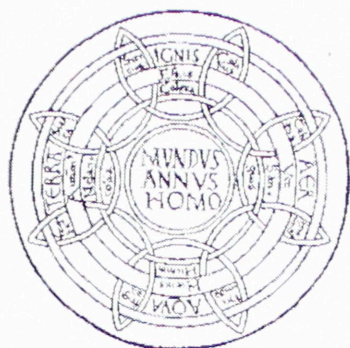


FOM 125





WARBURG



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The Institute of Classical
Studies



MANDRAKE

(From Sibthorp's "Flora Graeca")

a Calyx cum pistillo. *b* Corolla, arte explanata, cum staminibus. *c* Pistillum
seorsim. *d* Bacca matura. *e* Semen.

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125

20.1.05

THE ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF APHRODITE

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125

BY
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THE ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF APHRODITE.

By J. RENDEL HARRIS.

WE have in previous essays shown that it was possible to dig down to the ground form of a number of the cults of the divinities which go to make up the Greek pantheon. Dionysus has been traced back to the ivy on the oak, and we can go no further in the direction of origins than this ; we are actually at the starting-point of the cult, whatever other elements, ritual or orgiastic, may be combined with the Ivy Cult. In the same way Apollo has been traced to the mistletoe on the apple-tree, which is a secondary form of the mistletoe on the oak, and we have shown that his skill as a healer and master in wizardry is due to the all-healing powers of his mistletoe and to certain other plants in his medical garden. From these conceptions the Apollo Cult must proceed, and although there is still some unresolved complexity in the cult, the major part of it is translucent enough. Artemis, too, with her woman's medicines, and garden of herbs helpful and of herbs hurtful, is now a much more intelligible figure, though still containing perplexities for further study and resolution. She, too, is, in the first instance, personified medicine.

We now pass on to the Cult of Aphrodite, and find ourselves face to face with a problem in which our previous investigations appear not to lend any assistance. She is a daughter of Zeus by tradition, apparently of Zeus and Dione, but there seems no way of attaching her to the sky, either bright or dark, or to the oak-tree, or to the woodpecker, or to the ivy or the mistletoe, or to a medical garden. Moreover, by common consent, she is ruled out of the company of gods with Greek originals. She is an immigrant in the Greek pantheon, an alien, however desirable, and however much at home. Her luggage has Cyprus labels on it, to say nothing of other islands where she has made stay ; and this has not unnaturally led to the view that she is Oriental and not Greek at all. In spite of the interest

which she takes in other people's business, she has no direct cult-relations with the rest of the gods, she does not share temples nor honours except in rare and insignificant cases¹; her worship is conventional as far as the sacrifices are concerned, and no special animal, not even the dove, betrays by its presence the links which connect the great goddess of Love with her past: and yet we are sure that she had a past, even if we do not at first know in what direction to look for it. The Greek mythology tells us nothing: the poets play with her name and perpetrate philological impertinences to show why she is born of the foam (*ἀφρός*), and only lead us from the truth, instead of towards it, by their industrious myth-spinning. We evidently must begin this enquiry *de novo*, both as regards the ancient mythologists and their modern representatives. We will not even assume too hastily that she is a foreigner: for that requires the underlying assumption that the Greeks had no god or goddess of Love of their own and had no necessity for one, which I, for one, find extremely difficult to believe. Cyprus and Cythera may turn out to be not so far from the mainland after all: and even if she did originate in Cyprus or Cythera, we have still to be told the story of her birth. Is she a personified force of nature, a vegetable demon of fertility, some person or thing that makes for growth and multiplies products? Can we look on her as another view of the Corn-Mother, or as a spirit of physical inebriation, like Dionysos? or is it possible that she, too, may be like Apollo and Artemis, the virtue of a plant?

As we have said, her relation to Zeus is merely ornamental: so that if she has a vegetable origin, it can hardly be found in the oak or its parasites. It would have to be sought in that part of the botanical world that is supposed to have sexual virtues. Now a little enquiry into the history of medicine, which we have shown to be for the most part the history of plants, will tell us that the ancients were very interested in determining what plants would make people fall in love with one another; they used their observation leisurely and their imagination industriously, and in the end they evolved all that branch of magic which has for its object the manufacture of philtres and potions, and, as Falstaff would say, "medicines to make me love him".

¹ The case of Dodona is not included: for here Aphrodite is hardly to be distinguished from Dione; the Dodona Cult is about the oldest thing in Greek religion.

Now it is clearly not an impossible thing that Aphrodite may have something to do with this wizardry: and, therefore, we will not too hastily assume that she is altogether out of kinship with Apollo and Artemis-Hekaté. Something, for instance, of a medical nature must be involved in the fact that "at Oropus she shared an altar with Athena the healer, and the daughters of Asklepios".¹

We cannot, however, help feeling that this medical element which put her in the medical school of Athens is something unusual, and that she might more properly be called Panalgeia than Panakeia.

Suppose, now, we ask of the herbalist the question as to which of his simples is likely to operate most powerfully on the affections. If he belongs to the ancient world, he will reply without a moment's hesitation that Mandragora, or Mandrake, is the thing for our money: if he belong to the modern world, he will say that mandragora is only an opiate and not a stimulant. We leave the modern wizards on one side, and interrogate the ancient. What have they to say of this "drowsy syrup"? The answer is full and marvellous. The mandrake is a root which shrieks terribly when you pull it out of the ground; it is, indeed, so dangerous that you must not try to pull it: better tie a dog to the stalk and then entice the dog towards you with a *bonne bouche*: stop your ears by way of precaution, and use your eyes to see the last dying agonies of the dog who has pulled the root for you. Then go and pick it up. To your surprise, you will find the root to have a human form, sometimes male, and sometimes female: it is, in fact, like Falstaff's "forked radish," a little parody of man: for the description of the youthful Justice Shallow as a "forked radish" led on to the comparison of him with a mandrake. The experts will tell you that it is rarely to be found except under the gallows, and that it is the humours and juices of the suspended person, especially if the victim of the law be innocent, that have given it the human form.

Naturally one asks whether this is really ancient lore: is it not a myth made in English out of the first syllable of mandrake? Then we recall how Medea, when she wished to make Jason secure from the brazen bulls that breathed fire on him, supplied him with an unguent made from a flower that had been fed with the ichor of the

¹ Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 657.

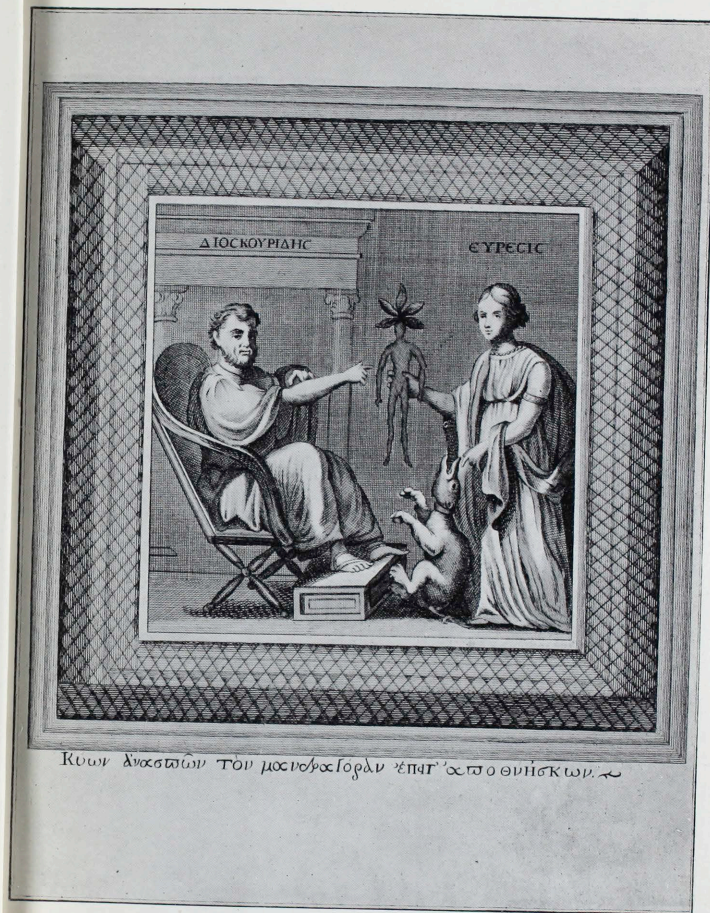
innocent, martyred Prometheus ; so we feel certain that we are, in the main, dealing with primitive matters.

