# Arjuna–Odysseus
## Shared Heritage in Indian and Greek Epic, 1st Edition
## By N. J. Allen

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## Description

Bringing together the study of the Greek classics and Indology, *Arjuna–Odysseus* provides a comparative analysis of the shared heritage of the *Mahābhārata* and early Greek traditions presented in the texts of Homer and Hesiod.

Building on the ethnographic theories of Durkheim, Mauss, and Dumont, the volume explores the convergences and rapprochements between the *Mahābhārata* and the Greektexts. In exploring the networks of similarities between the two epic traditions, it also reformulates the theory of Georges Dumézil regarding Indo-European cultural comparativism. It includes a detailed comparison between journeys undertaken by the two epic heroes – Odysseus and Arjuna – and more generally, it ranges across the philosophical ideas of these cultures, and the epic traditions, metaphors, and archetypes that define the cultural ideology of ancient Greece and India.

This book will be useful to scholars and researchers of Indo-European comparativism, social and cultural anthropology, classical literature, Indology, cultural and post-colonial studies, philosophy and religion, as well as to those who love the Indian and Greek epics.

## About the Author

**N. J. Allen** is a social anthropologist and a retired Reader in the Social Anthropology of South Asia, University of Oxford, UK. His research interests are Himalayan studies, world-historical approach to kinship systems, sociology of Durkheim and more especially Mauss, and Indo-European cultural comparativism.

## Reviews

'This is a volume for the ages. N. J. Allen is the dean of British comparativists; and no one has perceived more clearly or argued more persuasively for the shared structures of Greek and Sanskrit epic, features commonly held by cause of common ancestry. These twenty-four chapters are jewels, every one, to be read and re-read: rejoice in their brilliance.'

Roger D. Woodard, Andrew van Vranken Raymond, Professor of the Classics, University of Buffalo (The State University of New York)

'Every educated person knows that the languages of north India are related to those of Europe and that they all derive, in the distant past, from an Indo-European forebear spoken on the steppes of Russia. But how many realize that the key motifs and stories of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* – so often heralded as the beginning of European literature, somehow springing fully formed from the brain of Homer – in fact go back likewise to those ancient beginnings and share that origin with South Asia's great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*? No one has pursued the comparisons that prove this common origin point with such tenacity and persistence as N. J. Allen. The publication of a collection of his essays on this theme, essays previously scattered in obscurity, is a major scholarly event and should mark the coming of age of Indo-European Cultural Comparativism.'

David N. Gellner, Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford

'N. J. Allen's *Arjuna–Odysseus* extends the foundational work of Georges Dumézil by supplying an anthropological dimension to Indo-European studies. Allen brings to bear his sensibility as an ethnographer of South Asia, his long-term engagement with Greek and Indic texts, and an expansive knowledge of anthropological theory and comparative ethnography built up over decades of teaching. The result is a feast of insightful case studies that advance a new understanding of Indo-European cultural ideology while making a major contribution to the study of epic poetry in ancient Greece and India.'

Charles Stewart, Professor of Anthropology, University College London

**Introduction**
**1. A starting point**
Dumézil's much-discussed theory of an Indo-European ideology is founded on the idea of three functions, which are manifested as a set in many different contexts in early Indo-European societies. Instances are the three 'twice-born' *varṇas* (estates) recognised in Hindu socio-structural thinking – priests, warriors, wealth-producers; the three goddesses in the Greek Judgement of Paris; and at Rome the three priests called *flamines maiores*. Comparing such contexts, Dumézil recognized a recurrent pattern: the first function (F1) related to sovereignty and the sacred, F2 to warrior force, F3 to fecundity/prosperity. The history of Indo-Europeia is one of the large-scale decline of the trifunctional ideology.
Comparable 'segmentary' ideologies were analysed by Durkheim and Mauss in 1903, using ethnography from non-Indo-European tribal societies as well as from ancient literary ones. Such material suggests the possibility of an F4, relating to what is other, beyond and outside. Tribal social structures seem more often quadripartite than tripartite; most ideologies recognize outsiders and the dysfunctional; and a plausible ideology grasps the world as a totality. The idea of F4 was proposed by the Reeses in 1961, and reasons are discussed for its neglect; it can fill out Dumézilian trifunctionalism.

