

M. ELEANOR IRWIN

THE STORY OF ODYSSEUS' ARRIVAL in Phaeacia and his meeting with Nausicaa is well known. Exhausted by the shipwreck of his raft and battered against the rocks in his struggle to reach land, Odysseus fell asleep at the mouth of a river and wakened to the sound of girls' voices. He emerged from the bushes, naked except for the branch he held before him and caked with salt.

His famous eloquence did not desert him. The princess was charmed by his courtly speech and gave her suppliant clothing and olive oil for bathing. But more than clean clothes and a bath were needed to bring about Odysseus' homecoming in a Phaeacian ship. His patron goddess Athena, daughter of Zeus, made him

μείζονά τ' εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα, καὶ δὲ κάρητος
οὖλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας.
ὥς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνήρ
ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδασεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει,
ὥς ἄρα τῷ κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις.¹ Od. 6.230–235

Nausicaa, who had been preoccupied with the idea of marriage, was amazed at the transformation and immediately (244) began to think of this handsome stranger as a possible suitor. Athena's beauty treatment was repeated in Book 23, when Odysseus had returned at last to kingdom and wife; there, after slaughtering the suitors, he appeared before Penelope (a far less susceptible woman than Nausicaa) bathed, in fine apparel, with youth restored.

The phrase ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας, "like the hyacinth" has been taken either as epexegetic of οὖλας, "curled" like the petals of the hyacinth, or as a colour term, "dark" like the hyacinth. Eustathius thought that "black" (μελαίνας) was the most likely meaning.² English poets followed this interpretation and adopted "hyacinthine hair" as a synonym for "black

This paper was read at a meeting of the Classical Association of Canada, Laval University, May 27, 1989.

¹Repeated in *Od.* 23.157–162. The preceding line *Od.* 23.156 differs from *Od.* 6.129 and offers an awkward transition to line 157. For this reason, some editors reject 157–162, others 157–158 only. Cf. W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*² (London 1958) 2.396–397.

²Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 1–2 (Leipzig 1825, reprinted Hildesheim 1960) 251. The meaning "black" is supported by lexicographers who define ὑακινθίνον, "hyacinthine," as "somewhat black" ὑπομελανίζον, as well as "purplish" πορφυρίζον: M. Schmidt (post J. Albert, ed.), *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon* 4 (Jena 1862) 190 s.v. ὑακινθίνον; A. Adler (ed.), *Suidae Lexicon* (Leipzig 1935) 4.631 s.v. ὑακινθίνον;

hair." Thomas Hobbes, in his 1677 translation of the *Odyssey*, had Athena remove the grey from Odysseus' hair:

From his hair the colour grey she took
And made it like the hyacinthine flower.

Hobbes's quite different translation of the repeated passage in *Odyssey* 23 demonstrates that he took "hyacinthine" as black:

Taller and greater Pallas made him had
And varnishéd with black his curléd head.³

Milton, whose native air was classical literature, imitated the description in *Paradise Lost* when he portrayed Adam, "the goodliest man of men since born" in this way (*Paradise Lost* 4.301-303):

hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering.

It has been suggested that Milton, whose own dark hair "hung clustering," made Adam in his own likeness, while Eve with feminine golden tendrils resembled his wife.⁴

In English, apart from this poetic use, "hyacinthine" describes two unlike colours: the purplish blue of the hyacinth flower (the more common meaning) or the reddish-orange of the hyacinth gem.⁵ In Greek, too, a flower and a precious stone bear the name hyacinth. The identity of the flower will be discussed later in the paper; the stone, mentioned in late sources, may have been aquamarine or sapphire.⁶ The Greek adjectives, ὑακίνθινος and compounds in ὑακινθ-, usually described a colour produced by dye, one of

R. Porson (ed.), *Photii Lexicon* (Leipzig 1823) 392, 28; J. A. H. Tittmann (ed.), *Joannes Zonaras Lexicon* (Amsterdam 1967) 1759.

³T. Hobbes, *Odyssey* 23.148-149. Alexander Pope, *Odyssey* 6.274, probably takes hyacinthine as colour in "His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls," while William Cowper, *Odyssey* 6.286, emphasizes the shape in "His curling locks like hyacinthine flowers." Cf. Canticles 7:5b where a literal rendering of the Hebrew "the locks of your head like purple" (LXX καὶ πλόκιον κεφαλῆς σου ὡς πορφύρα) has been interpreted differently by translators, e.g., "the flowing hair on your head is lustrous black" (*New English Bible*) and "your hair is like royal tapestry" (*New International Version*).

⁴The suggestion comes from Thomas Newton (ed.), *Paradise Lost* 1 (London 1757) 301-303. For another imitation, cf. James Russell Lowell, "Agassiz," in *Poems* (Boston and New York 1890) 4.112: "He, too, is there, / ... Shaking with burly mirth his hyacinthine hair, / Our hearty Grecian of Homeric ways."

⁵*OED* s.v. hyacinth 2d "a purplish blue colour resembling that of a common variety of the flower"; s.v. hyacinthine: "of the colour of a hyacinth (either the gem or the flower)." The gem, hyacinth or jacinth (1b), is a reddish-orange variety of zircon as well as varieties of garnet and topaz of a similar colour.

