

# A Quartet of Graeco-Aryan Demi-goddesses: Leukothea, Eidothea, Ulūpī and Vargā

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The *Odyssey's* two scenes involving the helpful demi-goddesses Leukothea and Eidothea are linked by proximity and a number of narrative similarities; they may have arisen from a common source, one generally assumed to be folkloric. Two episodes from the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* involving similar aquatic helper figures (Ulūpī the Nāgī, and Vargā the crocodile/celestial nymph) shed light on the Graeco-Aryan origins of the Homeric goddesses, and offer insight into the evolutionary processes of both epic traditions.

## I. Introduction

The *Odyssey's* helpful aquatic demi-goddesses Ino/Leukothea and Eidothea most likely arose from a common ancestor. The scenes that involve them occur in adjacent books and are linked by a number of narrative commonalities; even the goddesses' names suggest deeper ties between the two.<sup>1</sup> To the extent that classical scholarship has addressed these figures directly,<sup>2</sup> their origins have been presumed to lie

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<sup>1</sup>Several textual reasons suggest that Odysseus may have been the original hero of the Eidothea episode: (1) though Helen accompanied Menelaus, she is not mentioned in the scene; (2) Eidothea's address to Menelaus at *Od.* 4.389–390 is the same as Circe's to Odysseus at *Od.* 10.539–540; (3) the phrase ὑπὸ πόντου ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα at *Od.* 4.425 is the same as 5.351–2 in the Leukothea episode; and (4) the Eidothea episode closely resembles Odysseus' stay on Thrinakia: stranded by the winds on an island (*Od.* 4.360–363, cf. 12.325–326); an attempt to assuage hunger through makeshift fishing lines (*Od.* 4.368–369, cf. 12.331–332); the hero goes off alone away from his companions (*Od.* 4.367, cf. 10.333–335).

<sup>2</sup>Classicists have had little to say about the Homeric characters. Wilamowitz (1884:135–136) declares Leukothea an Ionian adoption, and sniffs at the idea that her character makes any contribution to the epic. Heubeck saw the interventions Ino and Eidothea provide as insufficiently accounted for within

among the helpful water spirits of folktale.<sup>3</sup> While the two episodes probably were influenced by folktales during the developmental period of the Homeric epics, there is reason to believe that these two demi-goddesses have Indo-European precursors as well.

Evidence of the shared heritage of the Greek and Sanskrit epics has been widely noted.<sup>4</sup> Both traditions center on nigh-apocalyptic wars provoked by the stealing or molestation of a woman, and their heroes divide their time between waging this war and extended and unwelcome periods of travel, along with occasional archery-based marriage-contests. The epics' common origins are also discernable in small encapsulated episodes with well-defined boundaries.<sup>5</sup> These often resemble folktales in structure and content and, like folktales, are of a size to be easily remembered and transmitted intact; such episodes are particularly abundant in the category of "The Adventures of the Wandering Hero." Like the journey of Odysseus, the travels of the Indic hero Arjuna in the *Mahābhārata* (both in the company of and apart from his brothers) involve a disproportionate number of encounters with female characters. When these women are taken as a group and set against the encounters with women in the *Odyssey*, they form a neat set of remarkably similar pairings.<sup>6</sup>

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the narrative, stating that "Particularly noteworthy is the absence of any apparent motive for the assistance which the two goddesses provide" (Heubeck et al. 1998 vol. I: 216). Benardete (1997: 45) reasons that Leukothea's role may be to ensure that Odysseus is naked when he reaches Scheria.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., Hansen (1997), who reports that "the notion that marine deities are prophetic is found in other traditions as well." Hansen connects the *Odyssey's* Proteus-encounter to Scandinavian legends in which "(1) a man captures a marine spirit, (2) as a result of which he is entitled to ask him/her questions. (3) He does so, and (4) receives truthful answers." (Hansen 1997: 453-454).

<sup>4</sup>E.g., Gresseth 1979; Meulder 2000; Suter 1987.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., Allen 2000, 2009; Garbutt 2006; Jamison 1994, 1997, 1999; E.B. West 2005, 2006, 2009.

<sup>6</sup>These encounters can legitimately be paired in several ways, as some elements seem to have become detached from their original possessors and reassigned to different characters. Allen 1996 constructs a schema organized by the structural correspondences of the encounter stories within their respective epics: Odysseus' encounter with Circe is paired with Arjuna's liaison with Ulūpī, the Sirens are identified with Vargā, Calypso with Citrāṅgadā, and Nausicaa with Subhadrā, and the heroes' wives, Penelope and Draupadī, are equated with one another. On the basis of parallel elements in

This paper is concerned with the relationship between the Ino and Eidothea episodes and a pair of similar episodes from the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* epic: Arjuna's encounters with Ulūpī the Nāgī<sup>7</sup> and with Vargā, a celestial nymph who has been turned into a crocodile. These Indic figures are also closely linked by textual proximity; less than 25 verses separate the two adventures, and they share a number of narrative similarities as well. All four episodes share features, and even more significantly, the two *pairs* of episodes closely resemble one another: both the *Odyssey* and the *Mahābhārata* offer a pair of linked episodes about water-dwelling semi-human women, one of which involves a life-saving token, the other a wrestling match with a shape-changing opponent. I summarize all four briefly below:

(1) **Eidothea**, daughter of Proteus, appears to Menelaus at *Od.* 4.351 ff., when he is stranded on the island of Pharos off the coast of Egypt during his journey home from Troy. Eidothea gives Menelaus advice and provides him with the materials necessary to subdue her prophetic father. Following her instructions, the hero and his men are able to capture Proteus and coerce him into revealing what they must do to resume their journey home.

(2) **Ino** (also called **Leukothea**) was originally a daughter of Cadmus and princess of Thebes, but was transformed into a minor sea deity. She rescues Odysseus when his raft is in danger of being wrecked by Poseidon at *Od.* 5.333–350. Ino tells Odysseus that he is destined to survive this trial, and instructs him to tie her veil around his chest, abandon his raft, and swim to safety.

(3) **Ulūpī**, daughter of Kauravya, king of the *Nāgas*, drags Arjuna into the water of the Ganges at *MBh.* 1.206 ff., as he bathes in preparation for the evening fire ritual. Ulūpī has been smitten with love for the hero and, as this episode occurs

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the narratives, E.B. West 2009 explores shared characteristics in the tales of Citrāṅgadā and Nausicaa.

