Neoplatonism and Orphism in Fifteenth-Century Scotland

The Evidence of Henryson's 'New Orpheus'

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In a previous study (MacQueen 1967:24–44) I have tried to show that the long *moralitas* which Robert Henryson (?1420–*c.*1490) appended to his *New Orpheus*[1] has at least as much relevance to the main narrative as have the *moralitates* of the better known *Morall Fabillis*. For this paper I assume that a relationship has been established, and that the narrative has an allegorical element at least as strong as that of the *Morall Fabillis*. In the latter, however, the relation between story and moral is sometimes elaborate, even tortuous. To the *Taill of the Paddok and the Mous*, for instance, which in several ways parallels *New Orpheus*, Henryson subjoined a double *moralitas* (MacQueen 1967:110–21), the first part of which is on the tropological level, the second on that of allegory proper, 'whan a man understondith bi a bodili thyng that he redith of in story, an other gostli thyng that is betokened therbi'. A main object of this paper is to suggest that *New Orpheus* resembles the *Taill of the Paddok and the Mous* in that it should be read on the level both of tropology and allegory proper; that Henryson's explicit *moralitas* is, as he himself indicated, tropological:

> gud moralitie,
> Rycht full of fructe and seriositie— (423–4)

but that, incorporated in the poem, there is ample evidence for a second level of allegory proper, based on Neoplatonic doctrine, metaphor and numerology. Much, but not all, of this may be paralleled in works which were generally familiar during the Middle Ages, in particular, the commentaries of Macrobius and Chalcidius, but there is more than one hint of direct influence from Italy of the Quattrocento. If this is so, there are considerable implications for the intellectual life and culture of fifteenth-century Scotland.

Before Henryson's time, the story of Orpheus had also established itself as folk-narrative or fairy-tale, exemplified by the romances *Sir Orfeo* and the fragmentary *King Orphius* (Bliss 1954; Stewart 1973). In this tradition, Pluto and Proserpine became King and Queen of Faery, the Otherworld, that is to say, generally familiar in Celtic and Lowland British popular belief. Henryson admits this level; two features, for

instance, of his Hell—the bridge (line 262) and the thorny moor (line 289)—are drawn from this tradition. The servant girl too describes Eurydice's death in terms of capture by the fairies:

> Erudices, your quene,
> Is with the fary tane befor myne ene. (118–19)

Only the servant girl, however, uses this term, and it seems probable that Henryson intended his primary audience to distinguish her reaction as belonging to a level intellectually and philosophically lower than that which I hope to show is implicit in the remainder of the poem.

The narrative part of *New Orpheus* consists of fifty-two seven-line stanzas, with which are combined the five ten-line stanzas of the lyric 'Complaint of Orpheus' (lines 134–83). Verbal corruption is present in the three early texts,[2] but much of this may be emended with a fair degree of certainty. The allegory largely depends on stanzas 25–7 of the narrative, the text of which may be reconstructed thus:

> 25 In his passage amang the planetis all
> He herd ane hevinlie melody and sound
> Passing all instrumentis musicall
> Causit be rolling of the speris round;
> Quhilk ermony throw all this mappamond,
> Quhill moving ces, unite perpetuall,
> Of this quik warld Plato the saull can call
>
> 26 Thar leirit he tonys proporcionate
> As dupler, tripler and epitritus,
> Hemiolius and eik the quadruplat,
> Epogdous richt hard and curious;
> And of thir sex, swet & delicious
> Richt consonant five hevinly symphonyis
> Componit ar, as clerkis can devys.
>
> 27 First diatesseroun, full sweit, I wis,
> And diapasoun, symple & duplate,
> And diapente, componit with a dis;
> Thir makis five, of thre multiplicat.
> This mery musik and mellifluat,
> Complete, & full with noumeris od & evyn,
> Is causit be the moving of the hevin. (219–39)

Stanza 26 lists the six arithmetical ratios on which Pythagorean and Platonic musical theory is based; *dupler*, the ratio 2:1; *tripler*, 3:1; *epitritus*, 4:3; *hemiolius*, 3:2; *quadruplat*, 4:1, and *epogdous*, 9:8. The five corresponding consonant musical intervals, 'multiplicat' from the three basic—*diapasoun*, *diapente* and *diatesseroun*—follow in stanza 27; *dia-*

tesseroun, a fourth, corresponding to *epitritus*, 4:3; *diapasoun*, an octave, to *dupler*, 2:1, and *bisdiapasoun* ('diapasoun . . . duplate') or double octave, to *quadruplat*, 4:1; *diapente*, a fifth, to *hemiolius*, 3:2, and *diapente-and-diapasoun*, a double fifth, to *tripler*, 3:1, these together constituting 'diapente, componit with a dis'. The words 'swet & delicious/ Richt consonant' should be taken as qualifying only the five symphonies, not the six 'tonys proporcionate'; *epogdous* is not a consonant ratio.

Even on a superficial examination, it is not difficult to see why Henryson described these ratios as 'full with noumeris od & evyn', and called the series musically complete. For the modern reader, however, the relationship between this and the Neoplatonic Anima Mundi or Soul of the World (the created universe, that is to say) may not be so obvious. Soul for Plato was non-corporeal, and therefore abstract, but more 'real' than body. As a consequence it was closely related to the abstractions of number which underlie and govern the physical universe. At the same time, it seemed obvious that if the universe was in fact animated by a soul, its physical structure should demonstrably correspond to its numerical basis. The substance of the soul Plato (*Timaeus* 35a. Lee 1971:46–7) held to be compounded of three abstracts, Existence, Sameness and Difference (*οὐσία, τ'αὐτό, τὸ ἕτερον*); this substance in turn was subdivided in terms of a formula, the first part of which runs thus (Lee 1971:47): God

(a) first marked off a section of the whole, and then another twice the size of the first; next a third, half as much again as the second and three times the first, a fourth twice the size of the second, a fifth three times the third a sixth eight times the first, a seventh twenty-seven times the first. (*Timaeus* 35 b–c)

This is usually and most easily interpreted in terms of the series 1, 2, 3, 4 (2^2), 9 (3^2), 8 (2^3) and 27 (3^3), but Plato does not limit his words to interpretation in terms only of a single numerical series. Chalcidius for instance, the fourth century commentator on the *Timaeus* whose work (Wrobel 1876; Waszink 1962) was so influential in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, based part at least of his commentary on the parallel series 6, 12, 18, 24, 54, 48 and 182, and something of the kind is necessary if the later subtleties of the Platonic formula are to be understood. Plato himself introduced a ratio of 256:243 ($2^8:3^5$), which corresponds to the musical interval of a semitone.

