



Research Article

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Aurora's Pearls. Niccolo Giannettasio's Variant of the Classical Myth of Eos

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Abstract

The Jesuit Niccolò Giannettasio or Parthenius (1648-1715) was one of several Italian poets, who clearly saw the timelessness and versatility of the ancient myths, and playfully used to create new myths, based on the classic model. One of his works, the *Halieutica*, a didactic poem on fishing, composed in 1689, reveals a story about the nymph Drymo, who is hopelessly in love with the fisherman Ianthus, a son of the Ganges nymph Chrysorhoe, whom she finally conquers with the help of Aurora using a love potion made of pearls. The story tells us about fishing and the aition of the pearl. The depiction of the scene was artistically taken up by Francesco Solimena and creates a contemporaneous connection between literature and art. Although the works have been reprinted several times, there is still no critical edition. Some researchers, such as C. Schindler and Y. Haskell, have studied the author and his works in depth. Of his numerous mythographic re-creations, only a few have been edited by the author and her colleagues (see www.oeaw.ac.at/antike/mythdb). This is a representative example of how Giannettasio experimented with myths, varying genealogies or creating new ones, or setting known mythological stories in a new time and place, and the like. His works were known beyond the borders of Italy and as a Jesuit he taught for more than thirty years. Nevertheless, Giannettasio moved in some anti-Jesuit and heretical circles in Naples. However, he escaped prosecution and retired to the locus amoenus Cocomella, where he continued to write.

Keywords: Early Modern Age, Niccolò Giannettasio, *Halieutica*, Aurora, Drymo

Introduction

Giannettasio was a successful author in his time and his works were read beyond the borders of present-day Italy in England, France and Germany, among other places. He was highly successful in integrating his didactic poetry based on the ancient form with the Jesuit ideal of education, and was skilfully employing and creatively transforming classical myths to serve pedagogical purposes¹ [1]. An example of the mythological figures of Aurora and Drymo will show here how the author poetically played with the myths and skilfully interwove them with historical and geographical circumstances to attract, entertain, and instruct the reader. He used the classical, ancient mythical figures, freely reshaped them, changed the location and the events, and combined them with new figures, so that a completely new version of the myth was created. In this way, he is in the tradition of the authors of the Renaissance, especially in Italy, who also made numerous rearrangements and new versions of myths. What is distinctive about the myth discussed here is that artistic interpretation occurred simultaneously with its literary original.

The Jesuit *ratio studiorum*² of 1599 provides clear instruction on the use on pagan Latin literature in the curriculum of the Society of Jesus' schoolmen³ [2,3]. More than 80 years later, however, at the time of our Neapolitan poet Giannettasio (1648-1715), there was still only a small step between being honoured for one's poetry and being accused of heresy.

Nicola or Niccolò Partenio Giannettasio was born on March 5th, 1648, in Naples, where he was the only member of his immediate family to survive the plague of 1656 with any help⁴ [4]. So, he learnt to look after himself from an early age and taught himself mathematics, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. After studying philosophy and law, he entered the Jesuit order in 1666 at the age of eighteen⁵ [5]. Assigned to the teaching profession, he taught Greek, Latin, theology and philosophy at various Jesuit schools in southern Italy before being recalled to the Collegio Massimo in Naples, where he taught mathematics until 1705. He then retired and moved to Sorrento, where he continued to work until his death⁷ in Massa Lubrense, Sorrento, in 1715. The poet's oeuvre included textbooks of cosmography, geography, a three-volume history of Naples

(1713), and above all several collections of poems which became well known during his lifetime⁸ [6-8]. Unfortunately, to date there is no critical edition of his works⁹ [9]. To give two examples of his popularity, the Florentine librarian Antonio Magliabechi (1633-1714) recommended the works of the Jesuit poet ('buon poeta latino') to the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)¹⁰, who in turn recommended them to the Scottish lawyer Thomas Burnett of Kemney (1656-1729)¹¹ [10,11].

He composed his various epic didactic poems about fishing, fishermen, seamanship, naval warfare and cosmography¹² in the tradition of antiquity and the Middle Ages¹³. This tradition was picked up by the Jesuits in Italy and France in the 17th century, as Haskell and Schindler have described in great detail¹⁴ [12-14]. But in his poetry Giannettasio follows not only Ovid and Virgil, but none other than Giovanni Pontano (1429-1503) and the Neapolitan author Jacopo Sannazzaro (1457-1530)¹⁵ [15], both members of the Academy at Naples. In Schindler's article she divides three types of narratives in the didactic poetry of our author, the historical, historical-biographical, and the classical myths with the invented ones¹⁶ [16]. One example of the last type just mentioned is to be

introduced representatively of how Giannettasio combines ancient myths and his own inventions in a very refined and poetic way. His writing is full of geographical, historical, topographical and of course mythical references. His language is clear but verbose and long-winded. Many of his mythical narratives, such as those dealing with the figures of Columelis¹⁷ and Pausilippus¹⁸, were set in the surroundings of Sorrento, near the Jesuit villa Cocomella¹⁹, where he had already often spent time during the decades preceding his final retirement in 1705 [17-19]. This estate was situated on the seaside, founded as a convent by Jesuits in 1597. In its beautiful ambience he had apparently written his didactic poetry inspired by the idyllic environment. It seems that Cocomella served as a refuge from political and military turbulence and due to his poor health²⁰ [20]. Giannettasio himself, in his letter of dedication to Carlo II de Cárdenas (1652-1694) in his book *Halieutica*, says that there was a famine in Naples (*aetatis nostrae acerba nimium tabes, & penitus intoleranda*). While much of Europe had been involved in the War of the Spanish Succession²¹ since 1701 and Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736) had been expelling French and Spanish populations from Italy. Naples, until the Austrian occupation in 1707, had sometimes been close to civil war²² [21,22].

* For their suggestions and help I am grateful to Heinz Havast, Gerhard Holzer and Thomas Stockinger. – All translation are made by the author, if not otherwise specified.

¹ Schindler (2016: 31).

² See chapters *Regulae professoris rhetorice* 10; 18 (*affigantur carmina*), *regulae professoris humanitatis* 1; 9; 10 (*affigantur carmina*) of the *Ratio atque institutio studiorum* Societas Iesu (1599). The implementation of the Jesuit theatre within the *ratio studiorum* in 1599 makes it clear that the *regulae* were loosened and not practiced down to the last dot ad comma. More than 100 000 plays were performed during 200 years, see McNaspy (2001: 3708). For the *ratio studiorum* see Bangert (1986²: 106); O'Malley (2006, repr. 2007: XXX-XXXI); Loach (2006, repr. 2007: 66-85).

³ Bangert (1986²: 106).

