

Audience and Quattrocento Pastoral: the Case of Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*

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1. Introduction

On the marginal annotation of a manuscript that used to belong to Angelo Colocci, a book collector living in sixteenth century Rome, an erudite named Girolamo Borgia recalled how in 1501 he had witnessed the public performance of a poem entitled *Urania*.¹ The marginalia inform us that the author and performer of this five-book-long poem in Latin hexameters was Giovanni Pontano (1429-1503), once the leading political and intellectual figure of Quattrocento Naples, an old man retired from public life at the time of the event.² The manuscript, along with most of the documents of Neapolitan civilization, arrived in Rome after the extinction of the Aragonese dynasty and the consequent diaspora of its courtly intellectuals. Among them was Giovanni Pontano's selected group of disciples, which included the teacher's favourite pupil Jacopo Sannazaro (1458-1530).³

¹ Giovanni Pontano, *Carmina*, ed. by Benedetto Soldati, 2 vols (Florence: Barbera, 1902), I, p. xxxiv: 'Cal. Februarii 1501 Pontanus legere coepit suam Uraniam in sua achademia, cui lectioni fere semper quindecim generosi et eruditissimi viri affuere; nec vero ipse ego Hieronymus ullum unquam praeterii diem, quin adessem, et quae potui in margine anotanda curaverim, quae quidem sunt ab eiusdem auctoris oraculo exprompta. [On February 1st 1501, Pontano began to read *Urania* in his academy. Fifteen generous and most erudite men were present at this lecture, and not one day went by without me, Hieronymus, being there. The things that I recorded on the margins are indeed extracted from the oracle of the author himself (my translation)].

² Carol Kidwell, *Pontano: Poet and Prime Minister* (London: Duckworth, 1991).

³ Carol Kidwell, *Jacopo Sannazaro and Arcadia*, (London: Duckworth, 1993). Although still very useful, Kidwell's profile does not pay enough attention to Sannazaro's relationship with the Augustinian friar Giles of Viterbo and his conversion to religious poetry. It is therefore necessary to supplement Kidwell's biography with Marc Deramaix, 'Christias, 1513. La forma antiquior du *De partu Virginis* de Sannazar et l'Académie romaine sous Léon X dans un manuscrit inédit de Séville', *Les Cahiers de l'Humanisme*, 1 (2000), 151-172.

Apparently an erudite curiosity, this anecdote gives evidence of the crucial role played by the audience in fifteenth-century Italian culture. The performance and discussion of texts in front of a group of fellow writers and scholars, as well as the constant revision of a work in light of other people's advice, are constant features of this period. For example, Marsilio Ficino's commentary to Plato's *Symposium* illustrates how the habit of reading in a circle and the "culture of disputation" were becoming increasingly widespread among scholars of the time.⁴ Moreover, Pontano's poetic performance documented by Girolamo Borgia's marginal annotations corresponds to similar events that Pontano himself staged in his lively and highly influential dialogues, in which the author presents himself as being the member of an audience that comments, discusses and criticizes other people's ideas and verses.⁵ In sum, direct interaction between author and audience is a fundamental feature of what is generally labelled humanistic literature and of Pontano's intellectual community in particular, which Soldati has imaginatively compared with an artistic workshop.⁶

This dialogic way of composing and sharing texts with the members of an intellectual community is documented by several direct (e.g., poetic correspondences) and indirect (e.g., marginal annotations and commentaries) sources. However, a post-romantic view of poetry as the direct expression of one's own feelings and the aesthetic ideal of artistic autonomy have generally induced scholars either to neglect these sources, or rather to use them as mere biographic curiosities.⁷ In addition, highly dialogic texts such as, for example, pastoral poems or elegies are generally read as imitations of classical authors such as Virgil or Propertius, thus neglecting their authors' actual involvement in a conversation filtered by the language and clichés of their ancient models. In analogy with their medieval predecessors, Renaissance poets directly engage their historical audiences by turning their readers and other historical

⁴ Christopher Celenza, 'The Revival of Platonic Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 77, 82-83. Id. *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) pp. 86-88.

⁵ Shulamit Furstenberg-Levi, 'The Fifteenth Century Accademia Pontaniana - An Analysis of its Institutional Elements', *History of Universities*, 21.1 (2006), 33-70.

⁶ Benedetto Soldati, *La poesia astrologica nel Quattrocento* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1986), p. 312.

⁷ Claudio Giunta, *Versi a un destinatario: saggio sulla poesia italiana del Medioevo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), pp. 16-17. Although Giunta's essay focuses on medieval texts in vernacular, its general argument against aesthetics is applicable to pre-modern literary products, and in particular to dialogic literary forms such as those investigated in this paper.

subjects into characters of their texts.⁸ Therefore, I propose that intellectual communities such as those gathering in Florence and Naples, who produced dialogues and commonly interacted in a dialogic fashion, were keen to produce texts that had a close relationship with their audience.

