

Aurora, Golden Goddess of the Dawn – a glimpse into the realm of gold

by Nick Kollerstrom

At dawn the sun resembles liquid gold. This may remind us of the Latin word for gold *Aurum*, and *Aurora* – and the French words *l'or* for gold, and *l'aube* for the dawn, all cognate. An 'aura' glows, hardly having substance, while 'Au' is the chemical symbol of gold. Rudolf Steiner gave the sound of those two letters as being the 'Sun-sound', pronounced *Aa-oo*.¹ The Greek word for the dawn-goddess *Aous* or *Eos* may express this. We will explore this connection via the mythic image of *Aurora*, a relatively low-profile goddess.²

A Temple to Aurora

Aurora complained to *Jupiter*: "Least I may be of all the goddesses the golden heavens hold (in all the world my shrines are rarest),"³ and one finds her omitted from fashionable books on goddesses. One blames, no doubt, her all-too-brief appearance in the daily round, as preventing temples from being constructed in her honour. But maybe her time has now come and a temple to *Aurora* needs to be built? People would meet there for picnics, while enthusiasts would arrive at dawn. It would be good to have a replica of *Otto Runge's* mystical masterpiece *Der Morgen* at its central altar and there would be something twelvefold about it because the Hours formed a part of her story. An open, public temple needs gold foil in its décor – somewhat as Eastern orthodox churches do. In *Sophia, Bulgaria*, a wonderful atmosphere was given to the city by the churches, which had green-domed roofs (from copper verdigris) and goldfoil plated widows. In contrast British churches display primarily the metals lead and iron and therefore have a depressing atmosphere. These are base metals in the traditional alchemic scale of perfection, while gold and copper are more 'noble'.⁴ The notion of perfection can be expressed so to speak in gold and silver, whereas iron and lead are merely of practical utility. An astrophysical corner of this temple would have images of current solar flares and sunspots, and forthcoming eclipses.

Gold has a dual nature; on the one hand expressing solar splendour, but on the other, greed and avarice. We are all too familiar with 'macho' solar heroes who kill, eg *Apollo*, but now we need one with no blood on her hands! *Aurora* is associated with the experience of levity. *Lamos* and *Phaithon* were her steeds of the Dawn. Her colours were crimson and yellow, rose and gold. She had many lovers. *Tithonus* and *Kephalos* were

two of them and if they were lucky they got into her chariot and were taken for a ride, up into the sky.

Aurora's twelve attributes are here itemised for the first time. They are:

1. Her Exultant Heart:

Eos, heart-exultant in her radiant steeds amidst the bright-haired Horai (hours) Quintus Smyrnaeus 1.48

2. Her Healing power:

I long to please *Aotis* (Dawn-goddess) most of all, for she proved the healer of our sufferings. *Greek Lyric II Alcman Frag 1*

3. Her rosy fingers:

Eos (Dawn) comes early, with rosy fingers. *Odyssey 2.1, etc. (repeated many times)*

4. Her golden arms:

... golden-armed (*khrysopedillos*) *Auos* [*eos*] *Greek Lyric IV Bacchylides Frag*
gold-throned *Eos* *Homeric Hymn to Hermes 326-8.5*