The most straightforward interpretation, however, will serve for an introduction to Henryson's text. The series is linked to the physical universe, first by the fact that it is made up of seven integers separated by six intervals, corresponding, for instance, to the spheres of the seven planets, separated by the musical intervals, and so producing the music of the spheres, the seven phases of the moon, the seven-year periods of human life, and the seven orifices of the human head (Stahl 1952:109–17). A Christian interpreter would almost certainly add the seven days of creation and the seven ages of the world. Like the universe, the number seven is self-generating and self-sustaining (Stahl 1952:102). The series, further, consists of the monad, representing the mathematical point; 2 and 3 which represent the one-dimensional straight line; 2^2 and 3^2, which

represent two-dimensional surface; and 2^3 and 3^3, which represent three-dimensional volume (Stahl 1952:99). The abstract basis of the dimensions and properties of physical space is thus included. These and other important points are well-made in a work with which Henryson almost certainly was familiar, the early fifth-century commentary by Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius on the concluding section of Cicero's *Republic*, the *Somnium Scipionis:*

> The fabrication of the World-Soul, as we may easily see, proceeded alternately: after the monad, which is both even and uneven, an even number was introduced, namely, two; then followed the first uneven number, three; fourth in order came the second even number, four; in the fifth place came the second uneven number, nine; in the sixth place, the third even number, eight; and in the seventh place the third uneven number, twenty-seven.
>
> Since the uneven numbers are considered masculine and the even feminine, God willed that the Soul which was to give birth to the universe should be born from the even and the uneven, that is from the male and female . . .
>
> And then the soul had to be a combination of those numbers that alone possess mutual attraction since the Soul itself was to instil harmonious agreement in the whole world. Now two is double one and, as we have already explained, the octave (diapason) arises from the double; three is one and one-half times greater than two, and this combination produces the fifth (diapente), four is one and one-third times greater than three, and this combination produces the fourth (diatessaron); four is also four times as great as one, and from the quadruple ratio the double octave (bisdiapason) arises. Thus the World-Soul, which stirred the body of the universe to the motion that we now witness, must have been interwoven with those numbers which produce musical harmony in order to make harmonious the sounds which it instilled by its quickening impulse. It discovered the source of these sounds in the fabric of its own composition. (*Commentary* II. ii. 17, 18–19. Stahl 1952: 192–3)

Perhaps by mere inadvertence Macrobius does not mention one interval already discussed, diapente-and-diapason, a double-fifth, corresponding to the ratio 3:1, the triple, which is certainly present in the formula, and which is mentioned by Henryson. More understandably, he makes no reference to the ratio 9:8, the epogdous, at least partly because the corresponding interval, the tone, is dissonant—is not, in Henryson's terminology, a symphony. Henryson himself, quite properly, does not refer to it in his third stanza, which deals with 'symphonies'. Plato, on the other hand, refers to the epogdous in the later and subordinate portion of his formula in a way to explicate Henryson's brief reference to it as 'richt hard and curious'. The ratio appears to be present in the fifth and sixth integers of the primary formula, but this Plato, to judge by his subsequent elaborations, specifically excluded from the primary level; it is produced at a secondary stage of the process (Lee 1971:47–8):

> (b) Next he [God] filled in the double and treble intervals by cutting off further sections and inserting them in the gaps, so that there were two mean terms in each interval, one exceeding one extreme and being exceeded by the other by the same fraction of the extremes [harmonic mean], the other exceeding and being exceeded by the same numerical [arith-

metic mean]. These links produced intervals of 4:3 and 3:2 and 9:8 within the previous intervals, and he went on to fill all intervals of 4:3 with the interval 9:8. (*Timaeus* 35c–36b)

It is to illustrate this part of the complete formula that Chalcidius (Wrobel 1876:107–10; Waszink 1962:89–92) introduces the series already mentioned, 6, 12, 18, 24, 54, 48 and 162: a series which fits the primary formula, but makes no provision for squares and cubes. Between 6 and 12 Chalcidius inserts the two mean terms 8 and 9. 8 exceeds 6 by one-third of 6, 2; 12 correspondingly exceeds 8 by one-third of 12, 4. 8:6 and 12:8 thus stand in the ratios 4:3 (epitritus) and 3:2 (hemiolius). 9 is half-way between 6 and 12 and so exceeds 6 and is smaller than 12 by a figure of 3. 9:6 thus stands in the ratio 3:2 (hemiolius) and 12:9 is 4:3 (epitritus). The ratio of the two mean terms is obviously 9:8, epogdous. The integers of that part of the formula which is related to the basic 6 by the factor 2—12, 24 and 48—have mean terms, 16, and 18, 32 and 36, which follow the same pattern. Those related by the factor 3—18, 54 and 162—have mean terms 9 and 12, 27 and 36, 81 and 108, where the lower mean stands in hemiolius relationship to the lower extreme, and the upper mean in the same relationship to the upper extreme. The ratio 4:3 exists only in the means of the integers linked by the factor 2, and therefore, according to Chalcidius, when Plato said that God filled all intervals of 4:3 with the interval 9:8, he was referring only to the series linked by the factor 2.

The octave corresponds to the interval diapason and the ratio dupler, 2:1, but because the interval is also one which in musical terms includes eight diatonic degrees, made up of five tones and two semitones, it is vitally related to the interval of a tone, epogdous. This forms the basis of the final sentences of the Platonic formula (Lee 1971:48):

(c) This left, as a remainder in each, an interval whose terms bore the numerical ratio of 256 to 243. And at that stage the mixture from which these sections were being cut was all used up. (*Timaeus* 36b)

Chalcidius (Wrobel 1876:116–19; Waszink 1962:98–9) interprets this in terms of the series 192, 216, 243, 256, 288, 324, 364½ and 384. The extremes of the series stand in the ratio 2:1—they represent, in other words, the first two integers of the initial Platonic formula (a), and represent the relationship of the octave, diapason or dupler. In terms of (b), the means are 256 and 288. 256 exceeds 192 by 64, which is the third part of 192, and is less than 384 by 128, which is the third part of 384. 288 is midway between 192 and 284, and is separated from either by 96, which is half of 192 and one quarter of 394. 256:192 corresponds to 4:3, epitritus or diatessaron; 384:256 corresponds to 3:2, hemiolius or diapente. 288:192 corresponds to 3:2, hemiolius or diapente; 384:288 corresponds to 4:3, epitritus or diatessaron, and 288:256 corresponds to 9:8, epogdous or a tone. When the other integers are added to the series, four additional ratios—216:192, 243:216, 324:288 and 364½:324—are produced, and all are epogdous, thus creating five intervals of a tone within the series. The remaining two ratios,

256:243, mentioned by Plato, and 384:364½ are precisely equivalent (the quotient in both is 1.0534979), and represent an interval of a semitone. The two semitones complete the octave, and with it the musical structure of the Soul of the World.

