

Argos and Hanuman: Odysseus' Dog in the Light of the *Mahābhārata*

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Specialists in Greek and Sanskrit epic usually take it for granted that the respective narratives grew up in the geographical areas where the deeds of the heroes are set and where the epics were being orally related before they were written down. But this assumption can be questioned. The two languages go back to a proto-language, and it is increasingly recognised that the proto-language included a poetic language (Watkins 1995), as well as a mythology (Dumézil and followers). So why not postulate a proto-epic? But since questions of form and content are to some degree separable and my focus is on the second, I prefer to talk of a proto-narrative.

How strong is the evidence for a proto-narrative lying behind Greek and Sanskrit epic? The aim of this paper is not to answer the question in general terms, but to support the hypothesis by means of a comparison between two fairly short stretches of text. Many attempts along similar lines have been made by other comparativists, but since they bear only indirectly on the rapprochement presented here, I limit myself to listing in the bibliography the three most recent attempts by myself. Let us move quickly to the fundamental question of method.

How is one to judge that two narratives are so similar that they must have a common ancestor? There are no easy rules of method. One can only weigh similarities against differences, paying close attention to the primary texts and looking, not for isolated elements (however striking), but for relationships between elements, for sequences and combinations. One fights the constant temptation to tendentiousness and circularity. Secondary non-comparative literature devoted to one or other narrative, however intelligent and learned, is of relatively little help. A convincing case depends on the quality of its argument and on the quantity and interconnectedness of individual

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rapprochements.

Now to Argos and Hanuman, or more precisely, to the episodes involving them that I think are cognate. An introductory summary of *Odyssey* 17.201-327 can be very brief.

Returning from the Trojan War, the hero, disguised as a beggar, has been staying for a few days with the swineherd Eumaeus. Together, they walk through the mountains from the latter's dwelling to the palace of Ithaca. En route they encounter first the goatherd Melantheus, who kicks the hero, then Argos, the hero's aged hunting dog, who recognises his master after twenty years, and promptly dies. In the palace Odysseus kills his wife's suitors and is reestablished as king.

As for Hanuman the monkey (still worshipped as a god in India), I am concerned only with the episode in book 3 of the *Mahābhārata* when the hero Bhīma encounters him on a journey towards the palace of the god Kubera. Here is a slightly fuller summary.

The heroes of the epic, the five Pāṇḍava brothers, have long been languishing in exile. Arjuna, the central brother, left the others some years back to visit heaven, and they, plus the brothers' shared wife Draupadī, are in the Himalayas awaiting his return. Bhīma, the beefy second brother, is sent off up Mount Gandhamādāna by Draupadī to bring her some flowers (3.146.11).

(Now comes the encounter.) Bhīma's noisy approach wakes the dozing monkey. Hanuman questions the hero, urging him to turn back. Bhīma arrogantly demands passage, but the monkey says he is too old and sick to move. Declining to jump over him, Bhīma mentions Hanuman who, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, jumped across the Ocean to Lanka. Invited to pass under the monkey's tail, Bhīma is unable to lift it, and at last learns Hanuman's identity. The two are in fact half-brothers, sons of the Wind God by different mothers. In identifying himself, Hanuman summarises his role in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which took place in an earlier era. Bhīma wants to see his brother as he then was, and after delivering a disquisition on the eras, Hanuman obliges. After further sage advice and a fraternal promise to help the Pāṇḍavas in battle, the monkey lets Bhīma proceed, and himself disappears.

Bhīma finds the pond with the flowers, defeats the

Rākṣasas, the local guardian spirits, and is rejoined by the rest of his party.

At this point in the argument a common origin for the two encounters will hardly seem plausible. A hero on a journey to a palace encounters an elderly animal, dialogues with or about it, and passes on. So what? The differences are enormous. One hardly knows how far it is useful to go when listing differences, but the table below gives some idea of them.