So we must interrogate the herbalists and see where mandrake is to be found, and what can be done with it when you find it. The first thing one comes across is the well-known story in Genesis where little Reuben brings home to his mother Leah some pretty apples which he has found in the field : and Leah, who has no special need for such stimulants, trades them off to her sister Rachel for a consideration. The same love-apples turn up among the flora of the Song of Solomon, where we learn that in the spring-time they give an agreeable scent, a point upon which all nasal artists are not by any means agreed.¹ Let us see what old Gerarde has to say on the question of Mandrake : he tells us (p. 357) : " There hath been many ridiculous tales brought up of this plant, whether of old wives, or some runnagate surgeons, or physicke-mongers I know not (a title bad enough for them) but sure some one or moe that sought to make themselves famous or skilful above others were the first brochiers of that errour I speake of : [the supposed human form of the Mandrake]. They adde further that it is never, or very seldome, to be found growing naturally but under a gallowse, where the matter that hath fallen from the dead body hath given it the shape of a man ; and the matter of a woman the substance of a female plant, with many other such doltish dreams. They fable further and affirme, That he who would take up a plant thereof must tie a dog thereunto to pull it up, which will give a great shreeke at the digging up : otherwise if a man should do it, he should surely die in short space after. Besides many fables of loving matters, too full of scurrilitie to set forth in print, which I forbear to speak of. All which dreames and old wives tales you shall from henceforth cast out of your books and memory ; knowing this, that they are all and everie part of them false and most untrue : for I myselfe and my servants also have digged up, planted and replanted very many, and yet never could either perceive shape of man or woman, but sometimes one straight root, sometimes two, and often six or seven branches coming from the maine great root, even as Nature list to bestow upon

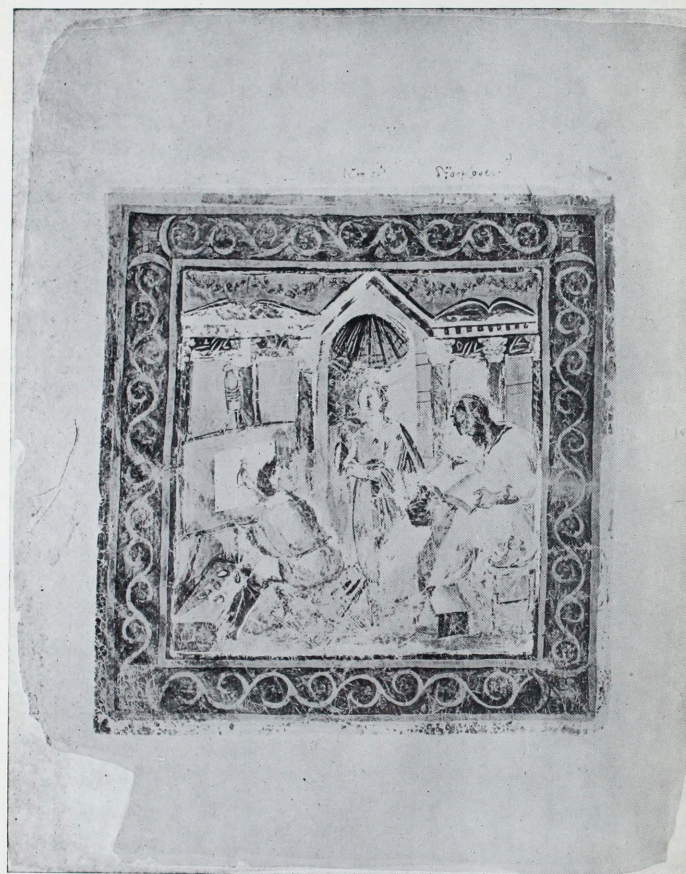
¹Howbeit Levinus Lemnius saith, in his discourse on the *Secret Miracles of Nature*, that the " male Mandrake beareth a lovely pleasant and sweet-scented Apple, like to the yelk of a Hen's Egg, by the enticement whereof Rachel was allured " (p. 264, Anglice).



DISCOVERY PRESENTING THE MANDRAKE TO DIOSCORIDES
(From the Leiden Facsimile of the "Vienna Dioscorides")



DISCOVERY PRESENTING THE MANDRAKE TO DIOSCORIDES
(From the "Vienna Dioscorides," as reproduced in Lambecius' "Commentariorum . . .")



DISCOVERY HOLDING THE MANDRAKE
(From the Leiden Facsimile of the "Vienna Dioscorides")



DISCOVERY HOLDING THE MANDRAKE
(From the "Vienna Dioscorides," as reproduced in Lambecius' "Commentariorum . . .")

it, as to other plantes. But the idle drones that have little or nothing to do but eat and drinke, have bestowed some of the time in carving the roots of Brionie, forming them to the shape of men and women : which falsifying practise hath confirmed the error amongst the simple and unlearned people, who have taken them upon their report to be true Mandrakes."

Evidently we want to know some of the fables of loving matters, to which Gerarde refers. Meanwhile, we note that this story of plant-extraction by dogs is a very old belief. That it was, in early times, considered dangerous to dig up the plants may be seen from the directions which Pliny gives to the excavators to keep to the windward of the plant, and then, after tracing round it three circles with the sword, to dig it up with one's face turned to the West.¹

As to the supposed virtues of the plant which Gerarde derides, it is sufficient to establish the antiquity of the belief in them, and we can then safely infer a corresponding antiquity of the associated practices.

Dioscorides lets the cat out of the bag by saying² that some people call the mandrake by the name Circaea, because its root is thought to be an efficacious philtre :—

ἐπειδὴ δοκεῖ ἡ ῥίζα φίλτρων εἶναι ποιητική.

Theophrastus has the same statement, and appears to be the source from which Pliny took his account of the manner of obtaining the root :—

περιγράφειν δὲ καὶ τὸν μανδραγόραν εἰς τρεῖς ξίφει, τέμνειν δὲ πρὸς ἐσπέραν βλέποντα· τὸν δ' ἕτερον κύκλῳ περιορχεῖσθαι, καὶ λέγειν ὡς πλείστα περὶ ἀφροδισίων.

Theoph : *De genere plantarum*.

We are to talk love at the top of our bent when digging the love-apple. So we need have no hesitation in saying that the mandrake was the love-apple of the ancients. Its Hebrew name *Dudai* is referred to the same stem (*Dōd* or *Dōdō*) from which the beloved *David* and *Dido* come, and gives the sense of fruit-of-love or love-apple exactly,

¹ Pliny, *H.N.* xxv. 13 (94). Cf. the cutting of the mistletoe on the sacred oak of Errol after it has been gone round three times sun-wise. Cf. also Theophrastus, *infra*.

² Diosc., *De Mat. Med.* iv. 76.

especially when we note how the Septuagint translate the *Dudaim* by the term *μηλα μανδραγόρων* or *mandrake-apples*. The fruit is not unlike a yellow apple in appearance, and Parkinson says it is "Of the bigness of a reasonable pippin and as yellow as gold when it is thoroughly ripe".¹ Parkinson follows Gerarde in his scorn for the popular beliefs in the physical effects of the mandrake in other than soporific directions, but while he refuses to go into the matter in detail, and tells us to consult Matthiolus if we want to know, he lets us incidentally into one little secret, by saying² that "great and strange effects are supposed to be in the Mandrake to cause women to be fruitfull and to beare children, if they shall but carry the same neare unto their bodies". Evidently the plant was worn as a charm about the waist, or in the girdle, and could produce its effect without being taken internally either as root or apple.

Our next question is whether this love-apple can in any way be connected with Aphrodite, in the same way as we connected Apollo with the apple and the mistletoe and Artemis with the mugwort. The answer comes from an unexpected quarter. Hesychius has amongst his glosses an explanation of the term *μανδραγορίτις* (*She of the Mandrake*) and he interprets it to mean Aphrodite.

That would be quite conclusive if it were not for the fact that it is preceded by another gloss to the effect that *Μανδράγορος* means Zeus. We find accordingly,

Μανδράγορος = Zeus.

Μανδραγορίτις = Aphrodite.

Clearly we have to explain why Zeus is "He of the mandrake," as well as why Aphrodite is the lady of the mandrake. At first sight this looks difficult. It almost requires a Zeus-Aphroditos which would, to the ancient world, sound like a contradiction in terms.

Evidently, then, we do not yet know the ancient mind with regard to the plant with sufficient accuracy, and we must delve a little deeper and employ a little more canine skill in the extraction of the root. We shall discover that the mandrake was regarded by the early botanists as existing in two species, which they called *male* and *female*³; next, that when you pulled a mandrake, the human form

¹ *Theatr. Botan.* p. 343.

² *l.c.* p. 353.

³ Thus Levinus Lemnius: "Theophrastus and other searchers into the nature of plants have wisely divided them into Males and Females, by the

which you extracted was, again, either male or female; and lastly, that Aphrodite herself had a cult-figure, according to which she was both male and female, and this representation existed in Cyprus, the original home of the goddess: to which may be added the fact that the persons who traded off fictitious mandrakes on a too credulous world adorned their frauds with hair and beard after the fashion of the Cypriot image already referred to.

We begin with Aphrodite and her possible bi-sexuality. Macrobius tells us as follows:—¹

Signum autem eius est Cypri barbatum corpore, sed vesti muliebri, cum sceptro ac natura virili; et putant eandem marem ac feminam esse. Aristophanes eam Ἀφροδίτου appellat. Laevius etiam sic ait: Venerem igitur alium adorans, sive femina sive mas est, ita uti alma Noctiluca est.

Here we have some astonishing statements. A bearded Venus in Cyprus, hardly female at all except for her dress: thought indeed by the Cypriotes to be both male and female. It is the plant evidently that is responsible for this ambiguity: and Macrobius goes on to quote a jest of Aristophanes about Aphroditos, and a statement of another author about the adoration of an *almus* Venus (male or female, fish or flesh as the case may be), and concerning her shining by night. Here again, we seem to be on the track of the plant; Venus is affirmed to shine by night, as in the case of the magic fern-seed, and other treasure-disclosing vegetables.²

reason that some are fruitful and bear seed, but others are barren and bring forth none. . . . The Female Mandragora is either barren or bears very small fruit."—*Secret Miracles of Nature*, p. 264.

¹ *Sat.* iii. 8, 3.

² That there was a bearded goddess in Cyprus is also attested by Hesychius, who reports that the author of the history of Amathus in Cyprus says that the goddess was represented in the Island in the form of a man:—

Ἀφρόδιτος· ὁ δὲ τὰ περὶ Ἀμαθούνη γεγραφὼς
ἀνδρα τὴν θεὸν ἐσχημάτισθαι ἐν Κύπρῳ λέγει.

Hesychius, s.v. Ἀφρόδιτος.