2. The case of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*

The dialogic aspect of Renaissance poetry has seldom been kept in mind when interpreting Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (written 1486-1504; first printed 1504), a text whose European diffusion and profound influence on the growing body of literature in vernacular equals only Francis Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*. Generally speaking, *Arcadia* has been approached in essentially three ways. First, *Arcadia* has been studied as a document for the history of vernacular language and literature in fifteenth century Italy, thus emphasizing on the one hand the author's lexical and phonetic choices, and on the other his knowledge of contemporary Tuscan poetry.⁹ Second, *Arcadia* has been interpreted as a document of humanistic classicism, thus devoting a great deal of critical acumen to Sannazaro's treatment of classical and humanistic Latin sources.¹⁰ Third, Sannazaro's text has been examined thematically in search of the author's motivation that has generally been explained in terms of the author's troubled life experiences.¹¹ Although useful and often extremely well documented, these kinds of essays misleadingly isolate Sannazaro's text from its intended audience, which consists of two important Neapolitan intellectual communities linked with the Aragonese court. In this paper, therefore, I will reconstruct *Arcadia*'s audiences and examine the way in which these audiences are inscribed in the text in order to illuminate this text's meaning and underline the dialogic nature of Renaissance pastoral poetry.

⁸ Claudio Giunta, 'Che differenza c'è tra commentare la poesia moderna e commentare la poesia medievale', *Chroniques italiennes web. Série web*, 13.1 (2008) <<http://chroniquesitaliennes.univ-paris3.fr/numeros/Web13.html>> [accessed 10 February 2008].

⁹ Gianfranco Folena, *La crisi linguistica del Quattrocento e l'"Arcadia" di I. Sannazaro* (Florence: Olschki, 1952). Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, 'La lirica volgare del Sannazaro e lo sviluppo del linguaggio poetico rinascimentale', *La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana*, 65 (1962), pp. 436-482.

¹⁰ William J. Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of the Pastoral* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1983). Giuseppe Velli, 'Sannazaro e le <<Partheniae Myricae>>: forma e significato dell' <<Arcadia>>', in *Lettura e Creazione: Sannazaro, Aliferi, Foscolo* (Padua: Antenore, 1983).

¹¹ Vittorio Gajetti, *Edipo in Arcadia. Miti e Simboli nell'Arcadia di Sannazaro*. (Naples: Guida, 1977). Angela Caracciolo Aricò, *L'Arcadia di Sannazaro nell'Autunno dell'Umanesimo* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1995).

When faced with the task of determining a text's audience, the critic has generally to decide whether this term will be handled as an internal function of the text or in relation to the external actions of those individuals who circulate and read books. The first approach is exemplified by the notion of *implied reader*, a figure that exists only within the limits of the text and is activated and guided by a set of textual signals and instructions.¹² This notion is generally found among text-oriented critics, whose take on the issue of detecting and understanding the audience is eminently internalist. The second approach, on the other hand, is illustrated by the notion of *empirical reader*, a concrete individual who actually purchases and reads a book. This notion is generally found among sociologists and historians of reading, whose main focus is the circulation of books and the empirical study of reading practices, rather than the interpretation of texts, and whose take on the problem of audience is externalist.¹³ In both cases, however, something of the audience is lost. On the one hand, text-oriented critics may produce extremely accurate and grounded interpretations of texts, but they ultimately isolate them from their historical and social contexts. On the other, sociologists of reading may provide interesting data about the market of books in a given time, but they often disregard how these patterns are inscribed in texts. These two notions of audience, in other words, constitute a critical dilemma that ultimately comes down to the opposition between internalism and externalism.

Since Sannazaro's *Arcadia* constantly refers to historical characters and events, and circulated in two different versions during its complex publication process, both the aforementioned approaches fail to grasp completely the problem of this text's audience. Firstly, it would be misleading to focus exclusively on the text because *Arcadia* is rich in extra-textual references that only its designated audiences could have completely understood. The text, that is, is not self-sufficient and the identification of its implied-reader is misleading if it is not illuminated by historical facts. Secondly, it would be deceptive to infer any hypothesis about *Arcadia*'s

¹² Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

¹³ David S. Miall, 'Empirical Approaches to Studying Literary Readers. The State of the Discipline', *Book History*, 9 (2006), pp. 291-311.

audience from the number of copies produced after the 1504 edition.¹⁴ This book, which was entitled *Arcadia*, was written for an audience and conceived within an intellectual community that do not match those of its manuscript version entitled *Libro Pastorale Intitolato Archadio*.¹⁵ These brief observations suggest that the case of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* challenges current notions of audience and requires the critic to adopt a different interpretive model.

In my view, Pierre Bourdieu's model for understanding literary production, and in particular his notions of literary *field* and *habitus*, provide the critic with a sharp analytical grid to explain the genesis and features of *Arcadia* in relation to its context, and to its audience in particular. Bourdieu coined the notion of field to overcome the dichotomy between contrasting views of the writer as either independently creating original works of genius or as being determined by the constraints of institutions.¹⁶ In contrast with these views, Bourdieu intends his *field* as a structure determined by the relations of the agents who act within it. Depending on the practice involved (e.g., economy, culture, literature etc.), Bourdieu posits a system of hierarchically organized fields (e.g., economic field, cultural field, literary field).¹⁷ The common feature of these fields is that they are the site of a competition among the agents, whose individual choices can be conceptualized within the notion of *habitus*, by which Bourdieu means both a general disposition toward practice, as well as the series of positions that a subject takes on the field.¹⁸ Bourdieu's model, therefore, approaches the study of the literary field by focusing on the relations between, rather than the uniqueness of, authors, texts and readers. In this perspective, the production of literary works is interpreted as an act of position-taking in the field, by which an author tries to acquire legitimacy and recognition among his contemporaries.¹⁹

¹⁴ Augusta Charis Marconi, *La nascita di una vulgata: l'Arcadia del 1504* (Rome: Vecchiarelli Editore, 1997).