⁴ For further biographical information see Haskell (2003: 70-75); Haskell (2007: 188-89); Tarzia (2000: 448-449; Schindler (2001: 145; 2014: 30; 2016:24-26). A biography written by himself and intimates in the *Opera Omnia Poetica I* (1715: 1-9), published posthumously in the *Giornale de Letterati d'Italia* 38,1 (1727), 269-289. Mazzarella (1816: 5 pp.).

⁵ Haskell (2003: 71-72).

⁶ Collegio di Amantea in Calabria (Latin and Greek), Collegio di Palermo and Naples (theology, philosophy), Reggio di Calabria (philosophy), Naples (mathematics). See Tarzia (2000: 448-449), also Haskell (2007: 188).

⁷ Schindler (2002: 245-260).

⁸ *Piscatoria* (thirteen eclogues) et *nautica* (eight books) (1685, 1686, 1692), *Universalis Cosmographiae elementa* (Naples 1688, 1701), *Halieutica* (Naples 1689, 1715), *Universalis geographiae elementa* (Naples 1692), *Naumachica seu de bello navali libri V* (1694, 1715), *Aetates Surrentinae* (1696), *Bellica* (fifteen books, 1697, 1699), *Autumni Surrentini* (1698), *Ver Herculaneum* (1704), *Opera omnia poetica* (Naples 1715), *Historia Neapolitana* (Naples 1713), *Hyemes Puteolanae* (posthumously edited in the *Annus eruditus* 1722), *Xaverius Viator seu Saberidos* (unfinished, posthum Naples 1721), and various poems. On the popularity of Giannettasio's poetry, see Grant (1965: 216) and (2022: 399-400).

⁹ See the translation of the 8th book of the *Nautica* by Navarro Antolín (2023).

¹⁰ Letters of Antonio Magliabechi an Leibniz: in May 1699, Nr. 105, see Gädeke-Van den Heinzel (2001: 135), in November 1694, Nr. 437, see Utermöhlen-Scheel-Müller (1979: 631), in July 1692 Nr. 195, see Scheel-Müller-Gerber (1970: 329).

¹¹ A letter in July 1696, Nr. 469 Leibniz an Thomas Burnett of Kemney, "*Il faut les exhorte à entreprendre quelque belle matiere, à l'exemple des peres Rapin et Giannettasius. Je me plaisois autrefois à la poésie.*", see Bungies-Heinekamp (1990: 731).

¹² See note 8.

¹³ See Haye (1997: 39-44; 132-167; 303; 348), Roellenbleck (1975: 7-26), see in general with the introduction of Haskell – Hardie (1996). See Malatesta Fiordiano's catalogue of fishes (*Operetta non meno utile che dilettevole, della natura, et qualità di tutti i pesci ...* Rimini: Pasini 1576).

¹⁴ Schindler (2014: 36-39; 2016: 24-40) with the latest bibliography. Haskell in her comprehensive and excellent monography Loyola's Bees (2007) and her chapter about Giannettasio pp. 70-82; Haskell – Hardie (1999).

¹⁵ Nash (1966: 7-26, especially 8-9), his academy-name was *Actius Syncerus*.

¹⁶ Schindler (2002: 246-247); Schindler (2003: 298).

The Didactic Latin Poem *Halieutica* (Naples 1689)

Giannettasio's *Halieutica* in ten books, a didactic epic poem about fish and fishing, was first printed in 1689 and reissued in 1715 as part of his *Opera Omnia Poetica*. The subject was one that had been dealt with since ancient times²³ [23]. The *Halieutica* of Oppian (c. 200 AD) and Nemesianus (c. 250 AD)²⁴ (whose poem of the same name is sometimes attributed to Ovid) had been handed down from late Antiquity. In the Middle Ages Oppian was frequently used, as can be seen from the large number of surviving manuscripts²⁵, and was commented on, e.g. by Tzetzes (c. 1100 - c.1180/85)²⁶ [24-26]. Various editions followed at the beginning of the 16th century²⁷ [27]. But as Giannettasio himself noted in the introduction to his *Nautica*, his role model was the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazzaro (1458-1530). He had been the first to introduce fishermen instead of or beside the traditional shepherds of pastoral poetry²⁸, and the setting of his five *Eclogae piscatoriae* had not been Arcadia, Sicily or the like, but the surroundings of Naples²⁹ [28,29]. Sannazzaro himself had been inspired by the poetry of Vergil (70-18 BC) and Theocritus' (c. 300 – c. 260 BC) Idyll 21 (Αλιεῖς)³⁰ [30]. That Giannettasio was taken with the theme of fishing becomes evident not only in the 13 eclogues of his book *Piscatoria* (1685), but also in the *Autumnus Surrentinus* 'Autumn in Sorrento' as part of his *Annus eruditus*. There he also discussed his approach to combining pastoral and didactic poetry, stating that his work was fictitious in

terms of events and characters, but that he took no liberties with the description of art or history [31]³¹.

His tenth book of the *Halieutica* begins with a description of the origin of pearls³² and of the different types of pearl-oysters found in the Indian and Arabian world. Here our poet follows the ninth book of Pliny's (23 – 79 AD) *Naturalis Historia*, but expands on some of the details. He tells us where and how the pearls are collected: mostly, oysters are taken by net, sometimes by divers known as *urinatores*³³ (Hal. p. 234), who use pegs or clips for their noses and olive-oil for their ears. They hang by a rope from the boat, or *cymba*, and have a heavy stone bound to their lower legs. Some have to fight against a kind of seal³⁴: *turmatim vituli cursant, turpesque nefando / ore canes Hos tuberones Indi cognomina dicunt*. ("Calves in hordes swim around them, terrible dogs with a horrid maw ... These the Indians call the hunchbacked ones", Hal. p. 235). The Indian fishermen overcome these beasts by singing: *has Indi suevere ... rapaces / thessalico de more feras vincire canendo* ("the Indians usually ... bound these wild beasts in a Thessalian mode by singing", Hal. p. 235). The fishermen first have to lay hands on the *reges concharum* ("the king-oysters"), at which point *totum gemmiferae gentis captabitur agmen* ("the whole flock of the pearl-bearing oysters will be taken", Hal. p. 237). In this, too, Giannettasio follows Pliny's description of *concharum ... duces*³⁵ [32-35].

¹⁷ Giannettasio, *Naut.* 9, p. 210f.; Hal. 3, p. 77.

¹⁸ Giannettasio, Hal. 9, p. 212f.; Bell. 2, p. 108f.

¹⁹ In 1711 Schinosi claimed that the villa and its surroundings had been called Cocomella since ancient times, see Schinosi (1711: 336-341, esp. 340): "...chiamato ab antico La Cocomella..."; Iapelli (2003: 247-257); Haskell (2003: 73-74). Today it serves as a hotel. There, Giannettasio wrote like his idol Sannazzaro, who, apart from his three-year exile in France, wrote in his Villa Mergellina on the Gulf of Naples.

