

BIOGRAPHY OF A HERO

From Lord Raglan's The Hero, New York, 1956:

The Story of the Hero of Tradition

1. His mother is a royal virgin
2. His father is a king, and
3. Often a near relative of his mother, but
4. The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
5. He is reputed to be the son of a god.
6. At birth an attempt is made, often by his father, to kill him, but
7. He is spirited away, and
8. Reared by foster parents in a far country.
9. We are told nothing of his childhood, but
10. On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
11. After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
12. He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
13. Becomes king.
14. For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
15. Prescribes laws, but
16. Later he loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and
17. Is driven from the throne and city.
18. He meets with a mysterious death,
19. Often at the top of a hill,
20. His children, if any, do not succeed him.
21. His body is not buried, but nevertheless
22. He has one or more holy sepulchers.

Oedipus:

His mother Jocasta is (1) a princess, and his father is (2) King Laius, who has sworn to have no connection with her but 940 does so when drunk, probably (5) in the character of Dionysus. Laius (6) tries to kill him, but (7) he is spirited away, and (8) reared by the king of Corinth. (9) We hear nothing of his childhood, but (10) on reaching manhood he returns to Thebes, gaining (11) victories over his father and the Sphinx. He (12) marries Jocasta and (13) becomes king. (14) For some years he reigns uneventfully, but (16) later comes to be regarded as the cause of a plague, and (17) is deposed and driven into exile. He meets with (18) a mysterious death at (19) a place near Athens called the Steep Pavement. (20) He is succeeded by Creon, by whose means he was deposed, and (21) though the place of his burial is uncertain, he has (22) several holy sepulchers.