

Of Dead Kings, Dukes and Constables: The Historical Context of the *Danse* *Macabre* in Late Medieval Paris

SOPHIE OOSTERWIJK

As discussed in an earlier article published in vol. 157 (2004) of this journal, the starting point of most studies on the medieval Danse macabre is the extensive mural scheme executed in the parish cemetery of Les Saints Innocents in Paris in 1424–25. Little attention has hitherto been given to the political circumstances surrounding this scheme's creation during the Anglo-Burgundian occupation of the French capital. The dual presentation of the king as both a victim of death amidst the ranks of the living and as a worm-eaten corpse at the end of the scheme is especially intriguing in view of the deaths in quick succession of Henry V of England and Charles VI of France in 1422. It is these topical references that explain the quick rise to fame of what at first sight might be just another medieval didactic lesson about mortality and sin. The allusions to contemporary figures incorporated into the mural's text and imagery or (in the case of the duke) the avoidance of any such allusions are examined. A case is presented for the deployment of 'cryptoportraits' in the imagery and a novel suggestion made as to the identity of the previously unidentified patron.

INTRODUCTION

THE *danse macabre* mural that was created in the cemetery of Les Saints Innocents in Paris in 1424–25 is the earliest known occurrence in art of a theme which was to become popular all over Europe.¹ Its accompanying verses were translated into Middle English by John Lydgate (c. 1371–1449), after the poet visited Paris probably in 1426.² The *Danse macabre* poem presents a dialogue between Death or representatives of the dead — for the original French text has *le mort* (the dead figure) instead of *la mort* (death) — and the living from all walks of life, while combining a didactic message about mortality and sin with social satire. Much has been written about the origins of this medieval theme, and about the possibility of a (lost) prototype of the poem, perhaps in Latin. The author of the French verses used at Les Innocents is unknown, but nearly half a century before the mural was painted we find the line 'Je fis de Macabré la dance' (I made/did the dance of macabree) in the poem *Le respit de la mort* written in 1376 by Jehan le Fèvre.³ If this line can be taken as evidence of the earlier occurrence of the theme as we now know it, why did the *danse macabre* rise to fame only when incorporated in a mural scheme that was created in a period of major political upheaval?

Surprisingly little attention has been paid in *danse macabre* research to the actual situation in Paris in the 1420s, despite the fact that the city was then under

Anglo-Burgundian control and the country itself torn between different political factions.⁴ Yet as this article will show, the mural scheme appears to have contained contemporary political allusions that might have been *risqué* at a time when the authorities in Paris were extremely wary of anything potentially subversive. The evidence presented here is based first of all on historical sources; on the *Danse macabre* poem itself and Lydgate's Middle English translation; and also on the early woodcut editions based on the scheme at Les Innocents, which were published by the Parisian printer Guy Marchant in 1485 and 1486.⁵ In addition, early visual evidence of how the *danse* was presented in art is derived from marginal decorations in two rarely studied books of hours, which were produced in Paris and probably date to within a decade of the mural's creation.

THE SETTING

BEFORE we look at the historical background, it is important to obtain a clear idea of the nature and setting of the churchyard in which the famous *danse macabre* mural was located. The cemetery of Les Saints Innocents belonged to a parish church and not to a Franciscan convent, as is often incorrectly claimed. The church was situated close to where Les Halles used to be, along the rue Saint-Denis from the north near to where it met the rue de la Ferronnerie, which was the extension of the rue Saint-Honoré, the major thoroughfare from the west (Fig. 1).⁶ The parish of Les Innocents was rather poor, but through donations of land it had come to own an unusually extensive cemetery; however, it shared this churchyard with other institutions, without deriving financial benefits from the arrangement.⁷

Because the cemetery at Les Innocents was a popular burial ground it became imperative to dig up the remains of the dead regularly to make room for the newly deceased. This necessitated the erection of several charnel-houses or 'charniers' where these remains could be preserved in open roof-spaces: the wind and air aided the drying-out process. A smaller version of such a medieval cemetery with charnel-houses survives in the Aître Saint-Maclou in the heart of Rouen (Fig. 2a): originally dating back to the 12th century, it was reconstructed probably in the later 1520s after a recurrence of the plague in 1521–22.⁸ A sculpted *danse macabre* cycle still decorates the pillars separating the formerly open arcades below, where chapels and tomb monuments were to be found; the charnel-houses were situated on the floor above, immediately under the roof, while the space between the two carved wooded friezes used to be open to the air (Fig. 2b). (The present upper floor was added in the 18th century.)

The original arrangement at Les Innocents may be gauged not just from a painting of the cemetery of c. 1570 by an unknown Flemish artist (Paris, Musée Carnavalet) but also from a miniature in a book of hours of c. 1440 (British Library, Add. MS 18751, fol. 163r), which shows in the background heaps of skulls visibly on display immediately beneath the roof (Fig. 3 and Col. Pl. IIa).⁹ This otherwise conventional burial scene, of the type often found at the start of the Office of the Dead in books of hours of this period, need not be taken as a representation of any particular cemetery.¹⁰ Nonetheless, as this manuscript was illuminated in Paris less than twenty years after the creation of the mural at Les Innocents, it is interesting to note not just a detailed, near-contemporary depiction of a medieval churchyard but also the marginal decoration, which shows Death on a black horse aiming a dart at the pope and emperor — traditionally the first characters in the *danse macabre*.

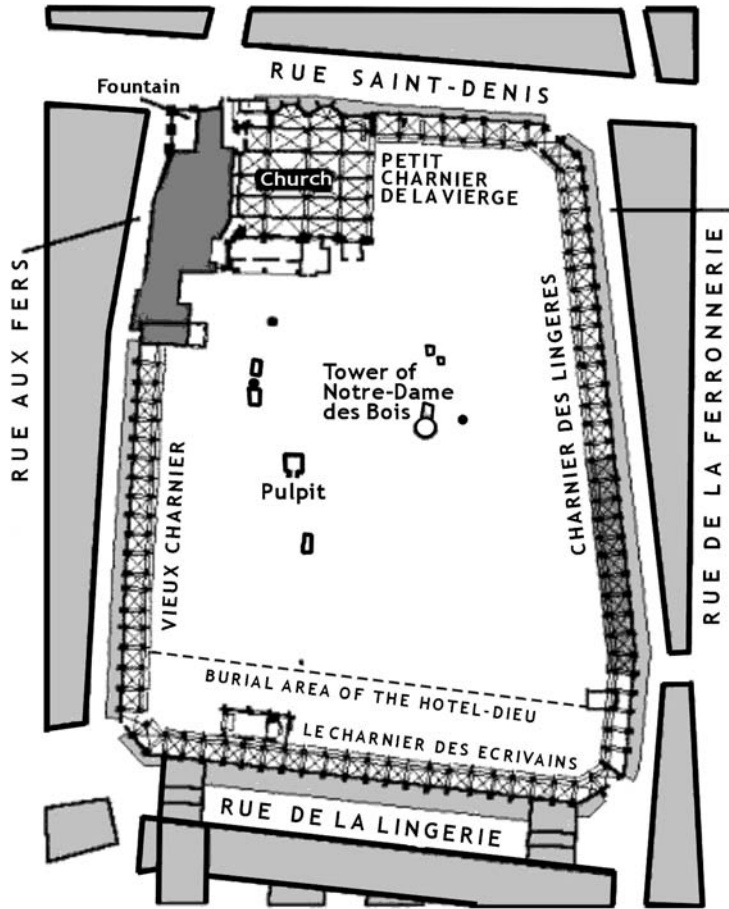


FIG. 1. Plan of the medieval cemetery of Les Saints Innocents

As recorded in the *Journal* of the so-called Bourgeois de Paris, the mural was painted between August 1424 and Lent 1425: 'Item, l'an mil cccc xxiiii, fut faicte la Danse Macabre aux Innocens, et fut commencée environ le moys d'aoust et achevée ou karesme ensuivant' (Item, in the year 1424 the Danse Macabre was made at the Innocents, and it was started around the month of August and finished the following Lent).¹¹ The mural was painted onto the south gallery wall of the 'charnier des Lingères' that ran alongside the rue de la Ferronnerie, and appears to have occupied eleven bays (Fig. 1): written beneath each pair of living and dead dancers was their dialogue in octave verses. The patron who financed this extensive painted scheme is not recorded, nor is the author of the accompanying poem. This is somewhat curious because one might expect those responsible for such a celebrated scheme to be named either in the mural itself or in contemporary records. For example, we know that the lost sculpture of the Three Living and the Three Dead above one of the doorways to the cemetery featured an inscription stating that it had been commissioned by John,



A

FIG. 2a. South-west corner of the Aître Saint-Maclou in Rouen, medieval cemetery with charnel-houses, reconstructed probably in the later 1520s, with a new upper floor dating to the 18th century

Photo: author



B

FIG. 2b. Aître Saint-Maclou, Rouen: detail of one of the pillars along the west wall, with remains of a *danse macabre* pair. Located between the two wooden friezes with carved imagery relating to death and burial were the original openings of the charnel-houses above, since walled up with timberwork and masonry

Photo: author



FIG. 3. Burial scene with a chancel-house in the background and Death on a black horse attacking a pope and an emperor in the bottom margin, Parisian book of hours of c. 1440 (London, BL, Add. MS 18751, fol. 163r)

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duke of Berry; according to at least one source, the sculpture was intended to commemorate the assassination in 1407 of the duke's nephew Louis of Orléans, brother to King Charles VI.¹² The mural would have been a very expensive project; hence it is unlikely to have been paid for by the impoverished parish itself. It is possible that the mural was commissioned by a public body, such as a guild or confraternity, but it is more likely to have been paid for by a rich individual, as will be discussed below; the completion by Lent 1425 was probably stipulated by the patron.

The cemetery of Les Innocents was a very public place where goods were traded and people met, so the wall-painting would have been seen by many. One such visitor was John Lydgate, who explains how he found 'Macabrees daunce' (as he calls it) 'at Parise [...] depicte ones on a walle [...] at saint Innocentis' (*E*: 24, 19–20, 35);¹³ his Middle English poem *The Dance of Death* was subsequently incorporated in a painted scheme in the cloister of Pardon Churchyard at Old St Paul's Cathedral, London, that was probably intended to rival its counterpart across the Channel. The *danse macabre* mural at Les Innocents left other traces in records of the period. There is a brief account of the cemetery and its *danse* by Philip the Good's *libraire* Guillebert de Metz in a manuscript dated 1436, in which he describes the city of Paris and its sights.¹⁴ Elsewhere in his *Journal* the Bourgeois mentions how in 1429 an itinerant Franciscan preached a series of popular sermons in the cemetery, 'à l'endroit de la Dance Macabre', until the authorities became suspicious and frère Richard had to flee the city. (He subsequently became a follower of Joan of Arc.)¹⁵ The enclosed cemetery was also used as a setting for secular entertainment: for example, the young Henry

VI visited Les Innocents in 1431 when a stag hunt was held there to celebrate his coronation as king of France.¹⁶

The *danse macabre* theme had already spread across Europe when in 1485, sixty years after the creation of the mural at Les Innocents, the Parisian printer Guy Marchant published his first edition of the *Danse macabre* poem with woodcut illustrations (Figs 8, 11, 14) that are believed to have been modelled on the wall-painting. By that time, however, the mural may have undergone restoration or updating, unless the artist employed by Marchant modernised the appearance of the figures himself; some of the fashions shown in the woodcuts are unmistakably late 15th century in date, for example, the style of the armour worn by the figure of the constable.¹⁷ This means that we should not rely too much on Marchant's woodcuts for evidence of the mural's original appearance.