**2. Five relationships**
The chapter compares part of the longer Sanskrit epic (the *Mahābhārata*) with part of the Greek *Odyssey*. The two languages being cognate, features of the Indo-European proto-language from which both descend can be reconstructed, and I try here to extend the same approach from language to narrative. Does comparison of the stories indicate an early Indo-European oral 'proto-narrative'?
Both heroes leave their wives at home and return to them after a journey. Late in *Mbh* 1, Arjuna visits the four cardinal points; having left Ithaca and fought at Troy, Odysseus in succession visits four locations; and at each of the four each hero interacts with females. In three of the locations the hero interacts with a single anthropomorphic female, while in one he interacts with a plurality of monstrous females. Despite many differences, the four Sanskrit and Greek episodes can be matched: thirty-eight rapprochements are made. However the fourth location (Western quarter ~ Scheria) presents a complication: the Odysseus-Nausicaa interaction also resembles the Arjuna-Urvaśī interaction during that hero's next solo journey (*Mbh* 3). Finally the hero's encounters are

related to the Sanskrit list of modes of marriage, itself interpreted as manifesting a fivefold Indo-European ideology.

## 3. Homer's simile

The chapter compares a passage from *Odyssey* 5 with a passage from *Mahābhārata* 3. Both epics narrate a journey undertaken by the central hero – respectively Odysseus and Arjuna, whose comparability has been explored in Ch. 2. Odysseus is travelling to Scheria, Arjuna to heaven. In both cases the journey starts and ends happily, but includes an ordeal that is split into two halves. In the Greek the ordeal is temporarily interrupted when the hero sights land, and his joy is described in a simile: it is compared to that of children who see their father recovering from a long illness. In the Sanskrit the interruption consists of a brief episode involving the god Śiva and some seers; the seers are initially anxious about Arjuna's ordeal but end up happy. It is argued that both journey stories derive from a single 'proto-narrative', and that in particular the Homeric simile derives from a main-story episode resembling that in the Sanskrit.

## 4. Hero and horse

The chapter addresses the method of 'language-family-based cultural comparativism', using material from Indo-Europeia. From three latish Greco-Roman sources, it takes the somewhat obscure tradition that Odysseus, after regaining the throne of Ithaca, was transformed into a horse; but *Mahābhārata* 14 narrates that, towards the end of his earthly life, Arjuna is deeply involved in a great Horse Sacrifice (*aśvamedha*): he accompanies the stallion while, before its immolation, it wanders the territory of India for a year. Despite the differences between the fragmentary Greek and the copious well-motivated Sanskrit, a surprising number of rapprochements is possible. Thus Greek tradition juxtaposes the Odysseus-horse theme with the Odysseus-Telemachus conflict; a similar father-son conflict, between Arjuna and Babhruvāhana, occurs during the horse's wandering. According to Servius, Penelope bore the god Pan ('All') to all her suitors; Draupadī bore the Pāṇḍava brothers five sons incarnating the Viśvedevas 'The All-gods'. In *Odyssey* 11 Tiresias predicted two sacrifices to be performed by post-return Odysseus: compare the details of the two sacrifices performed by the Pāṇḍavas in Book 4.