⁶Aquamarine: LSJ s.v. ὑακινθος II; sapphire: *OED* and D. E. Eichholz, *Pliny: Natural History* (London and Cambridge, Mass. 1962) 266, on 37.125. In Rev. 21:20, it is

the famous purples of antiquity,⁷ said to be a purple with more blue content than πορφύρεος.⁸

In one case, however, ὑακίνθινον was not produced by dye, but described the egg from which the twins Castor and Polydeuces were born, apparently purple, rather than the usual white egg laid by a swan. According to Sappho (166 L-P) φαῖσι δὴ ποτα Λήδαν ἱακίνθινον† πεπυκάδμενον / εὖρην ὦιον.⁹

In another poem (105c L-P), Sappho gave the hyacinth a πόρφυρον flower:

οἶαν τὰν ὑακίνθον ἐν ὥρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες
πόσσι καταστειβοῖσι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος . . .¹⁰

With colour defined by the flower and the dye, how is it that Homer's comparison of Odysseus' hair to a purple flower was so readily taken to mean "dark"?¹¹

Greek colour terminology is difficult to appreciate.¹² For the early Greek poets, value—relative darkness or lightness—made a stronger impression than hue, particularly in dark-coloured objects. Blood, wine, leaves of trees are at various times described as μέλας rather than red or green. At the same time, κυάνεος, later "blue," describes objects that we would not call

one of the foundation stones in the New Jerusalem; in Rev. 9:17, riders' breastplates of fiery-red, ὑακίνθινος, and sulphur-yellow correspond to the fire, smoke, and sulphur emitted from the horses' mouths.

⁷Found in the company of πορφύρεος; cf. Abradatas, king of Susa, in "a purple (πορφυροῦν) tunic hanging in folds down to his feet and a helmet plume dyed hyacinthine (ὑακίνθινοβαφῆ)," Xenophon *Cyr.* 6.4.2; Aristobulus in Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 6.29.6: στολαὶ ὑακίνθινοβαφεῖς with (other) purple clothing in the tomb of Cyrus; three dyes for tabernacle hangings and priestly robes in Jewish religion, Exodus 28 *passim*, 2 Chr. 2:6, 13: ὑακίνθος, πορφύρεος, κόκκινος.

⁸According to Irving Ziderman, "First Identification of Authentic *Tekelet*," *BASOR* 265 (1967) 25–33, *tekelet* (translated by ὑακίνθος, Exodus 28 *passim*, 2 Chr. 2:6, 13 LXX) is produced from *Trunculariopsis trunculus* and contains indigotin as well as 6,6'-dibromoindigotin (the dye from *Bolinus* [Murex] *brandaris* and *Thais* [Purpura] *haemastoma*). This additional indigotin accounts for the bluer appearance. I am grateful to Prof. T. R. Hobbs of McMaster University for bringing this article to my attention.

⁹The reading ὑακίνθινον (not attested by all sources which preserve the fragment) is accepted by D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric* (Cambridge, Mass. 1982, Loeb Classical Library) 1.170; for variant readings and sources cf. E. Lobel and D. L. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta* (Oxford 1955) 100.

¹⁰Other colour descriptions of the hyacinth: *suave rubens*, Verg. *Ecl.* 3.63; *ferrugineos*, G. 4.183; *purpureus* and *Tyrio nitentior ostro*, Ovid *Met.* 10.211 f.; and *purpureum*, *Met.* 13.394–395. Cf. further J. Sargeant, *Trees, Plants and Shrubs of Virgil* (Oxford 1920) 58–59; R. J. Edgeworth, "The Purple Flower Image in the *Aeneid*," *Philologus* 127 (1983) 143–148, at 146, n. 11.

¹¹Cf. [Aristotle] *Col.* 799b2–5 for purple hair not occurring naturally; for purple hair in myth, cf. H. L. Lorimer, "Gold and Ivory in Greek Mythology," in *Greek Poetry and Life: Essays Presented to Gilbert Murray* (Oxford 1936) 21, n. 1. See also above, n. 3.

¹²For a discussion of Greek colour terms, cf. M. E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto 1974), esp. 27–30.

blue: dark hair, dark eyes, the mane of a horse. Among these troublesome colour terms are some which incorporate the name of the violet, describing in epic objects that are dark rather than purple or blue, e.g., "fleece as dark as violets" or the "violet-like sea."¹³

English practice names colours after flowers: lily-white, poppy-coloured, rose, violet, lilac, gentian. It is tempting to assume that the Greek poets also used flower epithets for colours and to take, for example, λειριόεις as "white like a lily" and ροδόεις as "rose-coloured." In fact, these and other flower comparisons are not to be limited to colour but may refer to a shared or derived quality of texture, sound, or fragrance.¹⁴ λειριόεις describes fine-textured skin (*Il.* 13.830), the clear, high sound of insects (*Il.* 3.152), and the voice of the Muses (*Hes. Th.* 41);¹⁵ ροδόεις describes oil "with the fragrance of roses" (*Il.* 23.186).¹⁶

Eustathius was presumably relying on such colour usages as "violet-dark" when he interpreted "hair like a hyacinth" as "dark." He could excuse the difference in colour between the flower and any hair ever seen by calling to mind the "wine-dark" sea.¹⁷ But a second problem presented itself: how to reconcile Odysseus' "hyacinthine-dark" hair with his blondness in a later description (*Odyssey* 13.431). Not only do we have an explicit reference to Odysseus' blond hair in *Odyssey* 13, but Homeric Greek heroes in general are blond.¹⁸ It is no answer, under these circumstances, to assume a forgetful poet and sigh *quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*.

A different explanation of ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίως refers it to the shape of Odysseus' hair "curled like the hyacinth," a comment on οὐλας, "curled," with which the line begins.¹⁹ Eustathius (251) offers it as an alternative to "black":

¹³ ἰοδνεφής, *Od.* 4.135 (Helen's wool), 9.426 (Cyclops' rams); ἰοειδής, 5.56 (the sea). This must be Theophrastus' μέλαν ἴον, so named to distinguish it from the "white" violet, λευκὸν ἴον, Theophrastus, *Hist. Pl.* 6.6.7.