For the goddess' beard we have also the attestation of Suidas:—

Ἀφροδίτη· πλάττουσι δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ γένειον ἔχουσαν.

Hesychius also points out that it is this bearded Aphroditos that gave rise to the later Hermaphroditos, which leads us to infer that the mandragoros which Hesychius identifies with Zeus ought more correctly to have been called Hermes.

Meanwhile, there is no need to trouble any further over Hesychius and his *Zeus Mandragoros*: he is only the conjugate of the vegetable Aphrodite: a male counterpart had to be found for the plant of inconstant sex, and Zeus will do for this requirement quite as well as, shall we say, Hermes.¹ We may, therefore, identify Aphrodite with the mandrake, provided we can carry back the traditions to a sufficiently early date; for of course we must not manufacture early deities out of late folk-lore. That the mandrake is man-formed is, certainly, a very early tradition. Dioscorides tells us that Pythagoras called it *ἄνθρωπόμορφον*. The same writer tells us that the Romans called the fruit *mala canina*, which betrays the tale of its extraction by a dog.

The reference to the human form of the mandrake is due, in the first instance, to the bifurcation of the root (cf. the "forked radish")

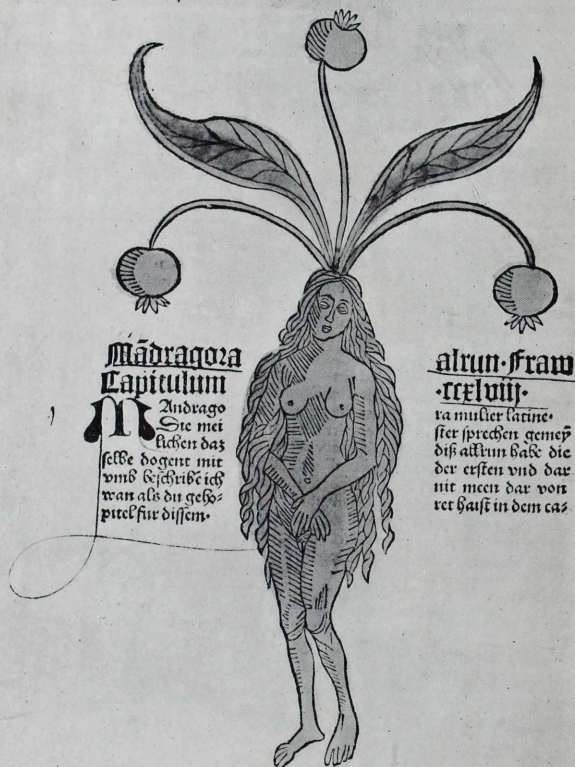
Servius on Vergil, *Aen.* ii. 632, has the same tradition of the bearded goddess, and discusses the use of the masculine *θεός* as applied to a goddess: as follows:—

Ac ducente deo: secundum eos qui dicunt utriusque sexus participationem habere numina. nam et Calvus: *pollentemque Deum Venerem*, item Vergilius (vii. 498): *nec dextras erranti deus abfuit*: cum aut Juno fuerit, aut Alecto. est etiam in Cypro simulacrum barbatae Veneris [corpore et veste muliebri cum sceptro et natura virili:] quod *Ἀφρόδιτον* vocatur, (cui viri in veste muliebri, mulieres in virili veste sacrificant; quanquam veteres *deum* pro magno numine dicebant. Sallustius: *ut tanta mutatio non sine deo videretur*) et hoc ad Graecorum imitationem, qui ὁ θεός καὶ ἡ θεός dicunt, sicut ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡ ἄνθρωπος, vir et femina.

It is interesting that, according to Servius, the image of the goddess is called *Ἀφρόδιτον*.

¹The reason why Zeus was selected as the male consort may, however, be divined with some degree of probability. If Aphrodite was to have a consort in Cyprus it should certainly have been Adonis. Now if we look at Dioscorides and his description of the male and female mandrake, we shall find him speaking of a third variety which he calls *μόριον* (morian). This mysterious *μόριον* is nothing else but the Syriac word for "Our Lord" transliterated into Greek, and in Cyprus its proper equivalent is Adonis. Apparently someone has misunderstood the reference and called the mandrake by the name of Zeus, to whom the term "Our Lord" might more properly be held to apply. So we suspect that originally the male and female mandrake were Adonis and Aphrodite. The difficulty is that in the popular tradition Adonis has not yet developed a beard. (If our interpretation is right, it will carry with it the meaning of Adonis-town for the Cypriote city Marion, near to Amathus, where the bearded goddess was worshipped. In Amathus itself, according to Pausanias (9, 41, 2), the goddess and Adonis had one temple).

Y^m Platearius disseit synden als groif als drey keller gewichte gebak
ten fur die schenck der frauwen bringet menstrui vñ dreyet vñ das
dort bynt. h Dis synden gekouffen zu puluer vñ genutet mit cys
nem elistier machet flausen vñ rinnen fur alle ander kunst.
l^e Item dis wurzel geseeten in weyn vñ vff das gegichte geleert der
gledder ist den werthum stulen.



**Mādragoza
Capitulum**

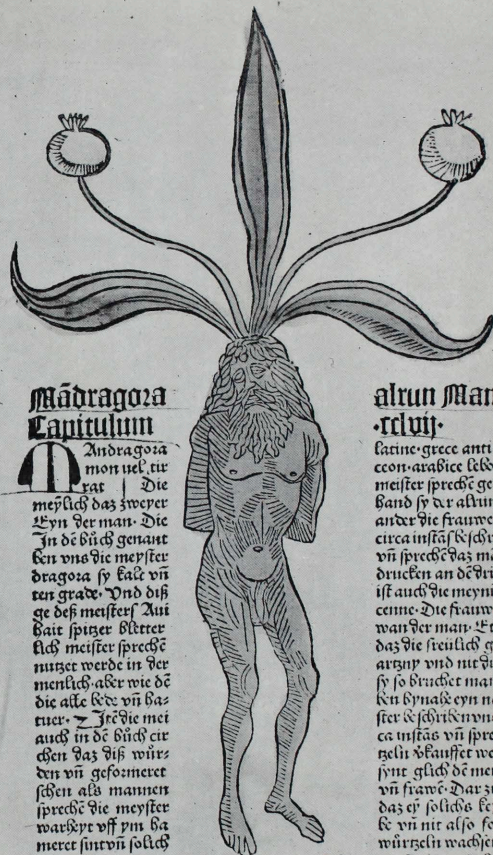
M Andrago
Sie mei
haben das
selbe dogent mit
vñd beschreib ich
wan als du geso
pitel fur dissem.

**alrun·Fraw
·celviij·**

ra mulier latine
ster sprechen gemeß
dis alrun bat die
der ersten vñd dar
mit meen dar vor
ret haust in dem cas

MANDRAKE (FEMALE)

(From the German "Herbarius". Mainz: Schoeffer, 1485)



**Mādragoza
Capitulum**

M Andrago
mon uel tur
rac | Die
meylich das zweyer
Eyn der man. Die
in de büch genaunt
ken vñd die meyster
dragoza sy hat vñ
ter grade. Vñd dis
ge des meisters Aus
bait spitzer blitter
sch meyster spreche
nutzer werde in der
menlich ader wie de
die alle kete vñd bar
tuer. Item die mei
auch in de büch cir
cken das dis wur
den vñd geformet
schen als mannen
spreche die meyster
warhete vñd ym ba
meret sint vñd solich
mit in der erde sinde sie werde gemacht vñd künsten vñd also geist.

**alrun Man
·celviij·**

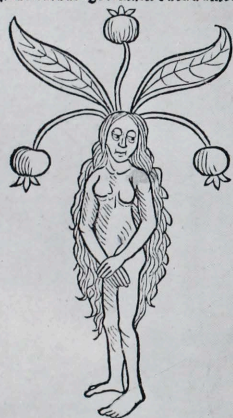
latine grece anti
ceon arabice lebo
meister spreche ges
band sy dar alrun
ander die frauwe
circa instat beschri
vñd spreche das mā
drucken an de drit
ist auch die meyni
camo. Die frauwe
wan der man. Es
das die steulich ge
argny vñd me die
sy so bruchet man
den dynast eyn na
ster de schiden vñd
ca instas vñd spre
geln klanfset wer
sint gleich de man
vñd frauwe. Dar zu
das es solich se
ke vñd nit also for
wurzeln wachsen

MANDRAKE (MALE)

(From the German "Herbarius". Mainz: Schoeffer, 1485)

Tractatus

Alia species q̄ nō s̄ntur narbus ad ministrat a chirurgis q̄ p̄volunt mēbrū aliquod incidere. 7 q̄n bibit solat. q̄d v̄r sūstocās ei est tyriaca. **M** Et idē auc. Rasis. **A**dit mibi q̄dā ex antiq̄s babylonie. q̄ q̄dam p̄nella p̄medit quinq̄ poma mādragore. 7 cecidit sūcopiata. et tota effecta est rubicūda. et quidē sup̄ueniens effudit sup̄ caput ei⁹ aq̄ nimis donec sur recipit. **O** Et ego vidi hōēl q̄ sūmple ruit de radice eius cā impingūdi. et accidit eis sicut accidit solis hōibus ingredi entibus balneum et bibētib⁹ post crīum vinū multū. nā facit furcūlus eoz nimis rubicundus. **P** Et idē auc. dyal. Radicē mādragore multa dāt ad amorē.