## 5. Yoga

Chapters 2 and 3 compared two epic journeys: they argued that Arjuna's journey from the Gangetic forests to the Himalayas and Indra's capital (*Mbh*. 3) was cognate with Odysseus' journey from Ogygia to Scheria and Alcinous' capital. But since Arjuna's journey is described as yogic, does anything similar apply to the Greek journey? Since two accounts of yoga are drawn on – Patañjali's and that in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* – six binary comparisons are

presented (*Mbh.~Od.*, *Mbh.~*Pat., *ŚvUp.~*Pat., *ŚvUp.~Mbh.*, *Od.~*Pat., *Od.~ŚvUp*). For instance, Arjuna's journey shows phenomena that parallel the five-plus-three-plus-one spiritual stages traversed by Patañjali's yogin, and Indra's chariot carrying Arjuna to heaven finds a parallel of sorts in the Upaniṣadic image of the person as chariot. The stages in Odysseus' ordeal at sea parallel the 'outer limbs' in the yogin's progression, and two similes in the account of Poseidon's storm (thistles and chaff) find parallels in Patañjali's thorns and cotton fibres. It is argued that the rapprochements point to a proto-narrative that was shamanic/yogic as in the Sanskrit epic, while Greek tradition developed in the direction of a de-spiritualized and terrestrial adventure story.

## 6. Crocodiles and nymphs
I first summarize the proposed expansion of Dumézil's trifunctionalism to a pentadic schema and the comparison (Ch. 2 above) between Arjuna's journey in *Mbh* 1 and Odysseus' journey in *Od*. 5–6. The focus is on marriages – the polyandrous marriage of Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas and the polygynous marital career of Arjuna. Three of Arjuna's marriages, contracted during his journey, accord with the modes of marriage recognized in the *Code of Manu* and analysed trifunctionally by Dumézil; but is Arjuna's interaction with Vargā and the four other crocodiles in the South interpretable as a *paiśāca* union (with a female who is 'asleep, drunk, or mad')? The crocodiles are in fact not their normal selves: originally nymphs, they teased an ascetic and were cursed to endure temporary punishment as beasts. Thus the sub-episode is interpreted as F4-.
In the Greek the crocodiles' place in the hero's journey corresponds to that of the Straits Monsters (Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis), and lists are presented of differences and similarities between the two sub-episodes. For instance, cognate verbs are used to describe Vargā writhing in Arjuna's grip and Odysseus' companions writhing in Scylla's.

## 7. Monkey and dog
After a note on comparative method the chapter summarises the encounter between Odysseus and the aged Argos in *Od*. 17 and that between Bhīma and the aged Hanumān in *Mbh* 3. Giving a cursory list of nineteen differences, it then explores seventeen similarities between the two encounters, before turning to a complex rapprochement involving adjacent parts of the two texts. After the Argos episode Odysseus suffers an unprovoked attack by Melantheus, against whom Eumaeus invokes punishment. After the first 'Flower Journey' (which includes the Hanumān encounter), during the second Flower Journey, the sage Agastya suffers an unprovoked attack by the demon Maṇimat, who is punished by a curse; and only a little later in *Mbh* 3, the text mentions Agastya being kicked by Nahuṣa, who is also cursed. Regarding location, the aggression, and the curses, rapprochements are presented between the Melantheus story and the

three interlinked Sanskrit stories. Note that, here, it is Bhīma not Arjuna who parallels Odysseus; also that in this case the proto-narrative participants are probably better preserved by the Greek dog than by the monkey – an idea supported by the dog who accompanies the Pāṇḍavas to heaven in *Mbh* 17.

### 8. Durgā and Athena

While not dismissing loan phenomena, the chapter pursues a common-origin agenda, arguing that in certain respects Durgā and Athena share an origin within Indo-European tradition. Salient only since the Purāṇas, Durgā is absent from Vedic texts, but this does not rule out my approach: as Dumézil recognised, early Indo-European material often bypasses our earliest texts. As regards method, the comparativist seeks, not isolated similarities, but networks of similarities (which have argumentative priority over the inevitable differences).
In both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Odyssey* the warrior goddess intervenes when the hero(es) begin a period of incognito. At the start of *Mbh* 4 Yudhiṣṭhira invokes Durgā, who appears and offers help. In *Od.* 13 Odysseus encounters Athena on the Ithacan shore and receives her help. Before the encounters themselves are compared, they are contextualized within the heroes' adventures: thus each incognito includes a massacre of suitors wooing the hero's wife (the Upakīcakas parallel the suitors at Ithaca), and the multiple lying stories of the Pāṇḍavas parallel those of Odysseus). Unlike Athena, Durgā is not in disguise, but just before invoking her, Yudhiṣṭhira encounters his divine father in disguise, and is offered similar help. This Sanskrit-Sanskrit comparison complements the Sanskrit-Greek one.