One piece of macabre art from the medieval cemetery of Les Innocents still survives. Locked away in a wooden box under the arcades of the 'charnier de la Vierge' and displayed only for the feast of All Saints was an alabaster statue known as *La Mort Saint-Innocent*, which is now in the Louvre (Fig. 4).¹⁸ The sculpture was created by



FIG. 4. *La Mort Saint-Innocent*, alabaster statue by an anonymous artist, c. 1530, h. 120 cm, formerly situated in the cemetery of Les Innocents and now in the Musée du Louvre
Photo: Robert Didier

an unknown artist around 1530, but removed from the cemetery in 1670; it was restored and bronzed by Louis Pierre Deseine for display in Notre-Dame around 1786 when the demolition of the church and cemetery Les Innocents was authorised.¹⁹ However, the wall-painting had been destroyed much earlier, most probably in 1669 when the rue de la Ferronnerie was widened — a traffic measure that sadly came too late for King Henri IV, who had been assassinated by François Ravaillac on 14 May 1610 when his open coach had become stuck in a traffic jam in the narrow medieval street.²⁰ Henri's demise so close to the famous *danse macabre* paintings is a curious twist of fate for, as we shall see, it may have been the death of King Charles VI some two hundred years earlier that originally inspired the creation of the mural.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

AMIDST the havoc caused by the Hundred Years War, France reached its nadir in the 1420s — the time when the mural at Les Innocents was created.²¹ Part of the problem was the mental health of its king, Charles VI (1368–1422), who had gained the throne upon the death of his father Charles V in 1380. The young king was first struck down by a bout of insanity at the start of a military campaign against the duke of Brittany in 1392;²² he was to suffer recurrent and ever longer periods of madness (probably a form of schizophrenia) until his death.

The king's weakness initially led to a bitter rivalry between the Burgundian faction and the king's brother Louis, duke of Orléans, with Queen Isabeau of Bavaria being used a political tool: she may have had affairs first with Louis and later, after Louis' assassination, with his Burgundian rival, Duke John the Fearless (Jean sans Peur, 1371–1419). It was John who arranged Louis' murder in the streets of Paris in 1407.²³ Louis' son Charles initially lacked the support to obtain justice from his father's killer; after his capture at the battle of Agincourt in 1415 his cause was espoused by his father-in-law Bernard d'Armagnac, the new constable of France, who lent his name to the Orléanist party. The Bourgeois describes in his *Journal* how Paris became a battleground for the rival factions, causing hardship and riots; this culminated in the Burgundian supporters taking control of the city once more in 1418 and massacring their opponents, including Bernard himself.²⁴ The dauphin Charles (1403–61, heir to the throne from April 1417 after the deaths of four elder brothers) was forced to flee to Bourges. John the Fearless ultimately paid the price when he in turn was assassinated by the Armagnac faction at a mutually agreed rendezvous with the dauphin on the bridge over the river Yonne at Montereau on 10 September 1419.²⁵

It is often said that the English entered France through the hole in the skull of the duke of Burgundy, and the murder of John the Fearless certainly drove his son Philip the Good (1396–1467) into an alliance with Henry V.²⁶ The English king had followed up his victory at Agincourt with the conquest of Normandy, but in order to build on his military success he needed an ally with whom he could enter negotiations. After the tentative *approchement* between the dauphin and John the Fearless had ended in the latter's brutal murder, the new duke Philip looked towards the English for support against his father's killers so that Henry may well have believed the crown of France to be within his grasp.²⁷ In 1420 the Treaty of Troyes between Henry V and Philip the Good, which was imposed upon Charles VI and formally approved by the French Parlement, resulted in Henry being declared heir to the French crown and marrying Charles VI's daughter Catherine of Valois (1401–38); this made Henry and Philip

brothers-in-law as the latter was married to Catherine's older sister Michelle (1395–1422).²⁸ Disinherited by his parents, the dauphin now established a rival kingdom in Bourges with the help of foreign troops, including many from Scotland;²⁹ here his son and heir (the later Louis XI) was born in 1423. The Treaty of Troyes and the dauphin's rebellion effectively divided France into three parts: the Burgundian realm, the kingdom of France effectively governed by the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, and the dauphin's rival kingdom that was to receive the support of Joan of Arc.³⁰ (Her intervention helped to bring about Charles' coronation in Reims on 17 July 1429.)

After his successes in battle and at the negotiating table, everything seemed to be going well for Henry V: in 1421 his queen gave birth to a son (the future Henry VI) and his royal father-in-law seemed unlikely to last much longer, worn out by madness and neglect. Charles VI's death would have made Henry king of both England and France, yet fate decided otherwise: in the prime of life, Henry V died of typhoid at Vincennes on 31 August 1422. His death was followed by that of the ailing Charles VI on 21 October, and thus the infant Henry VI was left as heir to both kingdoms, too young to be crowned or to rule. To safeguard his royal inheritance the infant king depended on strong loyal supporters in England as well as on Burgundian support in France. His paternal uncle John, duke of Bedford (1389–1435), served as regent of France and after Henry VI's coronation as governor-general; his rule provided the city with a period of relative stability.³¹ As an effective way to seal the political alliance, Philip the Good married off his sister Anne to Bedford, to whom he appears to have left the government of Paris and France while he himself opportunistically bided his time until the political situation should change.³² This eventually happened in late autumn 1435 when the Treaty of Arras was sealed between Philip and the former dauphin, now recognised as Charles VII. Bedford died in September 1435 and the English were expelled from Paris by the Franco-Burgundian alliance in April 1436; they managed to keep control of Normandy until 1450, however, and only lost Gascony in 1453.

Thus, France was a divided country when the *danse macabre* mural was created in Paris in 1424–25. Despite all that has been written about the stereotypical image of medieval society presented in the *danse*, there is a false semblance of 'normality' (if that term can be applied here) in the hierarchical presentation of a venerable pope, a crowned king, and an impressive-looking constable, raising the ceremonial sword that went with his role of supreme commander of the French army. When the mural was painted France had no crowned king nor a single constable of France, as tradition demanded — in fact, it had two. After Bernard d'Armagnac's murder in 1418, Queen Isabeau had appointed as the new constable Charles II, duke of Lorraine, who resigned in 1425; thereafter, the English government in Paris would choose its own constables on behalf of the crown. However, the dauphin had meanwhile appointed his own constable of France: first in 1421 the Scot John Stewart, earl of Buchan, who died in 1424 at the battle of Verneuil against Bedford's army, and then in 1425 Arthur, comte de Richemont, who was the duke of Brittany's younger brother as well as stepbrother to Bedford.³³ Despite marrying another of Philip the Good's sisters in 1423, Richemont had subsequently changed sides from Bedford to the dauphin who had immediately awarded him with this high honour.³⁴ Thus, the figure of the constable was potentially controversial when the mural was painted in 1424–25: as noted, there was no longer a single constable of France. The question is how contemporaries would have read the figure of the constable presented in the mural at Les Innocents and, even more crucially, the two figures of the king.



FIG. 5. The 'acteur' contemplating the dead king eaten by worms, final woodcut in Guy Marchant's *Danse macabre* edition first printed in Paris in 1485

THE DANSE MACABRE MURAL IN PARIS AND OTHER RELATED SCHEMES

THE deaths in quick succession of Henry V and Charles VI in 1422 must still have been fresh in people's minds when the mural at Les Innocents was begun in August 1424, and many viewers will have been struck by the final image of the 'roy mort' being eaten by worms, his crown rolled to the ground. In his stanza printed beneath Marchant's woodcut illustration (Fig. 5), the king describes himself as nothing but 'viande a vers' (food for worms) whereas he was once 'roy coronnez'. His cadaver serves as the ultimate warning to viewers that all estates must suffer death, even kings, and that earthly glory ultimately comes to nothing. This message is reinforced by the 'acteur' (author) seated on the right, who contemplates the royal corpse as he expounds his views about mortality and eternal life for the viewer's benefit in the last two stanzas of the poem: 'Cest tout vent: chose trasitoire./Chascun le voit: par ceste danse' (All is but wind, a transitory thing. Everyone can see that through this dance). An angel in the left corner holds out a scroll with an additional text in Latin hexameters about hell awaiting those who sin in this life.

There is no indication that this image of the 'roy mort' represents any king in particular.³⁵ The idea is that of a generic royal figure: in earlier medieval art, the Three Living were also often shown wearing crowns as symbols of power and pride when faced with their own mortality in the guise of the Three Dead.³⁶ One might even

query whether the ‘roy mort’ originally belongs to the *danse macabre* at all; there is no dialogue and his single stanza sits awkwardly between the concluding stanza by the last dead dancer and the author’s final two stanzas. The rise and fall of kings was already a familiar image from earlier representations of the Wheel of Fortune, where the fallen king traditionally utters the words ‘Sum sine regno’ (I am without a kingdom). Boccaccio’s discussion of Fortune and illustrations of her Wheel in contemporary manuscripts of his *De casibus virorum illustrium*, which was translated into French by Laurent de Premierfait as *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*, made the Rota Fortunae a very popular image in this period.³⁷ The ‘roy mort’ also bears a great resemblance to the type of cadaver or *transi* effigy that had begun its spread across northern Europe at this time. Such monuments often featured a message for the beholder, ‘Sum quod eris; fuerisque quod est’ (I am what you will be, and I once was what you are now) — the same *vanitas* warning uttered by the Three Dead to the Three Living, and one that also applies to the *danse macabre*.³⁸

In the *danse* the dead present themselves to the living as an image of what they are about to become, but they also send out the same warning to the viewer. At the very start of the poem that visitors to Les Innocents would have been able to read beneath the paintings, the ‘acteur’ warns his reader (‘O creature roysonnable’) that the *danse* is a mirror that shows how every man and woman must take part in the dance, whatever their status: ‘Mort nespargne petit ne grant’ (Death spares low nor high) and ‘Tu vois les plus grans commancer’ (You will see those of the highest ranks commence). The mural at Les Innocents thus presented a cycle of dead dancers who summon in turn a hierarchically arranged series of living characters starting with the pope, the emperor, the cardinal and the king, until the poem concludes with the infant, the clerk, the hermit, and finally another king — dead and eaten by worms. In this purported mirror contemporaries were expected to recognise themselves and the society they lived in.³⁹

It is interesting that the ‘acteur’ refers several times to people *seeing* the *danse*: ‘Tu vois les plus grans commancer’ at the start, and towards the end the phrases ‘Chascun le voit’ (everyone can see) and ‘vous qui veez listoire’ (you who behold this story). The scheme at Les Innocents must have been very effective in its combination of vernacular verse and vivid depictions of (almost?) life-size figures in full colour. It is unlikely that any expense was spared in the execution of what was evidently intended to be a prestigious mural, and comparisons with other *danse macabre* schemes suggest that even the ‘morts’ were painted in a variety of colours indicating different stages of putrefaction (Col. Pl. IIIA–B).⁴⁰

It is curious, therefore, that none of the extant early manuscript copies of the poem carry illustrations, including a copy on paper produced soon after 1428 and known to have belonged once to Philip the Good (BnF, MS fr. 14989).⁴¹ 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.

