

## Translating Whiteness: Color Aesthetics and the Early Modern Reception of *Daphnis and Chloe*

The first English translation of *Daphnis and Chloe* by Angel Day (1587) relied on the more popular French translation by Jacques Amyot (1558), but also rewards examination in its own right for its peculiarly English adaptations of Longus' story (Hardin 2000). Day's edition adds original verse, the "Shepherds Holidiae" celebrating a shepherd's yearly feast and their virgin queen Eliza. In praising Queen Elizabeth as "the fayrest" of nymphs, Day appropriates whiteness as a property of feminine and English difference, one that was increasingly viewed through emergent racial tropes in 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c. England (Hall 1995; Floyd-Wilson 2003). In this paper, I will examine how Early Modern adaptors Amyot, Day, and Jungerman handle the concept of "whiteness" in Longus' novel, and how their translations of Greek color terminology contributed to discourses of human color difference in the contemporary Atlantic world.

In the Greek text of the novel, Longus follows the idealized gender difference conventional for ancient Greek visual art by contrasting Chloe's feminine paleness with her beloved Daphnis' sun-burnt skin (McCoskey 2012; Eaverly 2013). However, Longus plays with color pervasively: complexion can reflect gender, age, status, affect, and connection to the pastoral landscape. The quality of paleness is neither completely fixed nor completely feminine, but inextricable from other culturally-specific color meanings. For instance, "greenness" in Longus' text includes both Chloe's own name (Χλόη, "young green foliage") and the greenish "blanching" (χλωρίζω) of the body's response to emotion.

Colorism is also established early in the novel, especially the first bathing scene through Chloe's point of view (1.13), and the contest where Daphnis' dark skin is derided by his rival Dorcon (1.16). However, these scenes were unknown to Renaissance editions of the text, and

their absence overemphasizes pale complexion and white skin color in erotic description. Jacques Amyot published his French translation (1559) before the appearance of a printed Greek text, and a later edition by Jungerman (1606) couches the Greek text within a Latin crib. Their Romance language versions use a variety of strategies to deal with the untranslatable associations of Greek color terms. These factors, in combination with prevailing tropes of lightness and beauty in Elizabethan literature, explain how Day was able to repurpose Longus' color aesthetics towards a more ethnic understanding of "whiteness," and more broadly how Early Modern editions of ancient texts were complicit in emergent ideas of colorism and race.

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