It should now be obvious that the formula, as summarised by Henryson, is 'complete & full with noumeris od & evyn' in a way much more specific than might have been expected, and that the later complications of the formula are governed to a very large extent by the exigencies of the 9:8 ratio, which indeed is 'richt hard and curious'. Henryson, we may take it, had the full formula from the *Timaeus* in mind, and gave it expression as complete as was consonant with the structure of his poem. And it is consonant; it is not merely a pedantic outgrowth on a narrative which otherwise would have been more effective. The poem in fact is constructed on Neoplatonic principles to illustrate Neoplatonic doctrine. The formula for the Soul of the World is not confined to three stanzas (where indeed it is implied rather than stated); it is built into the total narrative structure, and controls its meaning.

As has already been mentioned, the main body of the poem, excluding the *Moralitas*, consists of 52 seven-line stanzas of narrative, and five ten-line stanzas of lyric complaint. The description of the music of the spheres occupies stanzas 25–7 of the narrative. It ends, in other words, with the stanza whose number concludes series (a) in the Platonic formula, the first masculine cube. Several properties of the formula have already been noted; to these it should now be added that the sum of the first six integers (1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 8) equals the seventh integer (27), and correspondingly that if the sixth integer, 8, is subtracted from the seventh, the resulting number, (19) is the sum of the first five integers. 27, that is to say, represents not only itself, but also the sum of the other six integers. Significantly, the narrative progression of *New Orpheus* is interrupted by the lyric complaint when 19 stanzas have been completed; when the narrative resumes, 8 stanzas bring us to stanza 27 and the end of the description of the Soul of the World. The first 19 stanzas in turn fall fairly readily into subdivisions of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9. The first stanza is a prologue to the whole; the next two emphasise the need for precautions against human degeneracy; the three stanzas following begin the genealogy of Orpheus; the next four begin from Calliope, the mother of Orpheus, and end with his birth, when she

> gart him sowke of hir twa palpis qwhyte
> The sweit licour of all musik perfyte. (69–70)

The nine stanzas, 11–19, deal with the marriage of Eurydice to Orpheus, which apparently is ended, to the violent grief of Orpheus, when Eurydice is captured by Proserpina. In the eight stanzas which follow the lyric complaint, Orpheus descends from the stars to earth by way of the seven planets, and learns the universal music of the spheres. The first twenty-seven stanzas, it is thus tolerably clear, represent the complete primary series of the Platonic formula, with 27 representing both itself and the sum of the preceding six integers, and with each of these six integers itself marked by a

significant point or change of direction in the narrative. Henryson, we may presume, intended the sensitive reader to notice that his exposition of the Soul of the World concluded at a numerologically significant point, and that all the narrative up to that point was in effect an emblematic representation of the factors which underlie stanzas 25–7.

It is clear too that Henryson meant the Platonic formula to refer to Orpheus as well as to the Soul of the World. Sometimes one might even suspect that Orpheus is himself an allegory of the Soul of the World. His genealogy, for instance, spans three generations: the mortal Orpheus, his father Phoebus, a god, and his grandfather, Jupiter, supreme among the gods. Genealogical relationship is represented by the metaphor of the relationship of a stream to its source:

> Lyke as a strand of watter or a spring
> Haldis the sapour of his fontale well,
> So did in Grece ilk lord & worthy king:
> Of forbearis thai tuke tarage & smell. (22–5)

The detail here might be regarded as strikingly Neoplatonic. Orpheus' triple descent corresponds to the three levels, the One, Mind and the Soul of the World (*τὸ ἕν νοῦς* and *ψυχή*), which make up the Neoplatonic Trinity (Whittaker 1918:53–6). Jupiter might appropriately represent the One, Phoebus Mind, and Orpheus the Soul of the World. One might compare, for instance, the woodcut, designed by the German humanist Conrad Celtes (1459–1508) as a tail piece for Tritonius's *Melopoiae* (1507). 'He adopted', says Edgar Wind (1967:252–3), 'the traditional iconographic type of the Holy Trinity combined with the Deësis, but substituted pagan figures for the Christian. In the place of God the Father blessing Christ he introduced Jupiter hovering over his son Apollo, while the part of the Holy Ghost is transferred from the dove to the winged figure of Pegasus, whose hoof brings forth the fountain of Helicon—"the spirit moving over the waters". The Virgin Mary at Christ's side is replaced by the virgin-goddess, Minerva, and the forerunner and announcer John the Baptist by the divine messenger Hermes. In the centre of the triads, Apollo playing the lyre is supplied with his trinitarian attribute, the tripod (specially inscribed with its name). The nine Muses framing the scene correspond to the nine angelic choirs of the celestial hierarchy.' Wind further describes this as a diagram showing the agreement between Orphic (that is, Neoplatonic) and Christian theology. The relationship between Orpheus, musician and poet, son of Apollo, and Pegasus, the symbolic representation of poetry, is easy and obvious.

So too it is easy to parallel Henryson's metaphor of the 'fontale well' in Neoplatonic writing. In Plotinus (MacKenna 1956:380), for example, we find:

> Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new; this product has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so an Intellectual-Principle [*i.e.* Mind]. (*Ennead* v. 2. 1)

In the same way, Mind overflows and produces the Soul of the World. The term 'emanation' is precisely descriptive.

In Macrobius (Stahl 1952:143–5) the metaphor persists:

> God, who both is and is called the First Cause, is alone the beginning and source of all things which are and which seem to be. He, in a bounteous outpouring of his greatness, created from himself Mind. This Mind, called Nous (νοῦς), as long as it fixes its gaze upon the Father, retains a complete likeness of its Creator, but when it looks away at things below, creates from itself Soul. Soul, in turn, as long as it contemplates the Father, assumes his part, but by diverting its attention more and more, though itself incorporeal, degenerates into the fabric of bodies . . . Soul . . . out of that pure and clearest fount of Mind from whose abundance it had drunk deep at birth, endowed those divine or ethereal bodies, meaning the celestial sphere and the stars which it was first creating, with mind . . . Accordingly, since Mind emanates from the Supreme God and Soul from Mind, and Mind, indeed, forms and suffuses all below with life, and since this is the one splendour lighting up everything and visible in all, like a countenance reflected in many mirrors arranged in a row, and since all follow on in continuous succession, degenerating step by step in their downward course, the close observer will find that from the Supreme God even to the bottommost dregs of the universe, there is one tie, binding at every link and never broken. This is the golden chain of Homer which, he tells us, God ordered to hang down from the sky to the earth. (*Commentary*, I. xiv. 6–7, 8, 15)

These passages are linked to *New Orpheus*, not only by the doctrine of the Trinity and the metaphor of emanation, but also by the emphasis placed on degeneration as one emanation succeeds another.