²⁰ See the paper by Haskell (2007: 187-213), especially p. 194-195.

²¹ 1701-1714, where at the end Giannettasio's hometown Naples fell to the Austrian Emperor Charles VI together with Milan, Toscana and Sardinia. For the decline of Naples in the 17th century and development of an impressive new intellectual life see Stone (1997: 1-23).

²² Like the Macchia conspiracy against the Spanish viceroy in Naples in 1701, which was put down; the Prince of Macchia fled to Vienna, where he died. For the political situation, see Musi (2013: 144-145). Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) wrote a panegyric historical work (in support of Charles VI) on these events, the *Principum neapolitanorum conuersionis anni MDCCI historiae*, in 1703; Stone (1997: 148).

²³ See for further literature and information Haye (1997: 303, 348); Colonna (1963: 101-104). Giannettasio, as Haskell (2003: 81, note 26), suspects, 'may have consulted' the Jesuit Johannes Eusebius Nieremberg's (1595-1658) *Historia naturae*, Antwerp 1635, for the zoological information.

²⁴ For an introductory bibliography see Bartley (2003: 1-4), Fajen (1999: VI-XIII). Giannettasio follows Oppian in the description of his ideal fishermen concerning their physical and mental qualities, see Haskell (2003: 79, note 22) and Giannettasio, Hal. 3, p. 29-49. For Oppian's probable Greek sources (Leonidas of Byzantium, Demostratos, Alexander of Myndos), see Fajen (1999: XI, n.21); Wellmann (1895: 171, 173); Keydell (1937: 430-434).

²⁵ Oppian's *Halieutica* in five books on salt water fishing survived in 58 manuscripts, Bartley (2003: 2).

²⁶ See the edition of Dübner, Fr. – Bussemaker, U. Cats. 1849. *Scholia in Theocritum... scholia et paraphrases in Nicandrum et Oppianum*, Paris: Diderot, and for other scholia see Leverenz (1995:101-103).

²⁷ Editio princeps Venetiis 1517, for further editions see Fajen (1999: VI, n. 2).

²⁸ Giannettasio, *Nautica*, Ad lectorem: *Qui primus ... piscatores introduxit in eclogis*, see Schindler (2003: 298 with n. 26).

²⁹ Grant (1957: 71-72); Grant (1965: 205), see also Putnam (2009: XIV), and for further bibliography Nash (1996: 67).

³⁰ Nash (1966: 18-20, 23).

³¹ Giannettasio, *Autumnus Surrentinus*, Lib.2, cap.2: ... *at cum artem quampiam versu tradimus, aut historiam referimus, nulla nobis scribendi libertas conceditur*. "... but when we hand down any art in verse, or report history, we are allowed no liberty in writing."

³² See Pliny, NH 9, 107-109.

³³ See Pliny NH 9, 111 (55/35).

³⁴ See Pliny, NH 9, 110 (55/35). *In alto quoque comitantibus marinis canibus* "those, which lie out in the main sea are generally accompanied by sea dogs" transl. Bostock-Riley.

At this point, our author raises the question of who first brought the originally divine pearls to mankind: *Nunc age, qui primus Titanidis aurea nobis / Aurorae ostendit divino numine dona*

("Now tell us, who was first to show us the golden gifts of the Titanide Aurora by a divine sending", Hal. p. 239). The myth of Aurora's pearls is then related on six pages.

But first, an overview of the facets of figure of Aurora in antiquity, to see how Giannettasio varied this myth.

Aurora in Antiquity

The myth of Eos or Aurora itself has a comparatively homogeneous tradition since Homer and Hesiod, with some variations in the genealogy and in the selection of her various amorous stories. More often she is the personification of dawn or stands for the East itself. Giannettasio's role model Sannazzaro had likewise used Aurora primarily in a metaphorical way³⁶ [36]. The Greek goddess Eos (Ἠώς) of dawn³⁷, with the epitheton the ἡριγένεια³⁸, 'born in the early morning' (ἥρι), the Latin Aurora³⁹, is well-known in various stories in antiquity. Hesiod tells us she is the daughter of Theia and Hyperion⁴⁰, sister of Selene and Helios, mother of the strong-hearted winds Zephyrus, Boreas, Eurus and Notus, whom she bears to Astraeus (the starry), further Eosphorus (the dawn-bringer, the morningstar⁴¹) and the stars⁴² [37-42]. Ps.

Apollodorus (1st - 2nd c. AD) writes that she repeatedly falls in love with mortal men because Aphrodite has cursed her for having a liaison with Ares⁴³. Among these mortals are the handsome hunter Orion, who dies through Artemis' arrows, because the gods envy Aurora⁴⁴ or Cephalus, whom she steals away from his beloved Procris⁴⁵ and by whom she becomes, again according to Hesiod, the mother of Phaethon⁴⁶ [43-46]. But mainly, Eos, the 'rosy-fingered' (ροδοδάκτυλος⁴⁷) goddess, is connected with Tithonus, a son of Laomedon and brother of Priam⁴⁸, whom she abducts to Ethiopia or to the Oceanus⁴⁹ and to whom she bear Memnon and Emathion⁵⁰ [49-50]. She is represented as rising from Tithonus's bedside to bring the light of morning to mankind and gods⁵¹ [51]. Their sons appear as allies of the Trojans, Memnon is dying in a duel with Achilles⁵² [52]. Eos carries off his body to mourn for him⁵³, as is told in detail by Quintus Smyrnaeus (3rd c. AD) in his second book⁵⁴, and as she is crying her tears fell to the earth like dew⁵⁵. This dew (gr. ἡ ἔρση, ἡ δρόσος, lat. rōs, rōris m.⁵⁶) is her gift to mankind. Further epithets for Eos include 'fair-haired' (εὐπλόκαμος), 'gold-enthroned' (χρυσόθρονος), 'gold-sandaled' (χρυσοπέδιλλος⁵⁹); Homer describes her as riding in a golden chariot drawn by winged horses⁶⁰. Likewise Homer, *ibid.*, narrates her most famous role beside her love affairs, where Athena holds back Eos on the Oceanus without letting her harness the horses Phaëton and Lampus, while Odysseus and Penelope are enjoying their reunion [53-59].

³⁵ Pliny, NH 9, 111 (55/35).

³⁶ Some examples: Sannazzaro *epig.* 2,48,8; *de partu Virginis* 1,18; 1,369; 1,434; 3,6; *ecl.* 5, 65. Apart from an exception in a love poem, like *epigr.* 16,25 *iam non maluerim mihi beatas Aurorae Venerisque habere noctes* ("I would not now prefer to have the blissful nights of Aurora and Venus...")