<sup>7</sup>The *Nāgas* (Snakes) are mythical beings who live in the elaborate underground city of Bhogavatī, at the bottom of the ocean, or in lakes and ponds. By situating the original narration of the *Mahābhārata* at the 12-year Snake Sacrifice of the Kurus' ancestor King Janamejaya, and by implicitly comparing Janamejaya's attempted holocaust of the Snakes with the apocalyptic war at Kurukṣetra, the epic links the destinies of the Snakes and the Kurus on many levels (e.g., Kosambi 1964); that the name of Ulūpī's father is Kauravya ("Descendant of Kuru") is particularly intriguing.

during the period in which Arjuna is separated from his wife and brothers, he and Ulūpī spend a romantic night together. Arjuna then goes on to the city of Maṇalūra, where he marries a princess (Citrāṅgadā) and fathers a son before resuming his travels. In *MBh.* 14, Ulūpī makes a second appearance when Arjuna has returned to Maṇalūra as part of a Horse Sacrifice (*Aśvamedha*) and finds that his son Babhruvāhana is now ruler of the region. Since Arjuna is following the horse, he attempts to engage Babhruvāhana in combat, but his son demurs. The two remain at an impasse until Ulūpī appears and encourages Babhruvāhana to fight his father.<sup>8</sup> When Arjuna is accidentally slain by his son, Ulūpī restores the hero to life with a magic gem placed upon his chest.

(4) **Vargā**, an *apsaras* (celestial nymph) and her four sisters were cursed by an angry brahmin whom they had playfully tempted with their beauty as he meditated.<sup>9</sup> The brahmin transformed the nymphs into crocodiles, and they live in a cluster of sacred bathing areas and pose a danger to the holy men who bathe there. At *MBh.* 1.208 ff., Arjuna learns of the menace and decides to bathe at one of these *tīrthas*, where he is duly attacked by Vargā. He grips her tightly while lifting her out of the water, releasing her from the curse. After hearing her story, he frees the other enchanted *apsarases* in the same way. It is important to note for later reference that Vargā's tale, while sharing many motifs with the other three, has its central issue reversed: whereas the others describe assistance given to a hero by a demi-goddess, this one describes the rescue of a damsel in distress. I return to this point later, as it

<sup>8</sup>Goldman 1978 traces Freudian elements in the second Ulūpī episode. Allen 1996: 8-9 rightly compares the father-son combat resulting in the father's death in this tale to that between Odysseus and Telegonus (Odysseus' son by Circe), as reported by Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 306:

[Odysseus] then, having sailed back to Ithaca, carries out the sacrifices ordered by Teiresias, and then reaches Thesprotis and marries Callidice, queen of the Thesprotians...After the death of Callidice, the succession goes to Polypoetes, Odysseus' son, while Odysseus himself returns to Ithaca. Meanwhile, Telegonus, sailing in search of his father, goes to Ithaca and razes the island. Having marched out in defense, Odysseus is slain by his son in ignorance. Telegonus, realizing his error, takes his father's body, Telemachus and Penelope to his mother [Circe], where she makes them immortal. Telegonus marries Penelope, and Telemachus marries Circe.

<sup>9</sup>Allen 1999 analyzes Vargā's role within the *Arjunavanavāsa* and in relation to the varieties of marriage described in the Law Code of Manu, and compares her to the Sirens and Scylla and Charybdis.

plays a significant role in the analysis of the relationships between the episodes.

Following Parry and Lord (1960), episodes from Homer may be seen as strings of themes (or motifs) which a poet elaborates on, embellishes, or re-orders as storytelling occasions demand, sometimes creating alternative combinations that go on to become a stable part of his repertoire as independent episodes in their own right. These four water-dwelling demi-goddesses appear to be the outcome of such an evolutionary process. Like the characters they feature, these episodes are fluid and versatile, and demonstrate how a flexible narrative element may persist where a more rigid one might be abandoned. The very flexibility that allows them to remain part of the epic, however, also causes them to be especially subject to alteration as the poet casts and recasts the scene to suit the ever-evolving larger storyline. Though the incidents pair off naturally according to the differing focal points of each narrative (a wrestling match and an immortal magical object applied to the chest), other shared motifs link all four. I contend that these shared motif clusters provide evidence of Graeco-Aryan heritage in the epics.<sup>10</sup> I now discuss all relevant shared motifs in turn.

#### A. The Aquatic Demi-goddess

All four characters have profound associations with water. In the *Odyssey* this might not at first seem particularly striking as a shared characteristic; water and the sea are prominent throughout the tale, and sea deities (like sea monsters) would seem to be logical components of it. But aside from Poseidon (who is arguably in a separate class), the only marine immortal in Homer besides those featured in these episodes, is Thetis, who, though a Nereid and Eidothea's sister, less closely resembles the figures under discussion here than other divine mother-figures such as Eos and Aphrodite.

- **Eidothea**, as a Nereid, moves freely between land and water, and through her father Proteus is deeply connected to the sea.

- **Leukothea**, though originally of mortal heritage, is now a sea goddess:

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<sup>10</sup> See M. L. West 2009 for a concise discussion of the sub-groupings within the Indo-European tradition.

τόν δὲ ἶδεν Κάδμου θυγάτηρ, καλλίσφυρος Ἰνώ  
 Λευκοθέη, ἣ πρὶν μὲν ἔην βροτὸς ἀυδήεσσα,  
 νῦν δ' ἄλως ἐν πελάγεσσι θεῶν ἕξ ἔμμορε τιμῆς.  
 (Od. 5.333–335)

The daughter of Cadmus saw him then, lovely-ankled Ino,  
 Leukothea, who previously was a mortal, speaking with a  
 human voice,  
 But now in the open sea she shares in the honor of the gods.

Though the episode refers to Ino's prior life, it does not explain the circumstances of her transition to the sea, which must be supplied from other sources.<sup>11</sup> Because Ino nursed the infant Dionysus, the goddess Hera cursed Ino's husband, Athamas, with a madness that caused him to attack his own family. His ravings drove Ino to throw herself into the ocean, after which she was transformed into a marine deity.

In the *Mahābhārata*, water-dwelling is an unusual characteristic, and in this respect the two demi-goddesses here are unique in the epic.

