

DEATH AND THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK: PRINTERS, EXPERIMENTATION AND
THE REINVENTION OF THE *DANSE MACABRE*, 1485-c.1530s

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the adaptation of the *Danse macabre* (Dance of Death), a popular late medieval visual and literary theme prevalent in mural paintings, into a series of illustrated books published in France towards the end of the fifteenth century. While the first known edition, printed in Paris in 1485 by Guy Marchant, was based on the famous and now destroyed mural from the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents (painted 1424-25), subsequent editions published by presses in Paris, Lyons, Troyes and Geneva included additional figures and often placed the theme together with other texts and images of similar subject matter thus framing the *Danse macabre* in a novel context. Despite this, however, previous scholarship has treated the books mainly as replicas of the lost mural and overlooked their status as inventive works of art. Nor have the extant editions been studied in detail even though they vary considerably in terms of content, layout and medium, all of which has an effect on how the theme is presented in each book.

By studying the series within the context of early printing in France, the thesis situates the books in the transitional period of bookmaking, from scribal to printing culture, and argues that they were a product of collaboration and experimentation among some of the most prolific printers and publishers of the period, including Marchant, Antoine Vérard and Mathias Husz. In discussing their printing practices, the thesis emphasizes the crucial role the printers had in editing the work and reinventing the theme. The late fifteenth century in France was also marked by an unprecedented exchange of artistic practices across multiple media, facilitated in part by the proliferation of the printed works, which became the locus for diffusion of images and ideas. In this context, the *Danse macabre* books helped to popularize the late medieval theme and even served as the model for mural paintings and an illuminated manuscript. Ultimately, the thesis reveals not only that the books are distinctive and innovative works, but also that they participated in a much broader scope of image production than previously assumed.

PREFACE

This dissertation is the original, unpublished, independent work of the author, M. Dujakovic.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Context and Issues

Dressed in a traditional garb of a medieval scholar and seated in an elaborate chair in front of an open book, the figure of the Author (*L'Acteur*) gazes at the viewer while pointing to the procession arranged on a wall in a painting (Fig. 1).¹ Appearing twice in the image, at the beginning and at the end of the procession, the Author does not actually participate in the dance, but rather functions as a mediator between the beholder and the picture and calls attention to the moral of the image. A line up of figures stretches before the Author – an uncanny sight of corpses and men – arranged according to their station in lay and clerical hierarchy, beginning with the Pope and the Emperor and ending with the Infant and the Monk (Figs. 2 and 3). Although the figures are located outdoors – the ground is covered in fresh green grass – the space they occupy appears claustrophobic because the bodies of the living and the dead are pressed too close to one another, their arms and legs overlapping. The dead are portrayed naked save for the loincloth that partially covers their emaciated, decomposing bodies. Some carry objects associated with death and dying – coffins, spears and scythes – while others are busy holding on to the living figures and urging them to move in the direction of the procession. Unlike the dead, the living are fully clothed in the costumes that denote their status and profession and many hold accouterments that further signal their occupation in life. The bearded Emperor holds an orb, the King carries a scepter, the clerics are holding on to their crosses, each carefully demarcating their position within the

¹ In the literature, this figure is referred to either as the Author or the Authority. He delivers the prologue and the epilogue of the *Danse macabre*, both of which are directed at the viewer.

Church, while the Doctor examines a urine flask (Figs. 4 and 5). Yet, ironically, their social position and material possessions are no longer of any importance, for the figures are being forced into the dance that leads to death and the dissolution of worldly goods.

In the register below the fresco are verses in French, a cheeky dialogue between each living figure and the cadaver next to him, that are meant to further liven up the image. The verses allude to the fact that the painting portrays a dancing procession, though ironically it is only the dead that are demonstrating any kind of movement. Lifting their bony knees up in the air, hopping and twisting, the cadavers are dancing an erratic, wild dance, while the living figures with their stiff bodies and shocked expressions appear immobile. This image is the *Danse macabre*, or the Dance of Death, one of the most popular visual genres of the late Middle Ages in northwestern Europe (henceforth *Danse*). Derived from the religious discourse of the *Contemptus mundi* ("contempt of the world") tradition and similar didactic literature, the *Danse* is meant to signify the transience of earthly life and material possessions while also emphasizing the equalizing power of Death.

The painting just described is found in a small, twelfth-century church dedicated to Saints Oriens and Blaise in the community of Meslay-le-Grenet, located about fifteen kilometers from the town of Chartres in the Eure-et-Loire region in France. Sometime in the late fifteenth century the church began a program of redecoration at which point several frescoes were painted in the nave, including the image of the *Danse*. The fresco stretches over the lower part of the south and west walls of the nave, right above the rows of pews where the congregation gathers.² Above the image on the south wall is a depiction of another popular macabre theme, the legend of the *Three Living and the Three Dead* (henceforth the *Three Living*) (Figs. 6 and 7). In the legend the three princely hunters encounter a ghastly sight of the three decomposing cadavers in the forest who warn them to mend their ways and think of the consequences of sinful living. Like the *Danse*, the *Three Living* is

² According to Elina Gertsman, pews were being introduced in Christian churches by the fifteenth century and it is possible that they were already there before the fresco was made. See Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010) 158.

also typically accompanied by verses that capture the didactic and often humorous dialogue between the hunters and the dead, yet in the legend the living figures do not actually die and are merely warned.

By the time the Meslay *Danse* was painted, the theme was already popular in France and there were several mural examples including: the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris (1424-25), Kernascleden, Brittany (1440-60), La Chaise Dieu, Auvergne (c.1470) and Kermaria, Brittany (c. 1490). The mural from the Innocents in Paris, painted on the interior cloister wall of the Cemetery, was particularly influential and well known, generally credited as the first visual depiction of the theme, not just in France but also elsewhere in Europe. However, despite the existing murals, the fresco at Meslay-le-Grenet was not directly modeled after any of the known painted examples. Instead, an illustrated book containing woodcuts and verses of the *Danse* – probably an edition published by the famous Parisian publisher Antoine Vérard – was used as the model for the fresco.³ As I will show, this is because by the late fifteenth century the subject matter was taken up by the medium of illustrated book and the printed image of the *Danse* became the locus for the diffusion of the theme in other media. The process through which the *Danse macabre* illustrated books assumed such prominence and the implications this had on the late medieval theme are among the key issues addressed in the present study.

In September of 1485, the Parisian printer Guy Marchant published the first known edition of the *Danse*. The book was printed in folio format and illustrated with fifteen woodcuts that portrayed thirty male characters – two pairs per page – with the accompanying verses (Fig. 8).⁴ Marchant modeled the woodcuts after the mural at

³ There is some disagreement with regards to the source for the Meslay fresco in scholarly literature. Gertsman believes that woodcuts published by Parisian printer Guy Marchant were used as models for the image, while Marie-Dominique Leclerc credits Vérard's edition as the most likely source. See Gertsman, 147-48 and Marie-Dominique Leclerc, "Les fresques", *Danser avec le mort: Les danses macabres dans les manuscrits et les livres imprimés du XVe au XXe siècle*, eds. Marie-Dominique Leclerc, Danielle Ouérueu and Alain Robert (Lyon: Musée de l'imprimerie, 2004) 26-28, 26. Based on the striking visual similarity between Vérard's images and *Danse* from Meslay-le-Grenet, I would agree with Leclerc's claim.

⁴ For an electronic facsimile of the first edition see the website of the Bibliothèque municipale in Grenoble where the only copy of the first edition is preserved (

the Cemetery of the Innocents, though it is difficult to ascertain how closely the printed images actually resembled the fresco since the painting was destroyed in the seventeenth century during the reconstruction of the neighboring street. Shortly after he published the first and the second editions, Marchant began the work on an augmented version, which he published in June of 1486 under the title *La danse macabre nouvelle*.⁵ The book contained ten new living figures, five additional woodcuts, as well as an original image and verses of the Four Dead Musicians inserted at the beginning of the *Danse*, after the figure of the Author (Figure 9).⁶ Each playing a specific instrument, the Musicians visually add a reference to music in the *Danse*, even though, judging by the mismatched choice of musical contraptions, the tune they are producing is likely not particularly harmonious. At this time, Marchant also added the poem of the *Three Living*, illustrated with two facing woodcuts, which he placed after the *Danse*. Marchant's illustrated editions must have sold well because just a month later, in July of 1486, he published an edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes* – an original work that focused solely on female protagonists and included, in addition to the *Three Living*, two more illustrated poems concerned with the subject of death and sin, namely *Le debat dun corps et dune ame* (The Debate Between the Body and the Soul) and *La compliante de lame dampnee* (The Complaint of the Damned Soul) (henceforth the *Debat* and the *Complainte*).⁷

Marchant's editions of the *Danse* were among the earliest illustrated books published in Paris. The success of his editions prompted other printers and

http://pagella.bm-grenoble.fr/img-viewer/l/1327/viewer.html?base=BMG&np=1327_01.jpg&ns=1327_01.jpg

⁵ The second edition, virtually identical to the first, must have been published after September 28, 1485 and before June 7, 1486, when the augmented edition was published. The sole copy of the second edition is preserved as the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris as Rés.-Ye-88 (henceforth BN).

⁶ The new figures added to the *Danse* represent a combination of established medieval social roles such as the Pilgrim, the Schoolmaster or the Duke as well as individuals representing types or professions that became more prominent in the latter part of the fifteenth century like the Halberdier and the Fool.

⁷ For an electronic facsimile of this edition see *La Danse Macabre de Guy Marchant*, ed. Pierre Champion (Paris: Editions des Quatre Chemins, 1925).

publishers to produce their versions of the *Danse*, which often diverged significantly from the model established by Marchant. Between 1485 and c.1503 at least nineteen editions of the work were published and the title continued to be printed, though more sporadically, over the course of the sixteenth century by printers working in Paris, Lyons, Troyes and Geneva, reflecting the widespread popularity of the books at the turn of the century. The printers who published editions of the *Danse* are some of the most famous individuals in the history of early printing in France and include, besides Marchant and Vérard, Mathias Husz, Nicole de la Barre, Gillet Couteau, Jean Menard, Pierre Le Rouge, Jean Belot and others. In the early years of printing in France, publishing any edition – especially an illustrated one – was a risky and expensive endeavor. For this reason, printers were often forced to collaborate with different presses and with publishers and booksellers in order to secure funds and market their works. The late fifteenth century was also the period of transition in the world of bookmaking – the scribal culture was still in existence and the new printing culture was just emerging and beginning to establish itself – which meant that printers and publishers of illustrated works frequently entered into partnerships with illuminators who helped to design the woodcuts they were using. Books produced through such collaborative practices, including editions of the *Danse*, are unique objects that reflect the transitional nature of the period and are marked by continual processes of experimentation in terms of their content, format and medium.

However, despite their popularity and range there is of yet no comprehensive study of the *Danse macabre* books. Scholars concerned with the history of early printing in France discuss the series in general, as examples of popular illustrated works in vernacular, but pay little attention to the adaptation of the famous medieval theme of the *Danse* in the medium of illustrated book.⁸ Conversely, studies on macabre art reference the printed books – especially Marchant’s first edition that

⁸ See, for example, Lucian Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London: NLB, 1976) and *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome I, Le livre conquérant: Du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIe siècle*, eds. Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier and Jean-Pierre Vivet (Paris: Promodis, 1982).

was based on the fresco from the Innocents – but treat them mainly as replicas of the original mural and repeatedly deny them the status of distinctive works of art.⁹ Authors that do discuss representations of the *Danse* in illustrated books rarely study them in relation to the history of early printing in France or acknowledge the printing practices of the individual printer or publisher.¹⁰ Although studies of the *Danse* published by Leonard Kürtz, Joel Seigneux or Helene and Bertrand Utzinger do include lists of printed editions, they are typically not discussed in much detail even though they range considerably.¹¹ Especially absent from most studies on macabre art is a question of where the books fit in relation to the larger artistic practices of the late fifteenth-century France, despite the fact that this was the period marked not only by the transition from scribal to printing culture, but also by an unprecedented artistic exchange across multiple media, including illustrated books.

Contrary to how the *Danse macabre* books were studied in the past, my dissertation considers the series primarily in relation to the history of early printing in France. Although Marchant's 1485 edition was based on the mural from the Innocents, I argue that subsequent editions did not merely replicate the theme, but actually adapted and reframed it and should thus be understood as innovative works. Printers such as Marchant and Husz augmented the work by adding new figures, new verses and additional illustrated texts, hence encasing the *Danse* in a framework that diverges significantly from the original fresco model. Furthermore, Marchant's editions of the *Danse macabre des femmes* are particularly innovative

⁹ See James Midgley Clark, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Glasgow: Jackson, 1950); Jöel Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres de France et d'Espagne et leurs prolongements littéraires* (Lyon: E. Vitte, 1972); Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* and Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

¹⁰ See Jane H. M. Taylor, "Un Miroer Salitaire," *Dies Illa: Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jane H. M. Taylor (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1984) 29-43 and David A. Fein, "Guyot Marchant's *Danse Macabre*: The Relationship Between Image and Text." *Mirator* (2000): 1-11.

¹¹ Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres de France*; Leonard Paul Kürtz, *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit in European Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 1934); and and Hélène and Bertrand Utzinger, *Itinéraires des danses macabres* (Chartres: Garnier, 1996).

because, even though the verses originated in scribal culture, the woodcuts are not based on a previous pictorial model and there were no women included in the mural from the Innocents. For these reasons, the women's series bears little in common with the mural precedent, beyond thematic and compositional similarities.

My dissertation emphasizes the crucial role the printers and publishers had in editing the work and reinventing the theme. In the past, the scholarship on macabre art rarely awarded the printers much agency – apart from Marchant and occasionally V  rard, few printers of the *Danse* books are even identified – and their work is typically described as repetitive rather than innovative. By focusing on the printing practices of individual printers who produced the books and analyzing specific editions in detail, my study demonstrates that the editorial input of early printers was central in shaping the *Danse* in the medium of illustrated book. The choice of medium (paper or parchment), content and format in which editions were published all had a bearing on how the theme was presented to the viewer. The printers, I argue, made use of the ambiguous nature of the Dance of Death theme, which though religious and didactic in origin could also be understood in less devout terms, and published editions that vary greatly. Some books were intended to serve as self-help guides that aided the believer in their quest for salvation, while others celebrated the aesthetic quality of the illustrations and the lure of the visual. Printers like Marchant did not steer away from underlining their role as the mediators between the book and its reader: his colophons identified the ideal audience (“men and women who desire salvation”) and helped to define the principal purpose of the editions.

In the early years of printing, novelty was especially favored by the reading publics and printers frequently marketed their books as augmented, newly translated or revised in hopes of gaining wider readership. Editions of the *Danse* convey this concern in their titles (*La danse macabre nouvelle*, *La gr  t danse macabre* and the *Miroir Salulaire*) and in their colophons and title-pages that often allude to ways in which printers had expanded the editions. As I argue, woodcuts and verses of the *Danse* were published together with additional texts and images and the books were conceived as a single cohesive unit from the beginning, a fact rarely acknowledged

in earlier studies on macabre art.¹² Unlike medieval compendia or miscellany in which disparate texts and images were put together by a compiler, often times haphazardly, illustrated editions like the *Danse* should be understood as compilations or anthologies that reveal a conscious effort on the part of the editor to supply the narrative for the work and in turn inform the viewer's experience of it.¹³ Not only do the added texts stem from similar didactic literature, further implying a deliberate effort on the part of the editor to create a cohesive volume, but it is also clear from the more 'complete' editions, published in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, which begin with the *Danse* and end with the Last Judgment, that a number of printers were interested in structuring the theme in specific religious contexts. Just as the mural examples have recently been studied by Elina Gertsman in relation to their architectural settings and general pictorial programs of the churches in which they were painted – a methodology that has proven fruitful and which has emphasized the specificity and uniqueness of each fresco – my study reveals the importance of addressing all aspects of the book in order to understand how the *Danse* functioned in the new medium.

Discussing the illustrated books in relation to publishing strategies of their makers also helps to underscore to what extent the editions were shaped by the emerging printing industry in France. As mentioned earlier, the entrepreneurial aspect of the industry in which presses appeared and disappeared frequently and the success of the business depended on the printer's ability to recognize the trends in the market, forced the printers into collaborations and partnerships with publishers, scribal workshops and other presses. Financing an illustrated edition was particularly challenging since the printer needed to obtain the typographical material

¹² It is not often that the other illustrated poems are analyzed in any detail, see for instance, Taylor, "Un Miroer Salutaire" and Sophie Oosterwijk, "Dance, Dialogue and Duality in the Medieval *Danse Macabre*," *Mixed Metaphors: The Danse Macabre in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sophie Oosterwijk and Stephanie Knöll (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2011) 9-42.

¹³ See Jane H. M. Taylor, "A Priest of Poetry to the People: Antoine Vérard and the Anthology", *The Making of Poetry: Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies*, Jane H. M. Taylor (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007) 229-295.

and hire an artist to design the images. To make most use of each illustrated volume, printers often issued editions of the same title that catered to different clientele. For example, in 1490 Marchant entered into partnership with bookseller Geoffroy de Marnef and printed a Latin edition of the *Danse*, which was intended specifically for the customers of de Marnef's shops.¹⁴ Likewise, Marchant's editions of the *Danse macabre des femmes* were prompted by the success of the men's versions and the two works were intended to function as complementary units, thus expanding the impact of the theme. At the same time, his interest in producing a series with female protagonists also reflects the growing trend in the late fifteenth-century printing in France that showed predilection towards books with women protagonists, such as the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* or the *Ship of Female-Fools*.¹⁵

Although the illustrated versions of the *Danse* developed out the earlier fresco example, one of the central features of the printed editions is the way the printers were continually updating the series. Even Marchant's first edition – which probably closely replicated the mural from the Innocents painted in the 1420s – portrayed the living figures dressed in costumes that reflect the fashion of the 1480s, with round toe shoes, wider crowned hats and calf-length gowns.¹⁶ The 1486 edition of the women's *Danse*, which was illustrated with only two woodcuts, presented the figures of the Queen and the Duchess in fashionable dresses with cuffed sleeves. Yet, by 1491, when Marchant issued a full set of woodcuts, the ladies were clothed in wide sleeve gowns modeled to the body that were in vogue in the last decade of the century.¹⁷

Such concern with revising the books and making them more relevant to their turn of the century audience was not, of course, limited solely to sartorial matters.

¹⁴ Sandra L. Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant (1483 – 1504): High Culture and Low Culture in Paris," *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991) 68-100, 86.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Yona Pinson, *The Fool's Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

¹⁶ Anne H. van Buren, *Illuminating Fashion: Dress in the Art of Medieval France and the Netherlands, 1325-1515* (New York: The Morgan Library and Museum, 2011) 242.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 248.

One of Marchant's main updates in the 1486 edition of the men's *Danse* concerns the insertion of the Fool (*le Sot*) at the end of the procession – a decision that was followed in 1491 by the inclusion of the Female-Fool (*la Sotte*) in the roster of figures that made up the *Danse macabre des femmes*. Even though Marchant was not the first to incorporate the figure of the Fool into the *Danse* – a fresco from Basel painted c.1440 set the precedent – I argue that the printer's intention in bringing such characters into his illustrated editions responds to the changing discourse around the theme of folly at the end of the fifteenth century, which culminated in the publication of Sebastian Brant's famous treatise *Das Narrenschiff* (The Ship of Fools) in 1494, one of the most frequently printed books of the period. Similarly, Mathias Husz's edition of the *Danse*, published in Lyons in 1499, featured paragraphs taken from an apocalyptic text known as the *Antechrist* that was particularly popular and oft-published throughout Europe right at the turn of the century and which expressed the growing anxiety over the belief that the end of time was fast approaching. Here again we see the careful editorial strategy of the early printer who chooses from a selection of popular yet relevant treatises in order to expand and update an edition of the *Danse*, in this case by including appropriate eschatological verses that imbue the theme with serious religious context. Husz's edition is also noted, as I will elaborate shortly, for the inclusion of a unique woodcut, inserted in the middle of the men's *Danse*, that depicts Death visiting the Printing Workshop and the Bookstore, which introduced the audience to the new technology of printing while at the same time functioning as a sly of advertisement for Husz's own workshop in Lyons (Fig. 10).

One of the most common practices of early printers was the reuse of the same woodcuts for different texts. Prompted largely by the high cost of designing and publishing an illustrated edition, printers frequently resorted to recycling the same images several times over.¹⁸ However, save for the figure of the Author that opens the *Danse*, which was used in multiple editions of the period issued by

¹⁸ For examples of this practice see *A Heavenly Craft: The Woodcut in the Early Printed Books: Illustrated Books Purchased by Lessing J. Rosenwald at the Sale of the Library of C. W. Dyson Perrins*, ed. Daniel De Simone (New York: George Braziller and Washington: Library of Congress, 2004).

different presses, this strategy was not possible with other woodcuts in the series because they were designed in close correlation with the accompanying verses and thus not easily adaptable.¹⁹ Given their limited usage, the fact that the *Danse* books were published at all and with such frequency at the turn of the century suggests that the printers who published them did so knowing that they would profit because the books were popular. Yet despite their limitations, Marchant managed to incorporate woodcuts from the series and even a whole set of the *Danse macabre des femmes* illustrations in his other publications, most notably the *Shepherd's Calendar* and the *Shepherdesses' Calendar*, as will be discussed in the third chapter. Best described as precursors of modern almanacs, these books were concerned with larger themes including astrology, astronomy and medicine and the presence of the printed image of the *Danse* in such works suggests that theme circulated more widely than usually assumed.

The *Danse macabre* illustrated books emerged during the important moment of transition from medieval to Renaissance art in France, at the time when artists working in different media favored collaborations and artistic exchange. The collaborative practices were particularly popular in the world of bookmaking because the end of the fifteenth century was also marked by the appearance of the printing culture and the slow but steady replacement of the earlier scribal traditions, as I will discuss in the third chapter.²⁰ Publishers and printing workshops frequently collaborated with scribes and illuminators, especially in Paris, which had a long tradition of manuscript production and was the home of some of the most renowned scribal workshops in Europe. Very often the same artists illuminated pages of

¹⁹ On woodcuts of the Author from the *Danse* see Cynthia J. Brown, "Text, Image and Authorial Self-Consciousness in Late Medieval Paris", *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1991) 103-42; and Cynthia J. Brown, *Poets, Patrons and Printers: Crisis of Authority in Late Medieval France* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1995).

²⁰ The transition from script to print was a long and complicated process. On this issue see Julia Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London: c. 1475-1530* (London: The British Library, 2013); Brian Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) and David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).

manuscripts and designed illustrations in printed books.²¹ For example, the illuminator known as the Master of Jacques Besançon entered into partnership with Vêrard and hand painted many of his printed editions, including a copy of the *Danse* produced for the royal library of King Charles VIII. Likewise, printers and publishers such Philippe Pigouchet and Simon Vostre, who specialized in the production of printed Books of Hours, worked closely with scribal workshops and used the same design for their illustrations as are found in the illuminated manuscripts made in the period.²² At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the process of exchange between scribal and printing workshops was not simply one directional. While printers and publishers borrowed heavily from scribal tradition, the advent of printmaking was also beneficial for illuminators as it provided new opportunities for their work and awarded them even more prominence.²³ The illustrated books were not only modeled after scribal examples, but also occasionally served as prototypes for manuscript copies. This was the case with the famous *Danse macabre* manuscript (Bibliothèque nationale, MS. fr. 995) produced at the end of the fifteenth century and intended for a royal patron, possibly Anne of Brittany or Margaret of Austria, which was entirely based on the editions of illustrated books published by Marchant and Vêrard (henceforth BN) (Fig. 11).²⁴

The reuse of models in late medieval art is, of course, not a novelty. Throughout the period, artists supplied models for tapestries, embroideries, stained-glass windows and in some cases, even sculpture.²⁵ However, what is unique about the artistic practices of the late fifteenth century France is that the diffusion of

²¹ Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye and Séverine Lepape, "The Diffusion of the Work of Art", *Kings, Queens and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France*, ed. Martha Wolff (New Heaven and London: Yale UP and the Art Institute of Chicago, 2011) 163-181, 163.

²² On the exchange of images in printed Books of Hours and illuminated manuscripts of the period see Isabelle Delaunay, "Echanges artistiques entre livres d'heures manuscrits et imprimés produit à Paris," diss., U of Lille III, 2000.

²³ Taburet-Delahaye and Lepape 163.

²⁴ Sandra L. Hindman, "The Illustrations," *The Danse Macabre of Women, Ms. fr. 995 of the Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. Ann Tukey Harrison (Kent, Ohio and London, England: The Kent State UP, 1994) 15-43, 26.