¹⁵ Marina Riccucci, *Il Neghittoso e il Fier connubio: Storia e filologia nell'Arcadia del Sannazaro* (Napoli: Liguori, 2001), pp.190-204.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 37-40.

¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 50-51.

3. The two audiences of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*

Most readers are acquainted with Sannazaro's *Arcadia* in the version edited by Pietro Summonte and printed in Naples in 1504. However, this edition reproduces only the second version of a text that had begun to circulate almost twenty years earlier. Sometime after 1486 and before 1488, Sannazaro had written a book entitled *Libro Pastorale Intitolato Archadio*.²⁰ The *Libro Pastorale* comprises a prologue and ten chapters, which correspond to the first ten chapters of the 1504 printed edition. Immediately after having completed the *Libro Pastorale*, Sannazaro began to work on a new version of his pastoral book, which he continued to edit and revise until the time of its printed publication. While in France, Sannazaro sent a new manuscript to his editor Summonte, who used it to prepare the printed edition of *Arcadia*.²¹ The 1504 *Arcadia*, which is commonly reproduced in modern editions, combines the ten chapters of the *Libro Pastorale* with two new chapters and an epilogue. In my view, these two versions tell two very different stories, which betray Sannazaro's *habitus* in relation to the cultural *field* of Quattrocento Naples.

The *Libro Pastorale Intitolato Archadio* was published in the form of a manuscript presentation copy transcribed and illuminated for Ippolita Maria Sforza's library sometimes before her death in 1488. On the first page of this manuscript there is a colourful decoration in which the initials of the princess (YA) are wrapped in a pattern of vegetal motifs.²² This mark was generally found on those books that were part of Ippolita's remarkable collection. Knowledgeable in Greek and Latin, well versed in the study and performance of dancing, Ippolita had begun to collect books before her wedding with prince Alfonso of Calabria and continued to commission and purchase books throughout her life.²³ In particular, Ippolita loved to collect illuminated manuscripts, in pursuit of which pastime she appositely commissioned a professional illuminator from Lombardy, whose hand has been recognized on most of her belongings.²⁴ In this context, the presentation copy of the *Libro Pastorale* can be interpreted as Sannazaro's tribute to the circle of writers gathered around Ippolita in

²⁰ Marina Riccucci, *Il Neghittoso e il Fier connubio*, p. 197.

²¹ For a recent assessment of *Arcadia*'s textual history, see Gianni Villani, *Per l'edizione dell'Arcadia del Sannazaro* (Roma: Salerno, 1989).

²² Giuseppe Velli, *Tra lettura e creazione*, p. 15n.

²³ Ippolita Maria Sforza, *Lettere*, ed. Maria Serena Castaldo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004), pp. LXXVIII- LXXIX.

²⁴ Ippolita Maria Sforza, *Lettere*, p. LXXIX.

Castel Capuano, and to its leading intellectual Giuniano Maio.²⁵ Moreover, I propose that Ippolita, Maio and the group of writers that used to animate her court with the public performance of farces called *gliommeri*, the composition of poems in vernacular and the dedication of translations, can be considered the intended audience of the first version of Sannazaro's book.

On the other hand, the second version of Sannazaro's book, now entitled *Arcadia*, was edited by Pietro Summonte, printed by Sigismondo Mayr and published in Naples in 1504. This version is accompanied by Summonte's dedicatory letter addressed to Louis of Aragon, who had been cardinal since 1494 and who was in France with Sannazaro and King Federico at the time of publication. Pietro Summonte's editorial initiative needs to be understood in the context of a series of publications that were meant to spread and preserve Giovanni Pontano's works and legacy after his death in 1503. While working on the manuscript of *Arcadia*, Summonte was also editing part of Pontano's poetry and natural philosophical texts, such as the massive treatises *De Rebus Coelestibus* and *De Fortuna*. Animated by a fervent respect for Pontano's legacy, Summonte often altered his mentor's intentions by adjusting his works to suit contemporary patrons and even by rounding off their most controversial elements.²⁶ In the case of *Arcadia*, Summonte's dedicatory letter reminds us how the publication of *Arcadia* occurred against its author's intention, and in response to the diffusion of pirated editions of this text in its first form.²⁷ Considering Summonte's editorial guidelines and intellectual affiliations, along with

²⁵ Carol Kidwell, *Sannazaro and Arcadia*, pp. 35-53.

²⁶ Liliana Monti Sabia, 'Pietro Summonte e l'Editio princeps delle opere del Pontano', in *L'Umanesimo Umbro*, (Perugia: Centro di studi umbri, 1978), pp. 451-473. Id. 'Manipolazioni onomastiche del Summonte in testi pontaniani', in *Rinascimento meridionale ed altri studi in onore di Mario Santoro* (Naples: Società Editrice Napoletana, 1987), pp. 293-311. Id. 'La mano di Pietro Summonte nelle edizioni postume di Giovanni Pontano', *Atti dell'Accademia Pontaniana*, n.s. 34 (1986), pp. 191-204.

²⁷ Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia*, ed. by Francesco Erspamer (Milano: Mursia, 1990), pp. 49-50: 'La cagione che principalmente a questa mia non voluntaria audacia mi mosse, Reverendissimo e Illustrissimo Signor mio, di porre da me stesso mano a publicare in stampa quello che il suo auttore fu sempre alienissimo, nacque in me non meno da compassione che da giustissimo sdegno [...] mentre egli in Francia dimora, per non mancare al vero officio di perfetto e onorato cavaliere in seguitare la adversa fortuna del suo re in quelle parti, furono or son tre anni impresse in Italia le sue colte e leggiadrissime ecloghe tutte deformate e guaste, senza che lui di ciò avesse notizia alcuna [My most reverend and illustrious Lord, the reason why I boldly dared to publish what the author did not want to, is my legitimate indignation [...] Three years ago, while he (*i.e.* Sannazaro) was living in France following his king's bad fate as a honoured and perfect knight, his learned and graceful eclogues were printed without him knowing it (my translation)]'. Summonte's preface is not found in the English translation of *Arcadia*.

