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Drummond of Hawthornden: the Major Scottish Sources

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L. E. Kastner in his valuable edition of Drummond's poetry commits himself to the view, that "a full third of Drummond's compositions are translations, and betray in no uncertain manner the imitative temper of his Muse."[1] With an impeccable knowledge of French, Italian and Spanish to back him up, Kastner then produces an impressive number of models in these languages and adds to them various English sources employed by Drummond. Later scholars have made their minor contributions but the European emphasis, begun by Kastner has throughout remained dominant. Drummond of course was a master of those imitative techniques advocated by contemporary critics and his knowledge of foreign literatures was undeniably wide, but he was still a Scot, and moreover one who remained in Scotland, when many of his fellows had moved to James VI's London court.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, literary activity in Scotland was centred round the court. James VI had founded a court-school of poets in Edinburgh and although this group splintered after the Union of the Crowns, its influence lingered on. The movement to England also produced a defensive chauvinism among the Scots, who retained close contact with their compatriots, while cultivating the acquaintance of Jonson, Drayton and others. The major Scottish writers after the union, like their English counterparts, were divided into two groups — the Spenserians, including William Fowler and William Alexander, or the Metaphysicals led by Robert Ayton and Alexander Craig.[2] It is to the first of these groups that Drummond belongs, despite that "Metaphysical mood" to which Masson rightly refers.[3]

[1] *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden,* ed. L. E. Kastner (Manchester, 1913), I, xliii. The references to Drummond's poetry are numbered as in the 2 vols. of this edition. S¹ = *Love Sequence,* Part 1. S² = *Love Sequence,* Part 2. U = *Urania.* PP = *Posthumous Poems.*

[2] A point I substantiated in my dissertation, "The Scottish Sonnet and Renaissance Poetry."

[3] David Masson, *Drummond of Hawthornden* (London, 1873), p. 70.

In the light of this evidence it would be strange if Drummond, the literary chameleon, had not been influenced by his fellow Scots as well as by Marino, Desportes and Sidney. With two of the poets before mentioned he had especially close ties. William Fowler, author of the sonnet sequence, *The Tarantula of Love* and secretary to Queen Anne was after all his uncle. He had been responsible for introducing the youthful Drummond to the English court during his only stay there, before embarking for legal studies abroad. Drummond had a high opinion of Fowler's poetic talents, collecting the original MSS of his verse before presenting them to Edinburgh University in 1627. With William Alexander, however, he was on even closer terms. After their first meeting in 1614 he remained a valued friend of the poet-coloniser and praised his works excessively. Of Alexander's lengthy, uninspired *Doomesday* he comments, "he [Alexander] hath done more in one day than Tasso did all his life and Bartas in his two weeks, though both one and the other be most praiseworthy."[4] Even allowing for the obvious wordplay, this is clearly a biassed judgment. Friendship is being allowed to blind critical insight.

Both Fowler and Alexander, I believe, influenced Drummond quite extensively, not only through particular parallels, but in determining the final framework of the amorous poetry. It should be noted for example that both Fowler and Drummond begin their sonnet sequences by considering love and its relationship to art (TAR 1-6; S^1 1-3)[5] before sketching in a conventional backcloth of Petrarchan ideas, including the inevitable "contrarieties" and "list" types (TAR 7-13; S^1 4-11). This is the period, concluding for Fowler with the exclamation in TAR 14,

> I did afore bot looke, bot now dois love,

and for Drummond with the vision of Auristella by the Ore, leading to the realisation that until then he

> . . . . . had not felt that Archer's bow.

Like Fowler he is at once cast into melancholy and confusion. Both appeal against Fortune and Love,

> Ten thousand wayes *love* hes enflamed my harte,
> And *nature* greivd me with far moe agayne;

[4] Quoted in *Extracts from the Hawthornden Manuscripts*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1832), p. 28.

[5] *The Works of William Fowler*, ed. Henry W. Meikle, Scottish Text Society, 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1914), I. The numbering is as in that volume. TAR = *Tarantula*. SS = *Sonnet Sequence*. D = *Death Sonnets*. MS = *Miscellaneous Sonnets*.

