

## **The Heroes of the *Iliad* as Indo-European Gods: A Mythological Rosetta Stone**

Comparing the *Iliad* to the other Indo-European epics, the Indian *Mahabharata* and the Irish *Battle of Magh Tuireadh*, we can see quickly that it is descended from the same tradition, the same material, but recast in a Greek form. This being plain from a host of examples which will become apparent, and following the established tradition in myth studies (Wikander, Dumezil, etc) that has shown the heroes of the *Mahabharata* to be specific divine incarnations, it should follow that the active figures of the Trojan War are representatives, incarnations, of the most archaic primary gods, and should carry bonafide elements of their myths. Georges Dumezil hints as much when he points out that Achilles and Arjuna come from the same original. Both are the intellectually sensitive but terrifyingly powerful princes who hold themselves back from the action to brood over some issue, questioning whether they should fight, then coming through in the end to wreak havoc on the opponent's greatest warriors at the key moments. And as Arjuna is the spiritual son of Indra, Achilles and Arjuna then are each in their own way the “chivalrous” warrior god Indra made flesh. If this really is so, then what stops us from looking further to see if the other main gods appear in Greek guises within the pages of the *Iliad*?

There is nothing to assure that such a venture would be successful. There is no telling how much change the Greek version of the epic had undergone before reaching its final form, how much the characters of the heroes had been warped, merged, or even removed from the story. However, it should be remembered that the *Iliad* is thought to have been composed in its present form around the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and was also written down well before the *Mahabharata* was, which itself preserves the characters of the gods so clearly. And when we begin to investigate the question we quickly find that the *Iliad* too has been surprisingly conservative in content, and a significant amount remains within the traits of the main heroes to indicate their specific divine and Indo-European origins.

In the *Mahabharata*, the primary protagonists, the Pandavas and their mortal father Pandu, are spiritual sons and incarnations of the gods of society: Varuna and Mitra, Vayu and Indra, Nasatya and

Dasra. This makes three pairs of gods, each pair representing one of the functions in the tripartite social division. On the opposing side of the Kauravas are the incarnations of Dyaus, Surya, one of the Rudras, Bhaga, the demon Kali, and the embodiment of the Dwapara Yuga, among other warriors who may or may not have divine connections. Therefore these in particular are the gods we should look for in the heroes of the Trojan War. Doing so will help us greatly clarify these archaic Indo-European divine archetypes.

#### Agamemnon – Varuna (The Terrible Sovereign)

Agamemnon is the older brother of Menelaus and the reigning king of Mycenae. He is known as a fierce warrior and he is acknowledged commander-in-chief of all the assembled armies. As such he represents the power of kingship, just as Pandu begins as King over the Kuru kingdom. Consistent with the Varuna archetype as Dumézil outlines it, and with Pandu's story, Agamemnon is known as a conqueror who expands the territory of his kingdom in the early days of his power. Agamemnon is not a peaceable ruler, he is often haughty or unjust, known as something of a despot who takes what he feels to be his, as when he mistreats Achilles by exacting from him the woman Briseis. This general character recalls the descriptor which has been applied to Varuna: “The Terrible Sovereign.” It is Varuna whose sometimes violent but vital power forges kingdoms (as with Romulus), and it is he whose snares and spies exact justice from all within his kingdom which is the world. Agamemnon is highly destructive on the battlefield, a mirror image in fierceness of Achilles, and is known as one of the best three Greek warriors along with Ajax and Diomedes (when Achilles is not present).

While the loss of a hand is usually a trait associated with the Mitra type, the First Kings, Irish Nuada and Greek Agamemnon, both significantly sustain a wound instead to their arms, causing each to retire from battle for a period of time. Nuada too is the First King and expands the kingdom via the war with the Fir Bolg. It is possible that this has led to a confusion of Nuada with Mitra, despite the fact that Nuada is the First King. Agamemnon and Nuada are wounded in the *arm during battle* while

the Mitra type instead loses a *hand* during a questionable *contract or oath*.

Agamemnon's life is bookended by motifs very similar to those found in the story of King Pandu – Agamemnon's family had been cursed by Myrtilus resulting in infighting and death to several generations of the Atreides family. Pandu's curse was that he could not embrace his wife with intent to make love and so couldn't have children at all. Both curses caused great difficulty to the accomplishing of each king's duties, and to successfully furthering their lines. Indeed, Agamemnon's own son and wife, Orestes and Clytemnestra, were also caught up by the inter-family violence resulting from the curse, while his daughter was sacrificed to the gods. In the end of Pandu's life he one day is overwhelmed with love and embraces one of his wives, bringing about his death. Agamemnon dies when he returns home to his wife, either at the hands of her wife's lover or her own. Each king dies as a result of their curse and this occurs at the moment they return to their wives. Agamemnon and Menelaus also are forced into exile (related to the curse) before the events of the Trojan war, just as the Pandava brothers must endure exile before returning to fight the Kurukshetra War. Agamemnon was venerated as Zeus Agamemnon, in recognition of his embodiment of the role of sovereignty in line with the highest divinity.

Terrible Sovereign: (Agamemnon, Varuna/Pandu, Nuada)

Has a curse that affects his progeny

Is First King

Expands territory

Is exiled before the war

Is wounded in the arm

Is despotic

Exacts justice in a harsh manner which leads to conflict with the Thunderer and death of the Thunderer's son/favorite

Dies when he returns to his wife

Menelaus – Mitra (The Lawful Sovereign)

Just as Mitra and Varuna form a divine pair who alternate as sovereigns, so Menelaus is Agamemnon's younger brother, both kings in their own right. Agamemnon is older than Menelaus, as

Varuna is the older First King, and Mitra the younger Second King. Although Varuna represents a more “youthful,” creative and violent power, while Mitra represents a power more august, peaceful, and more in the spirit of a placid and wise old age, in the epic tradition it is still always the Varuna hero who is older while the Mitra type is younger. Varuna's position as the First King and Mitra's as Second King outweigh the youthfulness or agedness reflected in their personalities. Like his Vedic counterpart Yudhishthira, Menelaus too is a king, but he is known to be more peaceable than his brother. We find that “Menelaus was a man of an athletic figure; he spoke little, but what he said was always impressive; he was brave and courageous, but milder than Agamemnon, intelligent and hospitable.” (A Classical Dictionary of Biography, Mythology, and Geography). While Yudhishthira becomes King after Pandu, his restrained character is shown in the fact that he does not kill many prominent warriors, until he is called on to avenge Draupadi at the end of the war. Menelaus killed only 8 named men in the war, and Yudhishthira killed even fewer. As the ideal Brahmin and embodiment of dharma, Yudhishthira does not desire revenge but undertakes it as a matter of duty in the key moment. He is able to use his special ability of staying calm and unprovoked to confront the Kaurava general Shalya. In the climactic moment of the war he throws his spear, blessed by Shiva, into Shalya. The spear kills him, triggering a full retreat that effectively ends the war. As for Menelaus, while a skilled warrior he does not have as many high profile kills as some of the other warriors, and he features in the scene which parallels that of the death of Shalya. Menelaus seeks out Paris to take his revenge for the theft of his wife and in order to end the war, and so Hector suggests that Paris should fight him in single combat so that the war can be finished. When they face off, Menelaus throws his spear at Paris. It goes through his shield, but Paris is rescued by Aphrodite before he can be killed. Triangulating this scene further are the Celtic cases: Lugh, who (usually) takes the Mitra role in the Irish epic, comes in late to the action just in time to throw his legendary spear into Balor's eye, effectively ending the war. His Welsh counterpart, Lleu Llaw Gyffes, even more identical to Menelaus in several ways, seeks revenge on his wife Blodeuwedd's lover Gronw Pebr. Lleu throws his spear at Gronw and it goes through the stone

