The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre: A critical edition and English translation, from manuscript Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Barcelona

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Abstract
The present article focuses on ff. cxlf-clivr of manuscript Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Barcelona, which contain the only extant version of the fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre. The article contains a philological study of this section of the manuscript, with particular attention to the relationship between the Catalan version of the Danse macabre and its French sources: this study serves as an introduction to a new critical edition of the Catalan translation proposed in the second part of the article. The critical text consists of a parallel edition of the Catalan version and manuscript lat. 14904, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (MS BnF lat. 14904), which proves to be the witness of the French poem closest to the lost exemplar used by the Catalan translator. Both editions aim at finding a balance between readability and a conservative approach which preserves the historical character of the manuscripts. The critical text is preceded by editorial criteria and accompanied by a literal translation into modern English and editorial notes.

Keywords
Dance of Death; Danse macabre, Dansa de la Mort, Dança de la Mort; critical edition; Catalan literature; textual transmission and reception; medieval translation; manuscript tradition; Pere Miquel Carbonell; manuscript Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó; manuscript lat. 14904, Bibliothèque Nationale de France; Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris; John Lydgate.

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La traducció catalana quatrecentista de la “Danse macabre” francesa:
edició crítica del ms. Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, i traducció a l’ànglès

Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”

El present article se centra en els ff. cxlv-clxv del manuscrit Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Barcelona, que contenen l’única versió conservada de la traducció catalana de la Danse macabre francesa. L’article inclou un estudi filològic d’aquesta secció del manuscrit, amb atenció particular a la relació entre la versió catalana de la Danse macabre i les seues fonts franceses: aquest estudi serveix d’introducció a una nova edició crítica de la traducció catalana, proposada en la segona part de l’article. El text editat presenta edició en paral·lel de la versió catalana i del manuscrit lat. 14904, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, París (MS BnF lat. 14904, que resulta ser el testimoni del poema francès més proper a l’exemplar perdut emprat pel traductor català. En ambdues edicions se cerca un equilibri entre fàcil lectura i transcripció filològica per conservar el caràcter històric dels manuscrits. L’edició crítica és precedida pels criteris editorials, i seguida d’una traducció a l’ànglès actual, i per notes d’edició.


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1.1 “Danse macabre” and its transmission

The artistic genre of the Dance of Death (or Dance of the Dead) developed and spread in Europe in the late fourteenth-fifteenth century. This peculiar phenomenon of late medieval culture is normally expressed by series of dialogues between a personified Death – or a dead person – and representatives of different social classes placed in descending hierarchical order – from the pope and the emperor to the most marginal social figures, religious and lay people alternating. This genre takes different forms, such as a mural painting with or without accompanying text, a dialogue poem, a manuscript miniature or a series of miniatures, a dramatic action, wood or stone sculptures, or an authentic ritual dance. This formal plurality is balanced by a number of common characteristics at the level of content: most examples of the Danse macabre genre are distinguished

1. A second manuscript (Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, MS Memorial 49) once included the Dança de la Mort, but the relevant leaves have been lost: see Massip-Morrás 2014, 448 fn. 4.
2. As far as the name of the whole genre is concerned, the English expression Dance of Death and the French expression Danse macabre are normally used as almost full synonyms in scholarly works on the subject; this article follows the established tradition.
3. Among the studies published recently on the Danse macabre, it is worth citing Massip-Kovács 2004a; Oosterwijk 2004; Gertsman 2010; Oosterwijk-Knöll ed. 2011.
4. The difference between Death and the Dead is probably much less important than it might seem; see Warda 2011a. On the hierarchical order, see ibid., 81-90.
5. The diversity of the forms that this genre takes in its earliest attestations is described in Oosterwijk-Knöll ed. 2011, 2-3 (editors’ introduction). The Dance of Death is expressed most frequently through literature and painting. Victor Infantes proposes distinguishing the ‘complete’ Dances combining both text and images, the ‘graphic’ ones containing images without textual elements, and the ‘textual’ ones containing text without pictorial elements (see Infantes 1997, 21-22). The relationship between text and image – if both elements are present – is extremely important as it helps to better understand the nature of the genre and the particularities of its evolution; see, e.g. Taylor 1989a. Furthermore, it can happen that the textual and the visual elements become separated: for instance, this is the case of the Danse macabre of the Cemetery of the Innocents in Paris, the source of the text studied in this article. See Oosterwijk 2008, 140: “It is curious (...) that none of the extant early manuscript copies of the poem carry illustrations (...). Yet not long after the creation of the mural we find early books of hours containing Danse macabre scenes without any accompanying text as part of their decorative scheme. In other words, although text and image were combined to great effect in the mural at les Innocents, these two components were soon separated so that the poem was reproduced as a text without illustrations, while the images were apparently recognisable enough to function independently of the dialogue poem”.

For the role of dance rituals in the Dance of Death tradition, see Hammerstein 1980; Massip-Kovács 2004a (especially 139-43, 146-69).
by an ironic and often satirical tone and the idea of reminding humans that they will inevitably die and turn to ashes, regardless of their social position and privileges they used to enjoy in their earthly life. In this regard, the relationship between the Dance of Death genre and the homiletic tradition, particularly that of the mendicant orders, is important.6

The Dance of Death is situated in a precise historical moment and at the same time in eternity; its appeal is concrete and at the same time universal.7 The choice of the linguistic code for these works – the vernacular languages in most cases – is meaningful.8 The need to make their message understandable and accessible to everyone gave rise to many translations of these texts. Consequently, the translator’s activity played an important role in the transmission, reception and evolution of the Danse macabre. For the Germanic world, the Latin-German Totentanz or the Copenhagen Dance could be mentioned: the former is the oldest extant Dance of Death in Germany and it is considered a translation from Latin into German, while the latter is a translation of the Lübeck Dance from German into Danish.9 The Dance of Death that had definitely the widest circulation in Europe is the famous Parisian Danse macabre, painted in 1424-1425 at the Cemetery of the Innocents and destroyed in the seventeenth century (but surviving in numerous handwritten and printed copies); this work arrived in England through a translation by John Lydgate (probably...
made in 1426), which was used as an accompanying text for murals in the cloisters of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Lydgate’s poem inspired many literary and pictorial representations of the Dance of Death in the English tradition.

Similarly, the Catalan-speaking world was influenced by the French model. Although the Iberian Peninsula produced one of the most ancient Dances of Death, specifically the Castilian Dança General de la Muerte, dating from 1390-1400, our Dança de la Mort is independent of the Spanish text, being derived directly from the French source. This places the Catalan translation from manuscript B in the broad tradition of transmission and consumption of French texts in the fourteenth and fifteenth-century Crown of Aragon.

2 The Catalan translation: philological study

2.1 The extant manuscript of the Dança de la Mort: the original or a copy?

Manuscript B was written in the late fifteenth century by the humanist Pere Miquel Carbonell, royal archivist of the Crown of Aragon. There are two opposite opinions on the authorship of the Catalan translation contained in this manuscript: many scholars attribute it to Carbonell himself, whereas others opine that the archivist merely copied the Catalan text of the Danse macabre. This latter hypothesis is definitely more convincing: in fact, it is more likely that the Catalan translation is anonymous and chronologically not too distant from the original French poem.

Alfred Morel-Fatio and Florence Whyte stress the importance of the impersonal construction és stada traduida ‘was translated’, used by Carbonell to describe the Catalan Dance of Death in a note placed after the text: in their opinion, this note indicates that Carbonell’s version is only a copy, whereas the original must be older (Morel-Fatio 1972, 254 and Whyte 1931, 27).

A more important proof of the priority of the Dança de la Mort to the version transmitted by B is the presence of some undoubted copying errors found in this manuscript: l’altre 20.8, vostra<s> grimaca 37.3, monstrar instead of mostrau 50.8, gordattat instead of gordanat 52.7, mo y fallí<t>

10. The Parisian Danse macabre lacks a critical edition. Most studies examining or simply mentioning this text refer to a late fifteenth-century printed edition, namely the version with engravings printed in 1485 by Guy (or Guyot) Marchant and reissued with some modifications in 1486: a modern facsimile of the 1485 version can be found in Kaiser 1983, 74-107 and Fein 2013, 22-53. However, we should be aware that Marchant’s editions bring many innovations to the (hypothetical) original text.

11. For the critical edition of Lydgate’s poem, see Warren ed. 1931. For an analysis of this text, see Oosterwijk 2010.

12. In this article, the Catalan text will be often compared to Lydgate’s version, as it results in a better understanding of the peculiarities of the Catalan translation.

13. For the influence French poetry exercised upon Catalan texts in the fourteenth and especially in the fifteenth century, see Marfany 2010; Marfany 2012 and other works by this author. For a more general framework for the late medieval transmission and reception of the European literary tradition in the Catalan-speaking world, see Alberni et al. ed. 2010.

14. The hypothesis stating that the translation was made by Carbonell himself was postulated for the first time by the first editor of the Dança de la Mort (Bofarull 1864-65, 260), and it is still considered valid in some modern studies, e.g. Infantes 1997, 82; Corvisier 1998, 82; Merlo 2000, 226. Nevertheless, the idea that Carbonell is not to be seen as a translator but as a simple copyist was expressed already in 1872: see Morel-Fatio 1872, 254. This opinion was adopted by a number of later researchers: see Whyte 1931, 27; Kurtz 1934, 149; Romeu i Figueras 1957-58, 203; Massot i Muntaner 1983, 347; Massip-Kovács 2004a, 69.
59.6, and probably also pus 19.2 (see the respective editorial notes). These errors should not necessarily be attributed to Carbonell – or, at least, not all of them, as it is plausible that there were other intermediate copies – but such errors lead us to reject the idea that the extant version is the original one. This means that, aside from the extant manuscript studied here, there were other copies of the Catalan translation, which made possible the circulation of the text in the lands of the Crown of Aragon.

2.2 In search of the lost source: the relationship between the Parisian “Danse macabre” and its Catalan translation

The Dança de la Mort e de aquelles persones qui mal llur grat ab aquella ballen e dançen, copied by Carbonell, is a translation that aspires to faithfulness: for instance, the translator preserves the octosyllabic metre and the strophic structure, specifically the pattern ABABB CBC. The order of appearance of the characters in the Catalan text also shows a very close adherence to the French source, as evidenced by the following list (limited to the first ten victims in the two texts): le Pape = el Papa (the Pope); l’Empereur = l’Emperador (the Emperor); le Cardinal = el Cardenal (the Cardinal); le Roi = el Rey (the King); le Patriarche = el Patriarcha (the Patriarch); le Connétable = el Capità o Conestable (the Captain or Constable); l’Archevêque = l’Archabisbe (the Archbishop); le Chevalier = el Cavaller (the Knight); l’Évêque = el Bisbe (the Bishop); l’Écurier = le Gentilhome (the Squire); l’Abbé = l’Abbat (the Abbot); le Bailli = el Governador (the Bailiff). In both versions the duke is absent and the kings are two: the second is a dead body speaking from the grave. As far as the French poem is concerned, this order of characters brings us to the versions older than the second printed edition by Guyot Marchant (1486), which adds some more victims: le Légat (the Papal Envoy), le Duc (the Duke), le Maître d’École (the School Teacher), etc.; the absence of all these new characters in the Catalan translation leads us to reject the idea of the derivation of the Catalan text from Marchant’s printed version of 1486.

15. Here and below, the Catalan translation entitled the Dança de la Mort is quoted from the edition of B, ff. cxcvii-cliv, published in the second part of this article. All references to the critical edition contain a stanza number and a line number (or numbers, if a quotation includes more than one line), separated by a point.

16. It is worth noting that we have evidence of the circulation of the Dança de la Mort in the ecclesiastical circles of the Balearic Islands: our Catalan translation of the Danse macabre is one of the sources for the Mallorcan play Representació de la Mort. We cannot certainly affirm that this text arrived in Mallorca through other channels than Carbonell’s version, but it is not impossible.


17. The absence of the duke and the presence of two kings probably had a historical explanation in the original text, since it is possible that the French people could recognise some real-world royal figures, most probably king Charles VI: see Oosterwijk 2008. Naturally, for a Catalan reader it would have been more difficult to catch such political allusions, and in any case their importance would have been lost.

18. The extant manuscripts of the Parisian Danse macabre are MS lat. 14904, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (henceforth BnF); MS BnF fr. 25350; MS BnF fr. 25434; MS BnF fr. 14989; MS BnF fr. 1055; MS BnF fr. 1181; MS BnF fr. 1186; MS BnF fr. 995; MS BnF, nouvelles acquisitions françaises (henceforth NAF) 10032; MS Add 38858, British Library, London (henceforth Brit. Lib. Add 38858); MS Add 139 (364), Bibliothèque municipale, Lille (henceforth Lille 139); MS 907, Bibliothèque municipale, Tours (henceforth Tours 907); MS 127, Bibliothèque municipale, Saint-Omer (henceforth Saint-Omer 127); MS 502, Musée Condé (Bibliothèque et les archives du château), Chantilly (henceforth Chantilly 502). MS BnF fr. 995 is a codex descriptus deriving from Marchant’s 1485 edition; MS Chantilly 502 is a codex descriptus deriving from Marchant’s 1486 edition; the remaining manuscripts are independent of the printed versions.
Another textual element compatible with this hypothesis is the lection *honor, gaudia* ‘honour, joys’ found in B, f. 153v, and in all the French manuscripts that do not derive from Marchant’s editions and contain these Latin passages (it is very likely that the Parisian mural contained them as well), i.e. MSS BnF lat. 14904, BnF fr. 25434, BnF fr. 14989, BnF fr. 1055, BnF NAF 10032, Lille 139. This is meaningful because in Marchant’s editions of 1485 and 1486 we read *honor, gloria* ‘honour, glory’: this divergence between the manuscripts and the printed versions makes it unlikely that the Catalan translation derived from either of Marchant’s editions.

Some other remarks on the relationship between the Catalan translation and the transmission of the French *Danse macabre* can be made. Some structural and textual elements allow us to assume a relationship between the manuscript copied by Carbonell and one of the oldest manuscripts containing the Parisian *Dance*, specifically MS Paris, BnF lat. 14904 (henceforth P). A significant piece of evidence consists in a reference note found in B and attributing the French source text to a mysterious *Johannes Climacus sive Climages* (f. cliii v): as already pointed out by Whyte (1931, 33–5) and Leonard Kurtz (1975 [1934], 150), it is a cross between the names of Jean Gerson and Nicholas de Clamanges – two members of the Victorine circle whose works precede and follow the *Danse macabre* exactly in P, a copy with provenance from the school of Saint Victor. It is therefore possible to establish a connection between the Catalan *Dança de la Mort* and the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris.