Sannazaro's close ties with Pontano and his pupils at the time of this publication, I propose to read the second version of *Arcadia* as a tribute to the circle of writers that used to gather at Pontano's house. In particular, the content and function of the two additional chapters can be satisfactorily explained if one posits Pontano's intellectual community as the intended audience of Sannazaro's text.

According to Bourdieu's interpretive model, agents interacting within an intellectual field compete with each other by displaying their skills and learning, and this competition is meant to acquire recognition and legitimacy. Individual agents, consequently, take their position within the field by making choices that, in the case of literature, involve the adoption of a certain genre and specific stylistic features.²⁸ In a multilingual context like fifteenth century Naples, I would add to the aspects listed by Bourdieu the selection of a certain language. As it can be inferred from the preface of a translation written for Ippolita by one of her protégées, different degrees of prestige were accorded to writers who could master classical languages (Latin and Greek) and culture, and those whose production was exclusively vernacular.²⁹ This different degree of prestige was closely connected with an author's relation with two highly influential intellectuals, that is, Giuniano Maio and Giovanni Pontano.

Ippolita's court, Giuniano Maio and Giovanni Pontano are the most important agents in the cultural field surrounding the composition of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*. Well versed in Latin but constantly involved in translating Latin texts into the vernacular, Giuniano Maio was himself a vernacular writer and encouraged his pupils to do the same.³⁰ Although he is best known for his activity at the University of Naples after its reopening in 1465, Maio was also involved in the education of minor members of the royal family such as Ippolita's daughter Isabella. Also, he was himself a vernacular writer, who composed an advice book for King Ferrante entitled *De Maiestate*³¹ and translations of classical texts that were particularly appropriate for a courtly audience that had been the recipient of Tuscan gifts, such as the poetic anthology *Raccolta*

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 47-48, 189.

²⁹ Ippolita Sforza, *Lettere*, pp. XIX-XX.

³⁰ Carlo De Frede, *I lettori di umanità nello Studio di Napoli durante il Rinascimento*. (Naples: L'Arte Tipografica, 1960), pp. 80-95. Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p.228. Angela Caracciolo Aricò, 'Maio, Giuniano', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vols. 110 (Rome: Treccani, 1960-), LXVII (2006), pp. 618-621.

³¹ Nicholas Webb, 'Giuniano Maio', in *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts*, ed. by Jill Kraye, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), II, pp. 109-112.

Aragonese (edited by Angelo Poliziano and dedicated to Federico in 1476-1477), or Cristoforo Landino's translation of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*. Highly selective and exclusively devoted to the study of Latin and Natural philosophy, Pontano looked at vernacular poets with a certain degree of aloofness, which emerge from the descriptions of poets such as that found in the conclusion of Pontano's dialogue *Antonius*.³² As for his involvement in the life of the court, Pontano was primarily responsible for Duke Alphonse's education, which he immortalized in the advice book *De Principe* (written 1468; first printed 1490). He was also responsible for Ippolita's correspondence, which was often involved in complex diplomatic initiatives and designs.³³

During his formative years, Sannazaro was deeply involved in the life of Ippolita Sforza's court and he was one of Giuniano Maio's most gifted pupils. At the same time, and especially after Maio's death in 1493, Sannazaro became increasingly involved in Pontano's circle. As a tribute to his involvement in Pontano's intellectual community, Sannazaro was nicknamed *Actius* and constructed as the spokesperson of Pontano's literary theory in the dialogue *Actius*. Also, Pontano chose Sannazaro as the addressee of his pastoral poem *Coryle*. The composition of the *Libro Pastorale* and *Arcadia* occurs within this span of time, and the intellectual communities of Maio and Pontano constitute the literary field in which this text is produced. In the remainder of this paper I will firstly ask how *Arcadia* inscribes or, to put it in Bourdieu's terms, *diffracts* the organization of the literary field of Naples, and secondly what the differences between the text's two versions reveal of Sannazaro's *habitus*.

4. *Libro Pastorale, Arcadia* and the field of Naples

The study of how *Arcadia* inscribes the field of fifteenth century Naples requires the adoption of a broader definition of *intertextuality*, which I do not intend as the mere relationship between two texts. Consistent with Bourdieu's interpretive model, I will analyze this text in relation to other texts *together with* the structure of the field and

³² Giovanni Pontano, 'Antonius', in *Dialogi*, ed. by Carmelo Previtiera (Florence: Sansoni 1943), pp. 49-119.

³³ Ippolita Sforza, *Lettere*, p. LVIII-LXIV. Judith Bryce, 'Between Friends? Two letters of Ippolita Sforza to Lorenzo de Medici', *Renaissance Studies*, 21.3 (2007), pp. 353-54.

the agents involved.³⁴ Giuniano Maio and Giovanni Pontano correspond to the characters Enareto and Meliseus, whose different function in the *Libro Pastorale* and *Arcadia* betray Sannazaro's different attitude toward his audiences and his teachers. On the one hand, the characterization of the wizard Enareto found in these two texts translates into the vernacular a description of Giuniano Maio found in the second book of Sannazaro's collection of Latin elegies. On the other hand, the adoption of the name Meliseus and his reported direct speech found in the conclusion of the second version of *Arcadia* engages in a tight dialogue Giovanni Pontano's Latin eclogue *Meliseus*, written between 1490 and 1503.³⁵ Bourdieu's broad definition of intertextuality, in my view, allows the critic to explore Sannazaro's twofold dialogue with the most influential authorities in the field of fifteenth century in greater depth.