5. Her dewy hair:

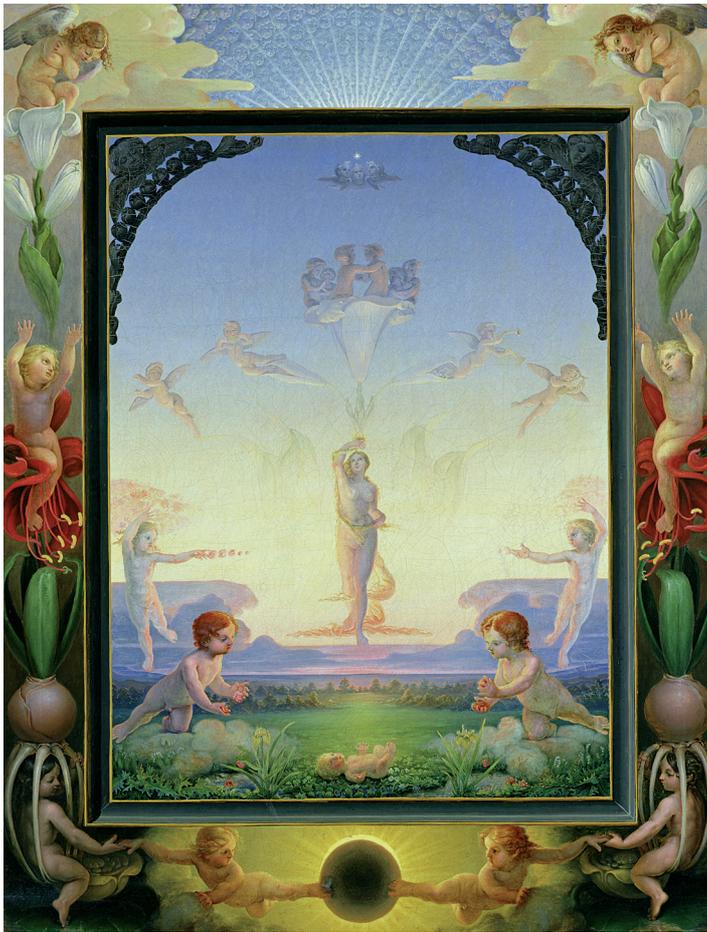
Aurora [*Eos*] arising with dewy hair *Metamorphosis 5.446*. She also had a tub of dew which she would sprinkle.



Eos with her Chariot, 430-420BC

6. Her steeds of Dawn:

Eos's horses went racing up into the sky today, bearing her all rosy from *Okeanos's* bed' *Theocritus Idyll 2.145f* 'Hyperion's daughter [*Eos* the dawn] expels the stars and lifts her rose lamp on the morning's horses *Ovid Fasti 5.159*.



Morning (Der Morgen) by Phillip Otto Runge, 1808

7. Her saffron Robe:

Eos the yellow-robed arose from the river of Okeanos to carry her light to men and to immortals.” *Iliad 19.1-2* Eos appeared in her flowery cloth of gold. *Odyssey 10.540, etc*

8. Her crimson doors:

Aurora watchful in the reddening dawn, threw wide her crimson doors and rose-filled halls; the stars took flight, in marshalled order set by Lucifer who left his station last. *Ovid, Metamorphoses 2.112*

9. Her cool whip:

So oft hath Tithona [Eos goddess of the dawn] passed by my groans [from lack of sleep], and pitying sprinkled me with her cool whip [the dewy whip with which she chased away the stars] *Silvae 5.4.1*

10. Her Mortal lovers:

The goddess Eos, who had slept beside Lord Tithonos, was rising now to bring light to immortals and to mortals. *Odyssey 5.1* Eos had just shaken off the wing of carefree sleep and opened the gates of sunrise, leaving the lightbringing couch of Kephalos Dionysiaca 27.1: ‘Eos rose from Okeanos and Tithonos’ bed, and climbed the steeps of heaven, scattering round flushed flakes of splendour’ *QS 6.1*

11. Her dancing-ground, *Aiaia*:

The island Aiaia, which Odysseus reached, was ‘her dwelling-place and her dancing grounds’ and also where the sun arose! Odysseus and his crew beached their vessel there upon its sands – but, note, she wasn’t there when they arrived, they only got to meet the enchantress Circe: *Odyssey 12.1-6*.⁶

12. Her brother Lucifer (i.e. Venus as morning-star):

And now Aurora, rising from her Mygdonian resting-place, had scattered the cold shadows from the high heaven, and, shaking the dew-drops from her hair, blushed deep in the sun’s pursuing beams; toward her through the clouds, rosy Lucifer turns his late fires, and with slow steed leaves an alien world, until the fiery father’s orb be full replenished and he forbid his sister to usurp his rays’.⁷

Sibling rivalry is evident here, with the lovely pre-dawn figure of Lucifer (not yet hijacked by the Church as their arch-fiend) departing as Aurora appears heralding the day.