- Like Ino, **Vargā**, dwells in the water as the result of a curse, though Vargā's time there will be temporary.
- The encounter with **Ulūpī** begins when she pulls the bathing Arjuna below the water and takes him to the palace of her father. *Nāgas* are generally associated with water in Hindu mythology, but they are rarely portrayed as amphibious within the *Mahābhārata*, which more frequently depicts them as living in caves.<sup>12</sup> Arjuna underscores the aquatic element of Ulūpī's character by addressing her as "Denizen of the Waters," (*jalacārīṇī*, *MBh.* 1.206.22). The meaning of Ulūpī's name, "Porpoise" (Burrows 1948: 367), also arouses interest, given the frequency with which folklore depicts the rescue of stranded sailors by cetaceans, suggesting a deeper association with Ino's rescue of the shipwrecked Odysseus.

### B. The Missed/Interrupted Sacrifice

Both the Ulūpī and Eidothea episodes open with a

<sup>11</sup>Ino's misfortune was the subject of Aeschylus' lost *Athamas*. Other sources include Pi. *O.* 2. 22 ff.; Ov. *Met.* 4. 416 ff.; [Apollod.] *Bib.* 3. 28.

<sup>12</sup>As in Uttanka's visit to the land of the *nāgas* in *MBh.* 1.3, or 1.32, where Brahmā rewards the austerities of the *nāga* Śeṣa with the right to live in a chasm and support the earth on his head.

reference to an incomplete or interrupted sacrifice.

• As noted above, Arjuna meets **Ulūpī** when she interrupts his preparations for an evening ritual:

*Tatrābhīṣekaṃ kṛtvā sa tarpayitvā pitāmahān  
uttitīrṣur jalād rājann agnikāryacikīrṣayā  
apakīrṣto mahābāhur nāgarājasya kanyayā  
antarjale Mahārāja Ulūpyā kāmāyānayā  
(MBh. 1.206.12–13)*

There, having made ablutions and offered to his ancestors,  
as he was about to emerge from the water, O King,  
intending to perform the fire-rites  
the strong-armed man was dragged under the water  
by the lustful Ulūpī, daughter of the king of the *nāgas*, O  
Great King.

Fortunately, a solution to the interrupted rite is at hand: Arjuna sees a fire already prepared in the *nāga* palace, and he immediately performs an underwater version of the ritual so as to avoid divine displeasure:

*Dadarśa Pāṇḍavas tatra pāvakaṃ susamāhitam  
Kauravyasyātha nāgasya bhavane paramārcite  
tatrāgnikāryaṃ kṛtavān Kuntīputro Dhanamjayaḥ  
āsāṅkam ānena hutas tenātusyad dhutāśanaḥ  
(MBh. 206.14–15)*

There the Pāṇḍava saw a well-assembled fire  
in the most revered palace of the *nāga* Kauravya.  
There Kunti's son Dhanamjaya performed the fire-rite.  
by him the oblation was offered unhesitatingly; the Fire  
was pleased by him.

The final line suggests that had Arjuna been unable to complete the ritual, he would have faced potentially serious consequences.

• The **Eidothea** episode also begins with reference to a missed sacrifice with serious consequences: as Menelaus informs Telemachus at the start of his tale, it was his failure to offer hecatombs to the gods upon his departure from Troy that resulted in his stranding on Pharos:

Αἴγυπτῳ μ' ἔτι δεῦρο θεοὶ μεμαῶτα νέεσθαι  
 ἔσχον, ἐπεὶ οὐ σφιν ἕρεξα τελεέσσας ἑκατόμβας  
 οἱ δ' αἰεὶ βούλοντο θεοὶ μεμνήσθαι ἐφετμέων  
 (*Od.* 4.351–353)

The gods still held me there in Egypt, eager to sail,  
 since I had not offered complete hecatombs to them.  
 The gods always wish for their commands to be  
 remembered.

The position of this statement at the beginning of Menelaus' tale is unusual in that it anticipates the substance of what Menelaus will learn from Proteus at the end of the episode; in scenes of consultation with seers and prophets, the information gained is typically withheld until it is delivered by the informant. As Menelaus learns from Proteus, he must return to Egypt and perform his sacrifices there if he wishes to get home, and he proceeds to do so.<sup>13</sup> Though the motif of the delayed rite is instantiated differently in these two tales, both place a problematic sacrifice at the beginning of the scene, and both scenes describe the accomplishment of the incomplete ritual.

### C. The Demi-Goddess Rises Out of Sea/Earth

In three of the episodes, a demi-goddess makes her appearance by rising up through water, or through land as if it were water, while the fourth narrative contains suggestions that it once contained something similar.

• **Leukothea** emerges through the water to aid Odysseus, as his raft is capsized by Poseidon off the coast of Phaiacia:

αἰθυλίη δ' εἰκυῖα ποτῆ ἀνεδύσετο λίμνης,  
 ἴζε δ' ἐπὶ σχεδίου καὶ μιν πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπε  
 (*Od.* 5.337–338)

Like a flying sea-gull, she arose from the water,

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<sup>13</sup>Powell sees evidence of a ritual underpinning elsewhere in the Eidothea narrative as well, comparing the ambush of Proteus to the sacrifices Odysseus performs for Teiresias and on Circe's island: "why must Menelaus and his men suffer the unpleasantness of crouching beneath malodorous skins of seals between the time of the sun's rising and high noon, the time at which Proteus rises from the sea? This, too, suggests a ritual prescription" (Powell 1970: 427).



sat upon the well-corded raft, and to him spoke these words:

- There is reason to believe that **Eidothea's** tale too once included a similar entrance: though her appearance at *Od.* 4.370 occurs on dry land, as she speaks to Menelaus when he walks about the island, her return to the sea at *Od.* 4.425 (“she sank under the billowing sea,” ὑπὸ ποντοῦ ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα) is nearly identical to Leukothea's at 5.351–352 (“she sank back into the billowing sea,” ἄψ' ἐς ποντοῦ ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα). Similarly, to prepare the men's ambush ὑποδύσα θαλάσσης εὐρέα κόλπον, “she dived deep into the broad bosom of the sea” (*Od.* 4.435). It thus seems possible that an appearance by rising up through the water was once part of the narrative.
- **Vargā** herself rises up out of the water only inasmuch as she is pulled out by Arjuna (*MBh.* 1.208.11). But when her friends are liberated (ostensibly by identical means) it is explicitly said that they rise up from the water: *utthāya ca jalāt tasmāt*, “and having arisen from that water...” (*MBh.* 1.209.22).
- **Ulūpī**, as her first appearance in the epic is described, pulls Arjuna under the water into her father's palace, rather than making an appearance by rising up through the water; though the text makes no note of it, in order to perform this action, she must at some point have risen up through the water from her home to go towards the hero.<sup>14</sup> In her next appearance, in the *Mahābhārata's Aśvamedhika parvan*, when Arjuna speaks to his son as they face each other on the battlefield, Ulūpī rises up directly through the ground:

*Tam evam uktaṃ bhartrā tu viditvā pānnagātmejā  
amṣyamāṇā bhittvorvim Ulūpī tam upāgamat  
(MBh. 14.78.8)*

The Snake's daughter, having perceived him being thus  
addressed by her husband,  
and unable to bear it, Ulūpī came to him by splitting  
through the earth.

