

CHAPTER I

ZEUS AS GOD OF THE BRIGHT SKY.

§ 1. Zeus and the Daylight.

(a) Zeus the Sky.

THE supreme deity of the ancient Greeks, during their historical period at least, was Zeus. His name, referable to a root that means 'to shine,' may be rendered 'the Bright One'.¹ And, since a whole series of related words in the various languages of the Indo-European family is used to denote 'day' or 'sky',² it can be safely inferred that Zeus was called 'the Bright One' as being the god of the bright or day-light sky.³ Indeed a presumption

¹ K. Brugmann *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*² Strassburg 1897 i. 204, 210, 263, 276 f., 307, 527, 797, 1906 ii. 1. 133 f., *id.* *Kurze vergleichende Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen* Strassburg 1904 p. 312, Schrader *Reallex.* p. 670, H. Hirt *Die Indogermanen* Strassburg 1907 ii. 506. The Greek Zeus and the Old Indian *Dyaus* represent an Indo-European **d̥i̯eu-s* from the root *d̥i̯*: *d̥i̯*: *d̥i̯a*, 'to shine.'

² This series as collected by Walde *Lat. etym. Wörterb. s.vv.* deus, dies, and Hirt *op. cit.* ii. 734 f. includes the following forms: Greek *ἠέλιος* 'at mid-day,' *εὐδία* 'clear sky'; Latin *sub dīvo* 'under the open sky,' *dies* 'day'; Welsh *dīw dyw dydd* 'day,' Breton *dez* 'day,' Cornish *det* 'day,' Irish *indiu* 'to-day'; Gothic *sin-teins* 'daily'; Lithuanian *dienà* 'day,' Slavonic *dini* 'day'; Albanian *dito* 'day'; Armenian *tiv* 'day'; Old Indian *dīvā* 'on the day,' *dīvām*, 'day, sky.'

³ Two misleading explanations may here be noted. (1) E. H. Meyer *Germanische Mythologie* Berlin 1891 pp. 182, 220 holds that Zeus denotes properly the 'hurler' or 'discharger' of rays (cp. H. Grassmann *Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda* Leipzig 1873—1875 p. 600 s. v. div.) and infers that he must have been the lightning-god, not as is commonly supposed the god of bright day-light. But the frequent use of the word *dyaus* in the *Rig-veda* for 'sky' or 'day' (A. A. Macdonell *Vedic Mythology* Strassburg 1897 p. 21, P. von Bradke *Dyaus Asura* Halle 1885 p. 110) and the existence of the forms recorded in the foregoing note are conclusive in favour of the common view.

(2) Frazer *Golden Bough*¹ ii. 369, *ib.*² iii. 456 f., suggested that Zeus was named 'Bright' as being the oak-god, *i.e.* god of the tree whose wood was used in fire-making. Against this view I protested in the *Class. Rev.* 1902 xvi. 372, as did Gruppe *Gr. Myth. Rel.* p. 1100 n. 2. And Frazer *op. cit.*³ ii. 358 n. 1 admits that he 'was disposed to set aside much too summarily what may be called the meteorological side of Zeus and Jupiter,' though he still regards the oak-tree as the primary, not a secondary, element in their composite nature (*ib.* ii. 373 ff.). I now hold, and shall hope in vol. ii of the present work to show, that the oak was originally the tree of the earth-mother rather than the tree of the sky-father, and that the latter acquired it in the first instance through association with the former.

C.

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