slab that he hides behind, just as Menelaus' spear had gone through Paris' shield, however in this case Gronw is killed rather than rescued. The Vedic Yudhisthira is known as one so skilled with a spear that he can throw it through solid stone as if it was paper, exactly as Lleu actually does. When he kills Shalya, he too is pierced in the chest by a spear and then Bhima, instead of him, destroys the shield of Shalya, before Yudhisthira pierces Shalya in return with the spear blessed by Shiva. It is said that Shalya “pierced the heroic Yudhishtira of terrible might in the chest with shaft possessed of the splendour of fire or the sun. Deeply pierced, O king, that bull of Kuru's race.” And of Bhima: “the illustrious Bhima cut off with ten arrows the unrivaled shield of the advancing hero” (The Mahabharata, Book 9: Shalya Parva: Section 17). Menelaus does complete the circuit as well – in the end he kills Helen's second foreign husband Deiphobus after the death of Paris.

In the *Iliad*, Aphrodite and Helen are somewhat shadows of each other (though one is a Love goddess and one theoretically a Dawn goddess). Aphrodite is the one who helps set off the war by conspiring to help Paris steal Helen, and it is Aphrodite who is there at the spear throwing face-off to save Paris. The two goddesses seem somehow to be combined into one in the Welsh figure Blodeuwedd – both adulterous lover stolen from the Lawful Sovereign, and conspiring, deceiving goddess of Love in one. Irish Lugh also has a wife who cheats on him. Her lover is Cermait, who Lugh kills in revenge. This suggests that the theme was quite well-established and firmly attached to the Lawful Sovereign. While Menelaus at first desires to kill Helen for her betrayal, the softening of his heart and the mercy he ultimately shows her further demonstrate that he possesses the qualities of the merciful Lawful Sovereign, in meaningful contrast to Agamemnon. Lleu likewise had shown Gronw mercy at first, and was only spurred to kill him when Gronw threw a knife at Lleu while his back was turned. Similarly, Yudhisthira attempts more than once to negotiate peace and avoid war. And as Menelaus and Helen have no male heir, neither does Yudhisthira. Additionally, the Vedic Mitra was the god who was seen as uniquely in possession of the ability to marshal the people, *yātayati*, the only god with this trait, (MacDonell, Arthur Anthony. *A Vedic Reader*. pp. 78–83, 118–

119, 134.), just as Menelaus does in order to pursue his cause of war.

As Yudhisthira is the only Pandava to reach the Himalaya pilgrimage and attain Paradise in the end of the epic, so Menelaus is one of only two of the Greek heroes who were thought to attain divinization after death (the other being Diomedes, discussed later). It had even been Athena's plan that Menelaus would not die in the war, which she insures when she saves him from Pandarus' arrow. According to the *Odyssey*, it was prophesied that the gods would take Menelaus and Helen to Elysium. Additionally, Yudhisthira and Lugh are both said to be held back for a long time by their own generals in order to protect them. Yudhisthira, being the king, had become the target of the Kaurava forces, who wished to cut the head off their foes' army. Lugh's men fear this very same thing, and so he stays out of the fight until the climactic spear throwing moment.

Just as Yudhisthira is the one who loses the dice game resulting in him losing the woman and the kingdom, which leads to the war, so it is Menelaus who loses the woman which leads to the war. And again there is a larger circuit of correspondences here: Dumezil suggests that the Germanic myth of the death of Baldr depicts this same dice game scene in a different permutation, and again it leads ultimately to the events of war (here Ragnarok). If so, then the Welsh version seems to miraculously tie the Germanic and Greek versions together. Just before the spear throwing scene in which Lleu kills Gronw, as mentioned we have the adultery of Blodeuwedd with Gronw. This leads to a scene astonishingly similar to the death of Baldr (the substitution of Baldr for Lleu is explained by the fact that Baldr's analog Aryaman is a god who develops out of Mitra as his cup bearer and remains closely tied to him, an extension of his divine power). Lleu is under a magical tynged, a protection from being killed, so that Blodeuwedd, conspiring with Gronw, decides she must ask him just how his death could ever be accomplished. Lleu guilelessly explains to her that he “can only be killed at dusk, wrapped in a net with one foot on a cauldron and one on a goat and with a spear forged for a year during the hours when everyone is at mass” (*Mabinogion*). Like Baldr, he is invincible until the malicious one finds out his sole vulnerability. Blodeuwedd passes this information on to Gronw and directs him how to

accomplish the murder, which he attempts with a thrown spear. This does not set off a war exactly, but Lleu does marshal all of his kingdom's forces to pursue Gronw. This may be because the Welsh Lleu and his story seem to be extracted and separated from the events of the main war of Welsh myth, and then compressed down to a shorter series of events, unlike in the other branches, including the Irish, where they are more integrated in the war myth. And yet the Welsh version proves the key to uniting all these branches together and glimpsing the essence of the Lawful Sovereign's story. It is even possible that the fact that Lleu had originally been under tynged or curse to never have a wife of human birth, and “died” when her returned to her represents a combining of the mythos of both Mitra and Varuna, relating him again to Agamemnon and Pandu. Thus we see a possible movement toward combining the Mitra and Varuna aspects into one in the Celtic Lleu/Lugh, which also seems possible in the Irish *Tragedy of the Sons of Tuireann*. However, we must recognize that even Vedic Mitra had the potentiality of wielding the fearsome power of Varuna, and the two were often indistinguishable and freely shared prerogatives: as is stated of Yudhishthira in the *Mahabharata*, “When I think of his wrath, O Sanjaya, and consider how just it is, I am filled with alarm” (*Mahabharata*).

