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In analysing Dunbar's reliance on Lydgate, Pierrepont H. Nicolls put Scottish literary studies greatly in his debt.[1] The English poet's voice is heard with some frequency in Scottish verse from the late fifteenth century till the early seventeenth. Gavin Douglas often echoes him, perhaps most noticeably in lines 1585-1611 of the *Palice of Honour,* where the *Siege of Thebes* and the *Troy Book* join as sources. David Lindsay's best editor notes the poet's admission of debts to Chaucer, Lydgate and Gower in *The Testament of the Papyngo.* He comments, "Lydgate, however, was more on a level with the so-called Chaucerians of England and Scotland, except James I of Scotland, and we find more practical imitation of Lydgate than of Chaucer, although the latter was considered the greater genius." [2] When James VI began a literary renaissance at the Edinburgh court in 1585, the emphasis was heavily placed on stylistic virtuosity. The latinate style and extravagant rhetoric of such as William Fowler or John Stewart inevitably recalls Lydgate to mind, while Alexander Craig occasionally uses examples from the *Fall of Princes* in his *Amorose Songes* of 1606.[3]

While accepting the value of Nicolls' contribution, I challenge its completeness on three grounds. While the account of verbal and imagistic debts is impressive, Dunbar's imitation of the English poet's favourite devices of rhetoric is perhaps more striking than either, yet is given scant attention. Secondly, like so many comparative critics, he concentrates rather much on the "tamen idem" side of the classical *topos,* forgetting that as much can be learned from "varius sis." Lydgate may have been Dunbar's major source, but they are very different poets. A study of basically similar poems may help to clarify the nature of their divergence one from the other. Finally, there are some important borrowings overlooked by Nicolls, notably the influence of *Reson and Sensuallyte* on the *Goldyn Targe.*

1. P. H. Nicolls, "William Dunbar as a Scottish Lydgatean," *PMLA,* XLVI (1931), pp. 214-224; "Lydgate's Influence on the aureate terms of the Scottish Chaucerians," *PMLA,* XLVII (1932), pp. 516-522.

2. *The Works of Sir David Lindsay,* ed. Douglas Hamer, Scottish Text Society, 4 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1929-34), III, 68.

3. *The Poetical Works of Alexander Craig of Rosecraig,* ed. David Laing, Hunterian Club (Glasgow, 1873).

Dunbar as a "makar" was deeply interested in style, metre and rhetoric generally. Just as Stewart was later to concern himself primarily with his "minchit meitir" and ask his master, James VI to corect it, so Dunbar praises Lydgate and Gower, not for their themes but their language:

> Your angel mouthis most mellifluate
> Oure rude langage has clere illumynate,
> And faire ourgilt oure speche, that imperfyte
> Stude, or your goldyn pennis schupe to wryte;
> This Ile before was bare and desolate
> Off rethorike or lusty fresch endyte.[4]

This comment makes it clear that Dunbar considered Lydgate and Gower to have made one advance on Chaucer's example, while being generally inferior to their great predecessor. That advance lay in a raising of the stylistic high level and the introduction of more complex devices of rhetoric. It is this artificial mode, which the Scot adopts for his aureate verse, notably in the *Golden Targe* and the *Thrissill and the Rois*. It was this example which was to be the norm for Scottish poetry until the vernacular revival of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns.

Sieper in his introduction to *Reson and Sensuallyte* in the EETS series, analyses Lydgate's style, commenting first on what he terms "reduplication of expression." "The author is rarely, indeed, content with a single expression to denote what he wishes to say, but associates with it a second expression, equivalent or similar in meaning to the first."[5] Readers of Dunbar are familiar with this technique. Phrases like "mirth and joy," "sueit and delectable," "fresche and ying" become almost formulaic in Dunbar's verse, often with the added refinement of alliteration, as in "fresche and flureist," "blyth and blisfull" or "pleasant and preclair." As in Lydgate this technique results in various circumlocutions. Sieper points out that Lydgate replaces "always" with "night and day" or "both eve and prime" and indicates similar phrases, substituting for nowhere, everywhere, throughout and under all circumstances. Again in his aureate verse, Dunbar follows the master:

> That all the world tuke confort, *fer and neir.*
> That *both in yewth and eild, and every hour.*[6]

He follows him too in the use of doubled phrases:

> For he is fadit full far and feblit of strenth.