> It is contrar the lawis of natur
> A gentill man to be degenerat,
> Nocht following of his progenitour
> The worthy reule, and the lordly estate. (8–11)

So at least Henryson declares at the beginning of the poem, which none the less tells the story of Orpheus' decline, by way of his marriage to Eurydice, his loss of her, and his consequent descent through the spheres into the lower world of almost insatiable desire. During his descent, the degeneracy is briefly reversed by his experience of the celestial music which enabled him to win a conditional and temporary respite from the nether world, but the old ascendency was reasserted before the rescue of Eurydice had been completed.

Some features, however, do not fit this particular allegorical interpretation. The scheme, for instance, would seem to distort the role of Calliope and the other Muses in the narrative. (Henryson follows Macrobius (Stahl 1952:194) and a number of earlier writers, who consider 'the nine Muses as the tuneful song of the eight spheres and the one predominant harmony that comes from all of them'). Almost certainly, it is better to regard the genealogy, not as an allegory of the Trinity, but as a reflected and partially

distorted image of it at a lower level of emanation. The Soul of the World exists separately from Orpheus, who nevertheless belongs sufficiently to the same order to have his own music modulated amd tempered by the music of the spheres.

To this interpretation there are no particular obstacles. The Platonic formula is common to the individual soul and the Soul of the World (Lee 1971:57–8):

> So speaking, he [God] turned again to the same bowl in which he had mixed the Soul of the Universe, and poured into it what was left of the former ingredients, mixing them in much the same fashion as before, only not quite so pure, but in a second and third degree. And when he had compounded the whole, he divided it up into as many souls as there are stars, and allotted each to a star . . .. To ensure fair treatment for each at his hands, the first incarnation would be one and the same for all and each would be sown in its appropriate instrument of time [*i.e.* 'body'] and be born as the most god-fearing of living things. . . . After this necessary incarnation, their body would be subject to physical gain and loss, and they would all inevitably be endowed with the same faculty of sensation dependent on external stimulation, as well as with love and its mixture of pain and pleasure, and fear and anger with the accompanying feelings and their opposites; mastery of these would lead to a good life, subjection to them to a wicked life. And anyone who lived well for his appointed time would return home to his native star and live an appropriately happy life. (*Timaeus* 41d–42b)

The marriage of Orpheus and Eurydice, I suggest, represents the immediate spiritual antecedents of human incarnation, with the establishment of the possibility of contact with the physical world, and so with sensation and desire. Incarnation actually begins when Eurydice is captured by the powers of the lower world.[3] The shattering effects of the process on the rational soul Plato describes in terms of his formula (Lee 1971:59):

> The result was that, though the three pairs of intervals of double and triple, and the connecting middle terms of the ratios three to two, four to three, and nine to eight could not be completely dissolved except by him who put them together, they were twisted in all directions and caused every possible kind of shock and damage to the soul's circles, which barely held together, and though they moved, did so quite irregularly, now in reverse, now sideways, now upside down. (*Timaeus* 43d–e)

I have already noted how in *New Orpheus* the sequence of the first twenty-seven stanzas is broken after stanza 19 by the five intruded stanzas, each of twice-five lines, which constitute the lyric complaint. In terms of the poem, this lacks the true music, briefly recovered by Orpheus in his descent through the spheres. Elsewhere (MacQueen 1967:41) I have indicated that the music of the complaint exerts power only on *silva*, brute matter; at any more spiritual level it is ineffective. The passions which accompany incarnation, and which are represented by the complaint, have distorted the formula 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 8, 27, significantly between the masculine square and the feminine cube, 9 and 8, which is also the vital interval of a tone. The distortion is produced by the impact of loss, grief and unsatisfied desire which accompanies incarnation. The pentad of

twice-five-line stanzas, I suggest, forms an emblem of the five bodily senses, through the medium of which the original balance of the soul is damaged and disturbed.

Eurydice herself does not represent the body; she too is soul, but in a lower, dual aspect. The Platonic doctrine of the triple soul, as set out, for instance, in the myth of the *Phaedrus* (Hackforth 1963:493), is here very relevant:

> As to soul's immortality then we have said enough, but as to its nature, there is this that must be said ... Let it be likened to the union of powers in a team of winged steeds and their winged charioteer. Now all the gods' steeds and their charioteers are good, and of good stock, but with other beings it is not wholly so. With us men, in the first place, it is a pair of steeds that the charioteer controls; moreover one of them is noble and good, and of good stock, while the other has the opposite character, and his stock is opposite. Hence the task of our charioteer is difficult and troublesome ... All soul has the care of all that is inanimate, and traverses the whole universe, though in ever-changing forms. Thus when it is perfect and winged, it journeys on high and controls the whole world, but one that has shed its wings sinks down until it can fasten on something solid, and settling there it takes to itself an earthy body which seems by reason of the soul's power to move itself. This composite structure of soul and body is called a living being. (246 a–c)

In human beings, the charioteer represents the rational aspect of the soul, properly concerned only with the world of abstract reality. The steeds represent the metaphorically upward and downward urges which beset the appetitive part of the soul. Henryson in his *moralitas* indicates how Orpheus corresponds to the charioteer, Eurydice to the steeds. Orpheus

> callit is the pairt intellectif
> Of mannis saull, in wndirstanding fre,
> And separate fra sensualite.
> Erudices is our effectioun,
> Be fantasye oft movit wp & dovn;
> Quhilis to resoun it castis the delyte,
> Quhilis to the flesche settis the appetite. (428–34)

When Eurydice proposes to Orpheus that they should marry, she is playing the part, *mutatis mutandis*, of the noble steed; when she flees from Aristaeus, that of the ignoble yoke-mate (MacQueen 1967:34–5). Henryson's handling of this latter episode, however, is not purely Platonic; the emphasis falls in a Scotist way on the non-rational Will as the active instrument of virtue, which takes the masculine initiative, as Orpheus had failed to do, and seeks unsuccessfully to impose restraints on the appetitive. When this fails, the appetitive turns inevitably to hell, a term whose meaning for Henryson will be discussed later in this paper, and thither reason, in the person of Orpheus, has no choice but to follow.

All this suggests an explanation for one of the most puzzling features of the poem. By his marriage to Eurydice, Orpheus became king of Thrace, a region with a definite

location on the surface of earth. Yet he begins his search for the lost Eurydice, not in his own territory, but apparently in the empyreal heaven ('Syne passit to the hevin', 186), and continues by way of a descent to earth through the spheres of the fixed stars ('By Wadlyng Streit', 188—*i.e.* by the Milky Way), and the seven planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Phoebus, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. On earth's surface only one feature is mentioned, the 'gravis gray' (244)—'groves' in all probability rather than 'graves', but a play on words is palpably intended. (I have already mentioned the philosophic and scientific use of Latin *silva* as 'brute matter', Greek *ὕλη*, and it seems likely that this too contributes to the total meaning.) The next place mentioned is the gate of hell, and hell is the location of the entire remainder of the narrative.