²⁵ Taburet-Delahaye and Lepape 163.

models in different media took on an unprecedented scope.²⁶ The dispersal was in part because the public taste at the time veered towards replicated models rather than original works of art and because the advent of printing made the book into a locus for a dispersal of designs and ideas.²⁷ The process through which the graphic arts assumed a dominant position in the art of the period has only recently been studied in more detail and scholars are constantly pointing out new similarities among the works produced in diverse media, from stained-glass windows and polychrome enamels to tapestries and illuminated manuscripts.²⁸ In the context of the *Danse* books that are, ironically, often dismissed by scholars of macabre art as mere copies of the mural – a notion that may not have been seen as a disadvantage by their contemporary audience – the diffusion can be traced in several examples. Besides the illuminated manuscript discussed above, the books were also used as models for the murals at Meslay-le-Grenet and at La Ferté-Loupière in Yonne, Burgundy, which was painted in the early sixteenth century (Fig. 12). Woodcuts of the *Danse* were reused in printed Books of Hours – a bestseller of the period – in editions published by Pigouchet and Vostre and later Thielman Kerver, where they served as border imagery surrounding the prayers and miniatures in the Office of the Dead (Fig. 13). In these books the illustrations of the *Danse* were radically reduced in size, the verses were used sporadically and almost always partially and the hierarchical order of figures that was so crucial in the earlier versions of the theme was not always followed. In the printed Books of Hours, the *Danse* was given an emblematic and ornamental role – its purpose was not narrative, but symbolic. Such images aided the believers in recalling the figure of Death, but not necessarily dwell on didactic or humorous elements of the *Danse* that marked more traditional renditions of the theme. Nevertheless, the fact that the *Danse* was featured in

²⁶ Ibid. 163.

²⁷ Ibid. 163.

²⁸ On this issue see especially Wolff, ed. *Kings, Queens and Courtiers*; Ina Nettekoven, *Der Meister der Apokalypsenrose der Sainte Chappelle und die Pariser Buchkunst um 1500*, Ars Nova 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) and Katherine Eve Baker, “Painting and the Luxury Arts in Paris, 1490-1515: Objects and their Urban Contexts,” diss., U of Virginia, 2013.

numerous printed Books of Hours meant that the woodcuts were given an even higher prominence since the printed prayer books were so popular and sold widely not just in France but elsewhere in Europe.²⁹

In contrast to the previous attempts at analyzing the *Danse macabre* printed books, which typically focused on one particular edition, my dissertation examines the series as a whole while also emphasizing their range and differences.³⁰ Although the Dance of Death was taken up as a theme in illustrated books published in Germany, such as the *Totendanz* (or *Der doten dantz*) editions printed in Heidelberg by Heinrich Knobloch in 1488-89, *Des dodes dantz* published in Lübeck by Hans Ghetelen 1489-96 or the editions printed in Mainz by Jacob Meydenbach between 1491-95, I concentrate on the French examples because the subject was more prevalent in France and the French printers were more prone to experimenting with the theme.³¹ The books were especially popular and often published in the period between 1485 and c. 1530s, hence the time frame of my dissertation. However, it is important to note that the books were still printed after the 1530s, though much more sporadically and there were even editions of the *Danse* that were published as part

²⁹ See Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012).

³⁰ Only Marchant's first edition has been studied in detail, see J. J. Champollion-Figeac, *Notice d'une édition de la Danse Macabre, antérieure à celle de 1486 et inconnue aux bibliographes* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de J.B. Sajou, 1811); *La Danse Macabre de 1485 reproduite l'exemplaire unique de la Bibliothèque de Grenoble et publiée sous l'égide de la Société des Bibliophiles Dauphinois*, ed. Pierre Vaillant (Grenoble: Editions de 4 Seigneurs, 1969); David A. Fein's two articles, "Guyot Marchant's *Danse Macabre*, cited above in note 8, and "Text and Image Mirror Play in Guyot Marchant's 1485 *Danse macabre*" *Neophilologus* 98. 2 (2014): 225-239. The article by Jane H. M. Taylor considers aspects of Marchant's 1486 edition of the women's *Danse*, though she does not discuss the book as a whole, see: Jane H. M. Taylor, "Un Miroer Salutaire."

³¹ The *Totendanz* books were also published in München in the early sixteenth century by printer Johann Schobsser. For a digitalized facsimile of von Ghetelen 1489 edition housed in Nurnberg at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum see: <http://dlib.gnm.de/item/4Inc28260/html>. Von Ghetelen's editions have also recently been discussed in the following text: Cordelia Hess, *Social Imagery in Middle Low German: Didactical Literature and Metaphorical Representation (1470-1517)*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

of the *Bibliothèque bleue* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reflecting the enduring appeal of the theme in France.

By focusing on a specific series of illustrated books, especially the one that develops out of an established late medieval pictorial and literary tradition, my study is aligned with recent trends in the scholarship of early printed books. Over the last ten years, there has been a growing interest in the question of translation and adaptation of popular medieval themes into the new medium of illustrated books. For instance, in 2014 Jane H. M. Taylor, a noted scholar of medieval French poetry who also wrote important articles on the *Danse macabre* genre, published a study on the Arthurian romance in the printed books of the French Renaissance.³² Although Arthurian romance was one of the most popular literary genres in the Middle Ages, portrayed in countless illuminated manuscripts, the development of the theme in the sixteenth century and especially its adaptation into print have been largely ignored. By focusing on the printers and the publishers who produced the volumes, including Vérard's hand-painted presentation copies, Taylor explores the differences in editions and the public fascination with the theme. Likewise, R.L. Schoff has studied the shift from manuscript to print of three important late medieval titles, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Book of Margery Kempe* and *Piers Plowman*, while an edited volume by Anna Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman considers the role of women writers in the transition from manuscript to printed books.³³

The benefits of examining a specific series of illustrated books produced in the early years of printing are multiple. By considering books from the same series we can, for example, see how the new medium of illustrated book was changing over a period of time from Marchant's first edition that included only the woodcuts and verses and no publishing information to an edition printed in 1531 by Nicholas Le Rouge that contained a fully developed title-page with an illustration, a table of

³² Jane H. M. Taylor, *Rewriting Arthurian Romance in Renaissance France: From Manuscript to Printed Books* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2014).

³³ R. L. Schoff, *Reformations: Three Medieval Authors in Manuscript and Movable Type* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols: 2007) and Anna Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman, *The Women and Writing, c. 1340-1650: The Domestication of Print Culture* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2010).

contents and the colophon stating the date and the place of publication. A closer look at the different editions in the series also reveals the extent to which the printers were modifying and adding to the genre. Even though all editions I study belong to the *Danse macabre* series, none of them are exactly the same and it is impossible to speak of a standardized version of the books. This is exactly how the books have been studied thus far in scholarship on macabre art, which continually treats different editions of the *Danse* as one cohesive unit and dismisses or ignores the inherent differences in layout, content and medium across the extant copies, which is why it is useful to focus on specific editions.

Contrary to this approach, my dissertation emphasizes the materiality of the printed editions and considers how the form and medium affected the presentation of the theme. As David Areford recently argued, early printed images are unique objects.³⁴ Early woodcuts are inherently hybrid – “printed multiples, yet also handcrafted originals designed to simulate other media like manuscript illumination, colored drawings and woven textiles through the use of colored pigments, metal leaf, and quartz crystals.”³⁵ Even though Areford’s study discusses predominately free standing early printed images, his argument that “materiality reinforces [the] singularity” of early woodcuts is also applicable to the fifteenth century illustrated books.³⁶ Vérard’s vellum copies, for example, were designed to simulate illuminated manuscripts, while his edition from c.1491 was printed on carton in a form of a *placard* intended to be displayed on a wall mimicking paintings or tapestries. Such differences in format and medium, complicate the assumption that every edition merely replicates the other – or that the printed books are essentially inadequate copies of the mural from the Innocents – and in turn suggest that each edition should be studied independently.

Studies of early printed images have long been shaped by Walter Benjamin’s influential essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” first

³⁴ See David S. Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010).

³⁵ *Ibid.* 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 14.

published in Germany in 1936.³⁷ In the essay, Benjamin argues that the process of mechanical reproduction eliminated the “aura” or the authenticity from the work of art, which he believed is found in handmade objects. Benjamin’s point of departure was the fifteenth century and the early woodcuts, which, because they were reproduced mechanically and distributed widely, could not be seen as unique or original. His assumptions about the “aura” of early woodcuts have been challenged frequently, most recently by Areford whose study on the materiality of early woodcuts is in many ways positioned in opposition to the arguments outlined in Benjamin’s text.³⁸ The majority of recent scholarship on early printed images has veered towards the examination of their specificities and unique qualities – whether it is a discussion of the application and meaning of color, forms of display and circulation or a consideration of the audience and, especially, the viewer’s response towards and the handling of the printed works.³⁹

Ultimately, my dissertation addresses a lack in the studies on macabre art that tend to focus, almost exclusively, on monumental mural examples at the expense of the later printed volumes. While in the past, the translation of the genre from a large fresco painting located in the heart of medieval Paris into a series of illustrated books has been seen as a form of regression, especially where representation of the theme is concerned, my study suggests that it is possible to consider the series in more productive terms. In particular, the printed image of the *Danse* helped to diffuse the genre and place it in multiple and varied contexts, from

³⁷ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Random House, 1968) 217-251.

³⁸ Areford 10. For opposing views in relation to Benjamin’s comments about the early printed image see also Jeffery F. Hamburger, “In gebeden vnd in bilden geschriben’ Prints as Exemplars of Piety and the Culture of the Copy in Fifteenth-Century Germany,” *Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter Parshall, *Studies in the History of Art* 75 (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art and Yale UP, 2009) 154-189 and Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2008).

³⁹ See for example, Susan Dackerman, *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color in Northern Renaissance and Baroque Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art and University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2002).

prayer books and illuminated manuscripts, to almanacs concerned with medical, astrological and religious lore. Moreover, the process of exchange and collaboration between printers, publishers and artists working in different media fostered the need for continual experimentation and adaptation of the *Danse*, which resulted in new and original ways of interpreting the macabre. In particular, the illustrated books should be understood as forming a crucial link between the traditional mural examples and the later reiterations of the theme, particularly Hans Holbein's printed series *Les simulachres et historiees faces de la mort* (Pictures of Death) (henceforth the *Simulachres*). First published in Lyons by the brothers Trechsel in 1538, Holbein's series is generally regarded, even by scholars of macabre art, as the work that completely reinvented and eventually replaced the medieval image of the *Danse*. However, I argue that even though Holbein did not base his work on any particular edition of the *Danse*, the medium of early illustrated books nevertheless allowed for the first conversions of the theme that eventually resulted in Holbein's radical revision. It is also primarily through the printed books that certain features of the *Danse* seeped into other sixteenth century pictorial representations including anatomical illustrations and the German Renaissance theme of Death and the Maiden.

Layout of Chapters

In February of 1499, Mathias Husz printed an important edition of the *Danse* in Lyons. Often credited with popularizing the genre of illustrated books, Husz was one of the most prolific printers in France, known for publishing at least 150 editions. The 42-leaves version of the *Danse* published by Husz contained both the men's and women's dances as well six additional illustrated texts concerned with themes of death, sin and judgment. Tucked in the middle of the *Danse macabre* of men section of Husz's volume is an unusual woodcut that was probably created specifically for this edition (Fig. 10). Split into two scenes, the image portrays Death visiting the printing workshop and the bookstore and taking away the printers and the

bookseller. Since these figures were not included in earlier versions of the *Danse macabre*, either painted or printed, Husz had to hire an artist to design the woodcut and a writer to compose the accompanying verses, which are featured below the image on the same folio. Generally regarded as the earliest representation of the interior of a printing workshop, Husz's woodcut has been discussed in many studies on the history of early printing, yet it has received little attention from scholars of macabre art. Because Husz's image is simultaneously about the process of printing and about the new way of picturing death, I use it in my dissertation as a platform through which the main points of each chapter are set up.

The second chapter, "Death in Print: The *Danse macabre* and the Medium of Illustrated Books," discusses the Dance of Death theme and the issues raised by the existing printed editions. In particular, I analyze the intricate setting of the *Danse* fresco from the Cemetery of the Innocents and question the process of adaptation of this image into a series of illustrated books, which I suggest is more complex than previously assumed.

The third chapter considers the *Danse* in relation to the beginning of printing in France and discusses the collaborative processes and the willingness to experiment with the medium and the genre that marked Guy Marchant's segue into the world of illustrated books. To some extent, Marchant is the inventor of the series in the new medium, having printed the first edition and published the original *Danse macabre des femmes* books, yet his career is in many ways quite unusual. As Sandra Hindman has shown, Marchant's career did not revolve around the production of illustrated texts – his business was centered on publishing religious and humanist tracts aimed at the teachers and students of the College of Navarre, one of the schools that belong to the University of Paris.⁴⁰ Despite this, however, Marchant created two of the most successful illustrated series, the *Danse* and the *Shepherd's Calendar*. The latter was particularly well-regarded and often reprinted with editions being published throughout the course of the sixteenth century. Part of

⁴⁰ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant " 72.

Marchant's achievements with regards to the illustrated editions was prompted by his ability to interpret the trends in the market and publish titles accordingly, but he was also benefiting from partnership and exchange with other printers, publishers and booksellers. Ultimately, the chapter highlights the fickle and transitional nature of the early printing industry and discusses the *Danse* books in relation to other illustrated texts produced at the time.

The fourth chapter, "*La danse macabre nouvelle: Women, Fools and the Agency of the Printer*," discusses two of the most innovative ways the printers adapted the *Danse*, namely the publication of the women's series and the inclusion of the Fool in the roster of figures. Both new features were first introduced in the editions published by Marchant and he assembled them from the literature of the period. As I outline in the chapter, the poem of the *Danse macabre des femmes* (but not the images) was probably written in the early 1480s and appeared in several manuscripts that predate Marchant's printed editions. Likewise, the interest in combining the themes of death and folly surfaced in the scribal culture of the late fifteenth century and was also taken up in the popular prints in Northern Europe. In addition, French allegorical poems such as the *Dance aux aveugles* (The Dance of the Blind), written c.1465 and the *Mors de la Pomme* (The Bite the Apple) from c.1470s as well as poems written by François Villon or Olivier de la Marche, already evoked the figure of Death and the macabre sentiment in important and innovative ways. At the same time, the society in the late fifteenth-century France was undergoing radical transformation and the fascination with class and hierarchies permeated popular theatre as much as the illustrated book like the *Danse* that catered to the public demand for representation (and ridicule!) of particular social types. Relying on the existing interest in literature by and about women and the new found fascination with the theme of folly, Marchant modernized the *Danse* by publishing editions which featured these themes. In discussing the *Danse macabre des femmes* edition, the chapter highlights Marchant's editorial strategy and argues that it was the printer's intervention with the theme and his choice of content that supplied the narrative for the work and structured the viewer's experience of it.

The fifth chapter, “The Salutary Mirror: Editing and Viewing the Illustrated Book,” analyzes different editions of the *Danse*, most notably those published by Husz and V  rard, and argues that the editorial input of the printers was crucial not just in choosing the content, but also in selecting the format and materials out of which the books were fashioned. Although these editions belong to the same series, each book is unique and represents a particular way of representing the *Danse*. That the readers, in turn, responded to the books diversely is also evident from the way they manipulated the books by adding commentary, drawing on costumes or in the margins and even cutting away the faces of the dead in an attempt to manipulate or react to the images. These “acts of viewing” suggests, as Areford has argued, that the interaction between the early printed image and the beholder is never passive, a point I highlight in the chapter by focusing on specific examples.⁴¹

Taken as a whole, my dissertation aims to emphasize the pivotal role of the *Danse macabre* illustrated books in the history of the genre. At the same time, as my study shows, the books are not solely about the *Danse* but actually reference the late fifteenth-century interests in apocalyptic, allegorical, scientific and satirical discourses. The volumes exemplify the exciting and innovative industry of early printing and demonstrate how the new medium adapted and converted the traditional themes and forms of medieval art. While relying on an established tradition of macabre art in a medium that was still novel, printers ultimately offered new ways of picturing death through processes of experimentation and collaboration.

⁴¹ Areford 15.

CHAPTER TWO

Death in Print: The *Danse macabre* and the Medium of Illustrated Books

The Printing Workshop and the Bookstore – New Spaces of Death

On February 18, 1499/1500, the German born printer Mathias Husz published an important edition of the *Danse macabre* (Dance of Death) book in Lyons.⁴² Titled *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes hystoriee y augmentee de beaux dis en latin*, the book was printed in folio format and included the Dance of Death of men and women and seven additional illustrated texts dealing with the subject of death, dying, and the Last Judgment.⁴³ Husz's edition is the most comprehensive version of the popular title printed in the fifteenth century since it includes two different woodcut versions of the Dance of Death of men, the greatest number of additional titles and two original images likely created specifically for this book. One of them, printed on folio b¹, is part of the *Danse macabre des homes* cycle and portrays the striking image of Death visiting the printing workshop and the bookstore (Fig. 10) (henceforth the *Printers*). Smiling at us, the viewers, and awkwardly tiptoeing on their scrawny feet, the three cadavers are shown taking away the Printers and the Bookseller from their places of work. The living (or more precisely, the dying), though showing signs of resistance are helpless against their horrid attackers; as the dead tell the printers: *Mourir vous fault certainement*.

Since neither the Printers nor the Bookseller have been included in previous renditions of the *Danse macabre*, the image is almost certainly Husz's own

⁴² Only two extant copies of the edition survive, one is preserved in London at the British Library (IB. 41735) and the other is in Princeton at the Scheide Library (35.4.6).

⁴³ All titles and verses from the *Danse macabre* books are transcribed as they appear in the original documents. I did not add accents and apostrophes or tried to correct the spelling of the words.

invention. In order to include the plate in the book and accommodate it into the *Danse*, Husz had to hire an artist to design it and a writer to compose the verses, which significantly increased the cost of the production. However, Husz's risk paid off. The woodcut and the verses perfectly capture the theme of the Dance of Death, demonstrating that the printer had not only understood macabre sensibility, but also managed to put his own spin on it. As is the case with the majority of macabre images, the woodcut functions on multiple levels. It is at once satirical and didactic, but also demonstrative of Husz's entrepreneurial skills and the pride he took in his profession. The image is the first known visual depiction of the interior of an early printing workshop and the printing press and it introduces the viewers to the steps in the process of mechanical reproduction. It could also be construed as a clever advertisement for Husz's own workshop in Lyons and as such complements the title page and the colophon at the end of the book, which provides the place and the date of publication. By inserting the woodcut with the Printers and the Bookseller into the social hierarchy of the *Danse*, Husz was also commenting on the increasingly more diversified world of bookmaking in late fifteenth-century France. Although the profession of the bookseller did, of course, exist prior to the advent of printing, the scope of this vocation was changing as printing developed to include the so-called *libraire*-publisher, an entrepreneur whose venture had a major impact on the transmission of knowledge in this period. On the other hand, as we shall see, printers were newcomers in late medieval society and their inclusion and, especially their placement within the hierarchy of the *Danse*, is important to consider.

Even more significantly, the woodcut is a major adaptation of the Dance of Death and comes on the heels of other changes imposed on the theme by the medium of print. Although Husz's image is part of the *Danse macabre* of men, it is not really a traditional representation of the Dance of Death theme. In a more conventional rendering of the subject, such as in the mural at Meslay-le- Grenet, the living and the dead are arranged in a hierarchical procession and are placed in a simple, exterior locale (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5). Such setting emphasizes the equalizing power of death, which does not discriminate the rich from the poor or the young from the old, and alludes to the fact that the figures in the procession are all dying at the

same time *and* in the same place. The notion of death as a collective, communal event has been one of the principle trademarks of monumental painted versions of the *Danse* since the earliest known version painted at the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris in 1424-25. When the *Danse macabre* illustrated books first appeared in France, in the mid 1480s, the printers emulated the composition by placing all dancing figures in the same exterior setting (Fig. 8). In the context of the printed books, which could not reproduce the long chain of figures in a single image, it was especially important to rely on repetitive elements – the layout, the frame and the background – in order to emulate the sense of continuity in the procession of dancers. Husz had clearly understood this since he placed all other figures in the *Danse* against an identical background, an outdoors setting embellished with delicate shrubs and foliage, which makes the *Printers* woodcut on folio b¹ all the more unusual (Figs. 14 and 15).

The position of the *Printers* interrupts the narrative of the *Danse*, a point especially obvious when the reader is actually leafing through the book (Fig. 10). With eight folios preceding it and nine following it, the woodcut is positioned in the middle of the Dance of Death of men. By the time the reader reaches folio b¹ (Fig. 8), key compositional elements of the narrative have already been established: two pairs of dancers are shown per page, the figures face the viewer and the procession is moving towards the left (Figs. 14 and 15). The figures of the Printers and the Bookseller, however, are placed in specific interior locations and are not promenading or even dancing, at least not in an obvious way (Fig. 8). Rather, they are working. The compositor, a person who sets the type for printing, is featured on the far left. He is not even standing – the image shows him seated at the desk and still picking out type from the cases in front of him. In the center of the printing shop, the puller, the figure that works the press, stands with his back to the viewer (the only figure in the *Danse* to do so) and is, ironically, being pulled into the dance by the cadaver on the opposite side of the printing press. The fate of the third printer, seen in the background behind the press, is more difficult to gauge, since,

uncharacteristically, he is not paired with his own dead partner.⁴⁴ He might die, but he might also survive the encounter. Save for the gestures of the cadavers in the workshop and the bookstore, both of whom point to the opposite directions and thus visually link the woodcut with images preceding and following it, nothing else connects the two scenes with the rest of the *Danse*. How then are we to read Husz's image? Are the Printers and the Bookseller somehow part of the same procession as the other figures? Will they die at the same time as their counterparts? If so, why are they in different spaces?

Husz's insistence on the particularity of spaces is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the woodcut. In the late fifteenth century the printing workshop was the most modern of spaces – the technology was brand new and the industry was just developing. Intended as a visual lesson for the beholder, the traditional Dances of Death portray the living protagonists in contemporary or traditional costumes but make no other references to time or space; the *Danse*, we will recall, typically takes place in an unspecified, exterior locale.⁴⁵ Both the text and the image suggest that for the living protagonists the moment of death is fast approaching – indeed, they already hover in the liminal state of being neither dead nor alive – but for the viewer, that moment is located at a more removed, indeterminate time in the

⁴⁴ In the *Danse macabre* certain characters are accompanied by other living figures that are not part of macabre procession. Rather, their purpose is either to highlight the sins of the character or portray the nature of their profession. For example, the Usurer is shown with the Poor Man, who is even given some verses, but it is clear from the composition and the text that the Poor Man is not dying. Death does not address him directly and the Poor Man does not touch the cadaver, which is a crucial sign that he will go on living. From 1486, when the printer Guy Marchant, expanded the Dance of Death of men, the printed editions of the *Danse* commonly included the figure of the Schoolmaster (Teacher) who is shown with his young student. Again, the student, like the Poor Man, does not engage with Death and serves in this woodcut merely as a prop to explain the Schoolmaster's profession. However, in Husz's image the third printer is about to strike Death with a pair of inking balls, thus his fate is more uncertain. The inclusion of the third worker shows the overriding desire to display an active workshop and to emphasize the steps in the process of printing: composing the type, inking, printing and, finally, selling.

⁴⁵ The exceptions to this are two paintings, one in Lübeck and the other in Tallinn (Estonia), both painted by Bernt Notke, which featured an elaborate townscape in the background. For a discussion of the two images and their Hanseatic settings, see Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, especially chapter 4.

future. But, not in Husz's image. By placing the dead in the modern space of the printing workshop, Husz "historicizes" Death and brings it "into the here and now of the beholder."⁴⁶ Moreover, the particularized setting of the woodcut isolates the Printers and the Bookseller from the rest of the procession and emphasizes their solitude at the face of Death – a notion that the late medieval audience accustomed to images of dying accompanied by relatives, clerics and even spiritual beings, would have found especially troubling. After all, as Joseph Leo Koerner explains, in relation to another early sixteenth century macabre print, "there is a kind of comfort in the crowds, even if the crowds are damned"; yet Husz explicitly denies the Printers and the Bookseller a chance to die along with the multitude of humanity.⁴⁷

The existence of Husz's woodcut complicates our understanding of how the theme of the Dance of Death and macabre art in general functioned at the end of the Middle Ages. Scholars have tended to interpret the *Danse macabre* illustrated books mainly as replications of earlier fresco examples and recognized elements of innovation or originality only in the works published later in the sixteenth century by artists such as Hans Holbein, whose printed series *Les simulachres et historiees faces de la mort*, first published in Lyons in 1538, is a significant departure from the medieval macabre model (henceforth the *Simulachres*). In Holbein's series, which shows men and women, every person encounters death in a setting specific to the status of the individual and the accompanying text, taken from the Bible, is not directly related to the images (Figs. 16 and 17). However, positioned right at the turn of the century, which modern scholars have come to see as a turn of historical periods, Husz's image demonstrates that aspects of macabre art had not only transitioned into the early modern era, but also that the medium of print had begun to revise the theme in crucial ways long before Holbein. Through the portrayal of new figures in modern spaces in the *Printers*, its rupture of the traditional

⁴⁶ Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1993) 288. Although Koerner's comments relate to his analysis of a single-sheet print of *Death Overtaking a Knight* made by Hans Baldung Grien in 1510-11, and not to Husz's image or even to Dances of Death specifically, I found his approach to thinking about representations of Death in printed images to be the most productive.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 290.

composition of the *Danse* and its intense interest in self-fashioning, the woodcut revises earlier approaches to the *Danse* (Fig.8). It also anticipates changes that will develop with regards to the theme in later periods. Just as the dead confront the living in the *Danse*, in Husz's *Printers*, macabre art confronts the medium of print and the two are folded together in a new and interesting way. This confrontation is the principal subject of my study.