Most extant books of hours containing *danse macabre* illustrations as part of the Office of the Dead are much later than the mural at Les Innocents. However, there are two relatively early examples that have received remarkably little attention from *danse macabre* scholars.⁴² The first is a richly illuminated book of hours attributed to



FIG. 6. The duke, *danse macabre* medallion in a Parisian book of hours of c. 1435 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.359, fol. 126r, purchased by Pierpont Morgan 1909).

Photo: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

the Bedford Master and his workshop (New York, Morgan Library MS M.359); typical of the Bedford style are the small secondary scenes contained in marginal medallions in the outer borders of the pages (Fig. 6 and Col. Pl. IIB).⁴³ Its original owner is unknown but the manuscript is dated c. 1430–35, that is, within ten years of the creation of the mural in Paris; the inclusion of typically English saints, for example, St George (23 April) in gold letters, indicates it must have been produced during the English occupation of the city.⁴⁴ Yet the *danse macabre* cycle in MS M.359 (fols 123r–151r) is very different from the mural. First, its decorative series comprises fifty-seven circular and semi-circular marginal medallions, nearly twice the number of figures in the mural. Secondly, it includes the author at the start but not at the end. Thirdly, the majority of characters are clerical rather than lay, including some representatives of relatively obscure minor orders such as a Trinitarian, an Alexian or Cellite(?), and a Servite(?); this and the Use of Rome may indicate a religious patron. Fourthly, the figures are set against a variety of backgrounds, from conventional patterned backdrops to landscapes and detailed interior settings. Finally, most scenes show the living accompanied by two dead dancers instead of a single ‘mort’. It might seem that there are very few similarities between this decorative cycle and the scheme at Les Innocents, yet MS M.359 serves to show how the *danse macabre* was already being freely adapted within a decade of the mural’s creation.

The second book of hours is another luxury manuscript produced for an unknown patron. As part of its marginal decoration it contains a smaller *danse macabre* scheme spread across two pages (BnF, MS Rothschild 2535, fols 108v–109r).⁴⁵ The manuscript

is dated *c.* 1430–40, but the dress worn by the figures implies a date closer to 1430. The cycle starts with the pope being pulled along by a dead dancer with a coffin in the bottom right-hand corner of fol. 108v, below the main miniature of a burial scene and the opening lines of the Office of the Dead (Fig. 7a and Col. Pl. IIIA). It then moves clockwise to the emperor, a cardinal and a king, each paired with a ‘mort’, before abandoning the traditional order: the remainder of this page shows a couple who may represent the ‘amoureux’ with his mistress, a labourer, and an infant in his cradle, while the sequence continues anti-clockwise in the bottom left-hand corner of fol. 109r with a bishop, a physician, a knightly figure in a heraldic tabard, a hermit, and finally at the very top a ‘mort’ digging a grave (Fig. 7b and Col. Pl. IIIB).

The *danse* cycle in Rothschild MS 2535 shares a number of similarities with the mural as we know it through Marchant’s woodcuts, but there are also telling differences. First of all, the settings are rather similar in both: Marchant’s woodcuts use a schematic landscape setting whereas the figures in the manuscript occupy flower-strewn ‘islands’ amidst a painted decorative foliate pattern on fol. 108v and penwork *rinceaux* on fol. 109r. The labourer, the child in his cradle and the physician with his flask occur in the manuscript as well as in Marchant’s edition (and in the mural), although the physician in MS Rothschild 2535 wears a much earlier style of academic dress than his counterpart in Marchant’s woodcut; the hermits in both schemes are perhaps closest in appearance and pose. The posture of the bishop on fol. 109r resembles that of the archbishop in Marchant’s woodcut, who is accused by ‘le mort’ of drawing back his head in disdain or fear: ‘Que vous tires la teste arriere’ (Why do you draw back your head?) — an interesting case of Marchant’s illustration (Fig. 8) matching the words of the poem. This could even be an indication of iconographical mix-up, with the illuminator using the wrong model from the mural at Les Innocents for his bishop.

The woman on fol. 108v and the heraldic figure on fol. 109r have no equivalent in Marchant’s illustrations. The latter almost certainly represents a knight, albeit with blazon that cannot be firmly identified.⁴⁶ His appearance is very different from that of the ‘chevalier’ in Marchant’s woodcut, who not only lacks specific attributes to distinguish him as a knight but whose dress and broadnosed shoes do not belong to the 1420s (Fig. 8). The clothes worn by the couple on fol. 108v fit the period around 1430, especially the woman’s horned headdress that can be observed in contemporary Early Netherlandish portraits, and her very wide sleeves that went rapidly out of fashion after 1430. She may be not a character in her own right but rather the attribute of the ‘amoureux’, just as one occasionally finds a female companion with the a male representative of *Adolescentia* in medieval depictions of the Ages of Man.⁴⁷ Female figures are the exception in the French *danse macabre* tradition at this time, and the French mural has always been believed to have been an all-male scheme. Yet the depiction of a couple in MS Rothschild 2535 may imply that the ‘amoureux’ in the mural at Les Innocents also originally had a companion, albeit one without her own text; it is worth noting that Lydgate introduced a ‘gentilwoman amorous’ immediately after the ‘amorous squyere’ in his *Dance of Death* poem.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Marchant’s ‘amoureux’ has no companion or distinguishing attribute, while his long robe and decorated sleeves belong to the later 15th century, indicating yet again an updating of earlier dress either in the mural itself or by Marchant’s artist.

The similarities between the *danse macabre* cycle in MS Rothschild 2535 and the scheme at Les Innocents (as we know it through Marchant’s edition) suggest that the illuminator was familiar with the mural, even if he appears to have taken liberties



A

FIG. 7a. *Danse macabre* marginal decorations in a Parisian book of hours of c. 1430–40 (Paris, BnF, MS Rothschild 2535, fol. 108v)



B

FIG. 7b. *Danse macabre* marginal decorations in a Parisian book of hours of c. 1430–40 (Paris, BnF, MS Rothschild 2535, fol. 109r)



FIG. 8. The archbishop and the knight, woodcut in Guy Marchant's *Danse macabre* edition first printed in Paris in 1485

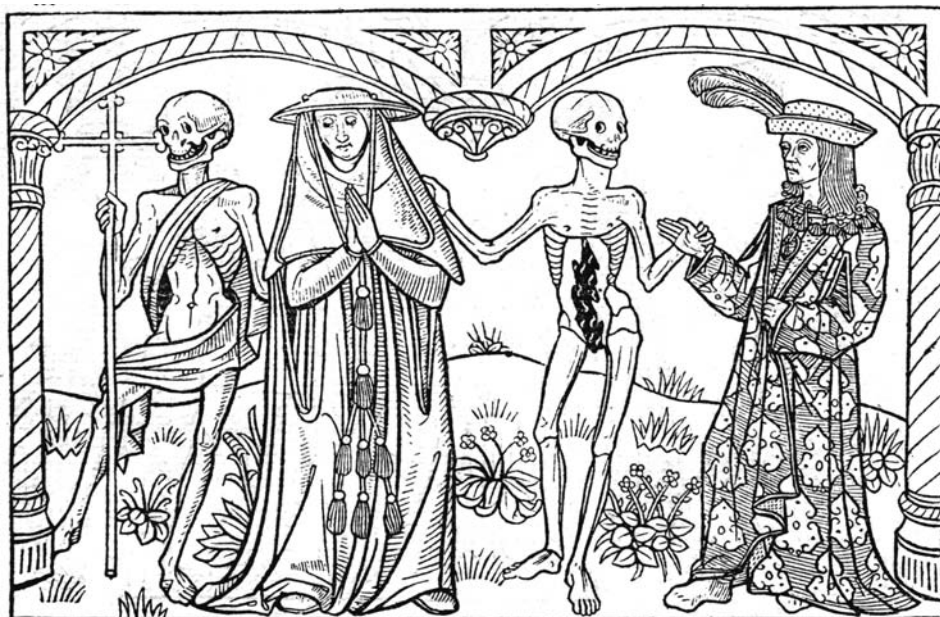


FIG. 9. The papal legate and the duke, new woodcut added to the *danse macabre* in Guy Marchant's second edition of 1486

with his model to suit his own decorative purposes. What is certain is that the clothes worn by the figures in the manuscript are closer in date to the mural than those shown in Marchant's woodcuts, many of which belong to the later 15th century in style; as such, the manuscript may offer more reliable evidence about the appearance of the knight in the mural, for example. Whereas the extensive *danse macabre* cycle in Morgan MS M.359 is rather different from the mural scheme, some of the figures illustrated in its roundels can also provide further insights into the characters presented at Les Innocents — and even into one particularly important figure omitted from the mural.

THE SEQUENCE OF CHARACTERS

IN the French *danse macabre* poem as we know it through both Marchant's edition and earlier manuscript copies, there is a strict alternating sequence of clerical and lay characters up to the last two characters of the clerk and the hermit. Admittedly, the added figure of the poor man has his own stanza, but he only serves as a prop for the usurer, just as the female figure in the Rothschild manuscript may be simply an attribute of the 'amoureux' rather than an independent character. The poem was thus carefully planned by the unknown author. In addition, there is a descending social order, which is evident in the first half of the poem, even if less so in the second half. Once again, it is vital to compare Marchant's text with extant early manuscript copies as this shows that Marchant mistakenly placed the 'curé' and 'laboureur' before the 'advocat' and 'menestrel', which makes little hierarchical sense.

The confines of this paper do not allow a full comparison of characters in the different *danse macabre* schemes across Europe; however, there are some important initial observations to be made. First of all, there is the *Dance of Death* poem by Lydgate, who probably visited Paris in 1426 shortly after the mural was finished. In his translator's prologue, he claimed to have modelled his poem on the mural at Les Innocents, although he was also familiar with the wider tradition of estates satire of which Chaucer's *General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* is a prime example.⁴⁹ Lydgate's poem has come down to us in different versions, which may be due at least in part to scribal variance: it is the earlier, so-called A-version which closely follows the order and words of the French poem. Even so, Lydgate introduced additional stanzas for a number of new characters that he did not find in the Paris scheme, including three female figures (although women do occur in the German *Totentanz* tradition). Then there is the Latin-German *Totentanz*, which may be an independent development of the theme of uncertain date; the oldest extant version of the poem (Heidelberg University Library, Cpg 314, fols 79r–80v) was copied in Augsburg c. 1443–47, but based on an earlier text.⁵⁰ Finally there is the Spanish *Dança general de la muerte*, whose date is still a matter of debate but which shares many similarities with the French *Danse macabre* poem.⁵¹

A comparison of the first twelve characters in these four different versions reveals some surprising similarities and differences (see Table I). As one would expect, all four start hierarchically with the pope and the emperor, who are followed in the French *Danse* by a regular alternation of clerical and lay figures. Then, however, the German *Totentanz* inserts the empress before the king, resulting in an illogical sequence of three lay and three clerical characters in a row instead of alternating. Likewise, Lydgate's inclusion of the lady disrupts the order of characters that he adopted from the French poem. The patriarch occurs in all four versions despite being

Sequence of the first twelve characters in the *danse macabre*

INNOCENTS, PARIS	LYDGATE (A version)	DANÇA GENERAL DE LA MUERTE	Latin-German TOTENTANZ
1. Pope	1. Pope	1. Pope	1. Pope
2. Emperor	2. Emperor	2. Emperor	2. Emperor
3. Cardinal	3. Cardinal	3. Cardinal	3. Empress
4. King	4. King	4. King	4. King
5. Patriarch	5. Patriarch	5. Patriarch	5. Cardinal
6. Constable	6. Constable	6. Duke	6. Patriarch
7. Archbishop	7. Archbishop	7. Archbishop	7. Archbishop
8. Knight	8. Baron	8. Constable	8. Duke
9. Bishop	9. Lady	9. Bishop	9. Bishop
10. Squire	10. Bishop	10. Knight	10. Count
11. Abbot	11. Squire	11. Abbot	11. Abbot
12. Bailiff	12. Abbot	12. Squire	12. Knight

rather a historical anomaly in this period, a relic of the crusading era (as one author has remarked, only the clergy can have known what this title signified exactly).⁵² Yet whereas the patriarch is a somewhat peculiar figure to include, far more curious is the omission of the duke in the French scheme and consequently in Lydgate's poem.