¹⁴ Cf. W. B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford 1936) 47–62, on synaesthesia. Clothing is "dyed" in flowers to absorb their fragrance not their colours; cf. *Cypria* fr. 4.2 ἔβαψαν ἐν ἄνθεσιν εἰαρνοῖσι, fr. 4.8 τεθωμμένα εἴματα (Allen).

¹⁵ For further examples, cf. Irwin (above, n. 12) 205–213.

¹⁶ This interpretation is supported by mention of oils perfumed with rose, cyperus, and sage in Linear B tablets: M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*² (Cambridge 1973) 476–477, 481–482.

¹⁷ ἐνὶ οἴνῳι πόντῳ "on the wine-dark sea" (*Od.* 5.132) is often quoted to exemplify the difficulties posed by Homeric colour vocabulary. "Wine-like" may be a description of surface brightness, a dark liquid glinting in the brightness of the sun.

¹⁸ Cf. A. S. Pease (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber quartus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1935) 471–473.

¹⁹ So Stanford (above, n. 1) 1.316–317. On οὐλος, "woolly, close-curled," from *ὄλως connected with *lana* and "wool," cf. Stanford 2.325 (on *Od.* 19.225). Cf. οὐλόθριξ, "curly-haired." The scholiast, W. Dindorf (ed.), *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Odysseam* (Oxford

Or the comparison of hair to the hyacinth is not made in respect of blackness but of its curl, that is to say "curly-haired," indicating that Odysseus is handsome by nature, and this change makes him more handsome.

Two of the physical characteristics Athena gave Odysseus when she beautified him were (in this passage) curly hair (οὔλας . . . κόμας) and (in 16.175) dark skin (μελαγχροῖς). These, as it happens, are also characteristics of Odysseus' herald Eurybates, who was "round-shouldered, dark-skinned and curly-haired" (γυρὸς ἐν ὤμοισιν, μελανόχροος, οὐλοκάρηνος,²⁰ *Od.* 19.246).

In this line, the disguised Odysseus paints a vivid picture for Penelope of a man of memorable and individual appearance, his purpose being to persuade her, by these and other details, to believe his fabricated story. His stooped shoulders suggest that Eurybates was not an imposing figure; Ther-sites, the ugliest man who came to Troy, had "his two shoulders hunched, cramped on to his chest" (*Il.* 2.217-218). Odysseus, as Helen on the walls of Troy points him out to Priam, is broad-shouldered (*Il.* 3.194).

Dark skin is a mark of beauty in men; it makes a manly contrast with the idealized whiteness of women's skin, particularly their arms. Yet, in later writers, dark skin, like curly hair, distinguishes non-Greeks—Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Colchians—from Greeks.²¹ The gradations in dark skin from the deep pigmentation of Ethiopians to the healthy colour of the hero who performs his deeds under the sun are embraced under one term, μέλας. Similarly, the kinky hair of a Colchian and Odysseus' looser curls are encompassed under οὔλος. Foreigners are contrasted with Greeks in these details, while Odysseus is contrasted with what he was formerly. In the case of Eurybates, a contrast is certainly implied with Odysseus; Eurybates has curlier hair and darker skin than his master, and probably than most of his fellow Ithacans. We are not to take him as ugly (for neither dark skin nor curly hair is an ugly feature); even his round shoulders may be no more than an indication that he is not a warrior. Neither is he necessarily foreign in appearance.²²

It was no accident that Athena's intervention on Phaeacia made Odysseus "taller and broader." For the Greeks, height was essential for beauty—a

1855) 313, gives two explanations: a reference to the twisting of the hair or (comparing ὅλος "whole") to (a return to) health.

²⁰ Although the epithets are not identical in the descriptions of Odysseus and Eurybates, they are substantially the same. μελανόχροος and μελαγχροῖς both combine μέλας and χρώς; οὐλοκάρηνος combines οὔλος and κάρα "head."

²¹ Irwin (above, n. 12) 112-126 on white and dark skin, with references. Ethiopians (in Libya, *Hdt.* 7.70.1), Egyptians, and Colchians (*Hdt.* 2.104.2) have curly hair and dark skin. On curly and straight hair, cf. Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 782b33-35.

²² As F. E. Wallace, *Color in Homer and in Ancient Art* (Northampton, Mass. 1927, Smith College Classical Studies 9) 20 argues.

mark by which a deity might be known. Nausicaa stood head and shoulders above her companions, like the goddess Artemis among her nymphs (6.101–109).²³ Breadth in shoulders implies strength in a military leader; in a nice balance of height and breadth, the poet of the *Iliad* makes Odysseus shorter than Agamemnon, his commander in chief, but broader in the shoulders and chest (*Il.* 3.194).

Athena also changed the appearance of Odysseus' hair. By the colour and length of hair and the way it is worn, the Greek poets depicted youth or age, beauty or ugliness, nobility or baseness. It has been suggested that Greeks preferred to make their heroes blond, though the motivation for it and its significance is debated, some arguing that the Greeks were blond and made their heroes like themselves, others that they were dark and made their heroes different.²⁴ Among the Greeks at Troy, Achilles, Menelaus, and Odysseus are blond and no Greek is said to be dark-haired, while Trojan Hector is dark-haired and no Trojan is said to be blond.²⁵ But there cannot have been a higher value placed on blondness; for, on Olympus, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hera are dark.²⁶ Beautiful women and beloved boys are usually blond,²⁷ and occasionally brunette,²⁸ but, far more important, once the hair of a lover has gone white or grey, sexual partners cannot be expected to respond.²⁹

Thick, luxuriant hair marked both Greeks and Trojans. The formula *κάρη κομόωντες* "long-haired" is applied to the Greeks at Troy and on Ithaca and it is reasonable to assume that Odysseus resembled his countrymen in

²³ Aristotle (*EN* 1123b7) says height is a prerequisite for beauty. Cf. further Stanford (above, n. 1) 1.312; A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford 1973) 508, with further references. On the Parthenon frieze seated gods and goddesses occupy the same vertical space as standing human beings.

