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What was the Greek Hyacinth?

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a tolerable sense. Here again, as so often, marriage lands us in difficulties! I am inclined to think that the original word may have been the comparatively rare *γαμικειν*, for which cp. Arist. *Pol.* 4. 1335^a20.

802B *ὅτι δ' ἂν ἐνδεὲς . . . τὸ δ' ἐπαυερόμενον ἐπιρρυθμίζειν*. Of the emendations recorded by Burnet, Ast's *ἐπαυερθούμενον* seems the most attractive; but in view of *ἐνδεὲς* it may be worth while to consider whether it is not more probable that the original was *τὸ δὲ πληρούμενον*. For *αν=λη* see Burnet's footnote to 780b 6; cp. also *Gorg.* 496E.

IX. 864A *τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἀρίστου δόξαν, ὅπῃ περ ἂν ἔσεσθαι τούτων ἡγήσωνται κτλ.* What is to be made of *τούτων*? What sense has it or what construction? We might content ourselves with Hermann's *τοῦτό γ'* if only *ἔσεσθαι* did not sound so inept and weak. The truth only dawns on us when we read on some fifteen lines and light on the words *καὶ δόξης τῆς ἀληθοῦς περὶ τὸ ἀρίστον ἔφασκεν*. The inference is, surely, irresistible that *ἔσεσθαι τούτων* has usurped the room of *ἐφασθαι τούτων*.

January, 1921.

R. G. BURY.

WHAT WAS THE GREEK HYACINTH?

*rubefactaque sanguine tellus
purpureum viridi genuit de caespite florem,
qui prius Oebalio fuerat de vulnere natus,
littera communis mediis pueroque viroque
inscripta est foliis, haec nominis, illa querellae.*

WHENEVER this question arises, the names of four flowers are brought forward — Iris, Corn-flag, Martagon Lily, and *Delphinium Ajacis*. Some are even bold enough to bring forward Linnæus' genus *Hyacinth*, though he himself never claimed to get nearer than *Hyacinthus non scriptus*—a contradiction in terms.

A new claimant to the honour of the name of Hyacinth has a difficult task, that of gaining a hearing from two classes of judges—the botanists who have forgotten their classics, and the classical scholars who never knew any botany.

Both classes will surely agree that 'the discovery of some plant with marks which can be taken for the Greek letters AI generated the myth of the youth Hyacinthus.' We have such a flower at our doors almost; let the Oxford Fritillaries speak for themselves in May. Even Persephone herself, were she to visit the Christchurch meadows, would think the flowers her own, so like are they to their Southern kindred.

The chequering found in the *F. Mele-*

agris type of Fritillaries is in the form of square spots all over, or partially over the flower-leaves; they are kept in line between the parallel veins, and have a general likeness to square writing on papyrus: it is not difficult to trace in it the letters required.

Is there any other flower of so woe-begone an aspect! In some counties it is called Weeping Widow, for six drops of nectar hang, like tear-drops, inside the pensive bell. The colours of the Southern forms are of an even more sombre shade than ours. There is generally but one flower on each plant, and it is but of short duration, soon scorched and withered by the hot sun—an obvious type of untimely death. Finally, the dull red, as of bloodshed, suggests death by violence.

The character of colour, though elusive, is next in importance to that of markings. To quote from the late Professor R. S. Poole: 'The colour of the flower hyacinth is determined by that of the jacynth, one of the few precious stones of the ancients which can be determined beyond doubt.' The colours of the gem¹ are orange-red, brown and purple: the true colour of the Oriental jacinth was that of the Tyrian dye yielded by the murex, *πορφύρα*, described as of the colour of clotted blood. The colour of the flower and the gem alike is described as *πορφύρεος*. The classic gems in the British Museum labelled jacinth vary in colour from a dark opaque brown to various shades of deep red; some show a flame-like gleam, some have a deep ruby tint.

It may now be well to clear the way to the botanical aspect of the question by giving a list of species, a selection from the fine collection of Fritillaries in the Kew Herbarium; the geographical distribution is copied from it and from standard Floras of the regions in question. They are all of the *Meleagris* type; with few exceptions, the flowers are solitary:

F. Messanensis, purple, very distinct lines and squares. Laconia, Crete, Italy, Sicily.

F. Acropetala, wine purple, 'a compromise between *F. Meleagris* and *F. pyrenaica*.' Asia Minor, Syria, Lycia.

¹ The jacinth contains 70 per cent. of zircon.