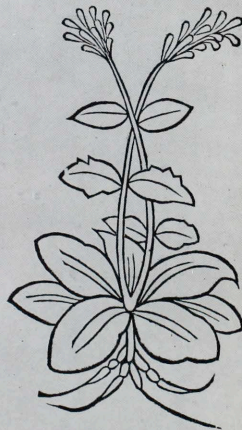
Ca. cclxxvij.

Mandraca femine. Serap. auc. dyal. Et semē color est niger et nō minatur landachis siue bādachis antlactica. Mā in folijs ei⁹ est similitudo cū folijs lactuce. 7 sunt pinguis q̄uis odoris. 7 extendunt sup̄ faciem tere. in medio

folior eius est simile mēspili 7 est losach. 7 ē citrini color. hīs odorē bonū. 7 intra ip̄s sunt grana similia granis pīroz. 7 habet radices magnas medio crīter duas l̄res adherentes invicē exteri⁹ nigras 7 interi⁹ albas. sup̄ q̄s est cortex grossus. Et hec species mādragore non habet stipitem

Operationes.

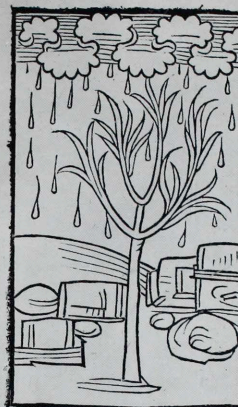
A Mandragora fortissimi odoris est. ab hōīne ieiunio nō colligit. **U**lri usq̄ vis vna est. Nec cum polēta trita ser uores oculoꝝ 7 dolores aurīū sedat. **R**adix eius cū aceto trita 7 illita ignem facrum curat. **A**uicenna. Mandragora somnū puocat. Et q̄n ponit in vino vehementer inebriat. Multusq̄ vs ei⁹ 7 odoramentū. facit apoplexiā. **A**ccius euellit lentiginēs. et pannū sine mordicarōe. Soluēdo at̄ educit colerā 7 flegma. **R**adix eius trita et cū aceto imposita sup̄ berisipilam sanat eā. Semen eius matricem mundificat. v̄l vomitum puocat.



MANDRAKE (FEMALE)

(From the Latin "Hortus Sanitatis". Mainz: Meydenbach, 1491)

Tractatus



Ca. cclxxv.

Manna. v̄t ait Auicenna. Est ros ca dens sup̄ lapidē. 7 plantas. et habet plures species. 7 v̄ndiata est terebinthin. 7 siracoli. 7 succaz baoler est de speciebus eius. Et ait Auicenna. Manna diuersificatur fm diuersitatem rerum sup̄ q̄s cadit recipiens ab eis diuersitates 7 virtutes. apud nos vidi duas species. vna quaz est granulosa non p̄iuncta granulis. alia p̄globata q̄ artificio magis videt sop̄bilitata et succaro cocta et folijs sene quoz frustula in mītra vident saporem (qui sene) ostendit. Sera. liaggre. cap. mēti. manna est ca. 7 abstergit 7 lauat. 7 est ca. in p̄mo gradu r̄pata hūiditate 7 siccitate. Et idē auc. Rasis v̄nit q̄ v̄tem māna cadit sup̄ arborem q̄ v̄t amariscus sicut mel. 7 q̄n facit moram sup̄ plātam illam albefcit. sed quando ibi nō moratur. sed colligitur cito cum folio eius est viridis. **A**lior ex ea est cuius color ē clarus appropinquas albedini. 7 bz panum

ruboris. **A**linisi. Manna est omnis ros ca dens sup̄ lapidē aut arborem 7 fit dulcis 7 coagula t̄ sicut mel. Et efficitur sicut gummi quemadmodum terebinthin. Et alia species q̄ vocat terebinthin. a quale ge capitulu. Terebinthin.

Operationes.

A Serapion. auc. Rasis. Mue de sp̄o cadit sup̄ arborem tamarisci est bona mīsi 7 asperitate pectoris. Colligit eā Rā 7 dicit q̄ manna cadit sup̄ arbore q̄ v̄t amariscus sicut mel. **E**tidē auc. Rasis. Est ca. in fine p̄mī sicca p̄pinquas caliditate. p̄fert relaxatōi stomachi. 7 abstringit venter. 7 p̄uenit aq̄ citrine quā do bibitur de ea. emplastrat venter. et ingreditur in medicinis apostematū. Et efficitur catary. q̄n sit caput purgum. q̄n mūdicat cerebz 7 expellit ab eo ven tositatē q̄siam. **A** Et fortificat medicinas q̄n miscet eū eis in portionib⁹ et caput purgus. 7 v̄let ap̄ata flegmā. 7 mīcetur in p̄fectionibus p̄pter excellētiam mentum quod est in ea.



MANDRAKE (MALE)

(From the Latin "Hortus Sanitatis". Mainz: Meydenbach, 1491)

of Shakespeare)¹; it was this bifurcation that led to the finding of a head and arms in the plant to match the legs and all other necessary accessories. Columella accordingly described the root as half-human.

Quamvis semihominis vesano gramine foeta
Mandragerae pariat flores.

De re rustica, x. 19, 20.

But what appeared to the philosopher as manlike, and to the professor of agriculture as half-human, was easily carried by the vulgar into a more exact delineation of the human form.

Thus in the earlier printed herbals we have actual representations of the emerging human forms, as the plant is plucked out of the ground. The *Hortus sanitatis*, for example, of 1491 gives us the accompanying representations, which have mythology written across their very face. One can see Aphrodite rising out of the ground a great deal more clearly than the Greeks saw her rising out of the sea.

We must not say that our ancestors had nothing to work upon in their representations. If we were to consult Sibthorp's splendid volumes on the Greek Flora, we should find a picture of the mandrake, root and all, which is really not unsuggestive of the lower part of the human anatomy. Our frontispiece shows a copy of the plate in Sibthorp from which it can be judged whether I have overstated the case. One way of determining the hold which the ideas about the mandrake had upon the human mind is to watch the efforts which the more scientific herbalists make to shake these beliefs off. We have already alluded to Gerarde: here is an extract from Parkinson who insists that there is no danger in the extraction of the root, and nothing human in its shape. In his *Garden of Pleasant Flowers* (A.D. 1629), much of which is repeated in the *Theatrum Botanicum*, we find as follows:—

"The Mandrake is distinguished into two kinds, the male and the female; the male hath two sorts, the one differing from the other, as shall be shewd, but of the female I know but one. The male is frequent in many gardens, but the female in that it is more tender

¹ Dodonaeus, *Hist. of Plants*, p. 437: "The roote is great and white, not muche unlyke a Radishe roote, divided into two or three partes, and sometimes growing one upon another, almost lyke the thighes and legges of a man".

and rare, is noursed up but in few. . . . The roote is long and thicke, blackish on the outside and white within, consisting many times but of one long roote, and sometimes divided into two branches, a little below the head, and sometimes into three or more, as nature listeth to bestow upon it, as my selfe have often seene by the transplanting of many parts of the rootes, but never found harm in so doing, as many idle tales have been set down in writing, and delivered up also by report, of much danger to happen to such as should digge them up or break them; neyther have I ever seene any forme of man-like or woman-like parts, in the rootes of any; but as I have said, it hath oftentimes two maine roots running down right into the ground, and sometimes three, and sometimes but one, as it likewise often happeneth to parsneps, carrots, and the like. But many counterfeit roots have been shaped to such forms, and publicly exposed to the view of all that would see them, and have been tolerated by the chief magistrates of this citye, notwithstanding that they have been informed that such practices were meere deceit and insufferable; whether this happened through their over credulitie of the thing or of the persons, or through an opinion that the information of the truth rose upon envy, I know not, I leave that to the searcher of all hearts. But this you may be bold to rest upon and assure yourselves, that such formes as have bin publicly exposed to be seene, were never so formed by nature, but only by the art and cunning of knaves and deceivers, and let this be your *Galeatum* against all such vaine, idle and ridiculous toys of men's inventions."

These be very bitter words. Let us see what the knaves and deceivers had actually been doing, animated, no doubt, by a shortage in the supply of mandrake from the Mediterranean or the Levant.

Matthioli, from whom much in Parkinson and Gerarde is derived, tells us the story of a man whom he cured in the spital at Rome of a certain disease, who in gratitude confided to him the secret of the manufacture of fictitious mandrakes; he said that he made them out of bryony roots, and sold them to ladies desirous of offspring; in order to produce the proper hair and beards and the like, which a true mandrake ought to show, he used to plant little grains of millet in artificial hollows of the root, and bury the root again until the millet seeds had sprouted and thrown out the necessary hirsute additions to

the root that was to go upon the market.¹ These attempts at producing a bearded mandrake, etc., are instructive: they show us what was the popular acceptation of the plant, and help us again to understand the bearded Venus of Cyprus of whom Macrobius speaks. Matthioli does not, like his followers, deny the bifurcation of the root, though he does deny the existence of the human form in the mandrake. As his account is valuable because of the traditions which it gathers up, I transcribe the main body of his statement on the mandrake.