4. *The Poems of William Dunbar,* ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie, 2nd ed. (London, 1960), p. 119.

5. *Lydgate's Reson and Sensuallyte,* ed. Ernst Sieper, Early English Text Society, 2 vols. (London, 1903), II, 45.

6. *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 109 and p. 135. The italics are my own.

. . . . . .
With notis glaid and glorious armony.
. . . . . .
Thay saluse and thay thank a thousand syse.[7]

Parallel phrases also occur, though not usually allied to Lydgate's complexity of style:

Quhen Merche wes *with veriand windis past,*
And Appryll had, *with hir silver schouris,*
Tane leif at nature *with ane orient blast;*

In May as that Aurora did upspring,
With cristall ene chasing the cluddis sable,
I hard a merle *with mirry notis* sing
A sang of lufe, *with voce rycht comfortable,*
Agane the orient bemis amiable . . . .[8]

In the latter case, Dunbar moves some way towards the placing of parallel phrases within the highly complex sentence structure, beloved by Lydgate. Generally, however, he preferred a simpler syntax.

Most of the other Lydgatean characteristics studied by Sieper are later adopted by the Scottish disciple. Especially popular is the addition of intensifying phrases. Lydgate's "ful wel apayed" and "ryght wonder frendly wyse" may profitably be compared with similar strengthening in Dunbar, "with voce rycht comfortable," "richt awfull," "full lustily," "full low enclyning." Again Dunbar's tendency is towards simplification and he does not have so wide a range of variations as Lydgate. Yet he is clearly following the latter's line, rather than that of a more moderate stylist like Chaucer. Like Lydgate too he shows a marked interest in double negatives ("Nocht to perturb the wattir nor the air") and has a series of stop-gap phrases used to eke out the metre where necessary ("me thocht," "discrive I wald," "thare saw I").

There can be little doubt that Dunbar as the "laureate" of James IV's court schooled himself in the complex style adopted by his counterpart in England. It is equally certain, that he saw its deficiencies. Every one of the devices listed above is a technique of amplification. Already it has become clear that Dunbar did not carry these techniques to the extremes of the English poet. Further, his poetic vision was much more precise than Lydgate's, tending naturally towards short lyrics rather than long narrative verse; brief, almost humourised character portraits, rather than tedious descriptions bolstered by the moralizing and Biblical associations, which are necessary parts in Lydgate's thought progression, Never does Dunbar lose sight of the overall form of his poem, even in aureate works like the *Thrissill and the Rois.* The mode

7. Ibid., p. 89, p. 134 and p. 115.
8. Ibid., p. 107 and p. 134.

of expression is complex and full, yet the governing idea of Nature crowning the various levels of creation is at once static and simple. The extravagant brilliance of the high aureate style is controlled within compartmentalized units of thought and stanza.

He thus avoids the rambling monotonousness of Lydgate's verse, where a loose fullness of style joins to arguments following the vagaries of association within a form scornful of unity or the interdependence of ideas. Compare for example, Lydgate's long sentences as they turn and twist in an effort to discover their own meaning, with Dunbar's control of length and content. Lydgate had more faithful Scottish disciples, who transmitted his weaknesses as well as his strengths. They were without exception minor poets, most of them writing at the end of the sixteenth century. William Fowler in his version of Petrarch's *Trionfi* unites all the stylistic tricks studied above to uncontrolled sentence length and a hazy knowledge of syntax:

> So muche my hart wes then amaised, so much of mervell full,
> That I thair stoode, euen as a man that stupid stands and dull,
> And can not speik, bot holdis his toung, and luikis if anye man
> Be neir of yit him round about to give him counsell than,
> When that my shaddow and my freind began thus for to say:
> "Quhat . . .[9]

Here are the synonyms, the parallel phrases, the padding and reduplications of which Sieper speaks, without Dunbar's control and precision. The difference in quality between Fowler's verse and Dunbar's highlights how far the latter is from being a "Lydgatean," although well versed in all Lydgate's stylistic devices.