> Yea, *fortoun* in my losses playes her parte,
> And with dissembled showes protracts my payne. (TAR 16)
>
> Ah burning Thoughts now let me take some Rest,
> And your tumultuous Broyles a while appease,
> Is't not enough, *Starres, Fortune, Loue* molest
> Me all at once, but yee must to displease? (S^1 12)[6]

Drummond's replacement of "nature" by "Starres" should be noted, but the general pattern of ideas is closely followed. In each sequence the poet then analyses his grief. Subsequently Drummond alters the order of his uncle's narrative, while retaining its most effective elements.

The lady in both sequences is regularly set against a natural background, so that she becomes a Nature goddess and her cruelty becomes part of Nature's general malevolence (esp. TAR 32-40, S^1 14-18). Occasionally, however, she surpasses it in obduracy, a fact underlined by TAR 19 and S^1 15. Both draw similar pictures of nature, including animals and plants, before concluding that only the lady would not grant sympathy to the grief-stricken lover. The adaptation is in this case quite free, but the ideas presented and the nature/lady contrast are identical. It seems possible that Fowler's sonnet, as much as Sannazaro xxix is behind Drummond's final product.[7]

If there is some doubt about this parallel, there can be none about the debt of S^1 8 to TAR 22 or S^1 18 to TAR 41. The first pair both stem ultimately from Statius's "Crimine quo merui," (*Silvae* v. 4) and describe the peace of nature contrasted with the poet's own restlessness.

> The day is done, the Sunn doth ells declyne,
> Night now approaches, and the Moone appeares,
> The tuinkling starrs in firmament dois schyne,
> Decoring with the poolles there circled spheres;
> The birds to nests, wyld beasts to denns reteirs,
> The moving leafes unmoved now repose,
> Dewe dropps dois fall, the porctraits of my teares,
> The wawes within the seas theme calmlye close:
> To all things nature ordour dois Impose,
> Bot not to love that proudlye doth me thrall,
> Quha all the dayes and night, but chainge or choyse,
> Steirs up the coales of fyre unto my fall,
> And sawes his breirs and thornes within my hart,
> The fruits quhairoff ar doole, greiff, grones, and smart. (TAR 22)
>
> Now while the Night her sable Vaile hath spred,
> And silently her restie Coache doth rolle,
> Rowsing with Her from *Tethis* azure Bed

[6] The italics are my own.

[7] *Le Opere Volgari di M. Jacopo Sanazzaro* (Padova, 1723), p. 354. Cited by Kastner, op. cit., I, 183.

> Those starrie Nymphes which dance about the Pole.
> While *Cynthia,* in purest Cipres cled,
> The Latmian Shepheard in a Trance descries,
> And whiles lookes pale from hight of all the Skies,
> Whiles dyes her Beauties in a bashfull Red,
> While Sleepe (in Triumph) closed hath all Eyes,
> And Birds and Beastes a Silence sweet doe keepe,
> And *Proteus* monstrous People in the Deepe,
> The Winds and Waues (husht up) to rest entise,
> I wake, muse, weepe, and who my Heart hath slaine
> See still before me to augment my Paine. (S¹ 8)

Both open with the image of night and deal in almost the same order with stars, moon, sleep, animals and the sea, before designating the lover as a solitary exception. Kastner is wrong in seeing Drummond's sonnet as an amplification of the octet in Petrarch's "Or che'l cielo e la terra e'l vento tace." It is clearly a close rendering of one of Fowler's best sonnets, proving again that Drummond's taste in choosing his models was impeccable.

In S¹ 18 he gains hope through Nature's greenness as represented by the lady's eyes,

> To frame thought best, as bringing most Delight,
> That to pin'd Hearts Hope might for ay arise:
> Nature (all said) a Paradise of Greene
> There plac'd, to make all loue which haue them seene.