Matthioli, *Comm. in lib. quartum Dioscoridis*, pp. 759 ff. *Mandragorae* utrumque genus frequens nascitur in compluribus Italiae locis, praesertim in Apulia Gargano monte, unde radicum cortices, et poma herbarii quotannis ad nos convehunt. Habentur et in viridariis spectaculi gratia: etenim Neapoli, Romae et Venetiis utramque mandragoram in hortis et vasis fictilibus satam vidimus. Sed profecto vanum ac fabulosum est, quod mandragorae radices ferant, quae humanam effigiem repraesentant, ut ignarum vulgus, et simplices mulierculae certo credunt et affirmant. Quibus etiam persuasum est, eas effodi nequaquam posse, nisi cum magno vitae periculo, cane qui effodiat radicibus adalligato, et auribus pice obaturatis, ne radices clamorem audiant effodientes, quod audita voce periclitentur pereantque fossores. Quippe radices illae, quae humanam formam referunt, quas impostores ac nebulones quidam venales circumferunt, infocundas mulieres decepturi, factitiae sunt ex harundinum, bryoniae, aliarumque plantarum radicibus. Sculpunt enim in his adhuc virentibus tam virorum quam mulierum formas, infixis hordii et milii granis, iis in locis, ubi pilos exoriri volunt; deinde facta scrobe tamdiu tenui sabulo obruunt, quousque grana illa radices emittant; id quod fiet viginti ad summum dierum spatio. Eruunt eas demum, et adnatas e granis radices acutissimo cultello scindunt, aptantque ita ut capillos, barbam et ceteros corporis pilos referant. Hujus sane rei certam fidem facere possum, quod cum Romae essem, impostorem quendam circumforaneum lue Gallica correptum nobis curare contigit, qui praeter alias innumeras imposturas, quibus circumventis hominibus, multam pecuniam extorquens, docuit et artem qua factitias sibi comparabat Mandragoras, quarum complures mihi demonstravit, asserens unam tantum interdum divitibus vendidisse quinque et viginti, nonnunquam etiam triginta aureis. Quamobrem nos, qui omnium utilitati et saluti quantum possumus consulimus, haec silentio haudquaquam involvenda duximus, ut palam omnibus fiat, quibus fallaciis et fraudibus maximo cum detrimento, et vitae saepe discrimine, homines ab iis impostoribus et nebulonibus decipiantur. Qui ut antiquorum quoque auctoritate suas imposturas abstruant, praedicant Pythagoram vocasse Mandragoram anthro-

¹ So Bacon, *Natural History* (ed. Spedding, 2, 533): "Some plants there are, but rare, that have a mossy or downy root; and likewise that have a number of threads, like beards; as mandrakes, whereof witches and impostors make an ugly image, giving it the form of a face at the top of the root, and leaving those strings to make a broad beard down to the foot".

pomorphon, quod eam humanam formam reddere coluerint. Verum sciendum est, non sine rationi mandragoram ita a Pythagora dictam fuisse: quippe quod in universum omnes fere mandragorae radices a medio ad imum bifurcatae proveniant, adeo ut crura hominum modo habere videantur. Quapropter si illo effodientur tempore, quo fructum gerunt, qui mali instar super folia ad terram procumbentia brevi pediculo appendus, parum a radice distat, hominis qui brachia desint effigiem quadantenus repraesentant. Hanc quidem rem nulli, quod sciam, vel pauci sunt, qui recte acceperunt. . . . Sed ut ad fabulam illam redeamus quae periculum denuntiat ignaris radices mandragora effodere volentibus . . . ea mihi quidem desumta videntur a Flavio Josepho, etc.

It is amusing to find that Matthioli thought that he could explain a world-wide (or almost world-wide) piece of folk-tradition by a reference to Josephus. It will be well to emphasise the diffusion of the belief in the digging of the mandrake and its dangers both chronologically and territorially. For instance, Josephus with his story of the digging of a root which he calls Baaras must be taken as evidence of the folk-lore of Palestine. He does not seem to identify the Baaras with the mandrake, and no one seems to know about it, nor whether it is used as a love-philtre, or only for medical purposes and associated magic. He seems to think that the plant is named after a place near the castle of Machaerus on the Dead Sea, where John the Baptist was incarcerated; the root had a colour like flame, and towards evening sent out a ray like lightning. We naturally compare stories of the fern-seed, and of the Aphrodite Noctiluca, referred to above. There was danger in extracting the root, but, says Josephus, there was a safe way of getting it: "They dig a trench quite round it till the hidden part of the root is very small, then they tie a dog to it, and when the dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up, but the dog dies immediately, as it were, instead of the man that would take the plant away; nor after this would any one be afraid of taking it into their hands. . . . If it be only brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, which enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."¹

It certainly looks as if it were the mandrake that Josephus and his dog had been extracting, and using as a charm against evil spirits. The same belief was noted last century in the furthest parts of Armenia.

¹ Jos., *Bell. Jud.* vii. 6, 3.

In 1822 there was published in London a translation of an Armenian work called the *Memoirs of the Life of Artemi of Wagarshapat near Mt. Ararat in Armenia*. In this work (p. 99) we find as follows: "In the vicinity of the Ushakar are found two remarkable roots. With one called *toron* is made a red colour, which is used in Russia: and the Russian name of which is *Morena*: the other, *laschtak* or *manrakor* (mandrake), bears an exact resemblance to the human figure and is used by us medicinally. It grows pretty large. A dog is usually employed to draw it out of the ground; for which purpose the earth is first dug from about it, and a dog being fastened to it by a string, is made to pull till the whole of the root is extracted. The reason of this is, according to the current report, that if a man were to pull up this root he would infallibly die, either on the spot or in a very short time; and it is also said that when it is drawn out the moan of a human voice is always heard, but I cannot answer for the truth of these circumstances, as I never witnessed them, nor indeed do I myself believe them." Here we have the same folk-tradition tinged with incipient rationalism that we detected in the English herbals, and it is expressly said that the root extracted is the mandrake.

Here is a story which seems to suggest that the mandrake tradition was, till recently, extant in Cyprus itself, which for our purposes in the interpretation of Aphrodite, is its natural home.

"I entered into conversation," says Mr. Hume in one of his journals, "with a Russian who had studied medicine in Padua, and was now settled in Limosol in Cyprus. In giving me an account of the curiosities which he possessed he mentioned to me a root, in some degree resembling a human body, for at one end it was forked, and had a knob at the other which represented the head, with two sprouts immediately below it for the arms. This wonderful root he had dug up, he said, in the Holy Land, with no little risque, for the instant it appeared above ground it killed two dogs, and would have killed him also had he not been under the influence of magic."¹

Evidently the Russian doctor at Limosol was treating his guest to some of the fancies of that end of the Levant, and retailing mandragora stories as they were in circulation in times long anterior to his own. He may have even picked them up in Cyprus itself.

¹ Quoted in Walpole, *Memoirs of Travels in Turkey*.

We have now shown sufficiently the diffusion of the legend of the mandrake in the Eastern end of the Mediterranean; its original home being certainly not far from Cyprus, the traditional centre of the Cult of Aphrodite. Down into the Middle Ages the herbalists tell us that the mandrake was imported, seeds, roots, and fruits, from that part of the world. For example, Bauhinus in his *History of Plants* (A.D. 1651) tells us that the flowers and fruits of the mandrake are produced in Italy, France, and Spain from seeds and roots imported from Crete and the Cyclades.¹

We come now to a curious alternative in the classification of the varieties of the mandrake by the early Greek magicians and doctors. A reference to Dioscorides² will show that a division into male and female was accompanied by another into black and white. The female was black and the male was white. The herbalists speculate on the reason of this division and suppose that the colour of the leaves or of the root is involved: what concerns us is not the reason for the colour assigned, but a certain consequence that ought to result from the description. If the colour has been accepted by the ancients as a part of the botanical summary, we ought to expect that, corresponding to the female mandrake, there would be a black Aphrodite: and not only so, but since we have assigned Cyprus as the home of the mandrake cult, at least for Greek religion, we ought to find the black Aphrodite in Cyprus. Now let us see what we actually do find. There are traces of the existence of a black Aphrodite in Thessaly, (among the Thesprotians) and again by a fountain in Arkadia near Mantinea: there is also a black Aphrodite in Corinth. In each case, the title of the goddess is *Melainis*. The title "the black lady" suggests a cult that is in some way connected with the world below.

Now, with regard to this cult, we are told by John Lydus³ that the rites which characterised it were transferred from Corinth to Cyprus, a statement which implies the existence of the black goddess in Cyprus, though we are not bound to accept the inference as to the direction in which the transfer was made. The passage referred to is as follows:—

¹ He professes (vol. iii. p. 617) to be quoting from Lobelius: "In Italiae provinciae Narbonae et Hispaniae hortis florem malaque maturant, semine aut radicibus ex Candia et Cycladibus insulis advectis, ut scribit Lobelius.

² *De, Mat. Med.* iv. 76.

³ *Joh. Lyd.*, 4, 45.

ἐν δὲ Κύπρῳ πρόβατον κωδίῳ ἔσκεπασμένον συνέθουν τῇ, Ἀφροδίτῃ; ὁ δὲ τρόπος τῆς ἱερατείας ἐν τῇ, Κύπρῳ ἀπὸ τῆς Κορίνθου παρήλθε ποτε. i.e. they used also to sacrifice to Aphrodite in Cyprus a sheep, wrapped in its fleece; and the form of the Cypriote ritual must have been introduced at some time or other from Corinth.

Here we must make a correction to the text which talks of the sacrifice of a sheep wrapped in its fleece. It was the worshipper that was wrapped in the fleece, and who identified himself with his offering by throwing the fleece over his head and shoulders, or by kneeling upon it. We must read, then, ἔσκεπασμένοι for ἔσκεπασμένον.¹ It seems, then, that we have recovered the cult of the black Aphrodite in Cyprus, and a fragment of the associated ritual. We need not, then, hesitate to draw conclusion from the black mandrake to the black goddess. They are the same.