²⁴ For references on both sides of this argument, cf. Pease (above, n. 18) 473.

²⁵ Achilles, *Il.* 1.197; Menelaus, *Od.* 1.285; so also Rhadamanthys, *Od.* 4.564, 7.323; Odysseus, *Od.* 13.398, 431; Hector, *Il.* 22.401–403.

²⁶ Zeus, *Il.* 1.528; Poseidon *καταρχαίτης*, *Il.* 13.563, etc.; Hera, *Il.* 15.102–103. In later authors certain deities are blond: Athena, Pindar *Nem.* 10.7; Apollo, Pindar *Ol.* 6.41; Demeter, *Hym. Hom. Dem.* 279, 302. Dionysus is at times dark like his father, *Hym. Hom.* 7.4–5, and at other times blond, Hes. *Th.* 947.

²⁷ E.g., Helen, Sappho 23.5 L-P; Ariadne, Hes. *Th.* 947; Sappho's daughter, Sappho 98 (a) 6–7; cf. 132 L-P "a daughter like golden flowers." T. G. Rosenmeyer, "Alcman's Partheneion 1 Reconsidered," *GRBS* 7 (1966) 321–337, esp. 337, 353, says with respect to Hagesichora whose "hair blooms like pure gold" (lines 53–54) and the girl with blond hair (Agido) in line 101 "all girls in archaic poetry are blondes."

²⁸ Some would take *ισπλόκαμος*, a common epithet of women and goddesses, as "dark-haired" but it is perhaps better "with violets twisted in the hair." Lycus, the beloved of Alcaeus, was dark: *nigris oculis nigroque crine decorum*, Horace *Odes* 1.32.10 ff. (Alcaeus 430 L-P).

²⁹ For the white-haired rejected as a lover, cf. Anacreon 358.6–7 (and 395.2) *PMG*; change from black to white hair a sign of age, Anacreon 420 *PMG*; Sappho 58.13–14 L-P; Soph. *Antigone* 1092–1093. Cf. Irwin (above, n. 12) 194–196.

this respect.³⁰ Achilles had hair long enough for Athena to tug when she wanted to restrain him from threatening Agamemnon (*Il.* 1.197).³¹ Trojans, too, had long hair: Hector's hair "spread round and all his head, formerly graceful, lay in the dust" as his body was dragged behind Achilles' chariot (*Il.* 22.401-402);³² Paris was like a horse "who held his head high and his mane streamed round his shoulders" (*Il.* 6.509-510). A similar picture is suggested by Poseidon's epithet "dark-maned," κυανοχαίτης (*Il.* 13.563), which evokes an image of a god whose hair flowed free like a horse's mane.³³ Zeus also had long hair; he nodded and

ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαίται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτου· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον. *Il.* 1.529-530

Dionysus' beautiful, dark hair "waved round him": περισσεύοντο (*Hym. Hom.* 7.4-5). Apollo's hair is unshorn, ἀκερσεκόμης, a description which had its influence in artistic representations of the god (*Il.* 20.39).³⁴

In contrast to these full heads of hair, the ugly Thersites has λάχνη, a fine fuzz, on his head, and even this is sparse, ψεδνή:

πολλὸς ἔην, χαλὸς δ' ἕτερον πόδα· τὸ δέ οἱ ὦμα
κυρτῷ, ἐπὶ στήθος συνοχωκότε· αὐτὰρ ὕπερθε
φοξὸς ἔην κεφαλὴν, ψεδνή δ' ἐπενήνοθε λάχνη.³⁵ *Il.* 2.217-219

If Thersites was the ugliest of the Greeks at Troy, Euphorbus who had "hair like the Graces, braids bound tightly with gold and silver" (*Il.* 17.51-52) must have been one of the handsomest Trojans:³⁶ κόμαι Χαρίτεσσιν

³⁰ *Od.* 1.90 and many other references; cf. Stanford (above, n. 1) 1.216-217; *Il.* 3.43 and G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* (Cambridge 1985) 1.271-272. For other styles, cf. two contingents in the Greek camp with unusual hair styles, the Abantes from Euboea with hair long at the back, ὄπισθεν κομῶντες (*Il.* 2.542) and the Thracians with a topknot, ἀκρόκομοι (*Il.* 4.533).

³¹ Achilles had intended to devote his hair to the river god Spercheios on his safe return from Troy but instead laid it on Patroclus' funeral pyre, *Il.* 23.141.

³² On Hector's hair, cf. R. G. Austin (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber secundus* (Oxford 1961) 131-132, on 2.277: the tonsura named for Hector which was worn by bridegrooms was short in front and long behind.

³³ For a horse κυανοχαίτης, cf. *Il.* 20.224.

³⁴ For Apollo with long hair in art, cf. L. R. Farnell, "Ideal Types of Apollo," *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford 1907) 4, ch. 7, esp. 333, 337; Richard Carson, *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years* (London 1965) 55 fig. 8, 61 pl. 13; Aristaeus, son of Apollo, is βαθυχαίτης, *Hes. Th.* 977.

³⁵ λάχνη, first beard, therefore fine growth, *Od.* 11.320. On Thersites' ugliness, cf. his conversation with Nireus in the underworld, *Lucian Dial. Mort.* 25.1. Baldness as a reproach, 2 Kings 2:23 of the prophet Elisha. The verb ἐπενήνοθε may be a compound from ἀνθέω, see below, n. 55.