There is no denying that the lay sequence of emperor-king-duke-count-knight (if we ignore the empress) in the *Totentanz* is more complete and logical than the jump from king via constable to knight in the French *Danse* and in Lydgate's poem (where the baron's stanza is a translation of that of the French 'chevalier'); even the Spanish *Dança* includes the figure of the duke. Was the omission of the duke at Les Innocents deliberate? A look at Morgan MS M.359 suggests that it was: just as in the Spanish *Dança*, the duke in his long blue court robe with an ermine collar and lining (fol. 126r: Fig. 6 and Col. Pl. IIB) precedes the constable with his ceremonial sword of office (fol. 127r). Moreover, Marchant appears to have regarded this omission as a hiatus: in his second edition of 1486 he added the papal legate as well as the duke, thereby preserving the alternating sequence of clerical and lay characters (Fig. 9).

So why was the duke not included in the mural at Les Innocents? It might have been because the political situation was highly sensitive and the figure of a duke would have evoked undesirable associations with both living and dead dukes. Louis of Orléans and John the Fearless had been murdered in 1407 and 1419, respectively; the former's son Charles was in English captivity, an absent duke and political pawn who was not to be released until 1440; and there was at best an uneasy Anglo-Burgundian alliance with John, duke of Brittany. More importantly, Paris itself was the setting of a covert power struggle between the duke of Bedford and Philip the Good's Burgundian supporters. Whereas the image of the dead king at the end of the cycle was strikingly apt, it might have been thought that there were too many dukes and their supporters who could object to the inclusion of a duke as a participant in the *danse macabre* mural. The omission of the duke may thus have been a tactical decision influenced by the political circumstances of the time. A look at some of the other characters in the upper ranks of the *danse* would support this hypothesis. Even though the duke could have been presented as a generic character, we shall see that the reason for

the omission could have been a vested interest on the part of the unknown patron in ensuring that the duke was not the subject of satirical representation and criticism.

(i) *The pope*

TABLE I shows how each of the four main *danse macabre* versions starts with the pope, the highest-ranking church official and God's representative on earth. One author claimed that the pope was not usually criticised in *danse macabre* or *Totentanz* schemes until Niklaus Manuel's mural scheme of 1516–19 in Bern, but the most recent study of the Bern scheme describes Manuel's verses as typical of the anti-clerical nature of the 15th-century *Totentanz*.⁵³ Manuel's pope reads like an expanded echo of the pope's assumed holiness as conveyed in the terse words of the earlier Latin-German *Totentanz* poem, 'Sanctus dicebar' (I was called holy): a seemingly innocuous phrase, yet at the same time quite ambiguous, and also found thus in related German *Totentanz* texts.⁵⁴ An illustrated *Totentanz* edition of c. 1488, which is attributed to the publisher Heinrich Knoblochzer, goes even further in its hyperbolic presentation of the pope who claims 'Got was ich off erden genant' (On earth I was called God).⁵⁵

In fact, Knoblochzer's *Totentanz* version was closely modelled on the French *Danse macabre* poem, where the pope refers to himself in the same presumptuous terms and where the irony is unmistakable. The pope is invited by 'le mort' to start the dance 'comme le plus digne seigneur: / En ce point honore seres / Aux grans maistre est deu lonneur' (as the most esteemed lord. In this you will be honoured: honour is due to great masters). In reply, the pope questions whether it is proper for him to open the dance 'qui suis dieu en terre / Jay eu dignite souverainne / En leglise comme saint pierre' (I who am God on earth. I have had sovereign dignity in the church like St Peter). The satire continues in Lydgate's version where the pope instead acknowledges that he is the fittest to open the dance as one who 'sate yn erthe hyst yn my see / The state ful parilous who so taketh hede / To occupie Petirs dignitie' (E: 66–68).

The papal see was indeed a precarious honour, as recent history had shown. The move of the papacy from Rome to Avignon in 1309 had led to the Great Schism (1378–1417), when two rival popes came to rule the (divided) Christian nations from Avignon and Rome simultaneously.⁵⁶ The situation was made worse at the Council of Pisa in 1409 with the election of Alexander V as a third, alternative, antipope; this attempted solution failed when his rivals Benedict XIII and John XXIII refused to abdicate. The co-existence of three rival popes inevitably undermined the prestige of the papacy. Only in 1417 at the Council of Constance was the situation resolved through the election of Martin V (1368–1431) as sole pope with English support; the new pope refused the French offer of Avignon as papal residence in favour of Rome where he eventually arrived in 1420.

There is no evidence that the figure of the pope in the mural at Les Innocents was meant to represent any pope in particular, least of all the autocratic Martin V. None the less, the potential for pointed satire is suggested by a comparison with the famous Großbaseler *Totentanz* scheme, which is believed to have been painted soon after the plague epidemic of 1439. The Basel-born engraver Matthäus Merian the Elder claimed that the figure of the pope in this *Totentanz* represented Felix V (1383–1449), who was elected in 1439 as antipope to Eugenius IV, while the emperor and the king were identified respectively as Sigismund (1368–1437) and his Habsburg son-in-law and

successor Albrecht II (1397–1439).⁵⁷ Even if the mural at Les Innocents may not have portrayed any specific pope of this period, its presentation of the emperor is perhaps more suggestive of a real-life counterpart.

(ii) *The emperor*

APART from his imperial crown, orb and sceptre, the bearded emperor in Marchant's woodcut is distinguished by his robe decorated with the double-headed eagle.⁵⁸ This device is traditionally associated with the Habsburgs, but it had a much earlier history. The emperor in MS M.359 displays a black eagle on a gold field on the sinister side of his mantle, but the dexter side has been left plain blue, perhaps because the small size of the roundel did not allow further detail. It is the emperor in MS Rothschild 2535 (Fig. 10) whose mantle reveals the full heraldry: a double-headed black eagle on a gold field on the dexter and gold fleurs-de-lis on a blue field on the sinister side of his mantle. The latter device is that of the kings of France, and this same combined heraldry was traditionally used in depictions of the Nine Worthies as Charlemagne's coat of arms, *viz.* a combination of the emperor's arms on the dexter side and on the sinister the fleurs-de-lis that signal him as king of the Franks.⁵⁹



FIG. 10. The emperor, detail of the border decoration in BnF MS Rothschild 2535, fol. 108v

The appearance of this dual heraldry in both MS Rothschild 2535 and (in a reversed and reduced form) Morgan MS M.359 makes it likely that the device was also used for the emperor in the mural at Les Innocents. The black double-headed eagle on a gold field had been unofficially associated with the emperor from the 13th century on, until Emperor Sigismund officially adopted it in 1433.⁶⁰ Sigismund was an important political figure in this period and pivotal in the relations between England, France and Burgundy, where he saw his role as that of a mediator. (Relations between England and the Empire had been strained after the dethronement of Richard II, whose first wife had been Sigismund's sister Anne of Bohemia, but there was a rapprochement in 1411 when Henry IV sought imperial support against France.)⁶¹ After failing to effect a truce that could have prevented the battle of Agincourt, Sigismund visited England in 1416 and that autumn attended a meeting between Henry V and John the Fearless at Calais.⁶² Sigismund was, in fact, an exceptionally well-travelled man: he had earlier been involved in the crusade that ended so disastrously at Nicopolis in 1396 (when the young John the Fearless became one of the Ottoman sultan Bayazid I's most lucrative captives),⁶³ and in 1433 he travelled to Rome to be officially crowned Holy Roman Emperor at last.

Sigismund was thus well known in both England and France, so could the emperor in the mural at Les Innocents have been intended as a 'cryptoportrait' (ie. a disguised portrait) of him? The emperor in the French poem is reverentially greeted by 'le mort' as 'le non pareil du monde / Prince et seigneur grant emperiere' (he who has no equal on earth, prince and lord, great emperor); there may be a degree of hyperbole, but the irony mainly hinges on the fact that the emperor must abandon his imperial insignia and arm himself instead with death's attributes of 'pic', 'pelle' and 'linceul' (pick-axe, spade and shroud). The traditional appearance of the bearded emperor in the *Danse macabre* fits Charlemagne but also Sigismund, who had long hair and a forked beard as extant portraits bear out. More importantly, Sigismund is believed to have been the subject of a number of cryptoportraits in his lifetime — although to date scholars do not appear to have considered the possibility of such an imperial portrait in the mural at Les Innocents — and even after his death, if Merian was correct about his portrait in the Großbaseler *Totentanz*.⁶⁴

There are parallels for such cryptoportraits in later *Danse macabre* schemes. In the Dresden *Totentanz* relief of 1534–37 the emperor is traditionally identified as Charles V, the king as Ferdinand I, and the duke as George the Bearded of Saxony (who commissioned the relief) with his sole surviving son Johann.⁶⁵ The example of the relief at Dresden suggests that the inclusion of living people in the *Danse macabre* was not unique, although it may have been inspired by the presentation of historical characters in the earlier *Totentanz* mural at Basel. Of course, the key question is how people would have recognised such portraits: heraldry, dress and attributes would often have been more telling indications of identity than mere likeness. Nonetheless, this use of real-life characters may have started at Les Innocents, as the discussion of the king will show.

(iii) *The king*

IF the inclusion of the dead king towards the end of the mural evoked memories of the recently deceased kings Henry V and Charles VI, there are indications that the figure of the king towards the start of the *danse* was meant to represent Charles VI specifically. In the German *Totentanz* tradition the king was identified as the king of



FIG. 11. The king, detail of a woodcut in Guy Marchant's *Danse macabre* edition first printed in Paris in 1485

Rome, that is, heir to the imperial crown, but in Knoblochtzer's edition the king carries a banner with three fleurs-de-lis, emblems of the French crown — another sign that Knoblochtzer based his *Totentanz* version on a French model.⁶⁶ Marchant's woodcut shows an unmistakably French king dressed in a mantle decorated with the royal fleurs-de-lis, but with long hair and a short beard (Fig. 11). Unlike his father, Charles VI had very regular features that make him difficult to recognise in depictions, but he wore his hair rather short and had no beard.⁶⁷ It is interesting to observe, therefore, that MS Rothschild 2535 shows the king in a blue mantle with gold fleurs-de-lis, but beardless with short brown hair and a lined face (Fig. 12). The king in Morgan MS M.359 is likewise beardless and brown-haired, but he appears younger and more conventional-looking, while his mantle has been left plain blue.