4.1. The declining influence of Giuniano Maio

Sannazaro wrote the *Libro Pastorale* while he was one of Giuniano Maio's pupils and for a courtly audience that praised Tuscan culture and considered this scholar as a mentor and an authority. Conversely, *Arcadia* inscribes the decline of Maio's influence on the author as well as his conversion to Latin poetry and Pontano's ideas.³⁶ This transition is suggested by the different roles played by Enareto and Meliseus in the two versions of the text. As brilliantly explained by Tateo, Sannazaro's *Arcadia* combines multiple motifs, including the search for a remedy against love sickness and a critique of pastoral poetry. Given the narrative form of this text, these motifs are intertwined in the construction of the protagonist Sincero and in the deployment of his story, which is articulated as a quest for a love remedy and appropriate poetic form.³⁷

Sannazaro's construction of Enareto can be interpreted in relation with a poem for Giuniano Maio found in the second book of his *Elegiae* (first printed 1535). As did many other Quattrocento writers, Sannazaro worked for his entire life on a book

³⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The field of Cultural Production*, p.182.

³⁵ Giuseppe Velli, *Tra lettura e creazione*, 34-35.

³⁶ Along with poetry written in Tuscan vernacular, Florentine ideas were widespread in Naples and their reception was often controversial. A case that divided Neapolitan intellectuals, for example, was the condemnation of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in 1486. After this event, Giuniano Maio received a copy of Giovanni Pico's *Heptaplos* accompanied by a letter that gives evidence of his acquaintance with Florentine intellectuals involved in Pico's rehabilitation. Giovanni Pontano, on the contrary, wrote virulent invectives against Giovanni Pico in his *De Rebus Coelestibus* (XII) and *De Fortuna* (III). For Pontano's invectives, see Giuseppe de Sanctis, 'Pico, Pontano e la polemica astrologica. Appunti sul libro XII del *De Rebus Coelestibus* di G. Pontano', *Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Bari*, 29 (1986), 151-191.

³⁷ Francesco Tateo, *Tradizione e realtà nell'Umanesimo italiano* (Bari: Dedalo Libri, 1967), pp. 16-17.

of elegies in which he encoded his literary discussions and aspects of his biography in the language of Latin Augustan poetry.³⁸ In line with this tradition, Sannazaro included an elegy addressed to his mentor Giuniano Maio in his three-book-long collection. Scholars have correctly pointed out that this elegy is the subtext of Sannazaro's characterization of Enareto. However, Sannazaro's reuse of his Latin poem has been interpreted as a mere amplification of a generic praise of his old mentor.³⁹ In my view, this point is valid only for the *Libro Pastorale*, but it is actually misleading if applied to *Arcadia*, especially if this case of intertextuality is matched with this text's relationship with the literary field of Sannazaro's Naples.

Sannazaro's poetic persona and the role of his addressee in the elegy correspond to the relationship between Enareto and a lovesick shepherd (Clonico) in the *Libro Pastorale*. Sannazaro's elegy begins with the author's self-presentation as a young boy enslaved to a cruel mistress, who is wasting his days in pointless desperation, neglecting both studies and religion. Both texts deal with the theme of love-remedy, and invest Maio/Enareto with the role of expert and healer.⁴⁰ In addition, Sannazaro's elegiac persona and Clonico confess their propensity to suicide, which is translated into the mythological metaphor of cutting the threads of Lachesis, one of the three Moirae that tradition invested with the power of determining human destiny.⁴¹ Both Sannazaro's persona and Clonico, in addition, are represented as victims of love abandoned by Apollo and Pan. In the elegy, the poet directly

³⁸ Donatella Coppini, 'Poesia dell'umanesimo. Latina', in *Antologia della Poesia Italiana. Quattrocento*, ed. by Cesare Segre and Carlo Ossola (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), pp. 3-8.

³⁹ Marina Riccucci, *Il Neghittoso e il Fier Connubio*, pp. 182-184.

⁴⁰ *The Major Latin Poems of Jacopo Sannazaro*, ed. by Ralph Nash (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), pp.138-9: 'I, as you know, in the city here am constrained to obey my harsh mistress, and to pass my time in tedious delays. Nor is it of any use to have fixed the mind on rigorous studies revered the holy goddesses. And though fate has granted me so many affectionate friends, there is none among them to bring me proper aid. Cruel love is pressing me hard, sharpening his arrows on the whetstone, and my neck may not move from under his heavy yoke. And though my heart is consumed away with so many constant cares, I ask from where so many evils can come. Would that Lachesis would put an end to my unhappy years, closing off the harsh measure of my life, or that some god worthy of belief should sing to my ear what remedy there is for the cruel madness'.