Differences between the Argos and Hanuman encounters

| Greek | Sanskrit |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | formal |
| 38 lines | 170 ślokaś = 340 lines |
| two speeches | twenty-two speeches |
| | animal |
| dog | monkey |
| does not speak | speaks |
| weak | strong (pretends weakness) |
| hero recognises, pretends not to | hero does not recognise |
| not divine | at least semi-divine |
| disappears from story | will participate in battle |
| younger than hero | older than hero |
| no relative of hero | half-brother of hero |
| nourished by hero 20 years ago | never met hero |
| presence needs no motivation | came to help &/or test hero |
| no effect on journey | first hinders, then helps |
| | hero |
| travelling with Eumaeus | travelling alone |
| disguised as beggar | no disguise (in hermit garb) |
| lacks brothers | second of five brothers |
| | location |
| on island of Ithaca | in Himalayas |
| in front of human palace | in area avoided by humans |
| at the home of the dog and the hero | at the home of neither |

However, an oral narrative transmitted by separate traditions for two or three millennia is likely to develop great

divergences — even as regards language, the gap between ancient Greek and Sanskrit is considerable. We must weigh differences against similarities, and look closely. I shall consider eighteen similarities, giving each a title. The order in which I treat them and the separations that determine the exact number treated are not fundamental.

1. *Elevated position.* Argos is lying on a large pile of dung (*en pollēi koprōi* 297). Hanuman is dozing on a thick slab of stone (*pīne śilātale* 146.64).¹

2. *Movement of tail.* When Argos becomes aware of the proximity of the hero, he wags his tail (*ourēi esēne* 302). When Hanuman awakes from his doze, the first thing he does is slap his tail on the ground, repeatedly and vigorously (146.60).

3. *Aged, afflicted, immobile.* Argos, who is at least twenty years old and flea-ridden, has become too weak to move towards his master (*asson d' ouket' epeita dunēsato hoio anaktos| elthemēn* 303-4). In spite of looking nimble as a lightning flash, Hanuman twice claims to be ill (*sarujas* 146.74, *vyādhinā kleśito* 147.7), and when refusing to move out of the way, he claims that because of old age he lacks the strength to get up (147.16). If the animals could move, Argos would move towards the hero, while Hanuman would perhaps move aside; but the theme of immobility is present in both stories.

4. *Identity questioned.* In his first speech to the swineherd, Odysseus asks whether the dog's speed matched its beauty, or whether it had merely been kept for show. In his first words to the speaking monkey, Bhīma asks who he is and why he has assumed the guise of a monkey (147.2). Later (147.22) he repeats his questions, wondering to what category of supernatural this monkey-like being belongs.

5. *Original athleticism.* Twenty years earlier, when Odysseus left for Troy, Argos was exceptional for his speed and strength: Eumaeus recalls his *takhutēta kai alkēn* 315). The events of the *Rāmāyana* lie in a previous era, and it is more than 11,000 years since Hanuman's famous leap across 100 leagues of ocean (147.38). Both animals have had long lives.

In both cases point 3 precedes point 5 in the text. Taken together in their natural order they imply the physical decline that we all face with age. The theme of decline is underscored

¹Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to book 3 of the *Mahābhārata* (Critical Edition) and to book 17 of the *Odyssey*.

in the Sanskrit by the account of the four eras, which start with a golden age lacking death, disease or senile decay (148.11, 14). 6. *Reference to earlier epic account of abduction and rescue.* The Greek refers twice (293-4, 314) to Odysseus' departure for Troy, which both to us and to Homer's audience implies the *Iliad*. Both Bhīma and Hanuman (147.11, 37) refer to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the latter summarises its plot. As is often noted, both these previous epics narrate an overseas expedition to recover an abducted wife.

7. *Temporary wondrous reclamation of past.* In the Greek the reclamation is conditional: if Argos were now as he had been once, Odysseus would quickly be amazed at the sight (*aĩpsa ke thēēsaio idōn* 315). In the Sanskrit the past is recreated: responding to Bhīma's demand, Hanuman expands his body to the dimensions of a mountain. Bhīma is duly delighted and amazed (*visismīye* 149.2-6).

The vision of times past is soon over. After his description of Argos as hunter Eumaeus returns us to the dog's present plight (*nun d'ekhetai kakotēti* 318). Hanuman contracts (150.1), and the encounter nears its end.

8. *Abrupt termination.* When Eumaeus enters the palace, Argos dies. Having delivered his final promise, Hanuman vanishes (*antaradhīyata* 150.15 — perfectly normal behavior in a god).