When viewed alongside the other elements shared among these four episodes, Ulūpī's dramatic entrance may suggest that the motif of rising up through water to meet the hero has been re-engineered here to accommodate a shift of location

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<sup>14</sup>I owe this clever observation to an anonymous referee.

to the battlefield.

#### D. Appears, Unsummoned, When Needed

A hallmark of three of the tales is the demi-goddess' sudden unsolicited appearance purely in aid of the hero.<sup>15</sup> Similar "divine helpers" are widespread in folk-tale,<sup>16</sup> and Athena and Hermes periodically perform this function, but it is not part of the role of any of the other minor characters encountered in the course of war or wandering in either epic.

- Though **Ulūpi's** first appearance is amorous rather than helpful, she comes to Arjuna's aid at *MBh.* 14.78.8 (quoted in Section C) without being called, magically drawn by an awareness of the hero's situation and a desire to help him.
- **Ino** is not summoned by Odysseus, but comes to him prodded by a merciful inclination to assist a man in distress. As she says by way of introduction:

κάμμορε, τίπτει τοι ᾧδε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων  
 ᾧδύσατ' ἐκπάγλως, ὅτι τοι κακα πολλὰ φυτεύει;  
 (*Od.* 5.339–340)

Poor thing, why does Poseidon Earth-Shaker so  
 dreadfully hate you, that he devises so many evils for you?

- **Eidothea** is similarly inspired by pity for Menelaus when she sees him and his men trapped on the island, and her assistance is again a spontaneous act of sympathy:

καί νύ κεν ἦῖα πάντα κατέφθιτο καὶ μένε' ἀνδρῶν,  
 εἰ μή τίς με θεῶν ὀλοφύρατο καὶ μ' ἐλέησε  
 Πρωτέος ἰφθίμου θυγάτηρ ἁλίιοιο γέροντος,  
 Εἰδοθέη· τῇ γάρ ῥα μάλιστά γε θυμὸν ὄρινα.  
 (*Od.* 4.363–366)

And by that time all the food would have been gone, and  
 the men's strength,  
 if one of the gods had not taken pity and saved me,  
 the daughter of mighty Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea,  
 Eidothea; for it was her spirit that was so stirred.

Though pity at a hero's unfortunate situation seems a

<sup>15</sup> As noted above, Vargā's episode reverses the situation.

<sup>16</sup> See Propp 1970: 39–50; Stith-Thompson, Motif-Index F 340–348 and N 810.

straightforward excuse to introduce a minor character, the device finds little use outside of these scenes.

### E. Shape-Changing

Shape-shifting is a primary component of two of the episodes under discussion, and there are overtones of it in all four.

- In *MBh.* 1.208, **Vargā's** shift into animal form occurred against the demi-goddess' will when she and her friends were cursed by the meditating brahmin (*MBh.* 1.208.21), much as Ino was condemned to life in the water by Hera's curse.
- In **Eidothea's** story, the shape-shifter is not the demi-goddess but her father.<sup>17</sup> When Menelaus and his companions seize Proteus:

ἀλλ' ἦ τοι πρότιστα λέων γένετ' ἠϋγένειος,  
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων καὶ πάρδαλις ἠδὲ μέγας σῶς·  
γίγνετο δ' ὑγρὸν καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον·  
(*Od.* 4.456–459).

But he first became a well-bearded lion,  
and then a serpent, and a panther, and a great hog;  
He became both liquid water and a high-branching tree.

Only when the parade of forms finally ends, are the men able to converse with him.

- At *Od.* 5.337 (quoted above), **Ino** appears to Odysseus ἀιθυίη δ' ἐϊκυῖα ποτῆ, “like a flying sea-gull,” although whether this refers to her *form* or her *manner* has been a matter of debate.<sup>18</sup> While my own inclination is to read the words as descriptive of manner, it is nevertheless possible that an earlier tradition, in which Ino did assume the form of a bird, eventually came to refer only to the manner of her arrival at the hero's raft.
- While **Ulūpi** does not herself change form in this incident,

<sup>17</sup>But it should be remembered that Proteus' daughters also possess their father's ability to change shape, as both Thetis and Amphitrite prove in their attempts to avoid marriage.

<sup>18</sup>Discussed in Heubeck vol. I: 283. The same phrase is used as Ino returns to the water: αὐτῆ δ' ἄψ' ἐς πόντον ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα / ἀιθυίη ἐϊκυῖα: μέλαν δέ ἐ κῶμα κάλυψεν (*Od.* 5.351–352). Cf. Athena's delivery of nectar and ambrosia to the fasting Achilles at *Il.* 19.350–351: ἠ δ' ἄρπη ἐϊκυῖα τανυπτέρυγι λιγυφώνω/ οὐρανὸν ἔκ κατεπάλλτο δι' αἰθέρος, “And she, like a broad-winged, shrill-voiced hawk / dove out of the heavens through the aether.”

the shape-changing abilities of snakes are well-attested in the *Mahābhārata* and an integral part of their nature,<sup>19</sup> much like those of the Old Man of the Sea and his daughters.

#### F. The Wrestling Match Followed by Conversation

Two scenes—one from each epic—center on a wrestling match that ends when the opponent has resumed his or her natural form.<sup>20</sup>

- After Arjuna is told that the religious community at the sacred fords is plagued by crocodiles, he laughs off the risk and begins to bathe. The enchanted **Vargā** attacks him, and he responds by dragging her out of the water:

*Sa tam ādāya Kaunteyo viṣphurantaṃ jalecaram  
udatiṣṭhan mahābāhur balena balināṃ varah  
utkṛṣṭa eva tu grāhaḥ so 'rjunena yaśasvinā  
babhūva nāri kalyāṇi sarvabharaṇabhūṣitā  
dīpyamānā śrīyā Rājan divyarūpā manoramā  
(MBh. 1.208.10–11)*

Having seized the writhing crocodile, Kaunteya,  
that strong-armed Best of the Strong, stood up powerfully.  
Indeed, when that snapper had been dragged out by the  
glorious Arjuna,  
she became a beautiful young woman, adorned with all  
ornaments,  
blazing with beauty, King, of divine form and charming.