Another, more important element that makes the Catalan translation closer to the Victorine branch of the *Danse macabre* tradition than to other witnesses of the French text is the denomination *lo Mestre* (‘the Master, the Teacher’) in the rubrics preceding the introductory and concluding lines of the poem. This word choice is interesting, as it does not match the most common variant in the manuscript and printed tradition *l’acteur* ‘the Authority’ nor most other variants used in the French manuscripts and in the 1485 and 1486 Marchant’s editions, namely *le docteur / doctor* ‘the Teacher, the Mentor’, *Macabre* (used as a proper noun) or *Angelus* ‘an Angel’, used in the other French manuscripts and in the 1485 and 1486 Marchant’s editions. Instead, the Catalan *Mestre* finds an equivalent in both extant Victorine manuscripts (P and BnF fr. 25550), where there is no mention of *acteur*, but of *ung maistre qui est au bout de la dance* ‘A Master speaking at the beginning of this dance’ (P 66 title; BnF fr. 25550, f. ccxlviii).

Another element to be analysed in the light of the stemmatic aspect is the choice of the feminine article *la* before the word *mort* in the manuscript rubrics that regularly precede the stanzas. Some manuscripts and printed versions of the *Danse macabre* use the masculine article *le*, thus interpreting the word as ‘Dead’, while others use the feminine article *la*, thus referring to ‘Death’. The constant use of the feminine article in the Catalan text cannot be considered as sufficient proof of its dependence upon one specific witness of the French poem. Nevertheless, this characteristic makes it more likely that the *Dança de la Mort* derives from a version containing the feminine

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20. *Acteur* is the reading of MSS BnF fr. 25434, BnF fr. 1186 and of both Marchant’s editions; *docteur* is found in MSS Brit. Lib. Add 39853 and BnF NAF 10032; *doctor* is in MSS BnF fr. 14989 and BnF fr. 1055; *Mac<r>abre* is in MS Saint-Omer 129; *Machabre le docteur* and *Angelus* are compresent in MSS BnF fr. 14989 and BnF NAF 10032.
21. Here and below, all quotations from P refer to the critical edition of this manuscript, ff. lxiv–lxxii, provided in the second part of this article. All references to the edition contain a stanza number and a line number (or numbers, if a quotation includes more than one line), separated by a point. When quoting a rubric, the word *title* is used instead of line numbers.
22. Both in French and in Catalan the form *mort* corresponds to two morphological homonyms: it can stand for ‘death’ or for ‘dead’, feminine in the first case and masculine in the second. As for the form *la* of the feminine singular definite article, it is the same in French and Catalan.
article before mort rather than from one containing only the masculine article. Among the latter are Marchant’s editions and, interestingly, MS BnF fr. 25550, i.e. the second of the two extant manuscripts of the Danse macabre with provenance from the Abbey of Saint Victor. As for P, it oscillates between the two grammatical genders without any logical reason: this evident oversight shows that the choice between the two forms had less importance for the fifteenth-century readers of the Danse macabre than for many contemporary scholars (also v. supra fn. 4). However, the presence of both articles in P is compatible with the above hypothesis of the relationship between this manuscript and the Catalan text. It is plausible that the Catalan translator had access to one of the manuscripts – now almost certainly lost – belonging to the same branch of the Victorine manuscript family as P and other than BnF fr. 25550. This lost source might have been constant in the choice of la mort (and faithfully followed by the Catalan version), but it is also possible that it fluctuated between la mort and le mort, which would mean that the Catalan translator regularised the use of these two forms, opting for la mort. Also, the choice of the feminine article is reflected in the title of the Catalan poem, where the adjective macabre, common in the French tradition, is replaced by the syntagma de la mort. It is possible that this innovation is to be attributed to the Catalan translator himself rather than to some French copyist in the chain of transmission: there is no attestation of the term macabre / macabra in the Catalan text, which suggests that the translator deliberately avoided it, probably perceiving it as a markedly French word, unfamiliar and unnatural in the Catalan-speaking context.

There is a remarkable discrepancy between the Catalan text and the extant versions of the Parisian Danse macabre: the Catalan Dança includes four female characters, namely the Maiden (la Donzella), The Nun (la Monge), the Widow (la Viuda) and the Married Woman (la Maridada), whereas the known witnesses of the French poem adhere to the all-male scheme. This difference could be plausibly interpreted as an innovation brought in by the Catalan translator or by a scribe who executed some intermediate copy – in French – placed between the original text and the Catalan version. However, another explanation is possible. Besides four female characters mentioned above, the Dança de la Mort also adds the Notary (el Notari): this element closely matches the structure of Lydgate’s English translation of the Danse macabre – more precisely, the structure of the version found in one branch of the manuscript tradition of this poem – where we find the Abbess, the Noble Lady, the Woman in Love and the Juror. The characters are not exactly identical, and the women in Lydgate’s poem are three whereas in the Catalan text they are four; nevertheless, the concomitance of these two groups of characters makes it possible to formulate at least a hypothesis of a common prototype containing three or four female characters and a notary.

24. Sophie Oosterwijk (2011, 11) rightly claims that such irregular alternation of forms found in the manuscript and printed tradition of the Parisian Danse macabre might be explained by linguistic reasons, namely by the fact that the form le is attested as the feminine article in some Middle French dialects. However, this explanation hardly works in the case of the Victorine manuscripts in question nor in the case of Marchant’s editions, since no other attestation of le before a feminine noun is found in any of them. What is more, the use of le mort in these manuscripts and incunabula is limited to the rubrics, whereas in the main text of the poem we always read la mort; the only exception, in all the versions, is the context clearly referring to a dead person and not to Death: le mort le vif fait avancer ‘the dead person makes the living one go forward’ (P 2.4; MS BnF fr. 25550, f. ccliii, etc.).
25. The origin and etymology of the term macabre are uncertain, if widely discussed. See the brief summary in Fein 2013, 2-3.
26. As it is known, the French Danse macabre des femmes is a separate poem, postdating the Danse des hommes and deeply influenced by it. The earliest witness of the Des femmes text is dated 1482. See Harrison 1994, 1-2.
27. The manuscript families of Lydgate’s poem are discussed in Warren ed. 1931, xxiv-xxxi; see also Oosterwijk 2010, 190-192 and 200-201.
or a juror. Further, whereas Lydgate’s work can be defined as a reworking of its source rather than a true translation, the *Dança de la Mort* is characterised by less individuality and less freedom in the treatment of the source text: this suggests that the stanzas of the five ‘additional’ characters probably derive from something already existing in some French version of the *Danse*.

### 2.3 Translation patterns

In addition to the ‘macroscopic’ structural elements shared by the French and the Catalan texts, the *Dança de la Mort* shows great faithfulness to its model at the microtextual level. Whole stanzas translated almost literally are not infrequent. For example, this is the case of the words addressed by Death to the Pope:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danse macabre 3.1-8</th>
<th>Dança de la Mort 3.1-8</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| ‘You who live, certainly, sooner or later, you will dance this way. But when? Only God knows it – watch carefully how you will do that. Lord Pope, you will begin, as the highest lord. This way you will be honoured: honour is due to those of high office’. | ‘You who live in the present world, sooner or later, you will dance here. But when? Only God knows it – watch carefully how you will do that. Lord Pope, you will begin, as the highest lord; This way you will be honoured: honour is due to those of high office’.

However, the Catalan translator often sacrifices some shades of meaning and other details to metrical regularity. Thus, the monologue of a Dead King speaking from his grave is characterised by a number of lexical and syntactic manipulations, which reduce its closeness to the formal aspect of the French text, but exercise a minor influence on the content level:

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28. The assumption that the Catalan and English translations derive from a common archetype had been already outlined by Whyte (1931, 28). Regarding the origin of the female characters in these texts, it is remarkable that the miniatures of a book of hours influenced by the *Danse macabre* also contain one such character (see the comments in Oosterwijk 2008, 141). It might also be useful to examine the female characters in the German Dances of Death.

29. Here and below, the Parisian *Danse macabre* is quoted from my edition of P. V. *supra* fn. 21.
It should be noted that in other cases the translator repeatedly shows much more freedom in the treatment of source material. He mitigates some of the sarcasm characteristic of the French poem, e.g. *alegrar les dones totes* 50.3 ‘to entertain all women’ instead of *faire esjoir sots et sottez* 50.3 ‘to entertain foolish men and women’ (Death to the Minstrel). It can also happen that, on the contrary, the translator accentuates the irony of the Parisian *Danse macabre*, e.g. *cuytau lo pas, no sembleu bou* 33.6 ‘speed up your pace, do not look like an ox’ instead of *il convient que par cy passes* 33.6 ‘you have to pass through here’ (Death to the Merchant).

An interesting modification strategy consists in extending the metaphor of dance in the Catalan version: it can be found in several contexts where the French source does not make use of it. Thus, in the French *Danse* we read: *Ha, maistre, par là passeres* 39.1 ‘Ha, sir, you will pass through here’ (Death to the Monk), whereas the Catalan version of this line is the following: *En Monjo, ab mi dançareu* 39.1 ‘Sir Monk, you will dance with me’; or we find: *Veniu prop mi, ballem abdos* 46.3 ‘Come close to me, [and] let us dance together’, instead of *Vous estes prins, la mort vous pique* 46.3 ‘You are captured, [and] Death stabs you’ (Death to the Lover).31

The last remarkable feature that makes the Catalan translation differ from its French model concerns the so-called proverbs.32 In the French *Danse macabre*, proverbial locutions are an independent structural element; their position is metrically fixed (they always occupy the final, eighth line of each stanza), and they have a very specific function: they provide a synthesis of...
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the whole stanza, which contributes to effect “une transformation du ponctuel à l’universel, de l’anecdotique à l’axiomatique” (Taylor 1989b, 219). The Dança de la Mort is characterised by a rather free treatment of the proverbs present in its French source: it frequently happens that, in the Catalan version, these proverbs lose their logical and syntactic autonomy and sometimes even their proverbial character. In the following paragraphs I will describe the different types of proverb transformation that can be individuated.

First, the ‘proverb’ can come to occupy two lines instead of one, e.g. per la mort, qu’es camí estret, / passar coré, cosa·s forçada 16.7-8 ‘one must inevitably pass through Death, which is a narrow path’, instead of quant faire le fault, c’est contrainte 16.8 ‘when one must do that [i.e. die], he is bound’ (the Archbishop); La carn e ossos deu podrir, / mas no sab hom hon, com ni quant 22.7-8 ‘Flesh and bones have to rot, but no one knows where, how and when’, instead of tous fault morir; on ne set quant 22.8 ‘everyone has to die, [and] no one knows when’ (the Squire); per Adam, qui fonc lo primer, / moriu per manjar una poma 27.7-8 ‘you die because of Adam, who was the first [human], as a result of his eating an apple’, instead of tous fault morir pour une pomme 27.8 ‘everyone has to die because of an apple’ (Death to the Astrologer).

Second, the ‘proverb’ can occupy only one, the final line, but be linked to the previous line by means of a conjunction: car no sap hom per qui s’ajusta 29.8 ‘since no one knows for whom he amasses [wealth]’, instead of on ne set pour qui on amasse 29.8 ‘no one knows for whom he amasses [wealth]’ (Death to the Bourgeois); car tot treball requer salari 52.8 ‘as any effort requires a reward’, instead of à toute peine est deu salaire 52.8 ‘any effort requires a reward’ (Death to the Parish Priest); que tal cobeja que ha prou 33.8 ‘as he who has enough desires to have more’, instead of tel convoite qui a asses ‘he who has enough desires to have more’.

Third, in some cases the proverbial locution of the French source is replaced by a significantly different proverb: qui mal no fa no sent torment 41.8 ‘who does no ill feels no pain’, instead of à tout perdre est cop perilleux 41.8 ‘to lose everything is a dangerous blow’ (Death to the Usurer). It is also possible that the original ‘proverb’ is replaced by a related but more generic one: a la mort no y val resistença 45.8 ‘resistance is useless against Death’, instead of contre la mort n’a medicine 45.8 ‘there is no medicine against Death’ (the Physician).

Fourth, the ‘proverb’ can be transformed into a remark of a personal nature, thus losing its universality: may pensí ballar en tal dança 40.8 ‘I have never considered dancing such a dance’, instead of chascuns n’est pas joyeux qui dance 40.8 ‘not everyone who dances is happy’ (the Monk).

Lastly, one case of interchange of the ‘proverbs’ used in Death’s stanza and the respective victim’s stanza is attested: poc resta d’açò que fol pensa 60.8 ‘very little remains of what a fool thinks’, instead of Dieu punit tout quant bon lui semble ‘God punishes everyone who seems appropriate to him’ and, vice versa, porta-se·n Déu ço que li plau 61.8 ‘God brings away with him what he finds appropriate’, instead of moult remaint de ce que fol pense ‘much remains [unfulfilled] of what a fool thinks’.

Unlike the English translation of the Parisian Danse macabre, which contains Verba translatoris and a Conclusio added by the translator John Lydgate, the Catalan text – in the version that has come down to us – contains no explicit reflection on the process of translation. However, Lydgate’s statement specifying that the translator’s intention is to follow the matter and not the form could also be applied to the translation model adopted by the anonymous author of the Catalan Dança de la Mort, who analyses the original text and then restores it using elements of his native language: the result of this process is a text oscillating between literal translation and free imitation.33

33. Lydgate’s statement is the following: owte of the frens she I drowe hit of entent / Not worde be worde but folowynge the substaunce, lines 665-66 (Warren ed. 1931, 76). These words have a formulaic nature (a topos modestiae),
3 The *Dança de la Mort* from MS Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, and *Danse macabre* from MS BnF lat. 14904: parallel critical edition

3.1 Editorial criteria

3.1.1 Syntax: general criteria

3.1.1.1 Catalan text

1) The use of capital and lower-case letters generally follows modern Catalan usage.