The Danse macabre mural and the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents

By the time Husz printed his edition of the *Danse* in 1499, the title was already a bestseller in France. At least twelve editions predate Husz's – an impressive number for this type of publication in the early years of printing. The first known edition was published in Paris on September 28, 1485 by the printer Guy (Guyot) Marchant.⁴⁸ Published in folio format, the book included only the Dance of Death of men and its text and image were modeled after the famous *Danse macabre* mural from the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris painted in 1424-25. Likely the earliest painted rendition of the Dance of Death, the mural inspired other examples in fresco most notably a *Danse* painted in the cloister of St Paul's in London (1430) at Kernascleden in Brittany (1440-60), in the Benedictine Abbey of La Chaise Dieu (c.1470) and at Kermaria-an-Isquit in Brittany (c.1490). The two other French murals, one at Meslay-le-Grenet and the other at La Ferte-Loupière (c. 1500) were modeled after the printed books and therefore indirectly also inspired by the fresco from the Innocents.⁴⁹ Despite its popularity in the late medieval period,

⁴⁸ The only extant copy of the first edition is preserved in Grenoble at the *Bibliothèque municipale* as I. 327 Rés; the complete scanned edition can be seen at http://pagella.bm-grenoble.fr/img-viewer/I/I327/viewer.html?base=BMG&np=I327_01.jpg&ns=I327_01.jpg For sources discussing with Marchant's first edition see Introduction, footnote 23.

⁴⁹ The Dance of Death painted in London was demolished in 1549, for recent discussion of this painting see: Amy Appleford, "The Dance of Death in London: John Carpenter, John Lydgate, and the *Daunce of Poulys*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38.2 (2008)

however, the mural was destroyed, probably in 1669, during the reign of Louis XVI, when the wall on which it was painted was knocked down in order to widen the neighboring street.⁵⁰ Marchant's first edition is therefore the only visual document that suggests what the mural may have looked like.

According to the contemporary accounts, the *Danse macabre* fresco was a striking image.⁵¹ Stretching over twenty meters across the interior cloister wall of the Cemetery, it featured thirty male figures arranged according to their station in late medieval ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy.⁵² The cast included: the Pope and the Emperor, the Cardinal and the King, the Patriarch and the Constable, the Archbishop and the Knight, the Bishop and the Squire, the Abbot and the Bailiff, the Astrologer and the Burgher, the Canon and the Merchant, the Carthusian and the Sergeant, the Monk and the Usurer with the Poor Man, the Doctor and the Lover, the Lawyer and the Minstrel, the Priest and the Peasant, the Franciscan and the Child,

285-314; Sophie Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Ingland'? The *danse macabre* in text and image in late-medieval England," diss., U of Leiden, 2009; and Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis*.

⁵⁰ It was the widening of the rue de la Ferronnerie, which caused the demolition, though scholars still debate as to whether this happened in 1669 or some decades earlier.

⁵¹ The making of the mural was recorded by an anonymous chronicler who wrote *A Parisian Journal*, a book of memoirs. As it states: "In this year 1424 the *Danse Macabré* was made at the Innocents. It was began about August and finished in the following Lent." See: *A Parisian Journal 1405-1449*, trans. Janet Shirley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 204.

⁵² The bibliography on the Dance of Death and macabre art is extensive and cannot be listed here in its entirety. Besides works already cited, the following sources are useful in studying the French examples: Clark, *The Dance of Death*; André Corvisier, *Les danses macabres* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998); Reinhold Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes. Die mittelalterlichen Totentänze und ihr Nachleben* (Bern: Francke, 1980); Georges Kastner, *Les danses des morts* (Paris: Brandus, 1852); Kürtz, *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit*; Eustache-Hyacinthe Langlois, *Essai historique, philosophique et pittoresque sur les danses des morts*, Ouvrage complété et publié par m. André Pottier et m. Alfred Baudry, 2 vols. (Rouen: A Lebrument, 1852); Gabriel Peignot, *Recherches historiques et littéraires sur les danses des morts et sur l'origine des cartes a jouer* (Dijon and Paris: Victor Lagier, 1826); Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres de France*; Alberto Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita nel Rinascimento (Francia e Italia)* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1957); and Hélène and Bertrand Utzinger, *Itinéraires des danses macabres*.

and the Cleric and the Hermit; each living figure was paired with his own Death, portrayed as decomposing and grimacing cadavers. The procession of the living and the dead was framed on either side by the Author, a preacher-like figure who delivers the prologue and the epilogue and thus functions as a narrator and not a participator in the Dance of Death. As in the mural at the Meslay-le Grenet, the figure of the Author at the Innocents was likely shown sitting at a desk in the opening section of the *Danse* and facing the prostrated body of the Dead King at the closing portion of the fresco (Figs. 18 and 19).

The mural was accompanied by verses written in vernacular, which were placed below each dancing pair and added to the dramatic impact of the pictorial composition. Emphasizing his role of the preacher, the verses of the Author are written as a sermon or homily and address not so much the figures in the *Danse*, as the beholder who is the ultimate recipient of the visual lesson. In the prologue, the Author discusses the image as a “*doctrine notable*,” and suggests that it should be used as a tool for meditating on death and salvation:

*O creature roysonnable
Qui desires vie eternelle.
Tu as cy doctrine notable:
Pour bien finer vie mortelle.
La dance macabre sappele:
Que chascun a danser apprant.
A homme et femme est naturelle.
Mort nespargne petit ne grant*

By addressing the reader specifically (*O creature roysonnable*), the verses highlight one of the central characteristics of macabre art, namely that both the image and the text implicate the viewer directly. As such, the composition plays out not only on a binary level, emphasizing antithesis between the living and the dead, but on ternary one as well, implicating the “third-party viewer directly,” as Paul Binski

explains the dynamic.⁵³ The image is a warning, an admonition directed primarily at the viewers who could be, and at one point in the future certainly will be, summoned into the dance.

The dialogue section of the text consists of sixty-two strophes, or roughly 540 lines of text, composed as a lively altercation between the living and the dead in which the cadavers 'invite' the living into the dance, while the latter refuse, resist or plead to no avail.⁵⁴ Occasionally, the living figures seem more accepting of death: the Peasant explains that he often longed for death (*La mort ay souhaite souvent*) but would now shun it away (*Mais volentier ie la fuisse*), while the Hermit embraces death and prays to God to erase his sins (*Or requer dieu qun don me face / Cest que tous mes pechies efface*). The verses are heavily peppered with humor and satire and the dead frequently mock the living, especially those belonging to the upper echelons of society: the Emperor for his reliance on accouterments of earthly power (*Armes: ceptre: timbre: baniere*), the Abbot for being plump (*Les plus gras est premier pourry*). At the same time, however, even here the dialogue does not take place merely between the living and the dead, but also between the protagonists and the spectator. For example, the cadaver who takes away the Pope directs his opening lines to the reader: "*Vous qui vivez* (*You who are alive*), while the Abbot also warns the reader *Vous qui vivez au demorant* (*You who are alive right now*).⁵⁵ In many painted and printed versions, the dead gaze at the viewer, further emphasizing the link between the composition and its beholder and implicating the viewer directly with the drama that is unfolding. This must have been especially effective in the context of the murals, which were typically placed in public spaces of churches or cemeteries and thus benefited from a varied audience including a number of illiterate individuals who could not read the verses, but could probably understand the implication of the striking gaze of the figures of Death.

⁵³ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1996) 138.

⁵⁴ For a close reading of the humor and satire in the verses see: Jane H. M. Taylor, "The *Danse macabre*: Reflections on black humor," *Comparative Criticism: Comedy, Irony, Parody*, ed. E. S. Shaffer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 139-58.

⁵⁵ Sophie Oosterwijk, "Dance, Dialogue and Duality" 21.

The mural was painted during the English occupation of Paris and a particularly tumultuous period of French history known as the Dual Monarchy (1422-1435), when France had two kings, the Dauphin (future king Charles VII) and young Henry VI.⁵⁶ The ramification of this political situation on the composition and the text of the mural, have, surprisingly, only recently been studied in more detail.⁵⁷ In her reading of the mural, Sophie Oosterwijk has noted the conspicuous absence of the figure of the Duke, a major title among the late medieval French courtiers.⁵⁸ Despite the careful hierarchical ordering of the French *Danse*, at least in the first half of the poem, the line of lay characters jumps from King via Constable to Knight, skipping the Duke entirely. This omission, as Oosterwijk notes, is not surprising given the fact that in this period many French and some English dukes were engaged in a vicious political battle over the control of the French throne and a reference to a duke in the image would have been a dicey move. Since the early fifteenth century, the dukes of France, most notably those from the houses of Orleans and Burgundy, were involved in a bloody princely war marked by a series of assassinations and counter-assassinations which have divided the country and prompted the establishment of the Dual Monarchy in the first place. In 1425, when the mural was completed, the Duke of Bedford (1389-1435), acting as a regent for Henry VI who was then still a

⁵⁶ This fascinating period of Franco-English history has only recently been studied in detail. For particularly interesting accounts of civic spectacles organized in Paris and London see: Lawrence Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1986) and Robert Epstein, "Eating Their Words: Food and Text in the Coronation Banquet of Henry VI," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36.2 (2006): 355-377.

⁵⁷ For studies dealing specifically with the historical context of the mural from the Innocents see: Valentin Dufour, *Recherches sur la Danse Macabre peinte en 1425 au cimetière des Innocents* (Paris: Bureaux de Bibliophile Francias, 1873); Maja Dujakovic, "The Dance of Death, the Dance of Life: Cemetery of the Innocents and the *Danse Macabre*," *Out of the Stream: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Mural Painting*, eds. Luís Urbano Afonso and Vítor Serrão (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007) 206-232; Sophie Oosterwijk, "Of Dead Kings, Dukes and Constables: The Historical Context of the *Danse Macabre* in Late Medieval Paris," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 161 (2008):131-62 and Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis*.

⁵⁸ Oosterwijk, "Of Dead Kings "145. The Duke appears in Marchant's 1486 augmented edition.

child, was *de facto* ruler in Paris and though he formed an alliance with the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1396-1467), they did not necessarily share the same political aspirations and were at that time in a stand-off. Although more research is needed, it is possible, especially given his predilection for the theme of the Dance of Death and the fact that the mural was painted in the area of the city that was under Burgundian rule, that Philip in fact commissioned the mural – another reason to omit the figure of the duke from the image.⁵⁹

The less than flattering portrayal of clerics in the image reflects the deeply seated problems the Western Church had faced throughout the fifteenth century. The mural was painted soon after the Council of Constance (1414-1418), which, in theory at least, put an end to the Great Schism, though issues addressed or seemingly resolved at the Council still lingered on. The move of the papacy from Rome to Avignon in 1309 had resulted in an embarrassing situation in which rival antipopes ruled the divided Christian nation from Rome and Avignon respectively. This was made even more problematic in 1409 with the election of Alexander V as the third antipope at the Council of Pisa, a solution that failed when his counterparts from Rome and Avignon refused to abdicate. The simultaneous existence of three popes had severely undermined the authority of the papacy – a situation that was not resolved until 1417 with the election of Martin V who refused the seat in Avignon and settled the papacy in Rome, where he arrived in 1420. As Oosterwijk explains some of the resonance of the recent papal disgrace can be construed from the verses: “[t]he invitation by the *mort* to the pope to start the dance, ‘*comme le plus*

⁵⁹ Oosterwijk, “Fro Paris to Ingland” especially chapter 3. No records have been found regarding the patron or the artist for the *Danse macabre* mural. It is, however, possible that the Duke of Burgundy had a hand in the making of the mural because he seems to have taken a special interest in the Dance of Death theme. For example, the Duke was the original owner of the manuscript with the transcribed verses from the Innocents now preserved at the BN. In addition, it was at his court that a theatrical performance of the *Danse* took place in 1449 and the mural was located near Philip’s hotel in Paris in an area of the city regarded as the Burgundian territory. Moreover, the Duke’s *libraire*, Guillebert de Metz, mentions the mural specifically in his account of Paris. He certainly had the means to commission the large painting and, in the early period of the Dual Monarchy, the Duke of Burgundy aligned fairly closely with the Duke of Bedford, Henry VI’s regent in Paris.

digne seigneur’ is tinged with irony if one considers his papal dignity and the church’s stance on dancing. This impression is strengthened when the pope proceeds to describe himself as God on earth, “*qui suis dieu en terre/Jay eu dignite souverainne/En leglise comme saint pierre*” – biting satire, the topical cause of which is not often recognized.⁶⁰

The political and social readings of the mural in the works by Oosterwijk, Ashby Kinch and others, have pointed out an important aspect of the *Danse* that is worth reiterating here. Earlier studies almost unanimously linked the development of macabre art with larger historical developments – most notably the emergence of the plague in the middle of the fourteenth century and its recurring epidemics, the Great Famine (1315-1317) and the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) – all of which increased mortality rates and triggered the predilection for morose subjects in art and literature.⁶¹ In this view, the Dance of Death is typically interpreted, according to Amy Appleford, “as a timeless and universal articulation of the human submission to the reality of death.”⁶² However, a careful historical reading of circumstances surrounding individual examples of the Dance reveals how topical and local many renditions really were.⁶³ It also points out, as I will discuss shortly, the potential for polyvalent readings of most Dances of Death – a fact that made the *Danse* particularly open to adaptations.

The dramatic impact of the mural was certainly not lost on its contemporaries. Just three years after the completion of the artwork, in April of 1429, when Paris was still under occupation, the mendicant preacher, Friar Richard, chose the mural as a

⁶⁰ Oosterwijk, “Of Dead Kings” 150.

⁶¹ On causes of macabre art see: Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: Chicago UP; 1996); Danièle Alexandre –Bidon, *La mort au Moyen Age: XIIIe-XVIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1998); Philippe Ariès, *L’homme devant la mort* (Paris: Seuil, 1977); T.S. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages: Mortality, Judgment and Remembrance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972); and Binski.

⁶² Appleford 308.

⁶³ Ibid 308. Appleford makes this argument in relation to the Dance of Death from London painted in 1430 and based on the model from the Innocents – but the same can be said about the Paris fresco. Given the complexity of the political situation in France in the 1420s, a large mural placed in the center of Paris which depicted a hierarchical portrayal of different social ranks must have had political dimensions.

backdrop for a series of apocalyptic sermons he delivered at the Cemetery. As the anonymous author of the *Parisian Journal*, a book of memories from that period, explains, Friar Richard preached at the Innocents every day for over a week, each sermon lasting for hours:

He would begin to preach at about five o'clock in the morning and go on till between ten or eleven o'clock and there were always five or six thousand people listening to him. He preached from a high platform – it was nearly half *toises* high – with his back to the charnel houses opposite the Charronnerie near the *Danse Macabré*. [...] Indeed, when they came away from the sermon that day, the people of Paris were so moved and so stirred up to devotion that in less than three or four hours' time you would have seen over a hundred fires alight in which men were burning chess and backgammon boards, dice, cards, balls, and sticks, *mirelis*, and every kind of covetous game that can give rise to anger and swearing. The women, too, this day and the next, burned in public all their fine headgear, the rolls and stuffing, the pieces of leather or whalebone that they used to stiffen their headdress or make them fold forwards. Noblewomen left off their horns, their trains, and many of their vanities. Indeed, the ten sermons he preached in Paris and one at Boulogne did more to turn people towards piety than all the preachers who had preached in Paris for the past hundred years.⁶⁴

Friar Richard chose the spot for his sermon wisely – not only did the mural portray the transience of earthly life and the leveling power of death, but the Cemetery itself, with its ossuaries overflowing with bones of the deceased eerily reflected and confirmed those very points. The Innocents was an ideal location for Friar Richard's sermons for other reasons as well. Used as a necropolis since the Merovingian era, the Cemetery lay at the heart of medieval Paris. The parish church of Les Innocents was located in a key spot on the rue Saint-Denis, the main road that led from the Porte Saint-Denis to the north; the Cemetery, on the other hand, occupied the space

⁶⁴ *A Parisian Journal*, 230-231.

along the rue de la Ferronnerie close to the city's main marketplace of *Les Halles*.⁶⁵ While it was officially under control of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Hospital of Sainte-Catherine, and the chapter of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, it was seen as a "common resource."⁶⁶ Long venerated for its special soil known as the flesh-eater (*mange-chair*) – it allegedly had the ability to de-flesh a body in about nine days, a quality much admired in late medieval culture that feared the state of in-between the most – the Cemetery was a popular burial ground.⁶⁷ Because of its central location, it was also a gathering place for many city dwellers – scribes and notaries, for example, gathered there, especially in the later periods, and conducted their business on the tomb slabs.⁶⁸ The Innocents was also a known meeting place for prostitutes and vagabonds, as well as merchants and produce sellers who spilled into the ground of the Cemetery from the neighboring marketplace.⁶⁹

A painting by an anonymous Flemish artist created c. 1570, gives a sense of the layout and the appearance of this popular Paris burial ground (Fig. 20). While the Church of the Innocents is seen in the background, the foreground is occupied by the large churchyard. Galleries with ossuaries are visible on either side of the painting and in the background near the Church. It is even possible to see parts of the *Danse macabre* mural behind the arcades on the back wall of the south gallery, shown on the right. According to a document dated 1663, just a few years before the demolition of the wall on which the mural was painted, the fresco occupied ten or eleven bays of the south gallery.⁷⁰ Although the mural showed a continuous

⁶⁵ Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Inglond," 59.

⁶⁶ Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 101.

⁶⁷ On medieval cultural beliefs regarding the dead, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 1998).

⁶⁸ For a discussion of scribes and notaries that gathered at the Cemetery, see: Christine Métayer, *Au tombeau des secrets: les écrivains publics du Paris populaire, Cimetière des Saints-Innocents, XVIe-VIIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000).

⁶⁹ On the issue of prostitutes at the Innocents see Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

⁷⁰ Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Inglond," 61. This comes from an anonymous source, the so-called *Epitaphier de vieux Paris*.

procession of figures with the poem written underneath, one stanza for each dancer, the setting of the mural as portrayed in this painting raises issues with regards to how the image was viewed. The figures in the fresco were almost life-size, which meant that the viewer had to step back in front of the arcades and maybe even further towards the center of the churchyard, in order to see the complete procession. From that vantage point, however, the beholder could not read the verses and the viewing of the text and the image would require a constant movement back and forth, away and towards the mural. The performative aspect of viewing the Dance of Death – the way the unusual composition requires bodily movement (a dance of sorts) on the part of the viewer – has recently been studied by Elina Gertsman who shows how the fresco would have engaged its audience.⁷¹ For my purposes, however, another point is worth mentioning. Since the mural was painted on the wall behind the arcades, the columns, which are clearly visible in the Flemish painting of the Cemetery, would have obstructed the view of the continuous procession by framing pairs or groups of figures, even if the viewers were standing far enough away to be able to take in the full composition (Fig. 20).⁷² As we will see, one of the main criticisms of Marchant's adaptation of the mural into the illustrated book had to do with the limitations of the print medium which could not reproduce a long chain of figures in a single image. Instead, he broke down the procession into two pairs per page, a move that, according to most scholars, severely reduced the impact of the original fresco. However, as the setting of the mural clearly

⁷¹ Gertsman, *Dance of Death*, especially chapter 3.

⁷² In her study of the mural, Oosterwijk has pointed out other limitations of the setting. For one, as she explains, the mural was painted on the south wall, in the area of the Cemetery where the sunlight would never directly light up the image. Furthermore, the painting took up only a small fraction of the enormous wall of the Cemetery which, according to the account of Guillebert de Metz, a *librarire* to both John the Fearless and Philip the Good, the dukes of Burgundy, written in 1436 and entitled *Description de Paris*, actually featured other devotional wall paintings. As Guillbert writes, the wall of the Innocents portrayed "*paintures notables de la danse macabre et autres, avec escriptures pour esmouvoir les gens a devocion*," (remarkable paintings of the *Danse Macabre* and other subjects, with inscriptions, to entice the people into devotion). The only extant manuscript of Guillbert de Metz's *Description* is preserved in the Royal Library in Brussels, see Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Inglond".

demonstrates, the possibility of viewing the image in its entirety, especially seeing the figures in an unbroken procession and reading the verses at the same time, would simply not have been possible.⁷³

Because of its location at the popular cemetery, the painted mural was exposed to an audience much greater and wider than those of early illustrated books. A look at the Flemish painting is helpful in this regard as well. A large funeral is taking place in the center of the composition while, at the same time, other activities are taking place in different areas of the Cemetery: a family of vagabonds is extracting bones from a grave on the left, a dog is defecating in the background and scribes are busy filling documents hunched over a tomb slab near the galleries on the north side. The Cemetery, as we have seen, was the site of Friar Richard's popular sermons and it was also incorporated in the civic spectacles celebrating the coronation of the young King Henry VI at Notre-Dame in December of 1431. Crowned as the King of both England and France, Henry's supporters had to orchestrate a poignant procession to convince Parisians that the Dual Monarchy was the right solution – one of the pageants included a deer hunt at the Innocents.

Like the mural it housed, the Cemetery itself was a victim of the changing infrastructure of the city. Prompted by the Enlightenment and, especially, concerns over salubrity of the air, the Innocents was deemed too unsanitary and demolished in 1786, just a few years before the French Revolution.⁷⁴ The cloistered wall and the Church of the Innocents was knocked down, the *charniers* (ossuaries) were demolished and the bones were dug up and relocated to the Catacombs of Paris, and the entire lot was cleaned up and remodeled. The site was redecorated with a classical fountain (intended to cleanse the air) and an herb market; it was a dramatic

⁷³ A similar argument with regards to the viewing of frescoes at La Chaise Dieu, Berlin and the Meslay-le-Grenet churches has been made by Gertsman in book on the mural examples of the Dance of Death. The settings for these murals either fragmented the chain of figures or forced the beholder to stand in a specific position in order to view the procession/ See Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, especially chapter 5.

⁷⁴ The best account of the demolition of the Cemetery can be found in Richard A. Etlin, *The Architecture of Death: Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984).

end to a famous remnant of a medieval city. The mural, however, did endure, at least to some extent, through the printed editions of the *Danse* initially made by Marchant.