### 9. Draupadī and Penelope

Written for a volume honouring Gabriel Germain, the chapter elaborates on the comparison he made in 1954 between Penelope and Draupadī: if Draupadī was won by Arjuna at an archery contest, Penelope was re-won by Odysseus at a comparable event. Both royal archers are in disguise, beg their food, and live humbly; the public are uncertain whether they are still alive. The other suitors (many names are listed) are arrogant, and the hero's victory accords with the will of the gods. Many rapprochements are made relating to the details of the contests and the emergence of the archers' true identity. Nearly half these rapprochements were recognised by Germain, the pioneer, but his focus was on the theme of marriage by concourse (*svayaṃvara*), rather than on a substantial early Indo-European proto-narrative within which Draupadī and Penelope were cognate figures. The stripping and miraculous re-dressing of Draupadī may parallel the weaving and unweaving of the shroud Penelope makes for Laertes.

### 10. Bhīṣma and Sarpedon

Linguists have long known that the Vedic god Dyaus ('Heaven') is etymologically cognate with Zeus, but in his massive contribution to Indo-

European cultural comparativism Dumézil made little use of the fact. However, Dumézil's discussion of Dyaus as incarnated in the *Mahābhārata* hero Bhīṣma prompts the question of whether Zeus is linked to a Greek epic hero comparable to Bhīṣma. In fact, yes: Zeus has a son, Sarpedon, who resembles Bhīṣma in the following ways: both fight and die for the Losers in the central conflict of their respective epics; both are major leaders, second only to the loser supremo, whom they both criticise; both seem to be active over three generations, and both are associated with bloody rain. Thus the two figures no doubt go back to a proto-hero linked with the Indo-European Sky god *Dyeus.

However, the comparison needs to include also the similarities between Bhīṣma and *Hektor*. Both come first in a sequence of four battlefield leaders, and both are killed by the Winners' champion with female help. It is suggested that these features originally belonged to the proto-hero who lies behind Bhīṣma and Sarpedon, but were transferred from him to another figure during the development of the Greek tradition.

## 11. Hesiod's Succession Myth

Interspersed with genealogical information, Hesiod's *Succession Myth* presents the patriline Ouranos-Cronus-Zeus; most classicists believe the story was borrowed from West Asia. But Zeus derives from IE *Dyēus which, like Ouranos, means 'Heaven'; and (to follow Dumézil) the cognate deity Dyu or Dyaus is incarnated in Bhīṣma, the classificatory paternal grandfather of Arjuna. My first rapprochement links Bhīṣma's step-mother's father, Vasu Uparicara, with Ouranos; moreover, the birth of Vasu's daughter Satyavatī parallels that of Ouranos' daughter Aphrodite. But in other respects Ouranos is paralleled by Grandfather Bhīṣma: each loses kingship and virility simultaneously, and each incurs the hostility of a female. Thirdly, Bhīṣma resembles Zeus: each is the youngest in a set of siblings of whom the others, at birth, are drowned or swallowed by a parent; each supports the Losers in the Great War; and at some point each is held off the earth (notably by arrows or flowers). Arjuna's father Pāṇḍu resembles Cronus in that each violently interrupts a copulating couple, and the sons resemble each other as regards modes of fighting and multiple sexual unions. The numerous genealogically-interlinked rapprochements imply an IE proto-narrative, probably extending over five generations like the Sanskrit, rather than three, like the Greek.