Lleu Llaw Gyffes' myth is so identical in every part to the story of Menelaus that it begins to seem like it may have been a direct borrowing by the Welsh from the *Iliad*. Gronw “The Radiant” comes to Lleu's kingdom while Lleu is visiting his maternal grandfather Math fab Mathonwy, while Paris of astonishing beauty comes to Menelaus' kingdom while Menelaus is about to leave for the funeral of his maternal grandfather Catreus. Gronw is there on a hunting expedition; Paris is there on a pretended diplomatic expedition. The goddess Blodeuwedd commits adultery and conspires with Gronw; Paris conspires with the goddess Aphrodite in order to adulterously steal Helen (Blodeuwedd combining both female figures in one). Lleu marshals all of his kingdom to pursue Gronw and Blodeuwedd (“Then they called together the whole of Gwynedd, and set forth to Ardudwy” (*Mabinogion*)); Menelaus marshals all of the allied kingdoms to pursue Paris and Helen. Lleu is struck in the abdomen by a spear and undergoes a symbolic death, and is revived by a god of wisdom,

Gwydion; Menelaus is struck in the abdomen by a spear during battle and is protected by a goddess of wisdom, Athena. Lleu has to be healed of this wound by physicians (“and there were brought unto him good physicians that were in Gwynedd”); Menelaus is healed of this wound by the physician Machaon. Lleu and Gronw finally face off in order to put their dispute to rest: Lleu first shows mercy, but when he is blindsided he throws his spear through a slab of stone that Gronw hides behind, killing him. Menelaus and Paris finally face off in order to put their dispute to rest: he throws his spear through Paris' shield and Paris has to be rescued by Aphrodite before he is killed. Menelaus later shows mercy to Helen, and kills her second foreign husband Deiphobus. The argument against simple borrowing in all of this is the question of whether a borrower would have copied so many of these small details, buried in the narrative and sometimes switched in order as they are, while also making the other changes that are evident. The other question would be whether such a borrower would have been able to accurately recognize Menelaus and Lleu Llaw as the same divine archetype to begin with, and understand exactly which elements were essential to the myth of his archetype. The question should be investigated further, yet when the correspondences to other branches are considered, it appears very likely that we are dealing with a large web of consistent parallels suggesting a deep ancient shared tradition.

Finally, Menelaus is most prominently tied to the central oath of the epic, The Oath of Tyndareus. All the suitors of Helen make an oath that they will come to the aid of the one who wins her hand, if need be. Thus it is this oath which Menelaus invokes in order to compel the others to join him in the attack on Troy. Mitra is associated primarily with oaths and so it would only be fitting for Menelaus to be the beneficiary of the central oath which ignites the epic. Furthermore, Menelaus binds a seer named Proteus in Egypt, with a chain. This allows Menelaus to learn that the gods are angry about the fall of Troy and allows him to appease them with an offering. There is a similarity between this tale and the role of Mitra as the god of binding (by oaths and contracts), which is illustrated most vividly in the account of the binding of Fenrir by Tyr and the Aesir.



The fact that these two brothers, Agamemnon and Menelaus, so well embody the same contrast of wrathful king and peaceable king that we find in Varuna and Mitra, reinforces the overall case for each parallel.

Lawful Sovereign: Mitra (Menelaus, Mitra/Yudhisthira, Lugh/Leu)

Is peaceable and merciful though still a skilled warrior

Is Second King

Loses his wife to another man which starts the war

Leads the united armies to regain her or the kingdom

Is wounded in the abdomen, requiring healing

Is called upon to take revenge on this man in order to end the war by throwing a spear

Desires to give mercy at first

Throws the spear to end the war or to attempt to end it

Throws his spear through a stone slab or shield

Kills his wife's lover either with this spear or at a different point

Ajax – Vayu (The Lord of Wind)

Telamonian Ajax, as has been discussed elsewhere, seems the obvious match for the powerful Lord of Wind, Vayu/Bhima. The most immediate connection is the size and strength of both Ajax and Bhima. Ajax is known as the tallest of the Achaean warriors. He is so large that he can be identified by the Trojans from their ramparts. His frame is also said to be colossal and he is the strongest of the Achaeans, called “the bulwark of the Achaeans” (Iliad). Bhima likewise is both the strongest and largest of the Pandavas. Ajax's name meaning “he who laments” may relate to the sound of the wind, poetically compared to lamentation; or we may consider the alternate meaning “eagle” as a possible symbol of the airborne strength of the wind god.

Beyond this, the main evidence is Ajax as primary one-on-one opponent of Hector, paralleling the battles between Bhima and Duryodhana. Ajax is known to be so powerful and courageous that when it comes time to draw lots to face Hector in single combat, Ajax steps forward and all the Achaeans pray that he will be chosen, and only Diomedes or Agamemnon may suffice if it is not him. He is chosen and greets the news with joy, and thus we get the formalized bout between the two

bafflingly powerful heroes in which Ajax fights Hector to a draw and they exchange gifts. Later they fight again when Hector charges the ships and burns one. In one of their four different face-offs Ajax nearly kills Hector by smashing him with a large rock, knocking him unconscious. Hector has to be revived by Apollo, and ultimately Ajax saves the ships and saves the Greeks from losing the war then and there. These one-on-one battles mirror those between Bhima and Duryodhana in the *Mahabharata*. Duryodhana is the primary warrior of the Kauravas and childhood sparring partner of Bhima. In the war they famously face off about four different times as Ajax and Hector had. In their final confrontation, a formalized bout, Bhima smashes Duryodhana's thigh with a mace, and there is no god who comes to revive him to fight on. He dies from the blow. If we take these two formalized bouts to be identical, then it seems Hector may have been revived in the Greek version so that this climactic kill could be given to Achilles.

A couple of other interesting connections require speculation. At one point, Ajax is struck by Poseidon in order to renew his strength. This is reminiscent of the scene where Bhima is dropped down, unconscious, into the underwater kingdom of the Nagas and is given his superhuman strength by the king who reigns there. In each case the Lord of Wind is given strength by a divine underwater king. Ajax dies after the war from dishonor from killing a herd of sheep (that he thought were his comrades); Bhima dies after the war from the sin of gluttony; the Dagda is mocked for eating a giant pit full of sheep and porridge. Can there be a connection here, of the Lord of Wind dying from gluttonous dishonor/sin over eating a massive amount of sheep?

Finally, just as Agamemnon and Menelaus are paired as brothers and just as the two heroes of the third function are paired, Ajax also is paired closely with the other hero of his function. Ajax and his contrasting hero of the second function, Achilles, are said both to be trained together by the centaur Chiron. This connection is reinforced as they are also said to be cousins. Ajax is also strongly marked by an his association with Heracles, another god of the Bhima type and a strong symbol of the warrior function in general.

Lord of Wind: Vayu (Ajax, Bhima, the Dagda, Bran)

Is the largest and strongest warrior  
Fights single combat with the Demon of the Dark Age  
smashes him with a blunt object

Achilles – Indra (The Thunderer)

As mentioned earlier, Dumézil has already discussed the parallel between Achilles and Arjuna, incarnation of Indra. The most well-known sections of both the *Iliad* and *Mahabharata* feature these two heroes. These are Achilles' withdrawal from the war in protest of Agamemnon's insult to his honor, around which the narrative is structured, and Arjuna's withdrawal from the war due to his internal conflict regarding fighting his cousins, in the section known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. Each hero in his own way displays a particular kind of intellectual sensitivity, a brooding introversion, specifically over the question of honor or dharma. Each culture used the episode as a major jumping off point for new movements of moral and political philosophy thereafter. Thus the protest of the Thunderer-hero massively influenced the respective cultures, India more toward the dissolving of the ego in impersonal Dharma, and Greece toward a more overt conflict of the atomized individual against the collective or sovereign order. After keeping aside from the war for a certain amount of time, each hero returns to be perhaps the most important warrior for their side, slaying key warriors of the enemy and turning the tide of the war.