But Fowler, when similarly depressed had derived comfort in the same fashion. He too asked Nature for comfort and was advised to feed

> "On grene," say they, "for grene dois hope ay breid,
> Which fedethe wrachles as by proofe they prove,
> And brings disparing saules some ease in love."

The connection of relieved misery, nature, greenery and hope is too complex to be accidental.

Other parallels may be suggested between S¹ 4 and TAR 12, which share a contrarieties pattern, imagery connected with horses, a heaven/ hell contrast and the opposition between reality and appearance as shown in the lady. Even the two "if" sonnets, TAR 30 and S¹ 32 are closer than Kastner's suggested source, Desportes', "Si j'ay moins de pouvoir, plus j'ay de cognoissance," which opens on a philosophical note, lacking in the Scottish versions,

> If never for to ioy nor yet enioy
> Ane spark of plesour in my fervent love,
> If vaynlye paines and pen and spreits employ
> The hardness of her harte to mercye move, (TAR 30)
> If crost with all Mishaps bee my poore Life,

> If one short day I neuer spent in Mirth,
> If my Spright with it selfe holds lasting Strife,
> If Sorrowes death is but new Sorrowes Birth? (S¹ 32)

The "if" form had always been popular in Scottish sonneteering, since first introduced by James VI's "maister poete," Alexander Montgomerie. It therefore seems unnecessary to cite inexact foreign models, when so many versions already exist in Scotland.

Fowler and Drummond retain a somewhat similar progression throughout the love sonnets in life. Each endures a period of absence, each finds comfort in solitary retreats, each finds temporary relief from love, only to return once more to its captivity, while in each there is a more noticeably sensual note than is consistent with pure Petrarchanism. But, like Petrarch, they both follow their lady into death, alone among Scottish sonneteers in so doing. Each is rewarded with a vision (S² Songe 2; D3) in which he is chided for excessive grief. Although Drummond's visitant is a spirit, while Fowler's is the lady herself, their arguments on the irrationality of grief and the lasting joys of heaven are identical. The situation is clearly Petrarchan, but Drummond was probably guided in part by Fowler's precedent.

Certainly Drummond's S²5 was inspired by Fowler's D 5. In both the poet addresses himself with a view to determining the nature of his grief.

> O thow myne hairt full fraughted with regrett,
> Quhat can the lett to sunder not for woe?
> Thow mynde also, with crabed cairs befrett,
> With pains oursett, canst thow hir death forgoe? (D 5)
>
> Mine Eyes, dissolue your Globes in brinie Streames,
> And with a Cloud of Sorrow dimme your Sight,
> The Sunnes bright Sunne is set, of late whose Beames
> Gaue Luster to your Day, Day to your Night. . . .
> And wofull Minde abhorre to thinke of Ioy,
> My Senses all now comfortlesse you hide, (S² 5)

Both "deafen Earth with Anatheames," as Drummond puts it, before concluding that Death has rendered future hope pointless. The development of the argument and similarity in rhetorical techniques employed are so striking that Fowler's sonnet must have been the origin for Drummond's plea of grief.

Despite this shared pessimism, both poets do find a solution finally, and characteristically their solution is the same, as a comparison between S² 13 and D 7 will confirm. The lady as beautiful yet fragile. God as anxious to restore her to a rightful place in heaven at the first opportunity. The poet's decision to move from earthly love to divine. These

are the three major themes in each, although foreseeably Drummond develops the "contempt of the world" topos, which is to play so strong a part in *Urania* and the *Flowres of Sion*. But he ends as he began, following the narrative model of his uncle and adapting those of Fowler's sonnets, which stood up to his rigorous artistic standards.

