

The topic of this paper will be the *Basia* by the Dutch poet Johannes Secundus (1511-1536), the most famous work of a poet generally reckoned among the best Neo-Latin writers ever (see Price, *Johannes Secundus*, 1996). For the first time, the genesis of this work will be discussed using previously neglected sources: two early editions and, more importantly, a working manuscript of the poet (Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Raw. G 154, see Tuynman, *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 1994, 262-287). The aim of the paper is to show that a study of this genetic evidence can lead to a more developed interpretation of Secundus' *Basia*. The *Basia* will turn out to be a poetic cycle incorporating several European traditions of love poetry and trying to find its own rightful place among them. Moreover, in the *Basia*, Secundus subtly reflects on his specific use of the traditions on a meta-poetical level. The genetic evidence shows how this complex web of allusions and reflections came into being, while Secundus was polishing his poems.

The *Basia* in its final version consists of 19 poems on kissing in general, and more specifically on kissing a girl named Neaera. In these poems, Catullus, Horace, the Roman love elegists, but also Petrarca and Neo-Latin poets are united to create a new kind of poetry. Recent scholarship on this work has revealed the wide range of models imitated in the *Basia* and its meta-poetical language (Price 1996 and Robert in Schäfer (ed.), *Johannes Secundus*, 2004, 277-292). However, none of these studies discuss the working manuscript or other sources for genetic evidence. This paper will do so in a macro- and micro-genetic analysis.

On a macro-genetic level, the manuscript and print tradition reveal that the overall structure of the *Basia* was changed more than once. Especially, I will focus on the late addition of *Basium* 19 (the early prints do not contain this poem and it is added in the working manuscript in a differently colored ink), a new closing poem with important meta-poetical implications, as was recently shown (Robert 2004). My discussion will prove that one kiss can really make a difference. The addition of this one poem changes the interpretation of the whole book, making it a meta-poetical discussion about the right way to imitate. Some other structural alterations seem to fit this macro-genetic analysis.

On a micro-genetic level, Secundus' method of incorporating the several traditions of love poetry in his own work can be observed as well. For example, a discussion of the genesis of the closing lines of *Basium* 5, which, in the earliest version, compare Neaera to a goddess (*Dea es*), but which, in later versions, state that Neaera is only the greatest in the eye of the beholder (*mihi es*), demonstrates how Secundus, while rewriting his *Basia*, changes the Petrarchan tradition that typically compared lovers to goddesses into something more personal. Alterations in other poems show Secundus in his practice of imitating and incorporating other European traditions.

In conclusion, I will argue for more focus on genetic research in Neo-Latin studies. The availability of genetic evidence distinguishes Neo-Latin scholarship from classical scholarship. My paper will show that the study of this material offers new insights in the practice of writing not only Neo-Latin poetry, but poetry in general.