Similarly a study of poems written within the same tradition serves to highlight differences rather than similarities. Both Lydgate's *King Henry VI's Triumphal Entry into London, 21 Feb. 1432* and Dunbar's *To Aberdeen* are commissioned poems, celebrating a monarch's visit. Both describe the town, the reception, the pageants and festivities. Only Dunbar, however, simplifies the contents of the pageant, dismissing it in two stanzas to Lydgate's twenty-two; only Dunbar varies his rhythm and converts bald narrative into a lyrical effusion with refrain; only Dunbar controls the form of his poem, highlighting in turn the town, the burgesses, the minstrels, the pageant, the maidens, the people and the gift, before coming full circle to the town again. Lydgate reports even the text of the welcome read to the King and so immerses himself in detail that poetic form is entirely lost. Dunbar may well have read Lydgate's work, but the similarity of situation is

9. *The Works of William Fowler*, ed. H. Meikle et al., Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh and London, 1914-40), I, 47.

the sole common denominator between his polished, orderly lyric and the English poet's haphazard, tedious verse-report with its monotonous moralizings.

Many of the seeming parallels between Dunbar and Lydgate amount to little more than this—a working within the same traditions, but a different handling of those traditions. Almost always Dunbar's work is shorter, more unified and more lyrical in tone. This judgment even applies to the titles. Compare Lydgate's *Ballade on a New Year's gift of an Eagle Presented to King Henry VI* with *A New Year's Gift to the King*. There in miniature we have the difference between an artist who can choose the poetically significant and one who cannot. Soon Lydgate's eagle like Miss Twinkleton's "Swan of Avon" in *Edwin Drood,* is to be drowned in the sea of his own erudition, while Dunbar trips lightly on, suiting the levity of his metre to that of his topic:

> God gif to the ane blissed chance,
> And of all vertew aboundance,
> And grace ay for to perseveir,
> In hansill of this guid new yeir.[10]

It is thus possible that Lydgate's *Ballade on an Ale-Seller* and *Ballade per Antiphrasim* may have suggested Dunbar's two poems on the tailors and the soutars, or that Lydgate's *Letter to Gloucester* lies behind *"Sanct Salvatour! send silver sorrow,"* but in each case the differences are more striking than the similarities.

Nicolls does of course pinpoint instances of real indebtedness. His analysis of the *Lament for the Makaris,* as including echoes of *Timor Mortis Conturbat Me, The Testament of Lydgate* and *Daunce Macha-bree* is highly convincing, although there are many touches of orig-inality. Nicolls' handling of the devotional verse is however open to criticism. Rigid traditions governing the choice of topics and even of phraseology make this a dangerous area for the comparative critic at the best of times. It is quite possible that, as Nicolls thinks, *The Testa-ment of Lydgate* may have influenced Dunbar's *Tabill of Confession,* but it is unfortunate that the verbal echoes adduced are of the most conventional sort: "Crystes woundes five"/"for thy woundis fyve"; "at gracious port taryve"/"in blissit port to arryif"; "there to have mercy"/ "that cryis the Mercy." The other main parallel between *Ave Jesse Virgula* and *When Deathe shall crusche me in his Armes strange* is only slightly stronger and as the latter was probably not Dunbar's, its value becomes questionable. It is probably true that "the pervasive influence of Lydgate's voluminous religious works"[11] is to be seen in Dunbar's

10. *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 51.

11. Nicolls, "Dunbar as Scottish Lydgatean," p. 219.

work. To isolate it with any certainty is nearly impossible, for Dunbar is not a close imitator, while the strict conventions governing devotional verse imply some echoing anyway between poems written on the same topic.