## 12. Five elements

In 2002 Thomas McEvilley published a substantial book comparing Greek and Indian philosophy. The similarities identified are ascribed to historical contacts – whether diffusion in both directions from Mesopotamia, westward spread in the Achaemenid period, or later eastward spread. Explanation by Indo-European common origin is neglected, and Dumézil's work is oversimplified. However,

for whatever reason, ideas from the common origin period can and do bypass our earliest texts.

The idea is introduced of an Indo-European pentadic ideology, potentially expressed in a proto-philosophy. Since in their philosophical thinking both India and Greece recognise five elements, the topic is immediately relevant. The Indian list aligns elements and functions (fire F1, wind F2, wáter F3, earth F4-, space F4+), and traces of such alignment occur in Zoroastrian tradition. The Greek list too is comparable: like India, Greece keeps the fifth element (ether) somewhat apart from the basic quartet. The proto-philosophy hypothesis is strengthened by the evidence presented in other chapters here for a proto-epic. Moreover, the elements are not the only philosophical topic susceptible to common origin analysis. Yoga and Sāṃkhya are major early branches of Indian philosophy: yoga was tackled in Ch. 5 and Sāṃkhya in Allen 1998.

## 13. Rings and rotations

The Tibetan painting called the Wheel of Life (*bhavacakra*) shows a hub surrounded by concentric bands and illustrates Buddhist teachings on *samsāra* and nirvāṇa. The image, which derives from Indian Buddhism and is described in early texts, is here compared with two passages from Homer. The Shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18) resembles the Wheel in layout and in presenting a worldview by means of vignettes of human activity, but one can also compare the Sirens-Scylla-Charybdis episode in *Odyssey* 12. The three types of monster parallel the three animals which symbolize evils and occupy the hub of the Wheel, while Scylla also parallels the demon who grips the wheel. All three scenes express the pentadic ideology of the early Indo-Europeans. Apparently Buddhism has fused material from different parts of early Indo-European tradition – possibly in a shamanistic context.

## 14. Achilles' shield

How far do the scenes depicted on the shield of Achilles form a coherent structure reflecting early Indo-European patterns of thought, as understood by Dumézil's trifunctionalism or by pentadic theory? The shield is organised into boss, concentric bands, and rim, and Yoshida in 1964 connected the bands to the classical functions (roughly, city at peace F1; city at war F2; agriculture F3); but the firmament at the centre and Ocean at the rim doubtless reflect F4+ and F4-.

The agricultural scenes show ploughing, grain harvest, grape harvest, cattle rearing and sheep, the two forms of livestock reflecting an Indo-European distinction between larger and smaller domesticated animals. This distinction is situated by Watkins within an IE taxonomy of wealth which also includes 'grain and grape', and metals. So the F3 part of the shield largely corresponds to Watkins' taxonomy (metals being used in making the shield). But it can also be analysed functionally: ploughing F4+; grain harvest with sacrifice F1; grape

harvest F2; paired livestock scenes F3; (non-living) metals F4-. If so, the pentadic ideology is reflected both in the shield as a whole and within one of its component parts.

## 15. Dumézil and Dumont
Louis Dumont (1911–98) and Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), both of them major figures from the same intellectual milieu, were both deeply interested in comparing the ideologies of India and Europe, and have contributed to the development of the ideas presented in this book; however, their styles of comparison differ profoundly. Having briefly explored the differences, the paper asks how the two approaches can be combined. In analysing the configuration of Hindu values, Dumont follows *Année sociologique* tradition and the binary structuralism so prevalent after World War II; he particularly emphasizes the opposition of purity (ideally represented by the Brahmins) and the pollution associated with the Untouchables. Dumézil's trifunctional schema lacks a position that could cover the latter, and needs extension at the bottom of its hierarchy – whence F4-. But Dumont's treatment of the king-priest relationship, of totality, and of transcendence indicate the need to reformulate the top of Dumézil's hierarchy, separating F4+ (which can accommodate sovereignty) from F1 (administration of the sacred). A pentadic theory of Indo-European ideology offers a starting point for thinking not only about traditional India but also about the history of ideas in Europe.