Even Fowler's *Miscellaneous Sonnets* were grafted into Drummond's verse occasionally. The best example is MS 5, which is the source of S^1 39. The conceit of a storm arising because the waves are striving to kiss her boat is common to each,

> Lest wind and wave, enamord of hir forme,
> May thronge and crowd themselves into a storme. (MS 5)

> And yet hudge Waues arise, the Cause is this,
> The Ocean striues with Forth the Boate to kisse. (S^1 39)

as is the imagery of the poet's instructions to the sea,

> No Wrinkles nor no furrowes in your face (MS 5)

> Cut your white Lockes, and on your foamie Face
> Let not a Wrinckle bee (S^1 39)

Sidney's sonnet "O happy Thames!" as suggested by Kastner, is not nearly so convincing a source.

In the light of all this evidence it seems certain that Drummond's uncle was a major influence on his poetry. But Alexander too had a part to play.[8] He almost certainly read Drummond's sonnets in MS form as the two poets habitually criticised each other's work. He it was who contributed the introductory sonnet to Drummond's love poetry, while he is the "Alexis" addressed in S^1 46 (Alexis, here shee stay'd among these Pines). The division of Drummond's sequence into sonnets, songs, sextains and madrigals echoes the division in Alexander's *Aurora*. In addition, by naming his heroine Auristella, Hawthornden seems to be implying that she owes as much to Aurora as to Sidney's Stella. If incidental evidence is to be trusted Alexander's influence in Drummond's sequence may be quite extensive.

Perhaps the greatest single characteristic of the *Aurora* is its view of life and love as compounded of Telesian oppositions.[9] Nearly all of these contrasts are echoed in Drummond. The love/lust conflict

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[8] *The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander of Stirling*, ed. L. E. Kastner and H. B. Charlton, Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1929), II. The numbering is as in that volume. AUR = *Aurora*.

[9] Bernardino Telesio, *De Natura Rerum iuxta propria principia* (Naples, 1586). For an assessment of his theories see *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. E. Cassirer, P. O. Kristeller and J. H. Randall Jr., 4th impression (Chicago, 1956).

appears in S^14 and S^1 Songe 1. Indeed it infuses the whole sequence, which depends on a balance between sensuality and Platonism for much of its effect. The ideal opposes the real (as in Alexander) when the lady, for so long viewed as subject to decay, becomes eternal in S^1 42,

> Shee whose faire flowrs no Autumne makes decay,
> Whose Hue celestiall, earthly Hues doth staine.

Reason is set against passion in S^1 2 and S^1 7. Despair contends with fluency in Hawthornden as well as Stirling,

> Ah Eyes which only serve to waile my Smart,
> How long will you mine inward Woes proclaime?

Reality and appearance merge when Drummond, like Alexander, considers the dreamlike qualities of life and concludes, as in S^1 47 that all which is termed "good" must be illusory,

> Loe, what is good of Life is but a Dreame,
> When Sorrow is a neuer-ebbing Streame.

Neither is purely concerned with the story of a single love. He aims in addition to provide a philosophy of love in the abstract. This in each case stresses love's paradoxicality and the need to reconcile its oppositions.

But the true closeness in this instance is one of spirit rather than similar narrative framework. Auristella like Aurora is seen first to conquer the poet and then to defeat his conqueror, Cupid. But the same amororus hierarchy can be traced in Alexander Craig's *Amorose Songes, Sonets and Elegies*[10] as well as other sonnet sequences. The importance of the Telesian oppositions is lessened too by the fact that they could be detected in the output of many other Renaissance sonneteers, although not so thoroughly dealt with. What Drummond derives from Alexander is not so much the same philosophy as the same spirit of philosophical enquiry. Both move from personal grief to grief at the general situation of mankind. While the senior poet saw opposition as the major truth of life, finding refuge in stoicism and hopes of final synthesis, Hawthornden accepted the Telesian implications of his theory but set them alongside his view of Time as the ruler of mortality. In short, Drummond like Alexander follows the Spenserian poetic line, but is a Metaphysical in the sense of having a consistent world view and being concerned with final problems.

[10] Contained in *Poetical Works of Alexander Craig of Rosecraig*, Hunterian Club (Glasgow, 1873). Craig's sequence is an unusual one, for he addresses eight mistresses.