After Arjuna subdues the crocodile in his grip, Vargā is restored to her natural *apsaras*-form. She explains her situation and Arjuna restores the other four crocodiles to their normal forms as well:

*Utthāya ca jalāt tasmāt pratilabhya vapuḥ svakam  
tās tadāpsaraso Rājann adṛsyanta yathā purā  
(MBh. 1.209.22)*

Having arisen from the water, and recovered their own  
forms, then the *apsarases*, O King, looked as they did  
before.

<sup>19</sup>As in *MBh.* 1.3.136, where the *nāga* Takṣaka takes the form of a naked mendicant.

<sup>20</sup>The Ulūpī episode has no exact parallel to the wrestling in the Eidothea and Vargā tales, but does open with a similar scenario, when Ulūpī grabs Arjuna and pulls him underwater at *MBh.* 1.206.12–3.

- A similar wrestling match is the central feature of **Eidothea's** story, as described in the last section. She describes the task to Menelaus and his men beforehand:

ὑμεῖς δ' ἀστεμφέως ἐχέμεν μάλλον τε πιέζειν.  
 ἀλλ' ὅτε κεν δῆ σ' αὐτὸς ἀνείρηται ἐπέεσσι,  
 τοῖος ἐὼν οἶόν κε κατευνηθέντα ὕδησθε,  
 καὶ τότε δῆ σφέσθαι τε βίης λῦσαί τε γέροντα,  
 (Od. 4.419–421)

But you all hold him tightly and squeeze him all the more.  
 And then when he, himself, asks you a question with words,  
 in the same form as when you saw him sleeping,  
 then let go of your might and release the Old Man.

Menelaus and his men follow Eidothea's instructions, and wait until her father returns to his original form. Like Vargā, once Proteus has been restored to his true self it becomes possible to converse with him:

ἡμεῖς δ' ἀστεμφέως ἔχομεν τετληότι θυμῷ  
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δῆ ῥ' ἀνίαζ' ὁ γέρων ὀλοφώϊα εἰδώς,  
 καὶ τότε δῆ με ἔπεεσσιν ἀνείρόμενος προσέειπε:  
 (Od. 4.459–461)

We, unyielding, held him with enduring spirit.  
 But when the old man, the possessor of devious wiles,  
 wearied,  
 he finally spoke to me with words, asking questions.

Both the Eidothea and Vargā episodes thus present a situation in which the hero must grip his adversary firmly in order to restore him/her to his/her natural form, after which he can converse with the shape-changer, who not only no longer poses a threat but offers the hero information.

### G. The Magical Object Applied to the Chest

- In *MBh.* 14, when **Ulūpī** rises up through the earth to find Arjuna in conflict with his son over the necessity of fighting one another, she sets a plan into action. Ulūpī instructs Babhruvāhana to engage in battle with his father because this

is the only acceptable option for a warrior. Babhruvāhana is persuaded, and he and Arjuna begin a single combat. After an extended battle that both enjoy immensely, Babhruvāhana mortally injures his father. Seeing this, the young man falls into a deathlike swoon; when he regains consciousness, he resolves to starve himself to death out of remorse. In response to his grief, Ulūpī mentally summons a magic gem she knows will revive Arjuna:

*Ulūpī cintayām āsa tadā saṁjīvanaṁ maṇim  
sa copātiṣṭhata tadā pannagānām parāyaṇam  
(MBh. 14.81.2)*

Ulūpī thought then of the re-vivifying gem  
and it came there, that last resort of the Snakes.

Ulūpī directs Babhruvāhana to place the gem on Arjuna's chest, and its power restores the dead hero to life:

*Etamasyorasi tvaṁ tu sthāpayasva pituḥ Prabho  
saṁjīvitaṁ punaḥ putra tato draṣṭāsi Pāṇḍavam  
ityuktaḥ sthāpayām āsa tasyorasi maṇim tadā  
Pārthasyāmitatejāḥ sa pituḥ snehād apāpakṛt  
(MBh. 14.81.10–11)*

“Put this on the chest of your father, Lord  
Then, O Son, you will see the Pāṇḍava revived.”  
Thus addressed, on the chest of Pārtha he then placed  
the gem,  
he whose glory is boundless, not a committer of sin, for  
love of his father.

• In the *Odyssey*, **Leukothea** also provides a magical ornament to assist Odysseus: her divine veil. Like Ulūpī's gem, it works when applied to the chest. She tells him:

*τῆ δέ, τόδε κρήδεμνον ὑπὸ στέρνοιο ταύσσαι  
ἄμβροτον· οὐδέ τί τοι παθέειν δέος οὐδ' ἀπολέσθαι  
(Od. 5.346–347)*

And here, wrap this immortal veil about your chest,  
nor fear to suffer anything, or to be destroyed.

After some hesitation,<sup>21</sup> Odysseus follows Leukothea's order to

<sup>21</sup>Gutglueck 1988 attributes Odysseus' reluctance to follow Ino's orders to

abandon his raft, and uses the veil to save himself from drowning during his three-day drift in the sea (*Od.* 5.354–372).

Though there are obvious differences between the tokens, there are similarities as well. Both are items of adornment, and both are described with adjectives relating to the crossing from death to life: ἄμβροτον for the veil and *samjīvanam* for the gem. In both cases, use of the token is also connected with the hero's visit to the country of a young and marriageable princess: Ino's veil saves Odysseus' life by bringing him to Nausicaa's island, while Ulūpī's assistance saves Arjuna's life in Citrāṅgadā's kingdom.<sup>22</sup> The paired occurrence of links that reach outside of individual episodes and extend into another set of comparable episodes strongly suggests that these interlocking tales derive from a precursor that diverged to form the Greek and Indic epics.

#### H. Resolution of a Curse

Both the Ino and Ulūpī narratives also have the intervening goddess reveal to the hero that events in the episode were pre-ordained, originating in curses from divine parent angered at the treatment of his or her son.