As has been mentioned as well, Achilles' pairing with Ajax as trainees of Chiron reproduces the archaic duad of Indo-European warrior gods, the “brutish” and the “chivalrous,” the wind and the thunder. When Achilles fights Hector, Athena returns his spears to him continually. This is reminiscent of Thor whose hammer returns to him or Zeus in his Thunderer aspect dealing out his endless stock of lightning bolts.

Finally, both Arjuna and Achilles are famous for their mourning over another warrior's death, a

warrior who is beloved by and tied closely to them. For Achilles this is Patroclus, Achilles' comrade from youth, but for Arjuna it is actually his son, Abhimanyu. The general parallel has been noted before, but it can actually be seen that this is not merely a vague similarity, but that the same story is here being told. Both Patroclus and Abhimanyu are tasked with a sort of suicide mission, because Achilles or Arjuna are occupied elsewhere (Achilles in his tent and Arjuna is being distracted on another part of the battlefield). Abhimanyu has to enter the ranks of the enemy's infamously unassailable Chakravyuha formation alone and to fight them singlehandedly. Patroclus is urged by Nestor to lead the Myrmidon's on a mad assault on Troy's walls, which he is warned against. Though fighting valiantly with impressive slaughter, each is unable to safely leave the enemy ranks and is killed by being attacked by many enemy heroes at once. Patroclus is killed when Apollo himself dazes him, so that Hector can strike, and then Hector threatens to ignobly give his body to the dogs. Abhimanyu is killed by a gang attack of many of the enemy heroes attacking at once from all sides, which Arjuna interprets as unjust. Each death highlights the dishonorable actions of those who do the killing. Upon receiving the news, the lamentation of both Achilles and Arjuna are proverbial. Each then vows revenge on the killers of his comrade/son. As Arjuna says, "Listen now to another oath of mine! If tomorrow's sun set without my slaying of that wretch, then even here shall I enter the blazing fire!" (Mahabharata)

It is interesting to attempt to draw a parallel between this episode and the Irish version of the Thunderer's myth, *the Tragedy of the Sons of Tuireann*. Tuireann, like Arjuna and Achilles, is best known for his heart-rending lamentation at the death of his sons. There are three sons this time, but the doubling in the names Iucha and Iucharba and the fact that only Brian speaks suggests that they are a triplication of a single figure. In addition, these deaths and lamentation happen as a result of, and repeat, the conflict between the Thunderer and the Sovereign of Justice, which we see in Agamemnon and Achilles' conflict and which may also be present in the conflict of Veles and the Thunderer Perun in Slavic myth. It's possible Lugh here has inherited a "Varuna" role, suggesting again that the Celtic

Lleu/Lugh tended in the direction of combining Mitra and Varuna elements into one god. In both the Irish and Greek stories, justice is being exercised by the god of justice in what is arguably an overzealous manner. Agamemnon exacts Briseis from Achilles because Chryseis is taken from him and as king and commander-in-chief he feels he is owed and is able to take compensation. This kingly justice of course is unjust and insulting from the perspective of Achilles, and it causes ultimately Achilles to be absent when Patroclus has to undertake his mission, leading to Patroclus' death. Lugh exacts a series of difficult-to-obtain objects in repayment from the sons of Tuireann because Lugh's father has been taken from him, killed at their hands, and as king and as son he feels he is owed – and is able to take – compensation. His demanded recompense is extravagant, but is still in the realm of reason, as he easily could have simply killed them. The fact that the final task leads to their mortal wounding walks the line between justice and excessive punishment. Lugh knew they would be seriously wounded from this task and when they ask him to be healed by one of the magical items they had obtained, he refuses it to them, and they perish. His justice is not absurdly unfair, but it is terrible in its absoluteness, a drawn out execution where mercy is refused, despite the fact that Lugh had told them they could live if they retrieved these items, giving them false hope that a non-fatal recompense was possible. Theirs is indeed a suicide mission too.

Both Agamemnon and Lugh's actions can be said to follow a logic of compensatory justice, and yet they also have a dimension of harshness. This harshness of applied power leads ultimately to the death of the Thunderer's son(s) or friend. Of course Tuireann then weeps and laments, and dies of grief. This may be, as in some other Celtic tales, because this tale has been removed from the context of the war. Whereas Arjuna says he will throw himself on the fire if he doesn't kill his son's killers by the end of the next day, Tuireann figuratively does just this and perishes from his grief, unable to take revenge. (As both the Vedic and Irish cases involve the sons of the Thunderer figure, it is plausible that Patroclus being only a close comrade and not a son may have been a Greek alteration of the myth. It has also been suggested that the close friendship of Duryodhana and Karna on the other side of the

war, and the lamentation of Duryodhana at the death of Karna is more of a match to that of Achilles and Patroclus, that the two similar parallel relationships and deaths were combined into one in the Greek epic.)

So who is Abhimanyu/Patroclus/The Sons of Tuireann? Abhimanyu is the reincarnation of the moon god Chandra's son. His main epithets are "son of Subhadra," "son/successor of Arjuna," and "son of Chandra." Patroclus' name means "glory of the father," and his father's name Menoetius has the stem meno- which means "month," from mene-, meaning "moon." As Abhimanyu is the reincarnation of the Moon God's son, given to Arjuna to raise as a son, so Patroclus is also given to Achilles by his father Menoetius as a mentor and friend (this is because Patroclus had committed the sin of killing another youth. Murder is Patroclus' sin as murder is the sin of Tuireann's sons.) Each figure is a manifestation of the duty of a son (this much is true of the Sons of Tuireann as well), and they are the sons of potentially moon-related figures.

The name "Achilles" means "he who has the people distressed," which relates him to the frightening storm, but also to the concept of distress generally which manifests in his stormy brooding. The fact that he is known as the swiftest Greek relates him also to lightning.

Thunderer:

Is the central and most skilled warrior

Retires from battle for a period of time due to sensitivity regarding an issue of honor/dharma

Has justice harshly exacted on him by the Terrible Sovereign, leading to the death of his favorite or son

Laments over the death of his favorite or son and may die in the resulting events

Odysseus – Nasatya

Diomedes – Dasra (The Horse Twins)

This pairing of heroes may seem surprising at first as their horse associations aren't blatantly obvious and they don't seem to be depicted as blood relatives. This is trivial however when the greater

pattern is considered. The Horse Twins were always known as warriors, but the Greeks and Romans emphasized the warrior aspect of the Dioskouri perhaps more than other branches had. A Horse Twin god like Aengus Og in Irish myth is more well-known for his association with love and wooing and youthfulness, but in more obscure epithets he is still called “of the battle squadrons” and “red armed” (Dindshenchas). The Greek and Roman soldiers in particular worshipped the Dioskouri, and they were seen as generals and ideal warriors while still having a closeness with the “human” level of normal people, gods of the “third function” as they are. Hence Diomedes being one of the fiercest and bravest of the warriors should come as no surprise. The fact that he is called the most feared warrior among the Achaeans shows just how high in reverence the Greeks held the Horse Twins and particularly how highly they rated their martial aspect.