There is a curious resemblance between the figure of the king in MS Rothschild 2535 and Charles VI's tomb effigy at Saint-Denis (Fig. 13), which was commissioned from the sculptor Pierre de Thoiry (or Thury) in 1423 or 1424 — the year when the mural at Les Innocents was begun.⁶⁸ By then Charles had been dead for nearly two years and also been rarely seen in public during the last years of his life. Yet after his death, his body had been laid out in his bed for two or three days, as was the custom, his face uncovered for all to behold.⁶⁹ Moreover, the customary funeral effigy in the king's likeness had been carried on top of the coffin in the funeral procession, its face probably based on a death-mask — the first attested example of such practice in France.⁷⁰ According to the Bourgeois, the king's funeral effigy



FIG. 12. The king, detail of the border decoration in BnF MS Rothschild 2535, fol. 108v

FIG. 13. Tomb effigy of Charles VI, commissioned in 1424 by his widow Isabeau de Bavière from the sculptor Pierre de Thoiry, Abbey church of Saint-Denis

Photo: Pascal Lemaître, © CMN



estoit hault comme une toise, largement couché en envers en ung lict, le visaige descouvert ou sa semblance, couronne d'or, tenant en une de ses mains ung sceptre royal, et en l'autre une maniere de main faisant la benediction de deux doyz, et estoient dorez et si longs qu'ilz advenoient à sa couronne.⁷¹

(it was a good six feet tall, lying on its back in a bed, the face — or the likeness of his face — uncovered, wearing a gold crown and holding in one of its hands a royal sceptre, and in the other a type of hand giving a blessing with two fingers, and these were gilded and so long that they reached the crown.)

It is likely that the very portrait-like tomb effigy produced some years later was modelled on the same image, but the latter could also have served as the model for a cryptoportrait in the mural at Les Innocents.

The Bourgeois describes at length how the common people of Paris greatly mourned the passing of their 'good King Charles', whose reign had lasted for over forty-two years.⁷² Charles VI had always enjoyed great popularity in Paris where he had been known as 'le Bien-aimé' (the Well-Beloved) until his illness caused this soubriquet to be changed into 'le Fol' (the Mad). The grief shown by the king's subjects was in marked contrast to the absence of the French lords at his funeral, including the duke of Burgundy (the late king's son-in-law). The only royal mourner was the duke of Bedford, who as regent had had the King of France's sword carried before him on the way back, much to the Parisians' disgust: it must have epitomised for them the situation that France was in.

Earlier in Charles VI's life, there had been a memorable, near-fatal incident that had caused outrage in Paris.⁷³ Shortly after his recovery from his first bout of madness, the king and five of his courtiers decided to dress up as wildmen ('hommes sauvages') as a prank to liven up the wedding of one of the queen's maids of honour on 28 January 1393. The event became known as the 'bal des sauvages' or, more pointedly, the 'bal des ardents' because the highly combustible linen costumes — covered in pitch or tar with hemp for shaggy hair — accidentally ignited when the king's brother Louis and his friend Philippe de Bar entered with torches, causing the agonising death of four of the 'hommes sauvages' and nearly killing the king himself. The incident was described in detail in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques* and depicted in various luxury manuscripts of his work.⁷⁴ To assuage Parisian anger, Louis was obliged to do public penance and he also erected a chapel at Les Célestins in expiation. Years later, the incident in 1393 was cited as one of the late duke's misdeeds in the *Justification du duc de Bourgogne*, a manifesto designed to justify John the Fearless's assassination of Louis in 1407 as tyrannicide.⁷⁵

It is this event in 1393 that the king's lines in the French *Danse macabre* poem appear to allude to. The king is addressed by 'le mort' as 'noble roy couronne / Renomme de force et de proesse' (noble crowned king, renowned for strength and prowess), which hardly seems to fit the ailing Charles VI in later life. Yet the king's response is striking. First there is his apparent objection to the crude music of the *danse*, as scholars have interpreted his lines 'Je nay point apris a danser / A danse et note si sauuage' (I have never learnt to dance to such a savage movement and tune) — a sentiment that is echoed in Lydgate's lines 'I haue not lerned here-a-forne to daunce / No daunce in sothe of fotyng so sauage' (*E*: 113–14).⁷⁶ Yet not only is the word 'sauuage' highly suggestive of the infamous 'bal des sauvages' of 1393, the allusion is reinforced by the king's last proverbial line 'En la fin fault deuenir cendre', or in Lydgate's words 'For [w]e shalle al to dede ashes turne' (*E*: 120).

At first sight the king's final line may read like a conventional reference to the phrase from the burial service 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. However, the combination with the earlier line 'A danse et note si sauuage' must have struck contemporaries as an allusion to the feast in 1393 when Charles VI was nearly burnt to death while capering around as an 'homme sauvage' — an event that was still being debated as part of the *Justification du duc de Bourgogne* at the Council of Constance in 1415.⁷⁷ The juxtaposition of these lines with a cryptoportrait of Charles VI in the mural (as implied by the appearance of the king in MS Rothschild 2535 and the French royal heraldry in Marchant's woodcut) would have been a poignant reminder to Parisians of their late beloved monarch at a time when they were ruled by an English regent on behalf of an absent infant king.

PATRONAGE

IT seems hardly coincidental that the earliest known *danse macabre* mural was created in Paris during the Anglo-Burgundian occupation. By all accounts, the production of art in the capital suffered from the impact of war and the removal of the French royal court from the city; the Bourgeois complained that the English were tight-fisted and bad for trade.⁷⁸ The patron(s) responsible for commissioning this large and costly mural scheme must have wanted to make a statement, but without falling foul of the authorities who were highly suspicious of any potentially subversive activities, as frère Richard discovered in 1429.

There was nothing wrong in principle about a mural with a moralising message about man's mortality, even one referring to the dead King Charles VI (who was, after all, the grandfather of the new King Henry VI). Perhaps in some way the mural was intended to serve as a homage to the deceased Charles VI: it was started around the same time as the monument at Saint-Denis and the cemetery of Les Innocents was situated along the rue Saint-Denis leading towards the royal mausoleum church. A painted cryptoportrait of the king could easily have been modelled on the funeral effigy that was probably still on display at Saint-Denis at this time; such royal representations were made to be as lifelike as possible. (One can only mourn the loss of Charles VI's funeral effigy when that of his daughter Catherine still survives at Westminster Abbey.⁷⁹) A painted memorial to his royal father at Les Innocents would probably not have displeased the former dauphin Charles VII, either, when he finally re-entered Paris with Burgundian support in 1436.⁸⁰

If the mural in the cemetery of Les Saints Innocents did indeed contain a veiled political statement in the form of recognisable allusions to real-life figures, this might help explain why the *danse macabre* became so famous in such a short time. Its sudden rise to fame is all the more striking if we consider that the theme may have been around since the time of Jehan le Fèvre nearly half a century earlier, without apparently having much of an impact. The mural scheme could well have included other cryptoportraits and allusions to existing persons who can no longer be identified. For example, there may be covert irony in the words of 'le mort' to the archbishop when he asks him whether he draws back his head out of fear: 'Auez vous peur qu'on ne vous fiere' (Are you afraid that someone will hit you?). Medieval archbishops were not usually timid: Jean Montaigu, archbishop of Sens, had died fighting Henry V's army at Agincourt. Likewise, the bishop in the poem is warned that he will have to relinquish the 'biens du monde et de nature' (good things of the world and of nature), and it may be no coincidence that parishes frequently found themselves at loggerheads with their local bishops over matters of revenue. For example, in 1441 Denis du Moulin, bishop of Paris, forbade all processions and burials in the church and cemetery of Les Innocents for four months because he demanded more money in tithes than the impoverished parish could afford to pay.⁸¹ Yet even if it offered an opportunity to satirise an earlier local bishop under the guise of a didactic lesson, it is unlikely that the parish itself commissioned this costly mural. The figures of the constable and the knight in the mural may also have been intended as cryptoportraits, perhaps recognisable through their heraldry, but the loss of the mural and the updating of the figures in Marchant's woodcuts mean that this can no longer be ascertained.

If the king's lines indeed contain allusions to the 'bal des ardents', it means that either the poem postdates 1393 or an earlier (lost) prototype version was adapted after this event to include these topical references. Some scholars have attributed the *danse macabre* poem to the theologian Jean Gerson (1363–1429), chancellor of the university of Paris.⁸² However, Gerson's known anti-Burgundian stance makes it unlikely that a poem by him would have been displayed in such a prominent location in Paris. He was at this time in exile in Charles VII's 'kingdom of Bourges', together with his deputy Gérard Machet, after he had earlier taken a stance against the duke of Burgundy's *Justification* at the Council of Constance in 1415.⁸³ It may well be that an earlier version of the *Danse macabre* poem had instead been written by Jehan le Fèvre, as is sometimes suggested on the basis of his line 'Je fis de Macabré la dance', for it was not unusual for medieval poets to refer to other of their compositions in

their own work. Thus, Lydgate made specific mention of his *Dance of Death* in the moralising poem *Tyed with a Lyne* when he addressed his readers: 'Both high and lough shal go on dethis daunce, / Renne vnto Powlis, beholde the Machabe [*sic*]'.⁸⁴ If the stanza by the 'roy mort' was another interpolation with the death of Charles VI in 1422 in mind, it would have made the scheme at Les Innocents very topical indeed.

Suggestive above all are the references to the notorious 'bal des ardents'. Although it was more than twenty years since Louis of Orléans had done public penance for nearly killing his brother (whose throne he may well have hoped to inherit), his recklessness on that day was still listed as one of his crimes in the duke of Burgundy's *Justification*. Furthermore, the chapel that Louis had built at Les Célestins served as a visible reminder and admission of his guilt. An allusion to the 'bal des ardents' would, therefore, have suited the Burgundian party but not the Orléans-Armagnac supporters, who in turn were held responsible for the brutal murder of John the Fearless. Philip the Good may not have visited Paris much during Bedford's regency, but there was great popular support for Burgundy in the capital. Even though he chose not to attend the late king's funeral, Philip was a Valois and also a member of the royal family through his marriage to Charles VI's daughter Michelle, who had predeceased her father in June 1422.

Whereas the figure of the king in the mural at Les Innocents may have been a cryptoportrait of Duke Philip's father-in-law, it has been noted above how odd it is that the scheme contains no duke. The omission may have been a deliberate decision on the part of a patron wishing to avoid satire or sly criticism of even a generic figure of a duke, or who may have felt that in such a strictly hierarchical scheme the duke might be conspicuous by his absence. Indeed, a case can be made for suggesting that it was Philip himself who was the hitherto unidentified patron. Admittedly, the evidence is entirely circumstantial, but there is a reasonable weight of it. Like his father and grandfather before him, Philip knew the importance of art for political and propaganda purposes. He also had the means to pay for an expensive mural, even if there is no known evidence to connect him with the scheme at Les Innocents. Further study will be needed, for example of the ducal records, to see if any evidence of such a commission can still be found. Yet Philip might have had a vested interest in the cemetery of Les Innocents because of its relative proximity to the Hôtel de Bourgogne further north, whose prominent defence tower, built by John the Fearless in 1409–11 in the aftermath of Louis of Orléans' murder, would have dominated this area that is likely to have been Burgundian territory.⁸⁵ (The Tour Jean sans Peur still survives, the only vestige of the ducal residence in Paris.)