- The storm that threatens Odysseus' life during the **Ino** episode was caused by Poseidon as a result of the supplication made to the god earlier by his son the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.526–536).
- In *MBh.* 14, **Ulūpī** reveals that the combat between father and son was necessary to expiate a curse placed upon Arjuna by the goddess Gaṅgā, after Arjuna killed Bhīṣma unfairly when the latter was already engaged in combat with Śikhaṇḍin:

*Mahābhāratayuddhe yat tvayā Śāmtanavo nṛpaḥ  
adharmeṇa hataḥ Pārtha tasya iṣā niṣkṛtiḥ kṛtā  
na hi Bhīṣmas tvayā vīra yudhyamāno nīpātitaḥ  
Śikhaṇḍinā tu saṃsaktas tam āśritya hatas tvayā  
tasya śāntim akṛtvā tu tyajes tvam yadi jīvitam  
karmanā tena pāpena patethā niraye dhruvam.  
eṣā tu vihītā śāntiḥ putrād yāṃ prāptavān asi  
Vasubhir Vasudhāpāla Gaṅgayā ca Mahāmate  
(*MBh.* 14.82.8–11)*

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residual fears about nudity and emasculation from his initial conflict with Circe.

<sup>22</sup>On the comparison between Nausicaa and Citrāṅgadā, see E.B.West 2009.

In the Mahābhārata battle, by you the kingly son of Śāmtanu was killed with an unjust act,<sup>23</sup> Pārtha, for which this atonement was done. Indeed, Bhīṣma was not felled fighting with you, Hero, but, having engaged Śikhaṇḍin, intent upon him, he was killed by you. If you should depart life without having made atonement for it, because of this sinful action you would certainly fall into hell. But by this which you have received from your son, peace is made with the Vasus<sup>24</sup> and Gaṅgā, O Great-Souled One, Protector of Wealth.

Arjuna's "death" at his son's hand has thus spared him from hell. For Odysseus, the resolution is only temporary; Poseidon decides that he has troubled the hero enough for the time being:

... ἴδε δὲ κρείων ἐνοσίχθων,  
κινήσας δὲ κάρη προτὶ ὄν μυθήσατο θυμόν·  
"οὕτω νῦν κακὰ πολλὰ παθῶν ἀλόω κατὰ πόντον,  
εἰς ὃ κεν ἀνθρώποισι διοτρεφέεσσι μιγήης.  
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς σε ἔολπα ὀνόσσεσθαι κακότητος."  
ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας ἵμασεν καλλιίτριχας ἵππους,  
ἴκετο δ' εἰς Αἰγῆας. ὅθι οἱ κλυτὰ δώματ' ἔασιν.  
(*Od.* 5.375–381)

...The powerful Earthshaker saw him,  
but shaking his head he spoke to his own spirit:  
"There now! Wander on the sea, suffering many evils,  
that you might be brought amongst the people cherished  
by Zeus.  
Nor do I imagine you will treat your misfortunes lightly."  
So speaking, he whipped up his lovely-maned horses  
And went to Aigai, where his glorious palace is.

Though Poseidon has left off his persecution for the moment,

<sup>23</sup>Note that just as Arjuna is accused of "cheating" in his fight with Bhīṣma, Odysseus is accused of an unfair maneuver by the Cyclops at *Od.* 9.511–16.

<sup>24</sup>The class of gods headed by Indra.



final resolution of the curse (via the planting of an oar according to Teiresias' instructions) does not occur within the text of our *Odyssey*.

### I. Help from the Goddess' Powerful Father

• **Eidothea** describes Proteus' knowledge and powers to Menelaus:

ὅς κέν τοι εἴπησιω ὁδὸν καὶ μέτρα κελεύθου  
νόστον θ', ὡς ἐπὶ πόντου ἐλεύσειαι ἰχθυόεντα.  
καὶ δέ κέ τοι εἴπησι, διοτρεφές, αἴ κ' ἔθελῃσθα  
ᾗττι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται  
οἰχομένοιο σέθεν δολιχὴν ὁδὸν ἀργαλέν τε.  
(*Od.* 4.389–393)

He could tell you the road and the length of your path  
and about your homecoming, as you travel upon the  
fishy sea.

And he could tell you, Cherished of Zeus, if you wish it,  
whatever wicked or good things have been done in your  
palace  
while you have traveled on your long and difficult  
journey.

Proteus, of course, is the γέρων ἄλιος, the “Old Man of the Sea” (as at *Od.* 4.384) who, as Poseidon's second-in-command, rules the enormous family of Nereids and Oceanids. He is apparently a local figure in this episode as well: ἀθάνατος Πρωτεύς Αἰγύπτιος, “immortal Egyptian Proteus” (*Od.* 4.385). While he spends much of his time in the water, he sleeps with his seals near the beach ὑπὸ σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσιω, “beneath hollow caverns” (*Od.* 4.403), a lifestyle intriguingly similar to that of the cave- and water-dwelling *nāgas*.

• **Ulūpī's** father Kauravya is also the powerful ruler of a tribe of minor deities (the *nāgas*) and lives in the area. Ulūpī's assistance to Arjuna, like Eidothea's to Odysseus, is based upon the employment of her father's abilities. When Ulūpī overhears Gaṅgā authorizing the curse upon Arjuna (*MBh.* 14.82.7–23), she immediately seeks her father's assistance:

*Tad ahaṃ pitur āvedya bhṛṣaṃ pravṛyathitendriyā  
abhavaṃ sa ca tac chrutvā viśādam agamat param  
pitā tu me Vasūn gatvā tvadarthe samayācata  
punah punah prasādyaināṃs ta enam idam abruvan  
(MBh. 14.82.16–17)*

I, having reported this to my father, became excessively distressed,  
and he, having heard this, went into a state of deep dejection.  
Having gone to the Vasus, my father pleaded on your behalf,  
again and again he propitiated them. They said this to him...

Ulūpī's father is able to secure a bargain with the gods, that Arjuna will be freed from the curse by being killed by his son, after which Ulūpī will be able to resurrect Arjuna safely.<sup>25</sup>

### J. Foreknowledge and Prophecy Regarding the Hero

All four demi-goddesses exhibit prior knowledge of the hero's identity and personal history, and two go on to foretell his future.