³⁶ Spiral hair ornaments have been found in Bronze Age graves; R. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery*² (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1980) 48, 51-52, 55, 58, 62, 74, 86. Trojan clothing and hair appeared foreign and effeminate to the Italians; cf. Vergil

ὁμοῖαι / πλοχμοὶ θ', οἳ χρυσῷ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἐσφίκωντο. Euphorbus' curls or braids are not paralleled among Greek warriors at Troy, though the sixth-century Samian poet Asius describes his countrymen as having hair which "waved in golden bonds in the wind," worn long with golden fastenings.³⁷

While gods and men leave their hair free, women and goddesses in epic normally cover their hair when they are out-of-doors or in the presence of strangers, though they may take off the covering to give them freedom of movement.³⁸ Nausicaa's companions, who removed their head-coverings when they played ball, are frequently described in Book 6 as ἐυπλόκαμοι, "with beautiful braids or ringlets."³⁹ The effect of this epithet may be compared to λευκώλενος, "white-armed," which idealized feminine beauty by indicating that the woman or goddess so described lived a protected life and did not toil in the sun like a peasant or a slave. Although Nausicaa and her companions spent the day outdoors doing the family washing, they remained "white-armed." Although they played a vigorous game of "catch," their beautiful ringlets were in no way dishevelled by the day's activities.

The component -πλοκαμος in the epithet ἐυπλόκαμοι is derived from πλέκω, "weave" or "twist," suggesting hair beautifully styled. Such a hair-style was part of Hera's careful preparation—πλοκάμους ἐπλεξε φαεινούς—for distracting Zeus from his oversight of the battle:

ιδὲ χαίτας
πεξαμένη, χερσὶ πλοκάμους ἐπλεξε φαεινοῦς
καλοὺς ἀμβροσίους ἐκ κράατος ἀθανάτοιο.

II. 14.175-177

Long hair continued to be a glory to women, though, from the sixth century, most Greek men began to wear shorter hair.⁴⁰ Long hair signified that the wearer was free and in good health, was not in mourning, and

Aeneid 4.215 ff. (esp. Aeneas' *crinem . . . madentem*), and R. G. Austin (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis liber quartus* (Oxford 1955/66) on the passage, 78-79. I wish to thank my colleague Prof. I. R. McDonald for bringing this to my attention.

³⁷ Athenaeus 12.525 f. = Asius fr. 13, G. Kinkel (ed.), *Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (1877) 206; Athenaeus (525e) mentions the proverb "to go to the temple of Hera with braided hair" βαδίζειν εἰς Ἡραῖον ἐμπεπλεγμένον, presumably, in the context, of men.

³⁸ Cf. H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London 1950) 385 ff.; E. B. Abraham, *Greek Dress* (London 1908) 34 f.; N. J. Richardson (ed.), *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 201, on unbound hair as a feature of the cult of Demeter at Eleusis.

³⁹ Nausicaa's companions, *Od.* 6.135, 198, 222, 238. Stanford (above, n. 1) 1.216-217 distinguishes between this epithet and ἡύκομος (Leto, *II.* 1.36; Helen, *II.* 3.329) and translates the latter "with beautiful hair."

⁴⁰ The apostle Paul expressed his views on women, men, and hair length, in 1 Cor. 11:5-7, 14-15. For long, thick hair as a mark of male beauty (and vanity) in Jewish culture of about 1000 B.C., cf. Absalom, 2 Sam. 14:25-26; 18:10.

had not behaved shamefully.⁴¹ Long hair and elaborate hair-styles were the prerogative of the aristocratic woman who had attendants to care for her hair and do the housework. The mare-woman of Semonides (7.57-70 *IEG*) whom only a king could afford to marry does not like to clean house, but keeps her long hair combed and wreathed with flowers.⁴²

The reasons which made long hair a symbol of women's status were valid for warriors in the age of heroes; their long hair was an outward and visible sign of their aristocratic birth. Even after the heroic age, warriors wore their hair long. The aristocratic Spartan hoplites were proud of their hair and were seen combing it on the eve of the battle of Thermopylae (*Hdt.* 7.208).⁴³ For some, long hair proved to be a hazard in battle and we hear of warriors who wore their hair long in the back but short in the front; this avoided giving a hand-hold to the enemy when they were facing them, and discouraged them from turning their backs on their enemies.⁴⁴

Odysseus' hair figures in two further transformations in the *Odyssey*. Athena, in Book 13, disguises him as a beggar to allow him undetected access to his palace, making him look older by "destroying his blond hair" (ξανθὰς δ' ἐκ κεφαλῆς ὄλεσε τρίχας, 431). Whether he became grey or bald we are left to supply.⁴⁵ Then, to complete the disguise, she gave him rags to wear. She reversed the procedure in Book 16, when Odysseus was to be revealed to his son Telemachus. She provided him with a clean cloak and tunic, and then

δέμας δ' ὄφελλε καὶ ἥβην.
 ἄν δὲ μελαγχροῖς γένετο, γναθμοὶ δὲ τάνυσθεν,
 κυάνεαι δ' ἐγένοντο γενειάδες ἀμφὶ γένειον. *Od.* 16.174-176

There is an apparent inconsistency between Odysseus' blond hair (ξανθὰς ... κεφαλῆς ... τρίχας) in Book 13 and his dark beard (κυάνεαι ... γενειάδες) in Book 16. Some have seen a poet who forgot here how he had previously described Odysseus; others a hero with an unusual combination of blond

⁴¹Hair of slaves: cf. R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge 1951) 479, referring to *Ar. Birds* 911 and scholia. Hair loss from sickness: Theocritus 2.88, a girl more yellow than θάψος, with hair falling out, all skin and bones, for love of a young man. Mourners cutting their hair: *Isaeus* 4.7. Shame: cf. Gomme and Sandbach (above, n. 23) 468 on Menander's *Perikeiromene* "The woman whose hair was cut off" in a jealous rage. At Sparta women's hair was cut short at marriage, a practice which kept them in seclusion until it grew long again, *Plut. Lyc.* 15.