The result has an interesting corollary. It is well known that there exist in some Christian Churches statues of a black Virgin, endowed liberally by the Church with the power of working miracles. One in S.E. France is especially noteworthy. It has been common amongst archæologists to assume that we have here a survival of the miracle-working images of Isis, converted to Christian use, as in many similar cases. It appears, however, from our investigation, that there is no need to go to Egypt for the required sanctity; it may very well have been current in the local worship of Aphrodite.²

If we may judge by the comparison between the little chapel of the Black Lady at Corinth as compared with the general devotion to her white sister, the black Aphrodite is not a cult figure of any prominence: she came into existence to personify one aspect of a magical plant, and would easily become a witch of the deadlier kind, and consort with Hekaté or Medea in her darker moods. In tracing her to Cyprus and possibly to Dodona (for the Thesprotian Cult probably derives from thence) we do not mean to suggest that either in Cyprus or in Dodona the white Aphrodite was not overwhelmingly the predominant one. It is, perhaps, this darker side of the cult which

¹ I see that the proposed correction had already been suggested by Robertson Smith, and wrongly rejected by Mr. A. B. Cook. See his paper on *Animal Worship in the Mycenaean Age* in J.H.S. xiv. 106 and n. 145.

² For the reference to local cults, take Pausanias, 9, 27, 4; 8, 6, 2, and 2, 2, 4; Athenaeus, 13, 588.

was responsible for the goddess being regarded in some quarters as a *ψυχοπόμπος*, a guide of souls to the other world.

As soon as we have satisfied ourselves that Aphrodite was originally a witch, and not a courtesan, we are almost obliged to infer that, like the other witch-goddesses, she had a garden of her own, in which grew her mandrake and other rarities and specialities.

It is not difficult to detect the literary reference to such gardens, though they usually appear as mere pleasure-gardens of a disreputable type. It may, however, be seen that this is not the whole of the story. For instance, Ovid tells us that the apples which beguiled Atalanta in her race, were gathered by Aphrodite herself from her own garden at Tamassos in Cyprus:—

Est ager, indigenae Tamassorum nomine dicunt,
Telluris Cypriae pars optima, quam mihi prisci
Sacravere senes, templisque accedere dotem
Hanc iusserunt meis; medio nitet arbor in arvo,
Fulva comam, fulvo ramis crepitantibus auro,
Hinc tria forte mea veniens decerpta ferebam
Aurea poma manu:

Ovid. *Met.* x. 644-650.

Here it is clear that the apples grew in a sacred enclosure, and were plucked golden from a golden bough. The reference to the dotation from ancient time reminds one of the "ancient garden of Apollo". If this fruit belongs to the earlier ritual in the old-time garden, it ought to be the mandrake-apple that was plucked: and then it would be love-magic and not mere covetousness that caused Atalanta to surrender the race to Hippomenes. Ovid tells us plainly that she was in love with him.

Now let us see how the mandrake story has coloured the medicine and religion of Northern and Western Europe. We shall show first that amongst our Teutonic ancestors it was the subject of much wizardry, and that it had the same name as the witch who operated with it. Next we shall go on to show that the legend developed on French soil in such a way as to produce a belief in a fairy-form, female in character, answering to Aphrodite at the other end of the evolutionary scale, and again named after the plant. We take these points in order, they are of great importance, because of the difficulty which some people will feel in accepting the identification of the primitive plant with the archaic divinity: the difficulty is a real one: we may have to admit

the original equivalence of Apollo and the apple, and we certainly cannot explain the name of the apple as a by-product from the name of the god: but is it as evident that we can equate Artemis the woman's doctor with artemisia the woman's medicine? May not the latter be a true adjective to the former? And why should we assume an equivalence between Aphrodite and mandragora which would almost require us to explain the former as a linguistic representation of the latter? These difficulties have been, in part, met already, as for example by the Hesychian equation between Aphrodite and the mandrake, and by the parallelism between the bearded mandrake and the bearded Venus of Cyprus: if, however, we can show that in Germany the witch and the plant have the same name, and that in France, after the original witch had disappeared from the legend, a female fairy was produced, it will be clear that the equivalence of the plant with the potency that controls it lies in the very nature of the case.

Let us then take up the German evidence. Bauhinus in his *Historia Plantarum* already cited, will tell us that amongst the Germans the plant is called *Alraun Maenlein*, but amongst the Belgians, *Mandragora Manneken*; amongst the Italians, *Mandragora Maschio*; amongst the French, *Mandragora* or *Mandegloire*. The names are very suggestive; we have before us the belief that there was a mannikin in the root, that mandrake was in two kinds, male and female, and that in French by an easy linguistic perversion, it came to be called *Hand of Glory*, of which more presently.

In German, then, it was known as *alraun* and this is one of the names of the Teutonic witches, or, if we prefer it, goddesses. An *alruna*-maiden is a witch who operates with *alraun*: she was the plant in the first instance, of necessity she remains closely connected with it.¹

There is no more powerful German magic than the *alraun*: it was a birth-helping medicine, amongst other potencies; for instance, in some lines of *Frauenlob*,² we are told as follows:—

¹ We may take the statement of the equivalence of the names of the witch and the medicine from Ducange: "Ita vocavere Gothi veteresque Germani magas suas: sed et *alrunae* nomen inditum fuisse mandragorae radicibus, quod praestantis usus in arte magica superstitiosis esse videretur" (Loccenius in *Antiq. Sue. Goth.*). "Hodie etiam a Germanis *alrunen* magas vocare constat."

² Ed. Ettmüller, *minneleich* 15, p. 26.

Sit, wip, der süeze ersüezen vürbaz reichet,
ouch, alsam der alrüne glanz
der berendigen vrouwen schranz,
berliche bürde weichet,

upon which Ettmüller remarks that "people seem to have believed that mandragora facilitated parturition. Perhaps it was the potency of the human *alrüne* (the witch, the enchantress) that had passed over with the witch to the plant." The observation is interesting, though the transfer of name and potency was probably in the opposite direction. It shows that the mandrake had its cult in Germany where it even discharged some of the functions of the artemisia, as if Aphrodite had taken over the duties of Artemis and acted as her *locum tenens*. The same thing comes out in a passage from Lonicer's *Krauterbuch* (A.D. 1582)¹: "Alraun rinder dienet zu augen- arzneyn. Dieser rinder drey heller gewicht schwer für den frauen gemacht (sc. genitalia) gehalten, bringet ihnen ihre zeit, treibet aus die todte geburt." The language is decidedly Artemisian.

Grimm tells us further that a man who had *alraun* about him could change his form from childhood to age, or conversely at his pleasure. Still more remarkable is the statement that the mandrake had to be dressed like a doll, and fed twice a day. We shall refer to this again, as it is important for the development of the image worship associated with the inherent deity of the plant: dolls may easily become gods, and of course, conversely. There can be no doubt as to the belief in the human form of the mandrake when that belief expresses itself in the concrete forms of a cult requiring food and raiment.

A few remarks may further be made with regard to the property of rejuvenescence attributed above to the mandrake, accompanied by a converse power in the case of young persons. It is precisely this power (interpreted of course sexually) that is attributed to Aphrodite, and furnishes one of her titles. For instance, she is called *Ambo-logēra*, the Postponer of Old Age: a term which has its perfect explanation in a passage of Plutarch:—

καὶ ἡμᾶς οὐπω παντάπασιν ἡ Ἀφροδίτη πέφενγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσευχόμεθα δῆπονθεν, λέγοντες ἐν τοῖς τῶν θεῶν ὕμνοις·

Ἀνάβαλε ἄνω τὸ γῆρας

ὦ καλὰ Ἀφροδίτη.

—Plut., *Sympos.* 3, 6, 4.

¹ P. 106. Quoted by Grimm, *Myth.* iv. 1673 (Eng. tr.).

THE ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF APHRODITE 21

It appears that a prayer for the adjournment of old age may have been actually incorporated in the ritual of the goddess. With this, we may take another petition addressed to the goddess in an epigram of Martial:—

Supplex ille rogat, pro se miserisque duobus,
Hunc juvenem facias, hunc, Cytherea, virum:

—Mart. II, 81, 5.

which will help us to understand the kind of help desired at the opposite end of the sexual scale.

This power of sexual modification is responsible for the belief of the middle ages that the man who had the mandrake could be man or child just as he would: "swenne er wil sô ist er ein kindelin, swenne er wil sô mác er alt sin" (Grimm, *ut supra*).

Now let us come to the French traditions. We have the belief that the "hand-of-glory" can be dug up under a gibbet, both in England and France. This "hand-of-glory" is the *main de gloire* evolved linguistically out of *Mandragore*. We have already explained that for mandrake to be effective it must be dug from under the gallows on which an innocent victim had been hanged: and we pointed out the same folk-tradition in Medea's gathering of the plant that had been fed with the ichor of the wronged and suffering Prometheus. The *main de gloire* became on the one side, an actual hand to be dug out, and on the other side it evolved into a French fairy named *Magloire*, who could presumably do all that the mandrake was expected to do: *Magloire* was a French *alruna*-maiden, a resuscitated Aphrodite. The importance of this for the equation of the mandragora and the goddess is obvious.

Now for some bits of evidence.

Chéruel in his *Dictionnaire Historique des Institutions Moeurs, et Coutumes de la France* (A.D. 1855, ii. 726) tells us that mandragora is a plant to which the peasants in some of the provinces attribute a marvellous virtue. He then quotes from the *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris* in the fifteenth century with regard to the mandrake: "que maintes sottés gens gardaient et avaient si grand foi en cette ordure, que pour vrai ils croyaient fermement que tant comme ils l'avaient, pourvu qu'il fut en beaux drapeaux de soie ou de lin enveloppé, jamais ils ne seraient pauvres".