Manuscript B frequently uses capital letters when Death calls a character by name (i.e., names his social rank) for the first time. This interesting feature is kept unmodified in the critical text, as it shows that the copyist distinctly perceived a meaningful structural particularity common to the *Dança de la Mort* and to its French source: Death always marks a shift from one victim to another by explicitly referring to their position in society (also *infra* editorial note 15.2). This becomes particularly interesting if we compare the Catalan version to the extant French copies: none of them uses capital letters when naming the characters. Such usage of capital letters is not perfectly regular, and the critical edition reproduces the oscillation present in the manuscript.

Sporadic capital letters not covered by the pattern above are not preserved in the edition, but registered in the editorial notes. For example, the critical text contains *als grans mestres* 3.8, whereas the respective note reports B *Mestres* (capital M).

2) Word separation follows modern Catalan usage.

3) The most universal punctuation marks – such as full stop, comma, exclamation and question marks etc. – are introduced according to modern Catalan usage.

4) A raised point (*punt volat*) between a vowel and a consonant is used to separate agglutinated words in the manuscript whenever the modern apostrophe cannot be used, e.g. *qui·s vol* 2.4, *No·m puit* 4.5.


An apostrophe is also used between a personal pronoun and the elided pronoun *en*, e.g. *me·n vaig* 51.7, *l’esbaït* 7.1, *s’esmena* 57.8.

5) A hyphen is used between a verbal form and an enclytical personal pronoun, e.g. *leves-me* 4.4, *acostau-vos* 15.2, *sab·ho* 3.2.

3.1.1.2 French text

1) The use of capital and lower-case letters follows modern French usage. No capital letters are used whenever Death mentions the character’s social rank (*supra* 3.1.1.1), as they do not compare in P.

2) Word separation follows modern French usage.

3) The most universal punctuation marks – such as full stop, comma, exclamation and question marks etc. – are introduced according to modern French usage.

4) A hyphen between verbal forms and pronouns is used according to modern French usage, e.g.

```plaintext
see Timofeeva 2006; at the same time, Lydgate “postulates an unsystematic but particular model for translation: an interpretative strategy which allows the translator to distinguish what is essential in his source text from what is contingent” (Taylor 1994, 185).
```
fault-il 4.1, est-ce 6.7, tires-vous 15.2.

3.1.2 Diacritics

3.1.2.1 Catalan text

1) The use of accents follows modern Catalan usage.

Accents are used to distinguish the following pairs of monosyllabic words: a ‘to, for’ (dative preposition) 1.7 and passim – à ‘has’ 55.4, 58.6; deu ‘must’ 22.7 and passim – Déu ‘God’ 3.3 and passim; don ‘lord’ 3.5 – dón ‘(I) give’ 66.7 / ‘(he) gives’ 63.7; dos ‘two’ 15.5 – dòs ‘back, shoulders’ 57.4; fas ‘(you) do’ (second-person singular present indicative form) 30.3, 71.4, – fàs ‘(I) do’ (first-person singular present indicative form) 13.3; feu ‘(you) do’ (present tense or imperative) 7.1, 50.6 – feu ‘(it) made’ (preterite tense) 70.2; ma ‘my’ 8.7 and passim / ‘me’ (clitic object personal or reflexive pronoun) 30.1, 62.3, 71.4 – mà ‘hand’ 43.5, 62.3, 74.6; mes ‘but’ 69.5 – mès ‘put, placed’ (past participle) 48.6, 54.7, 63.6 – més ‘more’ 20.4 and passim; mon ‘my’ 13.1 and passim – món ‘world’ 3.1 and passim; pres ‘took’ 24.1, 71.4 / ‘taken’ 38.6, 38.8 – prés ‘after’ 36.6; sé ‘I know’ 16.1 and passim – se (third-person reflexive pronoun) 2.3 and passim; són ‘(they) are’ 12.5, 57.3, 77.1 – son ‘his, her’ 22.1, 25.8; tòs ‘you’ plural (tonic object personal or reflexive pronoun) 15.2 and passim. The tonic object personal pronoun nòs ‘we’ 15.4 carries an accent mark, even though there is no attestation of the respective clitic pronoun nos.

2) The use of dieresis follows modern Catalan usage, e.g. esbaït 7.1, conduït 58.7.

3.1.2.2 French text

1) Accents are normally introduced only in final position, for greater readability of the text, e.g. forgié 2.8. The use of these accents follows modern French usage.

Accents are also used to distinguish the following pairs of monosyllabic words: a ‘has’ 9.8 and passim – à ‘to, for’ (dative preposition) 1.6 and passim; ou ‘or’ 53.1, 55.3, 63.1 / contraction of the preposition à with the masculine definite article le (variant of au) 40.5 – où ‘where’ 16.1 and passim.

2) Dieresis (tréma) is not normally used. The only exception is the couple Dieu ‘God’ 3.3 and passim – dieü ‘due’ (past participle of devoir) 3.8, where the dieresis has a distinctive function.

3.1.3 Spelling: general criteria

3.1.3.1 Catalan text

1) The use of the letters u and v is regularised according to modern usage.

2) The use of the letters i and j for the voiced palatal fricative is regularised according to modern usage. The only attestations of j with this phonetic value are jurar 24.4, Jove 46.1, desijada 55.1, jorns 61.1. In addition, the manuscript contains Infant 58.1 (corrected in the critical text), which confirms that there is no regularity in the choice of one of the two variants.

3) The non-etymological use of the letters a and e in atonic positions and the consequent oscillation between them are kept unchanged, as they are linguistically significant (for instance, v. infra editorial note 19.5).

4) The modern graphic unit ll is used in rebel-lau 37.2 and rebel lar 36.5. However, the overall tendency of B is to use the double ll for the palatal /ʎ/ – e.g. quelles title, mirall 2.1 – and not for the velarised geminate /ɫɫ/.

5) A prosthetic e- is never integrated, e.g. no pusc scapar 38.7, mon studi 45.2. However, the
cases when such e- is likely to be really pronounced are discussed in the editorial notes.

3.1.3.2 French text

1) The use of the letters u and e is regularised according to modern usage.
2) The use of the letters i and j for the voiced palatal fricative is regularised according to modern usage.
3) The use of the letters z and s is not regularised. The grapheme z is usually used in final position: desoulz 18.8, desquelz 63.7, fils 5.8, povez 44.7, serez 65.7, sottez 50.3, souliez 17.5, telz 65.7, voz 21.4, 25.6, 52.7. The use of z in phizique 45.1 is likely to be due to the fact this term is a Grecism, a learned word.
4) The groups -ct- and -tt- are mostly distributed according to the etymological criterion, e.g. doctrine 1.3 vs faittes 7.1 and passim. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish these two groups in non-etymological contexts, as they are written almost identically; however, it is possible to establish that the dominant spelling is -tt-. Thus, I opt for -tt- in doubtful cases, e.g. amourettes 47.2, flourettes 47.4.

3.1.4 Grammar: French text

The fluctuating usage of the desinence -s of the nominative case (cas sujet) is not regularised, as these fossil remains are present in almost every fifteenth-century French manuscript and represent linguistically valuable information (see, e.g. Marchello-Nizia 1979, 97-100).

3.1.5 Editorial interventions

1) Abbreviations are resolved in italics, e.g. B aquella (title), pendre 14.2; P luxumque 1.1, pour 1.4.
2) Integrated elements are in brackets, e.g. B bell[s] 14.4; P seig[n]ourrier 5.6.
3) Expunctions are indicated by angle brackets, e.g. B vostra<s> grimaça 37.3; P Cil est <est> eureus 2.3.
4) In the French text, round parentheses are used to mark the reconstructed parts of rubrics undoubtedly present in P, but not legible due to the way the book was bound, e.g. La m(ort) 5 title, L’empe(reire) 6 title. Reconstructing the word mort involves no difficulty; as for the characters’ social rank, I use the form employed in Death’s stanza immediately before the stanza of the character in question. As for the rubrics preceding stanzas 65 and 66, see the respective notes.

3.1.6 Apparatus

The critical apparatuses register editorial intervention taking place whenever the manuscripts contain evident errors counter to semantics or syntax and impossible to correct by a sole operation of integration or expunction. The apparatuses are positive; they contain both the emended forms present in the critical text and, separated by a single square bracket, the readings of the respective manuscript, e.g. B 50.8 monstrarj monstrau, P 6.4 un] an. All such corrections are discussed in the editorial notes.

3.1.7 Numeration

1) All the stanzas are numbered with Arabic numerals in B, and the same strategy is adopted in the edition. This also applies to the French text, although P uses no numbers. The numbers differ only for the last four stanzas, since stanzas 64-73 of B are absent in P.
2) Folio numbers, enclosed in vertical bars, are indicated in the left margin of each of the two columns containing the respective critical text.

3) Line numeration takes into account the gaps, i.e. the lines lacking in some stanzas. In both editions, such lacunae are indicated by sequences of points. Their position in the stanza is established on the basis of metrical evidence, namely the strophic pattern ABABBCBC; syntactic and semantic structures are taken into consideration as well. In the case of the French text, this kind of evidence is corroborated by the readings of other textual witnesses.

It should be mentioned that the lacunae in B and P never coincide and are of a different nature: in the Catalan version, the gaps do not damage the semantic and syntactic integrity of the stanza, whereas the lines lacking in the French manuscript make the text semantically and syntactically incomplete.

3.2 Critical text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dança de la Mort</th>
<th>Danse macabre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>from MS Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Barcelona (= B)</td>
<td>from MS lat. 14904, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (= P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

140r Dança de la mort e de aquelles persones qui mal llur grat ab aquella ballen e dançen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>{ see B lines 1.1-1.7 after stanza 77, which correspond to P lines 1.3-1.6 }</td>
<td>La dance macabre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hec pictura decus, pompa luxumque relegat, in quae choris nostris duceere festa monet.</td>
<td>Danse macabre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discite vos choream, cuincis quercernatis istam, quantum prosit honor, gaudia, divicie.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tales estis enim matura morte futuri quals in effigie moriuntur turba vocat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Parle lo Mestre

O creatura rahonable qui desiges vida tererenal, tu has aci regla notable per ben finir vida mortal. La present dança que veus tal és de la Mort poc delitosa. Morir a tots és natural; la mort és vil, molt odiosa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O creature raisonnable qui desire vie eternelle, tu as cy doctrine notable pour bien finir vie mortelle.</td>
<td>La dance macabre s'appelle que chascun à dancer apprenez; à homme et fane est naturelle, mort n’espargne petit ne grant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>En tal mirall cascú legir pot, pus cové aqui dançar; aquell se pot bonanat dir qui-s vol aqui sovent mirar. Tu veus los altres començar (qual és qui de morir se guant?) ne sol atras un pas tornar; tots d’una massa prenem part.</td>
<td>En ce miroir chascuns peut lire qui le convient ainsi danser; cil est c’est curieux qui bien se mire; le mort le vil fait avancer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. En tal mirall cascú legir pot, pus cové aqui dançar; aquell se pot bonanat dir qui-s vol aqui sovent mirar. Tu veus los altres començar (qual és qui de morir se guant?) ne sol atras un pas tornar; tots d’una massa prenem part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu vos les plus grans commencer, car il n’est nul que mort ne fiere; c’est piteuse chose y penser; tout est forgié d’une matiere.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Parla la mort al Papa

Vós qui viviu al món present, prest o tart aqui dançareu. Mas quant? Sab-ho Déu solament –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>64r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vous qui vivez, certainement, quoy qu’il tarde, ainsi danserez. Mais quant? Dieu le scet seulement –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”

preneu esment com ho fareu.
Don papa, vós començareu,
axí com pus digna senyor;
en tal forma honrat sereu:
als grans mestres pertany honor.

4. Respon lo Papa
Donchs hauré yo menar la dança,
qui tinch loch de Déu en la terra?
Dignitat haguí e poxança –
e tu, mort, leves-me desferra.
No-m puix lunyar de qui-m fa guerra;
enca morir no cuydava –
yó y pensí poc e fiu gran erra.

4. Respon lo Emperador
No trop senyor a qui m'appell
de la mort qui axí·m meneja;
la carn, los ossos e la pell
sots un lancel còvè que veja.
Tant prest morir yo may no creya –
què m'ha valgut gran senyoria,
pus veig la mort qu·axí·m garreja?
Honar val molt... Si no·s perdia!

6. Respon lo Emperador
No trop senyor a qui m'appell
dela mort qui axí·m meneja;
la carn, los ossos e la pell
sots un lancel còvè que veja.
Tant prest morir yo may no creya –
què m'ha valgut gran senyoria,
pus veig la mort qu·axí·m garreja?
Honar val molt... Si no·s perdia!

8. Le mort
Venes, noble roy couronné,
renommé de force et de proesse.
Jadis fustes advirnam.
Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”

10. Respon lo Rey
Jamès aprenguí de dançar en ball ni dança tan salvatge.


11. Al Patriarca
Patriarca, per vós bexar la cara no sou delliurat. La creu doble renunciar haureu, qu’altr’ n serà heretat. No penses plus a dignitat, ja no seres pappe de Romme, folta sperança l’hom engana.

12. Respon lo Patriarca
Bé conec que moltes honors m’an enganat, per dir lo ver. Mos goigs se giren en tristors, e què val tant honor haver? Pocs són qui no y prènguen pler, gran stat pert la gent e torbe; massa pujar no m par sceber: qui munta carregat, s’encorbe.

13. Al Capità o Conestable
De mon dret és qu’ab mi vengau molt prestament, bell Conestable: les plus fors, com Charlemaine, e no us hi qual esser dubtable. No y valrà cara d’espantable ni bravejar ni leig comport: ab tot que no us és agradable, armes no us defendran de mort.

14. Respon lo Capità
Mon parer e intentió era podre forces, castells, mettén a ma subjeció viles, ciutats, locs grans e bell[s]. No m valen lances ni coltells: la mort no guarda dret ni leys ni pobre ni rics ni jovencells – contra la mort no y ha remeys.

15. A l’Arçabísbe
No us qual mostrar la cara fera, mon bell Senyor, acostau-vos. Haveu vos por que yo no us fera?

d e servidors de gran destresa. Mas de present tota l’altesa haureu lexar. No sou vós sol, poch haureu de vostra riquesa: lo pus rich se n porta un lançol.

de grans pomps, de grant noblesse, mais maintenant toute haultesse laisser Reese. Vous n’estes pas seul, peu aures de voitre richesse: le plus riche n’a qu’un linscel.