Henryson himself tells us that he based his poem on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* III, Metre xii, *Felix qui potuit boni/Fontem uisere lucidum*, and if we compare the two poems, it would almost seem that the basis for the entire heavenly journey, together with the excursus on the Soul of the World and musical ratios, was a misunderstanding of the first line of one couplet (Stewart 1918:294):

Inmites superos querens
Infernas adiit domos. (17–18)

'Complaining that the powers above were cruel, he approached the dwellings below.'

In medieval Latin spelling, *querens*, 'complaining' and *quaerens*, 'seeking' both appear as *querens*, but it is surely impossible that Henryson confused the two, and gave the present participle a perfective aspect—'having sought the cruel powers above, he approached the dwellings below'. In a scholar of Henryson's attainments, such a mistake seems unlikely; it is more probable that the reference to the powers above simply give him the opportunity to elaborate the Neoplatonic ideas which he already associated with the story of Orpheus.

The descent of the soul through the spheres certainly has good Neoplatonic authority. Macrobius, for instance, discusses (Stahl 1952:132–3) three opinions held by philosophers, the third of which he is himself inclined to favour:

> According to this sect, which is more devoted to reason, the blessed souls, free from all bodily contamination, possess the sky; but the soul that from its lofty pinnacle of perpetual radiance disdains to grasp after a body and this thing that we on earth call life, but yet allows a secret yearning for it to creep into its thought, gradually slips down to the lower realms because of the very weight of its earthy thoughts. It does not suddenly assume a defiled body out of a state of complete incorporeality, but, gradually sustaining imperceptible losses and departing farther from its simple and absolutely pure state, it swells out with certain increases of a planetary body: in each of the spheres that lie below the sky it puts on another ethereal envelopment, so that by these steps it is gradually prepared for assuming this earthy dress. Thus by as many deaths as it passes through spheres, it reaches the stage which on earth is called life. (*Commentary* I. xi. 11–12)

The astrological stages by which full corporeality is reached are defined with some precision (Stahl 1952:136–7):

> In the sphere of Saturn it obtains reason and understanding, called *logistikon* and *theoretikon*; in Jupiter's sphere, the power to act, called *praktikon*; in Mars' sphere, a bold spirit or *thymikon*; in the sun's sphere, sense-perception and imagination, *aisthetikon* and *phantastikon*; in Venus' sphere, the impulse of passion, *epithymetikon*; in Mercury's sphere, the ability to speak and interpret, *hermeneutikon*; and in the lunar sphere, the function of moulding and increasing bodies, *phytikon*. This last function, being the farthest removed from the gods, is the first in us and all the earthly creation; inasmuch as our body represents the dregs of what is divine, it is therefore the first substance of the creature. (*Commentary* I. xii. 14–15)

The process of incarnation is, in one sense, a death of the soul, a descent to the infernal regions, a metaphor which may be developed in more ways than one (Stahl 1952:131–2):

> Some ... declared that the immutable part of the universe extended from the outer sphere, which is called *aplanes* (ἀπλανής, 'not wandering'), the fixed sphere, down to the beginning of the moon's sphere, and that the changeable part extended from the moon to the earth; that souls were living while they were in the immutable part but died when they fell into the region subject to change, and that accordingly the area between the moon and the earth was known as the infernal regions of the dead ... A second group preferred to divide the universe into three successions of the four elements: in the first rank were arranged earth, water, air and fire, the last being a purer form of air touching upon the moon. In the rank above this the four elements were again found, but of a more refined nature, so that the moon now stood in the place of earth—we just remarked that natural philosophers called the moon the "ethereal earth"—water was in the sphere of Mercury, air in the sphere of Venus, and fire in the sun itself. The elements of the third rank were thought of as reversed in order, so that earth now held last position and with the other elements drawn inwards the lowest and highest extremities ended in earth; thus the sphere of Mars was considered fire, the sphere of Jupiter air, the sphere of Saturn water, and the *aplanes*, the fixed sphere, earth. The men of old handed down the tradition that the Elysian fields were in this sphere, destined for the pure souls. The soul, when it was dispatched to a body, descended from these fields through the three ranks of the elements to the body by a threefold death.
> (*Commentary* I. xi. 6, 8–9)

The reference to the Elysian fields is derived ultimately from the Plain of Truth in the *Phaedrus* (Hackforth 1963:494–5):

> Of that place beyond the heavens none of our earthly poets has yet sung, and none shall sing worthily. But this is the manner of it, for assuredly we must be bold to speak what is true, above all when our discourse is upon truth. It is there that true being dwells, without colour or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot, can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof ... And while she (the soul) is borne round, she discerns justice, its very self, and likewise temperance, and knowledge, not the knowledge that is neighbour to becoming, and varies with the various objects to which we commonly ascribe being, but the veritable knowledge of being that veritably is. ... Now the reason

wherefore the souls are fain and eager to behold the plain of Truth, and discover it, lies herein—to wit, that the pasturage that is proper to their noblest part comes from that meadow, and the plumage by which they are borne aloft is nourished thereby. (247a–8c)

In the light of these passages, the reader is justified in taking Thrace as an allegorical term for the Elysian fields or the plain of Truth, the original home of the unitary soul—Orpheus and Eurydice—on the outer surface of the *aplanes*, from which it begins its descent to corporeality. Corporeal life, equally, is represented by Hell, the place of sensual experience and unsatisfied desire, from which Orpheus fails to rescue Eurydice. That life, however, is alien to either part of the soul. Incarnation is complete with the arrival of Eurydice in Hell, but she can never be satisfied with her changed status, which affects her like starvation or a wasting disease:

> Quod he, 'My lady leil, and my delyte,
> Ful wa is me till se yow changit thus;
> Quhar is thi rud as ros with cheikis quhyte,
> Thy cristall eyne with blenkis amorus,
> Thy lippis red to kis delicious?' (352–6)

The comment of Pluto:

> War scho at home in hir cuntre of Trace,
> Scho wald refet full sone in fax & face— (364–5)

almost certainly contains a veiled reference to the passage from the *Phaedrus* already quoted: 'the pasturage that is proper to their noblest part comes from that meadow, and the plumage by which they are borne aloft is nourished thereby.'

In Hell, the first creature which Orpheus encounters is the three-headed Cerberus, and it is notable that in a well-known document of Renaissance Neoplatonism, the *Practica musice* (1496) of Franchinus Gafurius, the three-headed Cerberus is the central figure of a diagram illustrating the music of the spheres. His serpent-like body extends beyond the *aplanes* to form a looped support for the throne of Apollo, and his three heads rest, not in Hell, but on the sphere of earth, labelled TERRA. He is not, that is to say, regarded by Gafurius as in any everyday sense of the word, an infernal monster; as Wind observes (Wind 1967:265), in the world of time as opposed to eternity, 'the triple-headed monster, *fugientia tempora signans*, retains a shadowy vestige of the triadic dance that the Graces'—whom Gafurius identifies collectively with Thalia, a Muse, present also in the underworld—'start under the direction of Apollo'. In Henryson's underworld of corporeal existence, the triadic theme receives further emphasis by the presence there of the three Furies, grouped round the wheel usually and more properly associated with the three Fates, and of the three exemplary sinners, Ixion, Tantalus and Tityus.

