, 03:41 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <entonio at gmail.com>
Jack Smith wrote:

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I'm okay with the Pan theory (but then I like simple theories). Wolfe allows that names will change over time: Allah is never written Ah Lah at this time, but will be recalled under that name.

Maybe Wolfe simply thought that 'Pan' has too many invalid connotations for modern-day audiences - sure he is an important God, but we think of him as the dancing guy with the flute. So he changed the name to something else that sounds similar but doesn't have this direct link to Pan.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 30 Nov 2010, 12:00 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote (30-11-2010 00:09):

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As I've said, I find it too simple. Gerry find it good on those grounds, I don't. I feel everyone's overlooking something. Which may be brutally simple as well - but only once you think of it, which nobody has.

Which is not to say that Pan isn't an association - and afaict especially on sexual grounds -, the more since the text itself almost spells it out. But I feel that's deceptive.

David Stockhoff — 30 Nov 2010, 13:52 · in reply to Lee Berman

I have wondered if the mere fact that Inire does not appear to be associated with any known factions (except the Autarchy itself, his creation [?]) suggests that his most likely association is with the Increate/Outsider---whatever the mechanism for that association.

On 11/29/2010 10:32 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Andrew Mason — 30 Nov 2010, 19:36 · follows David Stockhoff

Lee Berman wrote: >

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I have heard of this theory, but it seems very hard to believe, given that we know Typhon's doubled body part was artificial.

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of the megatherians, based on the giant Mother creature there.

That is more plausible. But might not the monsters equally have come to both Urth and Blue from a third place?

Jane Delawney — 01 Dec 2010, 01:08 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 30/11/10 03:32, Lee Berman wrote:

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I think the claw is actually on the godling's thumb? Silk/Horn sees the aforementioned appendage whilst the godling is cradling him upon his/its hand and it's pretty clear from the description (with a caveat or two, see below) that this claw is part of the hand not on the creature's head.

Hilariously (IMO) the front cover of the British paperback edition of RTTW depicts Silk/Horn cradled upon an oversized but very human hand (ie. with fingernails rather than claws) which belongs to a giant humanoid ... with a very big claw attached to the top of his head!

OK I can kind of understand how the illustrator got this so wrong - I had to read the passage twice to reassure myself that actually, the godling's claw is a thumbnail-analogue, not some daft looking turban substitute.

Not sure whether any Severian reference is intended (though I suppose a godling with claws - whether on hands or anywhere else - is somewhat suggestive) - in BoTNS the only guys we see with **actual** claws, flagged up at the time as parodies of **the** Claw, are the jungle sorcerers.

jd