Le roy
Je n’ay point aprins à dancer à dance et note si sauvage. Helas, on peut veiœs et penser que vaut orgueil, forse, lingnage. Mort destruit tout – c’est son usage – aussi tost le grant que le mendre. Qui moins se princ, plus est sage: à la fin fault devenir cendre.

Le mort
Patriarche, pour basse chiere vous ne povies estre quitté; vosse double crois qu’aves chiere haureu, qu’autre n serà heretat. Ne penses plus à dignité, ja ne seres pappe de Romme, pour rendre compte estes cité: fol esperance decept l’ome.

Le patriarche
Bien parcoy que mondains homneurs m’ont deceu, pour dire le voir. Mes joyes tournent en douleurs, et que vault tant d’onneur avoir? Tropt monter hault n’est pas savoir, haults estas gastent gens sans nombre, mais peu le veullent percevoir: à hault monter le fai encombe.

Le mort
C’est de mon droit que je vous maine à la dance, gent connestable: les plus fors, comme Charlemaine, mort prent, c’est chose veritable. Rien ne vault chiere espontable ne forte armeure en cest assault; d’un cop j’abas le plus estable: rien n’est d’armes, quant mort assault.

Le cou(n)estable
Je avoie encore entention d’assalir chasteaux et forteresses et mener à subjection, en aquerant homneurs, richisses. Mais je voy que toutes process mort met au bas – c’est gront despit. Tout lui est ung – douceurs, rudesses: contre la mort n’a nul respir.
No y dubteu gens, seguiu a nóis, e ballem tots de dos en dos.
Anuig ha l’hom qu’a mi s’acoste, lo ball és un poch fastijós; un jorn cové comptar ab l’hoste.

Respon l’archbis[b]e
Trist, no sé veure loch ni part (tant me veig per la mort destret) hon puxa fugir, e m’apart.
Las, hon hauyre yo mon retret?
Ara perdé mon benifet, no tendré pus cambra pintada: per la mort, qu-és cani estret, passar cové, cosa-s forçada.

Al cavaller
Vós qu’entre los altres barons sou stat noble Cavaller, oblidau trompes e clarons, prest veniu, no us mettau derrer.
Las dones soliau voler e fer dançar ab alegria – bé poden veure e sceber, ço que fa hu, altre u dessia.

Respon lo Cavaller
Yo dins lo món fuy nomenat e molt estimat en fets grans, e de nobles dones amat de mercaders e ciutadans, e per null temps fuy variable – los comptes meus tots foren vans: jüs lo cel no ha res estable.

Al Bisbe
Prest finirà vostre delit e molt estimat en fets grans, e de senyors richs e poxans, de nobles dones amat e de senyors richs e poxans, de mercaders e ciutadans, e per null temps fuy variable – los comptes meus tots foren vans: jüs lo cel no ha res estable.

Respon lo Bisbe
Lo cor no-m pot gens alegrar per les novelles que m’aporta. Déu vol tot compte escoltar, e veus ço qui més desconforta. Lo món poc ni molt no-m conforta ne-o lex a res, ans leva massa. Jamés algú res no s’en porta sinó i ben fet; tot l’altre passa.

Ne doubtes, vous veurez emprés.
N’est-pas toujours la mort emprés tout honne et le suit costé a costé?
Rendre convient debtes et prest:
une fois faut compte à l’oste.

L’arc(vesque)
Las, je ne scay où regarder, tant suis mort à grand destroy.
Où fuiray-je pour moy garder?
Certes, qui bien la congre[j]oit hors de rason jamais n’istroit.
Plus ne gerray en chambre painte:
mourir me convient, c’est le droit – quant faire le fault, c’est contrainte.

Le mort
Vous qui entre les grans barons aves en renon, chevalier, oubliés trompettes, clarons et me sieuves, sans soumcelier.
Les dames souliez resvelier, en faisant danser longue piece – autre dance fault-il veiller; ce que l’un fait, l’autre despiece.

Le chevalier
Or ay-je esté auctorisié en plusieurs fais et bien famé, des grans et des petits amé, avec ce des dames amé; ne onque ne fu diffamé à la court de seigneur notable, mais à ce cop suis tout pasmé: desouz le ciel n’a riens estable.

Le mort
Tantost n’aures vaillant ce pic des biens du monde et de nature. Evesque, de vous il est pic, non obstant vostre prelature. Votre fait en adventure: de vos subjis fault rendre compte. À chascuns Dieu fera droiture – n’est pas asuer qui trop hault monte.

L’ëvesque
Le coeur ne me peut resjoir des nouvelles que mort m’aporte. Dieu vouldra de tout compte oir – c’est ce que plus me desconforte. Le monde aussi peu me conforte, qui tous à la fin desherite; il retient tout, nul rien n’emporte: tout se passe, fors le merite.

20.2 vouldra [vauldra]
21. |144r| Al gentilhome
Passau avant, en gentilhom,
car de dançar sabeu los torns.
Moveu-vos prest, no semblen plom:
d’aquest ballar no-n fem tots jorns.
Ara fenexen vostres borns;
no us membràs may ací venir
ne oblidàs delits, sojorns –
a mort no pot qui viu fugir.

22. |66v| La mort
Avances-vous, gent escuier,
qui saves de dancer les tours.
Lance porties et escu hir,
et lui vous finieres voz jours.
Il n’est rien qui ne prengne cours –
dances et pensees de suir.
Vous ne pozes avoir secours:
il n’est qui puisse mort fuir.

23. R
Al Abbat
Veniu, Abbat, no fugiau
ni façau la cara smortida.
Cové la dança seguiscau,
ja que l’ajau molt avorrida.
Vostra renda ja l’an partida,
qui gras e gros vos ha nodrit;
pres prest vostra carn serà delida:
la mort no pot may desig,
mas só forçat l’estret passar.

24. R
Respon lo Abbat
De morir no-m pres may desig,
mas só forçat l’estret passar.
Poc observí de Déu la lig
ne los vots que volguí jurar.
Guardau-vos de molt abrassar
e pensau que Déu tot ho mira,
morir no vullau oblidar:
tart és pensar com l’hom expira.

25. Al Governador
Governador, de molta gent
jutge, gran administrador,
veniu cuytat, molt prestame
pour gouvrer toute police,
vejam que sereu tornador.
Lo poble regís ab furor –
daçò sereu en gran perpleix:
en aquell loc sou venidor
venes tantost à ceste assise.

26. R
Respon lo Governador
Ay Déu, bé-m par dura jornada,
d’aquest colp yo no-m cuydava.
La mia roda s’es girada:
encara morir no cuydava,
en semblants fets jamay pensava,
regint ma jurisdictió.
Seria fol qui y contrastava:
res no y val n-epelliató.
27. A l’Astròlec
Mestre, per lo vostre mirar
al cel ne per algun scebèr
no pueu a morir ascapar,
ne us qual cercar novell carrer.
Hajau açò per cert e ver
c e per gran argument e soma:
per Adam, qui fon lo primer,
moriu per manjar una poma.
Le mort
Maire, pour vos\'tre regarder
en haut ne pour vos\'tre clergie
ne pove la mort retarder:
cy ne vault rien astrologie.
Toute la genealogie
d’Adam, qui fut le premier homme,
mort prent, ce dit theologie:
tous faut morir pour une po\'me.

28. Respon l’estrôlec
Per grau algú ni per scienza
no pueu haver provisió.
Ja no-vi val res ma sapiença,
ay com és gran confusió!
E per final conclusió
no se\’qü\’n faça ne m’escriva,
yo pert tota discretió:
qui volrà ben morir, ben viva.
Le maistre
Pour science ne pour degré
ne puis avoir provision,
car maintenant tous mes regres
sont mourir à confusion.
Pour finable conclusion
je ne scay rien que plus descrie,
je pers c\’toute advisioin:
qui voudra bien mourir, bien vive.

29. Al Burgés
Burgés, cuytau, sans tarder:
vo\’s n’aves avoir ne richesse
qui vous puisse de mort garder.
Si dels béns hon hagués largesa
us\’s vos hé, fés saviesa.
D’altre vè tot e altre\’n gusta,
molt ajustar no-p\’m par certesa,
car no sap hom per qui s’ajusta.
Le mort
Bourgois, hastes-vous sans tarder:
yus\’s n’aures distribution,
ma
trop lessier rentes, maisons, cens, nourreture,
ma\’s tu fais, mort, telle est ta nature.
Saige n’est pas la creature
d’am\’er trop les biens qui demeurent
au monde et sont siens de droiture:
ceulx qui plus ont, plus enuis meurent.

30. Respon lo Burgés
Gran mal ma fa tant prest lexar
béns temporals e nodridura.
Pobres e rics tu fas lexar,
mort, pus ayal\’s és ta ventura.
No-s prou sabent la creatura
d’amar los béns per què tants ploren
e acquisits ab prou rancura:
tu fais, mort, telle est ta nature.
Saige n’est pas la creature
d’am\’er trop les biens qui demeurent
au monde et sont siens de droiture:
la mort vient qu’on ne garde l’eure.
Le mort
Sire chanoyne prebendés,
plus n’aul\’s distribution
ne gros, ne vous y attendes;
prenes cy consolation.
Pour toute retribution
mourir vous convient sans demeure,
ja n’aul\’s dilatation:
la mort vient qu’on ne garde l’eure.

31. Al Canonge
Mossé\’l Canonge arrendat,
no pendreu distributions
ne sereu ja pus engrexat
per renda ni oblations.
Pensau en dir orations:
morir haureu. Algú se\’n plora?
No y valran appellations:
la mort vé que no guarda l’hora.
Le (chanoine)
Cecy gueres ne me conforte:
prebendés fes en maistre eglise,
or est la mort plus que moy forte,
qui tout emmaine, c’est sa guise.
Blanc surplis et aumuce grise
me faul[t] lesser et à mort rendre –
que vault gloire si tost bas misse?
à bien mourir doit chascuns t<\'>endre.

32.  [146r] Respon lo Canonge
Aquest parlar me fa amig,
què-m val haver tants benïéts?
Mon saber ja d\’el tot me fuig.
La mort no guarda leys ne drets,
………………………………
no\’m qual donar, comprari ne pendre
almuces ne gentils birrets:
en bé morir val més entendre.
Le (chanoine)
Cecy gueres ne me conforte:
prebendés fes en maistre eglise,
or est la mort plus que moy forte,
qui tout emmaine, c’est sa guise.
Blanc surplis et aumuce grise
me faul[t] lesser et à mort rendre –
que vault gloire si tost bas misse?
à bien mourir doit chascuns t<\'>endre.

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Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre” 21

33- Respon lo Mercader
Yo só anat amunt, avall, per acquirir bens nit e dia, tot sol, a peu e a cavall, mas ara pert tot alegria. Ab tot mon poder, com podia, en haver era tot mon seny. Voluntat folía l’om desvia: qui molt abraça, poc astreyna.

34- Respon lo Mercader
Mercader, girau-vos d’açà: cercat haveu del món les vies per mar, per terra, gran temps ha – no us qual fer moltes avaries. Cessèu vostres mercaderies, caytau lo pas, no sembleu bou ni desigeu trafegueries, que tal cobeja que ha prou.

35- Al Cartuxà
Veniu, Cartuxà, sens aturar, e ja no façau resistença: rendes ne camps no us qual may comprar. Pas home sou de penitença, perdounau, hajau paciència; d’aquest món què val la glòria? Veniu ballar prest, sens temença: faites-vous valoir à la dance: sobre los vius mort ha victòria.

36- Respon lo Cartuxà
Yo só al món gran temps ha mort, e de viure no·m pren enveja, ab tot que·m sia desconort, quant veig la mort qu·axí·ns bandeja. Placi a Déu l’ànima, veja lo fill de Déu prés mon traspas. Açò m’és cert e yo ben creya: puis que la char est assouyé, plaise à Dieu que l’ame ravie soit es cielx apres mon trespas. C’est tout neant qu’est de ceste vie: tel est hui que demain n’est pas.

37- Al porter
Gentil porter ab la gran maça, a mi semble que us rebel·la. No us valrà vostra’s? grimaça; ab mi veniu, no fugtau. Aquesta Dança gens no us plau – lo viure va sent que us engana. Yo fac lo fort tornar suau: il n’est fort qu’aussi fort ne soit.

38- Respon lo porter
Yo só del rey oficial, e tu, mort, vols me destruir! Be m’semble joe descominal: yo feya mon offici hir, e veig que, sense més a dir, en dues parts sent que-m tens pres. No puse-separ ne fugir – anujós mor qui no-u ha pres.
39. **Al Monjo**

En Monjo, ab mi dançare,
e sol no penseu en defiendre.
Pas savi sou, no us aspanteu,
mas ben morir vullau apendre.
E no us qual ja d`uy mès contente,
car tost haureu la boca closa.
Lexau lo donar e lo pendre:
la vida d`hon és poca cosa.

40. **Respon lo Monjo**

Plaguere·m m`es esser encara
en claustre, ferent a Déu servici,
alegrement, ab bona cara,
matines dir e l`alt·offici.
Ara-m cone`c per foll e n`saci,
perquè volgi seguir l`usanc`a
dels mals vivents, conettent vici:
may pensi ballar en tal dança.

41. **A l`Usurer**

Usurer, home viciós,
veniu ab mi (erec que no us plau)!
D`usurar sou tan cobejós,
Serreu punt, açò cregau;
a Déu, qui és omnipotent,
qu·ell vos perdó tots jorns pregau:
mais ben morir vullau apendre.

42. **Respon lo Usurer**

Doncs axí·m covendrà morir –
açò m`es anuix e tristesa,
e no·m porria subvenir
mon or, mon argent e riquesa;
mas yo veig la mort tan encesa
envers mi que ja·m té dessota:
……………………………….

43. **Parla la mort més avant contra lo Usurer**

Usura és molt gran pecat,
segons lo dret diu e recompte.
Aquest hom és axí torbat
que de morir ja no té compte.
Ell mateix l`argent ab mà compte
e tots jorns a usura presta;
comptant, comptant, ell se bescompte:
………………………….

44. **Al Metge**

Mirau, metge, vostra orina,
vejà si y fa res esmenar.
Gran mestre sou en medicina
e ben sabent per commandar.
Ara us vè la mort damanar,
e no penseu que viure us leix,
e no y vullau més contrastar:
molt fa qui si mateix goreix.
45. **Respon lo Mege**

Gran temps ha qu'en malalts gorir –
sab Déu! – mon studi metí.
Per art practicat fiu fugir
la mort d’aquells e departí.
Ara no sé com ne a qui
m’acost per què-m faça valença:
emorjamés no pensí;
a la mort no y val resistença.