F. pyrenaica, dark purple-brown, with chequered varieties.

F. pyrenaica var. *nigra*. From the Pyrenees to Greece, Peloponnese.

F. pyrenaica var. *Graeca* (Sibthorp's plant was found on Parnassus; the figure shows a poor specimen, not like the *Graeca* of the Herbarium).

F. tenella, purple, very distinct 'letters.' Albania, Montenegro, Zacynthus, Apennines.

Most of them affect mountain stations. Compare Sappho's ἐν οὐρεσι.

Species are linked by varieties in a bewildering way, and the chequering obstinately recurs.

It should be observed that the mention of a locality does not exclude all others. Turkish rule has not made things easy for the scientific explorer.

Daremberg and Saglio, under *Hyacinthia*, say that the flower did not seem to have any place in the games; also that the games were introduced into Greece from abroad.

Some such account as the following would include the requirements of the case, and would keep within the bounds of probability: 'A flower of melancholy aspect, blood-red in colour, and apparently covered with writing, gave rise to a story of early death by violence, somewhat on the lines of the Adonis legend, and like it, possibly of Semitic origin' (Deimling's view of the *Hyacinth* legend). As it came westward to Greece proper, and then to Italy, the successive poets who handed it on might either just accept the flower as part of the scene, or they may have identified it with some flower in their own country which had the necessary marks. The species and varieties of *Fritillaria* with their intermediates, stretching in geographical area from Syria to the Pyrenees (not necessarily in abundance), lend themselves to the latter supposition. It would be an extreme view of classical colour-blindness to consider that the poets meant blue by the terms *suave rubens*, *ferrugineus*, and *πορφύρεος*.

CONSTANCE GARLICK.

ZEUS MEILICHIOS, ZEUS AGAMEMNON, AND ZANES.

THERE is a curious and supposedly corrupt passage in Macrobius which I

believe to be quite possibly sound, and to throw a ray of light on an obscure point in Greek terminology. It runs thus:¹ *ueteres autem nullum animal sacrum in finibus suis esse patiebantur, sed abigebant ad fines deorum, quibus sacrum esset, animas uero sacratorum hominum, quos zanas Graeci uocant, dis debitas aestimabant.* Although the subject under discussion is purely Roman—the meaning of *sacer*—the 'ancients' here named are at least as much Greek as Latin; for the sacred animals cf. e.g. Aesch. *P.V.* 666. The difficulty lies in the word *zanas*, which Eyssenhardt marks corrupt, and various scholars have tried to emend, with poor success, to judge by the attempts known to me. Can anything be made out of the word as it stands, assuming it to be what it looks like, the plural of Zeus?

Certainly it does not mean that the Greeks thought the souls of *sacrati homines* (? *φαρμακοί*) to be replicas of the great sky-god. Nothing is clearer, so far as normal Greek worship is concerned, than that Zeus is Olympian and nothing but Olympian—a god of the living, and not of the dead. This visible world is the 'realm of Zeus,' and it is a more or less vague 'someone else' who looks after the departed.² A bold poet of religious genius³ may call him 'another Zeus,' and a late syncretiser⁴ declare, that the two are one; but for the normal man in classical times, *χωρὶς ἡ τιμὴ θεῶν*.

But the very greatness and majesty of Zeus, lifting him high above the realm of departmental gods such as Ares, gave him a certain vagueness which some of the best minds of Greece turned to high account. For just as to the great writers of Hebrew the name Yahweh, from being the appellation of a tribal god on a par with Chemosh or Rimmon, came to signify the One God of their lofty faith, so to monotheistic Greeks the name of Zeus became almost a synonym for God, and St. Paul found

¹ *Sat.* III. 7/6.

² Pind. *Ol.* II. 64 ff., τὰ δ' ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχῇ | ἀλιτρά κατὰ γὰρ δικάζει τις ἐχθρῇ | λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκη.

³ Aesch. *Supp.* 231, Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν.

⁴ 'Orpheus,' *ap. Macr.* I. 18/18; oracle, *ibid.* 20.