There is other circumstantial evidence. The early manuscript copy of the *Danse macabre* text (BnF, MS fr. 14989) that formerly belonged to Philip the Good also contains a chronicle and the anti-dauphinist propaganda poem *Division des Orleanois contre les Anglois*, written upon the death of Thomas Montacute, earl of Salisbury, at the siege of Orleans in 1428.⁸⁶ This context may suggest that the *Danse macabre* was regarded as something more than just another moralising poem at this time. In September 1449, a play described as a 'jeu, histoire et moralité sur le fait de la danse macabre' was performed for the duke in his hôtel in Bruges, which indicates further interest in the theme.⁸⁷ No less intriguing is a civic record at Arras of numerous snow sculptures that were set up in the city's streets and squares during the severe winter of 1434–35.⁸⁸ They belong to a late-medieval tradition in which the adult population used snow sculptures to depict well-known characters from the bible and popular

culture, and also political allegories. Arras belonged to the duke of Burgundy who would sign a treaty with the former dauphin there later that year; it was also the place where Joan of Arc was held captive for a week or more in November 1430 after her capture outside Compiègne. Amongst the named snow sculptures at Arras that winter were 'le Grande Puchelle' with 'gens d'armes' (i.e. Joan the Maid with armed men) and 'la dansse machabre où estoient en figure de nege l'Empereur, le Roy, le Mort et Manouvrier' (the *danse macabre* in which there were in snow figures of the emperor, the king, Death and labourer). Whether or not this *danse* in snow carried a political message, it indicates a very rapid dissemination into popular culture within a Burgundian city.⁸⁹ If the sculpture of the Three Living and the Three Dead at Les Innocents was indeed commissioned by the duke of Berry to commemorate his murdered nephew Louis of Orléans, it would have been ironic for the duke of Burgundy to upstage that scheme with a mural in the same location that painted an even bigger picture of the deaths of popes, emperors, kings and lesser mortals.

The *danse* was an easily adaptable theme that lent itself to moralising and to satire, with the potential of targeting particular characters either in mockery, in homage, or perhaps just in remembrance. A literary example is Lydgate's 'tregetour', who is explicitly named as Henry V's court juggler or magician: 'Maister Jon Rikelle some tyme tregetowre / Of nobille harry kynge of Ingelonde / And of Fraunce the myghti Conquerowre' (E: 513–15).⁹⁰ One can find other adaptations intended to make the *danse* more relevant to contemporaries, especially in art by means of portraits of real-life figures, albeit these examples postdate the mural at Les Innocents. At least, the above-mentioned *Totentanz* mural at Basel with its presumed cryptoportraits of Pope Felix V, Emperor Sigismund and King Albrecht was created not too long after the scheme in Paris. More certain are the cryptoportraits in the extant *Totentanz* reliefs at Dresden, which were commissioned by the Duke George the Bearded for the new 'Georgen-tor' of his palace; whereas the figures of the emperor (Charles V?) and the king (Ferdinand?) are badly eroded, the figures of the duke and his son are well preserved, both of them still wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece. The duke of Saxony may have had his personal reasons for choosing such a sombre theme for his palace: he had already lost nine of his ten children when his wife Barbara died in 1534 as this new part of his residence was being built.⁹¹ Moreover, there is the king in Holbein's woodcut series, who is traditionally identified as a cryptoportrait of François I (Fig. 14), just as the emperor may represent Maximilian and the pope portray Leo X; it must be admitted, though, that Holbein included no heraldry to support such identification.⁹²

Kings would have been particularly straightforward to portray by means of either heraldry or of their general appearance familiar through coins and seals. In the *Dance of Death* mural of the early 16th century in the Guild Chapel at Stratford-on-Avon, the mantle of the king appears to have been decorated with the English royal device of three lions *passant gardant*, suggesting that the figure was intended to represent Henry VII.⁹³ Marchant's woodcut of a long-haired bearded king may indicate that he chose to have that figure updated by means of dress and hairstyle (unless the mural itself had been altered by that time). In turn, while Marchant's second (or subsequent) edition served as the model for the 16th-century *danse macabre* mural at La Ferté-Loupière (Yonne), the king was evidently altered once again from the long-haired figure in long robes in the woodcut to a more dashing bearded figure in shorter robes and tight hose (Fig. 15). Perhaps this was another cryptoportrait of François I (1494–1547), continuing a tradition that had started in Paris a century earlier.

FIG. 14. Death and the king (a cryptoportrait of François I?), woodcut from Hans Holbein the Younger's *Les simulachres & historiees faces de la mort* published in 1538



FIG. 15. The figure of the king (a cryptoportrait of François I?) in the early 16th-century *Danse macabre* mural on the north wall of the church of La Ferté-Loupière (Yonne)
Photo: author



CONCLUSION

THE aim of this essay has been to try to explain the sudden development of the *Danse macabre* from a mere mention in a poem written in 1376 to a text incorporated in a wall-painting that for some reason attracted a lot of attention from locals and foreign visitors soon after its completion in 1425 — more attention, in fact, than one might have expected from just another didactic scheme. Although there is a danger in trying to identify political messages and cryptoportraits of people long dead, especially in a mural that was destroyed centuries ago, in the case of the *Danse macabre* mural at Les Innocents the combination of text, visual evidence and historical circumstances supports the ideas proposed here.

By the time Charles VII took control of Paris with the support of his Burgundian former brother-in-law Philip the Good, the fame of the mural and the theme of the *Danse macabre* had spread far and wide. The London *Dance of Death* scheme at Pardon Churchyard was probably already in existence and the Großbaseler *Totentanz* mural was created not long after. The *Danse* easily lent itself to further adoption by local patrons: a moralising text or a decorative border in manuscript or print, a wall-painting, a stained-glass window, sculpture, or whatever suited their tastes and purposes. The irony is that these later adaptations may have obscured the original intention of the mural executed in occupied Paris in 1424–25.

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NOTES

1. For a recent overview of the theme across Europe, see S. Oosterwijk, 'Of Corpses, Constables and Kings: The *Danse Macabre* in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Culture', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 157 (2004), 169–90. A monograph on the medieval *danse macabre* is in preparation.

2. For Lydgate's poem, see esp. *The Dance of Death, edited from MSS. Ellesmere 26/A.13 and B.M. Lansdowne 699, collated with the other extant MSS.*, ed. F. Warren, with introduction and notes by B. White (Early English Text Society, o.s. 181, 1931, repr. 2000). Quotations from this edition will be referenced in the text with E for the Ellesmere manuscript version. A slightly earlier edition was published in *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey*, ed. E. P. Hammond (1927, repr. New York 1965), 124–42, 418–35.

3. *Le respit de la mort par Jean le Fevre*, ed. G. Hasenohr-Esnos, Société des Anciens Textes Français, (Paris 1969), 113, l. 3078.

4. The historical context is touched upon, but with different conclusions, in M. Dujakovic, 'The Dance of Death, the Dance of Life: Cemetery of the Innocents and the *Danse Macabre*', in *Out of the Stream: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Mural Painting*, ed. L. U. Afonso and V. Serrão (Newcastle 2007),

206–32. I am grateful to Dr Julian Luxford for sending me a copy of Dujakovic's essay after this article had already been accepted for publication.

5. For a modern facsimile of Marchant's 1485 edition, see *Der tanzende Tod: mittelalterliche Totentänze*, ed. G. Kaiser (Frankfurt am Main 1983), 74–107. Quotations in the text will be based on this edition.

6. See also P. Lorentz and D. Sandron, *Atlas de Paris au Moyen-Age: espace urbain, habitat, société, religion, lieux de pouvoir* (Paris 2006), 130.

7. The church of Les Innocents and its cemetery are extensively discussed and illustrated in M. Fleury and G.-M. Leproux ed., *Les Saints-Innocents* (Paris n.d.), esp. the article by Leproux, 'L'église des Saints Innocents', 74–83.

8. B. Venot and J. P. Mouilleseaux, *L'Aître Saint-Maclou de Rouen: petit guide à l'usage des habitués du lieu et de ceux qui le découvrent* (Rouen 1980).

9. For the painting, see V. Harding, *The Dead and Living in Paris and London, 1500–1600* (Cambridge 2002), 103, fig. 6; Fleury and Leproux, *Les Saints-Innocents* (as n. 7), fig. 43.

10. There was no fixed iconography for the Office of the Dead, which might carry illustrations of the Last Judgement, the Vigil of the Dead, deathbed and burial scenes, Dives and Lazarus, Job on the dunghill, the Raising of Lazarus, or the Three Living and the Three Dead, as well as the *danse macabre*. See, for example, R. S. Wieck, 'The Death Desired: Books of Hours and the Medieval Funeral', in *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*, ed. E. E. DuBruck and B. I. Gusick, *Studies in the Humanities*, 45 (New York/Canterbury 1999), 431–76, esp. 433, and also G. K. Fiero, 'Death Ritual in Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Illumination', *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), 271–94.

11. A. Tuetey ed., *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris, 1405–1449, publié d'après les manuscrits de Rome et de Paris* (Paris 1881), 203. Tuetey, n. 2, adds that only the manuscript copy in Rome (Vatican Reg. Lat. 1923, dating from the second half of the 15th century) mentions that the painting was started in August 1424; the Paris manuscript only gives the year 1425. For an English translation, see *A Parisian Journal 1405–1449*, trans. J. Shirley (Oxford 1968), 204. As explained by Shirley, 12–14, the *Journal* was not strictly a diary written day by day; much of it was composed piecemeal.

12. Leproux, 'L'église' (as n. 7), 80–81.

13. According to J. Stow, *A Survey of London, Contayning the Originall, Antiquity, Increase, Moderne estate, and description of that Citie, written in the yeare 1598* (London 1598), 264–65, this Dance of Death scheme was commissioned by the town clerk John Carpenter (c. 1372–1442). Stow's 1603 edition contains a shorter and slightly different account with the added information that the scheme was 'curiously painted vpon boord', and thus not strictly a wall-painting. Born in 1525, Stow could well have seen the scheme prior to its destruction in 1549.

14. 'Illec sont peintures notables de la danse macabre et autres, avec escriptures pour esmouvoir les gens a devotion' (And in this place are remarkable paintings of the *danse macabre* and other subjects, with inscriptions to incite the people to devotion). Edited text published in [A. J. V.] Le Roux de Lincy and L. M. Tisserand, *Paris et ses historiens aux xive et xve siècles* (Paris 1855, 2nd edn 1867), as 'Description de la ville de Paris sous Charles VI par Guillebert de Metz 1407–1434', 117–236, at 192–93.

15. Tuetey, *Journal* (as n. 11), 233–34. It may have been frère Richard's preaching stint that led to the mistaken belief that Les Innocents was a Franciscan cemetery.

16. Tuetey, *Journal* (as n. 11), 275–76. Plays were also frequently performed in cemeteries in the 15th century.

17. See Oosterwijk, 'Of Corpses' (as n. 1), fig. 4.

18. M.-N. Baudouin-Matuszek, 'Le Cimetière à l'époque moderne', in Fleury and Leproux, *Les Saints-Innocents* (as n. 7), 61, figs 47 and 31.

19. Leproux, 'L'église' (as n. 7); H. Couzy, 'L'Église des Saints-Innocents à Paris', *Bull. mon.*, 130 (1972), 279–302.

20. Baudouin-Matuszek, 'Le Cimetière' (as n. 18), 58–59 and fig. 51. The enlargement of the rue de la Ferronnerie had earlier been advocated by King Henri II in 1554.