⁴¹ Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia and Piscatorial Eclogues*, trans. by Ralph Nash (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966), p. 87, vv. 73-75: 'Sometimes for anger or scorn they wish to cut/ the thread that the Parcae are winding on the spindle;/ and with love to twine their soul from themselves'. Ibid. p. 88, vv. 85-90: 'If spirit of pity be to be found in the world, for love of God consent to free this soul./ since life does not prove any better than death./ O thou who art able, Earth, content me, Earth,/ swallow up in thy bowels my sad body,/ so no man may see me, or find trace of me'.

complains about the silence of these oracles, whereas in the *Libro Pastorale* they are used to comfort Clonico and to exhort him to hope for a better future.⁴²

Sannazaro's elegy and the *Libro Pastorale* provide Maio/Enareto with the gifts of magic and divination, and present these skills as remedies against love-sickness. More specifically, Maio's description in the elegy corresponds exactly to the description of Enareto given by a shepherd (Opico) in the *Libro Pastorale*.⁴³ According to Riccucci, Sannazaro's elegy was written after *Arcadia*, and it should therefore be interpreted as the Latin amplification of Sannazaro's text in vernacular.⁴⁴ This claim, however, is accurate if one considers only the *Libro Pastorale*, which began to circulate before 1488 in the dedicatory copy addressed to Ippolita Sforza. Sannazaro's elegy refers to Giuniano Maio as still alive, which would suggest that the text was written before 1493, the year of Maio's death. Given that *Arcadia* was written around 1496, the vernacular text could only have been written after the Latin elegy. Also, in the complete version of the story, Enareto never interprets Sincero's dream, which leads to his solitary descent to the underworld and eventual return to Naples as a poet of Meliseus' entourage. In contrast with Riccucci's interpretation, therefore, I propose that Enareto's portrait found in Sannazaro's elegy and *Libro Pastorale* were originally written for Giuniano Maio and Ippolita Sforza's court. While revising his book for Pontano's intellectual community, Sannazaro recontextualized in a radical way the role played by Maio/Enareto in his intellectual growth. In *Arcadia*, Enareto plays the role of what Propp would call a false hero, and

⁴² *The Major Latin Poems*, p. 139: 'But now the oracles are departed from laurel-crowned Delphi, and the Cumaean virgin's silent caves are mute, and Pan returns no answer from under the Maenalian shade, though the shepherd by night make offering of the slain sheep's entrails. I have no hope of hearing the Chaonian doves; horned Jove is ashamed to utter oracles. And Greece has marveled for this long time that the oaks, forgetful how to speak, keep silence when the god is by'. Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia and Piscatorial*, p.88, vv. 115-117: 'Love cheerful Apollo, and the holy Genius,/ and hate that cruel one who abuses you so,/ he who is harm in youth, shame in old age./ Then our Pan, in grace abounding,/ with fostering Pales will increase your number, so that your mind may be well satisfied'.

⁴³ *The Major Latin Poems*, p. 139: 'But you (Maius) can tell of things to come, and take counsel of benign divinities. You make your discoveries not so much from altar smoke or warning lightning-flash, but from dreams sent up from the Stygian realms: dreams which often disturb our uneasy sleep, while the mind perpend ambiguous images. O how many times I recall when I put away vain fear because of you, and continued my days in happiness! O how many times, when fearfully I thought they should not be ignored, I have been apprehensive of ills to come upon my head! Often when I told you my dreams about my mistress, you have surely predicted things fearful and not far off'. Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia and Piscatorial*, p. 94: 'Moreover he said he had seen him swallow a hot and pulsing heart of a blind mole, placing upon his tongue an eye of an Indian tortoise in the fifteenth moon, and make divination of all things to come.'

⁴⁴ Marina Riccucci, *Il Neghittoso e il Fier Connubio*, p. 183.

he results juxtaposed to Meliseus.⁴⁵ In sum, Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia* for a new audience; this text inscribes the rebuttal of Giuniano Maio and the endorsement of Giovanni Pontano's prominent role in relation with the author.

4.1 The growing authority of Giovanni Pontano

Whereas the *Libro Pastorale* betrays Sannazaro's involvement at Ippolita Sforza's court as a pupil of Giuniano Maio, the author wrote *Arcadia* in order to assert his status as a follower of Pontano and a promoter of his new mentor's ideas. In the additional chapters added to the second version, the protagonist Sincero abandons *Arcadia* and its shepherds, and returns to his native town, Naples. His return is made possible by an ominous dream, which leads the protagonist to a cave where, thanks to the intercession of two water nymphs, he finds his way back home. After a travel to the underworld, Sincero finds a forest where he meets two shepherds named Barcinio and Summonzio.⁴⁶ These shepherds are reporting the mourning verses of Meliseus. The mourning shepherd, as it can be inferred from Pontano's eclogue entitled *Meliseus*, is Pontano himself, whose hexameters are translated in the last lines of the text. In contrast to the *Libro Pastorale*, *Arcadia* presents Sincero as a new member of Pontano's intellectual community. In its final version, therefore, Sannazaro's *Arcadia* is rethought in view of Pontano's audience.

The subtext of Sannazaro's self-portrait as a member of Pontano's circle and as an interpreter of an ominous dream is Giovanni Pontano's dialogue *Actius*.⁴⁷ Pontano wrote this dialogue after 1495 and before the summer of 1501, although he was still revising and editing it in June 1499.⁴⁸ Composed after Giuniano Maio's death, then, this dialogue is also Pontano's tribute to his new pupil, whose poetic skill and literary taste are used to represent the ideology of his intellectual community in the dramatic form of a dialogue. In the last section of the dialogue, which deals with the causes of poetry and the craft of Latin hexameters, *Actius'* disquisition on the knowledge of

⁴⁵ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, translated by Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), p. 60.