However, along with this martial skill, the Horse Twins are known for their intelligence and particularly their cunning or trickery. They are always tricking someone out of something or going on missions or going cattle raiding. Aengus Og tricks his father the Dagda out of Brugh na Boinne by means of the clever wording of an agreement, while Midir, his sometime brother and Horse Twin, uses a series of fidchell games the way a con artist does to finally get close to Etain and magically steal her away. This is where Odysseus in particular comes in, and with this framework we can at last understand the origin and significance of Odysseus' fabled cunning and wiles. Whenever a question of intelligence or stratagem arises, Odysseus is called on, and he becomes most famed of all for coming up with the Trojan Horse plot. Yet in the *Iliad* there are many other instances of Odysseus, always accompanied by Diomedes, performing some kind of covert mission. Sthenelus and Diomedes go on one mission to steal the horses of Aeneas. Diomedes, in a move highly reminiscent of Aengus, tricks Glaucus into trading his gold armor for Diomedes' bronze, such a cunning trade thereafter being referred to as a Diomedian swap. Diomedes and Odysseus are sent on a night mission to gather Rhesus' horses. Diomedes and Odysseus may have even been sent on a peace mission to try to negotiate terms of truce after Paris was killed. Odysseus and Diomedes are sent on another mission to

steal the Palladium statue, Troy being prophesied to be unconquerable while the statue remained within it.

As Achilles and Ajax trained together under the same teacher and were both connected to Heracles, so Odysseus and Diomedes were both said to have met and teamed up already on “several adventures” when in Aulis before the war and were the two favorites of their shared patron, Athena. They each share the traits of their patron goddess, each one marked by her wisdom and cunning, her courage and skill in battle, though to different degrees. While Odysseus is known as the craftiest Greek and the go-to strategist, Diomedes is repeatedly praised for his exceeding intelligence especially for his young age. And this combination of intelligence and great youthfulness is often repeated. Nestor commends his intelligence and says that no one “of such a young age” (Iliad) had Diomedes' intellectual ability and wise council. He is known as the youngest of the Achaeans and his youth is brought up repeatedly. This again parallels exactly with the Irish Aengus Og, known as “the young son, ” who was said to be perpetually youthful, a god of youth, love and beauty, but also, as aforementioned, of cunning exchanges and “of the battle squadrons.” This is paralleled also by the Welsh Mabon (“young son”) and by the Asvins who were known as the “sons of God” and associated with youthfulness and myths of healing and the regeneration of youth.

While, as mentioned, Odysseus and Diomedes' horse associations are not blatant, they are not absent either. Two of their missions involve the capture of horses, and one of them leaves Diomedes the owner of Aeneas' famed horses, the second fastest after Achilles' divine ones. Odysseus' most famous stratagem even takes the form of a horse – the Trojan Horse – and he and Diomedes lead this mission from within the wooden representation of their divine form. Diomedes is also said to have had a white horse sacrificed to him in the worship of the Heneti.

Diomedes also fulfills the Horse Twin role of rescuer in one instance during the war when he bravely saves Nestor from Hector's attack. Like the Horse Twins, Odysseus is closely associated with a sea voyage. As the Horse Twins are also connected with oaths, second in this only to Mitra, it is



fitting that the central Oath of Tyndareus, which Menelaus enforces, is thought up by Odysseus.

The Horse Twins were somewhat of divine climbers – that is, while initially excluded from the higher pantheon of gods, they eventually attained recognition and immortality when they were admitted into the soma sacrifice. This fact may be reflected in Diomedes' well-known clashing with the immortal gods on the battlefield. This demonstrates his closeness with the world of mortals but also his ambition to put himself on a level with the highest immortals. Diomedes wounds two immortals in one day, becoming the only human ever to do so. Numerous tales tell that in the end Diomedes, just like the Asvins, had a “mysterious apotheosis,” or even was given immortality by the goddess Athena (Pindar) and became worshipped as a god. One tradition even says that he lives with the Dioscouri in heaven as an immortal god, suggesting that the Greeks sensed or knew the deep connection between them.

Just as Aengus Og is said to be accompanied by birds that fly over his head, so Diomedes is said to have birds which follow him and his soldiers, birds which “used to be his companions” (Virgil, Aeneid XI.246–247). One of the islands named for him is said to be known for its mysterious birds (Aelian). Another legend states that the albatross sang for him when he died, and others say that when he died his companions “were changed into birds resembling swans...They are called the birds of Diomedes” (Bibliotheca Classica, John Lempriere). The Irish Aengus and Midir transform into swans at the end of both their stories.

Horse Twins:

Skilled warriors and generals  
Cunning strategists, wise counsors  
One of them is known for his youth  
Vie to become like the gods  
Birds fly over the head of one of them  
Horse associations  
One of them becomes a god  
Associated with sea voyages  
Rescuers  
Usually act together

## Paris – Surya (The Sun)

It may be surprising to some but as we have mentioned, the incarnation of the Sun God Surya fights on the side of the Kauravas, the force opposing that of the protagonist Pandavas. This may represent the idea of a conflict of the gods of natural, potentially destructive forces, against the gods of “society.” Vayu and Indra, though gods of fearsome and destructive natural forces, could be brought into the social structure as representatives of the ideal warrior nobles, Indra eventually as the ideal king as well. The Sun God, however, was always seen very ambivalently, and even his association with certain strands of elitist esotericism may have put him in an uneasy and antagonistic relationship with ordered society.

Hence, as we find with Karna, Surya's incarnation, and as with Paris, the Sun God in epic tradition is always conceived of as at best a long lost half-brother of the other gods, his true parentage only revealed later after he has been raised separate from them. Karna is conceived by Kunti (who later becomes mother of the Pandavas) with the Sun God Surya. She is unmarried at the time, so she puts Karna in a basket and sends him down the Ganges river. The baby ends up being adopted by a couple of relatively lower status, from the charioteer and poet class, who worked for the Kaurava king Dhritarashtra. The fact that he is believed to be of low birth is an impediment to Karna throughout life. Upon Karna's death it is revealed to the Pandavas that he was their half-brother, and they lament that they have killed their sibling. Paris, repeating much of this story very closely, is conceived by Hecuba, the queen of Troy; however, she had a dream that she would give birth to a flaming torch, and, it being prophesied that the child would lead to Troy's destruction, they instructed their herdsman to kill him. In the end, however, the herdsman ends up raising Paris. Hence, just like Karna, Paris, the long lost brother, is believed to be of low birth until he returns to court and is finally recognized as the forgotten prince.

The Sun God heroes are always depicted as morally ambivalent, yet highly noble nonetheless.