³⁷ For Eos as day or daylight is documented by Eur. *Troad.* 847, Paus. 1,3,1. And some Scholia to Pindar's *Ol.* 2, 148; *Nem.* 6,85 and Scholia to Homer *Il.* 3, 151, whereas Homer knows her only as dawn.

³⁸ Hom. *Od.* 22,197; Apoll. *Rhod.* 2,450.

³⁹ Eos, Hunger-Harauer (1998: 158ff.); Ov. *met.* 9,420 is the only to call her Pallantias (daughter of Pallas, a Titan and brother of Hyperion), see Ov. *fast.*, 4,373, 15,700; 6,567) but different Ov. *fast.* 159 Hyperionis (daughter of Hyperion), see, Haupt-Korn, 2, ad 421, p. 98. Eos, Roscher I,1, 1252-1278. Eos, Jacob Escher-Bürkli, RE V,2, (1905, repr. München 1987), 2657-2669; Hes. *Theog.* 371-373: "And Theia was subject in love with Hyperion and gave birth to great Helios (Sun) and clear Selene (Moon) and Eos (Dawn), he who shines upon all is on earth and upon the immortal Gods who live in the wide heaven". Θεία δ' Ἠελίον τε μέγαν λαμπράν τε Σελήνην | Ἠῶ θ', ἣ πάντεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοισι φαίνει | ἀθανάτοισι τε θεοῖσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι, | γείναθ' ὑποδμηθεῖσ' Ὑπερίονος ἐν φιλότῃ. *Theog.* 378-80: "Eos bore to Astraios the strong hearted winds, brightening Zephyrus and Boreas, headlong in his course and Notus, a goddess mating in love with a god. And after these Eriogenia [Eos] bore the star Eosphorus (Dawn-bringer), and the gleaming Astra (Stars) with which heaven is crowned". Ἀστραῖω δ' Ἠῶς ἀνέμους τέκε καρτεροθύμους, | ἀργέστην Ζέφυρον Βορέην τ' αἰψήροκ' ἔλευθον | καὶ Νότον, ἐν φιλότῃ θεᾷ θεῶ εὐνῇθεῖσα. Daughter of Helios Pind. *Ol.* 2,35, daughter of the Night Aeschyl. *Ag.* 265.

⁴⁰ Hyperion and Euryphaessa see Hom. *Hymn.* 31,6. Daughter of Helios see Pind. *Ol.* 2, 58; Dionys. *Hymn.* 2,7, Orph. *hymn.* 8,4. Daughter of Euphrone (Nyx) see Aeschyl. *Ag.* 265, Nyx see Quint. *Smyrn.* 2,625, Tzetzes Hom. 285.

⁴¹ Eosphoros as dawnbringer precedes Eos, see Ov. *Her.* 17,112; *Met.* 11,296.

⁴² Further children Dike/Iustitia Arat, *phainomena* 98; Schol. *Hyg. Astr.* 2,25.

⁴³ Apollod. *Bibl.* 1,27 Aphrodite made her constantly fall in love (συνεχῶς ἔρᾶν, ὅτι Ἄρες συνευνάσθαι), because Eos had an affair with her husband Ares. These men were Orion, Tithonos, Kephalos and Kleitos.

⁴⁴ Hom. *Od.*, 5,121ff. or Apollod. *Bibl.* 1,4,5. with other causes of death.

⁴⁵ Eur. *Hipp.* 454 f., Apollod. *Bibl.* 1,9,4; Ov. *Met.* 7,700ff; Paus. 1,3,1. ("On the tiling of this portico [the Royal Portico at Athens] are images of . . . Hemera (Day) [i.e. Eos the dawn] carrying away Kephalos, who was in love with him. His son was Phaethon, afterwards ravished by Aphrodite . . . and made a guardian (daimon) of her temple. Such is the tale told by Hesiod, among others, in his poem on women." (transl. Jones.); *Hyg. Fab.* 189.

⁴⁶ Hes. *Theog.* 986 ff. "Then [Eos], embraced by [a mortal] Kephalos, she engendered a son, glorious Phaethon, the strong, a man in the likeness of the immortals; and, while he still had the soft flower of the splendour of youth upon him, still thought the light thoughts of a child, Aphrodite, the lover of laughter, swooped down and caught him away and set him in her holy temple to be her nocturnal temple-keeper, a divine spirit (Daimon Dios) [i.e. a star]" (transl. Evelyn-White). See Paus. 1,3,1.

⁴⁷ Different explanations, on the one hand rosy colored rays similar to the hand's fingers (Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, 1, 683) or (Preller 1,343; Jordan, *Jahrbuch für Philologie* 1873, 80) as seizing roses etc. her garment often named κροκόπεπλος yellow or saffron-colored, see Homer *Il.* 19,1 Ἠῶς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἄπ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων | ὄρνυθ', ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι φῶς φέροι ἡδὲ βοροῖσιν, her wings are white λευκόπεπρος; *Il.* 8,1; see Eur. *Troad.* 847.

Giannettasio's Version of Aurora

The picture drawn by the author is that of a sublime goddess living in her luxurious palace but helping a young nymph to fulfill her desires. The content of the narrative closely resembles a fairy-tale. A young maiden in love has to win her beloved's heart with a love potion. But Giannettasio embeds the whole story in his didactic poem, using it to explain the genesis of pearls, and he moves the setting to the river Ganges, introducing three new characters to interact with Aurora.

The first one is Chrysirhoe (gr. χρυσιρόης "streaming of gold"), a nymph of the Indian river Ganges. She is the mother of the fisherman Ianthus; both have no ancient equivalent. Giannettasio provides her with no further characterization. The third protagonist is the nymph Drymo⁶¹, Δρυμώ. This name is attested as that of a Nereid in Vergil's *Georgica*⁶², and Hyginus (64 BC – 17 AD) lists her in the preface of his *Fabulae*⁶³, without giving any characteristic or story behind her. Sannazzaro also mentions her only by name⁶⁴. Giannettasio introduces her simply as "a very beautiful nymph" (Hal. p. 240) [59-63].