- **Eidothea's** foreknowledge about Menelaus is the most limited, presumably because her father is the informant, and his role would be rendered unnecessary if Eidothea herself appeared too prescient. She therefore primarily exhibits a grasp of Menelaus' current situation and of what he must do to learn how to escape it.
- **Ino** not only seems familiar with Odysseus and his plight, but

<sup>25</sup>One final consideration is the unusual situation of Ino's father, and his possible ties to Ulūpī's father. While Cadmus plays no role in Ino's episode in the *Odyssey*, the text suggests that the narrator is familiar with the back-story to her peculiar life. It is perhaps significant therefore that (as foretold by Dionysus in *The Bacchae*) Ino's father Cadmus becomes a giant snake at the close of his life: δράκων γενήσῃ μεταβαλὼν, δάμαρ τε σὴ / ἐκθηριωθεῖσ' ὄφεος ἀλλάζει τύπον, / ἦν Ἄρεος ἔσχεσ' Ἀρμονίαν θνητὸς γεγώς ("You will transform and become a serpent; and your wife / will become a beast and take on the form of a snake / Harmonia, Ares' daughter, whom you have though you are mortal," *E. Bac.* 1330–1332; see also *Ap. Rhod., Argon.* iv.516ff.; Dionysius, *Perieg.* 390ff., with the commentary of Eustathius, *Comm. on Dionysius Perieg.* v.391; *Strab.* 1.2.39, 7.7.8; *Paus.* 9.5.3). Whether this transformation is pure invention by Euripides, or a nod to a dutifully preserved tradition extending back to Graeco-Aryan sources, is unclear.

is able to offer comforting words about his long-term prospects. She asks, perhaps rhetorically, why Poseidon is so angry, and assures him that the god οὐ μὲν δὴ σε καταφθίσει μάλα περ μενεαίνων, “will not destroy you, though greatly he is striving” (*Od.* 5.341). Finally, she tells Odysseus that he will reach Phaiacia ὅθι τοι μοῖρ ἐστὶ ἀλύζαι, “where it is your fate to escape” (*Od.* 5.345).

• **Ulūpī’s** knowledge about Arjuna is perhaps the most extensive. At their first meeting, when he protests that he is temporarily committed to a hermit’s life, Ulūpī assures him that she is fully aware of the situation:

*Jānāmy ahaṃ Pāṇḍaveya yathā carasi medinīm  
yathā ca te brahmacaryam idam ādiṣṭhavān guruḥ  
(MBh. 1.206.24)*

I know, O Pāṇḍava, how you wander the earth,  
And how your guru has directed you to this state of  
chastity.

Ulūpī carefully explicates the *dharma* involved in Arjuna’s temporary celibacy, making a compelling case that the ban does not apply to her (*MBh.* 1.206.24). During their second meeting, Ulūpī explains the necessity of his temporary death at Babhruvāhana’s hand to resolve the curse (*MBh.* 14.82.8 — 11, quoted above in section H).

• **Vargā** also has critical foreknowledge about Arjuna: she tells him that his coming had been predicted to her by the brahmin who transformed her:

*Yadā ca vo grāhabhūtā grhṇantīḥ puruṣān jale  
utkarṣati jalāt kaścīt sthalam puruṣasattamaḥ  
tadā yūyam punaḥ sarvāḥ svarūpam pratipatsyatha  
anytaṃ noktapūrvaṃ me hasatāpi kadācana  
(MBh. 1.209.9–10)*

When you, in the form of crocodiles are grabbing people  
in the water,  
a certain superior man will drag you from the water to  
the land.  
Then all of you will return again to your own form.  
Never before has an untruth been spoken by me, even in  
jest.

Though the brahmin's words were meant to reassure, they fail to comfort the *apsarases*. Wandering dejectedly, they meet the itinerant seer Nārada, who offers them a slightly more specific version of the brahmin's prediction:

*Dakṣiṇe sāgarānūpe pañca tīrthāni santi vai  
 puṇyāni ramaṇīyāni tāni gacchata māciram  
 tatrāsu puruṣavyāghraḥ Pāṇḍavo vo Dhanamjayah  
 mokṣayiṣyati śuddhātmā duḥkhād asmān na saṁśayah  
 (MBh. 1.209.17–18)*

In the marshes of the Southern ocean are five *tīrthas*,  
 holy and charming; go there without delay!  
 There Dhanamjaya Pāṇḍava, that tiger-of-a-man  
 whose soul is pure, will no doubt release you from your  
 sorrow.

The superfluity of prophetic older male figures in the Vargā tale raises a number of questions, and with this point I begin an analysis of the extent and significance of the episodes' similarity to one another.

### **The Relationship Between the Four Episodes**

All four incidents discussed above center on water-dwelling female minor deities, all refer somehow to shape-shifting, and all are concerned with remediation of a curse or vendetta: in three versions it is the hero who suffers from the curse, and a demi-goddess who repairs matters, while in Vargā's tale the roles are reversed.<sup>26</sup> The structures of the incidents are summarized in Figure 1. At two places (as indicated by italics) the chart yields an unexpected result: Ino takes on the prophetic function as well as the helper role in her episode, while the nameless brahmin performs both the curse-inflicting and prophetic functions in Vargā's tale. I argue below that these discrepancies share a common explanation.

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<sup>26</sup>It is worth noting as an aside that "The Resolution of a Curse" is a common story pattern. While no other adventures of Odysseus or the Pāṇḍavas follows this template, it is essentially the structure of the *Odyssey* as a whole, with Poseidon as the grudge-holder, Athena as the helpful goddess, and Teiresias as the foreteller of the resolution.

**Figure 1: The Four Episodes According to Roles and Characters**

| Demi-Goddess:                              | Ino                             | Eidothea                     | Ulūpī                            | Vargā                             |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Hero:                                      | Odysseus                        | Menelaus                     | Arjuna                           | Arjuna                            |
| Curse or Grudge from:                      | Poseidon                        | The Gods                     | Ganga                            | The brahmin                       |
| Curse Resolution Foretold or Explained By: | <i>Ino</i>                      | Proteus                      | Kauravya                         | <i>The brahmin &amp; Narada</i>   |
| Curse Neutralized when:                    | Odysseus swims to safety w/veil | Menelaus performs sacrifices | Arjuna dies and is revived w/gem | Arjuna lifts Vargā from the water |