Here again we have the mandrake dressed up (remember that in

the original Aphrodite Cult the goddess was always draped), and this well-dressed mandrake would make one rich, had in fact the key to hidden treasures. Chérue! goes on to show that this belief lasted into the nineteenth century, and quotes an extraordinary story from St. Palaye of a conversation he had with a peasant as to the existence of the *main de gloire* at the foot of a mistletoe-bearing oak! The *main de gloire* or *mandrake* was for this peasant a kind of mole at the root of the tree, which had to be regularly fed, and would always make you rich by returning twice as much as you spent upon it. But woe to the man who neglected to supply the mandrake with its proper nutriment! The plant had become an animal, but was still parlous stuff to deal with. For convenience of reference we transcribe the description: "Il y a longtemps qu'il règne en France une superstition presque générale au sujet de *Mandragores*: il en reste encore quelque chose parmi les paysans. Comme je demandais un jour à un paysan un gui de chêne, il me conta qu'on disait qu'au pied des chênes qui portent du gui, il y avait une main de gloire (c'est à dire en leur langage une mandragore), qu'elle était aussi avant dans la terre que le gui était élevé sur l'arbre; que c'était une espèce de taupe; que celui qui la trouve était obligé de lui donner de quoi la nourrir, soit du pain, de la viande, ou toute autre chose; et que ce qu'il lui avait donné une fois il était obligé de lui donner tous les jours et dans la même quantité, sans quoi elle faisait mourir ceux qui y manquaient. Deux hommes de sons pays qu'il me nomma en étaient morts, disait-il; mais en récompense cette main de gloire rendait au double le lendemain ce qu'on lui avait donné la veille. Si elle avait reçu aujourd'hui pour un écu de nourriture celui que le lui avait donné en trouvait deux le lendemain, et ainsi de toute autre chose: tel paysan qu'il me nomma encore et qui était devenu fort riche, avait trouvé à ce qu'on croyait, ajouta-t-il, une de ces mains-de-gloire."¹

¹ It is amusing to see the way in which the "Hand of Glory" is worked up in the poetry of the Ingoldsby Legends, and with what fidelity to tradition, excepting only that the *main de gloire* is taken from the actual murderer on the gibbet and not dug up from beneath it. The author produces the following spell:—

Now open lock
To the Dead Man's knock!
Fly bolt and bar and band!
Nor move nor swerve,
Joint, muscle, or nerve,

I have not yet succeeded in determining the meaning of the relation between the mandrake and the mistletoe-bearing oak. There is something here waiting to be unravelled. We have also to find out how the oak became a gibbet.¹ The legend of the mandrake appears to be crossed at certain points by that of the mugwort: both of them have in common with the springwort (whatever that was) the power of enriching their possessors. The mandrake, like the other famous plants, was magic as well as medicine.

In spite of the crossing of cults to which we have referred, the main point remains clear; viz.: that mandragora is magic rather than medicine; and that it is peculiarly a love-magic. It is as old as the Book of Genesis, whatever may be the date to which that book of Hebrew traditions is ultimately assigned. It has lasted as a love-medicine to our own times. As Isaac Vossius said in the seventeenth century,

"Mandragorae putatur vis inesse amorem conciliandi".²

The superstition referred to was noticed by Sibthorp to prevail amongst the young Athenians, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, who kept pieces of mandrake root about their persons in little bags for amatory reasons.³

Our next step is to ask whether the apple of Love turns up in the figured representations of Aphrodite, in the same way as we showed the apple to occur in coins representing Apollo, and elsewhere in connection with the god. One recalls at once that some of the most famous statues of Aphrodite represent her with an apple in her hand. The Venus of Melos, for example; or the famous statue of the sculptor Kanaches in Sikyon of which Pausanias says that it was made of gold and ivory and that the hands held, one a poppy and the other an apple. Here the selected fruit and flower are

At the spell of the Dead Man's hand!
Sleep all who sleep! Wake all who wake!
But be as the Dead for the Dead Man's sake!

This is not bad. The hand of glory operates on the one hand as a springwort, and on the other as the soporific anæsthetic mandragora.

¹ We might compare the hanging of victims (or, at least, their heads) upon a sacred oak. See A. B. Cook, *European Sky-god*, p. 397.

² Vossius, *De. idol.* lib. v.

³ "Radice frustula, in sacculis gesta, pro amuleto amatorio hodie, apud juvenes Atticos, in usu sunt" [Sibthorp, *Flora Graeca* (A.D. 1819), iii. 16].

suggestive, for the mandragora is a sort of combination of poppy and apple, from the old Greek medical point of view. The apple inherits its magical power, the poppy its soporific value.

Then we have "a terra-cotta figure from Corinth, of which both hands are held against the breast, with a dove in the right hand, *an apple in the left*,"¹ or we might refer to "the bronze in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, representing her as holding the hem of her robe in the left hand, and *an apple in the right*, and wearing a flower-wrought crown."² Then there is the well-known statue called the Venus Genetrix in the Louvre, reproducing some religious image of the divinity of vegetation, as we may believe that the hand wit



VENUS, WITH SCEPTRE AND APPLE
(From copper coin of imperial date in British Museum. From Aphrodisias in Caria)



VENUS GENETRIX
(From a silver denarius of Sabina, the wife of Hadrian, in the collection of Mr. A. B. Cook)

the apple is a correct restoration.³ Other artistic representations may be quoted, but these will suffice. It appears that Aphrodite, then, resembles Apollo in one of her leading cult symbols, the apple. Not only so, but she appears to have occasionally taken a title from the symbol, parallel to *Apollo Maleates*, for in a coin of Magnesia on the Maeander she appears as *Ἀφροδίτη Μηλεία*, and this is the apple-Aphrodite and not the Aphrodite of Melos.⁴

How, then, are we to explain this concurrence in cult symbol between Apollo and Aphrodite? We know the meaning of Apollo's apple; it has been shown to be the sacred tree which is Apollo's self: it is, however, impossible that this can be true of Aphrodite; she is not the apple-tree nor the mistletoe. The explan-

¹ Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 673.

² *Ibid.* 692.

³ *Ibid.* The coin representing Venus with sceptre and apple is a copper coin of imperial date, in the British Museum, from Aphrodisias in Caria. The Venus Genetrix coin is a silver denarius of Sabina the wife of Hadrian, in the Collection of Mr. A. B. Cook.

⁴ See *Zeit. f. Num.* 1885, t. 12, p. 318, pl. 13^o.

ation is that her apple is a substitute for the mandrake-apple; she is, as Hesychius explains, the "Lady of the Mandrake"; and when we put this apple back into her hand, well! that is her way of telling us her past history! The two apples, the Apolline and the Aphrodisian are respectively the oracular apple and the love-apple, and the apple, as a symbol of love, is derived from the earlier fruit. The oracular apple will survive in folk-lore as a means of determining, by its rind or its pips, what one's luck in love is like to be.

Now let us see whether we can find any evidence for the substitution of the Apolline-apple for the original love-apple in the Aphrodite Cult. How are we to transfer the symbolic fruit from Delphi or Delos to Cyprus? The answer is as follows:—

There was a mythical story current preserved to us by Servius, or one of his interpolators, in his commentary on Vergil, according to which a certain young man, named *Melos*, went from Delos to Cyprus, in the days of King Cinyras, the father of Adonis: he became bosom friend of Adonis and married a young Cypriote lady, a priestess of Aphrodite. After the death of Adonis, the heart-broken Melos and his companion hanged themselves upon a tree. Aphrodite, in pity, turned Melos into an apple-tree, which was called Melon in memory of the tragic event, and his partner into a dove. In this way, then, the apple of Delos may be said to have been consecrated in the shrine of Adonis. Here is the very passage of Servius, from which mythological tradition it is possible to extract some further evidences of the way in which religious explanations presented themselves to the mind of an educated Greek.

Serv. in Verg. *eccl.* viii. 37, *roscida mala*:—

Matutini roris humore perfusa. (Sane unde Melus Graece traxerit nomen, fabula talis est: Melus quidam in Delo insula ortus, relicta patria fugit ad insulam Cyprum, in qua eo tempore Cinyras regnabat, habens filium Adonem: hic Melum sociatum Adoni filio iussit esse, cumque eum videret esse indolis bonae, propinquam suam dicatam et ipsam Veneri, quae Pelia dicebatur, Melo coniunxit: ex quibus nascitur Melus, quem propterea quod Venus Adonis amore teneretur, tanquam amati filium inter aras praecipit nutrir. Sed postquam Adonis apri ictu extinctus est, senex Melus cum dolore mortis Adonis ferre non posset, laqueo se ad arborem suspendens vitam finit, ex cuius nomine Melus appellatus est. Pelia autem coniux eius in eo arbore se adpendens necata est. Venus misericordia eorum mortis ducta, Adoni luctum continuum praestitit. Melum in pomum sui nominis vertit, Peliam coniugem eius in columbam mutavit: Melum autem puerum,

qui de Cinyrae genere solus supererat, cum adultum vidisset collecta manu redire ad Delum praecepit; qui cum ad insulam pervenisset, et rerum esset ibi potitus, Melon condidit civitatem: et cum primus oves tonderi, et vestem de lanis fieri instituisset, meruit ut eius nomine oves *μηλα* appellarentur.)

Thus far Servius, or his interpolator Daniel. It is interesting to see the attempt to connect *apples* with *sheep* in Greek. Now let us return to Aphrodite whom we have justified in apple-stealing from Apollo.