21. For more details on the historical background, see esp. G. Ll. Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule: The Anglo-Burgundian Regime 1420–1436* (Oxford 1991); C. T. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy 1415–1450: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford 1983); idem, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c.1300–c.1450* (Cambridge 1988); idem ed., *Power, Culture, and Religion in France c.1350–c.1550* (Woodbridge 1989); idem ed., *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France* (Liverpool 2000).

22. A vivid account of the king's illness, based on contemporary chronicles such as Froissart's, can be found in B. W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (London 1979), esp. 497–99, 513–16.

23. See R. Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power* (1966, repr. Woodbridge 2002), chapter 2.

24. See Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), esp. 116–19.
25. Vaughan, *John the Fearless* (as n. 23), chapter 10. This notorious event is curiously missing in all copies of the *Bourgeois' Journal* (Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), 142).
26. For an account of the relations between Burgundy, England and France after the murder of John the Fearless, see R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (1970, repr. Woodbridge 2002), chapter 1.
27. Allmand, *Hundred Years War* (as n. 21), 29–30.
28. Catherine was also a younger sister to Richard II's child-wife Isabelle (1389–1409), who after Richard's death had been married to her cousin Charles of Orléans and had died in childbirth (albeit Shakespeare chose to make her an adult queen in *Richard II*). The dauphin in *Henry V* was their brother Louis (1397–1415); he was briefly succeeded in that role by Jean (1398–1417).
29. B. G. H. Ditcham, '“Mutton Guzzlers and Wine Bags”: Foreign Soldiers and Native Reactions in Fifteenth-Century France', in Allmand, *Power, Culture* (as n. 21), 1–13.
30. See Allmand, *Hundred Years War* (as n. 21), map 3.
31. For a lively, if not always accurate account of Bedford's life and career, see E. C. Williams, *My Lord of Bedford 1389–1435, Being a Life of John of Lancaster, First Duke of Bedford, Brother of Henry V and Regent of France* (London 1963). Bedford is also mentioned frequently, and usually favourably, by the *Bourgeois* in his *Journal*. See also J. Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories: The Worldly Goods of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France (1389–1435)* (London 1993).
32. Bedford was to find Philip an often unreliable ally. After a triple alliance had been agreed between England, Burgundy and Brittany in the Treaty of Amiens in 1423, Philip signed a separate treaty with John, duke of Brittany; there were also to be various overtures between Philip and the dauphin prior to 1435. Serious friction between Bedford and Burgundy was caused by the marriage of Bedford's brother Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, to Philip's kinswoman Jacqueline of Hainault and his subsequent attempt to invade Hainault on behalf of his wife (whom he subsequently repudiated in favour of Eleanor Cobham). See Vaughan, *Philip the Good* (as n. 26), esp. 34–47, and Williams, *My Lord of Bedford* (as above), 118–26.
33. Younger brother of the duke of Brittany and originally an Armagnac supporter, Richemont's natural allegiance was pro-English; his widowed mother Joan of Navarre had remarried King Henry IV in 1402, which made Bedford his stepbrother. The French 'comte de Richemont' was an old but empty English title to which the dukes of Brittany still laid claim; the actual earldom of Richmond was held by Bedford from 1414. For the constables of France and Richemont in particular, see Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), 185–86 (n. 1), 302 (n. 2), 234–25, 330, 253 (n. 1). Also *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, ed. C. Beaune (Paris 1990), 503.
34. After his capture at Agincourt, Richemont was released in 1420 in return for supporting the Anglo-Burgundian cause, which he abandoned in 1424 to join the dauphin. However, his service to the dauphin's cause was questionable: the *Bourgeois* described him in his *Journal* as either dishonest or cowardly. Charles chose to exclude Richemont from his coronation ceremony in 1429.
35. Dujakovic, 'Dance' (as n. 4), 227–30, interprets the 'roy mort' as symbolic of the nation.
36. See, for example, the miniature of c. 1310 in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle illustrated in Oosterwijk, 'Of Corpses' (as n. 1), fig. 2.
37. Particularly relevant in this context is a miniature of Fortune's Wheel with six figures, including a pope at the top, a constable(?), a tumbling emperor and a fallen king, in a manuscript of c. 1415 of *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*: see E. Taburet-Delahaye ed., *Paris 1400: les arts sous Charles VI*, exh. cat. (Paris 2004), cat. 80. Laurent de Premierfait's prose text was to be translated by Lydgate as *The Fall of Princes*. Premierfait had been another victim of the Burgundian attacks on Armagnac supporters in Paris in 1418; see J. Laidlaw, 'Alain Chartier and the Arts of Crisis Management', in Allmand, *War, Government* (as n. 21), 37–53, at 43.
38. For medieval cadaver effigies, see the monograph by K. Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, California Studies in the History of Art, 15 (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1973), and two recent overview articles: S. Oosterwijk, 'Food for Worms — Food for Thought: The Appearance and Interpretation of the “Verminous” Cadaver in Britain and Europe', *Church Monuments*, 20 (2005), 40–80, 133–40, and F. Baron, 'Le médecin, le prince, les prélats et la mort. L'apparition du transi dans la sculpture française du Moyen Âge', *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 51 (2006), 125–58. P. Binski, 'John the Smith's Grave', in *Tributes to Jonathan J. G. Alexander: The Making and Meaning of Illuminated Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts, Art & Architecture*, ed. S. l'Engle and G. B. Guest (London, 2007), 386–93, identifies an indent at Brightwell Baldwin (Oxfordshire) as potentially the earliest known shroud brass dating to the 1370s.
39. J. A. Wisman, 'La symbolique du miroir dans les *dances macabres* de Guyot Marchant', *Romanische Forschungen*, 103 (1991), 157–71; J. H. M. Taylor, 'Un miroir salutaire', in *Dies Illa: Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. H. M. Taylor, Proceedings of the 1983 Manchester Colloquium, *Manchester Studies in French*, 1 (Liverpool 1984), 29–43; A. Corvisier, 'La représentation de la société dans les danses des morts du XVe au

XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 16 (1969), 489–539. Lydgate likewise uses the image of a 'myrrow[r]' (E: 49).

40. It is often overlooked that medieval tomb effigies were habitually painted, and this probably applied to cadaver effigies as well: see Oosterwijk, 'Food' (as n. 38), 68–71.

41. H. Wijsman, 'La Danse macabre du cimetière des Saints-Innocents et un manuscrit de Philippe le Bon', in *Actes du 12e congrès international d'études sur les Danses macabres et l'art macabre en general*, 1 (Meslay-le-Grenet 2005), 135–44. The manuscript is recorded in the inventory of Philip the Good's library made after his death on 15 June 1467.

42. See the brief mention in C. Reynolds, "'Les Angloys, de leur droicte nature, veuillent touzjours guerrear': Evidence for Painting in Paris and Normandy, c.1420–1450", in Allmand, *Power, Culture* (as n. 21), 43, where no date is assigned to either manuscript.

43. The manuscript contains 174 vellum leaves and is richly decorated throughout with twelve large miniatures, 332 small border miniatures and twenty-four calendar illustrations; a wealth of illumination suggestive of an important patron. Its decorative programme is in many ways unusual: for this and other information on this manuscript, see W. Voelke, 'Morgan M.359 and the Origin of the "New Iconography" of the Virtues in the Fifteenth Century', in *Album Amicorum Kenneth C. Lindsay: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. S. A. Stein and G. D. McKee (Binghamton, NY 1990), 57–90, and the Morgan Library's CORSAIR website at <http://utu.morganlibrary.org>; also R. S. Wiecek, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York 1997), 30, 55, nos 14, 36.

44. Also included are St Botolph (translation 9 March, and 17 June), St Edward (18 March), St Augustine of Canterbury (27 May), and St Edmund of Canterbury (19 November), in addition to St Geneviève (3 January) and St Denis (9 October) for Paris. It is suggestive that the earliest recorded owner (indicated in a 16th-century hand on fol. 173v) is Charles de Bourgueville (1504–1593), sieur de Bras, of Caen — the Norman city held so long by the English; see Voelke, 'Morgan M.359', 71.

45. C. de Hamel, *The Rothschilds and their Collections of Illuminated Manuscripts* (London 2005), 64–65 and fig. 30a, attributes this manuscript to the Bedford Master. However, G. Bartz and E. König, 'Die Illustration des Totenoffiziums in Stundenbüchern', in *Im Angesicht des Todes. Ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium I*, ed. H. Beckeret and E. König (St Ottilien 1987), 487–528, at 516 and fig. 4, attribute the manuscript instead to the Master of the Munich *Légende Dorée*, who was active in Paris between 1420–30 and 1450–60.

46. The coat of arms that bears the greatest resemblance to that on the herald's tabard is that of the family of Aumont in Picardy and Guernsey (the same as the dukes of Villequier-Aumont), which are *argent a chevron gules with four martlets in chief three in base*; the heraldry may have been adapted for a cadet branch. I am grateful to Dr Kristiane Lemé-Hébuterne and her colleague for this information and to Philip Lankester for the English terminology.

47. An example is the miniature illustrating the entry for *Adolescentia* in the 14th-century encyclopaedia *Omne Bonum* (BL MS Royal 6 E VI, fol. 58v). I am grateful to Dr Margaret Scott for drawing my attention to this image.

48. There is one female character in the *danse macabre* mural in the abbey church at La Chaise-Dieu (Haute-Loire), but this scheme is very difficult to date. The question about the appearance of a woman in the *danse macabre* was discussed in a paper entitled 'Vive l'amour! A woman in the medieval *danse macabre* mural in Paris?', which was presented at the 13th international Totentanz Congress in Metnitz (Austria) on 27 October 2007 and is being prepared for publication. The image of Death preying on romantic couples was to become a theme in its own right, for example in the graphic work of the Housebook Master.

49. See, for example, J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge 1973), and also L. C. and R. T. Lambdin ed., *Chaucer's Pilgrims: An Historical Guide to the Pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales* (Westport, CT 1996).

50. R. Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes: Die mittelalterlichen Totentänze und ihr Nachleben* (Bern/Munich 1980), 29–39 and 149.

51. See, for example, F. Whyte, *The Dance of Death in Spain and Catalonia* (Baltimore 1931); J. M. Clark, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Glasgow 1950), chapter 4; and J. Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres de France et d'Espagne et leurs prolongements littéraires* (Lyons 1972), with an edited version of the *Dança general* text on 165–82.

52. A. Corvisier, 'La représentation de la société dans les danses des morts du XVe au XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 16 (1969), 494.

53. K. Holderegger, 'Der Tod und der Papst', in *Tanzend ins Jenseits. Vorstellungen — Darstellungen — Erfahrungen zu Sterben und Tod in Mittelalter und Gegenwart* (Zürich n.d.), 11: 'Diejenigen Diener der Kirche, die mit ihrem Tun die Werte der Bibel mehr verrieten als befolgten, wurden in den Totentänzen von Anfang an scharf angegriffen, doch wurde der Papst in der Regel geschont. Erst Niklaus Manuel wagte es, im Berner Totentanz auch den Stellvertreter [*sic*] Gottes zu entweihen und damit die mittelalterliche Kirche als Institution in Frage zu stellen'. Manuel's pope mocks the foolish world which venerates him as if he held

the keys to heaven: 'Vff Erd scheÿn groß min Heÿligkeÿt / Die torrecht wällt sich vor mir neÿgt / Als ob ich vff schluf s Himmelrych. / So bin ich jetz selbs ouch ein Lych.' See J. Tripps, 'Den Würmer wirst Du Wildbret sein.' *Der Berner Totentanz des Niklaus Manuel Deutsch in den Aquarellkopien von Albrecht Kauw* (1649), *Schriften des Bernischen Historischen Museums*, 6 (Bern 2005), 32–33.