The only possible influence that I would advance hesitantly in this area is that of *Ave Regina* on Dunbar's *Ane Ballat of Our Lady*:

> Hayle luminary & benigne lanterne,
> Of Ierusalem the holy ordres nyne,
> As quene of quenes laudacion eterne
> They yeue to thee, O excellente virgyne!
> Eclypsyd I am, for to determyne
> Thy superexcellence of Cantica canticorum,
> The aureat beames do nat in me shyne,
> Aue regina celorum!
>
> Hale, sterne superne! Hale, in eterne,
> In Godis sicht to schyne!
> Lucerne in derne for to discerne
> Be glory and grace devyne;
> Hodiern, modern, sempitern,
> Angelicall regyne!
> Our tern inferne for to dispern
> Helpe, rialest rosyne.
> Ave Maria, gracia plena!
> Haile, fresche floure femynyne!
> Yerne us, guberne, virgine matern,
> Of reuth baith rute and ryne.[12]

Not only does Dunbar take over the "Hayle" repetition and the basic idea of Mary as an eternal light, he also adopts Lydgate's two rhymes on "erne" and "yne," as well as the Latin line, which interrupts this complex rhyme scheme. His invention adds internal rhyme and the short/long line alternation, both improvements to Lydgate's rather placid stanza. Certainty is impossible, but the combination of shared features suggests that here the Scottish makar may be directly indebted to the much-maligned "monk of Bery."

Before moving to more certain ground, I should like to suggest that Dunbar had read Lydgate's *The Pain and Sorrow of Evil Marriage* and that it may have influenced his *Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* as much as Chaucer's Wife of Bath had done. As many critics have pointed out, Dunbar is primarily satirising mediaeval marriage in his poem. Both he and Lydgate, however, do this through lengthy analyses of the female character. Lydgate's comment in St 7:

12. *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. H. N. MacCracken, Early English Text Society, 2 vols. (London, 1962), I, 291; *Poems of Dunbar*, p. 160.

> Dyvers of hert, full of duplicite,
> Right mastirfull, hasty and eke proude,
> Crabbed of langage when þei lust cry lowde.[13]

might well have suggested Dunbar's three masterly portraits, although similar judgments would not be hard to find. Yet Dunbar probably did know this work, and more detailed parallels follow. The speech of the first wife in particular seems to owe something to Lydgate. The wife's bestiality and desire to imitate the yearly love of birds may have stemmed from the double suggestion in St 14 of *Evil Marriage*:

> Wyves been bestes very unstable
> In ther desires, which may not chaunged be;
> Like a swalowe which is insaciable[14]

Suspicion grows into near certainty when this line of thought leads directly in both cases to the pilgrimage complex:

> They hem reioise to see and to be sayne,
> And to seke sondry pilgremages;
> At grete gaderynges to walken upon the playne,
> And at staracles to sitte on hie stages;
> If they be ffaire, to shewe ther visages;
> If they be ffowle of look or countenaunce,
> They can amend it with plesaunt daliaunce.

> I suld at fairis be found new faceis to se;
> At playis, and at preichingis, and pilgrimages greit,
> To schaw my renone, royaly, quhair preis was of folk,
> To manifest my makdome to multitude of pepill,
> And blaw my bewtie on breid, quhair bernis war mony;
> That I micht cheis, and be chosin, and change quhen me lykit.[15]

Of these passages, each arises from a consideration of birds' mating habits, each deals with plays, pilgrimages and other gatherings, each uses infinitive constructions; there is an echoing of "see and to be sayne" in "cheis and to be chosin," while Lydgate's association of "fair" (in one sense) with "visage" is paralleled by Dunbar's association of fair (in another sense) with "faceis."

Thus, while the two works are very different, it seems likely that Dunbar again owes a debt to Lydgate. The idea of the widow flirting in church may even have been suggested by St. 16, where Lydgate satirises those who use "seyntuaries ther ffrendes to visite" or prefer "to kys no shrynes, but lusty yong images," while Lydgate like Dunbar ends by stepping out of his poem and addressing himself directly to the men in his audience:

13. *Minor Poems of Lydgate,* II, 458.