⁴⁶ According to Francesco Erspamer's commentary, these shepherds should be identified with Benit Gareth and Pietro Summonte. Gareth's nickname would refer to his town of origin, Barcelona.

⁴⁷ An interesting explanation of why Pontano might have chosen this nickname for his new pupil is found in Marina Riccucci, 'La profezia del vate: Sannazaro e il *Caeruleus Proteus*', *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura Italiana*, 3 (2000), pp. 245-287.

⁴⁸ Salvatore Monti, 'Ricerche sulla cronologia dei Dialoghi di Pontano', *Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Napoli*, 10 (1962-63): 285-290.

Latin poetry and its creative use in poetic diction is framed by an explanation of poetic inspiration in natural philosophical terms and by a contrasting view of writing based on a prescriptive view of Latin grammar.⁴⁹ On the one hand, Pontano constructs Sannazaro's persona as the recipient of a form of inspiration whose causes are found in a configuration of stars at birth. This view of inspiration, which Pontano had broached in his commentary to the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium* and defined in his treatises *De Rebus Coelestibus* and *De Fortuna*, was implicitly meant to counter the alternative and increasingly popular approach to poetic inspiration theorized in Florence by Cristoforo Landino and Marsilio Ficino.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Pontano uses *Actius* to contrast his own conception of poetic writing as a creative imitation of Virgil's hexameters with the dogmatic imitation of classical models prescribed by grammarians like Giuniano Maio. This view of poetic writing, which Pontano had announced in his dialogue *Antonius*, was meant to oppose the authority of local grammarians and implicitly incorporated Sannazaro's epigrams addressed against pedantic teachers working in Naples.⁵¹

While Pontano's *Actius* constitutes the main subtext of Sincero's characterization in *Arcadia*, the eclogue found in the conclusion of this text betrays Sannazaro's position-taking as a follower of Pontano's academy and his newly acquired *habitus* of Latin poet. This eclogue is both a rewriting and a vernacular translation of Pontano's Latin eclogue *Meliseus*. Francesco Tateo has persuasively illustrated how this section of *Arcadia* sets out a correspondence between Sincero's tragic love story and Meliseus' truncated marriage by translating and reframing Giovanni Pontano's Latin eclogue *Meliseus* within *Arcadia*'s text.⁵² Sincero's loss of his beloved, which is explicitly reported in the epilogue, corresponds to Meliseus' loss of Philli, which is the pastoral name of Pontano's wife Adriana Sassone.

⁴⁹ Giovanni Pontano, 'Actius', in *Dialoghi*, pp. 127-239. Pardo's discussion on poetic inspiration (pp. 142-146) and Summonte's grammatical view of poetry (pp. 190-2) frame *Actius*' investigation of poetic diction (pp. 146-190).

⁵⁰ Giuseppe Saitta, *Il pensiero italiano nell'Umanesimo e nel Rinascimento*, vols. 2 (Florence: Sansoni, 1961), I, pp. 650-651, 656-657. Marc Deramaix, 'Excellentia et Admiratio dans l'Actius de Giovanni Pontano: une poétique et une esthétique de la perfection', *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome. Moyen Age, Temps Modernes* 99 (1987), pp.171-212, 185, 190. The problem of the diffusion of Ficino's ideas in Naples, however, is still open.

⁵¹ For a study of Sannazaro's epigrams written against Neapolitan grammarians and their schools, see Lucia Gualdo Rosa, 'L'Accademia Pontaniana e la sua ideologia in alcuni componimenti giovanili del Sannazaro', in *Acta XI Conventus Neolatini Cantabrigensis. Cambridge, 30 July- 5 August 2000*, ed. by R. Schnur (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), pp. 61-82.

⁵² Francesco Tateo, *Tradizione e realtà nell'umanesimo italiano*, pp. 64-67.

According to Tateo, Sannazaro created this correspondence in order to communicate both his own biographic experience and his views on literary history. Following his years as a writer of vernacular eclogues, according to Tateo, the poet found the last remaining Neapolitan poetry in Pontano's humanistic circle.⁵³ I would add that Sannazaro's newly acquired *habitus* as a member of Pontano's circle explains the negative connotation of vernacular language found in the epilogue of *Arcadia*.

The dialogic organization of *Arcadia*'s last eclogue and the way Sincero, Barcinio and Summonzio present themselves as witnesses of Meliseus' lament is modelled on Pontano's eclogue *Meliseus*. Originally conceived for circulation among a small audience of friends in the form of scattered papers rather than a compact book, Pontano's eclogues are marked by a constant feature. As in Pontano's dialogues, which seldom present their author as a character but rather distribute his opinions throughout the personae of his followers, the author's pastoral voice is diffracted by the voices of other characters.⁵⁴ In addition, Pontano's eclogues are often set in the future and represent the poet's followers in the act of lamenting the absence of the author, who fashions himself as a predecessor or a founding father.⁵⁵ In Pontano's eclogues, in analogy with Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, the author's voice is always overheard and engaged in a dialogue with other voices that correspond to a selected group of readers and disciples who could recognize themselves under the pastoral fiction. *Meliseus*, in this sense, is the most representative text of Pontano's bucolic corpus and its presence in *Arcadia* needs to be read as Sannazaro's tribute to his new audience.