54. The matching German line in Heidelberg cpg 314 reads 'Ich was ein heiliger pabst genant', which is also followed closely in the Heidelberg blockbook; see Hammerstein, *Tanz* (as n. 50), 32, and Kaiser, *Der tanzende Tod* (as n. 5), 280.

55. Kaiser, *Der tanzende Tod* (as n. 5), 116.

56. E. Delaruelle, E.-R. Labande and P. Ourliac, *L'Eglise au temps du Grand Schisme et de la crise conciliaire 1378–1449*, 2 vols (Paris 1962–64).

57. Kaiser, *Der tanzende Tod* (as n. 5), 194–95. Felix V was Amadeus VIII, count and duke of Savoy; he was elected antipope by the rebellious Council of Basel and only resigned under pressure ten years later. Matthäus Merian's copper engravings of the Großbasler *Totentanz*, which were first published in 1621, predate the destruction of this mural scheme in 1805.

58. In Heinrich Knoblochster's printed *Totentanz*, which was based on Marchant's *Danse Macabre* edition, the emperor himself displays no heraldry but the double-headed eagle does feature on the banner suspended from the trumpet that Death is blowing by his side.

59. The heraldic term is *or a eagle sable impaling azure semy of lis or*. This is how Charlemagne is depicted, for example, in a miniature in a manuscript of c. 1310–20 of Jacob van Maerlant's Middle Dutch *Spiegel Historiael* (The Hague, KB MS KA XX, fol. 217v) and in a wall-painting of the Nine Worthies of the 1430s in the 'sala baronale' of the Castello della Manta (Piedmont, Italy): see M. Meuwese, *Beeldend vertellen. De verluchte handschriften van Jacob van Maerlants Rijmbijbel en Spiegel Historiael* (Leiden 2001), 110, and V. Tátrai, 'Die Darstellung Sigismunds von Luxemburg in der italienischen Kunst seiner Zeit', in I. Takács ed., *Sigismundus, Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxembourg 1387–1437*, exh. cat. (Mainz 2006), 143–67, fig. 10. Although this heraldry was obviously fictitious, Charlemagne had used the eagle as a symbol of the Holy Roman Emperor; see W. van Anrooij, *Helden van weleer. De Negen Besten in de Nederlanden (1300–1700)* (Amsterdam 1997), 85–86 and 238, n. 45.

60. For recent studies of Sigismund, see Takács, *Sigismundus* (as n. 59), and M. Pauly and F. Reinert ed., *Sigismund von Luxembourg. Ein Kaiser in Europa* (Mainz 2006).

61. A. Bárány, 'Anglo-Luxembourg Relations during the Reign of Emperor Sigismund', in Pauly and Reinert, *Sigismund* (as n. 60), 43–59.

62. See Vaughan, *John the Fearless* (as n. 23), esp. p. 255. Sigismund's later attempts to curb Burgundian power were to cause conflict first with John and then with his son Philip.

63. J. M. Bak, 'Sigismund and the Ottoman advance', in Pauly and Reinert, *Sigismund* (as n. 60), 89–94.

64. See esp. Tátrai, 'Die Darstellung Sigismunds', and V. Colling-Kerg, 'L'iconographie de l'empereur Sigismund de Luxembourg en Italie (1368–1437)', in *Le rêve italien de la maison de Luxembourg aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Luxemburg 1995), 189–227, esp. 191–94. Also G. Pochat, 'Zur Genese des Porträts', in Takács, *Sigismundus* (as n. 59), esp. cat. 2.1, 124–42, at 141: 'Kaum ein Herrscher der Zeit wurde so häufig in Handlung- und Kryptoporträts dargestellt wie Sigismund.'

65. M. Winzler ed., *Dresdner Totentanz: Das Relief in der Dreikönigskirche Dresden* (Halle an der Saale 2001), 4, 5, 13, and figs 4–5.

66. See Kaiser, *Der tanzende Tod* (as n. 5), 136. It should also be noted that although Knoblochster (Kaiser, 138) omits the constable and instead includes the duke clad in ermine and armour, the sword raised in the latter's left hand is reminiscent of the former's ceremonial sword.

67. See P. Lorentz, 'Des rois qui se suivent mais ne se ressemblent pas: à propos des portraits de Charles V et de Charles VI', in Taburet-Delahaye, *Paris 1400* (as n. 37), 28–30 and also cat. 95. On the medieval development from conventional representation to portraiture, see also G. Sommers Wright, 'The Reinvention of the Portrait Likeness in the Fourteenth Century', *Gesta*, 39 (2000), 117–34.

68. C. Sauvageot (photos) and S. Santos (text), *Saint-Denis, dernière demeure des rois de France* (La Pierre qui Vire 1999), fig. 57; M. Beaulieu and V. Beyer, *Dictionnaire des sculpteurs français du Moyen Age* (Paris 1992), 90–91; Taburet-Delahaye, *Paris 1400* (as n. 37), cat. 226A.

69. Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), 179.

70. Taburet-Delahaye, *Paris 1400* (as n. 37), cat. 226A.

71. Tuetey, *Journal* (as n. 11), 179.

72. Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), 179–83. Charles VI had succeeded his father Charles V upon the latter's death on 16 September 1380, but the Bourgeois claims that some old men witnessing the funeral of Charles VI still remembered how his father had looked in his consecration robes in 1364.

73. The story is retold in detail in Tuchman, *Mirror* (as n. 22), 503–05.

74. 15th-century illustrations of this event can be found, for example, in BL, MS Harleian 4380, fol. 11r; BL, MS Royal 18 E II, fol. 206r; and BnF, MS fr. 2646, fol. 176r.

75. Vaughan, *John the Fearless* (as n. 23), 71 and pl. 4. Other crimes attributed to the duke included attempts to poison both the king and the then dauphin Charles (1392–1401), and causing the king's insanity through black magic.

76. See, for example, J. H. M. Taylor, 'Que signifiait *danse* au quinzième siècle? Danser la Danse macabré', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, 18 (1991), 265–66.

77. Vaughan, *John the Fearless* (as n. 23), 210–11.

78. Shirley, *Journal* (as n. 11), 2. Reynolds, 'Les Angloys' (as n. 42), 49, noted the apparent disappearance c. 1420 of the Boucicaut Master's workshop in Paris. Also F. Avril and N. Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peinture en France 1440–1520* (Paris 1993), 18–19, 23.

79. See P. Lindley, 'The Funeral and Tomb Effigies of Queen Katharine of Valois and King Henry V', *JBAA*, 160 (2007), 165–77.

80. Charles had been conceived at a time when Queen Isabeau was believed to have had an affair with her brother-in-law Louis. However, M. Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981, repr. London, 1987), 72–75, points out that it was Henry V's supporters who questioned the dauphin's legitimacy; officially Charles had been disowned by his parents in 1420 because of the murder of John the Fearless.

81. Tuetey, *Journal* (as n. 11), 357, item 796; Beaune, *Journal* (as n. 33), 401 and n. 7. The Bourgeois claims that the grasping bishop had fifty court cases with other ecclesiastical institutions in his diocese pending in parliament at this time, but Du Moulin's greed was probably not unique amongst medieval bishops.

82. Some of the reasons for attributing the poem to Gerson are rather convoluted. On the one hand, a 1497 translation into Catalan by Pedro Miguel de Carbonell names as the author 'un sanct homme doctor e Canciller de Paris [...] Johannes Climachus sive Climages', presumably Nicolas de Clemanges who was a magister and Rector, rather than a doctor and Chancellor, and not named 'Johannes', but indeed a friend of Jean Gerson. On the other hand, and perhaps more tellingly, a copy of the poem survives in an early manuscript (BnF, MS lat. 14904, from the rich library of the former abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris) that also contains tractates by de Clemanges and especially Gerson. See, for example, Hammerstein, *Tanz* (as n. 50), 168; Clark, *Dance* (as n. 51), 28–29. S. Cosacchi, *Makabertanz. Der Totentanz in Kunst, Poesie und Brauchtum des Mittelalters* (Meisenheim am Glan 1965), 701, chose to see Gerson's known opposition to the Burgundian cause as the reason why his authorship of the poem could not be revealed.

83. Gerson also wrote a *Deploratio* in Latin about the Burgundian slaughter of Armagnac supporters in Paris in 1418.

84. H. N. MacCracken and M. Sherwood ed., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, part II, Secular Poems, EETS, o.s. 192 (London 1934), no. 74, p. 834, ll. 66–67. Another poem sometimes attributed to Lydgate, *The Prohemey of a Mariage betwix an Olde Man and a Yonge Wife, and the Counsail, &c.*, includes a similar allusion to 'the daunce of Makabre'. See *A Selection from the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate*, ed. J. O. Halliwell (London 1842), 27–46, at 34, based on BL MS Harl. 372, fols 45–51; this poem is not included in MacCracken's edition of Lydgate's minor poems.

85. Thompson, *Paris and Its People* (as n. 21), 127–28 and 130, cites the small number of confiscated Armagnac properties in the triangle between the rue Saint-Denis and the rue Saint-Honoré.

86. Wijsman, 'La Danse macabre', esp. 138–39; the third text is a chronicle entitled *Les Aventures depuis 200 Ans*.

87. The ducal accounts for 1449 list a payment to the Douai painter Nicaise de Cambray for enacting the play with his companions before the duke. See Clark, *Dance* (as n. 51), 92.

88. Vaughan, *Philip the Good* (as n. 26), 67; R. Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne (XVe–XVIII siècles). Essai* (Paris 1978), 161–65, which cites the full town record on 161–62; G. Besnier, 'Quelques notes sur Arras et Jeanne d'Arc', *Revue du Nord*, 40 (1958), 51–62. H. Pley, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511. Stadscultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam 1988), 17, cites an earlier example at Tournai in 1422, where a snow sculpture of a lion herding a flock of sheep was interpreted by the population as a king guarding his subjects' welfare.

89. Muchembled, *Culture* (as n. 88), 162. In the regional dialect *le Mort* can mean *la Mort*.

90. The introduction of a named contemporary in the *Dance* may imply a familiar figure recently dead at the time of writing, but no historical character of that name has been identified. See notes in *Dance of Death* (as n. 2), 112–13, and *English Verse* (as n. 2), 425.

91. Winzeler, *Dresdner Totentanz*, 4–5, 8, 13.

92. N. Z. Davis, 'Holbein's *Pictures of Death* and the Reformation at Lyons', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 3 (1956), 97–130, at 101 and n. 47.

93. However, if one can trust William Puddephat's drawings of the Dance of Death mural in the Guild Chapel at Stratford-upon-Avon, made when it was temporarily revealed in its damaged state in 1955, the mural was otherwise modelled on the woodcuts in one of Marchant's later *Danse Macabre* editions. See C. Davidson, *The Guild Chapel Wall Paintings at Stratford-upon-Avon* (New York 1988), fig. 20; Oosterwijk, 'Of Corpses' (as n. 1), fig. 6.