A princess called Aurora featured in Tchaikovsky’s ballet *Sleeping Beauty*. It was loosely based upon the Grimm brothers fairy-tale, *Briar Rose*⁸ which told of a king who had a beautiful baby daughter. He gave a feast to celebrate this event and invited the wise women who lived in his kingdom to attend, but because he only had twelve golden plates he could only invite twelve of them, who all came and bestowed special gifts on the child. But there was also a thirteenth wise woman (which suggests her connection to the lunar cycle in contrast to the solar picture evoked by the twelve plates and twelve wise women). As she wasn’t invited to the celebration, she placed a curse on the Princess such that when she reached her 15th year, she would prick her finger and die. One of the twelve wise women is able to soften this curse, such that the Princess will not die, but must fall into a deep and long sleep. Eventually, the curse is lifted by the arrival of a Prince whose kiss re-awakens her. However, Tchaikovsky’s ballet rather lost these themes, shifting the whole drama instead to the Princess Aurora’s 18th year. The struggle between solar and lunar motifs – the very meaning of the story – went out of the window and instead the theme became merely, will the prince arrive and kiss her? That’s showbiz for you – but, he did use the name Aurora, for his doomed solar heroine, for which we can be grateful.

The Fiery Sun-Metal

Gold is finely dispersed through the Earth’s crust, more densely in some places than in others. ‘There are however no veins of gold as there are of other metals.’⁹ Mother Nature doesn’t concentrate it and, in a sense, neither should we ‘hoard’ it. Beaten out to be more delicate than butterfly’s wings, it is used in all sorts

of decorative ways. Gold is used in nanotechnology appearing in semiconductors, fuel cells etc. and also is used medically. Gold needs to glitter in the sunlight on sacred temples and palaces of magnificence for all to see and to decorate the beauty of womankind.

Glassmakers need high temperature ovens to work with gold – around six hundred degrees centigrade – and then they can produce a lovely pink at about ten parts per million of gold, and ruby red at a slightly higher concentration. A gold compound is added into the molten glass, which is then cooled, and slowly re-heated until it starts to glow pink as the colloid mysteriously forms; a tricky and skilful process.

The fiery, solar nature of gold may be discerned in the way gold is put to the ‘proof,’ by being heated until it melts in a fierce furnace. Other metals will gradually burn up – even silver gradually burns away – but the gold remains. Gold’s level of purity is designated by the measure of carats and pure gold is twenty-four carats. A gold ring may be eighteen carats, while finely beaten-out and almost-transparent gold foil will be 23 or 24-carat. In the furnace, because other metals are burnt off, the carat value of the gold – its purity – increases. The word ‘proof’ originally had this meaning, of having been put to the test. There was just one other metal that could endure such heat: platinum, which eventually came to be recognised as the ‘8th metal,’ coming over from the New World in the 18th century.

Gold is a metal on a journey, the fiercer the furnace the higher its carats, finally achieving twenty-four carats; by comparison the heavenly body connected with gold, the Sun, revolves around the twenty-four hours of the day and the twelve months of the year. There is a resonance of measure apparent here. Together with other precious metals, gold has its own units of weight; it is weighed in a special ‘troy’ system, based on the weight of grains of wheat where one troy ounce equals 480 grains.