Furthermore, Sannazaro's combination of elegiac and bucolic language that marks the last chapter of *Arcadia* may be considered a response to Pontano's eclogue *Coryle*, which I propose to read as the meta-literary counterpart of *Meliseus*. *Coryle* starts by exhorting Actius/Sannazaro to embrace the combination of mournful love themes and pastoral setting metaphorically represented by the hazelnut tree.⁵⁶ The

⁵³ Francesco Tateo, *Tradizione e realtà nell'umanesimo italiano*, pp. 52-53.

⁵⁴ Thomas K Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation from Theocritus to Milton* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 248-256.

⁵⁵ Thomas K. Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan*, p. 250.

⁵⁶ Giovanni Pontano, 'Coryle', in Liliana Monti Sabia, 'Esegesi e preistoria del testo nella Coryle di Giovanni Pontano', *Rendiconti dell'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli*, 45 (1970), p.197, vv. 1-5: 'Hanc Acti (neque enim patula solum aesculus umbra/ Grata placet) corylum tueare, nec arbutus una/ carmine nota dei est, Pana aut tegit una canentem/ Aestibus in mediis somnos

poet indicates the model for this newly found poetics in his eclogue *Meliseus*, whose text is recalled by a series of direct quotations.⁵⁷ Although *Coryle* is partially unaccomplished, its exhortation might have been what caused Sannazaro to conclude his *Arcadia* on a mournful note, and explain the reasons behind this poetic choice in the epilogue added to this text. Sannazaro's acceptance of this exhortation, if my interpretation rings true, is consistent with his newly acquired position as a member of Pontano's intellectual community.

5. Conclusion

If the ultimate meaning of *Arcadia* resides in the dialogue with a selected group of friends as the only remedy against desperate love, Sannazaro's text would be consistent with Pontano's views on the nature and function of language formalized in his treatise *De Sermone*. Pontano's text is based on the assumption that nature provides humans with reason and words, and that humans are naturally disposed to escape pain and look for rest.⁵⁸ Consistently, the text brings forth an ideal of discursive virtue (*medietas*) and disposition toward truth (*veracitas*) along with a typology of humankind based on the way in which individuals interact in a conversation.⁵⁹ One may object that *De Sermone* is a philosophical work and that its thesis does not apply to poetic discourse, whose mechanisms and purposes are to be found exclusively in the poetic tradition. However, both the eclogues of Pontano and

suadente cicada, / verum etiam et corylus nostris est cognita siluis [Look at this hazel-nut tree, Actius. Indeed, the wide-spreading oak gives pleasure with its shadow and the wild-strawberry tree is famous for Pan's poem or hides his singing, while the cicada invites to sleeping in the summer afternoons. In our woods, however, also the hazel-nut is famous (my translation)].' These verses may be referred to Theocritus's description of Pan's midday sleep (*Idylls* I: 15; *Epigrams* V: 6), which the author is setting out to rework in light of the mourning pastoral poetics epitomized by the hazelnut- tree. The presence of the cicadas in the context of a mournful love song, however, may also recall Plato's *Phaedrus* (259A), a text that Marsilio Ficino had translated and annotated in Pontano's times.

⁵⁷ Giovanni Pontano, 'Coryle', p.197, vv. 6-13: '*Nec tantum Meliseus eam aut tantum una Patulcis / ornarunt calamis caesoque in cortice versu, / cum questu commota gravique excita querela / vertice decuteret frondes et corde sub imo / redderet <<Heu heu>>; sed singultibus interrupta/plena nequit raucas iam vox erumpere ad auras; / sibilat ipsa tamen: <<Vidi tua funera coniunx>> / atque illa: <<Ah moriens morientem, Ariadna, relinquis>>*' [Not only with their pipes and verses carved on trees Meliseus and Patulci honoured her (*i.e. Coryle*), while deranged by the tears and shaken by the lament she was shaking her branches and repeating inside <<Helas, Helas>>. Her voice, suffocated by the sobbing, couldn't fully burst into the husky wind anymore. Nevertheless she whispered <<I saw your burial, consort>>, and she replied <<Ariadna, your death leaves me like a dead man>> (my translation)].' The verses in brackets correspond to those found in Pontano's eclogue *Meliseus*.

⁵⁸ Giovanni Pontano, *De Sermone*, translated by Alessandra Mantovani (Rome: Carocci, 2002), pp. 75, 83. This edition reproduces the critical edition by Lupi and Risicato (Lugano: Thesauri Mundi, 1954).

⁵⁹ Giovanni Pontano, *De Sermone*, pp. 81, 171.

Sannazaro generally emphasize the simultaneous presence of many characters and frame the authors' voices within a choir of different personae. This dialogic poetics, I would suggest, has its bedrock in Pontano's *De Sermone*. The protagonists of Giovanni Pontano's eclogue *Meliseus* and Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, therefore, are two individuals who are suffering for the loss of a woman they loved and find their mutual consolation in the dialogue, which emerges as the trademark of Pontano's intellectual community.

The external history of Sannazaro's text, as well as the poetic conversation that closes *Arcadia* epitomizes the dialogic nature and the close relationship with specific audiences that mark humanistic poetry in general and the pastoral fiction in particular. Knowledge of the audience and history of *Arcadia* therefore helps modern readers to rethink modern assumptions about poetry and literature. The case of Sannazaro's *Arcadia*'s illustrates that if related to historical facts, linked to anecdotes, and framed in a network of mutual relationship, literary products of the Quattrocento can be understood as the manifestation of a *field* and of an author's *habitus*, and therefore interpreted in the broader context of that "culture of disputation" that, according to Christopher Celenza, is the distinctive mark of humanistic writing and thought.