14. Ibid., p. 459.

15. Ibid., and *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 86.

> Wherfore, yonge men, to eschewe sorowe & care,
> Withdrawe your foot, or ye ffall in the snare.
> Quhilk wald ye waill to your wif, gif ye suld wed one?[16]

Chaucer's influence is equally strong, but Dunbar was an eclectic borrower, and when similarities of topic, situations and conclusion ally themselves to similarities of image progression, word association and rhetorical devices, it is impossible to deny the probability of some direct interrelationship.

Lydgate's *A Wicked Tunge Wille Sey Amys* seems also to have escaped Nicolls' attention. In this the English poet complains that a slanderer can blame you for dressing cheerfully and for dressing shabbily, for being single and for being married, for being rich and for being poor. This is exactly the argument used by Dunbar in *Of Deming* and *How Sall I governe me.* Compare the two voices considering the physical attributes of man:

> ȝif thow be fatte owther corpolent,
> Than wille folke seyn thow art a grete glotoun,
> A deuowrer or ells vinolent;
> ȝif thow be lene or megre of fassioun,
> Call the a negard yn ther oppynyoun,
> ȝitte suffre hem speke triste right wel this,
> A wicked tonge wille alwei sei a-mys.

> Be I bot littill of stature,
> Thay call me catyve createure;
> And be I grit of quantetie,
> Thay call me monstrowis of nature;
> Thus can I not undemit be.[17]

It is surely not enough in this instance to refer to the mediaeval love of arguing on both sides of the question and refer all else to coincidence. Dunbar elsewhere has proved himself a master of style, of verse forms and of variations on given themes. He nowhere impresses as an original mind, and indeed often praises his sources, nearly always including Lydgate. Moreover, he is one in a line of Scottish court poets, including James I, Alexander Scott, Alexander Montgomerie, John Stewart and William Fowler, all of whom relied heavily on earlier material for their inspiration.

Nicolls' largest omission, however, lies in failing to note the numerous parallels between *Reson and Sensuallyte* and the *Goldyn Targe.* Both open with the conventional Springtime scene, and each stresses the procreative aspects involved. It is dangerous to seek parallels in

16. *Minor Poems of Lydgate,* II, 460; *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 97.
17. *Minor Poems of Lydgate,* p. 840; *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 23.

such a context, but many details are shared by Lydgate and Dunbar. Their use of colours is close. Lydgate writes:

> In these herbes white and rede,
> Which spryngen in the grene mede,

while Dunbar has:

> Within thair courtyns grene, in to thair bouris
> Apparalit quhite and red wyth blomes suete.[18]

Both concentrate on the dew, adopting exactly the same image:

> And the siluer dropes rounde
> Lych perles fret upon the grene.
>
> Anamalit was the felde wyth all colouris,
> The perly droppis schake in silvir schouris.[19]

Allowing for the common tradition within which they were writing, one can fairly argue that this is one of the poems in which Dunbar explicitly admits a debt to Lydgate; that there are rather more direct parallels, both phraseological and verbal than one might have expected and that both highlight Nature as procreation in preference to any of her other aspects.

This opening leads in each case to a description of Nature herself, though singly presented in Lydgate and as the first of a catalogue in Dunbar. Both Dunbar's single portrait of Nature and his catalogue seem to owe a debt to the English poet however. It is not only the general bias of emphasis, the establishing of Nature as at once ruler of all creation and intermediary with God, which strikes the reader, although it is noticeable. There are minor poetic details, which Dunbar seems to have recollected from his reading of Lydgate, then introduced into his own poem. Lydgate's Nature is especially noted for her mantle, "wrought of foure elementys" and covered with pictures of all God's servants. It seems to be this very cloak, which Dunbar's Nature hands to Venus:

> There saw I Nature present hir a goune
> Rich to behald and nobil of renoune,
> Off eviry hew under the hevin that bene
> Depaynt, and broud be gude proporcioun.[20]

This interpretation fits well into the thematic progression of the *Goldyn Targe,* for it implies that Nature at this point abdicates her

18. *Reson and Sensuallyte,* p. 4; *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 113.
19. *Reson and Sensuallyte,* p. 4; *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 113.
20. *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 115.

control over all animals to Love, thus anticipating the psychomachia, which forms the central portion of the poem.