A Case for Printed Books

When Guy Marchant adapted the mural from the Innocents in his *editio princeps*, he effectively preserved the famous artwork for posterity. It is, of course, impossible to know exactly how close the woodcuts copied the mural – and, as I will demonstrate later in the chapter, certain aspects of Marchant’s images that have always been seen as direct references to the mural may not be that at all – but the verses used in the first edition closely resemble those found in two fifteenth-century manuscripts (BN, Ms fr. 25550 and BN, Ms. lat. 14904) that include the transcribed poem from the Innocents, thus we know that the mural did serve as the model.⁷⁵ The latter manuscript, dating from the 1420s, includes the *Danse macabre* poem along with tracts written by two important fifteenth century theologians, Jean Gerson (d. 1429), Chancellor of the University of Paris, and his colleague Nicolas de Clémanges (d. 1434-40), as well as writings of the Dominican Friar Vincent Ferrier (d.1419). Gerson, in particular, was a hugely influential figure in the theological and political life of early fifteenth century France and his devotional tracts remained popular and often printed by early printers, including Marchant. Gerson played a crucial role at the Council of Constance, which not only put an end to the Great Schism but also stressed the importance of devout living among the laity. His

⁷⁵ Both manuscripts have been part of the library of the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris. Dating from c. 1429, Ms. lat. 14904 includes the sentence “*Prout habetur apud Sanctum Innocentem*, while Ms. fr. 25550, which is a compendia of several different texts, reads: *Dictamina Choreae macabre prout sunt apud innocente[m] Parisii.*” Another early manuscript copy on paper (BN, Ms. fr. 14989) created in c. 1428, also includes verses of the *Danse macabre* poem. As Oosterwijk has shown, this manuscript belonged to Philip the Good, the Duke of Burgundy and contains the anti-dauphinist propaganda poem *Division des Orleanois contre les Anglois*, another reason to believe that the mural was indeed reflective of the political situation during the Dual Monarchy. See Oosterwijk, “Of Dead Kings.”

famous tract, *Opusculum tripartitum* contained a section entitled *De arte moriendi*, which likely inspired the texts of the *Ars moriendi* (Art of Dying) tradition.⁷⁶ Because the *Danse macabre* poem is found in the manuscript that contains tracts by Gerson and de Clémanges and since Gerson's texts stressed the importance of devout living among the laity, a number of scholars have suggested that the two theologians, or an individual linked with their academic circle, are the likely authors of the verses from the Innocents.⁷⁷

In adapting the mural from the Innocents, Marchant, as Emile Mâle has shown, had made some important changes.⁷⁸ For one, the costumes of the living protagonists have been updated to match the fashion of the 1480s, a point especially evident in the depiction of the square-toed shoes, as oppose to the pointed shoes, or *souliers à la poulaine*, which were worn in the first part of the century. In some instances, there is a notable correlation between the woodcuts and the verses: the Emperor holds the globe of the world in his left hand, while the dead tell him to "*Laisser fault la pomme dor ronde*" (Leave behind the round golden apple); in the pairing of the Archbishop and Death, the latter says "*Que vous tires la teste arriere Archevesque*" (How you draw back your head Archbishop!); and in the woodcuts the Archbishop does indeed draw his head back. Despite the fact that we do not know for certain what the painting from the Innocents looked like, most scholars assume that these correspondences between the text and the image are derived from the mural and, conversely, that the instances in which the woodcuts stray from the verses are Marchant's own interpretation or the fault of the medium. In the verses, the Sergeant says: "*Je suis pris deca et dela*" (I am taken from this side and that), which scholars believe means that in the mural the Sergeant was

⁷⁶ Binski 40. The *Ars moriendi* was a late fourteenth and early fifteenth century literary development that is divided roughly into two textual types: the *Tractatus artis bene moriendi* and the *Ars moriendi* itself. The latter was disseminated in the vernacular by block book and incunabula editions that contained illustrations.

⁷⁷ See Clark, Chaney and Oosterwijk. It is not likely that Gerson was the author since at the time the mural was made he was in a voluntary exile from Paris.

⁷⁸ Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*, ed. Harry Bober, trans. Marthiel Mathews (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1986), especially pages 330-339.

accompanied by two dead figures, potentially mimicking an arrest, whereas in the books only one is shown. Because of the nature of the print medium, which could not reproduce the long chain of figures in a single woodcut, Marchant was also forced to depict two figures per page, a point that, according to most writers severely diminished the impact of the original. Moreover, as Oosterwijk has argued:

The designer of the woodcuts may have taken further liberties with the poses of the characters, especially at the start or the end of each arcade, for whereas there is usually physical contact between the figures in each arcade there is nothing to link them to those in other arcades. Instead, the dead dancers at the start of each arcade are either turned towards their next victim or are shown holding a large dart or grave-diggers' attributes, such as a spade and a coffin-lid.⁷⁹

The result of Marchant's design was such that readers concentrated even more on the relationship between the image of each pair and the dialogue below. As mentioned earlier, the setting of the mural may have prevented the viewer from ever really seeing the unbroken chain of dancers, to say nothing of the fact that the composition of the fresco made it impossible to read the verses and see the procession all at once. While most authors agree that Marchant's first edition resembles the original fairly closely and thus see it as a useful tool through which to study the lost image, they are also often critical of the way the medium of the printed books have altered the theme. In a recent study on the Dance of Death murals from Paris and London, for example, Ashby Kinch has described the effects of Marchant's translation of the theme as a way of radically reducing "the scope and comprehensiveness of the monumental form" (Fig. 8).⁸⁰ As Kinch argues:

⁷⁹ Oosterwijk, "Fro Paris to Ingland " 65.

⁸⁰ Kinch, *Imago Mortis* 265. The same argument was made in an expanded form in Ashby Kinch, "The Danse Macabre and the Medieval Community of Death," *Mediaevalia* vol. 23 no. 1 (2002): 159-202. For a link to the electronic facsimile of the first edition, see chapter 1, footnote 4.

The public space is replaced pictorially by an inset proscenium frame with bordering pillars and an arch, which presents each woodcut as an independent tableau in a series. This proscenium may be an attempt to recreate in a book format the dramatic context that many scholars believe was the original form of the *Danse*, but it radically downplays the social meaning of the image.⁸¹

At the same time, it could be argued that the repetitive usage of the frame in the *Danse* books visually unites the woodcuts and, in turn, allows the viewer to read each scene as one part of a larger whole.

Criticism of Marchant's first edition is not surprising given the fact that, any form of "adaptation," to use Linda Hutcheon's words, "is likely to be greeted as minor and subsidiary and certainly never as good as the 'original.'"⁸² The problem of treating adaptations as *adaptations*, she argues, is that we think of them as "inherently palimpsestuous works, haunted at all times by their adaptive texts. If we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly."⁸³ In the context of the *Danse macabre* books, the question of adaptation is especially pronounced since, despite the rapid proliferation of printed editions and the almost immediate need to change and reinterpret the 'original,' evidenced by the introduction of new figures, new texts and even an invention of a whole new series of the *Danse macabre* of women, scholars writing on macabre art continually deny the printed books the status of distinctive works.⁸⁴ Moreover, only a handful of texts even discuss the printed books as material objects in their own right – and these are concerned primarily with content and offer little with regard to interpretation or meaning – and why most analysis of the first edition remain, essentially, comparative interested mainly in the issue of proximity to the original

⁸¹ Kinch, "The Danse Macabre," 185.

⁸² Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006) xii.

⁸³ *Ibid.* xii.

⁸⁴ At the same time, it is intriguing to consider that some buyers of the *Danse macabre* books, especially those living in Paris, were actually familiar with the mural from the Innocents and took pride in the fact that they owned a copy of it.

work. The question of the printed work's fidelity to the mural is an especially loaded one since it is predicated on an assumption that as an adapter, Marchant, or more precisely the artist who made the woodcuts, simply sought to reproduce the original image. However, as Hutcheon reminds us:

Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication. And there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying. ... According to its dictionary meaning, "to adapt" is to adjust, to alter, to make suitable. This can be done in any number of ways.⁸⁵

Following Hutcheon's definition of adaptation, my study consciously avoids thinking about the books solely as *adaptations*, as objects haunted by their models. Instead, I seek to understand them as distinctive works which function in their own time and space. After all, sixty years separate the creation of the mural and the first printed edition and though some devotional and cultural practices that have informed the interest in the Dance of Death theme in the 1420s certainly lingered on, there are other important historical developments, not the least of which is the advent of printing, that are specific to the context in which the books participated. The link to the mural is relevant but there is no precise record making comparisons speculative, and the printed editions of the *Danse* vary, making it clear that many printers were not intent on replicating the painting precisely. Nor did Marchant make any specific reference to the mural in any of his editions, which he likely would have, were it beneficial – a point that will be elaborated later – leaving his intentions about publishing the series open to question. For the purposes of this study, then, it is the propensity of the *Danse macabre* itself for adaptation that is crucial. Understanding its success and influence is based mainly on its unusual composition, at once general and specific, that attracted the early printers to the theme. The continual process of reinvention and experimentation with the theme and format of the *Danse*

⁸⁵ Ibid. 7.

– evident in the way printers added new figures, introduced complementary poems or placed the theme in new contexts thereby altering its meaning – is a direct response to trends of the printing industry at the turn of the century.

In pursuing this approach to studying printed versions of the *Danse*, my project aims to advance current studies on macabre art by emphasizing the importance and complexity of this theme in the print medium, while at the same time discussing the role of illustrated books in the early stages of print production in France. Though scholarly interest in the theme of death and dying in the Middle Ages has been fairly consistent ever since Johan Huizinga wrote his influential study, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, in 1919, in recent years the fascination with macabre art has grown noticeably. In the last four years, four important studies have been published in English alone (Gertsman, Oosterwijk and Knöll, Rooney and Kinch) – whereas in the past the majority of publications on macabre art were in German or French – and though these texts offer new and productive ways to think about the Dance of Death and other macabre themes, they do not, for the most part, consider the printed books in any detail.⁸⁶ This is all the more surprising given the fact that both Gertsman and Kinch discuss Holbein's series, *Les simulachres*, in some detail, yet skip over the French editions almost entirely. The exception is the anthology by Oosterwijk and Knöll, which includes a section on macabre images in print medium, but again does not discuss the French editions specifically.⁸⁷ Earlier studies on the Dances of Death, published mainly by German and French scholars (Hammerstein, Kastner, Langlois, Saugnieux, Peginot and Utzinger) consider the printed books in more detail, but since these authors are concerned primarily with tracing the theme of the *Danse* and cataloguing existing examples, they generally do not address the books in relation to the printing industry nor do they pay much attention to the historical context in which they emerge.⁸⁸ Articles written by Jane H.M. Taylor and, more recently David A. Fein, analyze aspects of printed books or

⁸⁶ Kenneth Rooney, *Mortality and Imagination: The Life of the Dead in Medieval English Literature* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

⁸⁷ See Oosterwijk and Knöll, especially the last section titled "The Macabre in Print" 325-405.

⁸⁸ See footnote 11.

focus on a specific edition, and though they raise important questions with regards to how the *Danse* functioned in a book format, they do not consider the history or early printing in France or analyze the differences in content and format across existing editions.⁸⁹

Part of the reason for the neglect of the *Danse macabre* printed editions, is a result of the fact that they are difficult to categorize. The books can be seen as intermediaries between the fresco rendition of the *Danse* and Holbein's adaptations; they are clearly based on the mural from the Innocents and steeped in earlier macabre tradition, but also part of the new medium that was at the time still in the process of becoming. They are produced in-between centuries, and more crucially, in-between two historical epochs and are neither necessarily medieval nor are they distinctly early modern. While print specialists recognize them as important examples of early illustrations, the woodcuts in the *Danse macabre* editions are not as technically advanced as Holbein's series and not of the same aesthetic value, though this really depends on which edition we are discussing. Antoine Vérard's lavish hybrid volumes – printed on parchment and hand illuminated – are among the most advanced examples of early woodcuts and visually are quite striking because of the added color and the variation in faces, costumes and, in some instances, backgrounds (Fig. 21). Vérard's editions possess what Michael Camille has termed a "technicolor flashiness" and thus engage the viewer differently from the more typical, 'cruder', black and white woodcuts.⁹⁰ At the same time, as Camille also suggests, the unadorned printed images "creates less of a rift between image and text [...] precisely because the image has the same black and white structure as the word, and although it is read in space, it is also read in time, following a linear pattern just as in the flow of language."⁹¹ In the context of the printed books, this point is

⁸⁹ See, for instance, Jane H.M. Taylor, "Danse Macabré and Bande Dessinée: A Question of Reading," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 25.4 (1989):356-69 and Jane H. M. Taylor, "Un Miroer Salutare" 29-43.

⁹⁰ Michael Camille, "Reading the Printed Image: Illuminations and Woodcuts of the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* in the Fifteenth Century," *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991) 259-291, 267.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 281-283.

useful in thinking about the potential positive aspects of the translation of the theme from frescos to books. We can ask, because the relay “through which the eye must pass to reach the goal is shorter in the print medium” was it easier for the viewer to read the verses and look at the images simultaneously? It must have made reading easier, since printed type, even the early ones that mimicked writing, was more legible especially in comparison to text in fresco paintings which is notoriously prone to fading almost as soon as it is applied. Part of the benefit of studying a series of printed books produced in a transitional period is that we can, as Camille did in relation to Husz’s renditions of the *Pilgrimage of the human life* (*Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*), ponder these questions across multiple editions and understand not only how the images are manipulated depending on the format and the materiality of the book itself, but also study how the illustrated book developed as a medium of art over the course of this transition. To understand the impact of the print medium better, we should turn now to a discussion of format and content of printed editions of the *Danse*.

The Danse macabre Illustrated Books: Format and Diffusion

While Marchant printed the greatest number of editions – seven in total – the title was also published and adapted by other important figures in the history of early printing in France, including, among others: Antoine Vérard, Pierre La Rouge, Jean Tréperel and Mathias Husz. Between 1485 and c.1503, at least nineteen editions were published in Paris, Lyons, Troyes and Geneva and the title continued to be published through the sixteenth century, though with less frequency.⁹² It is very likely that many more editions were published in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but early printed books were often lost, destroyed or cut up (especially by collectors in later periods), so it is difficult to estimate how many editions were actually produced. The series is best categorized as an illustrated devotional work

⁹² Two notable late sixteenth century editions include Denis Janot, Paris (1540s) and Pierre de Sainte Lucie (1555).

aimed at the general reading public, which in the late fifteenth century still constituted a fairly limited group.⁹³ It is also an example of incunabula – a term used by book historians to define any type of book, single sheet or broadside that was printed, not handwritten, and produced in Europe before the sixteenth century.⁹⁴

Marchant's first edition is also one of the earliest illustrated books printed in France. As will be elaborated in the third chapter, the very first illustrated book, a French translation of *Speculum humanae salvationis* was published just five years earlier, in 1478 in Lyons. Printed by Mathias Husz's cousin, Martin Husz, the book included German woodcuts used previously for editions in Basel and Cologne. In the early years of printing in France it was in Lyons that the majority of vernacular editions were published; the printers in Paris focused mainly on theological and humanist treatises aimed at the university clientele. For this reason, it was not until 1481 that an illustrated book was published in Paris, Jean DuPré's *Missale*, and not until 1484, just a year before Marchant's first edition, that an illustrated book designed by a French woodcutter was published in Paris, also by DuPré. In publishing the *Danse*, Marchant was therefore at the forefront of a new medium of visual arts and he was a part of an exclusive group of French printers who were developing a specifically French style of illustration.

The nineteen known editions of the *Danse macabre* are incredibly varied in terms of format, content and medium. Some books, most notably those published by Nicole de la Barre and Jean Belot, are printed in quarto format and are small enough

⁹³ On the question of reading practices in late fifteen century see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 1975) 191-226.

⁹⁴ Bibliography on incunables is vast and can be very technical. For the more recent studies see: Kristian Jensen, ed., *Incunabula and their Readers: Printing, Selling and Using Books in the Fifteenth Century* (London: British Library, 2003); Martin Davies, ed., *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth Century Printed Books presented to Lotte Hellinga* (London: British Library, 1999), and Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed, eds. *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the conference organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts section* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Saur, 2010). While useful for cataloguing and organizing early printed works, the term is also problematic because it uses the year 1501 as an arbitrary cut off date, even though there is very little difference between books printed in the late 15th century and those produced in the first decade of the sixteenth century.

to fit into a hand, while one edition printed for V  rard by Pierre La Rouge is exceptionally large (56 x 40cm) and was probably initially intended as a placard (Figs. 22 and 23). The majority of editions are printed on paper, though there are exceptions here as well – V  rard’s edition from 1492, the work of printers Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard, is printed on vellum and extensively hand illuminated, while his placard copy mentioned above is printed on carton, a kind of stiff posterboard.⁹⁵ One of Marchant’s editions of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, though printed on paper is also partially hand colored.⁹⁶ The series was typically published in French (with some lines of text in Latin), but there is an edition from 1490 printed by Marchant for bookseller Geoffroy de Marnef, which was translated into Latin and as such, as we shall see, reflects the trend in the early printing industry to publish popular titles in multiple languages and thus appeal to a wider audience. Save for Marchant’s first and second edition of the Dance of Death of men, all other *Danse macabre* books feature at least one additional title and some, like Husz’s, up to seven.⁹⁷ The added titles are always illustrated, though not with as many woodcuts as the *Danse*, and reflect the same devotional concerns including death and mortality, the duality of body and soul, sin and punishment and Judgment and the Apocalypse. The idea to insert additional titles was likely Marchant’s – his editions from June and July of 1486 were the first to include other texts and images – but it is also reflective of the marketing strategies of early printers and the period’s predilection for compendia. While most editions use Marchant’s woodcuts for the Dances of Death, in the late fifteenth century two versions of woodcuts of the male dance circulated in France. One was created for Marchant, and the other for V  rard. The latter featured only the thirty male figures from the Innocents and is found in editions published by V  rard, Husz, de la Barre, and Belot. Husz’s edition is

⁹⁵ Two copies of vellum edition are preserved, one in London at the Lambeth Palace Library (MS. 279) and the other at the BN (R  s. Te 8). I will discuss these copies in detail in the fifth chapter.

⁹⁶ This edition is preserved at the BN (R  s. Ye. 189).

⁹⁷ It should be noted here that the idea of appending the *Three Living* to the Dance of Death in the printed editions most likely stems from mural precedents since the two macabre themes have frequently been depicted together in frescoes before and after the publication of the books.

especially interesting in this regard since he was obviously in possession of both versions of the cuts – his version of the Dance of Death of men includes the full set of Vérard’s woodcuts and six additional woodcuts taken from Marchant’s 1486 augmented edition.

How popular was the *Danse macabre* series? The fact that it was published at least nineteen times in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggests that it was a sought after title. As soon as Marchant printed his first edition, he began the process of reinventing the series by adding on new figures and text. By June of 1486, just nine months after the first edition, he published an augmented version of the men’s dance entitled *La danse macabre nouvelle*, which featured six additional woodcuts and ten new dancers (the Dead Musicians, the Papal Legate and the Duke, the Schoolmaster and the Man-at-Arms, the Proctor and the Jailer, the Pilgrim and Shepherd, and the Halberdier and the Fool) and was accompanied by the illustrated legend of the *Three Living*.

A month later, in July of 1486, he published the first edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes* – an original series dedicated to female protagonists. Women, we will recall, were not included in the fresco from the Innocents, although verses of the *Danse macabre des femmes* poem are featured in some fifteenth century manuscripts.⁹⁸ It is important to note, however, that these manuscripts were not illustrated and thus the artist who designed the woodcuts did not necessarily have a model to work from. The verses were likely written by Parisian poet Martial d’Auvergne (d.1508), though this attribution is still occasionally debated. As Ann Tukey Harrison and Sandra Hindman demonstrated, the verses of the women’s dance are composed in a distinctly Parisian Middle French and the city is also

⁹⁸ BN, Ms. fr. 1186, dated 1482, BN, Ms. fr. 10032, no year available, BN, Ms. fr. 25434, no year available, and Bibliothèque Arsenal, Ms. 3637, dated 1519. Save for the Arsenal copy, all other manuscripts feature both female and male cycle of dancers. For a discussion of the manuscripts see Ann Tukey Harrison, ed. *The Danse Macabre of Women, Ms. fr. 995 of the Bibliothèque Nationale* (Kent, Ohio and London: The Kent State UP, 1994). On the *Danse macabre des femmes* poem see P.-L. Miot-Frochot, ed. *La Grant Danse Macabre des Femmes que composa Maistre Marcial de Paris d’Auvergne procurer au parlement de Paris publie pour la première fois d’après le manuscrit unique de la Bibliothèque Imperiale* (Paris: Libraire Bachelin-Deflorenne, 1869).

reflected in the verses directly in a number of references to places and events, all of which differentiates this poem from the men's Dance of Death.⁹⁹

The best indicator of popularity is a comparison with other similar titles published at the time. For example, the *Ars moriendi* (The Art of Dying) tract, which is thematically close to the *Danse*, was published in France in twenty-four known editions.¹⁰⁰ Another fifteenth-century bestseller was Sebastian Brant's allegorical and moralistic treatise *Das Narrenschiff* (The Ship of Fools) written in Basel in 1494. Promoting similar theological concepts as the *Danse*, the *Narrenschiff* emphasized the folly of human nature, criticized moral corruption and sinful behavior and reflected the whole of society through the symbol of the metaphorical ship, or the "fool's mirror."¹⁰¹ By the early sixteenth century, Brant's treatise was published in twenty-six editions, seven of which were printed in France. As will be discussed in more detail in the third and fourth chapters, the book was not only translated into French (*La grande nef des Folz du Monde*, 1498), but also adapted into an original series with female protagonists entitled *La Grant nef des folles* (The Ship of Female-Fools) published in 1498 for bookseller Geoffroy de Marnef.¹⁰² Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea sanctorum* (The Golden Legend), one of the most famous titles in the Middle Ages illustrated in numerous manuscripts, was also hugely popular in printed books – 167 editions were printed in Europe, 34 of which were published in France. Another oft-printed work was the *Mirouer de la redemption de l'humain lignaige*, which, as we discussed earlier, was the first illustrated book published in France in 1478 – it went on through at least twelve editions. The allegorical poems *La Roman de la Rose* (The Romance of the Rose) by Jean de Meun (d. c.1305) and *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* (The Pilgrimage of the Human Life) by Guillaume de Deguileville (d. c. 1358), which were derived from scribal tradition, were printed in ten and eight editions respectively. Marchant's second illustrated bestseller, a precursor to the modern almanac, *Le Compost et*

⁹⁹ Harrison 9.

¹⁰⁰ See the ISTC for the list of known editions.

¹⁰¹ Yona Pinson, *The Fools' Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art*, Turnhout (Belgium: Brepols) 2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 4.

Kalendrier des bergers (The Shepherd's Calendar), first published in 1491, was printed in thirteen editions and remained a sure seller throughout the sixteenth century. Published in at least nineteen editions, the *Danse* was thus one of the most frequently printed illustrated titles of the period.

Like the *Danse macabre*, the works listed above belong to the category of illustrated books and most of them were published in vernacular, not in Latin, as was the case with the majority of publications in the early years of printing. As such, these books represent a fairly small niche. Early printed books were not frequently illustrated and, as David McKitterick explains, "most fifteenth-century books were utterly plain."¹⁰³ About 75% of books published in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century were printed in Latin; the vernaculars moved to the majority only at the end of the 1500s.¹⁰⁴ In the early years of printing in France, the world of illustrated books was therefore rather small and as a result printers, publishers, woodcutters and illuminators frequently collaborated with one another and exchanged images and ideas. Most, if not all, printers, who published editions of the *Danse macabre* books also produced other popular illustrated books of the period we mentioned. Mathias Husz published several editions of the *Mirouer de la redemption de l'humain lignaige*, the Golden Legend and the *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*. Marchant invented and popularized the Shepherd's Calendar, but also printed editions of the *Ars Moriendi* and an unusual Flemish translation of Brant's *Narrenschiff* published in Paris for Geoffrey de Marnef in 1500. Vérard, whose publishing empire specialized in the production of luxurious illustrated editions and who employed the most popular printing workshops produced copies of the *Ars moriendi* tracts with striking woodcuts made by Pierre Le Rouge, *La Roman de la Rose*, the Shepherd's Calendar printed by Marchant and intended as a presentation copy for King Charles VIII and the Golden Legend. In order to understand how the

¹⁰³ David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 45.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Petegree, Malcom Walsby and Alexander Wilkinson, eds. *French Vernacular Books: Books Published in the French Language before 1601* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007) xiv.

books altered the theme, we must now consider the Dance of Death in more specific terms.

The Ambiguous Image of Death

What exactly is the Dance of Death? This question, as it turns out, is not easily answered. The Dance of Death is a late-medieval visual and literary theme that is difficult to define in strict terms. For one, the name itself is variable and translated differently in different languages – the most important point of contention being “the nature of the dead protagonists.”¹⁰⁵ Is it the Dance of Death or the Dance of the Dead? In Germany, the theme is referred to as the *Totentanz*, in Dutch as the *Dodendans*, therefore as the Dance of Dead. In Spanish, on the other hand, it is *Danza general de la Muerte*, same as in English, the Dance of Death. In French, it is known as the *Danse macabre*, though the verses from the Cemetery of the Innocents and Marchant’s *edito princeps* refer to the dead as *le mort* (the dead person) and not as *la mort* (Death). However, by July of 1486, when Marchant printed the first edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, the dead are changed into *la mort*, thus complicating our understanding of whether it is the Dance of Death or the Dance of the Dead.¹⁰⁶

The term *macabre* also has a long and convoluted etymology, which does not help much in resolving the issue, and actually adds more questions in relation to the origin of the French poem.¹⁰⁷ The earliest known use of the term occurs in a poem

¹⁰⁵ Oosterwijk, “Dance, dialogue and duality” 11.

¹⁰⁶ Subsequent editions and manuscripts used either *le mort* or *la mort*, further obscuring the issue. Oosterwijk explains that some of the confusion regarding the nature of the dead in the *Danse macabre* may be linguistic. As she explains, *le* is the feminine article in some French dialects of the period, including Picardian and the Anglo-Norman dialect. See Oosterwijk, “Dance, dialogue and duality” 11.