The Menstrie poet[11] provides fewer direct sources for Drummond than Fowler had done. Yet some of Drummond's more daring images are paralleled in the *Aurora*. When the younger poet writes of his lady in S¹ 47,

> To haue your Sunne in such a Zodiacke

he doubtless is recollecting the following line from AUR 37,

> I would the Zodiacke be whence thou dost shine.

The imagination which allows Drummond to see his eyes as "great in labour of their Teares" is also suspiciously close to Alexander's in AUR 71,

> For eyes that are deliuer'd of their birth.

One of Drummond's favourite yet unusual epithets, "blubbered" is perhaps suggested by his friend and compatriot in AUR 15, when referring to his "blubring pen." None of these instances is decisive on its own, but possible echoes of Alexander on a verbal and imagistic level recur so frequently throughout Drummond's poetry, that some must be valid.

The opening sonnet of the *Aurora* may have been the original model for Drummond's first sonnet. The octets with their concentration on the poet's youthfulness, his love of fanciful conceits and ignorance of the realities of love are especially close, although the conventional nature of the content makes certain attribution impossible. It seems that Drummond began with Alexander's poem and then adapted it to provide a new conclusion. This technique he again employs in S¹ 7,

> That learned Graecian (who did so excell
> In Knowledge passing Sense, that hee is nam'd
> Of all the after-Worlds Divine) doth tell. .

This clearly echoes in phraseology and style the first lines of AUR 3,

> That subtill Greeke who for t'aduance his art,
> Shap'd Beauties Goddesse with so sweet a grace,
> And with a lerned pensill limn'd her face. .

Yet Alexander is talking of Apelles and Drummond of Plato. It seems likely that the tale of Apelles and his creation of the Idea of beauty, mentioned by Alexander (1 10) aroused in Drummond's mind associations with that other Greek, creator of the philosophical Idea of beauty (1 7). The sonnets are thus linked by their opening invocations and by the "Idea" theme, but Drummond introduces a new hero and the theory of pre-existence. Such a procedure would be consistent with

[11] Menstrie, near Stirling, was Alexander's birthplace and he is often referred to as "the gudeman of Menstrie."

the rules for imitation set down in the only Scottish critical treatise of the day, James VI's *Reulis and Cautelis*.[12]

A clear parallel exists between S[1] 13 and AUR 10. Alexander had begun with the image of the dawn embodied in his mistress's name,

> I sweare, Aurora, by thy starrie eyes.

Drummond expands this image,

> O Sacred Blush impurpling Cheekes pure Skies,
> With crimson Wings which spred thee like the Morne.

Both then advance to conventional descriptions of her beauty, sharing the detail of "coral lip" and "golden lockes." This leads to a proclamation by the poet of the chastity of his affections,

> I sweare by those, and by my spotless loue,
> And by my secret, yet most feruent fires,
> That I haue never nurc'd but chast desires. (AUR 10)

Drummond varies this slightly by extending the platonism to his lady,

> Chaines
> Which did captiue mine Eares, ensnare my Soule,
> Wise Image of her Minde, Minde that containes
> A Power all Power of Senses to controule. (S[1] 13)

But only in the final couplet do the poems part company,

> Then since I loue those vertuous parts in thee,
> Shouldst thou not loue this vertuous mind in me? (AUR 10)

> Yee all from Loue disswade so sweetly mee,
> That I loue more, if more my Loue could bee. (S[1] 13)

The evolution of thought up till this point is so close as to make it virtually certain that Drummond's sonnet is an adaptation of Alexander's.

Among other likely sources is AUR 72, which like S[1] 49 describes a final parting with the lady. The reluctance to stop gazing at her, the kiss which in each case "seales" the last farewell, the misery after separation are common to both. Significantly too, both poets stress the involuntary nature of the poet's behaviour,

> When I against my will thy sight forsooke: (AUR 72)
> How loth were mine (lips) from those delights to part (AUR 72)

Drummond for his part is "constrained" by the stars and expresses his impotence in a classical parallel,

> So wailing parted Ganamede the faire,
> When Eagles talents bore him through the Aire. (S[1] 49)

[12] *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. James Craigie, Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1955), I, 78-9. James approves of imitation only if it allows for "your awin Inuentioun, quhilk is ane of the cheif properteis of ane Poete."