I have already commented on the likelihood that the five stanzas, each of twice-five lines, which form the lyric complaint, emblematise the five bodily senses. The same

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meaning is probably to be discovered in the twenty-five (5^2) stanzas devoted by Henryson to Orpheus' journey through Hell. Hell is corporeal existence, the realm of the five senses; infernal experience begins as soon as the soul in its descent has passed the sphere of the moon. Next to the descent of Orpheus through the spheres, the most unexpected feature of the narrative is probably the appearance in a classical Hades, not merely of Biblical figures such as Pharaoh and Jezebel, but also of others from the pre-Reformation[4] church:

> Thair fand he mony pape and cardinal,
> In haly kirk quhilk dois abusioun,
> And bischopis in that pontificall,
> Be symony and wrang intrusioun;
> Abbotis and men of all religioun,
> For ewill disponyng of that placis rent,
> In flam of fyre war bittirly torment. (338–44)

The presence of these figures, and the use in line 339 of the present tense, goes some way to emphasise that the Hell of the poem is more than exemplary and remote, that it is part of immediate experience— *this* world and *these* five senses.

Near the beginning of this paper, I referred briefly to another numerological feature of the poem. The total length of the narrative, fifty-two seven-line stanzas, fairly obviously corresponds to the fifty-two seven-day weeks of the year. The poem as a whole, that is to say, in some sense represents the year; in what precise sense the Neo-platonists generally, and Macrobius in particular, may help to determine. In their estimation, there were several types of year, ranging from the year of the moon, 28 days, through the year of the sun and of the other planets, to the World-Year, or Great Year, which occurs (Stahl 1952:221) 'when all stars and constellations in the celestial sphere have gone from a definite place and returned to it, so that not a single star is out of the position it previously held at the beginning of the world-year, and when the sun and moon and the five other planets are in the same positions and quarters that they held at the start of the world-year. This, philosophers tell us, occurs every 15,000 years' (*Commentary* II. xi. 10–11). The sun's year however has a particular importance for souls in their descent to mortality. The most northerly and southerly points in the annual movement of the sun through the Zodiac were marked by the summer and winter solstices in Cancer and Capricorn. Macrobius, following Porphyry, erroneously assumed that the solstices are to be found where the Milky Way crosses the Zodiac (Stahl 1952: 133–4):

> The Milky Way girdles the Zodiac, its great circle meeting it obliquely so that it crosses it at the two tropical signs, Capricorn and Cancer. Natural philosophers named these the 'portals of the sun' because the solstices lie athwart the sun's path on either side, checking farther progress and causing it to retrace its course across the belt whose limits it never trespasses. Souls are believed to pass through these portals when going from the sky to the earth and returning from the earth to the sky. For this reason one is called the portal of men

and the other the portal of gods; Cancer, the portal of men, because through it descent is made to the infernal regions [*i.e.* life on earth]; Capricorn, the portal of gods, because through it souls return to their rightful abode of immortality, to be reckoned among the gods. (*Commentary* I. xii. 1–2)

The soul, that is to say, enters the material universe from the Elysian fields at the point on the inner surface of the *aplanes* which marks the summer solstice, and begins its descent by the Milky Way or, as Henryson (line 188) names it, Wadlyng Street.

The reference to Watling Street has an unmistakable significance; rather less obvious is the probability that Orpheus entered Watling Street at the point in the poem which corresponds structurally to the summer solstice. The poem contains only one verbal reference to the calendar year. The death of Eurydice occurs when she is walking 'in till a Maij mornyng', a reference which occurs in line 93 of the narrative. Orpheus reaches the *aplanes* in line 136 of the narrative (line 186 of the complete poem). In terms of the total structure, each line of the narrative represents one day of the year. If we assume that line 93 represents 1 May, line 136 will represent 13 June, and in terms of the unreformed Julian calendar of the fifteenth century, 13 June might be considered the summer solstice. Orpheus, the soul, enters the created universe by the portal of men. The winter solstice is represented by line 369, the middle line of the stanza in which the music of Orpheus gains a conditional remission for Eurydice:

> Than Orpheus befor Pluto sat dovne,
> And in his handis quhyte his harp can ta,
> And playit mony sweit proporcioun,
> With base tonys in Hypodoria,
> With gemynyng in Hyperlydia;
> Til at the last for reuth & gret pete,
> Thai wepit sore, that couth him heir or se (366–72)

It is notable that at this point 'terms of art', the technical vocabulary of musical theory, reappear. Hypodoria and Hyperlydia were the lowest and highest of the fifteen classical Tonoi or Keys, and in terms of the music of the spheres correspond to the Moon, the lowest, and the *aplanes*, the highest. The choice of those *tonoi* implies that Orpheus in his playing utilised the full range from lowest to highest, and so by producing a 'proporcioun' which corresponds to the music of the spheres and the Soul of the World, gave Eurydice and himself the opportunity to return from the world of incarnation to the Elysian fields by the portal of the gods. The portal itself is represented numerologically by the central line of the stanza. It seems likely too that in the closing lines of the forty-eighth narrative stanza:

> And on thai went, talkand of play & sport,
> Quhill thai come allmast to the vttir port (385–6)

the words 'vttir port' refer specifically to the portal of gods.

At the most literal level, *New Orpheus* is a story of tragic love. But not only at this level. Love earthly and divine is central to Neoplatonic thought, and although the love of Orpheus and Eurydice is 'wardlie' (line 89), directed to bodies and incarnation, it is not therefore totally separate from the more divine passion. The poem ends with a paradoxical definition by Orpheus of love under both aspects:

> Quhat art thow, Luf, how sall I thee diffyne?
> Bitter and sweit, cruell & merciable,
> Plesand to sum, till vthir playnt & pyne,
> Till sum constant, till vther wariable. (401–4)

Unexpectedly, but I think unmistakably, this bitter-sweet[5] definition recalls a passage (*De Amore* II. viii) in the commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, published in 1469 by the Italian Renaissance philosopher, Marsilio Ficino (1433–99):

> Do not let the fact that Orpheus has sung about the bitter afflictions of lovers trouble you. Listen carefully, I beg you, to the way in which these troubles are to be borne, and in which these lovers are to be helped. Plato calls Love bitter, not unjustly, because everyone dies who loves. For this reason Orpheus too calls Love γλυκύπικρον, that is sweet and bitter. Insofar as Love is a voluntary death, as death it is bitter, as voluntary sweet. But anyone who loves, dies. (*Ficino* [1959]: II. 323)