⁴²Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, *Females of the Species* (London 1975) 78-81.

⁴³The origin of the practice is traced to their defeat of Argives, *Hdt.* 1.82; cf. *Xen. Pol. Lac.* 11.3, 13.8. For wearing hair long as "laconizing" see *Ar. Birds* 1281-82.

⁴⁴As, e.g., *Abantes*, *Il.* 2.542. Archemachus in *Strabo* 10.465 mentions the hazards of long hair to warriors.

⁴⁵"Bald," *Stanford* (above, n. 1) 2.213. Ageing is marked by both thinning and greying of the hair; cf. M. L. Ryder, *Hair* (London 1973, *Studies in Biology* 41) 4-5. Athena's intention was announced earlier, *Od.* 13.399-401.

hair and a blue-black beard. It is simpler to take *κυάνεα* as predicative, "his beard grew dark," a contrast either to the chin on which the beard is growing or, more likely, to the greyness of the beggar's beard.⁴⁶ In this connection, the simile in Book 6, in which Athena's intervention is compared to a craftsman pouring gold on silver, seems more suitable to a golden-haired hero than to one with dark hair.

We have drawn a portrait of Odysseus with long, thick, blond hair, a vigorous, handsome warrior. *ὑάκινθος*, the flower to which his hair is compared, is thought because of the element *-vθ-* to be, like some other flower names, a pre-Greek word.⁴⁷ The hyacinth in myth, though not in Homer, commemorates either the death of Hyacinthos, whom Apollo loved and killed accidentally with a quoit or the death of Aias, "the best of the Greeks at Troy after Achilles," who committed suicide when he failed to win Achilles' weapons after that warrior had fallen in battle. In either case, the flower is said to bear "woeful letters" by which the dead hero is recalled.⁴⁸

It has proved impossible to agree on an identification that will suit all occurrences of the hyacinth in Greek literature.⁴⁹ It is generally acknowledged, however, that the hyacinth of the classical world is not the *Hyacinthus orientalis*. This ancestor of our garden hyacinth, which now grows wild in Greece, apparently arrived from the east after the end of the classical period.⁵⁰ At least eight different candidates for hyacinth have been proposed depending on which evidence is given most weight.⁵¹ Among these,

⁴⁶First beard is dark (*μέλας*), Pindar *Ol.* 1.67–69. Cf. further, Irwin (above, n. 12) 195–196.

⁴⁷"Préhellenique": E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1938) 996; "unerklärtes Fremdwort": H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1970) 2.952–953. Cf. J. André, *Les Noms de plantes, dans la Rome antique* (Paris 1985) 268, where it is argued that *vaccinium* ("myrtle") is cognate with *hyacinthus*, both being non-Indo-European. Cf. also M. Wellmann, "Die Pflanzennamen des Dioskurides," *Hermes* 33 (1898) 419; Sargeant (above, n. 10) 56; Stanford (above, n. 1) 2.397.

⁴⁸The earliest reference to the myth of Hyacinthos: Hes. fr. 171.6; the earliest evidence connecting the flower with Aias: Euphorion 40 (Powell); for markings, cf. Theoc. 10.28. On the flower and the myth, cf. *RE* 9 (1914) 4–7 (Stadler) and 7 (1910) 798–799 (Olck).

⁴⁹The hyacinth is mentioned in the following passages from the Greek poets to the Alexandrian period: Homer *Il.* 14.348; *Od.* 6.231, 23.158; *Hym. Hom. Dem.* 2.7, 426; *Hym. Hom. Pan.* 19.25; *Cypria* 6.3; Sappho 105 (c) 1, 166.1 (as adj.), 194 (test.) L-P; Alcaeus 296 (b) 8 L-P; Anacreon 346.7 PMG; Euripides *IA* 1298; Euphorion 40 (Powell); Hermippus 82.6–8 (Kock); *Anth. Pal.* (Meleager) 5.147; Theocritus 10.28, 11.26; Moschus *Europa* 65. Cf. further Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 6.8.1–2; *RE* 7 (1910) 798–9 (Olck s.v. "Gartenbau"); *RE* 9 (1914) 4–7 (Stadler s.v. *ὑάκινθος*).

⁵⁰So André (above, n. 47) 126–127; T. J. Haarhoff, "Hyacinthus Again," *CR* NS 6 (1956) 200.

⁵¹The commonest are *Scilla*, *Delphinium*, *Iris*, and *Gladiolus*. Stanford 1.316–317, on *Odyssey* 6.231: *Scilla bifolia*, *Delphinium Aiacis* and *Iris germanica*; André (above, n. 47) 126–127: *Scilla bifolia* or *hyacinthoides*, *Delphinium Aiacis*, *Gladiolus segetum*, or, for Latin only, *Vaccinium myrtillus* or *uliginosum*. *Scilla bifolia* and *Delphinium Aiacis* are

Stanford prefers the *Scilla bifolia* here, a flower which would also be compatible with the only other occurrence of the hyacinth in Homer, where it grows with crocus and clover (λωτός) in the scene of Hera's seduction of Zeus (Il. 14.348). In arguing for the scilla (which he equates with the English bluebell), Stanford takes the comparison "as one between [Odysseus'] short curls (as in later Greek athletic statues) and the curling petals of the bluebell."⁵² In my discussion of the hair of Greek heroes, I have shown that they had shoulder-length hair which hung free. Odysseus' short curls are, in my opinion, a figment of Stanford's imagination. The curls Athena created hung down to the shoulder in ringlets or rippling waves, like the style worn by Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia or in many representations of Apollo and archaic kouroi statues.⁵³