This is due to the way the Indo-Europeans viewed the Sun, as often inhospitable, even abusive, potentially exceedingly destructive, and yet as beautiful, life giving, and a symbol of intellect and elitist esoteric pursuits. Mircea Eliade explains it thus: “The sun's ambivalence is shown also in its behaviour towards men. It is, on the one hand, man's true progenitor...On the other hand, the sun is sometimes identified with death, for he devours his children as well as generating them.” (Patterns in Comparative Religion). The sun, so powerful and uncompromising, was found difficult to bring into the social order and to count on as a benefactor of society. Karna distinguishes himself for his noble character, is an exemplary friend, generous in charity, hard working, piously devoted to Surya, compassionate to those in need, and is known for his “glowing” beauty, yet his hot temper leads him to insult Draupadi and to order that she be assaulted. He is oversensitive and arrogant. He is a skilled speaker, but he fights for the adharmic side of the war, abetting the destructive actions of Duryodhana. He is at times cruel and abusive, as he is toward Draupadi. Paris, in his turn, is noted for his truthfulness and his fairness (which leads to his being chosen to judge the beauty contest of the goddesses), and he is recognized for his astonishing beauty and intelligence. Yet he commits the theft of the foreign queen which starts the war, and in Homer's account he displays significant cowardice (which Homer may have emphasized more than the tradition had), and is considered as lacking in warrior skill (this aspect also does not appear in the other traditions where the sun hero is generally a highly skilled warrior). Paris is said only to be able to fight with ranged weapons such as bow and arrow, again a fitting metaphor for the action of the Sun.

We can see most of this archetype reflected in the Irish god Bres the Beautiful. Just as Karna and Paris are Kauravas or Trojans by birth, but “go back and forth” from being apart from them and then returning to fight with them, Bres, a Fomorian by birth, originally fights on the side of the Tuatha De Danaan against the Fir Bolg. He then takes over the kingship from Nuada temporarily, but proves to be the definition of inhospitable. Under Bres' rule, the gods' “knives were never greased and their breaths never smelled of ale,” and they are subject to hard labor under his command. As a result he is

deposed and then leads the Fomorians against the De Dannan. He is known as “the Beautiful,” “ornament of the host,” “with a visage never woeful,” “flower of the Tuatha De,” and “hot of valour,” yet he sparks the war with the Tuatha De Danaan due to his own inhospitality, resentment and temper. As Paris becomes the lover of Helen, possibly the Dawn Goddess, Bres is the husband of Brigid, the Irish Dawn Goddess. This clarifies why a fairly negative figure like Bres would be married to the central Irish goddess of all benevolent aspects. Bres' association with a knowledge of agriculture would also make sense for a sun god. His beauty and noble battle exploits early on contrast with his inhospitable and adharmic action later on, making him the most ambivalent of the gods. It must be remembered that Karna and Duryodhana in the *Mahabharata* also fight on the same side as the Pandavas before the Kurukshetra war begins, and that Paris was allied to Menelaus before he ignited hostilities.

Paris, like both Karna and Bres, is one of the two central warriors of the antagonist side of the war. There are always two central warriors of this oppositional side, between whom a couple of mythoi may combine in different ways. These warriors are Paris and Hector, Karna and Duryodhana, Bres and Balor. One of these two is always the Sun God; however, the other has shifting elements combined of primarily the Demon Kali and, in the case of Balor at least, one of the Rudras. As Karna insults Draupadi and abets Duryodhana's taking of Draupadi and the kingdom, helping to spark the war, so Paris steals Helen. This leads the gods of society to seek him out for vengeance in both cases. All three cases of the Sun God hero mentioned die in the war or just after.

Sun God:

Morally ambivalent yet noble  
Hot tempered and inhospitable  
Unknown parentage revealed later to be a lost sibling of the other gods, or has some kind of split allegiance between the two  
One of the 2 main warriors for the “opposing” side  
Known for his beauty and speaking skill  
Steals or insults the central female character  
Lover of the “Dawn” goddess  
Dies in the war

## Hector – Kali (The Demon of the Dark Age)

This identification will seem the strangest by far, at first, but if the reader agrees that the parallels thus far have revealed a true pattern, they will be rewarded for trusting a bit further. Duryodhana of the *Mahabharata* is considered to be the incarnation of the demon of this dark age, Kali, and this is confirmed in the *Mahabharata* as well as by Georges Dumézil. Duryodhana's father is fittingly said to be the incarnation of the Dwarpara Yuga, the age just before the Kali Yuga. Duryodhana conspires to trick Yudhisthira into losing his kingdom in the fateful dice game, and is the hell-bent motive force pushing the war forward. He is also the primary warrior on the Kaurava's side, wreaking havoc on the Pandava forces. His skin was said to be made of lightning and his name means “hard to kill.”

It is in the structural position of Hector's character: his role as prince, heir to the Trojan throne, primary and fearsome warrior for his side, and one-on-one opponent of the Lord of Wind, that he best fits this archetype. As previously mentioned, the one-on-one battles between Bhima and Duryodhana, including the final formalized bout in which Duryodhana's thigh is crushed by Bhima, form a central part of the war narrative. In the same way, the face-offs between Ajax and Hector, including the formalized bout where they prove evenly matched and exchange gifts, form a central part of the *Iliad*. Bhima crushes Duryodhana's thigh with a mace as Ajax smashes Hector with a large rock. Hector's “Kali” character may also be seen in the sheer destruction he wreaks on the Greeks: no other warrior on either side kills as many men as Hector, and his body count in the war is said to be 31,000. The Greeks describe him as “incredible dynamite” and a “maniac.” (*Iliad*, Fagles), and he strikes terror in even their bravest leaders.

However, there is an undeniable shift in the Greek epic of the negative traits of the “Kali” archetype onto the more unlikeable character of Paris. In the dice game that sets the conflict off in the

*Mahabharata* and which parallels the theft of Helen as well as the deaths of Baldr and (temporarily) of Leu (as argued in a previous section), it is Duryodhana rather than Karna the Sun God hero who tricks and defeats Yudhishthira, the Lawful Sovereign hero, and in the winnings takes Yudhishthira's wife as a slave. It is also Duryodhana about whom a terrible prophecy is pronounced at his birth, which tells that Duryodhana (like Kali) would cause the end of the universe. It is Paris who in the *Iliad* is prophesied to bring the destruction of Troy, as Paris takes the more active and negative role of setting off the war via his deceptive wife taking. As a result, we can see that the Greeks desired to make Hector a more purely noble character, his sins shifted to Paris leaving a more black and white moral dichotomy between the two. In Hector's opposition to the war he even is reminiscent of the noble figure of Bhishma (discussed later), which is not at all Duryodhana's character in the *Mahabharata*.