In my next set of similarities what the Greek attributes to the hero the Sanskrit attributes to the animal. This need not necessarily be viewed as a difference. The Greek hero outranks his dog, while in the Sanskrit the semi-divine monkey outranks his younger brother, so in both cases the motifs are attributed to the senior of the two.²

9. *Mistreatment of animals.* When he questions Eumaeus, Odysseus suggests that the dog's sorry treatment does not accord with its merits, and his suspicion is supported by Eumaeus. When he opens the dialogue, Hanuman moralises: humans, endowed with reason, should show compassion to

²In similar vein, although the disguise of the hero (present in the Greek, absent in the Sanskrit) has been treated above as a difference, this is arguably the wrong way to look at it. In a sense, Hanuman the god is 'disguised' as an ordinary monkey. From that point of view in both cases the higher-ranking participant in the encounter is in disguise, and what we really have is a similarity which could be included in the list.

dumb brutes, and not rudely awaken them when they are sick and asleep (146.74-6). In the Greek the mistreatment is the fault of the female slaves and it is real, while in the Sanskrit it is the fault of the hero and the remark is ironic; but the theme is present in both cases.

10. *Pretended ignorance.* Argos and Odysseus both recognise the other, but since the hero is still disguising his own identity from Eumaeus, he cannot reveal his recognition. Thus, in opening his conversation with the swineherd he pretends ignorance of the dog's identity.

It is implied even in the text of the Critical Edition that Hanuman recognises Bhīma from the start. For his first speech his manner is contemptuous but smiling (146.73-4), reminding one of gods in other contexts who are playing with ignorant humans. The Northern mss explicitly say that the monkey came to help his brother (*bhīmasya kāraṇāt/ rakṣārtham* 146.708* 2, 5). Nonetheless, Hanuman pretends ignorance of Bhīma's identity.

11. *Pretended weakness.* Odysseus is pretending to be a miserable aged beggar, needing a staff (17.202-3). Hanuman pretends to be weak and ill.

12. *Tears.* Odysseus wipes away a tear (*apomorxato dakru* 304) without letting Eumaeus see. After contracting in size and embracing his brother, Hanuman opens his penultimate speech with tears in his eyes (*paryāśru-nayano*), his voice choked with weeping (*bāṣpa-gadgadayā girā* 150.3).

My next two rapprochements compare the speech of Eumaeus with speeches by Hanuman. Both speakers comment on life in general, in the manner of philosophers.

13. *Duties of slaves.* At the end of his speech Eumaeus blames the slave women for neglecting Argos. But, he implies, what can one expect? When masters are no longer present to exercise control (*meket' epikrateōsin*), slaves are no longer willing to fulfil their duties (*enaisima ergazesthai* 320-21).

Of Hanuman's two didactic speeches the second concerns the duties of different members of society. In the middle it details the duties of the traditional four estates of Hindu social theory, ending up with the serfs or slaves. Their duty, says the god, consists in obedience to the three superior estates (*śuśrūṣā dvijātinām* 149.36.7).

14. *Halving of virtue.* Eumaeus ends his speech with a general reflection: Zeus removes half the virtue of a man (*hēmisu aretēs*

apoinutai aneros) when he becomes a slave (322-3).

Hanuman's first didactic speech concerns the eras. In each era dharma (sacred order, virtue, righteousness) is reduced by a quarter so that in the third it is reduced by half (literally by two of its parts — *dvibhāgonah pravartate* 148.26).³

Here are four final rapprochements, grouped together only because their validity may be more debatable.

15. *Awoken by noise.* The Greek does not say that Argos was awoken by noise, but an aged dog lying down in the afternoon is quite likely to be dozing, and the pricking up of its ears might suggest a response to sound. Purportedly it is Bhīma's noisy approach that wakes Hanuman (146.59, 74).

16. *Dung.* Argos lies on a sizeable quantity of mule and cattle dung. As Bhīma rampages through the forest on his way to the encounter, he frightens lions, tigers and hyenas, who slink away in fear, discharging urine and dung (146.48). The words for dung, *kopros* and *sakrt*, are cognate, but even if they were not, the motif seems worth noting.

17. *Lightning.* Regarding the name Argos, the etymologist Chantraine suggests 'originally a notion that expresses the dazzling whiteness of lightning and at the same time its speed' (1968: 104). In a single śloka (146.65) Hanuman is compared with a lightning flash (*vidyut*) no less than four times.

18. *Unprovoked attack.* This somewhat complex rapprochement necessitates going beyond the hero's encounters with Argos and Hanuman and looking at adjacent stretches of narrative. Let us first recall the context of the Greek encounter.

In line 201 Odysseus and Eumaeus set off from the swineherd's dwelling to go to the palace. Lines 204-253 narrate the encounter with Melantheus, who then enters the palace (254-60). When they in turn come within earshot of the palace, the two travelers make their plans (260-89) and, after the Argos episode (290-327), they too enter the palace, first the swineherd, then (336) Odysseus. So the Argos episode is closely linked with the Melantheus episode; they are the two main events that punctuate a single journey.