‘When things get tight, men go for gold.’¹⁰ For centuries man has collected the traces of finely-dispersed gold and concentrated it into ingots, encouraging greed and avarice. The price of gold rises and falls seasonally, being lower in summertime. But, the being of this magical metal is best experienced once it has been finely ‘diluted’, for example in coloured glass, or beaten out thinly into gold foil that can glitter in the sunshine. Gold finely distributed in a liquid, usually water, gives us colloidal gold. This is the basis of processes for colouring glass. As regards how to make colloidal gold, not much has been written on the subject since Michael Faraday’s essay of 1857, which showed how to make its different hues.¹¹

My Purple Gold

Chemistry nowadays seems to have vanished as an experiential science and we need to bring it back again and regain the wonder and mystery that should belong to it. To see the lovely hues of gold, you can do this

experiment: prepare a dilute solution of gold chloride, say 0.01%, or maybe some higher, and a solution of Rochelle salt (a weak reducing agent), say 1%. Add the one to the other, and, before your amazed gaze, the solution will slowly grow into a lovely purple, if you are lucky.¹² Once, when trying this myself, I found the solution went black – maybe it was too concentrated, or not clean enough, but by the next day this had turned into a lovely ruby red. Put these solutions on your windowsill and admire them, they’ll last a week or so.¹³ What used to be called ‘Purple of Cassius’ (a pigment used in glass colouring) is made using a tin solution, adding stannous chloride solution to gold. I tried to achieve this myself, but instead obtained a rich hue of golden-amber. Again, why not put this into a phial on your windowsill. It is the Sun-metal after all and needs the sunshine.

Back in 1936, the scientist Lily Kolisko made an experiment to show how the Sun-forces directly affect gold. Using a gold-chloride solution on filter paper, she conducted the experiment before, during and after the total solar eclipse of 19th June in that year and these

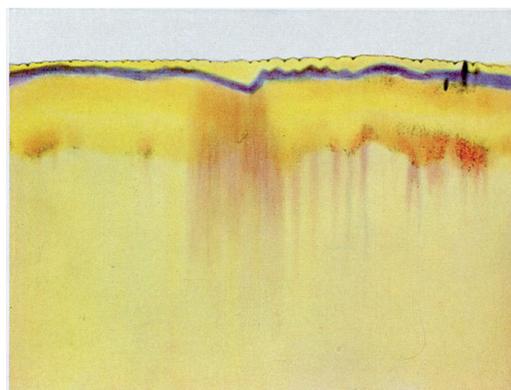


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

three colour plates show the progression through the experiment. Fig. 1 on page 49 shows the normal cheerful golden-yellow colour of gold-chloride solution on filter paper. Fig. 2 shows how the solution was affected during the brief period of totality: the previously bright gold colour has changed to dark reddish purple stripes on a brown ground as the Sun is covered by the Moon. Fig. 3 shows the filter paper after the eclipse, when the colour is now a bright pink rose-violet. Kolisko spoke about how the Sun forces are 'condensed' in solid gold, and that when gold is dissolved back into a fluid state, the Sun can permeate it and affect it, as this experiment seemed to prove.¹⁴

Total Eclipse of the Heart ¹⁵

Depression has overtaken back pain as the number one cause of days off work in today's Britain. A homeopath knows that if someone has suffered from a 'total eclipse of the heart' – perhaps from some relationship going wrong – then a high dilution of homeopathic gold, say D30, can be an effective medicine. 'When a patient reports that he has been depressed all of his life, think of Aurum.'¹⁶

An Aurora meditation, as well as gold taken as a medicine, could here be relevant. A team working through this process needs to be up before dawn, to walk towards the sunrise and greet it: Aurora appears in the mists of the early-morning dawn. You look into her eyes and see her innocence! She reaches out, and her finger touches your heart, and you sense the golden radiance, like the fiery corona of the Sun. The corona around the Sun – does it remind us of the coronary arteries surrounding the heart? Corona is the Greek word for a crown or a garland of flowers.