46. **A l’enamorat**

Jove gentil e graciós
qui us estimau de gran valor!
Veniu prop mi, ballen abdis;
lo món lexaru ab dolor.
Argent, vestits no les thesor
no us avran aquesta jornada.
Vós no y pensáis e lés follar:
jovent no ha molta durada.

47. **Respon lo enamorat**

O llas, mesquí, socors no trobaré
qui·m puixa de la mort lunyar!
O trist de mi, per qual camí iré?
Jaquir la mort no tenc voler
dones ni ab ellas dançar.
Bé m’engana lo jovent
(pensi devia molt durar):
petita pluja bat gran vent.

48. **A l’Advocat**

Advocat, sens fer gran procés,
veniu, no vullau fer contrast!
Les gens per haver molts diners
fés plegdejar ab dans e guast,
mas ara mudareu de past
e sereu dins la terra mès.
No manjareu perdius en ast –
devia molt durar:
bon fait fait justice prevenir.

49. **Respon lo Advocat**

Bé m’és forçat, més no pusc fer
ne sol pensar en fer defensa.
Jaquir la mort no tenc voler
algu – o trista departença!
Hon és mon saber e sciença?
Bé·s foll qui ab temps no·s preveu.
Déu en lo jorn de la venjança
açò·s ben cert, vós bé·u sabés.

50. **Al Minister**

Minister qui dançes e notes,
graciós, ab bell continent
per alegrar les dones totes,
veniu dançar molt prestament!
E no us sia gens desplasent –
dançau, feu bella continença;
no us prenga de mi aspavent:
vestre monstrar deu de sa sciença.

50.8 monstrar] monstrau.
Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”

**Respon lo Ministrer**

De tal dançar yo no tenc cura, 
as com forçat me n’entremet,  
car morir és cosa molt dura. 
Mon estrument vos do e us ret: 
cançó ne dança ne metot  
per algun temps no cantaré.  
Ab tu me’n vaig tot camí dret: 
tal dançà qui al cor no u té.

**Le menestrel**

De danser ainsi n’eussse cure –  
certes, tres enuis je m’en mesle,  
car de mort n’est peine plus dure.  
J’ay mis sousles le banc ma vielle:  
plus ne corneray sauterelle  
n’autre dance, mort m’en retient.  
Il me faut obei r à elle:  
tel dance à qui au cuer n’en tient.

**Al Curat**

Passau, curat, sens mès pensar! 
Yo sent que us sou als béns donat:  
morts e vius soliau manjar,  
mas vos sereu als vèrmens lancat.  
Vós fós pel Bisbe ordenat  
al poble per bon exemplar –  
del ben fer sereu gordanat,  
car tot treball requer salari.

**Le mort**

Passes, curé, sans plus songier!  
Je sens qu’estes abandonné:  
le vi, le mort souls mengier,  
mais vous seres aux vers donné.  
..........................  
mirer d’autrui et examplaire –  
de voz fais seres geurdonné:  
tà toute peine est deu salaire.

**Al Cavador**

Pagès qu·ab gran treball e pena  
tot vostre temps haveu viscut!  
Forment, molt ordi, mil, avena  
abundament haveu hagut.  
Lo vostre temps és ja vengut:  
morir haureu, no sou desliure,  
e sereu mès dins un loc brut:  
foll és qui cuide totes temps viure.

**Le mort**

Laboureur qui en soing et peine  
aves vescu tout vostre temps!  
Mourir vous fault, c’est chose certaine;  
reculer n’y vault ne contens.  
..........................  
Car de grant soucy vous delivre –  
approchies-vous, je vous attens:  
fol est qui cuide tousjours vivre.

**Respon lo Cavador**

La mort gran temps he desijada,  
mas volenters li fugiria.  
Ma vida trista, trabellada  
abundamment heu-s fuit.  
Lo vostre temps és ja vengut –  
morir haureu, no sou desliure,  
e sereu mès dins un loc brut:  
foll és qui cuide totes temps viure.

**La (laboure)ur**

La mort ay souhaitié souvent,  
mais volentier je la fouisse:  
j’aimasse mieulx – fist pluye ou vent –  
estre en vignes où je fouisse.  
Encor plus grant plaisir y prisse,  
car je pers de peur tous propos.  
Or n’est-il qui de ce pas yse:  
a toute heure la mort est prest.

**Respon lo frare menor**

Faites voye, vous aves tort,  
laboureur. Apres, cordelier!  
Souvent aves pescéi de mort –  
si vous desx moins movellier.  
Ja ne s’en faict esmoi baillier:  
il n’est si fort que mort n’arreste.  
Si fait bon à mourir veillier:  
tà toute heure la mort est prest.

**Al frare menor**

Faites voye, vous aves tort,  
laboureur. Apres, cordelier!  
Souvent aves pescéi de mort –  
si vous desx moins movellier.  
Ja ne s’en faict esmoi baillier:  
il n’est si fort que mort n’arreste.  
Si fait bon à mourir veillier:  
tà toute heure la mort est prest.
57. **Respon lo frare menor**

Què us par del viure d’aquest món ple de tots mals? No y trob repòs: tot quant hic veig, vanitats són.

Quan no y pensam, la mort al dòs tenim, qui·ns dóna un tal mos que, sens dir, a la fossa·ns mena.

Ay las! E com es cnjós morir aquell qui no s’esmena!

58. **A l’Infant**

Petit Infànt qu’ara sou nat, al món haureu poc de delit: a la dança screu manar, lo vostre viure és complit.

No y prengau amigui ne despit: així s’a fer, no y qual més dir. Per Déu és així conduït: qui més viu, més ha soferir.

59. **Respon l’Infant**

A, a, a, no sé parlar:

infan só, tene la lengua muda. Hir nasquis, hui m’en fault aler – així com és trista ma venguda.

Per por sau, ma color se muda; no y fallís per què·m meravell.

La voluntat de Déu no·s muda: e mor l’infant, e mor lo vell.

60. **Al Scholà**

Cuida d’morir èsser luny, clerch aspantat, per recular?

Mirau detràs, vejau qui us puny: ja no us qual molt ambarrassar.

Molt prest (no cuydeu retardar) bé·n morir metteu vostra pensa, e no us hi qual més contrastar: poc resta d’açò que foll pensa.

61. **Respon lo Scholà**

Yo, qui tots jorns je trabellat, en fer serveys prenguí plaer; per cuydar ésser avençat morir tant prest yo·m desesper.

Ni gran estat, ni molt haver, ne de gentil sceber lo grau – poc resta d’açò que foll pensa.

62. **A l’Hermità**

Veniu ballar vós, hermità!

Lexau lo bosch, prest levau sus; sens triga donau-ma la mà: estar en l’erm no cuydeu pus.

Entrar en la fossa deu seru forçat: aquest viatge clergue ni lech no se n’escús – vida no s’segur heretatge.

**Le (cordellier)**

Qu’est-ce que de vivre en ce monde?

Le c(ordellier)

Nul homme à scéure.

Mendicité point ne m’asseure:

Rien n’ay mesfait, mais de peur sue;

L’ordo nance Dieu ne se mue:

Jean Soubirou, "The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre"
63. **Respon lo Ermità**

Algú per molt estar en l’erm no-s excusat que mort no senta.

Ara crech que no y ha res ferm,

pus a Déu plau, a mi contenta:

supplíc-lo qu-el foc qui tormenta

los mals vivents no y sia més,

ne-l vil Satan no-m dón empena;

qui no-s contenta no ha res.

L’erm(tic)

Pour vie dure ou solitaire

mort ne donne de vivre espace.

Chascuns le voit, si s’en faut[ti] taire;

or requier Dieu q’un don me face:

c’est que tous mes pechiés efface.

Bien suis contens de tout ses biens desquel j’ay usé de sa grace:

qui n’a souffissance, il n’a riens.

64. **A la Donzella**

Venir ab mi, gentil donzella,

haveu; ballar no us sia greu.

Però trossau-vos la gonella

que no us embarc, moveu lo peu!

Del viure va tost davaot Déu

haureu donar prestament compte:

d’aquest dançar – vós bé u sabeu –

no-s excusat rey, duc ne comte.

65. **Respon la Donzella**

Trista de mi, e què faré,

qui no só gens acostumada?

Ni lo compás ni passos sé,

ne-m plau gens la vostra sonada.

Yo-m penso que fos maturada

en aquest món pus largament,

e tu, mort, veig que m’has citada:

albarà tenc d’espatxament.

66. **A la Monge**

Lo viure va, molt curiós

haveu mudar e la ligaça:

Senyora Monge, veniu vós

de grat ballar en esta plaça!

A tota gent la mia maça

fa tremblar, no y ha remey;

a pocs e grans tots jorns dón caça –

aquesta s la mia gran ley.

67. **Respon la Monge**

Jesús beneyt! Què-s ço que dius,

o mort cruel, desagradable?

Sens donar temps, tan curt m’escrius –

ay quant és greu e detestable

lexar un loc tan delitable,

hon cuydava molt envellir!

Ara dic qu’és cosa loable

qui pensa sovint bé morir.

68. **A la viuda**

Madona, vós del front cubert,

que viuda sou nomenada!

Ballar ab mi crec bé us és cert.

Vós no sou en res occupada,

e de dançar acostumada

crech no siau molt de temps ha –

veniu molt prest pendre posada:

tot hom qui viu ab mi venrà.
69. **Respon la viuda**
No m pens que m sia gens honest
ballar a ma conditió,
si n só forçada; jo y protest,
no m plau, ne y tenc devotió.
Mes tal és ta intentió,
mort dura, vil, descominal;
no passes de res passió,
per tot loc talla ta desstral.

70. **A la marïada**
Lo jaure calt ab lo marit
vos feu oblidar lo morir –
pensau-hi, no us sia despit.
Lexau los fills, cuytau venir
en aquest ball, sens contradir,
on ballareu molt gentilmen,
e no us vullau enfèllonir:
tal balle que no-s prou content.

71. **Respon la marïada**
Dones lo marit, fills e parents
haure lexari, los quals tant am.
Ay lassa, greus departiments
ab tu ballar! May no-m pres fam.
Bé-m fas de lana bon estam,
o mort cruel e fastiososa!
No sé trobar a qui ma’n clam:
at tot lo món est odiosa.

72. **Al notari**
Lexau, notari, prest l’escrivure
e no cureu més ordenar!
Pensau açí per tots temps viure?
Disponseu-vos ab mi dançar.
Posau apart lo cartajar
e legir libres e contractes;
de morir no us qual appellar;
yo só tal que no serve pactes.

73. **Respon lo notari**
Bé veig que molta senyoria,
mort, tens e gran auctoritat;
No m par que ab faces cortesia,
car sens dar temps m’as damnat.
O trist de mi, desconsolat,
e què faré, pus axí·m vols?
Algun tant visc aconortat,
pus al dançar no vaig tot sols.

74. **Conclusió**
Açò·s ben dit, e molt, que m plau;
pus conexeu, sens més scriure,
que l’argulós e lo suau
per res no-s de mort desliure.
Doncs pens·açí molt bé viure,
que de bon fet no leu la mà,
c porá entre los sancts riure
l’hom qui vuy no sab demà.

64. **Le m(ort)**
C’est bien dit, ainsi doit-on dire:
il n’est qui soit de mort délivré.
Qui mal vit, il aura du pire –
si pense chascuns de bien vivre.
Dieu pesera tout à la livre –
bon y fait penser soir et main,
melieux science n’a en livre:
il n’est qui ait point de demain.
Aquestes paraules diu un Rey que jau dins una tomba o moniment
Vosaltres qui la presentança mirau, ab tota aquesta gent,
yo fui gran Rey e molt potent;
ara só dins lo moniment,
hon ten podrits tots mos costats –
no seran sabens ni grossers
que no sien als vèrmens lansats.

Vos qui en ceste pourtraiture
vees danser estas divers,
penses qu’est hu

Ung roy mort tout nu couchié en(vers)
Vous qui gis envers:

Je le monstre, qui gis envers:

Je le monstre, qui gis envers:

Je le monstre, qui gis envers:

Je le monstre, qui gis envers:

Je le monstre, qui gis envers:

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Je le monstre, qui gis envers:
et velut infernus fabula vana foret.
Cum doceat sensus viventes morte resolvi,
atque herehi penas pagina sacra probet,
quas qui non metuit, infelix prorsus et amens
vivit et extinctus sentiet ille roguem.
Sic itigur cuncti sapientem vivere certent,
ut nichil inferni sit metuenda palus.

Explicit la Dance Macabre.

3.3 Editorial notes

3.3.1 Catalan text

[1.2] Terrenal ‘earthly’: all the extant witnesses of the French Danse macabre contain eternelle. The substitution of ‘eternal’ by ‘earthly’ is likely to be explained on a metrical basis: the Catalan form eterna is paroxytone, which makes it more difficult for a translator to maintain it in the given context without significantly modifying the syntactic structure of the whole stanza. Thus, the translator opts for a phonetically similar but oxytone form, even though this results in the opposite meaning.

[2.1–2.2] As follows from the proposed translation, these two lines can be interpreted in the following way: ‘Everyone can read in such a mirror, since we all have to dance here’. Nevertheless, the syntax of this sentence, along with paleographical evidence, suggests a high probability that the form pus (‘more’ or ‘because, since’, see DCVB s.v.) is an error for que ‘that’: the two forms are written very similarly, and a subordinate completive clause introduced by the conjunction que is more preferable than a causative subordinate, considering that an intransitive use of the verb legir ‘to read’ is rather odd in this context.

[2.5–2.7] This text fragment seems somewhat disconnected. However, if we suppose that line 2.6 is a parenthesis, lines 2.5 and 2.7 become semantically and syntactically connected.

[2.6] In the manuscript, guart is preceded by part, a word cancelled by Carbonell.


[4.1–4.7] This stanza contains only seven lines instead of eight, and metrical evidence shows that the lacking line is the final one. As the text of the stanza is semantically and syntactically acceptable and complete, it is impossible to establish if the responsibility for this reduction belongs to the Catalan translator, to the manuscript tradition that produced the French exemplar he used, or to the Catalan manuscript tradition (Carbonell or a copyist of some earlier version).