Now the Melantheus episode takes place beside a fresh-

³Russo (1992: 36) thinks that the Greek lines 'have the appearance of a proverbial couplet awkwardly added on'. The rapprochement suggests rather that they may be the relic of some more systematic reflection.

water spring, and its central act is the unprovoked kick that the goatherd gives to Odysseus (his rightful king), and that incurs an imprecation from Eumaeus. Nothing like this occurs before the Hanuman encounter, but does anything similar occur beside the fresh-water pond that is the goal of Bhīma's journey? I summarise.

After Hanuman disappears, Bhīma journeys on until, close to Kubera's palace, he comes upon the pond, which springs from mountain falls (*jātam parvatānirjhare* 151.2, 152.10). It is surrounded by all kinds of trees and creepers (151.2), and its water is nectar or elixir (*amṛtakalpaṃ* 152.22). The pond, the play-garden of Kubera, is much visited by supernaturals (151.8), and is guarded by Krodhavaśā demons, who challenge Bhīma and threaten to cook and eat him if he enters the pool. Bhīma promptly slays more than a hundred of them (152.18). Meanwhile he has been followed by his eldest brother Yudhiṣṭhira together with the rest of the Pāṇḍavas, and the group is reunited. Yudhiṣṭhira reproaches his brother for his recourse to violence.

The pond recalls the location of the Melantheus episode. In the Greek the fair-flowing fountain is regularly used by the citizens of Ithaca. It is surrounded on all sides by poplars and its cool water flows down from a rock above (*kata rheen hupsotēn ek petrēs* 208-10). Above it is an altar of the nymphs, the daughters of Zeus whom Eumaeus mentions in his imprecation, and who regularly receive offerings from everyone who passes by (210-11, 240). Similarly, the Himalayan pond is highly honoured (*paramarcita* 151.7) by deities, Gandharvas and Apsarās, and the latter are celestial nymphs who are fond of water, as is implied by their name (*ap* 'water'). One might also compare the cannibalistic threat of the Krodhavaśās with the threatening words of Melantheus, when he says that Odysseus will be pelted in the palace (231-2). On the other hand, the Greek hero silently enduring the kick contrasts sharply with the Indian one killing a hundred demons; so in spite of the comparable locations, not much can be made of this comparison taken by itself.

However, Bhīma's *first* journey up Mount Gandhamādana, which is made in quest of flowers for Draupadī, is scarcely to be separated from his *second*, which is also occasioned by the arrival of wind-borne flowers, is made at the request of Draupadī, and is narrated only a few sections later (157.14-159.35). Though

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the second journey makes no reference to Hanuman, in other ways it is so similar that van Buitenen speaks of it as a 'recast' of the first (1975: 201-2). Others have argued that of the written versions the second is the older (Grünendahl 1993, cf. also Brockington 1998: 141-2), but there is no doubting that the two are related. This time Bhīma climbs the mountain and reaches Kubera's palace without encountering any fresh water, though there are beautiful trees of all sorts (157.37).

Bhīma blows his conch, and puts to flight various types of supernatural. Halting the rout, Kubera's friend, the Rākṣasa demon Maṇimat, attacks and sorely wounds Bhīma in the right arm, before being felled. Bhīma's brothers follow him, and on arrival Yudhiṣṭhira reproaches him for his violence. Kubera arrives as if to take revenge, but at the sight of Bhīma is delighted. He explains why.

Once he and Maṇimat were on their way to a council of the gods. The sage Agastya was engaged in austerities on the bank of the Yamunā, and as they passed over him Maṇimat spat (or according to the Ganguli translation, *shat*) on him. The sage cursed the demon to be killed by a human (i.e. Bhīma), and at the same time extended the curse to Kubera, who had neither prevented nor reproached his friend. The god — sufficiently punished, it seems, by the loss of his troops — is now released from the curse by Bhīma's act.

Kubera's explanation thus refers to an innocent and virtuous victim who suffers an unprovoked and outrageous insult from an evil-doer, and responds to it with a curse which in due course is fulfilled. In other words, Maṇimat physically insults the innocent Agastya and is cursed by him, but receives no immediate punishment; Melantheus physically insults the innocent Odysseus and is effectively cursed by the victim's friend, but receives no immediate punishment. In both cases the unprovoked assault is stupid. Melantheus acts in his wanton folly (*aphradiēisin* 233), Maṇimat out of folly, ignorance, insolence and stupidity (158.54).

