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On Dragon-Slaying and Undying Fame

The Indo-European language family is well known for its morphological and lexical correspondences, but there is a host of parallels within the mythology and even the text of epic tales that defies coincidence. The tales themselves have changed much throughout time, but their fundamental similarities reveal clues about the lives and rituals of the Indo-Europeans. A tendency toward unusual and poetic language reveals the craft of the ancient poets, and what sort of role wordcraft played in society. Indeed, whole phrases like “undying fame,” constructions about slaying dragons, and a clear obsession with overcoming death recur in the telling of tales from multiple Indo-European cultures.