However, the other elements confirm that Hector is still the Duryodhana archetype at root. The death scene of the morally questionable Duryodhana brings to the front all of the noble traits contained within this sometimes demonic figure. Having been killed by dishonorable means, struck below the belt while Krishna aided Bhima with illusions and advising, Duryodhana indicts all the Pandavas for their trickery and dishonorable actions. The gods shower flowers on him, while the Pandavas weep for their disgraceful behavior and Duryodhana's glory is vindicated. Duryodhana is said to go to heaven before the Pandavas do and is there seated in glory for his bravery, loyalty, and strong rulership. It seems fair to say that from such a germ of nobility the Greeks derived the noble character of Hector. As Duryodhana is killed via dishonorable means, due to the illusions and assistance of Krishna, so Athena creates illusions of Hector's brother to mislead him in the battle, and when Achilles throws his spears Athena continually returns them to him, giving Achilles an insurmountable advantage over Hector. As Bhima strikes Duryodhana dishonorably below the belt, and is derided for his dishonorable fighting, Achilles purposely dishonors and attempts to desecrate Hector's body after death (though it is protected by Apollo and Aphrodite). This leads to an outcry from the gods and ultimately paints the Greek hero in a dishonorable light, which is contrasted with Hector's nobility, just as Duryodhana's

death highlights his own nobility and the dishonor of the Pandavas. These death scenes are so similar in the structural elements that they even preserve the surprising fact that the great warriors Hector and Duryodhana both are struck by fear and flee their opponent just before the final portion of the confrontation, knowing that the tides and the gods have turned against them.

The Demon of the Dark Age:

The central warrior of the “opposition”

Son of the king and heir to the kingdom

Fights Lord of Wind one on one in an arranged match which they fight to a draw or nearly a draw is smashed by a blunt object in one of these face offs with Lord of Wind

Dies through the trickery or divine collaboration of his opponent and is seen as noble but mistreated in death

Helen – Ushas (The Dawn Goddess)

Helen occupies the position comparable to that of Draupadi in the *Mahabharata*. Draupadi's divine affiliation is not specified and so we are left to speculate, however her epithets such as “maker of garlands,” “one who never grows old,” and “born from sacrificial fire,” as well as the accusation that she is “unchaste,” leave open the possibility that she could have a Spring or Dawn association. Draupadi is involved in a competition for her hand, and when Arjuna is selected, all the other Pandava brothers become her husband in common by (accidental) pronunciation of their mother. This parallels the competition for Helen's hand and the Oath of Tyndareus in which her suitors all become bound to each other, sworn to come to the aid of whoever wins her. When Yudhishthira loses the dice game he loses the kingdom as well as Draupadi, who is taken as slave by Duryodhana. This causes all the Pandavas to seek together to gain back kingdom and wife. When Helen is taken from Menelaus by Paris, this causes all the kingdoms linked by the Oath of Tyndareus to join the fight to bring her back. In Irish myth, the goddess consort of the Sun God Bres is the Dawn Goddess Brigid. In Welsh, the woman stolen from the Lawful Sovereign by the solar figure Gronw Pebr (“The Radiant”) is Blodeuwedd, who seems more of a spring or love goddess, entirely created out of flowers as she is.

Yet, as Angriff and Redbeard have reminded us, the Spring was the time of love making and were also associated with Dawn goddesses (Brigid, Eostre, etc) and her festivities, and so this “flower face” of Blodeuwedd may have only been another aspect of the same goddess. Draupadi and Blodeuwedd both are cursed in the end of their stories: Blodeuwedd to become an owl, Draupadi and all women to be subject to blushing.

Helen has been suggested to be the same figure as Vedic Sarama. This is believed to be a name of the Dawn Goddess Ushas – Max Muller and Sri Aurobindo were of this opinion. However, Muller also hypothesized that “Helene” could derive from Selene, goddess of the moon. This would make Paris the Sun God who steals the moon. However, M. L. West and Otto Skutsch claim her name derives from \*Suelena, which relates to svarana, “the shining one.” It is the opinion of Ceisiwr Serith that this makes Helen the Daughter of the Sun (Sawélyosyo Dhugatér), a figure who he claims was habitually confused or combined with the Dawn Goddess. However, Helen's own genealogy strengthens the case that she is The Dawn: her father is Zeus and her brothers are said to be the Horse Twins Castor and Polydeuces, just as the Dawn Goddess is regularly said to be daughter of the Sky Father and a sister or close relation to the Horse Twins.

Dawn Goddess:

The most beautiful of women

Promiscuous, multiple husbands and multiple suitors

Is taken from her husband the Lawful Sovereign by the Sun God, sparking the war

Is not killed but may be cursed in punishment

Sarpedon – Dyaus (Father Sky)

Both Bhishma, incarnation of Dyaus in *Mahabharata*, and Sarpedon of the *Iliad* are generals



not directly of the royal Kaurava or Trojan family, but are brought in as allied forces. Each one has reservations about the war or does not want to fight it. However, each is also one of the best generals of their side. While Bhishma is the spiritual son of Dyaus, Sarpedon is said to be the son of Zeus, and is the only warrior said to be so. Bhishma is uncle to and loves the Pandavas, so his heart is not in the fight and he doesn't wish to kill his nephews. Sarpedon complains during the war that he has no reason to hate the Greeks and no reason to fight them. Both are forced to fight by bonds of alliance and loyalty. Sarpedon gives a speech to Glaucus relating to the duty of kings to honor their subjects by fighting and dying bravely. Bhishma, as he is dying, gives a speech to Yudhisthira all about dharma and the duties of a king.

Bhishma and Sarpedon both die in the war, and their deaths highlight their divine connection. Both of their death scenes are drawn out more than many other death scenes in the epics and both involve mystical or divine elements. Bhishma is filled with so many arrows that when he falls back they make a bed for him, holding him off the ground. He does not die yet as he has the power to stay alive until the moment he chooses. Arjuna gives him another “pillow” of a vertical arrow pointing from the ground up to the back of his head, and shoots the ground nearby causing the Ganges water to spring out to slake Bhishma's thirst. His death is drawn out as he gives his speech to Yudhisthira. After 58 nights he gives up his life and attains salvation. Sarpedon is killed in battle by Patroclus, and Zeus debates whether to save his son's life, but Hera convinces him this would be unjust. As Bhishma becomes so filled with arrows that he can lie back on them like a bed, it is said of Sarpedon that “A man had need of good eyesight now to know Sarpedon, so covered was he from head to foot with spears” (Iliad). After he is mortally wounded, Sarpedon calls on Glaucus to remove the spear from him (his soul doesn't leave him until this is done, just as Bhishma had chosen the moment to give up his breath) and to rescue his body. This moment may parallel the moment where Arjuna places the arrow under Bhishma's head and provides the water to soothe him. While Sarpedon doesn't have the power of choosing when to die exactly, the question is still discussed as his father Zeus exercises this same

choice for him. Zeus then has Apollo rescue Sarpedon's body. As Bhishma died with drawn out ceremony, it is also said that Apollo washed and anointed the body of Sarpedon with ambrosia, and then delivered it to Hypnos (Sleep) and Thanatos (Death) to take back to his homeland for funeral ceremonies.

We may speculatively compare both of these episodes to the deaths of Celtic Sky Fathers Bran and the Dagda. Welsh Bran is killed in the war in Ireland, mortally wounded in the leg. He then gives a speech telling his men to cut his head off and return it home to Britain, to the White Hill in London to watch and protect against invasion from France (performing this kingly duty ever after). The Dagda is wounded in the leg in the war, however it takes 80 years until the poison is able to kill him. Thus his death, like Bhishma's, is the longest of all.

