

MASTRO GIORGIO AND THE STORY OF PHAETHON

Like many artists of his time, the Renaissance Age, the famous potter **Mastro Giorgio** had a great interest in ancient stories. The Myths particularly attracted his attention : the fantastic tales that explained the origins of the world, of man and natural phenomena and told the adventures of heroes, gods and mysterious creatures. Many mythological stories inspired his most famous ceramic works, the **historiated dishes**. They were precious works of art to be exhibited in the house and were not used as kitchenware. They tell stories through images, painted by Mastro Giorgio with traditional colors and embellished with golden yellow and ruby red. He Knew the technique of creating bright reflections like those of metals and precious stones.

The dish entitled “**The Fall of Phaethon**” is preserved in the Museum of the Palazzo dei Consoli, in Gubbio. It was painted by Mastro Giorgio in 1527, this date is written with the initials of his name on the back of the dish.

Mastro Giorgio painted only some scenes from the Myth of Phaethon. The story begins at the bottom, continues to the right and then at the top, continues to the left and ends at the center of the dish.

Look at the image represented in the dish and read this story:

The young Phaethon, son of Apollo and the nymph Climene, went to his father (who was sitting on a throne in his palace) to ask him to drive the chariot of the sun. The boy wanted to show everyone his divine origins. Phaethon obtained permission to drive the chariot for a day but having no experience with the horses, he immediately lost control. The chariot of the sun got too close to Earth and caused disasters: rivers dried up, forests burned and deserts were created. Phaethon was punished by Zeus who struck the chariot with lightning. The boy

fell into the river Eridano and drowned. Her sisters, Fetusa and Lampezia, turned into trees for pain and their tears became amber drops.