## 16. Yudhiṣṭhira and Agamemnon
The quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, which dominates the *Iliad*, is compared with a quarrel in the *Mahābhārata* between Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna. In both epics the Commander of the eventual Victors ('the Goodies') alienates a Subordinate who is his best warrior, but whereas in the Greek the Subordinate withdraws his services for a matter of weeks, with disastrous results, in the Sanskrit the episode lasts only for minutes or hours and receives little emphasis. However, in two other episodes of the *Mahābhārata* a comparable estrangement between Commander and potential Subordinate lasts much longer and is much more public. Although these other episodes involve individuals who belong to the Vanquished ('the Baddies'), it is suggested that the Homeric narrative derives from the fusion of stories that were distinct in an early Indo-European proto-narrative, as they still are in the Sanskrit.

## 17. Kauravas and suitors
Among the methods for studying Homer Indo-European comparison has been used only to a limited extent, and largely on the *Iliad*. The method is used here to study the second half of the *Odyssey* in the light of the *Mahābhārata*. First, five synchronic published comparisons are reviewed and three new ones are proposed (relating to the massacre of the suitors and subsequent events). The

paper then moves to a diachronic perspective. On the hypothesis that the Sanskrit epic is more conservative than the Greek, an attempt is made to model some of the processes contributing to the development of the plot of the *Odyssey*.

## 18. Hanging over abyss

Yaroslav Vassilkov (1994–5) explored the parable of the man hanging from a tree, head downwards, over a pit, in a wood roamed by multi-headed threatening wild animals (*Mbh* 11); but despite his desperate plight the man enjoys some drips of honey. The parable illustrates our addiction to trivial pleasures despite our parlous existential condition. The parable occurs widely, not only in oriental texts but also (as the story of Barlam and Josaphat) in mediaeval Christianity. Although he mentions archetypes (esp. that of the world tree), Vassilkov also sees the image as part of the Indo-European cultural heritage – an idea followed up here by drawing on the *Odyssey*. Odysseus hangs like a bat, from a fig tree, over the pit formed by Charybdis when she sucks down the sea water, close to the cliff inhabited by the multi-headed man-eating Scylla. Some thirty rapprochements are explored, and it is proposed that they go back via oral transmission to a common origin in early Indo-European mythology. The comparison is then related to other India-Greece rapprochements (esp. that in Ch. 6); but the monsters are also compared with the three animals at the centre of the Buddhist Wheel of Life (Ch. 13).

## 19. Gods descend to battlefield

Indo-European languages have received intensive comparative study, for which Greek and Sanskrit (with Latin) are often regarded as the fundamental pillars. Much less has been done to compare the epics recorded in these languages; most students of one epic simply take for granted that the other is of no interest to them.

After noting various ways in which gods involve themselves in the struggles of mortals, I focus here on gods who fight other gods in the course of human battles. Thus in the episode of the Khāṇḍava Forest Fire (*Mbh* 1), Agni (= Fire), assisted by Arjuna, opposes Indra (here = rain, i.e. water), while in *Iliad* 21, Hephaestus (here = fire), assisting Achilles, opposes the river Scamander. The rapprochements involve not only the elements and several additional deities, but also many details, including some similes.

The similarities are naturally accompanied by many differences, and the major theoretical issue is how to demonstrate that the traditions are in fact cognate and derive from an early common origin. It is surprising how much detail has been preserved by oral tradition over a period of the order of two millennia.