The formula "like a . . . flower" is also found in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (177–178): the hair of the daughters of Celeus, king of Eleusis, "streamed round their shoulders like the crocus flower".⁵⁴

ἀμφὶ δὲ χαῖται
ὅμοις αἴσσοντο κροκητῶ ἄνθει ὅμοιαι.

the choice of A. F. Hort, *Theophrastus, Enquiry into Plants* (Cambridge, Mass 1916) for Theophrastus' "wild" and "cultivated" hyacinths and of A. Lindsell, "Was Theocritus a Botanist?," *G&R* 6 (1936) 82–83, distinguishing between the hyacinths of Theoc. 10.28 and 11.26. *Gladiolus*: Sargeant (above, n. 10) 56–60, *Gladiolus segetum* (for Vergil); Haarhoff (above, n. 50) 200–201, *Gladiolus communis*; Hellmut Baumann, *Die griechische Pflanzenwelt in Mythos, Kunst und Literatur* (Munich 1982) 84 and ill. 143, *G. italicus* (= *G. segetum*). Iris: H. J. Rose is reported to prefer *Iris germanica*, mentioned without reference in Haarhoff. Martagon lily: LSJ s.v. ῥάκινθος, with reference to Euphorion 40, Sargeant 56–60 for Ovid. Asphodel: E. Abbe, *The Plants of Virgil's Georgics* (Ithaca 1965) 53–63, *Asphodelus fistulosus*. Fritillary: C. Garlick, "What Was the Greek Hyacinth?," *CR* 35 (1921) 146–147. Orchid: *Orchis quadripunctata*, A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge 1950) 2.200–201, who gives credit for the proposal to J. E. Raven. A salutary reminder of the limitations on our ability to identify classical plants is given by R. M. Dawkins, "The Semantics of Greek Names for Plants," *JHS* 56 (1936) 1–11.

⁵²Stanford 1.317. Linnaeus' name for the bluebell was *hyacinthus non scriptus*, *OED* s.v. bluebell; it is now called *Scilla hyacinthoides* or *Hyacinthoides non scripta*, Allen J. Coombes, *Dictionary of Plant Names* (Twickenham, Middlesex 1985) 104.

⁵³In a fourteenth-century Persian poem, a young woman's hair is compared to hyacinths, Samuel Rousseau, *The Flowers of Persian Literature, Containing Extracts from the Most Celebrated Authors in Prose and Verse; With a Translation into English* (London 1801) 167, n. 2 "tresses, dark as the hyacinth." Cf. Sir William Jones, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (Oxford 1772) "Solima, an Arabian eclogue" 1.5–6: "The fragrant hyacinths of Azza's hair / That wanton with the laughing summer-air." "Solima" is "not a regular translation from the Arabick language . . . [but] all the figures, sentiments, descriptions in it were really taken from the poets of Arabia" (ii). Cf. further 178, Persian poets compared "curled hair to . . . hyacinths." On hair, cf. Pease (above, n. 18) 533–535; Onians (above, n. 41) 232 f.; P. Schredelseker, *De superstitionibus Graecorum quae ad crines pertinent* (diss., Heidelberg 1913) 16–22.

⁵⁴Women in Homeric epic did not appear in public, as these princesses did, with unbound hair falling loosely round their shoulders, Lorimer (above, n. 38) 385 ff.; E. B. Abrahams, *Greek Dress* (London 1908) 34 f.

The goddess Demeter had blond hair (ξανθή, 302) and these girls, her priestesses in prototype, were likely also blonde.⁵⁵ The crocus, one of Demeter's special flowers, was a suitable bloom to which to compare the girls' hair.⁵⁶ It goes beyond suggesting that the hair is "yellow."⁵⁷ In the hymn girls are like flowers: Kore, a budlike girl (8), is carried off by Hades while she is gathering flowers; her companions, Ianthe, Rhodeia, and Rhodope, have flower names;⁵⁸ and the daughters of Celeus have a "youthful flower," κουρήϊον ἄνθος (108).⁵⁹ Lines 177-178 might be translated "their hair streamed round their shoulders, flowering like the crocus."

Lewis Carroll, in *Through the Looking Glass*, compared Alice's hair to flower petals and teased her by having the flowers make rather rude and personal remarks on the length and shape of her hair.⁶⁰

⁵⁵Cf. Ovid AA 1.530, Ariadne "binding back her crocus-coloured hair," *croceas irreligata comas*, on which A. S. Hollis, *Ovid Ars Amatoria Book I* (Oxford 1977) 122, comments "fairhaired like a good epic heroine." The king's daughters contrasted starkly with the mourning Demeter, whose black robes reached down to her feet, and whose head was covered by a veil. Later Demeter's "blond hair grew down over" or "flowered down over (κατενήθονεν) her shoulders" (line 279); cf. Richardson (above, n. 38) 252-254 for the possible derivation of the verb from ἀνθεῖν.

⁵⁶E.g., in Soph. OC 681-685; cf. M. E. Irwin, "The Crocus and the Rose," in D. E. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy: Studies in Honour of Leonard Woodbury* (Chico, California 1984) 156-157, and n. 38. Aphrodite apparently had a special claim on the hyacinth; cf. τὰς ὑάκιν[θινὰς ἀρ]ούρας where Cypris was found, Anacreon 346.1.7-8 PMG; cf. also Alcaeus 296 (b) 8 L-P; Sappho 194 L-P.