Medical Uses

In his book, *Gold as a Remedy in Disease*, J. Burnett writes: "Hahnemann says 'gold has great remedial virtues, the place of which no other drug can supply.' And having myself used it in practice for several years, I have come to regard it in the same light: I cannot do without it. To my mind there are varieties of disease that gold, and gold only, will cure, and others that gold, and gold only, will alleviate to the full extent possible, and not a few of these varieties of disease are of the gravest nature. As a heart-remedy alone it claims the earnest attention of every medical man."¹⁷

On the internet today can be found the following testimony from a homeopathic doctor: "One of the most powerful anti-depressive remedies is Aurum metallicum or the metal gold. Indeed, it does not have any healing powers in its crude form, but prepared according to homeopathic methods it becomes a gem. It covers the classic situation in which one person dies after many years of a happy marriage, and the other partner dies within a few months. The surviving partner will say, 'I lost the sunshine in my life,' meaning they lost all their

purpose in life. Aurum will also help senior citizens in nursing homes where loneliness and a lack of purpose often bring an Aurum state of emptiness and despair... Aurum is able to alleviate physical as well as emotional pain, as I have seen so many times in my practice."¹⁷

Today, medical uses of gold have expanded greatly. It is used in surgery to patch damaged blood vessels, nerves, bones, and membranes, and in the treatment of several forms of cancer. Injection of microscopic gold pellets is said to help retard prostate cancer in men, while women with ovarian cancer are treated with colloidal gold and gold vapor lasers help seek out and destroy cancerous cells without harming their healthy neighbours. Gold is an important biomedical tool for scientists studying why the body behaves as it does. By attaching a molecular marker to a microscopic piece of gold, scientists can follow its movement through the body, and because gold is readily visible under an electron microscope, scientists now, for the first time, can see whether and where a reaction takes place in an individual cell. Some researchers are placing gold on DNA to study the hybrid genetic material in cells. Others are using it to determine how cells respond to toxins, heat and physical stress. Because it is biologically benign, biochemists use gold to form compounds with proteins to create new and possibly lifesaving drugs. One experimental new gold compound allegedly blocks virus replication in infected cells. It is being tested for the treatment of AIDS. Every day, surgeons use gold instruments to clear coronary arteries, and gold-coated lasers literally give new life to patients with once inoperable heart conditions and tumors.¹⁸

Persons concerned with the art of healing would, I believe, much appreciate glass coloured with gold: as it produces 'healing light'. Gold, as the Sun-metal, has a unique connection with the human heart and no other element can compare with it in this respect. Whatever the type of healing art, the fee would go up, no doubt, if there were a window in the treatment room whose glowing, aureate hues were derived from gold!

Glassmakers don't generally know how to make different hues out of gold with glass – only the same red, or a paler pink. It can be done, however. A German glassmaker I consulted works with the idea of various glass hues having different healing powers and her group claims to have been, for several years, making golden glass that is yellow, orange, pink, red and violet. They seem rather reticent about going public with their methods, but as the Sun-metal, it ought to be able to produce these different hues. There is something mystical or magical that simply cannot be separated from gold.

Golden Glass

Johann Kunckel is usually credited with re-discovering the secret of how to make gold ruby glass, in Brandenburg,

Bohemia around 1670,¹⁹ This was a blow to the pride and prominence of Venetian glass-makers, who had tried unsuccessfully for years to make it. Kunckel was a chemist from a glass-making family who published the results of his experiments in a famous book *Ars Vetraria Experimentalis* in 1679. Amongst others who are sometimes named as the inventors of gold ruby glass is Andreas Cassius, whose purple-red pigment called 'Purple of Cassius' was hard to make and was sometimes used to colour glass red. Other chemicals produce red glass, but none have the special magic of gold ruby.^{20 21}

In his book *Coloured Glasses*, W. Weyl writes: "The beauty alone of gold-ruby glass justified neither the tremendous efforts made in its development nor the high prices which these glasses brought. It was no doubt the mystic power attributed to gold and the ruby colour produced by it which was responsible for the extraordinary demand."²² To get the red, traces of tin or lead were necessary, or else a mere pale pink hue would result: "their presence more or less controls the development of the colour". The ruby hue is spoilt if the glass is allowed to cool slowly, it must be fairly rapidly cooled, before re-heating when the nuclei of gold is ground with the glass to make the hue. So the 'thermal history' of the glass is important. "Appropriate treatment of a gold-containing glass could lead to practically all colours of the rainbow."²³

Magic of Gold

The Bible begins with a garden and ends with a city. Its final, transcendent vision is of a city glowing from within. No Sun shines above it and instead light comes from its pavements a-glowing gold from within: "this wonderful vision of a glittering, translucent city is the climax of St John's Revelation"²⁴ wrote British philosopher John Michell. His book explained how the numbers involved in the dimensions of this heavenly city were solar, namely 12 and 144.