¹⁰⁷ In the Hebrew, *macabé*, stands for “the flesh leaves the bones,” while in the Arabic, *maqābir* (plural: *maqbara*) refers to the grave. For further discussion of the term, see Kurtz, especially pages 21-24. See also Hans Sperber, “The Etymology of Macabre,” *Studia philologica et litteraria in honorem L. Spitzer*, eds. A.G. Hatcher

Le Respit de la mort written in 1376 by Jehan Le Fèvre. Because Le Fèvre begins the poem with the sentence *Je fistz de macabree la dance* (“I made/did the dance of Macabree”), scholars have wondered whether he was the author of the verses that were eventually used at the Innocents or if he had composed an earlier Dance of Death poem that is now lost.¹⁰⁸

Like the other macabre theme, the Dance of Death poem shares similarities with religious literature of the *contemptus mundi* tradition out of which it probably developed. In particular, some scholars have drawn comparisons between the Dance of Death and the *Vado Mori* (“I am going to die”) monologue poem, in which a series of living representatives of medieval society lament their immanent death.¹⁰⁹ Developed in France in the thirteenth century, the *Vado Mori* poetry does not feature a figure of Death personified and the distich (two-line) verses are monologues rather than dialogues, but, like the *Danse*, it demonstrates an interest in social portrayal and humor. For instance, the King complains, “*Vado mori: rex sum. Quid honor, quid gloria mundi?/ Est via mors hominis regia: vado mori,*” (I am going to die: I am the king. What use is honor, what use worldly glory? Death is the royal road of man: I am going to die.).¹¹⁰ Like the poem from the Innocents, the *Vado Mori*, featured only male characters (the King, the Pope, the Doctor), but also characters that are defined by their age or other traits and sins (*Juvenis, Senior, Sapiens, and Dives*) and there is no evidence of a pictorial *Vado Mori* tradition. Despite these similarities, a direct link between the *Danse* and the *Vado Mori* cannot be established; “both may

and K. L. Selig (Bern: Francke, 1958), 391-402 and Edélgard Dubruck, ‘Another look at “macabre,”’ *Romania* 79 (1958): 536-543.

¹⁰⁸ These questions have never been answered successfully, though most authors agree that La Fèvre is not the author of the verses from the Innocents. The earliest known Dance of Death poem proper is the Spanish *Dança general de la Muerte*, which was composed around 1400. See: Gaston Paris, “La danse macabré de Jean Le Fèvre,” *Romania* 24 (1895): 129-32 and the second chapter of Oosterwijk’s dissertation, “Fro Paris to Ingland.”

¹⁰⁹ Oosterwijk, “Dance, dialogue and duality” 20. See also: Willy F. Storck, “Das “Vado mori””, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 42 (1910): 422-28 and Eleanor Prescott Hammond, “Latin Texts of the Dance of Death,” *Modern Philology* 8 (1911): 399-410.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Oosterwijk, “Dance, dialogue and Duality” 20.

simply have been separate compositions within the *contemptus mundi* tradition.”¹¹¹ It is, however, interesting that Marchant had added the Latin verses of the *Vado Mori* poem above the woodcuts in his editions of the Dance of Death of men, thus further linking the two literary traditions and demonstrating his talent for compiling texts from different sources in a single book.

In the late Middle Ages, the Dance of Death was an international phenomenon – paintings of the theme appearing in France, England, Germany, Croatia, the Baltic countries and Scandinavia. In Italy, the theme was not as popular, though elements of it were included in the so-called *Triumph of Death* frescoes that showed several related macabre scenes and depictions of the Last Judgment, popular from the mid fourteenth century onward. Most, but not all, Dance of Death murals were accompanied by verses written in vernacular and the images were typically placed in public spaces of Christian churches or cemeteries. Up until the emergence of the printed books in the 1480s, the Dance of Death was mostly depicted in frescoes though there were also examples in other mediums as well: illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, sculpture and even theatrical performances.

The ability of the *Danse* to be adapted and taken up by multiple media is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the theme at the end of the Middle Ages. While the painting from the Innocents was first officially adapted by Marchant, it may have also served as the model for two early fifteenth-century Books of Hours (BN, ms. Rothschild 2535 and New York, Morgan Library, MS. M. 359) that have only recently been studied in more detail.¹¹² Both manuscripts contain marginal *Danse macabre* decoration and both are believed to date from the time of the English occupation of Paris or shortly thereafter. The Rothschild manuscript, probably closer in date to the mural, illustrates the challenges of adapting a fresco composition into a book format – the dancing pairs are placed haphazardly around the miniatures and the procession is arranged in a counterclockwise manner. On the other hand, the

¹¹¹ Ibid. 21.

¹¹² See Oosterwijk, “Fro Paris to Ingland,” especially the second chapter and Kinch, *Imago Mortis*.

Book of Hours from the Morgan Library, most likely produced by the Bedford Master and his workshop c. 1430-35, contains an impressive *Danse macabre* cycle that features fifty-seven dancing pairs, almost twice as many as was depicted in the mural. Portraying an array of clerics (some almost impossible to identify, in part because no verses accompany the images) civic figures and tradesmen, this manuscript is also important because it places figures in individualized spaces: the apothecary is in store with pots on the shelves behind him, the money-changer is seated at his desk with coins and scales, while the ploughman follows his ox in a field.

Diffusion in multiple media is also an important characteristic of the legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, which together with the *transi* tombs and the *Danse* represent the three main categories of macabre art.¹¹³ Like the *Danse*, the Three Living had a long literary tradition, first emerging in the secular context at the court of France in the late thirteenth century and then spreading across Europe in multiple forms in the late Middle Ages. Although different variations of the story exist, the Three Living tells of an encounter in which the three living, typically described as princes or noblemen returning from a hunt, come across the three cadavers. The gruesome sight of the decomposing corpses – usually shown in three different stages of decomposition, from cadavers to skeletons – and the dialogue between the living and the dead that ensues reminds the living of the inevitability of death, the

¹¹³ Literature on the Three Living is vast and cannot be fully recounted here. For an in-depth study of the French wall paintings of the story, see Groupe de Recherches sur les Peintures Murales, eds. *Vifs nous sommes ... morts nous serons: Le Rencontre des trois morts et trois vifs dans la peinture murale en France* (Vendôme: Editions du Cherche-Lune, 2001). In recent years scholarly discussions of the Three Living have shifted from a broad analysis of the theme, to a more specific discussion of individual examples. For this reason, authors have been able to note that, like the *Danse*, the theme did not remain static, but changed and adapted over time, see Christine Kralik, "A Matter of Life and Death: Forms, Functions and Audiences for the 'Three Living and the Three Dead' in Late Medieval Manuscripts," diss., U of Toronto, 2013, Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, Ashby Kinch, "Image, Ideology, and Form: The Middle English *Three Dead Kings* in Its Iconographic Context," *Chaucer Review* 43.1 (2008): 49-82. On the *transi* tombs see Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: UP California, 1973).

need to forgo earthly possessions and avoid sin in order to assure salvation. The depiction of the encounter varies depending on the artist and the medium – sometimes the living are shown as princes or kings wearing crowns and ermine furs, other times they are just noblemen. Occasionally, the living are mounted on horses – this is how they are shown in the printed books – and accompanied by dogs and falcons, signifying the hunting spree from which the living are returning. In many renditions, however, the figures are on foot and the reference to hunting is reduced to a single sign, if any. This is how the story is depicted in one of the earliest renditions – the famous miniature from the Psalter of Robert de Lisle, produced c. 1305, which portrays the Living and the Dead occupying two distinct and abstracted spaces, with the body of a single falcon transgressing the two realms.¹¹⁴

In France, the theme was incredibly popular and dispersed in paintings, manuscripts and sculpture. At least sixty murals that feature the theme are known and there were possibly even more made which did not survive to the present day. When the *Danse* developed, in the early fifteenth century, it became common to include both themes in the same pictorial program. For example, in the early fifteenth century, Jean, the Duke of Berry (d. 1416), who seems to have been particularly taken by the Three Living and had it painted in two of his famous Books of Hours, commissioned a portal sculpture of the subject for the Church of the Holy Innocents, where it eventually stood in the vicinity of the mural.¹¹⁵ Starting with Marchant's augmented edition of 1486, it became common to include the illustrated poem of the *Three Living* in the printed editions of the *Dance macabre* of men and women (Figs. 24 and 25). Late fifteenth-century murals at Meslay-Le-Grenet and La Ferté Loupière – which, we will recall were based on the printed books – also feature a depiction of the Legend above the dancing procession (Figs. 6, 7 and 26).

¹¹⁴ For a facsimile edition of the psalter see Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle in the British Library* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1999), the miniature with the *Three Living* is featured on page 45, plate 5.

¹¹⁵ The *Three Living* is included in a miniature on folio 282r of the Duke of Berry's *Petit Heures*, made in 1390 and in the border illumination of the *Très Riches Heures*, painted by the Limbourg Brothers between 1412-16.

The Three Living is, indeed, a natural companion to the *Danse* with which it shares several important characteristics. Both themes rely on the interconnectedness of text and image and though several versions of the poem of the Three Living circulated, it too was written in a form of a dialogue between the living and the dead. Like the *Danse*, the legend is a visual lesson not just for its living protagonists, but for the viewer as well. In the miniature from the Psalter of Robert de Lisle, for example, the living princes turn their bodies and their gazes towards the dead in a gesture that suggests that they are recipients of the visual lesson. The dead, on the other hand, engage with the princes but also with the beholder – a point made especially obvious in the way the third cadaver faces the viewer, and more significantly, gazes out at us with a sinister grin.

In one important way, however, the Three Living differs from the *Danse*. Its narrative centers on an encounter – a momentary occurrence – that brings together the world of the living and that of the dead. Although transgressive, it is a fleeting moment that passes and from which the living will come back, thus functioning as a *memento mori* for the protagonists rather than a depiction of actual death as is the case with the *Danse*. Late medieval beliefs and burial customs insisted on a clear separation between the realm of the living and that of the dead. Elaborate burial practices: anointing, embalming and shrouding the corpse, for example, were all symbolic of the process of purification and separation of the dead from the world of the living.¹¹⁶ A corpse in the process of decomposition was deemed especially dangerous, hence the practice of burying the bodies only until they de-fleshed after which point the bones were arranged in ossuaries that were typically left exposed. This is precisely why the Innocents was such a popular burial ground, its corrosive soil could decompose the body in just over a week. That macabre cadavers are precisely the decomposing, dangerous scepters, and not the ‘safe’ fully de-fleshed skeletons, is one of the main anxieties inherent in this art.

In the miniature from the Psalter of Robert de Lisle, as in most other renditions of Legend, the two realms are clearly separated. Although the Living and

¹¹⁶ An especially useful summary of medieval burial practices can be found in Binski's *Medieval Death*.

the Dead converse, there is no physical contact between them and, more importantly, they occupy distinct spaces. Arranged in a diptych-like composition, the Living are placed against a barren background while the cadavers float (notice how their feet do not touch the ground) in a green-colored space adorned with an abstracted fleur-de-lys pattern. Similar concerns are observed in the depictions of the Legend in the printed books. In Marchant's the *Three Living*, the protagonists are depicted on separate folios, while the cross, located in the middle of the facing woodcuts, further distinguishes the two realms and possibly references the setting of the Cemetery in which the *Danse* also takes place (Figs. 24 and 25). Marchant's rendition is perhaps more dramatic and engaging than the miniature from the Psalter because he includes more narrative elements: the figures are placed outdoors; the Living, depicted as noblemen, not princes, are on their horses; and the three cadavers stand near a cave with a hermit in it. The sight of the specters is upsetting not only for the living, but for the animals as well – the horses recoil and the hunting birds are flying away from the gruesome scene.

The role of the hermit in the image is especially curious. He is not just a passive observer of the dramatic encounter, he seems to participate in it holding a scroll and gesturing towards the three cadavers with a pensive expression. As Kinch has noted, the hermit figure is more commonly found in Italian, not French, renditions of the Legend, as in, for instance, the famous *Triumph of Death* fresco from the Campo Santo in Pisa created c. 1340s.¹¹⁷ The link between Marchant's version of the Legend and a possible Italian model merits further research, but it is important to note here that, according to Kinch, "the hermit's role is to offer a model of sanctioned piety [and] inject a sense of proper meditative function."¹¹⁸ A similar argument is echoed in Marco Piccat's recent article on the Italian renditions of the Legend.¹¹⁹ As he argues, the hermit takes on a role "of a historian of sacred plays or

¹¹⁷ Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, 125.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 125.

¹¹⁹ Marco Piccat, "Mixed Encounters: The Three Living and the Three Dead in Italian Art", *Mixed Metaphors: The Danse Macabre in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sophie Oosterwijk and Stephanie Knöll (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 155-167, 159.

the singer of oratories,” and is expected to comment, as if from the wings of the stage, on the story represented in the image. Because the hermit was given a role of an active agent in the depictions of the Legend, the dead in Italian examples are thus reduced to silence and are often not even shown standing, but lying in their tombs and assuming the characters of the truly dead – as they are portrayed in the *Triumph* from the Campo Santo.¹²⁰

According to the story of the Legend, the Living do not die, they are merely warned. In this aspect, the legend differs significantly from the Dance of Death in which all living protagonists (save for the figure of the Author) die the moment they enter the dance. Moreover, if in the *Three Living*, the worlds of the Living and the Dead are clearly kept apart, in the *Danse* that separation is removed. Not only do the living and the dead occupy the same space in depictions of the *Danse*, the transgression is further emphasized in the way the dead physically engage with the living: pulling their arms, tugging on their clothes and stepping on their toes (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5). The violent nature of this contact renders the living helpless and prevents them from escaping the deadly dance. In Marchant’s woodcuts, the dead are also armed with shovels, scythes, spears and coffin-lids, adding further to the sinister note of the image (Figs. 8 and 27).

In the context of late medieval beliefs and burial customs, the *Danse* brings forth several frightening notions. In the image, the dead take the living by surprise; they pull them into the dance without warning and kill them instantly. Although the living are given a chance to talk to the dead, ultimately, their dialogue is not productive because no living protagonist can argue his way out of death. In the *Danse*, the living die a bad death. No figure in the image is given a chance to repent or confess, and no one is anointed by a priest or given the Last Rites. This is in stark contrast with the advice given in the manuals on good dying, or the *Ars moriendi*, which were invented at the end of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century and were still, as we have seen earlier, extremely popular at the time the printed books were made. In the illustrated versions of the tract, the dying man, *Moriens*, is shown

¹²⁰ Ibid. 159.

lying in bed and surrounded by a priest, family and friends.¹²¹ The bedside drama is made even more complex by the inclusion of demons who cluster around *Moriens* and hide beneath his bed and the holy presences of Christ, the Virgin and the saints who also surround him. At the moment of his death, *Moriens* is tempted and has to ponder the routes set out by demons and Christ and the saints, “before choosing the latter path and commending his soul to God.”¹²² As Binski has argued, the theme of the *Ars moriendi*:

...plays on the inescapability of death and also on the fragile, but fundamental character of human choice – *Moriens* is in effect controlling the character of his own death, and so of his destiny. The most important thing is that he should die in a state of preparedness, that he should be ‘shriven’ (absolved) of his sins; to give someone ‘short shrift’ means to allow them little time for confessions and satisfaction before death, to treat them curtly.¹²³

Being in control of one’s death, like *Moriens*, and adhering to the rules inscribed by the burial practices, including anointment, washing and enshrouding the body, processions and interments, protected both the living and the dead and assured a proper transition into the afterlife. That such rituals were of pivotal importance to the late-medieval culture is also evident from the fact that Books of Hours commonly featured vignettes depicting specific burial customs in the sections dedicated to the Office of the Dead.¹²⁴ Depictions of burial rites in manuscripts were especially

¹²¹ For an electronic facsimile of Vérard’s edition of *L’art de bien vivre et de bien mourir* (*Ars moriendi*) published in Paris in 1493/94 see the edition preserved at the Library of Congress, Rosenwald 424 http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collid=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2004rosen0424page.db

¹²² Binski 40.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 40.

¹²⁴ On this issue see Gloria Fiero, “Death Ritual in Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Illumination” *Journal of Medieval History* 10. 4 (1984): 271-294 and Alexandre-Bidon, *A Réveiller les morts*, especially pages 83-94.

prominent during the periods of the plague epidemics suggesting an interest in regulating funerary customs in the moments of crisis.¹²⁵

Despite the importance of burial rites, such rituals are not portrayed in the *Danse* and the image does not even show an act of dying *per se*.¹²⁶ Save for the verses, which imply that the living are about to die, nothing in the image references dying specifically: there is no deathbed, no family members or mourners surround the victims and there is no hint at a proper burial that is to follow. Even more disconcerting is the absence of any real sign of salvation or an afterlife for the protagonists in the image. Although the Dance of Death is framed by a preacher-like figure of the Author whose verses read like a sermon or homily, neither the image nor the text of the main part of the *Danse*, the procession of the living and the dead make clear references to salvation or the Judgment. Discussing the verses of the *Danse*, Jane H.M. Taylor has pointed out that the dialogue section of the text contains very little theological information that can 'make sense' of death.¹²⁷ Neither the image nor, perhaps more surprisingly, the verses of the French *Danse* contain references, religious or teleological, that could help the beholder to grasp the meaning behind the composition. In the dialogue part of the *Danse*, which consists of "some 540 lines out of a total of 646," God is mentioned only ten times and three of those are exclamatory references (*A Dieu/ Hee Dieu*), Heaven is mentioned only once by the figure of the Carthusian monk, hell and purgatory not at all and judgment only three times.¹²⁸ As Taylor explains:

¹²⁵ Elina Gertsman, "Visualizing Death: Medieval Plagues and the Macabre" *Piety and Plague: From the Byzantium to the Baroque*, eds. Franco Mormando and Thomas Worcester (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State UP, 2007): 64-89, 67.

¹²⁶ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 33.

¹²⁷ Jane H.M. Taylor, "The *Danse macabre*: Reflections on Black Humor, with Illustrations" *Comparative Criticism: Comedy, Irony, Parody* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 139-58, 149.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 149. For example, the Carthusian does pray to God for his soul to be taken to Heaven after he dies (*Plaise a dieu que lame ravie / Soit es cielx apres mon trespas*), yet this is, as Taylor points out, the only instance in the poem that Heaven is mentioned. Addressing the Lawyer, the cadaver reminds him that he will have to go to the Great Judge (*Au grant juge vous fault venir*) to which he replies that God repays everything at a fair price on Judgment Day (*A craindre est le jour de vengeance / Dieu rendra tout a juste pris*).

Nor – even more surprisingly, perhaps – do the dead offer threats or rewards, heaven or hell, to the living: at no point whatsoever do they admonish them, or recommend further prayer or repentance. All that they do, consistently, is to point to the ironies and absurdities which their mere appearance creates [...] The dead, in other words, are retrospective, not prospective: they invite their victims only to the immediacy of the Dance, and not to any ‘beyond.’¹²⁹

Because, as Taylor convincingly argues, the dead in the *Danse* focus, paradoxically, only on life, even the social customs and expectations that have shaped the world of the living become annulled. In the *Danse*, bravery and strength are trumped over by Death, status and wealth devoid of meaning (this point is especially problematic because one of the ways in which social identity is constructed in the image, and by extension in medieval society, is through costume and accouterments that the verses render pointless), and even science and knowledge are impotent (as we learn through the dialogue between Death and Doctor).¹³⁰ In other words, salvation is not promised, or even directly mentioned in the *Danse*, and the worldly order is emptied of meaning, leaving the audience very little to feel hopeful about.

In fact, outside of specific theological teachings that could endow the composition with the things it is missing – a promise of an afterlife, a hint at

¹²⁹ Ibid. 149. Speaking to the Emperor, the dead dismiss worldly status (*Et vous le non pareil du monde / Prince et seigneur, grant emperiere / Laisser fault la pomme dor ronde / Armes: ceptre: timbre: baniere*). Also, the dead tell the King that his power and strength is no longer of any importance (*Venez noble roy couronne / Renomme de force et proesse / Jadis fustez environnee / De grant pompez, de grant noblesse / Mais maintenant toute hautesse/ Lesseres vous nestes pas seul*). Likewise, knowledge and science are dismissed by the cadavers and rendered useless. The dead tell the Astrologer that his knowledge of the stars will not actually save him from death (*Maister pour vostre regarde r/ En hault ne pour vostre clergie / Ne povez la mort retarder / Cy ne vault rien astrologie*). The dead also tell the Knight, who spent his days enjoying the parties and pretty women that now he has to enjoy a different kind of dance (*Vous qui entre les grans barons/ Avez eu renon chevalier/ Obliez trompettes, clarons/ Et me suives sans sommelier/ Les damses solies resveiller/ En faisant danser longue piece/A autre danse fault veillier*).

¹³⁰ Ibid. 150.

judgment or a proof that pious life brings forth rewards – the *Danse* becomes an image that is not necessarily very Christian. The inherent ambiguity of the *Danse* has been pointed out by numerous scholars and some, like Mâle, Natalie Zemon Davis and Jean Deleumau, have even argued that the intense focus on the gruesomeness of death and decomposition, could trigger in the viewer an opposite reaction: not a desire to live piously, but on the contrary, a need to embrace the earthly life in its fullest.¹³¹ It is true that the frame of the composition, consisting of the moralizing prologue of the Author, placed the *Danse* within a specific religious context, yet in the fifteenth century the majority of the audience viewing the mural in places like the Innocents, would have been illiterate and thus likely unable to interpret the more sophisticated meaning behind the image. In the words of Zemon Davis, “the pictures *alone* have only one comment on death – it comes to high and low alike and can come at any time.”¹³² It did not help either that the satirical portrayal of ecclesiasts and laymen and the prickly tone of the verses, could, again, outside of the religious framework, be construed as a daring social critique or even, in the case of high clerics, downright blasphemy. Consider, for instance, the Cardinal’s lament who, when approached by Death, expresses sorrow for losing his title and his robe, in other words, his status and material possessions, precisely the things the *Danse* warns against (*Plus ne vestiray vert. ne gris/ Chapeau rouge. chappe de pris*); or the Bishop who worries about being questioned by God (*Dieu voudra de tout compte oir: Cest ce que plus me desconforte*). At the Innocents, as we have seen, the hierarchical portrayal of upper class layman and clerics carried within a very poignant commentary on the political context in which the image emerged and there are reasons to believe that the same was true for other renditions as well.

Often times, the setting of the fresco examples of the *Danse* helped to constrict and clarify some of the ambiguities. The image was almost always placed

¹³¹ See Natalie Zemon Davis, “Holbein’s *Pictures of Death* and the Reformation at Lyons,” *Studies in the Renaissance* vol. 3 (1956): 97 -130 and Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th-18th centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990).

¹³² Davis 97.

in churches or parish cemeteries where it could benefit from daily sermons – we will recall how impactful Friar Richard’s week-long preaching in front of the mural was, even if the account exaggerated the numbers somewhat – and it could also benefit from the accompanying pictorial programs. In fact, as we shall see, many late-fifteenth century versions of the theme seem to have adapted the composition of the *Danse* precisely in order to make references to sin or judgment in more explicit terms, suggesting that very early on contemporaries recognized the inherent ambiguity of the composition and tried to correct it.

The *Danse macabre* mural at the Benedictine monastery of La Chaise-Dieu in Auvergne, completed in c. 1470, is one example in which the composition was purposely modified (Fig. 28).¹³³ Although unfinished and poorly preserved, the mural stretches some twenty-six meters along the wall that separates the north aisle of the church from the choir. The placement of the image is especially appropriate: this part of the church was used by the monks to perform funerary rites and the stone slab on which they washed the dead was attached to the wall. Executed in red and yellow chalk, which imbued the figures with an eerie, ghost-like appearance, the mural was painted on four panels intercepted by four protruding piers, which were also decorated with images. The dampness of the space, the style of execution and its unfinished state, all contributed to the fact that the line up of figures in this rendition of the *Danse* is sometimes difficult to identify. Contrary to the mural from the Innocents, this image featured two female characters, the Canoness and the Religious Woman/Nun, and it includes a scene of Original Sin painted on one of the pillars. The scenes portrayed on the pillars were applied directly onto the surface of the stone and not, as was done with the rest of the mural, on the underpaint, hence they faded over time and are now almost completely erased. However, in the nineteenth century, when the painting was in a better condition, Achille Jubinal made

¹³³ For a discussion of the fresco see Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*; Kinch, *Imago Mortis*; Claudie Pierre Boisse, *La Danse macabre de La Chaise-Dieu* (Brioude: Watel, 1977), Patrick Rossi, *La danse macabre de l’abbaye de La Chaise-Dieu: étude iconographique d’une fresque du XVe siècle* (Le-Puy-en-Velay: Jeanne d’Arc, 2006) and Véronique Duchâteau, *La danse macabre de la Chaise-Dieu* (Saint-Ouen: La Goélette, 2006).

sketches of the entire fresco, which although not fully reliable, show that in addition to the Author, the first pillar includes the figures of Adam and Eve standing next to the Tree of Knowledge.¹³⁴ As Elina Gertsman has pointed out, the scenes depicted on the piers clearly do not comprise a part of the Dance, but rather, illustrate another related didactic story, possibly the *Mors de la pomme*, a fifteenth century anonymous moralizing poem that addresses Original Sin and its effect on the world.¹³⁵ Like the *Danse*, the *Mors de la pomme* features a variety of protagonists who are forced to come to terms with the inevitability of death and in that sense it is thematically and compositionally an appropriate choice to accompany the mural. By bringing together the figures of Adam and Eve and the Author, the mural at the La Chaise-Dieu forges a connection between Original Sin that gave rise to death in the world and the “Dance of Death, the direct result of this sin.”¹³⁶ Painted on the same pier, the two iconographic themes were visually linked and, more significantly, the *Danse* was now transformed into a larger narrative, which was placed within specific Christian connotations.