In relation to Henryson's poem, the combined reference to Orpheus and Plato is striking. References by Ficino to Orpheus as an authority are generally to the so-called *Orphic Hymns* (Quandt 1955), which probably belong to the late Hellenistic period, and which Ficino had himself translated by 1462 in a version which has not survived. γλυκύπικρος however is not a word which appears in any extant Hymn, and indeed, as Edgar Wind (1967: 162–3) has indicated, Ficino was himself probably responsible for the idea that it was Orpheus, rather than Sappho, who called Love bitter-sweet:

> The assurance with which Ficino declared that 'Orpheus called Love γλυκύπικρον' is the more remarkable since Ficino is the only source for the attribution ... Since he regarded all Neoplatonic mysteries as derived from Orpheus, the presence of γλυκύπικρος in a Neoplatonic text would be sufficient for him to consider it Orphic. Now the intrusion of the term into Neoplatonic writings can be traced through at least two stages. Maximus of Tyre, in his discourse 'On the amatory art of Socrates', drew an explicit and lengthy parallel between the loves of Socrates and of Sappho, in which he remarked that, if Socrates says that love flourishes in abundance and dies in want, 'Sappho conveys the same meaning when she calls love bitter-sweet (γλυκύπικρος) and a painful gift.' The second stage is represented by Hermias's *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, 251D, which was one of Ficino's 'Orphic' sources. Here the transference of the Sapphic term to Socratic love was made without any mention of Sappho: ὅθεν γλυκυπικρόν τινες εἰρήκασι τὸν ἔρωτα. It is almost certain that in this passage Ficino would take the anonymous τινες as a concealed reference to the Orphic initiates.

If we assume, as seems reasonable, that *New Orpheus* was completed by 1490—and it

may be substantially earlier—Ficino becomes the most probable source for Henryson's lines. One might say, indeed, that during the last third of the fifteenth century any poem or treatise, combining aspirations to learning with the subject of Orpheus, was likely to result from Ficinian influence. Ficino regarded the *Orphic Hymns* as seminal for the development of philosophy.

> 'Mercurius Trismegistus [he writes in the preface to his translation of the Corpus Hermeticum] was the first philosopher to raise himself above physics and mathematics to the contemplation of the divine ... Therefore he was considered the original founder of theology. Orpheus followed him and held second place in ancient theology. Aglaophemus was initiated into the Orphic mysteries. Aglaophemus' successor in theology was Pythagoras, and his pupil was Philolaus, the master of our divine Plato'. (Kristeller 1943:25)

Ficino was himself characterised by his friend Poliziano (1454–94) in terms of the myth of Orpheus: 'Marsilio Ficino the Florentine, whose lyre, far luckier than that of the Thracian Orpheus, called back from Hell the Eurydice who, unless I am mistaken, is the true one, that is, Platonic wisdom of amplest judgement' (*amplissimi judicii*—an etymological pun on the name 'Eurydice'). Poliziano himself (1965:107–30) wrote the *Favola di Orfeo*, which, as R. D. S. Jack (1972:8–14) has indicated, offers some interesting parallels to Henryson's poem. (I must add that it is less Platonic than Henryson's, and even less Orphic.) Another well-known Orphic work of the Quattrocento is the *Conclusiones de modo intellegendi hymnos Orphei* of Pico della Mirandola (1463–94).[6] Most interesting of all, perhaps, is Pico's statement made at the end of the work which more than almost any other exemplifies the mind of the Renaissance, the *De Hominis Dignitate:*

> Nay, furthermore, they say that the maxims of Pythagoras are alone called holy, because he proceeded from the principles of Orpheus; and that the secret doctrine of numbers and whatever Greek philosophy has of the great or the sublime has flowed from thence as its first font. But as was the practice of the ancient theologians, even so did Orpheus protect the mysteries of his dogmas with the coverings of fables, and conceal them with a poetic veil, so that whoever should read his hymns would suppose there was nothing beneath them beyond idle tales and perfectly unadulterated trifles. (Cassirer 1948:253)

In the early part of this paper, the passages quoted to illustrate Henryson's work were chosen, wherever possible, from writings generally familiar to educated men in the Middle Ages. The suggestion that Henryson was familiar with Chalcidius and Macrobius need offer no difficulties to anyone. In contrast, the best ultimate source for a descent through the spheres made specifically by Orpheus is to be found in the *Orphic Hymns*, which include one to the Stars (No. 7), the Sun (8), the Moon (9), Saturn (13), Jupiter (15, 19 and 20), Mercury (28), Venus (55) and Mars (65), together with one to the Muses (76), Memoria (77), Pluto (18) and Proserpine (29)—almost the entire *dramatis personae* of *New Orpheus.*[7] This is not necessarily to say that Henryson knew the *Hymns* at first hand; an intermediary, such as Ficino, is perhaps more probable. Now it is notable

that neither Chalcidius nor Macrobius refers to the *Hymns*, or even, save in passing, to Orpheus himself; Chalcidius once only (*In Timaeum* cxxvii) and Macrobius twice (I. ii. 9; II. iii. 8), never in a context to suggest a direct relationship with *New Orpheus*. With this, contrast Ficino, in a passage (*Platonica Theologia* IV. i), where he mentions in conjunction Orpheus, Pluto and Proserpine as powers on earth, eight Muses associated with the eight celestial spheres, and the ninth, Calliope, the mother of Orpheus, equated with the Soul of the World:

> If anyone wishes to know the names of the divine spirits, let him know that the theology of Orpheus separates the souls of the spheres in such a way that each has a double power, one whose function is to know, the other to animate and rule the physical body of the sphere. Thus, in the element of earth, Orpheus names one power Pluto, the other Proserpine; in water, one Ocean, the other Thetis; in air, Jove the Thunderer and Juno; in fire, Phanes and Aurora; in the soul of the lunar sphere, one is Bacchus Licnites, the other the Muse Thalia; again, in the soul of the sphere of Mercury, one power is Bacchus Silenus, the other Euterpe; in that of Venus, Bacchus Lysinus and Erato; in that of the Sun, Bacchus Trietericus and Melpomene; in that of Mars, Bacchus Bassareus and Clio; in that of Jove, Bacchus Sabasius and Terpsichore; in that of Saturn, Bacchus Amphietes and Polymnia; in the eighth sphere, Bacchus Pericionius and Urania. In the Soul of the World, Orpheus calls the first power Bacchus Eribromus, the second the Muse Calliope. Thus, according to Orpheus, one Bacchus is placed in charge of each Muse, as a result of which the powers of the Muses are described as intoxicated with the nectar of divine knowledge. For this reason, the nine Muses with the nine Bacchi revel around the one Apollo, that is, around the splendour of the invisible Sun. (Ficino 1964:I. 164–5)

The names of the Bacchi are derived from Hymns 46, 54, 50, 52, 45, 48, 53 and 47. The order of the Muses differs in Henryson[8] and Ficino (as also in Henryson and Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum*, from which he takes some details), but the equation of Calliope with the Soul of the World is significant in terms both of the lines already quoted about the birth of Orpheus, when she

> gart him sowke of hir twa palpis qwhyte
> The sweit licour of all musik perfyte (69–70)

and in terms of the later relationship between his music and the Soul of the World. It is also worth noting that Henryson places Calliope, as fourth Muse, in a position corresponding not to that of the invisible Sun, but at least to that of the Sun among the planets of the pre-Copernicean universe.