⁵⁷I assume that it embraces their blondness. Dawn κροκόπεπλος wore "a robe dyed by saffron," which is not necessarily the same as a robe the colour of a crocus (Il. 8.1); for although some crocuses are orange or yellow, saffron crocuses are purple or white; cf. E. A. Bowles, *Crocus and Colchium* (London 1924/1985) 65-66. κροκο- is inescapably "saffron-coloured"; though not always "saffron-dyed." Flower names in compounds with -βαφ- do not always imply that the flower is the source of the dye; cf. κροκοβαφής, of a drop of blood (?), Aesch. Ag. 1121. Cf. R. Edgeworth, "Saffron-Coloured Terms in Aeschylus," *Glotta* 66 (1988) 179-182.

⁵⁸Ianthe (418), Rhodeia (419), Rhodope (422). I have commented on this feature of the hymn in "Kore's Flower: The Narcissus in the Classical Greek World," which will appear in a collection of essays on the myth of Narcissus, J. R. Warden (ed.), *Narcissus Observed*.

⁵⁹On the form, cf. Richardson (above, n. 38) 184. Commentators emphasize the root meaning in ἄνθος "something which grows or issues forth" from which "flower" is derived, e.g., P. Buttmann, *Lexilogus*³, tr. J. R. Fishlake, (London 1846) 133-134. J. M. Aitchison, "Homeric ἄνθος," *Glotta* 41 (1963) 271-278, argues for a semantic development in three stages from "sprout, grow" through "flourish, reach full growth" to "bloom, flower." W. B. Stanford, (above, n. 14) 111-114 and "In Lexicographos: Another Heresy" *G&R* 5 (1936) 156-157, proposes for ἄνθος a neutral meaning "what comes/rises to the surface." Aitchison thinks that ἄνθος ἥβης refers particularly to the first beard and that the poet of the hymn was mistaken in applying a similar expression to young women.

⁶⁰Alice Liddell had dark hair, cut short with straight bangs across her forehead; cf. Martin Gardner (ed.), *The Annotated Alice: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (New York 1960) 25.

"Well, [the Red Queen] has the same awkward shape as you," the Rose said: "but she's redder—and her petals are shorter, I think."

"They're done up close, like a dahlia," said the Tiger-lily: "not tumbled about, like yours."

"But that's not your fault," the Rose added kindly. "You're beginning to fade, you know—and one ca'n't help one's petals getting a little untidy."⁶¹

I should like to think that these lines were inspired by the memory of Odysseus' hair, a joking reference which, if it passed over the heads of Alice and her sisters, was not unappreciated by their father, Dean Liddell.⁶² The fading and untidiness of Alice's hair is far removed from the ideal world of epic, the world of handsome heroes and beautiful women, with every hair in place.

κουρήϊον ἄνθος, "youthful flower," is a variant on ἄνθος ἥβης, "flower of youth" (*Il.* 13.484; cf. Solon 26 *IEG*), often unabashedly erotic in its associations. According to Mimnermus, the flowers of youth are "secret love, sweet gifts, and the bed, . . . pleasant to men and women" (1.3–4 *IEG*). According to Tyrtaeus, a man who has "the flower of youth" is "desirable to women" (10.28–29 *IEG*). Spring does not last long enough; its flowers are soon over. Homer had compared the generation of leaves to the generation of men (*Iliad* 6.146); Mimnermus makes it specific to youth: "we are like leaves (or petals) in the flowery spring; . . . like them we enjoy the flowers of youth for a brief time" (2.1–3 *IEG*).⁶³ The flowers of youth are a sign of sexual attractiveness, but time is fleeting. Old age or death awaits, neither an attractive prospect.

Anacreon had as a rival in love the tyrant Polycrates who, unable to win a certain boy away from the poet, had the boy's hair chopped off. Anacreon lamented:

νῦν δὲ δὴ σὺ μὲν στολοκρός,
ἢ δ' ἐς ἀύχημ' ἄρας πεσοῦσα
χεῖρας ἀθρόη μέλαιναν
ἐς κόνιν κατερρή⁶⁴

347.1.3–6 *PMG*

Instead of attacking the perpetrator Polycrates, Anacreon blamed the young boy for having "sheared off the blameless flower of soft hair" (ἀπέκειρας δ' ἀπαλῆς κόμης ἄμωμον ἄνθος, 414 *PMG*). One can hear the admiration and

⁶¹Lewis Carroll, "The Garden of Live Flowers," *Through The Looking Glass*, ch. 2 (New York 1971, Norton Critical Edition) 123. The scene may have been prompted by the flower names of Alice Liddell's sisters, Rhoda (= Rose) and Violet, cf. *The Annotated Alice* 203.

⁶²Lewis Carroll *alias* Charles Dodgson read Greats as well as Mathematics at Oxford; Alice's father, with Robert Scott, produced *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

⁶³Also in Simonides 8.6, 11 *IEG*. For φύλλα = petals, cf. *Hdt.* 8.138, *Theoc.* 11.26.

⁶⁴Note "cropped," στολοκρός, and "flowed down," κατερρή. On the latter word D. E. Gerber, *Euterpe* (Amsterdam 1970) 224, remarks perceptively that it "stresses the length of the boy's hair."

regret in Anacreon's voice; the boy's hair, like Odysseus' and that of Celeus' daughters, had been a flower.

Odysseus through Nausicaa's eyes looked rather old when he came out of the bushes, but after his bath he became young and handsome. He was taller than she had thought, his shoulders broader, and his hair, which had been matted and caked with salt, fell from his head in well-groomed curls. His hair was so beautiful that the poet compared it to a flower bursting into bloom. That is what Homer wants us to see in Odysseus' hyacinthine hair.

SCARBOROUGH COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
WEST HILL, ONTARIO M1C 1A4