The setting is in India, by the river Ganges, near and in a

cave (*spelunca*), where Ianthus, a handsome fisherman of the Agarid lineage lives: *Extremo quondam, ut perhibent, piscator Eoo | Agaridum de gente fuit, cui nomen Iantho* ("Long ago in the extreme East, as they say, there was a fisherman, whose name was Ianthus, from the Agarid line", Hal. p. 239). This genealogy has been mentioned already some lines before: *vati vos, ò Chryseides, & et vos, | Agarides, monstrate viam per caerula Divae* ("O you Chryseids and you Agarids, show this singer the way through heaven to the deity [Aurora]", Hal. p. 239). Giannettasio had previously introduced these nymphs in the opening verses of book eight of his earlier didactic poem, the *Nautica* (1685): *& umbroso Bepytri a vertice nymphae | Agarides rutilaeque vocant Chryseides auro, | omnes Aurora genitae, & Titanides omnes* ("and from the shady peak of Bebytrus the Agarid nymphs and the golden-shining Chryseids call, they are all Aurora's offsprings and all Titanids"⁶⁵). Thus, if Aurora cares for the fisherman Ianthus, it is because he is a descendent of her own line. The Agarids, as is explained in a footnote, derive their name *ab Agarico sinu, qui Gangetici pars est* ("from the Agaric Bay, which is part of the river Ganges"⁶⁶). This geographical information may derive from the seventh book of Ptolemy's geography. While in general, the geography⁶⁷ of India had been well known through Portuguese exploration and conquest from 1505 onward, the Ganges River mouth in Bengal was not as thoroughly investigated

⁴⁸ Diod. 4,75,4.

⁴⁹ When a goddess abducts a mortal, this could be understood as the death of the concerned person, see L. Radermacher, *Das Jenseits im Mythos der Hellenen*, Bonn 1903, 113ff. See Ganymed through Zeus or Endymion, Hunger-Harrauer, 158f.

⁵⁰ Hes. Theog. 984ff., Apoll. Bibl. 3,147.

⁵¹ Hom. Il.11,1f. ἥως δ' ἐκ λεχέων παρ' ἀγαυοῦ Τιθωνοῖο ὄρνυθ', ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι φάως φέροι ἡδὲ βροτοῖσι. "Now Dawn rose from her couch from beside lordly Tithonus, to bring light to immortals and to mortal men", transl. Murray. Hom. Od. 5,1f. She forgot to wish the lover immortality, so that in the end he was transformed into a cicada, Schol. Hom. Il. 3,151,11,1; Hom. Hymn. Aphrod. 218ff., where he babbles endlessly. Mimnermos fragm.4 ("He [Zeus] gave Tithonos an everlasting evil, old age, which is more terrible than even woeful death.").

⁵² Hom. Od. 4,188, Hes. Theog. 984f., Pind. Ol. 2,83, Apollod. Bibl. 3,12,4; Arctinus Milet, Aethiopis fragm. 1, Quintus Smyrnaeus 2.549, Pind. Nem. 6, 49-53; Diod. 4.75.4, Callistratus Descriptions 9; Ov. Fast. 4.713.

⁵³ Ov. Met. 13,581f., Sen. Troad. 239f., Callistratus, descr. 1; 9; Philostratus Elder, 1,7.

⁵⁴ Quintus Smyrnaeus 2.594-666.

⁵⁵ Ov. Met. 13,621f. (*Luctibus est Aurora suis intenta, piasque | nunc quoque dat lacrimas et toto rorat in orbe* "Aurora intent on her own grief: now still her loving sorrow she renews and with her tears the whole wide world bedews", transl. Melville; Verg. Aen, 8, 384; Serv. Aen. 1,489.; Serv. Georg.3, 328).

⁵⁶ *roscidus* dewing, let dew falling; oldindic *rasā* wet.

⁵⁷ Hom. Od. 5, 390.

⁵⁸ Hom. Od. 15,250.

⁵⁹ Sapp. fr. LP 103, 13; LP 123, 1.

⁶⁰ Hom. Od. 23,243-46 Ἡὼ δ' αὔτε | ῥύσαςτ' ἐπ' Ὀκεανῷ χρυσόθρονον, οὐδ' ἔα ἵππους | ζεύγνυσθ' ὠκύποδας, φάος ἀνθρώποισι φέροντας, | Λάμπρον καὶ Φαέθονθ', οἳ τ' Ἡὼ πῶλοι ἄγουσι. The chariot of Helios is missing in Homer.

⁶¹ For Drymo see W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 1,1, 1203. RE V,2, 1745, Jacob Escher-Bürkli (repr. Munich 1987).

⁶² Verg. Georg. 4,336 ff. *At mater sonitum thalamo sub fluminis alti | Sensit. Eam circum Milesia vellera Nymphae | Carpebant hyali saturo fucata colore, | Drymoque Xanthoque Ligeaque Phyllodoceque, | caesariem effusae nitidam per candida colla,...* „But his mother heard the cry from her bower beneath the river's depths. About her the Nymphs were spinning fleeces of Miletus, dyed with rich glassy hue – Drymo and Xantho, Ligea and Phyllodoce, their shining tresses floating over snowy necks." (transl. Fairclough).

⁶³ Hyg. Fab.praef. VIII. Ex Nereo et Doride *Nereides quinquaginta*, Glaucē Thalia [...] **Drymo** ...].

⁶⁴ Sannazzaro, ecl. 4, Proteus, 56 *candida Drymo* ("snow-white Drymo") receiving Nesis.

⁶⁵ Giannettasio, Naut. p. 221.

as one might have expected by the early 18th century⁶⁸.

Drymo, as Giannettasio tells us, is flushed with love for Ianthus (*Illum ... ardebat*, Hal. p. 240). But Ianthus is not impressed and withstands (*aversatus*) all her entreaties (*mollia verba et preces multae, sacrae taedae coniugii*, “tender words and frequent asking, and the sacred conjugal torches”), because he wants to preserve his purity (*fixum est animo servare pudorem*). So Drymo travels by divine chariot (*caeruleis bigis*) to the Far East (Hal. p. 240). The *bigae* in Antiquity are reserved for gods like Luna, Aurora, Venus, and for chariot races⁶⁹. There she comes to Aurora, whom she addresses as “Mother Dawn” (*mater Eos*), in her palace (Hal. p. 240)⁷⁰, which is described in great detail. The house rests on a hundred white pillars, reaching to the highest (*poloque aequata supremo*); it has a shining silver roof with a thousand sparkling stars. The walls are of diamond and jasper with crimson shining points. The floor gleams with flowers, the wide doors with gold. There is a bright temple with twelve columns, where a thousand everlasting flames nurtured with Arabian balsam-oil and incense are burning.

So Drymo asks for help and recounts her sorrows to Aurora: *Tu, Dea, praeduram pueri da flectere mentem, | qui dulces spernit thalamos, & foedera sancti | coniugii, fastuque preces, & dona superbo | contemnit Nymphae, magno quae sanguine Divum | creta est, & Divos inter, Nymphasque sorores | Agaricis⁷¹ late dives dominatur in undis* (“You, Goddess, let the stubborn mind of this boy be changed, who spurns the sweet nuptials and the holy bonds of matrimony, who disdains with haughty pride the pleas and gifts of the Nymph, she who is sprung from the famous blood of the Gods, and who rules in plenty far and wide among the divines and her sister nymphs in the Agaric waves”, Hal. p. 240f.). Drymo wants a legitime marriage (*legitimum peto coniugium*).