The ambiguity of the *Danse* is almost certainly one of the reasons why the early printers felt compelled to include additional texts and images in the *Danse macabre* books. Marchant’s first edition, we will recall, included only the Dance of Death, but his augmented edition from June of 1486, and, especially, the *Danse macabre des femmes*, published in July of the same year, began to place the *Danse* within a strict didactic setting. As mentioned earlier, the women’s *Danse* of 1486, included an elaborate subtitle which referred to the book as the *Miroir Salulaire* and promoted it as a self-help guide for all who desire to be saved. While Marchant chose moralizing verses that highlighted the debate between the body and the soul

¹³⁴ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 131. The scene on the remaining two pillars are difficult to interpret, at least two figures were painted on the second pier accompanied by two skeletons, one of which appears ready to shoot an arrow. The third pier had two skeletons and two men, one of whom was pierced by an arrow and the final pier included a group of people including also possibly another figure of the Author or the Hermit. See Achile Jubinal, *La danse des morts de la Chaise-Dieu, fresque inedite du XVe siècle* (Paris: Didron, 1862).

¹³⁵ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 131.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 134.

or listed pains of hell, subsequent printers expanded this further to include *Exhortation on Good Death*, a text taken from the *Ars moriendi* tracts, descriptions of the Antichrist and the Last Judgment. Husz's edition took the Christological references even further, by opening and closing the book with a full page illustration of the Trinity or the Throne of Mercy.¹³⁷ I would argue that in the context of the printed editions, adding complementary didactic texts and images was especially important since, unlike murals painted in public spaces of churches or cemeteries or miniatures included in prayer books, in printed books the *Danse* was not initially surrounded with other religious imagery and thus particularly prone to volatile readings.

Part of the reason it was possible for Marchant to add new figures to the *Danse* or even to invent a new series with female protagonists, without necessarily compromising the theme, is the paradoxical quality embedded in its narrative structure. The *Danse*, as Gertsman observes, is "simultaneously deeply personal and widely accessible."¹³⁸ In fact, we should wonder, with Gertsman, whether the *Danse* is a narrative at all? The principles of narrative structure are based on concepts of transformation – a story has to lead to some form of conclusion/resolution for there to be any story at all. But, where does the *Danse* lead? Neither the printed image nor the fresco examples tell a story *per se* or provide a complete exemplum; rather they depict for the viewer a series of replicating encounters, albeit with different protagonists.¹³⁹ In a way, each encounter between the living and the dead protagonists reads as a mini-narrative: Death seizes the man, he complains and dialogues with Death, the man dies. The image lacks narrative progression because, to cite Gertsman again, "in its entirety, it is not driven by the sum of its protagonists' desires: any one of them can be plucked out of the Dance of Death procession without disrupting its didactic lesson."¹⁴⁰ Alternatively, new figures could also be added to the composition, as printers did in the illustrated books, without compromising the theme.

¹³⁷ I will discuss Husz's edition in more detail in the fifth chapter.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 13.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 34

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 34.

The potential for the double reading of the *Danse* may also be one of the reasons the early printers were attracted to the subject matter. On the one hand, it was possible for the viewer to understand the *Danse* as a moralizing instructional lesson on the importance of piety and repentance and on the other, especially given the lack of reference to God or salvation in the verses and the problematic composition in which the act of dying is not actually shown, it was also likely that some viewers reached an alternate conclusion and decided to live life to its fullest, embracing their status and lusting over worldly goods.

In an article on Holbein's *Simulachres*, Peter Parshall argues that the message of the series was left purposely ambivalent because, as he states the "medium embraced the advantage of double readings not only as a commercial ploy encouraged by the open market but also as pitch that was consistent with an interest in prints as objects of exegesis."¹⁴¹ Although Holbein's pictures differ from the *Danse* and they are a product of the intense religious climate of 1530s, the universal theme of death, "at once familiar to all but experienced by none", was a fitting choice for early printers as well because of its inherent adaptability.¹⁴² The theme was applicable to everyone – *pour toutes gens: et de tous estaz*, as Marchant explains in his 1486 subtitle – and thus easily marketable, which was certainly appealing to early printers who were always at a risk of losing their business quickly if their books did not sell. At the same time, the composition of the *Danse* was predicated on a portrayal of social classes, which always carried within a potential for double reading even if the books attempted to place the theme within a more constrictive framework. This is especially true for the *Danse macabre des femmes* series which should be seen alongside other popular topsy-turvy subjects such as the *Ship of Female-Fools* or the Power of Women topos that were commonly depicted in print medium. The former, as I will discuss in the fourth chapter, was especially similar to

¹⁴¹ Peter Parshall, "Hans Holbein's *Pictures of Death*," *Hans Holbein: Paintings, Prints, and Reception*, eds. Mark Roskill and John Oliver Hand (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2001) 83-95, 92.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 92.

the women's *Danse*, which as scholars have shown, offered widely divergent portrayal of women, both misogynistic and celebratory.¹⁴³

Questions and Issues

Judging by the number of the known editions, nineteen in total, by the end of the fifteenth century the *Danse macabre* books were one of the most popular illustrated texts published in France. As Paul Needham recently noted, "even today, a printer or publisher who finds buyers for six or more editions of a text over a few years is seen as one who has identified a reliable market."¹⁴⁴ What is at stake then is not whether the books were popular, but why. What made the theme of the Dance of Death so appealing that the early printers would return to it with such frequency at the turn of the century? What accounts for so many adaptations not only within the medium of illustrated books, but in other media as well?

The popularity of the printed books is typically discussed not through the context of the early printing industry or the conditions in France at the turn of the century, as would be logical, but in relation to the mural from which they developed. Gertsman's comment is particularly enlightening in this regard:

¹⁴³ Ibid. 92. On the power of women theme see also Keith Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1989), Natalie Zemon Davis. "Women on Top" *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1965) 124-151 and Susan L. Smith, *The Power of Women: A Topos in Medieval Art and Literature* (Philadelphia: UP Pennsylvania, 1995). On the *Danse macabre des femmes* see Ann Tukey Harrison ed. *The Danse macabre of Women ms. fr. 995 of the Bibliothèque nationale* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State UP, 1995); Suzanne F. Wemple and Denise A. Kaiser, "Death's Dance of Women", *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986): 333-343 and Josette A. Wisman, "Un miroir déformant: hommes et femmes des *Danses macabres* de Guyot Marchant", *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23. 2 (1993): 275-299.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Needham, "Prints in the Early Printing Shops," *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter Parshall, New Heaven and London: Yale UP, 2009. 39-91,60.

Late-medieval woodcuts disseminated the *idea* of the Dance of Death, but did not aspire to originality, referencing, instead, famous large-scale painting. The popularity of the French editions – of Marchant or Vérard, for instance – was based primarily on the fact that they reproduced and later elaborated upon the existing mural at the Parisian Cemetery of the Innocents.¹⁴⁵

This statement amply summarizes previous scholarly attitudes regarding the printed books, which almost unanimously reduce them to mere copies and place them in a position subsidiary to the mural. Part of the problem with the printed books has to do with the fact that the books are difficult to categorize. If, as Gertsman argues, the books were primarily popular because “they reproduced ... the existing mural”, should we not expect to find at least some reference to the mural in the printed books? There are none. Marchant’s first edition, the only one that copied the mural closely, does not mention the Innocents or the famous mural and neither do any of the other known editions published subsequently. Certainly, in the late fifteenth century, the Cemetery was still a popular gathering place; it was frequently mentioned in historical and literary texts of the period. The most famous French poet of the fifteenth century, François Villon, described the *charniers* of the Innocents in his famous *Testament*; poet Jean Meschinot also commented on the ossuaries and their piles of bones and, as one author recently noted, even François Rabelais evoked the horrors of the Cemetery in an indirect way.¹⁴⁶ The Innocents was definitely famous enough to be the subject of the late sixteenth century painting discussed earlier in the text. The verses of the *Danse macabre* mural were transcribed by John Lydgate in the 1430s and used as the basis for the London Dance of Death at the Old St Paul’s and it may have also served as the model for later French frescoes. Occasional references to the mural were made in some historical accounts, most notably in the *Parisian Journal* and in Guillebert de Metz’s description of Paris, which date from the first half of the fifteenth century. Even still,

¹⁴⁵ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 174.

¹⁴⁶ Julie Singer, “Eyeglasses for the Blind: Redundant Therapies in Meschinot and Villon,” *Fifteenth Century Studies* 35 (2010): 112-131

we have to wonder whether the mural was so well known that the audience, not just in Paris, but in Lyons, Troyes, Geneva, Rouen and other places where the books were printed and sold would immediately recognize the illustrations as copies of the mural without any direct reference to it. Besides, while the first edition was based on the mural and this may have contributed to the initial success of the series, in subsequent editions new figures and different texts were appended which effectively made the books into autonomous works with their own sets of issues and correlations, many of which have absolutely nothing to do with the mural.

This brings me to the questions about the term “originality.” How can we say that Marchant’s edition of the *Danse macabre* of women is not an original work, or that it emulated an existing painting, when, as far as we know, no female characters were depicted in the original image? It is true, as I already pointed out, that the *Danse macabre des femmes* poem was included in several manuscripts, which were not illustrated, and female characters were featured in some French illuminated manuscripts and fresco versions of the *Danse*, but even still, Marchant’s edition is an elaboration of the earlier renditions of the poem and no image included more than two women, let alone thirty-four. Even if it was derived out of a literary tradition, Marchant’s *Danse* of women is still a novel work of art, for after all, most macabre images, including the mural from the Innocents, emerged out of previous literature, but are still treated as original works. Should this concept not be extended to printed books? And, if not, why? What reason is there, except for the oft-criticized practice of traditional art history favoring large scale works, to make the printed editions somehow less original because they reference a previous image or a text all the while producing a new, adapted work?

Nor should we treat Marchant’s versions of the *Danse macabre* of men as mere copies simply because the first edition reproduced the same characters as the mural. For one, as architectural historian Robert Berger pointed out in his discussion on public art in Paris:

[...] the men’s *Danse macabre*, taken from the Innocents, marked the first time in the history of art that a fresco cycle was reproduced in its entirety.

(Previous efforts to record figural cycles, which are very rare, took the form of drawings or manuscript illuminations, which necessarily had a very limited circulation.) Marchant's publications are thus early demonstrations of the power of the new medium – the printing press – to record and disseminate works of visual art.”¹⁴⁷

Whether Marchant's edition was indeed the first time a fresco cycle was reproduced in its entirety is perhaps not as important (though it is certainly impressive) as the fact that the print medium did help to popularize the subject matter. While macabre art was widespread before the invention of printing, I am not sure that the theme would have trickled down into as many discourses and visual renditions had it not been for the printed books. As Koerner has shown, German Renaissance artists like Albrecht Dürer, Hans Baldung Grien and others, were all influenced by macabre art and Baldung's Death and the Maiden series, in particular, was directly developed out of the Dance of Death tradition. The macabre figure of Death personified was also included in Early Modern anatomical theaters where it was typically perched above the dissecting table and signified the famous *memento mori* message of *nascentes morimur* (“From the moment we are born, we begin to die”).¹⁴⁸ And, as one author has recently argued, even the famous illustrations from Andreas Vesalius' anatomical treatise *De Humani Corporis Fabrica libri septem*, published in 1543, which depict lone corpses posing in landscape, can be seen as examples of a *Danse macabre*.¹⁴⁹ The partially dissected corpses (or in some cases skeletons) standing in contrapposto or turning their backs to the viewer, are actually in

¹⁴⁷ Robert W. Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris: A Documentary History from the Middle Ages to 1800* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State UP, 1999) 32.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 125. On anatomical theatres and dissection in Early Modern Europe see Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁴⁹ Reinhard Hildebrand, “Anatomische Darstellungen zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft,” *Zum Streben schön: Alter, Totentanz und Strbekunst von 1500 bis heute*, eds., Andrea von Hülsen-Esch and Hitrud Westermann-Angerhausen with Stefanie Knöll, 2 vols. (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2006) 181-96.

movement, much like the cadavers in a traditional *Danse* – a point which can only be observed in its entirety once the single sheets are put one beside the other.

Furthermore, Marchant added new text and images almost immediately after he published the first edition and, more crucially, began the practice of appending additional illustrated poems in the *Danse macabre* books, hence placing the theme in a wholly new context. Just as the *Danse macabre* frescoes in European churches are part of a larger iconographic program and should be – as Gertsman convincingly argued with her discussion of the murals at Meslay-le-Grenet or Berlin, for example – viewed together, text and images in an illustrated book are also part of a whole and their relationship to one another should not be ignored.

One more point regarding the notion of originality must be made. In the realm of visual arts, the transition from medieval to Renaissance France was marked by an unprecedented collaboration and cross-pollination of different media. As France was becoming more exposed to Italy and the Italian models of art and philosophy, the production of art and luxury objects was undergoing significant change. It was not only, as we have seen, that illuminators and printers collaborated frequently; rather artisans in different fields – from stained glass windows and tapestries to painted enamels and even playing cards were in close contact and often exchanged ideas and reused models. As authors of a recent exhibition catalogue on French art around 1500 explained: “[t]he impetus to create images in multiples and the corollary effect, the tendency to break up the creation of the work of art into a series of steps were among the most significant developments in the period.”¹⁵⁰ Creating or reusing models for stained glass windows, tapestries, embroideries or even sculpture was of course not a novel practice, but in this period the phenomenon took on an unprecedented scope.¹⁵¹ Part of the reason was certainly the advent of printing, but also the fact that public “demand was not always directed toward unique, original works.”¹⁵² Originality held very little value and copying from models was exactly the type of art making that the audience was looking for. The same argument is echoed

¹⁵⁰ Taburet-Delahaye and Lepape, 163.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 163

¹⁵² Ibid. 163

in Christopher Woods' recent book on temporalities of German Renaissance art, in which he explains that:

In the fifteenth century ... on the far horizon of the modern paradigm, things that are today considered works of art and therefore non-substitutable, like statues and paintings, were still constantly standing in for one another. Copying was the normal way to make new things.¹⁵³

Basing a work of art on an established model did not therefore reduce the quality of the work, it did not diminish its 'aura;' on the contrary, it awarded it with a greater sense of importance. In such environment, the graphic arts assumed a dominant position and helped to diffuse iconographic themes and stylistic trends. The centrality of the book in the arts of the period should actually help explain how the same image of the *Danse* existed simultaneously in several different media at the end of the fifteenth century.

It is now almost a trope to suggest that in reproducing the mural, Marchant had hinted on the original setting of the image, painted on the wall below the arcades, by placing the dancing pairs within an architectural frame consisting of arches and columns (Figs. 29 and 30).¹⁵⁴ The framing also helped to create a sense of continuity in a medium that was unable to reproduce the lengthy procession in a single image. While I agree with the latter argument – framing was so crucial in signaling continuity across folios that even Husz used it in his otherwise completely unconventional rendering of the Dance of Death with the Printers and the Bookseller – I do wonder about it being a direct reference to the setting of the mural. As Otto Pächt has shown in relation to illuminated manuscripts, using an architectural framework, be it a simple arch and column, or the elaborate Gothic framing we find

¹⁵³ Woods 18.

¹⁵⁴ This argument is reproduced in nearly every study on the *Danse*, even the more recent ones. Gertsman, for instances, writes: "Marchant's *editio princeps*, extant in one exemplar, places the protagonists within arches that echo the arches of the cemetery cloister where the original fresco was painted," 6. In discussing the translation into print medium, Clark explains that the "ornamental arcading of the woodcuts corresponds to the stone arches in the original," 25.

in miniatures painted by Jean Colombe, for example, had been a useful pictorial device that helped ‘anchor’ an image to the page since the time codices replaced rolls.¹⁵⁵ Such framing prevented a miniature (or in this case a woodcut) from ‘floating’ on the page and aided the act of simultaneous reading and viewing of images and texts in a manuscript – a process very different from viewing other forms of visual arts. We should remember that Marchant’s first edition was one of the earliest illustrated books published in Paris and that it was made in the period of transition from scribal to printing culture, at the time when the new medium still borrowed heavily from the manuscript tradition. DuPré’s *Missale*, for example, the first illustrated book printed in Paris, reused border decoration from illuminated manuscripts produced at the time to create a distinctly French style of illustration. Illuminators worked simultaneously for scribal and printing workshops and publishers like Vérard frequently copied miniatures from manuscripts in their printed books. Even the typeface in this period still resembled handwriting, so it is not surprising that all other aspects of bookmaking were steeped in scribal tradition. Is it possible then, that the framing in Marchant’s editions is an example not of the printer’s desire to emulate the original architectural setting of the mural from the Innocents, but of the new medium’s emerging pictorial language that was, at the time, in the process of being established? This is all the more possible – and I would even argue highly likely – given the fact that the exact style of framing is found in other illustrated books of the period.

For instance, a number of incunabula editions of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, printed in the 1460s and 1470s, feature an almost identical frame (henceforth *Speculum*).¹⁵⁶ In the *Speculum*, the corresponding stories from the Old and the New Testament are juxtaposed; hence the book shows double scenes per

¹⁵⁵ Otto Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages: An Introduction*, trans. Kay Davenport (Oxford and London: Harvey Miller Publisher and Oxford UP, 1984) 32.

¹⁵⁶ For an illustration from an edition of the *Speculum* printed in Utrecht in c. 1470 preserved at the Library of Congress as Incun. X. S72 Rosenwald Collection see https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/LOC_SHS.jpg

page framed, like the *Danse*, by arches and columns.¹⁵⁷ Even more impressive is the overall similarity in the layout of the page between the two works, which further suggests that the printers at this time were working towards formulating a uniform pictorial design for illustrated books (Figs. 29 and 30).¹⁵⁸ Arches and columns are also used as frames in the xylographic editions of the *Biblia pauperum*, although in this book each page depicts several typologically connected scenes that are anchored into a larger architectural framing. Vérard had also used the same framing for his edition of *L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir*, published in 1493/94.¹⁵⁹ More importantly, however, a similar framing is found in illuminated manuscripts of the period, such as, for instance, in the manuscript of Jacques d'Armagnac (BN, Ms. fr. 9186) made before 1477, and even in tapestries woven at the time, as in those depicting the life of the Virgin from the Church of Notre-Dame in Beaune, which were based on the design by the Dijon painter Pierre Sprice created in 1474 but not woven until 1500.¹⁶⁰ These examples point to the level of exchange across multiple media that defined the turn of the century in France, but also demonstrates the importance of studying the *Danse macabre* books alongside other works produced in the same period.

¹⁵⁷ In the *Speculum* editions, the column in the middle splits the two narratives. While in Marchant's books, the middle column is not shown probably in order to emphasize the processional aspect of the *Danse*, in Vérard's editions there is a middle column. For a discussion of the history of the *Speculum* in both manuscripts and printed editions see Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis 1324-1500* (Berkeley and Oxford: California UP, 1985).

¹⁵⁸ See footnote 156.

¹⁵⁹ See footnote 121.

¹⁶⁰ The miniatures from the manuscript of Jacques d'Armagnac are discussed and reproduced in Mâle, 287-296. The tapestry depicting the Life of the Virgin from Beaune is discussed and reproduced in Philippe Lorentz, "The Genesis of the Work of Art: The Patron and the Artist in France around 1500," *Kings, Queens and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France*, ed. Martha Wolff (New Haven and London: The Art Institute of Chicago and Yale UP, 2011) 21-27, 25 and in Fabienne Joubert, "Nouvelles propositions sur la personnalité artistique de Pierre Sprice, *La Splendeur des Rolin: Un mécénat privé à la cour de Bourgogne*, ed. Maurice-Chabard (Autun and Paris, 1999) 169-91.

The questions raised thus far emphasize the importance of studying the *Danse macabre* books both in the context of the history of printing and in relation to other media produced at the time. The transitional nature of many editions reflects the deep connection between scribal and printing culture of the period, which goes beyond a mere experiment with form and effects the books' expressive and iconographic meaning, to say nothing of the way it impacts the viewer. Following Camille, we should wonder whether in leafing through V  rard's hybrid volume "the readers duped themselves into believing that this was a handwritten as well as a hand-painted page."¹⁶¹ The wide range of editions within a single series – from Nicole de la Barre's quarto format in which the verses and the woodcuts did not always match, Husz's composite volume comprised of woodcuts designed by different artists to V  rard's would-be manuscripts – suggests, as Camille has argued, that in the fifteenth century "there were obviously some viewers who wanted to read and some who were more concerned with the "art" in the text."¹⁶²

While studies on macabre art pay little attention to the range of editions or formats in which the books circulated, recent scholarship on early print medium emphasizes the importance of considering materiality and adaptability of these printed images. Arguably the most important recent contribution to the study of early prints was the 2005-2006 exhibition *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth Century Woodcuts and their Public* that highlighted the practical function of early prints which went beyond the aesthetic appeal as many images were pasted into manuscripts, edited, inscribed or otherwise manipulated by their initial audience.¹⁶³ There is evidence of the reader's presence in the *Danse macabre* books as well, as I will discuss in the fifth chapter.

The issue of reception has also been at the core of most recent texts on macabre art and the Dance of Death in particular. One of the most productive aspects of Gertsman's approach has been her interest in locating the viewer of the Dance of Death murals. In discussing examples from Tallinn, L  beck, Berlin or

¹⁶¹ Camille 272

¹⁶² Ibid. 272.

¹⁶³ Peter W. Parshall and Rainer Schoch, eds. *Origins of European Printmaking*.

Meslay-le-Grenet, Gertsman continually paid attention to how the audience related to the image, where they stood in relation to it, how they moved along with the mural and how the composition affected the viewing experience. No rendition of the *Danse* is exactly the same and, in fact, each mural adapts or manipulates the theme to fit its architectural or pictorial program. The same can be said about the printed books. If we consider each edition as a space and pay attention to all aspects of the books – images, texts, title pages, colophons, subtitles, or page layouts – we see how differently the theme functions in different books.

The transitional aspect of bookmaking in the late fifteenth century has been much studied in the past, but new texts on the French context have expanded the scope of study to include works produced in other media, especially enamels, textiles, stained glass and panel paintings.¹⁶⁴ For example, Ina Nettekoven's study has identified a group of artists associated with the Ypres family that have been responsible for producing designs for the fifteenth century stained glass rose windows at the Sainte Chapelle and the metalcuts and woodcuts used for printed Books of Hours published in Paris.¹⁶⁵ The diffusion of models across multiple media has been a subject of a recent dissertation that discusses painting and luxury arts in Paris and it was also a subject of major exhibition held at the Grand Palais in Paris and at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2011.¹⁶⁶ As the curators of the exhibition pointed out, "the exuberant outpouring of activity in all media, including monumental

¹⁶⁴ Bibliography on the transition from scribal to printing culture is extensive, for our purposes useful studies include Sandra Hindman and James Douglas Farquhar eds, *Pen to Press: Illustrated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of Printing* (College Park: University of Maryland, 1977); David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830*; Sandra Hindman, ed. *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books 1450-1520*; Isabelle Delaunay, "Echanges artistiques entre livres d'heures manuscrits et imprimés produit à Paris," diss., U of Lille III, 2000; Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier and Jean-Pierre Vivet, eds. *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome I, Le livre conquérant: Du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Promodis, 1982).

¹⁶⁵ Ina Nettekoven, *Der Meister der Apokalypsenrose der Sainte Chappelle und die Pariser Buchkunst um 1500*, *Ars Nova* 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

¹⁶⁶ Katherine Eve Baker, "Painting and the Luxury Arts in Paris, 1490-1515: Objects and their Urban Contexts," diss. U of Virginia, 2013 and Martha Wolff ed., *Kings, Queens and Courtiers*.

works of sculpture, stained glass, tapestry, refined and intimate illuminated manuscripts, luminous painting on panel, goldsmithwork and prints (then an innovative new medium)” created at the turn of the century have generally been overlooked, even by French scholars, in favor of the glamorous arts produced at the court of Francis I just a decade later.¹⁶⁷ My project aligns with this emerging area of focus on the art produced around 1500 as the makers of the *Danse macabre* books were active participants in the artistic exchange of the period and helped diffuse the image of the *Danse* in multiple media while also borrowing from other arts to define an essentially French style of illustration in the books they made.