[6.8] This line was probably produced by an unsuccessful attempt to create a hypothetical period. If so, it would have been: Honor val[dria] molt, si nos perdia ‘Honour would be worth much, if it did not vanish’. However, our translator opts for a syntactically rougher but metrically perfect variant, which we can interpret as ‘Honour is worth much… I wish it did not vanish!’

[11.3] Carbonell writes haureu (the first word of the following line) in the end of this line, after renunciar. However, he notices the repetition and cancels the first haureu.

[11.6] Capa de grana ‘cape dyed with madder’, i.e. a bright red cape.

[12.6] Gran stat: metrical and prosodic evidence makes it likely that this should be read as gran
Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”
thus putting together the two main variants mentioned above, and Marchant replaces le maistre in his first edition (1485) with l'astrologien in the second (1486). I explain this fluctuating situation with the following conjecture: the Danse macabre mural did not contain any rubrics introducing characters, since they were depicted and, consequently, easily identifiable; as for the manuscripts, most of them contain no images, which caused the addition of the rubrics for greater clarity.34 For most characters, the copyists had little doubts when determining which term should be used: they had available such elements as the content of the stanza and the words denoting the social rank in Death’s stanzas (v. supra 3.1.1.1); besides, at least some of them could see or have seen the Parisian mural. In the case of the Astrologer’s stanza, these different sources of information come into conflict: Death names the character maistre, but the content of the stanza clearly refers to astrology. If my hypothesis is right, the shift between the two lections is to be explained polygenetically and not in genealogical, or stemmatic, terms; and this is probably also the reason why the Catalan translation has l’Astrolec in the rubrics and mestre in the main text.

The oscillation, in the French manuscript and printed tradition, between the readings acteur (‘master’, ‘teacher’ or ‘authority’), maistre, docteur / Doctor and Macabre (used as a proper name) which takes place in the introductory stanzas, seems to be due to the same reason, i.e. to the passage of the Danse macabre poem from the mural to books, from a hybrid verbal and pictorial form to a prevalently verbal one.35

[27.3] Ascapar: the first letter is actually an e corrected to an a, which illustrates the oscillation between e and a in atonic positions, typical of our manuscript (v. supra n. 19.5).

[29.7] The line is marked in the same manner as line 24.5.

[30.3] Lexar ‘to leave, to abandon’: probably a copying error for lexar ‘to fall, to go down’: P has abaisser; moreover, the intransitive use of lexar is very odd. This likely substitution is possibly due to the presence of lexar two lines above.

[30.5] The line is marked solely by a drawing of a hand, like line 16.1.

[30.8] Trist[o]s is likely to be read as tristifols, which makes the line, otherwise lacking a syllable, metrically perfect.

[35.3] The line contains one syllable too many. As our manuscript is the only one extant, it is quite impossible to establish if this hypermetry was generated by the translator himself or by a copying error.

[35.6] The line lacks one syllable. Again, like in line 35.3, we cannot establish if such hypometry is due to a defect of the translation or to a copying error.

[38.1] B Rey Official (capitals R and O).

[38.4] B Offici (capital O).

[38.7] No pusc scapar: metrical and prosodic structure suggests that we should read this phrase as no pusc [e]scapar (also v. supra nn. 12.6, 17.2).

[41.7] Que ell vos perdó: this is a fixed expression where the subjunctive form of the verb perdonar looks like perdó (Déu me perdó, Déu lo perdó, etc.). See DCVB s.v. perdonar.

[42.8] The line is marked by a hand without letters, like line 16.1.

[43] The rubric assigns this stanza to Death, which is interesting, given that the great majority of French manuscripts and printed editions of the Danse macabre agree in attributing it to a poor man or to a borrower.36 That indicates that the Parisian mural was also likely to represent a poor

34. This characteristic of the manuscript and printed tradition of the French Danse macabre is briefly discussed in Wijsman 2005, 141-142.
35. For the distribution of these variants between different versions, v. supra 2.2 and fn. 20.
36. A poor man: le povre P, BnF fr. 25550 and le povre homme in both Marchant’s editions; a borrower: le bon
man discoursing about the usurer. The only witness that opts for la mort is MS BnF NAF 10032.
This lectio singularis seems to have the following explanation: for some reason, the rubric preceding
this stanza disappeared at some point in the chain of transmission, and the copyist who decided to
restore the rubric did not have in mind the mural of the Cemetery of the Innocents – he might have
never seen it or he might have forgotten it. The same thing must have happened in the manuscript
family that produced the copy to which our Catalan translator had access. I find it unlikely that it was
the translator himself who transformed a poor man into Death, as this would be the only case of such
a remarkable change in the rubrics.

As 16.1.

Mon studi: most likely to be pronounced as mon [fe]studi (also v. supra nn. 12.6, 17.2, 38.7).
Ne lo thesor: B also contains a cancelled e before ne.
As 16.1.

Lines 47.1 and 47.3 each have two syllables too many. It is possible that the translator,
influenced by common formulaic clichés of early Romance lyrical poetry, added mesquí de and de mi.
It is also plausible that it was not the translator himself but some copyist in the chain of transmission
who added these words – again, under influence of the formulaic style of love poetry.
As 16.1.

In the parallel edition of the French text, the respective lines are the following: Menestrel
qui dances et nottes / saves et aves beau maintien ‘Minstrel, you who know dances and musical notes
and have pleasant manners’. Thus, the forms dances and nottes are nouns acting as objects of the
verb savoir. As far as the Catalan version is concerned, the forms dançes and nottes cannot be nouns,
since there is no verb of which they could be the objects. The only plausible interpretation is that the
Catalan translator misunderstood the morphological form of dances and nottes in the French poem,
i.e. thought they were second person singular verb forms, thus introducing analogous forms in his
translation. This is semantically and syntactically acceptable, although it produces some problems
of textual cohesion: both in the French and the Catalan poems, Death always uses second person plural forms when addressing her victims. However, I opt for keeping the line unchanged, as any
emendation would be unreasonably artificial.

I emend monstrau to monstrar on syntactical grounds. The only possible interpretation of
this line without any intervention would presuppose an appellative use of the noun mestre: ‘Master, show to God his knowledge’. However, it is not acceptable either semantically or syntactically, as it
should have been ‘your knowledge’ and the verb monstrar must take a recipient indirect object, i.e.
omstra [a] Déu. Consequently, the most economical solution is to follow the French text where we
read: Maistre doit monstrer sa science. This means replacing the final -u of monstrau with -r: thus,
mestre becomes the subject of the sentence, deu becomes the third person singular form of the verb
deure, and the meaning of the whole line becomes: ‘Master must demonstrate his skills’.

Estrument: Carbonell first wrote estrement and subsequently added a letter u above the line.
Gordanat: we can distinctly read gordattat. I emend it, as this lection makes no sense and is
paleographically explicable by a confusion between n and t.

V ençut só yo i pert: Carbonell first wrote V ençut yo pert and then added so and i above the
line.
The line has one syllable too many: the initial O was probably added in the chain of
transmission.
As 16.1.
[54.8] As 16.1.

[57.3] Carbonell adds the usual drawing of a hand and a note of his own in the left margin: *vanitas va-nitas et omnia va-nitas Eccles.* (the hyphen marks the passages from one line to another).

[57.3-6] Carbonell marks all these four lines, delimiting them with a vertical line in the right margin and two horizontal lines – above line 57.3 and below line 57.6. He also adds two of the usual drawing of a hand, in the corners formed by the intersection of the three lines; in the upper corner, there are also the letters No surmounted by a tilde.

[57.8] As 16.1.

[59.6] *No y fallí:* the lection of B is not syntactically acceptable. Another possible correction could be *no y [he] fallit.*


[63.5] *El foc:* *el* is a contraction of *en + lo.*

[64.5-8] Carbonell marks all these four lines, delimiting them with a vertical line in the left margin. There are also the usual drawing of a hand and a marginal gloss, substantially identical to the one found close to line 57.3: *vanitas vani-tatis et omnia vanitas Eccles.*

[64.5] *Del viure va:* above the word *va* Carbonell writes *vre* surmounted by a tilde, i.e. *vostre.* It is possible that the copy to which Carbonell had access contained *va* surmounted by a tilde, which stayed for *vostra* (for the desinence *-a* instead of *-e*, cfr. n. 19.5 above).


[74.2] *Més scriure:* most likely to be read as *més fe[scriure] (also v. supra nn. 12.6, 17.2, 38.7, 45.2).*

[76.1] As 16.1.

[76; 77; I] Carbonell writes a note in the right margin, parallel to these three stanzas and occupying equal height in the page: *Per ço ara-m ve a la memòria aquella epístola que, stant lo S. Rey don Joan, fill del S. Rey don Ferrando primer, en la agonia un dia ans passàs d’esta vida, feu al S. Rey fil seu don Ferrando segon, huy beneve nent regna nent, dona-n-li a la benedictió paternal, la qual és inserta en la història yo he composta de Hespanya; diu axí, inter alia, in effectu: “Mon fill, pe[n]sau q ue en aquesta agonia haveu a venir; [no] nos facen goig regnes ne conq uestes, yo volguera ésser stat lo p usínfimo vassal de mos Regnes e Senyories, etc.” Molt piadosa e profita epístola a bé viure e foragitar pompas e vanitats de aquest mon és la dita epístola, la qu al deuría voler e demanar-li fós totes dies una vegada legida per recordar-se pus sovint q ue ha morir, car per salut de la ànima no pot ésser millor que cogitar cascun dia que havem a morir. E per açò he scrit açí la dança o ball de la mort.* So now there comes to my memory the epistle that the Lord King John, son of the Lord King Ferdinand I, wrote in his death throes to his son the Lord King Ferdinand II – who is now happily reigning – giving his son his father’s blessing. This letter is inserted in the history of Spain which I wrote; it says, *inter alia,* in effect: “My son, please think that you will one day be in agony as well; kingdoms or conquests do not make us happy, and now I would like to have been the humblest of the vassals of my kingdoms and estates”, etc. This is a very pious epistle, and it can help to live well and reject the pomp and vanity of this world, and we should want to have it read [to us] once a day, in order to remember more often that everyone will die; since, for the soul’s salvation, there can be nothing better than to reflect every day on the fact that we will die. And that is why I wrote here the Dance of Death’.

[1.1-1.6] This Latin passage, found in six French manuscripts (P, BnF fr. 25550, BnF fr. 19989, BnF fr. 1055, BnF NAF 10032, Lille 139) and both Marchant’s editions, features a remarkable concentration of *lectiones singulares* in the Catalan version – three in seven lines, which actually are not seven but only four, as proven by the metrical form (elegiac distich) and corroborated by the visual arrangement of the text in P and in the other French witnesses. However, the rather irregular
division into lines adopted in B is conserved in the critical text. The lectiones singulares, to be considered as copying errors, are commented on in the notes that follow.

[I.1] Dicite ‘tell, recount’: an innovation of B. All the extant French manuscripts and printed editions contain discite ‘learn’. This is likely to be an interpretation error.

[I.5] Finiri ‘be liquidated’: an innovation of B, paleographically explicable. The French witnesses of Danse macabre have futuri ‘going to be, coming, imminent’.

[I.7] Matura ‘hastening, having come quickly’: an innovation of B, substituting the reading mortua ‘as dead people’ in P and in all the other French versions containing this Latin passage. This copying error was most probably generated by attraction, i.e. caused by the presence of the form matura two lines above.

[II.1-14] This Latin stanza is found in five French manuscripts (P, BnF fr. 25550, BnF fr. 14989, BnF NAF 10032, Lille 139) and in both Marchant’s editions.

[II.8] Inferius: B internus is a paleographically explicable error, and it is not plausibly interpretable in the context.

[II.13] Sapienter: an innovation based on sapientes, the lectio optima found in BnF fr. 14989, BnF NAF 10032, Lille 139 and both Marchant’s editions. P and BnF fr. 25550, the two manuscripts with provenance from the school of Saint Victor, contain mortales, one of the conjunctive errors which make it possible to postulate a common source for these two copies; at the same time, it forms part of the group of disjunctive errors, which separate these two witnesses from the rest of the manuscript and printed tradition.

3.3.2 French text

[2.2] Qui le convient ainsi danser: the verb convenir is used transitively, ‘who summons them to dance this way’. See DMF s.v. convenir I.A.2.

[6.4] Un un: this error has a paleographical explanation.

[7.6] A grans devis: modern French à souhait, i.e. ‘incredibly, extremely’ in similar contexts. See DMF s.v. devis A.3.

[10.3] Veoir: the form veoir is not attested in the DMF database. It is probably a copying error for voir. See DMF s.v. voir.


[17.4] Sieuv: this form is not attested in the DMF database. However, there are attestations of forms with the verb theme sieuv-, which is very close to sieur-. It is also possible that sieuv with an added u is a copying error, as it is paleographically explicable.

[19.1] N’aures vaillant: Middle French avoir vaillant means ‘to possess’. See DMF s.v. vaillant II.A.

[20.2] Vauldra: an emendation is required, since valoir transitive is not semantically acceptable in this context. Valдра is a lection of P and MS Brit. Lib. Add 38858, opposed to the majority lection vauldra, found in all the other witnesses containing this stanza.


[40.5] Ou temps passé: ou = en + le. See DMF s.v. ou.

[42.1] Mourir: mourir: an emendation is necessary, since the reading of P is an evident copying error.

[48.7] Savoir se: se stands for ce = cela ‘this’.

[59.4] Entreer: the emendation is based on the syntax of the phrase, which requires two nouns and not an infinitive and a noun.

[65title] The last letters of the title are hidden because of the way the manuscript was bound. The integration en(vers) is based on the lection of MS BnF fr. 25550. The title is otherwise identical in
4 Conclusions and results

The results of the research into the Catalan translation of the French *Danse macabre*, presented in this article, have the potential to facilitate future studies on this text and on the *Danse macabre* tradition in general. The philological study and the critical edition of MS Miscel·lània 26, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Barcelona provide a basis for further historical, linguistic and hermeneutic research on *La dança de la Mort*. Moreover, the issues discussed in this paper can have relevance for comparative studies focusing on patterns of transmission and reception of different examples of the Dance of Death genre. Further, the strict dependence of the Catalan text on its French model and its remarkable textual closeness to one of the earliest versions of the *Danse macabre* (MS BnF lat. 14904) favour analysis of the Catalan translation as an indirect witness to the lost original text of the French poem. Thus, the results of the present study may be useful not only for an overall study on the transmission and reception of the French Dance, but also for an ecdotic study of this important text, still lacking a critical edition.

