

to the dark tower came and the bull(?) of the sun

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 20 Aug 2014

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6632>

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Marc Aramini — 20 Aug 2014, 06:45

doing some research for my "Solar Labyrinth: write up and was quite pleased to rediscover that the killing of the astral bull of the sun was every bit as important to the syncretic Mithras worship in the late Hellenistic and Roman cults as the execution of Christ is in the Christian cosmology. I earlier wrote that "To the Dark Tower Came" was a semiotic study of slippage in the letter s, but was confounded a bit by the symbolism of the bison and the penned whale.

Could that bison, pierced by the arrow, possibly from the archer Sagittarius, represent the bull of the sun? (Also, are the women with fire in their eyes who flank the young king sybils, or Delphic pythians? Seers for the god of light and the sun, Apollo? (In addition to healing, Apollo brought plague and sickness, too - thus the rats, besides representing senility eating at the mind of the king). Can we safely call a bison a bull? They are definitely bovines like cattle, but might not be a valid Taurus. (Tarus is a species name for cows)

Lee — 20 Aug 2014, 14:02 · follows Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini: doing some research for my "Solar Labyrinth: write up and was quite pleased to rediscover that the killing of the astral bull of the sun was every bit as important to the syncretic Mithras worship in the late Hellenistic and Roman cults as the execution of Christ is in the Christian cosmology.

Hopefully this is related. For a long time I was mystified by the dream appearance of a giant, bull-headed father for Severian (as Thecla) as he lay dying on the battlefield.

I thought it was likely related to Zeus, i.e. the Europa story, especially given that there is a line from Dorcas (as Meschianne) discussing a golden beam (shower) of golden light, another seductive apparition of Zeus. But I always thought something was missing that I didn't get until I read RttW, where Dionysus is specifically referenced.

Not only is the bull also related to Dionysus worship but Zeus and Dionysus have sort of a confused father-son-father relationship in an early version of the trinity. I think we see something similar in Typhon/Pas, Silk and The Outsider.

The Roman empire mostly didn't stray too far from the Mediterranean, so I think it is important to note that such Eastern mysticism as syncretic Mithras worship was brought to Europe by the earlier Alexandrian empire. Hence (I think) the parallels between the Alexander's life story and the combined stories of Spring Wind and Typhon.

I think we can agree that Wolfe is fascinated by the pagan precursors to Christianity. Purely through reading his work I've developed more than a passing interest myself. The relationship between such (ostensibly) humaniform pagan gods as Zeus and Dionysus (and Tzadkiel) and giant monstrosities such as Abaia, Great Scylla and The Mother has been discussed in other

threads (not to mention the relationship of such beings to Severian's own family tree, in the pattern of the mythic Greek demi-god/heroes).

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 20 Aug 2014, 16:54 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On 8/20/2014 1:45 AM, Marc Aramini wrote:

Can we safely

call a bison a bull? They are definitely bovines like cattle, but might not be a valid Taurus. (Tarus is a species name for cows)

As long as they are not obviously female, a honed bison makes a fine bull. Perhaps even an Ethiopian bull, to Hellenize the difference in appearance.

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