Aurora answers her “don’t doubt, Drymo, my blood” (*ne dubita, Drymo, sanguis meus*). The goddess accepts her as a blood relative and, well known for her experience in love affairs, advises her to mix a potion made of pearls dissolved in vinegar: *accipe, & aurati transfer te Gangis ad ora. | Hic tibi nativam divini roris in undam*

| Acre coruscantes gemmas dissolvat acetum. | Amplaue gemmato replebis pocula succo | ... Adveniet, diique bibet nova pocula roris, | Duritiem ex animo ponet, fastumque superbum (“Take them [the pearls] and proceed to the mouth of the golden Ganges. Here in the native water of the divine dew may strong vinegar dissolve the shining pearls. | You will fill capacious mugs with the pearl-juice ... He will come and drink from the new mug with the divine dew, | and will put off the hardness from his mind, and the haughty pride”, Hal. p. 241).

Pliny tells us a similar, famous story in his ninth book: that of Cleopatra’s extremely precious pearl, which she dissolved in a strong solution of vinegar to win a bet against Antonius as to who could spend more money on a single banquet⁷². Here the nymph Drymo is instructed to serve him the solution in a cup decorated with pearls and then hide herself. Her beloved Ianthus comes home very tired from fishing and thirsty. He drinks the love-potion and wonders about the pearls, and when Drymo appears, he falls in love with her. She teaches him pearl-fishing and tells him the story of origin of the pearls: namely, that Aurora is crying over her dead son Memnon and Sol turns her tears into pearls.

What, then, are the differences and the parallels between this and the familiar ancient myth? Aurora is introduced as *Tithanis*, daughter of a Titan; in Antiquity, her father was the Titan Hyperion or occasionally Pallas. The poet, who refers to himself as *vates*, wants to be guided through the air to the divine goddess⁷³. Four of her sons are mentioned: aside from Memnon, the winds Notus, Eurus and Favonius, a mild west wind corresponding to Zephyrus. Also familiar from ancient myth are the chariot and the dense cloud, but the description of the palace in great detail is new. Moreover, the version of how Aurora learns of the death of her son Memnon and how she copes with it is considerably embellished. Her son, a dark-faced man (*ora niger*) but handsome (*sed pulcher erat*, Hal. p. 243), as a nephew of Priam fights on the Trojan side and falls by Achilles’s weapons after having slain Nestor’s son Antilochus⁷⁴. Up to this point, Giannettasio has more or less followed the ancient model, but then he continues:

⁶⁸ Giannettasio, Naut. 221; In the same marginalia of the augmented reprint of 1715 in Naples, p. 222: Chryseides see note 3 *A sinu Magno, qui & Chryse dicitur* “from the Great bay (nowadays bay of Martaban), which is called too Chryse”. This last mentioned Chryse might be Aurea Chersonesus (Plin. HN 6,21; Pomp. Mela 3,7; Ptol. Geogr. 7,2,5). See Virgil, Georgica 3,27 where he refers to the Gangarides. Besides the Agarides are mentioned as the Arabian off-springs of Sarah’s Egyptian handmaid Hagar/Agar and Abraham, see Gen. 16 and 21.

⁶⁹ *India intra et extra Gangem*, see Berggren – Jones (2001: 109, 140-141; 173). For the knowledge of India in antiquity and in the didactic epic Cynegetica (of a Syrian author of the beginning of the 3rd century AD) see Bartley (2003: 4; 287).

⁶⁸ Prasad (1980), 153-154, 254. Lach - Van Kley (1998: 142-143; 259).

⁶⁹ Hurschmann, Rolf. 2015. “Bigae.” Brill’s New Pauly. Antiquity volumes edited by: Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Universitaet Wien. 20 March 2015 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/bigae-e217040>, first appeared online: 2006; Pollack, E. 1897 (1991). “Bigae”. Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearb. Hrg. Von Georg Wissowa, 5, 465-467, München Druckenmüller (repr. München-Zürich: Artemis & Winkler).

⁷⁰ Compare with Lucan’s depiction of Cleopatra’s palace Lucan. 10,111-135.

⁷¹ Ἀγάρα, see Ptol. Geogr. 7, 1, 67, the city in India within the river Ganges on the Agaricus bay.

⁷² Pliny, NH 9, 120 (58/35).

⁷³ Guided by Chryseides and Agarides, Hal. p.239.

⁷⁴ The tradition goes from Hom. Od. 4, 190ff. to late antiquity.

*Et jam Tithoni linquens Aurora cubile,
Non pexis de more comis, nec concolor ostro,
Sed ferrugineis surgebat lutea bigis,
Venturi ceu gnara mali, cum Vespere ab atro
Flebilis Idææ referens insigne cupressi,
Conspectus lentis properare Favonius alis.
Illicet inspecta ferali Aurora cupresso,
Palluit, & reliquum defluxit ab ore decoris.*

(“And already Aurora, leaving the marital bed of Tithonus, neither decently combed as usual, nor the same purple color, but rather yellow-golden, rose in her dark-colored chariot, as if aware of the coming evil; when from the dark western sky she saw Favonius flying hurriedly on his gentle wings, bearing the sign of the mourning Trojan cypress. When Aurora caught sight of the funereal cypress, she turned pale, and the remnants of composure fled from her face”, Hal. p. 243).

Apparently, after Memnon’s death Aurora has a premonition of what has happened. She leaves Tithonus’s bed and rises with her chariot in a dishevelled state rather than in her usual glory. The subsequent scene in which she encounters her son Favonius bearing a cypress branch is completely new. It replaces the more usual burial scene, which may be exemplified by Ovid’s account in the thirteenth book of his *Metamorphoses*⁷⁵. Here Memnon’s body is burnt on a funeral pyre, birds (the *memnonides*) are formed out of the rising ashes, and their fighting against each other and their dying again is repeated every year. Aurora typically watches this scene and turns pale, which has an impact on the cycle of day and night, and sheds her tears, the dew, onto the earth⁷⁶.