However, the insult to Agastya belongs to the narrative past, while it is in the narrative present that Maṇimat wounds Bhīma, much as Melantheus presumably leaves a nasty bruise on Odysseus. It is as if Odysseus here corresponds not only to Bhīma, as the Argos-Hanuman comparison already suggested, but also to Agastya — as if he conflated two proto-narrative

figures lying behind the two attested figures.

Even if the two mountain journeys of Bhīma are taken together, the comparison with the Greek might seem tenuous were it not for a third journey by the same hero, told only a little later in book 3 (3.175-8), and again involving a curse imposed by Agastya. This time the sage is insulted, not by the rather minor figure of Mañimat, but by a far more significant figure. Nahuṣa, father of Yayāti, is the human king who, when Indra went into self-imposed exile, assumed the kingship of the gods. However, he succumbed to arrogance and lust and, as we learn for book 5.11-17, a scheme was devised to topple him.

Nahuṣa is induced to order the brahman seers to carry his palanquin. Then, adding yet further insult, he enters into an argument with them on a point of dharma, and touches Agastya on the head with his foot. Some versions of the story imply less a touch (*sprś-* 3.178.37) than a kick (*dhṛṣ-* 13.102.25, *han-* 13.103.20, 22). Agastya (or an unseen being) at once curses the offender to wander the world for 10,000 years as a snake.

While Nahuṣa is under this curse, Bhīma goes on a hunting trip in the forest and is caught by the snake, who prepares to eat him (3.175.8).⁴ But Agastya has set a limit to the curse: the snake will be freed by a mortal who can give precise answers to his questions. Yudhiṣṭhira follows his younger brother to the place where Nahuṣa is holding him, answers the questions and frees both Bhīma and the snake. Nahuṣa returns to heaven.

Though I cannot explore the parallel in full, the two stories about Agastya are clearly related. In the past, the sage was offended by Nahuṣa and by Mañimat /Kubera, and put them under a curse until such and such should happen. In the present, Bhīma is attacked by Nahuṣa and by Mañimat /Kubera but, either directly or via his brother, causes the curse to be lifted. So let us now put together all three journeys made by Bhīma within this relatively short stretch of text, selecting the relevant features for comparison with the Greek.

First Gandhamādana journey. Coming to a tree-fringed source of fresh water, Bhīma is attacked by Rākṣasas for ignoring their warnings and entering the pond.

Second Gandhamādana journey. Bhīma challenges Rākṣasas,

⁴Cf. the threatened cannibalism of the Krodhavaśas.

including Maṇimat, and lifts curse laid when Maṇimat insulted Agastya.

Hunting trip. Bhīma is attacked by a hungry snake (Nahuṣa) and causes lifting of curse laid when Nahuṣa kicked Agastya.

Given that the three Sanskrit stories are so closely inter-linked, the comparison with the Greek can draw on all of them. Thus (a) the Odysseus-Melantheus conflict takes place by fresh water, like the first Bhīma-Rākṣasa conflict. (b) Melantheus kicks Odysseus, a stupid unprovoked insult which resembles Nahuṣa kicking or spitting on Agastya and also perhaps, though to a lesser extent, Nahuṣa seizing Bhīma (unprovoked aggression, but natural for a snake). (c) Melantheus is the object of an imprecation uttered by the victim's friend,⁵ much as Nahuṣa and Maṇimat (plus Kubera) were the objects of a curse uttered by *their* victim.

A major difference is that the curse uttered by Agastya belongs to the narrative past and its lifting or accomplishment to the narrative present, while the Greek as it were shifts the equivalent events into the present and future. The imprecation, equivalent of the curse, takes place in the present, while the punishment of Melantheus will come during and after the massacre of the suitors. Nevertheless, Greek and Sanskrit share the following motifs: waterside violence; foolish unprovoked aggression; curse or quasi-curse on the aggressor; end-point of the curse when the aggressor encounters the hero (i.e. respectively Bhīma and Odysseus in his undisguised form). In spite of considerable complexities one can perhaps add the motif of friendship — Kubera's friendship, first with Maṇimat, then with the Pāṇḍavas, Odysseus' friendship with Eumaeus.