Dunbar has preceded this with his description of the ship arriving, the use of "occupatio" and his list of goddesses, which rather unfortunately also includes Apollo and suggests that Pallas and Minerva are separate deities. It is possible that the idea of the ship was suggested by Lydgate, the source for much of Dunbar's marine imagery, as Nicolls indicates. Certainly, Lydgate's dreamer does mention a ship shortly after Nature's first appearance:

> And some also men myghte see
> Flowyng fro the salte see,
> Somme so myghty and so large
> To bere a gret ship or a barge.[21]

This possibility is greatly strengthened by the fact that Lydgate's "ship" is followed, like Dunbar's, by a list of famous goddesses. If Dunbar did use this list, it would account for many of his "mythological" errors. Lydgate's first goddess is Pallas, whose genealogy is explained at length with special reference to Apollo. If Dunbar were glancing quickly down this list of goddesses, he would find Thetis, whom he includes, but he might erroneously include Apollo as well. A little later, while still praising Pallas for her wisdom, Lydgate adds:

> she called ys Mynerve.[22]

Again a quick reading could well give the impression, that another goddess is being introduced and so account for Dunbar presenting one goddess as if she were two. Juno is next in Lydgate's list, followed by Venus both of whom figure in the Scottish catalogue. Indeed the only remaining problem is the presence of Thetes in such august company. Again Lydgate provides the answer, for after his list of goddesses, Mercury tells the dreamer of King Pelleus and

> the wedding of hys wyf,
> Which Thetys highte.[23]

Dunbar may even have placed Thetes next to Pallas in his list because of a confusion between the latter's name and that of Pelleus, although I think it unlikely. What does seem incontestable is that the idea of the ship, followed by the list of goddesses originates from a reading of Lydgate.

The moral implications of the two poems are at this point identical.

21. *Reson and Sensuallyte,* p. 26.

22. *Ibid.,* p. 30.

23. *Ibid.,* p. 50.

The poet is won over by Venus and enters another garden, which Lydgate identifies as the "gardyne of Deduit" or pleasure. There Lydgate's dreamer sees sirens, who

> Syngeth songes Amerouse,
> Wonderly delyciouse,

while Dunbar's dreamer listens ecstatically as Venus' servants:

> sang ballettis in lufe, as was the gyse,
> With amourouse notis lusty to devise.[24]

Readers have often wondered at Dunbar's introducing two separate musical descriptions, the first one dealing with the sirens and the second with the music of Cupid's court, a more technical description, involving harps, lutes, ballettis and dancing. The reason for this is clearly that Lydgate also had two descriptions, the one already noted and an earlier discussion by Venus of Deduit's skill in playing "harpe and lute," in "revel and Daunce" and "in al the crafte and melody of musyke and of Armony." There is in Lydgate too a connection with Cupid, for he is introduced after this musical catalogue, as Deduit's brother. The idea of two courts and of two separate musical descriptions may have originated with Lydgate.