5 English translation

This appendix contains a literal prose translation of the Catalan text into modern English. The *variae lectiones* of the French text in the version of *P* are listed in parallel, according to the structure of negative apparatus (only the divergent variants are included).

In the translation, the pronoun ‘she’ is used to refer to Death: this choice is based on the fact that Death is a personified character in the poems, and it is feminine in Catalan and in French.

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Dança de la Mort
from MS Miscel·lània 26,
Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Barcelona (= B)

Danse macabre
from MS lat. 14904,
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (= P)

Dance of Death and of those people who dance with her against their will

1 \{ see B lines 1.1-1.7 after stanza 77, which correspond to P lines 1.3-1.6 \}

This painting banishes pride, vanity and luxury, [and] with this our dance it teaches to lead the celebration.

All you who see it, learn how to dance and what is the real value of honour, joys, riches.

Indeed, such will you be in front of hastening Death as the crowd having the appearance of dead people, which summon you.

1. The Authority speaks
O rational creature,
you who desire the earthly life,
you have a remarkable instruction here
on how to end your mortal life properly.
This throng of dancers that you see
has little taste for Death.
It is natural that everyone dies;
Death is vile [and] most abominable.

2. Everyone can read in such a mirror,
since we all have to dance here;
we can call lucky the one
who is committed to look here often.
You see the others begin [this dance]
who can ever escape from dying?),
unable to move a single step back:
we participate [in this dance] all together.

3. Death speaks to the Pope
You who live in the present world,
sooner or later, you will dance here.
But when? Only God knows –
watch carefully how you will do that.
Lord Pope, you will begin,
as the highest lord;
this way you will be honoured:
honour is due to those of high office.

4. The Pope answers
So must it be me to lead the dance,
who have God’s place on Earth?
I had dignity and power –
and you, Death, bring me destruction.
I cannot go away from the one who wages war on me;
I did not want to die yet –
I have thought little about it and it was a great mistake.

5. To the Emperor
You who have no equal in the world,
prince and great Emperor,
now you must leave the world,
and you, Death, bring me destruction.
I was the first, I who am God
in the Church, like Saint Peter.
I did not want to die yet –
and still Death has come to seize me, like others,
but Death wages war on us all:
of little worth is honour that vanishes so soon.

6. The Emperor answers
I cannot find a lord I could appeal to
against Death who conducts me this way;
my flesh, my bones and my skin
have I to see under a shroud.
I have never thought I would die so early –
of what use has been my great majesty,
since I can see Death who wages war on me?
Honour is worth much... I wish it did not vanish!
7. To the Cardinal
It seems to me that you are perturbed –
come, Cardinal, let us cheerfully
and with great joy graciously
follow all the others!
Being afraid is of no use:
you have had much fun in your life and
many joys, honourably –
great honour loses wisdom.

7 title The Dead
7.3-7.8 Let us follow the others all together:
being afraid is of no use.
You have lived sumptuously
and with incredibly great honour –
**enjoy this entertainment:**
in great honour wisdom is lost.

8. The Cardinal answers
It does not seem to me I am scared without reason,
as I see Death so close to me,
and I have to follow the dance.
I cannot delight myself with beautiful clothes:
my red hat, my cape of high quality
will I have to abandon and the nobility,
I can tell where my court is:
all joy finishes in sorrow.

8 title The Dead
8.1-8.4 I have good reasons to be perturbed,
when I see myself held so closely:
Death has come to invade me –
I will not wear vair or grey fur any more;
8.6-8.7 have I to abandon with much distress.
I have never learned this:

9. To the King
Come, noble crowned King,
famous for your many great deeds and for your
prowess,
accompanied by nobles
and very adroit servitors.
But now you must abandon
all majesty. You are not alone,
you will get little of your wealth:
the richest man carries away only a shroud.

9 title The Dead
9.2 famous for your power
9.3-9.6 You were once surrounded
by great pomp and by great nobles,
but now you will abandon all majesty.
9.8 possesses only a shroud

10. The King answers
I have never learned to dance
such a savage dance.
Now I can see and reflect on
what honour, power, lineage are worth.
To destroy is Death’s custom,
it applies both to the rich and to the most humble.
He who values himself least has an advantage:
each [of us] turns to ashes.

10 title The King
10.2 savage dance and music
10.3 Alas, one can sec
10.4 pride, power
10.5 Death destroys all – it is her custom –
10.6 both to the great
10.7 least is a wiser man:
10.8 in the end, [all] must become ashes.

11. To the Patriarch
Patriarch, by lowering your head
you are not saved.
You will have to give up your double cross,
so that another will inherit it.
Do not linger over dignity any more,
[as] you will not wear a cape dyed with madder.
You are called to account for yourself:
foolish hope deceives a human being.

11 title The Dead
11.2 you cannot be
11.3-11.4 your double cross that you cherish
will go to another one, this is fair.
11.6 [as] you will not become Pope of Rome any more,

12. The Patriarch answers
I know that much honour
has deceived me, to tell the truth.
My joy turns to sorrow,
and what use is it to have so much honour?
Those who do not take pleasure in it are very few,
[as] high rank ruins and misleads people;
climbing too high does not seem to me wise:
he who climbs with a load, bends [under the weight].

12 title The Patriarch
12.1 I am fully aware that worldly honour
12.5-12.8 Climbing too high is not wise,
[as] high ranks ruin people without number.
But few are willing to be aware of it:
[their own] actions encumber those who climb high.
13. **To the Captain or Constable**
It is my right that you come with me immediately, fair Captain:
I turn meek the most powerful,
and there is no need for you to doubt it.
A terrifying appearance will be of no use to you,
not showing off your bravery nor bad demeanour:
although this is not pleasant for you,
weapons will not defend you from Death.

14. **The Captain answers**
My idea and intention
was to take fortresses and castles by assault,
bringing under my control
towns and cities, great and beautiful places.
Lances and daggers are of no use to me:
Death does not look at rights or laws
or the poor or the rich or the young –
there is no respite against Death.

15. **To the Archbishop**
You should not make a ferocious face,
my fair Lord, come nearer.
Are you afraid that I will hit you?
Do not doubt it at all, follow us,
and let us dance in couples.
Whoever approaches me is in trouble,
as the dance is a little annoying:
one day [everyone] must account to the host.

16. **The Archbishop answers**
Miserable, I cannot see any place
(so closely I see myself pressed by Death)
where I could escape, and I stand apart.
Alas, where will I have my retreat?
Now I will lose my benefice,
I will have no painted chamber any more:
one must inevitably pass through Death,
which is a narrow path.

17. **To the Knight**
You who among the other barons
have been a noble Knight,
forget trumpets and clarions,
come quickly, do not hide in the rear.
You used to desire women
and make them dance gaily –
yet you can see and realise [this]:
what one makes, another corrupts.

18. **The Knight answers**
I was appointed [to a high-ranking position] in the world
and much appreciated in important affairs,
and beloved by noble women
and by rich and powerful lords,
and I was not flighty at all –
all my expectations were vain:
there is nothing steady under heaven.
19. To the Bishop
Soon you will cease to enjoy
wealth and gifts of nature,
Bishop; your time is up,
[and] your prelacy will be of no use for you.

Your destiny is in great danger:
you must account for those you are responsible for.
God will judge everyone fairly –
he who climbs higher [than others] cannot be considered safe.

19.1-19.4 Soon you will no longer have this peak
of worldly and natural wealth.
Bishop, take a pick,
notwithstanding your prelacy.

19.5 is in danger:

19.8 who climbs too high

20. The Bishop answers
My heart cannot rejoice at all
from the news that [Death] brings me,
God wants to hear all accounting,
and this is what most makes me uneasy.

I do not take even a little of comfort from this world,
and it leaves us nothing; on the contrary, it takes away too much.

Nobody ever carries away anything
other than their good deeds; everything else vanishes.

20.1 cannot rejoice/

20.2 Death brings

20.3 God will want

20.4 this is what

20.5 I take so little comfort

20.6-20.8 that disinherits everyone in the end;
it keeps everything, nobody carries anything along;
everything vanishes, except one’s merits.

20 title The Bishop

21. To the Squire
Come forward, Squire,
since you know many dance steps.

Move quickly, do not be so leaden:
we do not perform this dance every day.

Now your jousts come to an end;
you have never thought of coming here,
nor have you abandoned enjoyments and pleasant rest –
he who lives cannot escape from Death.

21.1 noble Squire,

21.2 you who know

21.3-21.8 You carried a lance and a shield yesterday,
and today you will finish your days.

There is nothing that does not float away –
dance and be careful to follow.
You cannot have help:
there is no one who can escape from Death.

21 title Death

22. The Squire answers
Since Death holds me in her net,
at least she will let me say this:
farewell fun, farewell enjoyment,
I cannot stay here any more.

Please favour your soul,
never mind the body henceforth.
Flesh and bones have to rot,
but no one knows where, how and when.

22 title The Squire

22.2-22.8 at least let me say a word:
farewell plans, farewell enjoyment,
farewell ladies, I cannot laugh any more.
Think of the soul that desires rest, [and] let the body not matter any more,
[the body] that worsens with every day:
everyone has to die, [but] no one knows when.

23. To the Abbot
Come, Abbot, do not flee
or look so mortified.

It is appropriate that you follow the dance,
although you have hated it much.

Others have already divided between themselves your revenue
that fed you and made you bulky and fat;
your flesh will soon vanish;
the fattest is the first to rot.

23 title Death

23.1-23.2 Abbot, come quickly! Do you flee?
Do not look so perturbed.

23.3-23.8 that disinherits everyone in the end;
the first [ranked] is the first to rot.
24. The Abbot answers
I have never been taken by the desire to die,
but I have to pass the strait.
I observed very little God’s law
or the vows I took of my own will.
Be careful not to embrace too much
and mind that God looks at everything,
and do not forget that you will die:
it is too late to think about it when you expire.

25. To the Bailiff
Bailiff, judge of many people,
great governor,
come hastily, very quickly,
let us see you as a debtor.
You governed people with fury –
this puts you in dire straits:
you are about to come to that place
where all will carry their own burden.

26. The Bailiff answers
Oh God, this seems a really hard day to me,
[as] I did not expect this blow.
My wheel [of fortune] has turned:
I did not want to die yet,
[and] I have never thought about similar things,
carrying out my judgement.
It would be foolish to contest it:
even an appeal is useless.

27. To the Astrologer
Master, neither with your gaze
at the heavens nor with any knowledge
can you escape from Death,
nor should you look for a new way.
Be certain of this and consider it true;
consider it a great argument or summation:
you die because of Adam, who was the first [human],
as a result of his eating an apple.

28. The Astrologer answers
No degree or knowledge
can become a source of help for me.
By now my knowledge is of no use to me,
oh, how strong is my confusion!
As a final conclusion
I do not know what to do or what to write,
here I lose any good reason:
if you want to die well, live well.

29. To the Bourgeois
Bourgeois, hasten without lingering:
you have neither wealth nor riches
that could save you from Death.
If you made a good use of your ample wealth,
you did so wisely.
Everything comes from others and then others enjoy it;
amassing much does not seem safe to me,
since no one knows for whom he amasses [wealth].
30. The Bourgeois answers
It hurts me much to have to abandon so soon
worldly wealth and food.
The poor and the rich you make to leave,
Death, since such is your happiness.
The creature is not wise enough
who cherishes too much wealth for which many people cry,
wealth acquired with much trouble:
those who have the most, die the unhappiest.

31. To the Canon
Lord Canon with a revenue,
you will no longer take your contributions,
nor will you get fatter
thanks to either your revenue or your oblations.
Focus on saying prayers;
you will have to die. Does anyone cry for this?
No appeal will be useful:
Death comes without looking what time it is.

32. The Canon answers
This discourse troubles me.
What use to me are so many benefices?
My reason now completely abandons me.
Death does not look at laws nor rights,
……………………………..
nor should I give, buy or take as a gift
amices or elegant birettas:
it is more useful to endeavour to die well.

33. To the Merchant
Merchant, turn here:
you went through the roads of the world
at sea, on land, for a long time –
[now] you do not have to spend much.
Cease your transactions,
 speedy up your pace, do not look like an ox
or plan any shady deals,
as he who has enough desires [to have more].

34. The Merchant answers
I have been upstream and downstream
to earn wealth, day and night,
alone, on foot and on horseback,
but now I lose all my joy.
With all my efforts, insofar as I could,
my reason was entirely occupied by my possessions.
A foolish desire misleads a human being:
he who embraces much grasps little.

35. To the Carthusian Friar
Come, Carthusian Friar, do not stop,
and do not oppose any more:
you will never more need to gain revenues and fields.
As you are a man of penitence,
forgive [and] be patient:
of what use is the glory of this world?
Come dance quickly, without any fear:
Death has victory over the living.
36. **The Carthusian Friar answers**

I have been dead in the world for a long time,

and I am not taken by a desire to live,

although I am distressed,

when I see Death who ushers us this way.

May my soul be pleasing to God, may it see

God's son after my passing away.

This is certain for me and I firmly believed in it:

he who is here today is gone tomorrow.

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37. **To the Soldier Sergeant**

Noble Sergeant with this big mace,

it seems to me that you are resisting.

Your grimace is of no use for you;

come with me [and] do not escape.

You do not like this dance at all –

I feel that a vain life deceives you.

I turn meek the most powerful:

my power flattens the living.

---

38. **The Soldier Sergeant answers**

I am an officer of the king,

and you, Death, want to destroy me!

This seems to me an excessive game:

I was doing my duty yesterday,

and [today] I see that, without being able to say

anything more,

I am gripped by you on both sides.

I cannot escape nor flee –

he who has not learned this, dies troubled.

---

39. **To the Monk**

Lord Monk, you will dance with me,

[and] do not even consider defending yourself.

As you are wise, do not fear,

but please learn to die well.

And you no longer need to contend for anything,

as soon you will have your mouth sealed.

Leave the idea of giving and taking:

a human life is not much.

---

40. **The Monk answers**

I would prefer to still be

in the cloister, celebrating mass for God;

gaily, with a serene face,

[I would prefer] to celebrate matins and other services.

Now I realise that I am a foolish and stupid man

because I chose to follow the custom

of those who live badly, committing sins;

I have never considered dancing such a dance.