In Giannettasio’s scene, Favonius informs Aurora of her son’s fate, and she breaks down. When Sol sees her drenched in tears, he learns what has happened. He tries to comfort her because many of her tears are falling down as dew. So, Sol turns them into white pearls: *Et nostras olim lacrymas, nunc munera Solis* (“And my former

tears are now Sol’s gifts”, Hal. p. 241). *Rorantes reduci perfundens lumine guttas, | Protinus in niveas jussit concregere gemmas* (“By filling the dew drops with his returning light, immediately he caused them to harden into snow-white gems”, Hal. p. 244). Thereupon, the oysters in the sea greedily devour the falling dew-pearls, then wonder because the unusual pearls are shining brightly in their bellies: ... *Rores | Deciduos avido ceperunt gutture Conchae. | Miratae insolitas utero candescere baccas* (“The mussels seized the falling dew in eager maws, wondering that in their belly unusual pearls were shining bright”, Hal. p. 244). This is the story told by Drymo, who adds that if the oysters consume the dew in the morning, they produce white pearls, and if in the evening, red and dark-flecked ones will result⁷⁷.

The story of the falling dew generating pearls is generally known from Pliny’s ninth book: *pandentes se quadam oscitatione impleri roscido conceptu tradunt, gravidas postea eniti, partumque concharum esse margeritas pro qualitate roris accepti*⁷⁸ (“It is said that, yawning, as it were, it opens its shell, and so receives a kind of dew, by means of which it becomes impregnated; and that at length it gives birth, after many struggles, to the burden of its shell, in the shape of pearls, which vary according to the quality of dew”. Transl. by Bostock-Riley v. 2, 1855: 431) [1]. According to Pliny, the more beautiful the pearl is, the better the quality of the dew, and the calmer the sea will be.

Giannettasio’s Version of Aurora in Art

To embellish his story and maybe also to help the reader to better understand, Giannettasio requested a friend of his to enrich his book of 1689 with eleven illustrations. This was Francesco Solimena (1657-1747), together with the engravers Hubert Vincent (fl. 1680-1730) und François de Louvemont (c.1648- c. 1695)⁷⁹. The image (p. 222, Naples 1669) that goes with this myth is that of Aurora holding the torch in her right hand. On the left is Zephyrus, her son, with the funereal cypress, and in the water is a male figure, presumably a sea-God, half standing in the sea, collecting Aurora’s tears in form of dew-pearls with an oyster. In the foreground there are two females with half-open oysters. (Figure 1)

⁷⁵ Ov. Met. 13, 600-623. View the black figured Vase of the beginning 6th century, where Eos holds her dead son Memnon in her hands and above them a black bird, interpreted as Memnon’s soul <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/56.171.25> [2014-05-25].

⁷⁶ Paus. 5,19,1; Ov. Met 13, 580-622.

⁷⁷ See Pliny HN, 9, 107 (35/54) he too tells the story, when dew falls in the opened oysters, they give birth to pearls. The clearer the dew, the whiter the pearl.

⁷⁸ Pliny, NH 9, 107 (35/54).

⁷⁹ François de Louvemont (1648 - c.1695) was born at Nevers. Very little is known about him, view Thieme-Becker 23 (1992: 419); Santoro-Segatori (2013: 203); Hubert Vincent, born in Lyon, was a French engraver who spent years at Rome in the beginning of the 1680ies till 1727, view Füssli (1816: 3080), Thieme-Becker 34 (1992: 381).



Figure 1: Francesco Solimena, Hubert Vincent (sculpt.), *Halieutica*, p. 222, 1689.

Francesco Solimena (1657-1747), known as l'abbate Ciccio⁸⁰, nine years younger than Giannettasio, was born in Canale di Serino in Campania, but settled and prospered in Naples. He received his early training from his father Angelo, later by Francesco de Maria and Giacomo del Po. By around 1700, he became the head of a famous painting school⁸¹. He developed his own style, characterized by brownish shadows, which is indebted to Giovanni Lanfranco and Mattia Preti. Shadow and light and the clarity of line are typical, even when the figures are nearly conventional⁸². He had patrons like Prince Eugene of Savoy and the French king Louis XIV⁸³. Among his pupils were among others Paul Troger, Daniel Gran. Apart from a visit to Rome he never left the kingdom of Naples,

but nevertheless he acquired an international reputation, as Pisani shows very clearly in his article⁸⁴. He was still famous at the end of the eighteenth century, when students of painting visited Naples and painted after him⁸⁵.

Solimena first came into contact with the Jesuits at the age of twenty⁸⁶, the illustrations for the *Halieutica* of 1689 were not his first for Giannettasio. Together with Louvemont, he had already created ten illustrations for the *Piscatoria et nautica* in 1685⁸⁷. He is also known to have created paintings on mythological subjects, including an oil-on-canvas scene of *Aurora taking leave of Tithonus*⁸⁸, executed in 1714.

⁸⁰ Pisani (2002: 69 with n. 105); Santoro-Segatori (2013: 191-192).

⁸¹ For his life see Bologna (1958: 177-201); Pisani (2002: 44-56); Hojer (2011: 11), Stone (1997: 21-23). For his connection to the Accademia dell'Arcadia see Lotoro (2016: 119-122).

⁸² View for his metaphorical imagery Pisani (2002: 56-61).

⁸³ J. P. Getty Museum site: <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=762&page=1>; Pisani (2002: 43).

⁸⁴ Pisani (2002: 43).

⁸⁵ Walch (1979: 247-248).

⁸⁶ Pisani (2002: 45), frescoes in the Capella di Sant'Anna in the Gesù Nuovo church, Naples in 1677; Bologna (1958: 180; 259).

⁸⁷ Bologna (1958: 181; 284). Solimena also worked together with the engraver Andrea Magliar (fl. c. 1690) decorating the books *Universalis Geographiae Elementa* (Napoli 1692) and *the Bellica* (Napoli 1699).

⁸⁸ Oil on canvas 1714, Los Angeles, The J. P. Getty Museum (84.PA.65) <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=856&handle=li> [2023-05-25]

⁸⁹ Rodini (2000:70).

Christian Allegorical Interpretation of the Pearl

The pearl was interpreted as a divine gift, symbolizing purity and chastity, with its formation attributed to dewdrops descending from the moonlit heavens. Within Christian allegorical tradition, the pearl became emblematic of the Virgin Mary or Christ, while the dewdrops were analogized to the Holy ghost and the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The precious and shimmering pearls are also used in art to decorate crucifixes⁸⁹ and as jewellery for Mary. Solimena's artistic representation features a radiantly haloed figure, deliberately ambiguous in its iconography to allow interpretation as either the Virgin Mary or the dawn goddess Aurora.