From this point onwards Cupid becomes the dominant character in each poem, armed with his various arrows. The influence of the *Romaunt of the Rose* is here strongest, both on Lydgate and Dunbar. Yet probably Dunbar's eye was still primarily on *Reson and Sensuallyte,* merely echoing its increased reliance on Chaucer. Notably the appearance of Cupid, followed first by Beauty and a group of ladies symbolising cheerfulness and sensuality is shared by Lydgate and Dunbar. In the corresponding passage Chaucer concentrates instead on the arrows carried by Swete-Loking. The major reason for linking Dunbar and Lydgate at this point, however, is the greater explicitness of their allegory. In each case it is seen clearly as a battle between reason and sensuality. The *Romaunt,* despite De Meun's efforts, does not have this neat moral framework. Dunbar makes the opposition clear by placing his dreamer persona nominally outside the conflict. He watches Reason in turn withstand the assaults of Beauty, Tender Youth, Swete Womanhede and Hie Degre before falling to Dissymilance. Lydgate had done the same thing earlier, when setting the dreamer's whole pilgrimage in the context of a Reason-Sensuality conflict:

> This is the weye of Reson
> Which causeth man, thys no nay,
> For to goo the ryghte way

24. *Ibid.*, p. 96; *Poems of Dunbar,* p. 115.

> Which hath his gynnyng in the Est.
> But the tother of the west
> Ys, who that kan beholde and se,
> The wey of sensualyte,
> Which set his entente in al
> To thinges that be temporal,
> Passynge and transytorie,
> And fulfylled of veyne glorie.[25]

Lydgate and Dunbar preferred a more explicit, didactic approach to art than Chaucer as the rest of their work shows and their theological pursuits implied. It is no surprise to find these traits again in their reworking of the *Romaunt of the Rose* theme. They prefer a clearcut psychomachia between reason and passion fought out in the Garden of Pleasure under the rules of Cupid. Again too Dunbar shows a keener sense of unity and preference for brevity in rejecting the tedious chess metaphor taken over from the French original by Lydgate. Instead he concludes with the disappearance of the vision and a well-merited word of praise for his three English masters.

Dunbar was writing at a time, when imitation along with invention was regarded as perhaps the highest type of literary composition. In the *Goldyn Targe* he uses Lydgate's *Reson and Sensuallyte* as his basic model. It provides the framework of the psychomachia, parts of the introduction, perhaps the hint for the ship, certainly the list of goddesses and the two pieces of musical description. In conjunction with Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose,* it fills in the dramatis personae for the battlefield and identifies the arrows of Cupid. Dunbar's invention as always lies primarily in his art of selection, for example in accepting the fine description of harmony, but rejecting the chess metaphor. It is even possible that his substitution (the targe) may in this instance have been suggested by Lydgate. It will be remembered that in *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man,* Grace Dieu explains the nature of the Christian's armour to the pilgrim. He culminates with the targe, which is identified as "prudence" and linked with "ryhtful jugement." Moreover the pilgrim is advised to defend himself with it against the powers of sin, thus anticipating the major conceit in Dunbar's *Targe*:

> Wherfor, whil thow art at large,
> Looke thow haue up-on, thys targe,
> Wherso thyn Emnyes the assaylle,
> To force thy quarel and a-mende.[26]

While this suggestion could not be proved, the *Pilgrimage* would certainly be known to a disciple like Dunbar. Moreover the passage

25. *Reson and Sensuallyte,* p. 19.

26. John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man,* ed. F. J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society (London, 1904), p. 224.

beginning at l. 14290 ("Lat ech man -in especyal-") seems to have influenced *Of Manis Mortalitie.*

This study has suggested that in a sense Nicolls has at once underestimated and overestimated Dunbar's debt to Lydgate. He has underestimated it, by ignoring the clear links between *Reson and Sensuallyte* and the *Goldyn Targe*; *A Wicked Tunge* and *Of Deming*; *Evil Marriage* and *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo.* This underestimation continues with his failure to highlight the marked rhetorical similarities between the two authors. His overestimations are however perhaps the more damaging in distorting the nature of the relationship between Dunbar and Lydgate. Awareness of similar traditions or the echoing of conventional phrases are not enough to establish a genuine comparative link. Also, by limiting himself to parallels, while remaining silent on the vast divergences of form or method, Nicolls implicitly tempts us to connect the two poets more closely than we ought. It is hoped that this study, while underlining the general value of Nicolls' work has pointed out some important omissions, corrected some implicit assumptions and altered the bias of emphasis.

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