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41. **To the Usurer**

Usurer, sinful man,

come with me (I do not think you like it)!

You are so greedy in your usury

[that] you are all burning [with a desire] to earn money.

You will be punished, believe it;

pray Lord, who is almighty,

to forgive you, every day:

he who does no ill feels no pain.

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42. The Usurer answers

So I must die this way –
this troubles and grieves me,
and my gold, my silver, my riches /42.4/
could not assist me: /42.3/
but I see Death so inflamed
toward me that she has already put me below her:

……………………………………………….

he who does not see anything at all has good eyes. 8

43. Death continues to speak against the Usurer

Usury is an enormous sin,
according to what the law says and tells.
This man is so unsettled
that he does not realise that he has to die.
He himself counts silver with his hand
and lends it to be repaid with interest every day;
counting and counting, he miscounts:
he who has to give rest is not sufficiently free of debt. 8

44. To the Physician

Physician, look at your urine,
[and] see if it can arrange something here.
You are a great master of medicine
and competent enough to give orders.
Now Death comes to call you,
and do not think she will let you live more,
and please do not object any more:
he who cures himself does much. 8

45. The Physician answers

For so much time I dedicated all my studies –
God knows it! – to healing the sick.
Practising this art, I chased away and eliminated
Death from those people.
Now I do not know how nor to whom
I could go to find encouragement:
I have never thought of dying;
resistance is useless against Death. 8

46. To the Lover

Noble and gracious Young Man,
you who consider yourself of great merit!
Come close to me, [and] let us dance together;
you will abandon this world in sorrow.
Silver, clothes and wealth
will be of no use to you this day.
You did not think about it, and you did a foolish thing:
youth does not last long. 8

47. The Lover answers

Alas, miserable, I will find no help
that could turn me away from Death!
Poor me, what route shall I take?
I can no longer woo women
nor dance with them.
Youth definitely deceives me
(it thought it was to last long):
a small rain brings down a strong wind. 8
48. To the Lawyer
Lover, without making a long case, come [and] please do not oppose!
In order to get much money, you made people litigate with damage and losses;
but now you will have different food, and you will be put into the ground.
You will no longer eat partridges on a spit – this is a certain thing, you know it well.

48 title Death
48.2-48.8 come plead your cause!
You have been able to lure people for a long time, not just today or yesterday.
No counsel can help you here:
you must go to the great judge.
You must know that without thinking:
A good deed prevents punishment.

49. The Lawyer answers
I am so forced [that] I can do nothing more
nor just think of defending myself.
I have no desire to yield to Death – what a sad departure!
Where are my skills and my knowledge?
He who does not get ready beforehand is a fool.
God, on the day of vengeance,
will give fair payment to the good and to the bad.

49 title The Lawyer
49.1-49.8 it is really right that justice be done –
I cannot defend much here:
there is no reprieve against Death nor pardon from her, nor does anyone appeal against her sentence.
I obtained much from others – now that I think about it – for which I fear to be blamed.
The day of vengeance is to be feared:
God will give everyone a fair payment.

50. To the Minstrel
Minstrel, you who dance and write musical notes, gracious [and] able to move elegantly,
which is useful to entertain all women, come dance very quickly!
And let it not be unpleasant for you at all –
dance [and] make elegant movements;
do not be taken by fear of me:
what a sad departure!

50 title Death
50.1-50.7 Minstrel, you who know dances and musical notes and have pleasant manners, useful to entertain foolish men and women, what do you say? Are we doing well?
Since I am gripping you, you have to show to the others a dance movement.
It is useless for you to oppose:
the master must demonstrate his skills.

51. The Minstrel answers
I have no interest in dancing this way;
on the contrary, I get involved as I am forced, since Death is a very harsh thing.
I give and cede you my instrument:
a song, a dance or a motet will I sing never more.
I am going straight way with you:
it is possible to dance even though your heart is not in it.

51 title The Minstrel
51.1 I would have
51.2-51.7 surely, I get involved very unwillingly, since there is no harsher punishment than Death.
I have put my fiddle under the bench:
I will never more play a sauterelle, nor any other dance, [as] Death keeps me from that.
I must obey her:

52. To the Parish Priest
Go, Parish Priest, without thinking any more!
I feel that you devoted yourself to your wealth:
you used to get your food from the living and the dead,
but now you will be thrown to the worms.
You were appointed by the bishop as a good example for all people – you will be rewarded for your good deeds, as any effort requires a reward.

52 title The Dead
52.1 without indulging in daydreams!
52.2 I see that you feel abandoned:
52.4 given to the worms.
52.5 ………………………
52.6 mirror and example for others –
52.7 for your deeds:
52.8 any effort

53. The Parish Priest answers
I am forced, so I must surrender;
I am defeated, and I lose the battle.
I cannot make people give donations, nor can I have a funeral offering.
Alas! To this great battle I will have to come, as I am claimed.
The one who does not owe money or coins is acquitted [and] blessed.

53 title The Parish Priest
53.1-53.8 Whether I want it or not, I must surrender:
there is no human whom Death does not attack.
Ah, I will never more receive a donation from my parishioners, nor a funeral offering;
I must go before the judge to account for myself – alas, sorrowful!
Now I fear greatly that I will fail:
he whom God acquits is happy.
54. To the Ploughman

Peasant, you who in heavy drudgery and hardship
have lived all your life!
Grain, much barley, millet, oat
have you had in abundance.
Your time has already come –
you will have to die, [as] you are not free from that,
you will be put in an awful place:
he who thinks he will live forever is a fool.

55. The Ploughman answers

I have long wished for Death,
but [now] I would be glad to escape from her.
My sorrowful, hard life
brought me many troubles and much rage.
My mind and reason is deeply upset,
when I think that my case is closed in every way. If you think it well:
there is no rest under heaven.

56. To the Mendicant Friar

Speed your pace, without thinking it over any more,
Mendicant Friar, and do not linger.
You have often preached about Death,
saying: everyone must remember her.
Without opposing, barefoot, on foot,
come without making any other request,
and do not argue against it:
Death is ready at every moment.

57. The Mendicant Friar answers

What does life in this world appear to you, [as it is] full of evil of every kind? I do not find peace here:
all I can see here is vanity.
When we do not think about it, we have Death upon our back,
[Death] who bites us so that, without saying much, she brings us to the grave.
Alas! How painful feels the man who dies without getting better!

58. To the Child

Little Child, you who are just born,
you will have little pleasure in this world:
you will be led to the dance,
[as] your life is up.
Do not take it as an annoyance or an offence;
it has to be done like that, [and] there is nothing more to say.
God instituted it this way:
he who lives more has to suffer more.
59. The Child answers
Ah, ah, ah, I am not able to speak:
I am a child, [and] my tongue is mute.
I was born yesterday, [but] today you want to take me
away –
so my arrival is an unhappy thing.
I sweat with fear, [and] I change colour;
I did not sin, [and] that is why I am surprised.
God’s behest does not change:
a child dies, and an old man dies as well.

59 title The Child
59.3 today I must go away –
59-1-59.6 all I do is enter and exit.
I have done nothing bad, but I sweat with fear;
I must resign myself, [and] this is the best thing.
59.8 the young die as quickly as the old.

60. To the Cleric
Do you think you can be far away from Death,
frightened Cleric, by backing away?
Look behind, [and] see who is stinging you:
you should not obstruct anything any longer.
Immediately (do not think you can delay it)
dedicate your thought to dying;
and you should not oppose it:
very little remains of what a fool thinks.

60 title Death
60.1 you can escape Death,
60.2 desperate Cleric
60.3-60.8 It is useless to twitch about it:
he who often thinks he can go high
is often seen to be suddenly brought down.
Accept it, [and] let us go together,
for it is useless to oppose it:
God punishes everyone who seems appropriate to him.

61. The Cleric answers
I, who worked every day,
took pleasure in serving;
for thinking I can be promoted
I die so soon, and I despair.
Neither a high position nor much wealth
nor a degree of noble science –
intelligence, art and power are of any use here:
God brings away with him what he finds appropriate.

61 title The Cleric
61.1 Must it be that a young cleric in service,
61.2 who takes pleasure
61.3 he can be
61.4-61.8 should die so soon? It is an unpleasant thing.
I am banned from choosing
any other position: I must dance this way.
Death has taken me at her pleasure:
much remains [unfulfilled] of what a fool thinks.

62. To the Hermit
Come dance, you, Hermit!
Leave your forest [and] rise up quickly;
do not think you will live more in the hermitage.
You will be forced to enter the grave below:
this trip does not excuse
either the cleric or the layman –
life is not a secured inheritance.

62 title Death
62.1-62.7 Cleric, you must not refuse
to dance – show your ability!
You are not alone – rise up! –
therefore, this must affect you less.
Come along next, [as] this is my will,
man who has spent his life in a hermitage!
You should not be upset about it:

63. The Hermit answers
He who has lived in a hermitage for a long time
is not excused from feeling Death.
Now I think that there is nothing steady,
so may it please God he accomplishes my wish:
I beg him not to cast me into the fire
that torments those who lived badly,
not that evil Satan push me;
he who is not content has nothing.

63 title The Hermit
63.1-63.7 For [having had] a hard or solitary life,
Death does not give [to whomever] more time to live.
Everyone can see that: and, [now] we must keep silent about it;
now I ask God to make me one gift:
that is, to efface all my sins.
I am happy with all his good things
I made use of, supported by his grace:
65. **The Maiden answers**

   Poor me, what will I do,
   I who am not used to this at all?
   I know neither the rhythm nor the steps,
   nor do I like the music you perform.
   I thought I would grow up
   in this world for more time,
   and I see that you, Death, have claimed me:
   I have an order to go away.

66. **To the Nun**

   You have to change [your] vain life full of cares
   and your headwear:
   lady Nun, come willingly
   dance in this square!
   My mace makes all people tremble,
   [and] there is no remedy;
   I chase the great and the small every day –
   this is my great law.

67. **The Nun answers**

   Blessed Jesus! What is that you are saying,
   cruel unpleasant Death?
   Without giving me any time, you write to me so
   briefly–
   ah, how hard and detestable it is
   to abandon so pleasant a place
   where I really intended to grow old!
   Now I say that he who often thinks
   of dying well deserves praise.

68. **To the Widow**

   Milady, you who wear your head covering,
   you who are called Widow!
   I think it is certain that you will dance with me.
   You are not busy with anything,
   and I do not think you have been accustomed to dance
   for a long time now –
   come very quickly to settle in your new accommodation:
   everyone who lives will come with me.

69. **The Widow answers**

   I do not think it is respectable at all
   to dance in my situation,
   but I am forced; I protest,
   [as] I do not like it, nor do I feel devotion toward it.
   But such is your intention,
   Death, harsh, evil, excessive;
   you do not feel compassion for anything,
   [and] your hatchet cuts everywhere.

70. **To the Married Woman**

   Hot carnal relations with your husband
   made you forget that you would die –
   think about it, do not feel offended.
   Leave your children, [and] come quickly
   join this dance, without objecting,
   [this dance] where you will dance very graciously,
   and please do not be angry:
   it is possible to dance even though one is not happy
   enough.

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*Zvonareva, “The fifteenth-century Catalan translation of the French Danse macabre”*
71. **The Married Woman answers**

So I will have to leave my husband, my children and other relatives—those I love so much.

Alas, dancing with you means a hard separation!

I have never suffered hunger,

[but now] you will certainly make a thread of wool for me,

you cruel and oppressive Death!

I cannot find anyone I could call upon:

[Death] is hateful for everyone.

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72. **To the Notary**

Notary, leave quickly what you are writing and do not think you will give orders any more!

Do you think you will live here forever?

Get ready to dance with me,

Put aside leafing through documents and reading books and contracts;

you should not appeal against Death:

I am such as does not make pacts.

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73. **The Notary answers**

I really can see that you, Death, have much power and that you are a great authority;

it does not seem to me that you are kind to me, for you have called me without giving me any time.

Poor wretched me,

what will I do, if you want me this way?

I feel just a little comforted,

as I am not the only one to go dancing.

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74. **Conclusion**

This is well said indeed, so I like it;

therefore, be aware, with no more writing,

that the haughty and the meek

are not free from Death at all.

So now be careful to lead a very good life,

so that you do not cease doing good deeds,

and he who today does not know his tomorrow will be able to smile among the saints.

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75. **These words are pronounced by a Dead King who lies in a grave or tomb**

You who watch the present dance with all these people [who partake in it], pay attention, look at my appearance:

I was once a great king and a very powerful one;

now I am in the grave,

where my body has all rotted—neither the wise nor the uncouth will avoid being thrown to the worms.

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76. **What is this world really, if we reflect on it?**

It is just a moment and a transitory thing.

Everyone can well see that here, in the present dance or painting,

Remember it often,

for it admonishes us about how to live well:

if we live well, we will receive [celestial] glory;

those are happy who celebrate in Heaven.

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But there are some people who do not care about it, as if there were no Heaven – as a result, they go to Hell, a place of horror, full of evil and dissension. Please do very well – I warn you of that – [and] please correct all your errors: you will gain enjoyment and happy laughter, [as] a good deed is of great use for the living and for the dead.

All you who see it, /I.2/ tell of this dance and of /I.1/ what is the real value of honour, joys, riches; indeed, such will you be, when liquidated by Death, which summons the crowd, having come quickly. The books written by the saints time ago demonstrate this in beautiful stories. Do your duty, you who pass by here, and do good, [and] I will say nothing more on it: use for the dead.

This Dance of Death was written by a holy man, doctor and chancellor of Paris, in French; his name was Joannes Climacus or Climages, [and he wrote this poem] at the request of some pious religious French people. Subsequently, it was translated into Catalan. In the end of this [poem], the doctor mentioned above put the following Epigram.

Epigram on human happiness and unhappiness
The Lord created all the mortals in the light, so that they might obtain the supreme joy of Heaven by their merits. Happy is the one who constantly directs his mind there and is a watcher aware of everything that is harmful. Nor is he unhappy who repents of the evil deeds he has done and often regrets his crimes. But humans live as if Death were never to come to them, and as if Hell were only a vain fable. As sense teaches that the living are dissolved by death, and the holy page proves the punishments of hell, he who has no fear of them lives as an absolutely foolish man, and when extinct will feel the funeral pyre. So, then, let all strive to live wisely, in order they do not fear the stake of Hell.

II title Magisterial verses
II.13 all mortals must fight

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