## 20. Heroes and supercategories

Students of the narrative content of Greek epic usually ignore the hypothesis that it shares a common origin with the Sanskrit epic, and even Georges Dumézil, the best known Indo-European cultural comparativist of the last century, emphasized the contrast between the two traditions. However, since Dumézil's death, it has been argued that his 'trifunctional' theory of Indo-European ideology needs to be subsumed within a pentadic framework. This framework suggests that the sets of protagonists in the Massacre of the Suitors and in the Trojan War are comparable with those at the heart of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*. Despite some blurring, the influence of the pentadic ideology is recognisable in a 'canonical' set of Achaean heroes (Odysseus, Agamemnon, Ajax, Achilles and Patroclus), as regards not only their participation in certain Homeric episodes but also the sequence of their deaths and their relationship to geographical space.

## 21. Cyavana and Prometheus

The story of Cyavana, told in various Sanskrit texts, is relatively well known to Indo-European comparativists via Dumézil: the sage uses his powers to force Indra, king of the gods, to admit the third-functional Aśvin deities to the soma sacrifice. In Hesiod's *Theogony* Prometheus tricks Zeus into allowing humans the more nourishing parts of a sacrifice. Each story involves both attractive females (Sukanyā, Pandora) and paired males who are somehow close to humanity, and in each case the innovation regarding sacrifice marks a significant transition in mythic world history. The paper compares the two stories and proposes that, although Prometheus is a complex figure, one of his components is a Cyavana-like figure derived from an ancestral Indo-European story.

## 22. *Telemachy*

In the *Odyssey* the story of the main hero's return from Troy to Ithaca is preceded by the *Telemachy* (the outward journey of his son from Ithaca via Pylos to Sparta). The journeys of father and son overlap in time, and the travellers eventually converge at Eumaeus' piggery. Many detailed parallels have already been found between Homer's epics and the *Mahābhārata* (attributed to the sage Vyāsa), and the paper asks whether, here too, the overlapping journeys in the Greek have Sanskrit parallels. In fact, it is while the central hero Arjuna undertakes a visit to heaven that his brothers and wife undertake a pilgrimage around India; and the two journeys end in a reunion. A dozen rapprochements are presented linking the pairs of journeys recounted in the two epic traditions. The similarities are best explained by postulating a common origin within the Indo-European-speaking world.

## 23. Droṇa and Chryses

Very early in the main story of the *Mahābhārata* King Drupada brutally rebuffs his childhood friend, the priest Droṇa, who takes his revenge relying above all on the help of Arjuna. Right at the start of the *Iliad*, King Agamemnon brutally rebuffs Apollo's priest Chryses, who responds by calling on the help of the god he serves to punish the king and rectify the situation. The two stories are here compared detail by detail, in the light of the theory that the two epics are independent developments from an early Indo-European proto-narrative. Where feasible, the argument also draws on the pentadic theory of Indo-European ideology.

## 24. Aśvatthāman and the Wooden Horse

The many similarities between the Sanskrit and Greek epic traditions include the five-phase structure of the Great War (if we ignore its 'cosmic appendix'). The phases are distinguished by the five or four successive leaders of the Losers or 'Baddies' (Kauravas/Trojans). In the Sanskrit, Phase V is a nocturnal massacre within an enclosure carried out by Kauravas, who are led by Aśvatthāman, son of Droṇa; in the Greek, it is a similar massacre carried out by the Victors or Goodies, using the Wooden Horse. Despite this difference ('The Cross-over'), Aśvatthāman and the Horse are similar both in their structural position and in details, and the comparison needs to take account also of Droṇa's death in Phase II and of the pre-war Khāṇḍava Forest massacre. Such similarities (and others studied elsewhere) are best explained by postulating an early Indo-European proto-narrative from which both epics descend, the Greek having conflated stories that remain separate in the Sanskrit. One implication is that attempts to explain the *Iliad* as originating from historical events in the Troad in the late second millennium BC are misconceived. The archaeological findings are not irrelevant, but have been incorporated in a pre-existing narrative.