The situation is conventional, but the verbal echoes and choice of the sonnet genre make the possibility of Alexander's influence very strong indeed.

More tenuous links connect PP 10 with AUR 46, both of which recount Love's vengeance on the poet for scorning its dominance, while the opening of S^1 41,

> Is't not enough (aye mee) mee thus to see
> Like some Heauen-banish'd Ghost still wailing goe?

may have been suggested by the first couplet of AUR 20,

> Unhappie ghost go waile thy griefe below,
> Where neuer soule but endlesse horror sees.

The Platonism of S^1 20 in which the beauty of other women is seen as a shadow compared to the heavenly Idea of Auristella had been anticipated in AUR 19. The river motif of S^1 14-17 too is paralleled in the earlier sequence, notably in AUR 25 and 36, although no close thematic similarities exist.

Finally there is the example which Kastner himself pointed out. U 6 at least for the first seven lines is a fairly close adaptation of AUR 11. In each the poet laments the passing of a Golden Age and his misfortune in having missed it. The first quatrains will serve to underline the similarity.

> Ah that it was my fortune to be borne,
> Now in the time of this degener'd age,
> When some, in whom impietie doth rage,
> Do all the rest discredit whil'st they scorne. (AUR 11)

> What haplesse Hap had I now to bee borne,
> In these unhappie Times, and dying Dayes,
> Of this else-doating World? when Good decayes,
> Loue is quench'd forth and Vertue held a scorne. (U 6)

Alexander's influence, though less obvious than Fowler's clearly infuses Drummond's poetry. The Scots as well as Italians, French, Spanish and English are used as models by Drummond.

From this study several main points arise. Drummond was one of a close poetic group in Scotland. Bound by ties of blood, of friendship and of patriotism, he inevitably knew the poetry of his fellow Scots, adapting it to his own purposes. Of his Scottish sources Fowler and Alexander are the most important. There are minor echoes of Stewart of Baldynneis, Alexander Montgomerie and David Murray, but it was to the main Petrarchan sequence writers of his day that Drummond turned for inspiration. This inspiration was of two kinds—general and particular. On a general level he united the narrative interest of

Fowler's *Tarantula* to the genre divisions and metaphysical equiry of Alexander's *Aurora*. On a particular level, he adapted many sonnets with a greater or lesser degree of freedom. The following seventeen debts may be suggested along with several philosophical and imagistic echoes not included in the list.

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\begin{array}{rcl}
\text{Drummond } S^1 \; 1 & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 1 \\
4 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 12 \\
7 & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 3 \\
8 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 22 \\
12 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 16 \\
13 & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 10 \\
15 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 19 \\
18 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 41 \\
19 & : & \text{Fowler SS } 7 \\
32 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 30 \\
39 & : & \text{Fowler MS } 5 \\
47 & : & \text{Fowler TAR } 42 \\
49 & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 72 \\
S^2 \; 5 & : & \text{Fowler D } 5 \\
13 & : & \text{Fowler D } 7 \\
\text{U } 6 & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 11 \\
\text{PP10} & : & \text{Alexander AUR } 46.
\end{array}
$$

While some of these parallels remain a subject for conjecture (like many of Kastner's), the majority are certain sources. In addition it should be remembered that more ingenuity is needed when adapting a Scottish source into thinly Scotticized English than for a French or Italian one. In the latter case, translation into a new medium is in itself an original contribution. In the former, freer adaptation is necessary to avoid the criticism of plagiarism. Yet it is noticeable that every one of the sources listed above fills a gap in Kastner's list or replaces a dubious source.[13] As successive scholars make their contributions to this "source map," the problem of whether Drummond worked entirely on the principle of imitation becomes increasingly pertinent.

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[13] Except the U 6 / AUR 11 parallel, which Kastner himself noted.