Giannettasio's Heterodox Circle of Friends and his Sphere of Influence

Far from being confined to his Jesuit⁹⁰ environment, Giannettasio also interacted with the 'modern philosophers'⁹¹ of counter-movements, such as the famous lawyer and 'acknowledged leader of the Neapolitan intellectual life in the 1680s and 1690s' Giuseppe Valletta⁹². He was one of the founders of the Accademia degli Investiganti, some of its members were accused of atheism and heresy. His huge private library (18.000 books) was famous in Naples and often used by his friends, even from abroad, and a meeting point for intellectual life. Valletta also established a chair in Greek at the University of Naples because of his own knowledge of and strong interest in the language⁹³. Giannettasio even dedicated some pages of his *Historia neapolitana* to Valletta, and also made his friend the protagonist of his eclogue *Antigenes*, the third in the

collection *Piscatoria*. The *argumentum* of the 1715 edition explains that of the two protagonists, Antigenes represented Valletta and Argilochus the artist Francesco Solimena (1657-1747):

Per Antigenem intellegit poeta familiarissimum suum Josephum Vallettam jurisconsultum eximium, & Latinis, Graecisque litteris florentissimum,..., per Argilochum innuit Franciscum Solimenam, pictorem sui temporis egregium, antiquis ipsis vel invidendum, Musisque Ethruscis perpolitum. ('By Antigenes, the poet understood his very close friend Giuseppe Valletta, an excellent lawyer, who was very famous for his knowledge in Latin and Greek letters, ..., by Argilochus he indicated Francesco Solimena, a distinguished painter of his time, to be envied even by the painters of antiquity, very accomplished in Tuscan Muses')⁹⁴.

Valletta as a member of the Accademia degli Investiganti⁹⁵ was involved in a trial concerning the 'affair of the atheists' starting at the end of the 1680s. He published these matters not only in a letter to Pope Innocent XII (1693), but also in his *Istoria filosofica* (c.1704), for which he and the leaders of the Accademia were attacked by the prefect of the Jesuit school in Naples⁹⁶. Among them was another patron of Giannettasio, the wealthy Neapolitan Carlo II de Cardine⁹⁷, who is addressed in the tenth book of the *Halieutica*⁹⁸. Giannettasio himself does not seem to have ever been directly involved in this trial⁹⁹. However, these events may have played a role in Giannettasio's decision to leave Naples at the age of 57 years in 1705 and to withdraw from teaching to the Villa Cocomella near Sorrento.

⁹⁰ On the general history of the Society of Jesus, see Bangert (1986²); O'Malley (2000 [repr.]).

⁹¹ See for the discussion about the 'modern philosophers' at this time in Naples, Robertson (2005: 97-99).

⁹² Giuseppe Valletta (1636-1714) member and one of the founders of the Accademia degli Investiganti, wrote an *Istoria filosofica* (1703-04). See Piaia (2011: 246-249).

⁹³ Stone (1997: 2), he had a remarkable collection of Greek vases too; Piaia (2011: 246-247).

⁹⁴ See Giannettasio, *Piscatoria et nautica* (1685: 13), see Stone (1997: 20-21), who stresses that the pairing of both "indicates the connections between intellectuals and artists"; Bologna (1958: 181).

⁹⁵ Accademia degli Investiganti was closed after the trials against the Atheists (reopened only for a short period in 1735-1737), see Galera Gomez the chapter "Los investigadores" (2003: 81-127, especially 103, n. 317).

⁹⁶ The others accused included Leonardo di Capua, Luc'Antonio Porzio and Francesco d'Andrea, see Robertson (2005: 98). For the "affair of the atheists" see. Robertson (2005: 98-101), Wright (2013: 134), Piaia (2011: 249-250, 266); Osbat (1974: 11-12; 450-69).

⁹⁷ Cardine, or Carlo II de Cárdenas (d. 1694), from a noble Neapolitan family was a generous friend of Giannettasio, Grant (1965: 248); Schindler (2003:297). Another one is the archbishop and Cardinal of Naples Giacomo Cantelmo (1665-1702), see Comparato (1975: 267-271), whom he dedicated the 13th eclogue of his *piscatoria*, Grant (1965: 376); Schindler (2003: 294). He took part in the trial against the Ateisti, see Nuzzo (2008: 194).

⁹⁸ *Giannettasio*, Hal. 10, p. 1 *Cardenide, nostris semper memorande Camoenis* ("Cardine, you who is always in our Muses' minds"); he mentions him also in the *Piscatoria*, ecl. 14 *Cardenides* ("descendents of Cárdenas," 114 verses).

⁹⁹ Robertson (2005: 98) points out that in the 1690s the prefect of the Jesuit school in Naples Giovan Battista de Benedictis had at the same time to defend the Jesuits against the hostilities of the Jansenists. According to Nuzzo (2003: 192-194) Giannettasio was indirectly involved in the conflict between de Benedictis and Leonardo di Cápua (1617-1695), a founder of the Accademia degli Investiganti and defender of the Cartesian method. At the same time an anonymus Francesco wrote a Dialogue *Giannettasius vel de animarum transmigratone Pythagorica* (ed. first by Luigi de Franco, Firenze 1978), where Giannettasio was one of the interlocutors, see the discussion Stone (1997: 61-63 with n. 20).

Conclusion

This myth of Drymo and Aurora is representative of the Early Modern practice of altering classical myths and composing new ones. From Boccaccio onward, the authors of the Renaissance, whether clerics or laymen, began to imitate and tried to excel the famous authors of antiquity with their new creative poetry. Unfortunately, it is rarely possible to prove how this neo-mythological literature directly influenced or was influenced by new trends in music and art. The Jesuit teacher Giannettasio is a very late example in the time of Enlightenment, a man who tried to emulate both Antiquity and the poetry of a hundred years earlier, in an old-fashioned but creative and playful way. To this end, he situated the aforementioned myth within the challenging and complex genre of didactic poetry, thereby demonstrating Jesuit erudition. While the pearl has held allegorical significance in Christian tradition since its biblical mention (Matthew 13:45–46) and later evolved into a symbol of the Virgin Mary's chastity and purity, Giannettasio's work conspicuously avoids engaging with this hermeneutic framework. Neither does he incorporate

Christian allegorical or moralistic exegesis reminiscent of 12th-century Renaissance interpretive practices. Instead, his approach remains firmly anchored in classical traditions and the neoclassical poetics of his Renaissance predecessors, such as Giovanni Pontano and Jacopo Sannazaro.

Though Naples was affected by a plague epidemic, an agrarian crisis and a decline of trade in southern Italy, the internal difficulties between the Atheists and the inquisition, and finally the struggle against occupation during the Spanish War of Succession, its scientific and cultural life was still lively and fruitful. This ambiguity in his poetry, which evokes an unreal world of myth and a locus amoenus while eschewing political realities, positions his oeuvre as a vehicle for escapism from the actual conditions of his time. With this mythological didactic poem, versified by Giannettasio and visually interpreted by Solimena, we encounter the rare instance in which literary text and work of art were conceived almost simultaneously; this refined decorative engraving thus not only corresponds to but also accentuates Giannettasio's literary creation (Figure 2).



Figure 2: N. P. Giannettasio, Mazzarella (1816).

Acknowledgement

None

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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