Some connection between *New Orpheus* and Florentine Platonism of the Quattrocento may thus seem to be established. But if so, how did Henryson come by his knowledge of it? It is possible (MacQueen 1967:17, 20–1) that he was a graduate of an Italian university, and thus he may actually have met, or at least sat under, Ficino or one of his disciples. But there is a second possibility, which may stand alone or complement the first. The tropological Moralitas of *New Orpheus*, mentioned at the beginning

of this paper, is based on the commentary by Nicholas Trevet (?1258–1328) on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Henryson was incorporated in the University of Glasgow in 1462, probably to give lectures in law. At that time, *liber Boetii cum glossa Trevet* was one of the volumes in the library (Maitland Club 1843:II, 334–9) of Glasgow Cathedral, and it is not unlikely that the presence of this book in a large library adjacent to the University of which he had once been a member, was a factor in Henryson's choice of subject. Well before the 1460s strong links had been established between Glasgow and Italy. In particular, Bishop Turnbull, who founded the University in 1451, was a Pavia Doctor of Canon Law, who had been in Italy from 1433 to 1439, and made another visit before his death in 1454. Dr Durkan (1951:15 ff.) has emphasised the intellectual brilliance of Pavia in Turnbull's day; the scholars and humanists of an earlier generation there included Lorenzo Valla, Maffeo Vegio, Francesco Filelfo and Theodore of Gaza. In addition, Pope Nicholas V, who issued the bull to establish the University, and whom Turnbull probably knew personally, was a lover of arts and sciences, the founder of the Vatican Library, and 'the first, and probably the best, of the Renaissance Popes' (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*). As early as 1432, Italian works of some importance and rarity were to be found in the Cathedral library, most notably *liber Francisci Petrarchi cuius primum folium habet in textu Paucos homines*; the *De Solitaria Vita*, that is to say. By the 1460s it is not unlikely that others had been acquired, and that literary and philosophical developments in Italy formed a subject of discussion among the clerics of the Cathedral and University—a northern echo, as it were, of the Florentine *Accademia Platonica*, Whether Henryson came to Glasgow already acquainted with Ficino, Orphism and Neoplatonism, or whether he acquired his knowledge after his arrival, scarcely now matters; it was as a result of his acquaintance with the scholars of Cathedral and University, I suggest, and of discussions with them, that he came eventually to write *New Orpheus*. In view of the evidence, the actual composition probably postdated his transfer about 1468 (MacQueen 1967:21) to Dunfermline, and there were certainly scholars, possibly in Dunfermline, certainly in St Andrews, who shared the Italian interests of their colleagues and rivals in Glasgow. But the attested evidence of a Boethius with Trevet's commentary in Glasgow Cathedral is decisive, I suggest, for the initial influence and audience.

NOTES

1 The poem is usually called *Orpheus and Eurydice*. *New Orpheus* is the title given by Gavin Douglas in the notes to his translation of the *Aeneid* (Caldwell 1957:19, footnote). The title used by one Renaissance humanist for the work of another deserves some recognition.

2 The texts are (a) the fragmentary Chepman and Myllar print (1508), closely related to which is (b) the Asloan manuscript (*c.* 1515), ff. 247a–56b. Standing at some remove is (c) the Bannatyne manuscript (1568), ff. 317b–25a. All three texts contain substantial corruptions. In general, I have followed Asloan, as more complete than Chepman and Myllar, while closely resembling it. Bannatyne however preserves some features of an independent tradition, and I have not hesitated to adopt one or two of its readings.

In all three texts the most corrupt passage is that represented by Asloan, lines 223–5:

> Quhilk Ermony throw all this mapamond,
> Quhilk moving cess vnite perpetuall,
> Quhilk of this warld pluto the saull can call

Here, the one certain emendation is Plato for *pluto*. Chepman and Myllar originally read *Quhill* for *Quhilk* in line 224, a reading which I have adopted. The repeated *Quhilk* is obviously suspect. Anything further is little more than guess-work, but I hope that my guess is at least reasonably plausible.

For ratios, intervals and tonoi, I have used or preserved spellings which clarify the relationship between Middle Scots and Latin or Greek.

3 Compare again the *Taill of the Paddok and the Mous* (MacQueen 1967:118–21).

4 It is likely that in this stanza Henryson has primarily in mind the pontificates of Sixtus IV (1471–84) and Innocent VIII (1484–92). Of the former, Burckhardt (1958:I. 123–4) remarked, 'He supplied himself with the necessary funds by simony, which suddenly grew to unheard-of proportions, and which extended from the appointment of cardinals down to the granting of the smallest favours. Sixtus himself had not obtained the Papal dignity without recourse to the same means.'; of the latter (Burckhardt 1958:I. 126), 'If Sixtus had filled his treasury by the sale of spiritual dignities and favours, Innocent and his son, for their part, established an office for the sale of secular favours, in which pardons for murder and manslaughter were sold for large sums of money'.

5 Compare also the description of Venus in *Testament of Cresseid*, lines 232–4 (Gregory Smith 1908:11):

> In taikning that all fleschelie Paramour
> Quhilk Venus hes in reull and governance
> Is sum tyme sweit, sum tyme bitter and sour.

Here however there is no direct Orphic or Platonic reference. Compare also *Timaeus* 42a 6–7, quoted above, 'love and its mixture of pain and pleasure'.

6 It is perhaps worth noting that the attack on judicial astrology which Henryson includes in his *Moralitas* (Chepman and Myllar, lines 432–43; Asloan, lines 549–60; considerably extended, but still most probably the work of Henryson, Bannatyne, lines 559–609), parallels on a much reduced scale Pico's celebrated and influential *Disputationes Adversus Astrologiam Divatricem* (Pico della Mirandola 1946–52), published in 1495.

7 The *Orphic Hymns* use, of course, the Greek names of the deities—Kronos, Zeus and so forth. Whether or not Henryson was working directly from a Greek original, he would have used Latin forms in a vernacular poem.

8 Henryson's order, and some of his detail, is derived from a piece of mnemonic verse in an early thirteenth-century schoolbook, the *Graecismus* of Eberhard of Béthune. (See Doreen Allen Wright 1971.)

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