Father Sky: (Sarpedon, Dyaus/Bhishma, Bran, the Dagda)

Is against the war but fights for the “opposition” as one of its main commanders

Gives a speech on the duty of kings

Dies in the war, his death scene is extended and he is in some way preserved by the gods

His body is filled excessively with projectile weapons on his death

Beyond the central characters thus far mentioned, the divine identities of the less prominent *Iliad* characters become less certain as they are less fleshed out. The King and Queen of the Kauravas, Dhirtarastra (embodiment of the Dwarpara Yuga) and Ghandari can easily be said to parallel King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. Hecuba bears a son who is prophesied to destroy their kingdom, while Ghandari's son is prophesied to destroy the kingdom and the rest of the universe as well. Cethlenn, wife of Balor in the Irish myth, is a prophetess and warns him of his doom, just as Cassandra, sister of Hector does for him. If Loki is also in this Demon of the Dark Age (Kali) mold, as Dumezil has argued, does he represent a blending of this demon also with the Sun God, as we seem to find in Paris and possibly Bres? Aged counselor Nestor, charioteer and grandson of Poseidon, is tempting to compare to figures like Manannan son of the Sea God Lir or the Vedic Pushan and Brihaspati, but the

amount of evidence is limited.

There are much deeper layers to the story, but for starters we may attempt to reconstruct a naturalistic meaning of the overall myth of the Dawn Goddess cuckolding the Lawful Sovereign with the Sun God. The Lawful Sovereign Mitra was early on associated with the morning sky, before this was expanded to association with the daylight sky as a whole. Hence in the morning, perhaps before the Sun itself quite came into vision, The Lawful Sovereign is united with the Dawn and rules unchallenged as peace loving lord of all creation. The Sun moving on its path from the low and unknown darkness, far from its proper home on high, then breaks up this peaceful marriage and takes away the Dawn as it rises in the sky and becomes the inhospitable lord of noontide, shooting its rays from afar with the golden splendor now all for itself, recognized as the forgotten but returned prince. The Lawful Sovereign, he whose special power is to unite the armies by oath of alliance (which is Society itself), then pursues his wife's captor along with the other Gods of Society: the gods of ever present Sky, of the tumultuous middle region, and of the flourishing earth. The Sun conspires with the Demon of the Age, of linear time, decay, destruction, to wear away at the Gods of Society and visit them with much death. The seemingly eternal war is the length of the day. The Sun is eventually struck down and goes down to Hades, and its kingdom burns up in the Sunset. The Spear of the Eternal Law of the cycle cannot be stopped by any shield or stone. The Dawn is reunited with the Lawful Sovereign for the following morning.

Placed in a simplified initiatic framework, the Soul of the righteous one (the Lawful Sovereign), is united with the essence of sovereignty/divine glory which is the golden glow of Dawn, in a golden age of early morning or a primordial unity where peace and justice reign. Through ignorance and foolish overconfidence the Soul lets his guard down, which is the sin corresponding to his archetype. The forces of Time and Decay represented by the Sun and Demon of the Dark Age cause the dark night of the soul, the wound in the abdomen, the fall into matter or decay (as Lleu here begins visibly decaying), the loss of the Divine Sovereign Principle. This is a necessary decaying of the ignorant state

however, and aided by Wisdom (Gwydion/Athena) the Soul is healed enough to marshal the other powers available to him. An internal battle ensues to regain the Divine Power/Sovereignty/Golden Age (within and without) with all marshaled forces. Each of the metaphysical forces corresponding to the gods have a particular strength required for this task as well as a sin or danger they are prone to, and these must be utilized carefully. The violent nature of the Terrible Sovereign's retribution is prone to destructive harshness, yet the fierce power of the commander-in-chief is required as a force of creation and spurring to action. The Lawful Sovereign's calm and wise Righteousness, which creates unities, is required, and yet one must not let one's guard down or succumb to too great of detachment or avoidance of conflict. The Wind God is also known as the Lord of Life, as the wind is the breath-soul and source of life. Hence he is the embodiment of overflowing vitality and raw power. The Lord of Life then becomes the fitting force to oppose the Demon of Decay and Decadence, the Demon of the Dark Age, Decay being that which afflicts all things more and more in the last days of the Yuga and which is responsible for destruction and degradation on an unmatched scale. These two fight one-on-one, to a draw, until the Lord of Life finally overcomes the Demon by possibly underhanded means. The Demon is fated to be vanquished at the end of the age, yet as a force of Fate he too has his necessity, his role, and his honesty as such an impersonal force shows in thought-provoking relief the necessary artifice that Life always uses in service of its continuation. Life is always wed to Maya (illusion) as it exists within Becoming, within the material world of Samsara. Its danger or sin is falling into overindulgences of the material world, of falling too deeply into Maya, of abusing Dharma, becoming too drunken with Life that one brings shame on oneself or becomes weighted down by material desires. The power which is embodied by brooding thought, by the duality of Skill and the sensitivity that comes with it (as seen in the Thunderer), is perhaps the most essential power in the esoteric battle, though it has a fragility to it. It is able to perceive and understand the deeper layers of Dharma, of Cosmic Balance, and to perform the skillful operations needed to attain the Divine Glory. Its dangers are its overconfidence in its Skill (the reason Arjuna is said to die before reaching Paradise)

and its proneness to falling prey to powerful emotions or internal storms that can destroy one. Hence the Soul must master all internal storms as well as personal attachments. Cunning in general, for planning and carefully sieging the place where the Divine Glory is kept, is required, as are the Youthfulness of Spirit to give one enough boldness to vie with immortals when one must. The mortal sins of the Horse Twins in the *Mahabharata* are said to be Sahadeva's pride in his wisdom and Nakula's pride in his beauty, thus vanity must be defeated within. In the *Iliad* there may also be added the occasional cowardice of Odysseus and the potential overstepping of Diomedes. Ultimately the Soul confronts the Sun God (ie Mitra here confronts Surya exactly as Mithras confronts the Sun God in the Mithraic Mysteries), the ultimate double-sided god with one face governing Time and thus the world of Decay, the other pointing to the Absolute and the world of Divine Glory, its keeper and gateway. The Soul uses its Spear of Dharma (which represents a power of concentrated asceticism in the *Mahabharata*, prayed over for many years) to at last overcome the Sun God and recapture the Divine Glory, the Golden Glow.

There is certainly more that can be learned by a patient study of the Greek epic. What seems almost incontrovertible from this perspective is the idea that these epics share a common origin, that they are the same myth with the same characters and events. The idea that all of this is a case of borrowing also seems far-fetched: much of the parallelism here described can only be grasped when one knows the proper pattern of other Indo-European correspondences, so buried in the text as they are. Whatever influence the Greeks may have taken into their mythology later, the *Iliad* preserves a deeper, more archaic mythological framework carried by these Indo-European people, that perhaps remained untouched by later influences as its ancient meanings were slowly forgotten and the heroes became seen as only mortal. Take this foundational European epic in hand and you will be able to see things in other parts of the mythological web with new eyes. Understand its pattern and you will have equipped yourself with one more Rosetta Stone.