The *Danse macabre* books were also a product of transition from one historical epoch to another. The period between 1480 to the 1520s, precisely the time the books were most frequently published, was marked by religious upheaval in the Western church, the rise of humanism, discoveries of the new lands and the emerging interest in the body evident from the scientific and medical treatises produced at the time. It is through the medium of print that many of these ideas were diffused and the *Danse macabre* books, as I will show, are directly or indirectly implicated in the changes that marked the period. For example, part of the humanist discourses at the turn of the century involved a revival of classical theatre in France. The comedies of Terence were especially popular and published in multiple editions, sometimes with illustrations, by printers such as Huzar and Vérard. Terence’s comedies, much like the *Danse*, invited responses from their audiences through prologues and speeches directed at them and it is probably not a coincidence that the early printers were interested in the theme of the Dance of Death, which featured strong performative components. Before these issues can be explored, however, we must first turn our attention to the study of printers and publishers in fifteenth-century France.

¹⁶⁷ Wolff 7.

CHAPTER THREE

Death and the Business of Printing:

Guy Marchant and the Production of the *Danse macabre* Books

The Printers and the Bookseller – New Figures in the Dance of Death

Folio b¹ in Mathias Husz's 1499 edition of the *Danse macabre* depicts two distinct spaces: the printing workshop and the bookstore (Fig. 10). Although the thin column, placed to the right, slightly off centre, visually separates the two scenes, they are nevertheless linked through a common narrative. In fact, the woodcut functions much like a diptych and the column – its round base protruding into our space and giving it a sense of three-dimensionality – both splits and hinges the two 'panels' together.

In the scene on the left, two grinning cadavers are snatching away the printers. The workers are caught unexpectedly, surprised in the middle of the various printing tasks. Seated on the bench on the far left, the compositor is still in the process of completing a line of text; he is holding the composing stick and picking out the type from the table in front of him. Performing one of the most challenging tasks in the printing workshop, the compositor needed to master a series of movements and work quickly handling letters without pausing or looking.¹⁶⁸ To

¹⁶⁸ Although the technique of manual typesetting is now rarely used, except in specific artisanal workshops, the process has hardly changed since the beginning of printing. On the techniques used by the early printers see Lucian Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London: NLB, 1976). As Febvre and Martin explain: "The equipment used is much the same: the compositor stands in front of a 'case', a large wooden cabinet subdivided into a series of pigeon holes each containing a different letter or sign. He takes out letters one at a time and places them in his composing 'stick', a small slotted receptacle, formerly wooden, now metal. When a line of type has been assembled in the stick (i.e. 'composed') the compositor places it in a 'galley', a small tray in which the lines

acquire such dexterity, he had to become an “automaton,” much like the modern typist at the keyboard.¹⁶⁹ The intensity of his focus is captured in the compositor’s expression. Although he tilts his head towards the cadaver, his expression seems withdrawn, as if he has not yet realized what is occurring. While the other two printers resist the dead – their open mouths imply that they are also screaming – the compositor is oddly resigned.

The second cadaver halts the process of printing. Death removes the pressman’s hand from the bar and prepares to drag him away. The pressman’s body shows signs of marked resistance – his right foot is pushed against the body of the press and firmly planted on the ground, his torso pulling away from the cadaver. The other printer, partially visible in the background, is also resisting. Although the inker is not actually seized by Death (yet?), he attempts to defend his working companion. The inker points his ‘weapon’ at the cadaver, but his effort is futile because the leather ball stuffed with hair or wool will be no match for the awful attacker. The bookseller in the panel on the right does not fare much better. Trapped in the tight space between the bookshelves and the counter, the *libraire* despite attempts to escape, but really has nowhere to go. Death stretches his bony arm over the counter and grabs the bookseller by the sleeve of his dress. Putting an end to the reading (and the selling) of books, the cadaver tells the bookseller to let go of his books (*Laissez vos livres maintenant*), one of which lies open on the counter.

Husz’s woodcut is about printing and about death. In the image, he successfully merged the representation of printing with macabre sensibility and in so doing opened up the scene to multiple readings. Inherent in the composition of the woodcut is the emphasis on mechanical reproduction of books, hence the

of type are held, with a ‘lead’ between each line (the leads are small lead pieces which do not register and which keep the lines apart). He then groups the lines onto pages and assembles the pages in the forme where they are secured with wooden wedges and firmly tied together,” 61. Nowadays, the compositor can tell by touch which letter he is taking out of the case by feeling for the notch cut in its shank. However, early types were not notched and the compositor had to use his eyes to check the letters before placing them in the stick. To be able to work fast, it was necessary that the letters be arranged in the same order in every case he had to work at.

¹⁶⁹ Febvre and Martin 62.

arrangement of printers along the specific steps of production: typesetting, inking, printing, selling and even reading. Husz provides not only visual clues to assist the viewer in understanding the sequential process of printing – assembling the lines of the text, pulling the press, selling the books – but the verses placed below the woodcut also reference the words associated with printing such as “*presses*,” “*capses*” and “*les imprimeurs*.” The text of the poem makes reference to the scope of printers’ work as well – they publish books on a variety of disciplines: law, theology and poetry (*Imprime avons tous les cours. De la sainte theologie. Loix /decret / y poeterie*). Husz therefore comments not only on how the printed books are made, but also what printers are capable of producing and in so doing advertises his profession and his shop.

The importance of printers as the new members of society is emphasized in Husz’s *Printers*. While in the *Dance of Death*, social classes are always depicted by a single figure (the Abbot, the King, the Hermit), in the woodcut the printers are shown by three different individuals and the verses refer to them in plural – *les imprimeurs* – not in the singular, as is the case with all other protagonists. Moreover, in the social hierarchy of the *Danse*, Husz places the printers and the bookseller between the figures of the Astrologer and the Bourgeois and the Canon and the Merchant, thus giving them a fairly elevated status. How accurate was this placement? As Miriam Usher Chrisman explains: “By traditional definition [printers] were artisans and craftsmen. In reality, they enjoyed a higher status.”¹⁷⁰ In practice, a social status of a printer was rather difficult to define and there was, as Husz portrayed in the woodcut, a very specific hierarchy within a printing workshop.

The typesetter, or compositor, had an important role in the workshop. He was typically more educated than the pressman and thus had a more secure job and a better relationship with the head printer. The pressmen and inkers were the lowest paid among workers and it was not unusual to find them working for a workshop for a time before they moved on to another press or another town altogether since they

¹⁷⁰ Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg 1489-1599* (New Heaven: Yale UP, 1982) 3.

often belonged to the strata of journeyman.¹⁷¹ Unlike composers who were generally well paid, the pressmen's job and financial future were seldom secured. The status of the head printer, as well, varied greatly. Master printers with an established shop and a steady clientele, like Husz, were fairly wealthy. On the other hand, printers whose enterprise depended on employment from the bookseller-publisher had a very different status. Add to this the fickleness of the industry, especially pronounced in the early years of printing, when many head printers opened stores only to find their business dwindle and collapse within months.¹⁷²

The social position of the bookseller, another type inserted in the *Danse* by Husz, was a bit different. The *libraire* was a profession of long standing, though, again, the precise social position of a bookseller depended on many factors.¹⁷³ The advent of printing began to change the scope of the bookseller's profession – although many sold printed works along with manuscripts – only a handful recognized the possibilities of the new industry and adapted their business accordingly. Printing also gave rise to the figure of the *libraire*-publisher, typically a wealthy bourgeois who employed numerous presses to print the work, which he then sold through his numerous outposts. Some printers sold their stock in a shop appended to their workshop – perhaps this is the setting Husz portrayed in the woodcut – but it was more common for books to be printed in a workshop and then sold in shops across the town or country. Much of the distribution of early printed works also lay in the hands of the *libraire*-publisher who had connections and bookstores in multiple places and could dispose of stock fairly quickly. The dichotomy set up by the printers and the bookseller in Husz's images is interesting

¹⁷¹ Febvre and Martin 130.

¹⁷² Chrisman is especially good in pointing out the speed in which many early printing workshops opened and closed in Strasbourg as a result of poor business choices of their owners.

¹⁷³For a discussion of booksellers in France, see Richard A. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris 1200-1500*, vol. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000), especially pages 321-323. The difficulty in defining social status, however, was not unique to printers and booksellers. The same can be said about late medieval merchants. Some of them were quite wealthy and even held positions of prominence in the city, while others were simple owners of store.

precisely because it reflects the collaborative, but also complicated relationship that was established between these two groups in the early years of printing, as I will discuss in this chapter. Printers often worked for booksellers, but could also occasionally become booksellers. The bookseller, at least theoretically, had a higher social position, but in the woodcut the bookseller comes after the printers, perhaps because Husz was more concerned with emphasizing the process of making rather than selling books.

Early Printing in France (1470-1500)

The printing industry portrayed in Husz's woodcut arrived in France rather late. The first printing workshop was established in 1470, in Paris, almost two decades after Johannes Gutenberg had begun printing in Mainz. The first press, erected in the precincts of the old Sorbonne, was not really set up as a business venture but rather as "a service to the cause of learning," explains Colin Clair, by two professors of the University, Guillaume Fichet (d.1480) and Jean Heynlin (d.1496).¹⁷⁴ Both associated with the Faculty of Theology, Fichet and Heynlin were great admirers of ancient Rome and of the Latin classics and formed a circle of scholars and students interested in studying humanist texts.¹⁷⁵ Although manuscript

¹⁷⁴ Colin Clair, *A History of European Printing* (London, New York and San Francisco: Academic Press, 1976) 59. The history of the first press in France and the list of works published by this workshop has been much discussed, see: Anatole Claudin, *The First Paris Press: An Account of the Books Printed for G. Fichet and J. Heynlin in the Sorbonne, 1470-1472* (London: Chiswick Press, 1898); Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book*; Jean-Marie Dureau, "Les premiers ateliers français," *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome I, Le livre conquérant: Du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIe siècle*, eds. Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier and Jean-Pierre Vivet (Paris: Promodis, 1982), 163-175; Henri-Jean Martin, *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre français: La Naissance du livre moderne (XIVe – XVIIe siècles)* (Tours: Editions du Cercle de la Librairie, 2000); and Jeanne Veyrin-Forrer, "Aux origines de l'imprimerie française: L'atelier de la Sorbonne et ses mécènes," *La lettre et le texte: Trente années de recherches sur l'histoire du livre* (Paris, 1987) 161-187.

¹⁷⁵ Although the first workshop did not open in France until 1470, printed texts were known and even sold in Paris for several years prior. German printers Johann Fust

copies of some Latin classics were readily available, this circle of scholars felt the need for accurate texts of Sallust, Cicero and Virgil, which at the time were rare and faulty.¹⁷⁶ With the aim of printing sound copies of ancient texts, Fichet and Heynlin set up the first press and invited three German printers, Ulrich Gering, Michael Friburger and Martin Crantz, who arrived in Paris at the end of 1469, to run it.¹⁷⁷ In the summer of the following year, they published the first book printed in France – the *Epistolae* (*Letters*) written by Gasparino of Bergamo (Gasparinus Barzizus) (d.1431), which was intended to provide students with an example of elegant and artful writing in Latin.¹⁷⁸ The second book printed by Fichet's and Heynlin's press was yet another work by Gasparino, a treatise on the orthography of Latin words arranged alphabetically, entitled *Gasparini Pergamensis orthographiae liber* (*Orthographia*) published in January of 1471.¹⁷⁹ Over the next two years, the press published thirty works, including texts by Sallust, Valerius Maximums, Cicero's *De Officiis* (*On Duties*), Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae Latinae* and Fichet's own work *Rhetorica* in which he summarizes the principles of correct Latin prose.¹⁸⁰

Although the first French press was by all accounts successful – the frequency of publications over the three years the workshop was open attests to that – the market was soon saturated.¹⁸¹ The circle of humanists in Paris was rather small and the clientele interested in purchasing Fichet's and Heynlin's edition limited.

and Peter Schöffer, who together with Gutenberg were the pioneers of the printing industry, sold some of their stock in Paris and Fust visited the city several times on business. According to Febvre and Martin, Fust even had a permanent agent in Paris, Hermann of Statboen. See Febvre and Martin 174-175. For further information on selling printed books in Paris prior to 1470, see Rouse and Rouse 321-323.

¹⁷⁶ Febvre and Martin 174.

¹⁷⁷ Clair 59. Gering was from Constance, Friburger was born in Colmar, Alsace, but spent time in Basel where he was an arts graduate and probably met Heynlin there and Crantz was from Heynlin's home town of Stein in Baden.

¹⁷⁸ Gasparino of Bergamo was an Italian grammarian and teacher known for introducing a new style of epistolary Latin inspired by the works of Cicero.

¹⁷⁹ Claudin 5-6. Consisting of 221 leaves, *Orthographia* was twice the size of the *Epistolae* and, as Claudin explains, later copies included two additional treatises, *De diphthongis* by Guarini of Verona and *De arte punctandi*, Heynlin's own text on the art of punctuation.

¹⁸⁰ Febvre and Martin 174.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 174.

Moreover, by late 1472 Fichet relocated to Rome and Heynlin resigned from his post as a corrector and as a result the workshop at the Sorbonne was permanently closed by April of 1473.¹⁸² The German printers, led by Gering, relocated the printing workshop to the rue St. Jacques, near the church of St. Benoit, at the sign of *Le Soleil d'Or* (The Golden Sun).¹⁸³ While the new workshop continued to print some classical texts, most notably of Virgil, once they moved Gering and his associates had to widen the repertoire of publications in order to appeal to a larger audience and this meant printing devotional works, treatises on morality and manuals for confessors, all of which were sure to sell.¹⁸⁴

The circumstances surrounding the opening and closing of the first Paris press reflect the entrepreneurial nature of the printing industry. As historians Lucian Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin have argued, “[t]here is no better example of the frame of mind in which, and the motives for which, a small group of clerics could be led to invite some printers into town; nor of the favorable conditions, and the freedom to alter their business strategy, which allowed these early printers to succeed in establishing themselves and prosper.”¹⁸⁵ While Fichet and Heynlin may not have thought of their workshop as a business venture in a true sense of the term, the rules that governed the world of early printing and publishing nevertheless informed the working of their enterprise. As examples of successful – and even more so – failed printing ventures demonstrate, to run a profitable business a printer had to identify an audience (in the case of the first press, this was the circle of humanist scholars), establish connections with printers and publishers beyond their own town and country and, most crucially, be willing to adapt and adjust to the demands of the often fickle marketplace.¹⁸⁶ For the present study, understanding the nuances of the early printing in France and especially the marketing strategies of the makers of illustrated books is particularly important because, as I will argue, adaptations of the

¹⁸² Claudin 32.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 32.

¹⁸⁴ Febvre and Martin 175.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. 173.

¹⁸⁶ As mentioned earlier, Chrisman’s text is great in highlighting the number of short-lived presses established in Strasbourg.

Danse in the printed books were often directly influenced by the workings of the industry.

Although slow to arrive in France, the printing industry spread fairly quickly. By the time Gering relocated from the Sorbonne and opened a new workshop at the *Soleil d'Or* in 1473, he was no longer the only printer with an *atelier* in Paris.¹⁸⁷ On the same street, two houses away from Gering's workshop, another press opened at the sign of *Chevalier au Cygne* (The Knight and the Swan), run by two Germans, Peter Kaiser, a master of arts, and his associate Johann Stoll.¹⁸⁸ Other presses soon followed and by 1480 there were about ten printing workshops operating in Paris, many located on the Rue St. Jacques, which became the hub of printing workshops in the city.¹⁸⁹ Even more importantly, the industry expanded beyond Paris.¹⁹⁰

In 1473, three years after Fichet and Heynlin printed the first book in France, Lyons was endowed with its own press. A native of Liège, Guillaume Le Roy, brought printing to Lyons and on September 17, 1473 he published *Compendium breve* by Pope Innocent III.¹⁹¹ Contrary to Paris where the first press was associated with the University, Le Roy's immediate financier was a wealthy merchant named

¹⁸⁷ Fevre and Martin 175.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 175. In France, Kaiser was known by several names: Petrus Caesaris, Pierre César, and Pierre Wagner. Latin or French forms of names were often given to foreign printers.

¹⁸⁹ Clair 61.

¹⁹⁰ The origins and spread of printing in France is a topic that goes beyond the scope of this chapter and my dissertation in general. My goal is to highlight some of the main episodes in the history of the early presses in France in order to produce background for the development of illustrated books and the *Danse macabre* series in particular, not offer an extensive account of printers and presses in existence at the time. For a detailed account of the history of early printing in France see: Anatole Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie en France au XVe et au XVIe siècle*, vols. I-IV (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1900-1914); Philippe Renouard, *Imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondateurs de caractères et correcteurs d'imprimerie, depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Letters Modernes, 1965). A good overview of early French printing can be found in British Museum, Department of Printed books, *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Museum* vol. VIII (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1949) especially pages ix-xviii (henceforth BMC).

¹⁹¹ Clair 62.

Barthelémy Buyer.¹⁹² In fact, the workshop was set up in Buyer's house and it was his name, and not Le Roy's, that typically appeared in the colophons of the books issues by this press.¹⁹³ Buyer was likely introduced to the art of printing in the 1460s when, as a student in the Faculty of Arts in Paris, he must have met Fichet and Heynlin.¹⁹⁴ As Febvre and Martin explain, "it is obvious that Buyer well understood the twin possibilities latent in the new art [of printing] – as an agency for the diffusion of culture and a means of earning a return on capital."¹⁹⁵ Moreover, it was Buyer, not the printer, who chose texts for printing and in so doing paved the way for the type of publishing that was to become unique to Lyons – books in French for merchants and the bourgeoisie as well as legal collections.¹⁹⁶ Buyer was also a financier and not content to sell only works published by his press. Paving the road for later bookseller-publishers – a profession established in the late fifteenth century and best described as a precursor to modern day publishing houses – Buyer obliged other printers from Lyons to entrust the sale of some of their work to him and both French and foreign booksellers came to him to help sell off their stock.¹⁹⁷ Eventually, Buyer even opened branches of his store in other French towns where there was a demand for reading matter, such as Paris, Toulouse and Avignon.¹⁹⁸

Lyons was not a university town, but it was a major commercial center and one of the most prosperous cities in France. While printers in Paris, at least at the beginning of printing, catered predominately to the demands of students and teachers at the University and published mainly scholastic works in Latin, the presses in Lyons specialized in popular and often illustrated works, in French, that appealed to the general reading public. This included devotional texts, historical

¹⁹² Ibid. 62.

¹⁹³ Ibid. 62. As Clair explains, during Buyer's lifetime – he died in July of 1483 – Le Roy's name is mentioned only on three occasions, in 1473, 1477 and 1482.

¹⁹⁴ Febvre and Martin 118. Buyer came from a wealthy family. His father, Pierre Buyer, was a rich local notable who was also devoted to studies of the law – obtaining a doctorate in law just a few months before his death in 1458.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 119.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. 119.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 119.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. 119.

treatises, legal documents and chivalric romances.¹⁹⁹ Although printing houses in Paris eventually expanded their repertoires to include a range of popular works, including editions of the *Danse*, the dichotomy between the presses in Paris and Lyons remained for the duration of the fifteenth century. Printers in Lyons benefited greatly from the town's geographical location – on the great commercial route between the Ile-de-France, Burgundy and Mediterranean countries – and from the Lyons Fairs, held four times a year which brought together merchants from all over Europe.²⁰⁰ For these reasons, Lyons proved to be a good market for printed books and before the end of the fifteenth century about 160 printers had worked there, most of them, like Husz, of German descent.²⁰¹ Actually, German printers in Lyons were so predominant that printers as a social class became known simply as *les allemands*.²⁰²

After the opening of presses in commercial and cultural centers of Paris and Lyons, printing spread to French provinces including Albi in 1475, Toulouse in 1476, Angers in 1477, Vienne and Chablis in 1478 and Poitiers and Caen in 1479.²⁰³ The industry expanded so quickly that by the end of the fifteenth century about 40 French towns had working presses, though the majority of editions were still published in Paris and Lyons.²⁰⁴ In these two cities, the number of printing workshops also grew

¹⁹⁹ Dureau 171.

²⁰⁰ Clair 62. The Lyons fair took place four times yearly between 1463 and 1484. Each fair lasted fourteen days and all merchants, except the English, were admitted. In 1484 the fair was suppressed because several provinces, most notably Languedoc, were envious of the town's commercial success. However, the four fairs, with all their privileges were re-established in 1498 by Louis XII.

²⁰¹ Ibid. 62.

²⁰² Ibid. 62.

²⁰³ Ibid. 64. For a good discussion of the way printing was set up in a French province see Diane E. Booton, *Manuscripts, Market and the Transition to Print in Late Medieval Brittany*, Farnham (Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). Typically, the presses were initially set up in towns that were either affiliated with a University or that were located in a close proximity to a paper mill.

²⁰⁴ As Dureau explains, while there was indeed a rapid growth in the number of new presses established in different towns in France in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, Paris and Lyons still produced about 80% of printed works, see Dureau 165.

rapidly and by 1500 there were 75 working presses in Paris alone.²⁰⁵ Although France still lagged behind Italy in book production, it was catching up fast.²⁰⁶ For example, between 1480 and 1482, Venice – which by this time had become the capital of printing – produced 156 editions and Paris only 35; between 1495 and 1497 Venice published 447 editions, Paris 181 and Lyons 95.²⁰⁷ By the end of the fifteenth century, printing was thus becoming an alluring industry in France and the number of presses that surfaced in Paris, Lyons and elsewhere point to the demand for printed works and the willingness of printers to join the market and open new workshops. Editions of the *Danse* were first published when the printing industry was still in the process of developing and are, as I will elaborate later in the chapter, often indicative of the changes brought about by the rapid spread of printing in France.

Between Script and Print: The Book in the Transitional Period

The transition from handwritten books to the world of movable type was not immediate.²⁰⁸ Printing did not instantly replace manuscript production and, in fact,

²⁰⁵ R. J. Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France, 1483-1610*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 7.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 7.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 7.

²⁰⁸ In the past, scholars tended to emphasize the profound and almost instantaneous affect the printing revolution had on all aspects of late medieval and, especially, early modern society. This was especially the view in Elizabeth Eisenstein's hugely influential book *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* first published in 1979, which played a central role in shaping the study of print culture and book history, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1979). In recent years, Eisenstein's book has been criticized by scholars who argue that the process of transition from script to print was more prolonged than her study implies. In particular, McKitterick has suggested that many changes associated with printing were only gradually absorbed over 400 years, from the invention of printing in the 1450s to the early nineteenth century. As McKitterick argues: "It is misleading to speak of any transition from manuscript to print as if it were a finite process, let alone an orderly one, or indeed that the process was all in one direction. [...] the printing revolution, a phrase taken to heart by some historians, was no revolution in the sense that it wrought instant change. The revolution was

the two forms of bookmaking continued to coexist well into the sixteenth century.²⁰⁹ For these reasons, book historians typically describe the late fifteenth century as a 'transitional period' and emphasize the hybrid nature of books *and* manuscripts produced at the time. As Elizabeth Eisenstein has recently noted, during this period script and print were so intertwined that sellers and readers of books seldom differentiated between manuscripts and printed texts:

Whereas manuscripts and printed products are now assigned to separate categories by curators and dealers, fifteenth-century readers found both kinds of books for sale in the same locales, often in the same shops. Purchasers placed them together in the same cabinets or on the same shelves and sometimes had them covered by the same bindings. The contrast with twentieth century is striking [...] Moreover, during the fifteenth century a carryover of format and layout reinforced the impression of similarity. When discussing a particular text, readers did not always make clear whether it was hand-copied or not.²¹⁰

part technological, and part bibliographical and social. It was prolonged, and like many revolutions its progress was irregular, and its effects were variable, even erratic" (p. 47). See McKitterick. Eisenstein's study sparked many debates among print culture specialists and book historians, see for example: Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Erin N. Lindquist and Eleanor F. Shelvin, *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst and Boston: Massachusetts UP in association with The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 2007); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1998); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999); or Sandra Hindman, ed., *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991).

²⁰⁹ On the issue of coexistence of manuscripts and prints see: McKitterick, especially chapters 2 and 3, Paul Needham, "Prints in the Early Printed Shops," *The Woodcut in the Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter Parshall (New Heaven and London: Yale UP, 2009), 39-91 and J. B. Trapp, ed., *Manuscripts in the Fifty Years after the Invention of Printing* (London: Warburg Institute, 1983).

²¹⁰ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending* (Philadelphia and Oxford: Pennsylvania UP, 2011) 8. Eisenstein's first chapter, "First Impression" is also an excellent recent overview of the relationship between scribal and printed culture.