One manner in which oral narratives are observably re-shaped is through the transference of the actions of male characters to female characters, often resulting in the elimination of the now-superfluous male.<sup>27</sup> Such alterations often increase the interest of a tale by broadening the range of possibilities in the storyline: whereas encounters between males generally lead to conflict, male-female encounters can have a wider array of progressions and outcomes. Ino's story may once have contained a male prophet, quite possibly a father, who was subsequently eliminated in favor of Ino's performance of the role. Similarly, the use of two prophets (the brahmin and Nārada) in the Vargā episode suggests that a two-stage shift may have occurred there: first, with the transference of the curse from hero to *apsaras*, the hero wrestles with the young woman instead of the prophetic male. The narrative advantages of such a substitution are obvious: an audience might well be more delighted with a wrestling match

<sup>27</sup>A straightforward example of this phenomenon comes to us in the "Tale of Cyavana and Sukanyā," whose three variants are found at *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 4.1.5.1–15, *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* III.120-128, and *Mahābhārata* 3.121–125. In all three versions, Princess Sukanyā is given to the ascetic Cyavana in marriage as compensation for an assault on Cyavana's person: in the earlier *Brāhmaṇa* versions, boys in the king's retinue abuse the decrepit Cyavana because he is old and ugly. In the *Mahābhārata*, however, the nature of the assault is substantially altered: rather than being ugly, in this version Cyavana has been sitting in meditation for so long that an anthill has formed around him, covering him entirely. The taunting boys are eliminated and Sukanyā's role is enlarged: when she walks by the mound, she sees a flash of desire from Cyavana's eye, and assuming that a jewel lies concealed there, she pokes at it with a thorn. She is then given to Cyavana in marriage as compensation for poking at his eye.

that leaves the hero with a beautiful young woman in his arms than with one in which he is left holding a damp old man who sleeps with seals. The role of the prophet was then filled not once but twice, with both the brahmin and Nārada, two different solutions being incorporated into the tale during its period of development and change.<sup>28</sup>

If the common features and underlying narrative template shared by the four stories suggest a common origin, what evidence do they offer about their evolution and their Graeco-Aryan predecessor(s)?

It seems reasonable to assume that the presence of paired tales in each epic reflects the distribution of their hypothetical forerunners: i.e., Graeco-Aryan proto-epic material would have contained two tales of benevolent water-dwelling female helpers, featuring, respectively, a magic ornament placed on the chest (Ino and Ulūpī) and the overpowering of a shape-shifter (Eidothea and Vargā). But several of the motifs catalogued in Figure 2 (A, C, E, and J) appear in some form in all four episodes. Furthermore, B and I also represent significant cross-linkage between the tales of Ulūpī and Eidothea. Not only the textual proximity of the paired stories, therefore, but the motif distribution as well supports the idea that all four episodes stem from a common ancestor, though doubtless at some great remove.

It is accordingly possible that proto-epic material contained only one encounter with a water-dwelling shape-shifter and her father, and that that encounter included both a wrestling match and the gift of a magic token. Seeing the pairs of encounters as two halves of a single original explains both their close relationships to one another within the individual epics and the obvious similarities in their construction. Behind the tales of Ino, Eidothea, Ulūpī and Vargā lurks a base character, the helpful, beautiful water-dweller, who functions like the model for a string of paper dolls: the basic outline is easily reproducible, and can be

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<sup>28</sup>A multiform of the Vargā episode supports the hypothesis of the deleted male figure. In several versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* a wrestling match between a bathing Hanūmān and an *apsaras* cursed with crocodile form also forgoes a male prophet, allowing the *apsaras*, once freed, to deliver her vital information about the evil intentions of the demon Kālanemi directly to Hanūmān (See, e.g., *Brahmāṇḍapurāna Adyātma Rāmāyaṇa* 7.22–29, or *Rāmacaritamānasa* 6.57–58), just as Ino tells Odysseus what he must do to escape Poseidon.

adorned and customized with a limitless variety of motif combinations that result in multiple versions of the tale.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 2. Motif Distribution Throughout the Episodes**

|   | Ino/<br>Leukothea    | Eidothea                       | Ulūpī                              | Vargā                                 |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>A. Aquatic Demi-goddess</b>                      | <i>Od.</i> 5.334-335 | <i>Od.</i> 365                 | <i>MBh.</i> 1.206.22               | <i>MBh.</i> 1.208.13                  |
| <b>B. Missed or Interrupted Sacrifice</b>           | —                    | <i>Od.</i> 4.351–353           | <i>MBh.</i> 1.206.12–15            | —                                     |
| <b>C. Rises Up From Water or Earth</b>              | <i>Od.</i> 5.336-338 | <i>Od.</i> 4.425<br>(possible) | <i>MBh.</i> 14.78.8                | <i>MBh.</i> 1.208.10-11<br>(possible) |
| <b>D. Appears, Unsummoned</b>                       | <i>Od.</i> 5.336-338 | <i>Od.</i> 4.363-369           | <i>MBh.</i> 14.78.8                | —                                     |
| <b>E. Shape-Changing</b>                            | <i>Od.</i> 5.336-8   | <i>Od.</i> 4.414-24            | <i>Common among Nāgas</i>          | <i>MBh.</i> 1.208.10-11               |
| <b>F. Wrestling match Followed by Conversation</b>  | —                    | <i>Od.</i> 4.414-24            | <i>MBh.</i> 1.206.13<br>(possible) | <i>MBh.</i> 1.208.10-11               |
| <b>G. Magical Object Applied to the Chest</b>       | <i>Od.</i> 5.345-351 | —                              | <i>MBh.</i> 14.81.2                | —                                     |
| <b>H. Resolution of Curse</b>                       | <i>Od.</i> 5.339-345 | —                              | <i>MBh.</i> 14.82.10-12            | —                                     |
| <b>I. Help from Powerful Father</b>                 | —                    | <i>Od.</i> 4.462-470           | <i>MBh.</i> 14.82.13-23            | —                                     |
| <b>J. Prophecies / Foreknowledge About the Hero</b> | <i>Od.</i> 5.339-345 | <i>Od.</i> 4.472-481           | <i>MBh.</i> 14.82.8-12             | <i>MBh.</i> 1.209.17-18               |

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<sup>29</sup>The hypothesis may also suggest answers to long-standing questions about other Homeric episodes that exhibit high degrees of similarity to one another, e.g., the encounters with Circe and Calypso, whose narrative similarities were first noted by Wilamowitz 1884: 121, or the Phaiacian and Laistrygonian episodes, which begin with a strikingly similar narrative progression (meeting a young woman at a water source; her father is king; she sends them to his high-roofed house; the first contact is with her mother).

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