The magic of gold connects numinously with the human heart and with the idea of everlastingness. We feel reassured by what the Roman natural scientist Pliny had to say about gold's healing power: "Gold is efficacious as a remedy in many ways, being applied to wounded persons and to infants, to render any malpractices or sorcery comparatively innocuous that may be directed against them."²⁵ One can't get away from there being something magical about gold. We may even wish to hear what the popular-in-California Satanic Bible of Anton Levay advised about ritual: "Ideally the chalice should be made of silver, but if a silver chalice cannot be obtained, one made from another metal, glass, or crockery may be used – anything but gold. Gold has always been associated with white-light religions."²⁷ Satanists, it seems, mustn't use gold – it's too heavenly!

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Endnotes

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*
 2. For a fine picture of Aurora see www.boughtonhouse.org.uk/html/gallery2/paintings/state5ceiling.htm
 3. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.576.
 4. www.levity.com/alchemy/kollerstrom_sevenfold.html
 5. <http://66.90.77.92/Ouranos/Eos.html>
 6. Quotes from www.theoi.com/Ouranos/Eos.html
 7. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, text available online at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam.html>
 8. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm *Complete Fairy Tales* 1972 *Briar Rose*, p.203.
 9. C. Budd *Of Wheat and Gold, Thoughts on the Nature and Future of Money* New Economy 1988 p.47.
 10. J. Burnett, *Gold as a Remedy in Disease* 1879 Finsbury Park. p.46.
 11. M.Faraday *Experimental Relations of gold and other metals to Light* 1857 *Philosophical Transactions*, 147, Part I, pp. 145-181.
 12. Purple gold: www.levity.com/alchemy/kollerstrom_purple_gold.html
 13. One can use formaldehyde as the reducing agent, but it doesn't give such a good purple. One makes the gold solution alkaline by adding bicarbonate of soda. Then, adding a drop of formaldehyde, nothing happens for quite a while, then slowly the solution grows purple. This is a rather muddy hue, not so attractive as that produced by the Rochelle salt, a reaction that takes several minutes to happen.
 14. L. Kolisko, *Gold and the Sun; An account of experiments conducted in connection with the Total Eclipse of the Sun of 19th June, 1936*. School of Spiritual Science, Rudolf Steiner House, London.
 15. Song by Bonnie Tyler <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=840B27zYfOk>
 16. www.herbs2000.com/homeopathy/aurum_met.htm
 17. Burnett, J. *Gold as a Remedy in Disease* 1879 Finsbury Park
 18. www.drluc.com/homeopath-depression.htm
 19. www.visionminerals.com/gold.htm
 20. The ideal ruby colour is attained when many small gold particles are formed, being neither too small, nor too large... Continued heating slowly increases the size and number until a ruby eventuates. If the Gold Amethyst is arrested at the purple stage the colour may be too deep a purple. Longer firing will lighten the hue http://gafferglass.com/technical/instructions_main.htm
 21. www.glass.co.nz/gibruby.htm
 22. But on the other hand *The Art of Glass* by Antonio Neri 1662 is credited with having the first description of making gold-ruby glass written in plain language: Muriel West, *Ambix* 1961 IX p.113.
 23. W.Weyl, *Coloured Glasses* 1951 Sheffield, p380.
 24. *Ibid* p382.
 25. John Michell, *The Dimensions of Paradise* 1988 p22.
 26. Pliny, *Historia Natura*, Lib. XXXiii, Cap XXV.
 27. Anton LeVey *The Satanic Bible* 1969 p137.
- The image of the painting Der Morgen by Phillip Otto Runge 1808 is published here by kind permission of Bridgeman Art Library.*