Though rappr. 18, *Unprovoked attack*, is methodologically more complex than 1-17, it merits inclusion for the extra weight it adds to the whole case. By way of overview of the argument, the following simplified formula may be helpful:

unprovoked attack + Argos encounter = Odysseus' journey
parallels

Hanuman encounter + unprovoked attack = Bhīma's journeys

Opinions may differ on the validity of the rapprochements

⁵It is a prayer, and not exactly a curse, which would have unmediated magical effect.

1-17, some of which may be dismissed as unpersuasive, or as corollaries one of another. However, I doubt whether even the most determined skeptic could reduce the list by more than a third. Of course, some motifs, regarded individually, may seem sufficiently banal for their occurrence in both epics to be explicable by coincidence. It is pretty common, for instance, for epic characters to question the identity of strangers (rappr. 4) or to pretend to ignorance of someone's identity (rappr. 10). But some of the other motifs are hardly commonplace ones, e.g. *Halving of Virtue* (rappr. 14), and in any case it makes no sense to look at the motifs individually. They compose episodes, and it is whole episodes that are being compared. Is it really conceivable that so many detailed similarities could exist between two relatively short passages if they were historically unconnected?

Theoretically, the proto-narrative might have originated at a period considerably later than that of proto-IE unity, but I doubt it. I cannot here enter on such a wide-ranging question (it is touched on in Allen in press). Perhaps one other possible objection should also be mentioned. My previous papers argued that in the parts of the epic traditions that they examined, Odysseus paralleled Arjuna, not Bhīma. That in no sense contradicts the homology presented here. If narrative comparativism were going to be simple, with regular one-to-one homologies extending throughout the whole corpus, no doubt more progress would have been made by now.

In conclusion, let us return to the most obvious difference between the two animal encounters, namely the difference in species. As Ian Rutherford pointed out to me, most theories of the Indo-European homeland locate it where monkeys are not native (cf. also Mallory and Adams 1997: 384-5). Most likely then, in the proto-narrative scene implied by the detailed similarities, the hero encountered not an aged monkey but an aged dog. Maybe there is even a hint of this in rappr. 2, since tail wagging is more natural in a dog than the corresponding movement by Hanuman is in a monkey.

Tentatively, one can go just a little further. Here is a summary, drawn from the very short book 17, very close to the end of the epic.

Clad in bark, the Pāṇḍavas set out on foot for their final journey to Heaven, and are joined by a dog. As they traverse

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the Himalayas, one by one Draupadī and the brothers die, except for Yudhiṣṭhira. Disregarding the urgings of the god Indra, Yudhiṣṭhira loyally refuses to abandon the dog, who in the end turns out to be his divine father Dharma in disguise. The hero is congratulated on his steadfast sense of duty and is transported to Heaven.

Reading this with the Greek in mind, one notes a hero traveling on foot through mountains, and one who, shortly before reaching his ultimate destination, is involved with a dog; the dog does not speak, but is spoken about with a third party. No other passage of the epic involves this canine form of the god, but the god himself is intimately linked with the relevant hero: Dharma was the progenitor of Yudhiṣṭhira, is incarnated in him, and (as Dumézil showed) governs his first-functional personality — which he affectingly displays here in his dharmic loyalty to the animal. The Odysseus-Argos link is also long-standing and intimate (the hero nourished the puppy — *threpsē* 293), and arguably there are elements of loyalty on both sides of the relation. More importantly perhaps, both Sanskrit and Greek have the hero traveling in the company of a real or apparent dependent (respectively Eumaeus and the canine Dharma) and the relationship between the traveling companions involves loyalty.⁶

On all these points the Hanuman episode diverges from the other two. The animal is a monkey who speaks and reappears later in the epic. Although they are half-brothers, Bhīma and Hanuman have not previously met, and Bhīma has been traveling alone. Three-way comparisons are usually complicated, and ideally the two Sanskrit episodes should be compared independently of the Greek. Nevertheless, even at this point, one might wonder whether Argos results from a fusion of two proto-narrative animals whose distinctness is retained in the Sanskrit. If so, the Greek dog would be cognate not only with Hanuman but also, as is suggested in passing by Vielle (1996:157 n.277), with the canine form of Dharma.⁷

⁶Evidently this last comparison shifts from the homology Argos~Dharma to Eumaeus~Dharma — cf. the shift made as we moved from rappr. 8 to 9.

⁷An earlier version of this paper was given at the Classics Graduates Mythology Conference at Reading University in July 1997.

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