Our next enquiry should be as to the provenience of the mandragora: how did it come into Greek magic or medicine? Is it a home product, or has it been brought from abroad? Or was it first brought from abroad and then discovered at home? And did its discovery result in the establishment of a garden of Aphrodite, with such plants as were likely to further her particular ends? When we examine the herbals we do not get much light on these questions, though it is clear we are dealing with a continuous tradition of long standing. Gerarde, for example, simply tells us¹ that "mandrake groweth in hot Regions, in woods and mountaines, in Mount Garganus in Apulia, and such like places. We have them onely planted in gardens, and are not elsewhere to be found in England." Upon which Parkinson enlarges as follows:² "They grow in woods and shadowy places, and the female on river-sides in diverse countries, beyond the Alpes, but not on this side naturally, as in Graecia, the *Isles of Candy*, and others in the *Mediterranean Sea*, Italy also and Spain: with us they are nursed up as rarities in gardens".

Now wherever Parkinson took his information from, whether from the actual trading botanists of his day, or from early writers, does not so much matter. The significant thing is that the mandrake is found in the Greek islands. That puts a new light on Aphrodite's migrations, and her cult centres in Cyprus and Cythera. The natural inference is that the plant was brought down the Levant by Phœnician traders. Aphrodite is the imported mandragora of early times, and has undergone divinisation in the same way as Apollo and Artemis.

As soon as Aphrodite has shed her transformation raiment, and become a plant again, we see the meaning of the magic cestus which she used to wear, with which she did witchcraft on Olympus and

¹ p. 352.

² *Theatr. Botan.* p. 344.

elsewhere. It is the belt of mandrake roots which the women of ancient times wore next their skin, for reasons detailed above.

Its magic virtue is clear from the language of Homer. It was witchcraft and made its wearer, for the time of wearing, into a witch. Hence Hera begs its use that she may operate on Zeus with more than normal charms: and it is interesting that in describing the loan of the cestus Homer lets us see, behind his designedly obscure language, a girdle containing a number of plants used as philtres: the passage runs as follows in a translation:—

Give me the loveliness and power to charm
Whereby thou reigns't o'er gods and men supreme.

Then Venus spoke and from her bosom loosed
Her broidered Cestus, wrought with every charm
To win the heart; there Love, there young Desire,
There fond Discourse, and there Persuasion dwelt.

—Iliad, 14, 197, tr. Derby.

These potencies were, we suspect, originally vegetables, and the chief of them was the mandrake. Lucian, in his *Dialogues of the Gods*, makes Athene roundly charge Aphrodite with witchcraft, and Athene and Hera refuse to take part in the contest for Beauty, unless Aphrodite takes off that thing. How could a young man give a fair verdict, and it had to be a man's verdict, if one of the competitors was mandraked and talismaned, so as to incapacitate his judgment in advance! Under such circumstances we should all have gone wrong, even if a thousand Ænones had called from the bush and told us to give the apple to Athene.

Now comes the most difficult problem of all, the question of the name. Is there anything that philology can confidently say on the subject? Or have we had so many bad guesses that there is no prospect of doing anything more than add one to the number of those that already exist? The one thing that seems clear is that the name is not Greek; and from this it follows as, at all events, a reasonable hypothesis, in view of the traditional connection of Aphrodite with Cyprus, that the name is Semitic and probably Phœnician. What would the goddess be likely to be called if she were really my lady Mandragora? The Hebrew name is *Dudaim* for the mandrakes found in the field, and it is matter of nearly general agreement that this has to do with a root that means "Love". Thus "David" is

said to mean "Beloved," and Solomon is actually called Jedid-Jah or "Beloved of Jahveh," the name being supposed by some to answer to a primitive form *Dodo*. The name of the mandrake *Dudai* would be an adjectival form belonging to this root; put the word for fruit before it and we have *pridudai* = פרי דודאי. It will be recognised that we have here something that might be the ancestor to the Greek A-phrodite. Now how would this be expressed in Phœnician? Fruit would be פֶּר = *phar*, and if we may judge by the analogy of the forms David (Dōd) and Dido, we might expect something like *phar-didi*, from which it is not a long step to the Greek spelling. Ἀφροδίτη would, to reach its primitive form, lose a prefixed vowel and change its last consonant from *t* to *d*, so as to read Φροδιδη. Now it is curious that there is some sign of wavering in the spelling of the name on early Greek vases. We find, for example, *Aphro-tide*. It may be an accidental permutation but it arouses suspicion. The form *Aphrodide* I have not found.

According to this suggestion, Aphrodite is simply love-apple, Græcised out of a primitive Semitic (Phœnician) form.

I see that this derivation has been in part anticipated, and that a number of German scholars have suggested that the first part of the goddess' name is connected with the root פֶּר (fruit). The idea which they thus reach is that of fruitfulness, a very proper idea to be connected with the more wholesome aspects of human love. It is, however, an insufficient explanation. There must be some other idea involved than that of fruit or fruitfulness. The mandrake cannot be fruit without some other quality to distinguish it from other fruits; it might possibly be fruitfulness in the abstract, if every one who used it had that idea before his mind. It is, however, doubtful if this could be maintained. It would suit the case of Rachel in the Book of Genesis, but not the devotees at Amathus or Paphos.

Moreover, we have an important analogy, which suggests that the name of the goddess has something to do with evil magic, as well as good magic.

The name of the Roman goddess Venus is one of the conundrums of Philology. It should, probably, be connected with the Latin *venenum* (poison) in the form *venesnum*, in which case Venus is simply the witch-medicine for love, perhaps the very same witch-medicine that was used further east: her name is not Love but

Philtre.¹ Analogy, then, suggests something more than "fruitfulness" as the underlying meaning of Aphrodite. Those who suspected the Semitic root to be פֶּר did not carry their enquiry far enough.²

In this connection we might almost have divined a herbal element in the Cult of Aphrodite from the language of Sappho. Mr. A. B. Cook draws my attention to the opening line of the first fragment of Sappho, where Aphrodite is addressed as

ποικιλόθρον', ἀθάνατ' Ἀφροδίτα,

and where some controversy, or, at least, divergence of interpretation, has arisen over the meaning of ποικιλόθρονος.

Enmann, in his work on *Cyprus and the Origin of the Cult of Aphrodite* makes the word to mean that the goddess is seated on the gay sky of Night, she the golden one or the one that dwells in a golden house.³

Walter Headlam, in his new book of translations, takes the word in the same sense. On the other hand, and with greater probability, Wüstemann⁴ took the word to be derived from θρόνα ποικίλα, in

¹ Giles, *Manual of Comp. Phil.*, § 223; "*venenum*, literally 'love-potion' for *uenes-no-m*".

² Those who wish to follow the matter up may like to have the following references:—

Tümpel, *Ares and Aphrodite*, p. 680. (*Supplement-band XI der Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*.) Ἀφροδίτη, ein Wort, dessen Semitischen Ursprung schon Völcker (*Rhein. Mus.*, 1883, *Ausländische Götterculte bei Homer*); Scheffele (*Pauly, Real. Enc. art. Venus*) und Schwenck (*Myth.* iv. 211, 1846) vertheidigt haben, unter Zurückführung auf die Wurzel פֶּר mit der Bedeutung der Fruchtbarkeit, und mit Recht.

Tümpel adds in a note an alternative solution as follows:—

Sowie Röth (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, i. 252 note) und Preller (*Gr. Myth.* i. 263), unter Berufung auf das Assyrische פֶּרִידָה (phönisch mit Artikel אֶפְרִידָה "die Taube," was vielleicht vorzuziehen wäre, wenn nicht eine Einführung der zahmen weissen Taube der Semiramis in der vorasiatischen Culten der Natur-göttin vor 600 a. chr. selbst unwahrscheinlich wäre (Hehn, *Culturpfl.*, 296 f.).

I have not verified these references of Tümpel. It appears to me that the idea of "fruit" or "fruitfulness" is to be understood, as explained above as *Fruit of Love*, or *Love-apple*.

³ Enmann, *Kypros und der Ursprung des Aphroditekultus in Mem. de l'Académie Imp. des Sciences de S. Pétersbourg*, vii^e serie, tom. xxxiv. No. 13, p. 77.

Rhein. Mus., xxiii. 238.

which case *θρόνα* means "gay flowers" or "magic herbs," and the adjective *ποικιλόθρονος* has nothing to do with "a throne": we may refer to the use of *ποικίλα θρόνα* ("quaint enamelled flowers") in Homer (Il. 22, 441) for the original of the Sapphic adjective; but that *θρόνα* may be taken in the sense of "Magic herbs" appears from Theocritus,¹ *τά θρόνα ταῦθ' ὑπόμαζον*, and Nikander.²

From this point of view, Aphrodite *ποικιλόθρονος* is very nearly the same as Aphrodite *Ἀνθεια*: only the flowers have a medical intention, a Medean quality.

It is admitted that this is somewhat tentative and uncertain; but it is the best solution that has yet presented itself to my mind. As to the meaning of mandragora, I have nothing to add to the attempts that have been made at its explanation.

To sum up, Aphrodite is a personification of the mandrake or love-apple. She holds this in her hand in the form of fruit, and wears it round her waist, or perhaps as an armlet, in the form of a girdle in which the root of the plant is entwined. Whether she had a herb-garden in which the plant was cherished, along with other similar stimulating vegetables, is doubtful; there was at Athens, near the Ilissus, a sanctuary of Aphrodite *ἐν κήποις*, but what this means is quite uncertain. Perhaps it was only a municipal name, say "the park". The plant appears to have come down the Levant, in the first instance, probably from Cyprus. As Cyprus is in ancient times a Phœnician island, it is possible that the name of the goddess may be a transfer of a Phœnician name for love-apple. The apple which the goddess holds in her hand in certain great works of art, is a substitute for the primitive apple-of-love.

¹ Idyll. 2, 59.

² Ther. 493, 936.