At the same time, as Eisenstein also notes, it would be wrong to assume that the advent of printing did not make a striking impression on at least some contemporaries.²¹¹ Part of the reason that makes the transitional period so interesting is the impossibility of defining it in absolute terms. Contemporary attitudes towards printing ranged immensely from “committed acclamation” to “absolute rejection.”²¹² Certain aspects of printing were immediately embraced. For example, the advantages of typography over hand-copying were frequently emphasized and so, in 1471, Fichet, the founder of the first French press, praised the new art in a letter he attached to some printed copies of Gasparino’s *Ortogtaphia*:

Bacchus and Ceres were made divinities for having taught humanity the use of wine and bread. Gutenberg’s invention is of a higher and more divine order. It enables all that had been thought and said, to be preserved and transmitted to posterity.²¹³

Likewise, the legibility of the type over handwritten text was lauded as was the ability of the press to produce multiple and identical copies.²¹⁴ While evidence of “absolute rejection” of printing are rare in this period, there is one oft-quoted example in which the invention of printing is discussed in negative terms. Written in 1494 by the Benedictine Abbot Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516), the treatise entitled *In Praise of Scribes (De Laude Scriptorum)* discusses the effects of printing on the nature of the written word and highlights especially the impermanence of paper as the medium:

All of you know the difference between a manuscript and a printed book. The word written on parchment will last a thousand years. The printed word is on

²¹¹ For a thorough discussion of this issue see Eisenstein’s first chapter.

²¹² Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979) 24.

²¹³ Quoted in Eisenstein, *Divine Art* 12.

²¹⁴ In a letter written in 1455 by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (future Pope Pious II) to a Spanish cardinal it was said that the [printed] text was exceedingly clean, that it was without error and that it could be read without glasses. Quoted in Eisenstein, *Divine Art*, 6.

paper. How long will it last? The most you can expect a book of paper to survive is two hundred years. Yet, there are many who think they can entrust their works to paper. Only time will tell. Yes, many books are now available in print but no matter how many books will be printed, there will always be some left unprinted and worth copying. No one will ever be able to locate and buy all printed books. Even if all works ever written would appear in print, the devoted scribe should not relax in his zeal. On the contrary, he will guarantee permanence to useful printed books by copying them.²¹⁵

Yet even Thritemius' text reveals contradictory attitudes towards printing that were typical of the period. While he is concerned with preservation of knowledge in the new medium, he still praised its fast modes of production elsewhere in his book and actually benefited from it by having his text printed.

This is the context in which the *Danse macabre* books emerged. They are a product of the transitional period and reflect the hybrid nature of books typical of this time. Guy Marchant's first edition of the *Danse*, published in 1485, is one of the earliest illustrated books published in France using woodcuts made by a French artist. Some of the most important printers and publishers of the period printed editions of the *Danse*, not just in Paris, but also in Lyons, Troyes, Geneva and possibly other places as well. Luxurious editions of the *Danse* printed for publisher Antoine Vérard epitomize the notion of the composite book – partially hand-made and partially mechanically reproduced so that every copy is unique. The range of editions, from Vérard *deluxe* copies to simple quarto (4^o) volumes is equally striking and points to the diverse way the image of the *Danse* was used in the period. The Dance of Death books also participated in the multi-medial exchange of texts and images the transitional period was noted for. Woodcuts of the *Danse* found their way into printed Books of Hours published by Simon Vostre, Philippe Pigouchet, and, in the sixteenth century, Thielman Kerver, whereby they gained an even wider prominence since prayer books were the most frequently published illustrated texts

²¹⁵ Johannes Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes (De Laude Scriptorum)*, ed. Klaus Arnold, trans. Ronald Behrendt (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1974) 63-65.

of the period (Fig. 13).²¹⁶ Editions of the *Danse* also served as the model for an illuminated manuscript created in c. 1500 preserved at the BN (MS fr. 995) and for the two mural paintings located in parish churches of Mesely le Grenet and La Ferté-Loupière (Figs. 1-7, 11 and 12).

The Career of Guy Marchant

While several printers, publishers and booksellers contributed to the development of the *Danse* in the medium of illustrated books, Marchant is nevertheless the central figure. After all, as discussed in the previous chapter, it was Marchant who is credited with the idea of copying the mural from the Innocents and translating the *Danse* into the print medium. Marchant also popularized the books by publishing the highest number of known editions, eight in total, and by inventing the *Danse macabre des femmes* series. For these reasons, the present chapter will discuss Marchant's printing practices and, especially, his venture into the field of popular illustrated books in vernacular.

As Sandra Hindman has shown, Marchant's career was rather unusual.²¹⁷ The majority of the books he published were aimed at the University clientele and included works on theology, grammar and humanist subjects. At the same time, however, he frequently ventured into other genres and experimented with formats as diverse as illustrated books, travel guides or even pamphlets, which opened his business to new publics for prints. Such meandering between genres and readers was not generally advisable and most early printers avoided it.²¹⁸ However, as I will

²¹⁶ On this issue see Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*. As Reinburg explains, printed prayer books were "the bread and butter of the printing industry in the early stages of the industry's growth," 28-9.

²¹⁷ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 69.

²¹⁸ On this issue see See Martha Tedeschi, "Publish and Perish: The Career of Linehart Holle in Ulm," *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991) 41-67. Accounts of business practices of early printers in France recorded in Claudin's,

show, Marchant's success as a printer – he is credited with publishing at least 180 editions over the course of his career, which is an impressive achievement – was based on his keen ability to interpret the trends in the market, collaborate with the best publishers and booksellers and continually reinvent his practice. By discussing Marchant's editions of the *Danse* and several of his other publications, I will argue that the making of the series was a product of collaboration with some of the main printers, publishers and booksellers working with illustrated books at the time. Although it may have been modeled on the mural from the Cemetery of the Innocents, the first edition of the *Danse* and the subsequent augmented or adapted versions reflect specific trends of the book market and as such have to be studied against the backdrop of the emerging printing industry.

Apart from Hindman's article, there is as yet no systematic account of Marchant's career.²¹⁹ Not much is known, for example, about his early life or the circumstances surrounding the opening of his workshop. Several authors have suggested that Marchant was of Flemish origin, an assumption largely based on the fact that in 1500 he published a Dutch translation of the hugely popular title *Das Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools) by Sebastian Brant.²²⁰ In the colophon, printed on the

Histoire de l'imprimerie also suggest that printers typically focused their enterprises on publishing specific categories of books.

²¹⁹ On Marchant's publications and printing practices see Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant"; Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, I, 335 -406; Philippe Renouard, *Imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondeurs de caractères et correcteurs d'imprimerie, depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris: 1898) 256-58; André Blum, *Les Origines du Livre à Gravures en France: Les Incunables Typographiques* (Paris and Brussels: Les éditions G. Van Oest, 1928) 20-27. Marchant's work on a Dutch edition of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* is discussed in an unpublished dissertation from the late 1940s, see: John Ralph Sinnema, "A Critical Study of the Dutch Translation of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, diss., U of Cincinnati, 1949.

Marchant's career and some of his more famous printer's marks are briefly studied in Edwin Elliot Willoughby, "Cover Design," *The Library Quarterly* 5. 3 (1935): 349-350.

²²⁰ See Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie* 393 footnote 1 and 403 and Sinnema and Willoughby. The Dutch edition was published on June 6, 1500 under the title *Der zotten ende der narrenscip* and it was the first book in Flemish printed in Paris. This book, the sole copy of which is preserved at the BN (Rés.-YH-64), was made in collaboration with the bookseller/printer Geoffrey de Marnef for whom Marchant also

last page of Marchant's Dutch translation, the name Guide Coopman is given as the printer of this tract. As Anatole Claudin explains, the word "*coopman*" means *marchand* in Flemish and hence the name of the printer is actually a translation of Marchant's French name.²²¹

It has also been implied, based on Marchant's last name and illustrations in some of his printer's marks, that he comes from a family of tradesmen ("*merchant*"), more specifically, shoemakers.²²² This is not surprising since many early printers/publishers came from merchant classes and were able to set up their business in part because their families had already acquired wealth through their respective trades.²²³ This was certainly the case with Barthelémy Buyer, the wealthy bourgeois who established the first press in Lyons, but also with Jean Petit, one of the principal bookseller-publishers in Paris and a frequent collaborator of Marchant's, who famously came from a family of butchers.

The idea that Marchant originated from a family of shoemakers is based on the fact that three of his six known printer's marks feature the patron saints of

published several other tracts, including a Latin translation of the *Danse macabre*. The book is illustrated, though according to Claudin the cuts used in this edition were borrowed from the French version of *Das Narrenschiff*, also published for de Marnef. For an electronic facsimile of this edition see <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k110648p/f2.image>

²²¹ Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie* 403. Marchant also altered his name when he printed an edition of the *Danse macabre* in Latin for Geoffrey de Marnef in October of 1490. In that book, he signed his name as Guido Mercatoris.

²²² Quoted in Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 77.

²²³ *Ibid.* 77. Jean Petit was probably the most important *libraire*-publisher working in Paris in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. From 1493 to 1530, Petit published more than a thousand books, roughly one tenth of the entire production of Paris book trade came from his shop. As Febvre and Martin explain, Petit became one of the four great publishers of the University of Paris, putting out volumes for students and professors alike. He was also a savvy entrepreneur who collaborated with leading publishers in Paris and elsewhere, individuals like Geoffrey de Marnef, Thielman Kerver, Berthold Rembolt and John of Coblenz and frequently employed the best printers to work on his volumes, including Marchant. On Jean Petit see Febvre and Martin, especially pages 121-2 and Phillipe Renouard, "Quelques Documents sur les Petit, Libraires Parisiens, et Leur Famille (XV et XVI Siècles)" *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, vol. 23 (1896):133-153.

shoemakers, Crispin and Crispinian, making shoes.²²⁴ For example, in Marchant's third catalogued printer's device, we see the two saints cutting up sheets of leather and putting the shoes together (Fig. 31).²²⁵ Pairs of shoes already made are scattered on the floor between them, while a finished (?) pair of boots hangs over the beam behind the two saints. An emblem featuring an open book, two hands shaking, the initials "G. M" and a rebus make up the upper part of the image.

Invented at the end of the century, printer's marks (or devices) were initially placed above the colophons at the end of the book. At first the devices were simple, but over time they became, as Febvre and Martin have stated, "species of pictorial publicity, not only telling the book's origin, but adorning it and affirming its quality."²²⁶ Typically, booksellers and publishers included their house sign as their device – Marchant did this when he opened the second shop on Rue Cloppin under the sign of Prestre Jehan – but it was also very common to include emblematic or allegorical illustrations laden with symbolism (Fig. 32).²²⁷ Marchant's repeated use of saints Crispin and Crispinian must therefore have been of particular importance to him. Was Marchant paying a tribute to his family's trade or constructing a clever allegory, the meaning of which is now lost? One plausible explanation has thus far been proposed.

Born to a noble Roman family in the third century, the twin brothers, Crispin and Crispinian, fled persecution for their faith under emperor Diocletian and ended up settling in the Northern French town of Soissons in Picardy.²²⁸ While in Soissons,

²²⁴ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant," 77. The link between shoemakers and Marchant was first made by H. W. Davies, *Devices of the Early Printers* 1935 and it was then reiterated in the BMC, p. XXV. On Marchant's printer's marks see Louis Polain, *Marques des imprimeurs et libraires en France au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1926) and Philippe Renouard, *Les marques typographiques parisiennes des XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1926).

²²⁵ The majority of printer's devices used in the fifteenth century in France were catalogued by Polain.

²²⁶ Febvre and Martin 84.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 84.

²²⁸ This is one of the two versions of the legend of SS. Crispin and Crispinian. According to the second one, the brothers originated from a Romano-Briton family whose father had been killed by a Roman emperor living in Canterbury. They settled in Faversham where they learned how to make shoes.

the brothers preached Christianity to the Gauls during the day and at night they made shoes to support themselves. Their preaching enraged the governor of Belgic Gaul who had them tortured and thrown into the river Aisne with millstones around their necks. Although they survived this martyrdom, SS. Crispin and Crispinian were eventually beheaded c. 286 on a plain near Soissons. The cult of the twin saints was especially venerated in Soissons, where a shrine was erected in their honor, and Marchant's repeated reference to them in his devices may actually indicate that he came from that town as well.²²⁹

While his reference to the twin saints may remain an unsolved puzzle, the upmost register of the printer's mark features a rebus that is easy to interpret (Fig. 31). Flanked by the two angels is a rectangle which features a sheet of music with notes "sol" and "la" on the left and the words "fides" and "ficit" on the right hand side. The rebus points to Marchant's motto, "*Sola fides sufficit*" (Only faith suffices), which is taken from Thomas Aquinas' hymn *Pange lingua gloriosa* ("Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory of his flesh"), composed in 1263 for the Office of the Corpus Christi.²³⁰ The source of Marchant's motto – the writings of Aquinas, the most celebrated theologian of the thirteenth century and a professor at the University of Paris – should not surprise us. Marchant was an ordained priest and he received the title of the Master of Arts from the Sorbonne, the very place where Aquinas taught. Marchant's name appears on the second list (*rotulus secundus*) of the register of nominations for the Master of Arts in Paris dated March 2, 1497. Although he never received preferment, according to one author, printing was only his second choice for a profession, a common second choice of clergymen in the early years of printing.²³¹ Around the time Marchant obtained the title from the Sorbonne, he began

²²⁹ This point was first made in BMC, see footnote 3 on page XXV. The theory was subsequently supported by Hindman, 80. Parenthetically, Marchant's printer's mark makes reference to hands – we see hands making shoes, hands holding an open book and even two hands shaking in the upper register. What is the meaning of this? There is also a reference to pairing or pairs – two hands shaking, pairs of boots, pairs of shoes, and most importantly a pair of twins – their sameness indicated by their identical faces.

²³⁰ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 77.

²³¹ Sinnema XI.

the practice of signing his colophons as *magister* and in a book published in 1499 he used the full title *maistre es ars*.²³² Because, as I will explain shortly, Marchant's principal readers were University students and professors, his title and the motto borrowed from Aquinas were particularly fitting.

Marchant's first shop was set up in Paris at the Hotel de Champ Gaillard behind the College of Navarre, to which it belonged.²³³ Founded in 1305 by Jeanne of Navarre, the wife of Philip the Fair, the College was open to students of grammar, philosophy and theology and it was specifically intended for poor students who received scholarships to pay for their education.²³⁴ The statutes of the College of Navarre insisted that students avoid luxury and attend divine offices in the chapel, which was endowed with four chaplains and four clerics.²³⁵ The College was located in the eastern part of the Latin Quarter between the Rue de Murs on the east and Rue de la Porte Bordelle on the west. This meant that Marchant's shop was further away from the main hub of printing workshops, most of which were located in or near the Rue St. Jacques, closer to the Sorbonne proper.

It is clear that Marchant had a particularly close relationship with the College of Navarre because in 1499, while retaining the shop at Champ Gaillard, he opened a second venue at the Hotel of Beauregard²³⁶, which belonged to the College of

²³² BCM, xxv.

²³³ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 81. The College of Navarre was located in the Latin Quarter, in what is now Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève. During the French Revolution, the College was suppressed, its library dispersed and its archives lost. In 1805, under the reign of Napoleon, the buildings of the College were assigned to the École polytechnique, which relocated in 1976.

²³⁴ Ibid. 81. For a recent historical account of the College of Navarre see Nathalie Gorochoy, *Le Collège de Navarre, de sa fondation (1305) au début du XVIe siècle (1418): histoire de l'institution, de sa vie intellectuelle et de son recurtement* (Paris: H. Champion, 1997).

²³⁵ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 81.

²³⁶ According to Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, Marchant's first shop was set in the big house of the Champ-Gaillard across from the College of Navarre, under the sign *Prestre Jehan* while the Hotel of Beauregard was located on Rue Clopin (Cloppin), 380. In the entry on Marchant in BMC, the authors explain that rue Clopin and rue Gaillard were actually "one and the same" and that the second store was quite close to the first, xxv. Both Sinnema and Willoughby suggest that Marchant

Boncourt, also part of the College of Navarre.²³⁷ The second shop was placed on Rue Cloppin under the sign of Prestre Jehan. Property records issued in the period between 1498-99, right at the time the second shop was open, indicate that Marchant had also significantly expanded his quarters “renting premises that took in a portion of the walls of the city between the gates of Bordelle and Saint-Victor, with the intervening three towers and the road.”²³⁸ It thus appears that by the turn of the century Marchant had become (or perhaps he had been all along?) a man of means.²³⁹ Was his wealth acquired through his printing enterprise? How was his business organized and what kind of books did he make?

In the literature on early printing, Marchant is typically presented as a successful printer of popular illustrated books.²⁴⁰ Such a view is based primarily on Marchant’s multiple editions of the *Danse macabre* and on another illustrated book he printed continually in the 1490s, the *Compost et Kalendrier des bergiers* (henceforth the *Kalendrier*).²⁴¹ However, as Hindman has shown, while the *Danse* and the *Kalendrier* did sell well (perhaps better than all his other editions), they do not reflect the kinds of books Marchant’s workshop typically printed.²⁴² Over the course of his career, which spanned from c.1483 – c.1505, Marchant published at

opened his first shop with the help of his uncle, Jean de Granges who was also a priest, though I have not been able to verify this information.

²³⁷ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 81. For the history of the College of Boncourt see Raymond Cazelles, “Pierre de Becoud et le Fondation du Collège de Boncourt,” *Bibliothèque de l’école de chartes* 120 (1962): 55-103.

²³⁸ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 81.

²³⁹ Most sources on Marchant agree that by the turn of the century, he was indeed fairly wealthy. See BMC, xxv, Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant 77, Claudin, *Histoire de l’imprimerie* 335.

²⁴⁰ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 68. For example, Claudin opens his discussion of Marchant’s career by suggesting that together with Jean du Pré, he was one of the printers that developed the art of the illustrated book, p.335.

²⁴¹ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 68. Eight extant editions of the *Kalendrier* printed by Marchant have been preserved. At least three of those were printed for Jean Petit (January 1496/7, September 1497, September 1500 and possibly also August 1499).

²⁴² *Ibid.* 69.

least 180 editions, more if we include all the works he printed for other publishers.²⁴³ The majority of his publications are short tracts on humanist or theological subjects in Latin; the books are mostly in quarto (4⁰) format – not in folio like the *Danse* and the *Kalendrier* editions – and they are sparsely illustrated, if at all, with woodcuts “of routine workmanship which are reused in other imprints.”²⁴⁴ The majority of his books are quite short, thirty-six to forty leaves is the average length, but there are a few that are even shorter, consisting of only six to eight leaves.²⁴⁵ Moreover, many of Marchant’s texts are put together in the so-called “tract volumes” – books containing several short, usually interrelated texts.²⁴⁶

Such output implies that Marchant aimed his books mainly at the University clientele. Given the location of his two shops, in the immediate proximity of the College of Navarre, and the fact that he printed tract texts on theology, grammar and philosophy – the main subjects taught at the school – it is very likely that his shop obtained an agreement with the College and that he was their exclusive printer/publisher.²⁴⁷ This is quite possible since his vocation as a priest and later also a Master of Arts, made him ideally suited to print works for this institution. We know, for example, that he was collaborating closely with Jean Le Munerat, cantor of the chapel of the College of Navarre and theologian at the University of Paris, on several

²⁴³ According to the authors of the BMC, after 1500 Marchant apparently worked exclusively for bookseller Jean Petit and though he signed a book with his own device as late as 1505, from 1504 Marchant’s own workshop was in the hands of his nephew Jean Marchant, xxv. By 1511, Marchant was dead. Hindman includes a preliminary list of Marchant’s imprints in her study, which consists of 149 editions. The ISTC lists 206 editions associated with Marchant, but they also include publications printed by his nephew in the early 1500s.

²⁴⁴ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 71. In this context, a folio format (*fo*) refers to a book made from sheets of paper folded only once, thus giving pages half the size of the sheet. Books in quarto format (4⁰) are made by folding a sheet with two folds at right angles, thus giving pages one quarter the size of the sheet.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 71.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 71.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 81. Hindman wonders whether Marchant’s shop was similar to Barnes and Nobles, the firm that now has monopoly on American college bookstores, for the College of Navarre. More research needs to be done on the relationship between Marchant and the College of Navarre, before this question can be answered, but it is certainly a possibility.

books including a short tract written by Le Munerat in 1496 entitled *De dedicatione ecclesie Parisiensis*, which Marchant printed.²⁴⁸ While the relationship between Marchant and the College of Navarre merits further research, his connection with the institution must have assured a constant flow of customers, which in turn gave him the financial backing he needed to experiment with other types of printed matter.

To consider Marchant merely as the printer of scholarly tracts, however, does not do his career justice. As the list of his less scholarly publications show, he was also highly innovative, willing to experiment with different formats and new titles. Even if the *Danse* and the *Kalendrier* are not representative of his general body of works, they are nevertheless two of the most successful and oft-copied illustrated books published in France and Marchant had ‘invented’ them both. In the following section, I will analyze aspects of Marchant’s career in more detail and question how and why he began printing illustrated books.

Printing the Illustrated Book

The beginning of Marchant’s career was slow and punctured with two lengthy and unexplained breaks. His first published books came in October and December of 1483, St. Bonaventura’s *Soliloquium* and the anonymous tract *De arte bene vivendi beneque moriendi tractatus*, or the *Ars moriendi*, respectively. Although not signed by Marchant, both volumes are dated.²⁴⁹ He was then allegedly inactive until September 29, 1485 when he issued the first edition of the *Danse*, which is also the first publication to mention him by name.²⁵⁰ This publication came therefore very early in his career, at the time when he was still setting up his practice. Although a

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 82.

²⁴⁹ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 70. The year and a half interlude in Marchant’s production is difficult to gauge. Several catalogues of Marchant’s imprints, including Hindman’s, lists three potential works he may have printed between December 1483 and September of 1485: an astronomical treatise entitled *Computus cum comment (avec mode d’emploi envers français)* by Anianus (1483), Jean Gerson’s *De ecclesiastica potestate et De origine juris et legum tractatus* (1484) and Thomas Aquinas’s *Confessionale* (1484).

²⁵⁰ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 70. See also BMC xxiv.

short volume, the *Danse* was an expensive book to make, featuring one large woodcut on almost every page. In order to publish it, Marchant had to hire an artist to design the cuts, thus further increasing the cost of the production. Early printers, including Marchant, typically compensated for the cost of woodcuts by reusing the same images for multiple imprints.²⁵¹ This strategy, however, was not possible for the woodcuts in the *Danse*. Since each cut corresponds to a specific set of verses, the images in the *Danse* could only be used to illustrate the Dance of Death and no other text. Their application was thus quite limited, which in turn made them even more of an investment.²⁵² Moreover, the cuts used in this edition are considered high quality and are often described as one of the best examples of early French illustration.

The *Danse macabre* was also one of the earliest illustrated books printed in Paris. The very first illustrated book printed in France was published just seven years earlier, in August of 1478. Titled the *Mirouer de la redemption de l'humain lignaige* (the *Mirouer*), the book was printed by Martin Husz and included 257 woodcuts used by German printers several years earlier.²⁵³ Although Husz

²⁵¹ For example, in 1495/6 Marchant printed the only French edition of Thomas Bradwardine's *Arithmetica speculativa*, which was illustrated with six woodcuts that had appeared in previous books printed by Marchant and that had no relation to the mathematical text. See: De Simone, *A Heavenly Craft* 133. Four of the woodcuts used in *Arithmetica speculativa* are from the *Kalendrier* and the other two are from Marchant's 1494 edition of Petrus de Alliaco's *De anima*.

²⁵² Marchant did manage to reuse some of the *Danse* woodcuts in his edition of the *Shepherdess's Calendar*, printed in 1499, which included a section on death and dying and featured a fully illustrated *Danse macabre des femmes* cycle.

²⁵³ Martin Husz (or Huss) should not be confused with Mathias Husz (or Huss) who published the *Danse macabre* book in 1499. Both Martin and Mathias were German (possibly cousins) and both lived and worked in Lyons, though they owned different workshops. In the past, the works published by Martin and Mathias were often confused in literature, which is not surprising since they also often printed similar texts. According to the ISTC, Marin Husz produced a much smaller body of works – the catalogue lists 49 editions published by the printer between 1481 and 1489, though 11 of the titles listed bear the name of Mathias, not Martin Husz, making it difficult to discern exactly how many of Martin's books are actually known. In any case, Mathias was a more prolific printer, 125 of his books are listed in the ISTC. While Martin published the first edition of *Le Mirouer* and then reprinted it exactly a year later (on August 28, 1479), Mathias published this illustrated book five more

published the first printed edition, the title had a long manuscript tradition. Better known by its Latin title, *Speculum humanae salvationis* (henceforth *Speculum*), it was one of the more popular texts of the later Middle Ages featured in several hundred manuscript copies, blockbook (xylographic) editions and sixteen incunabula versions created between the first quarter of the fourteenth and the end of the fifteenth century.²⁵⁴ Written anonymously and compiled at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the *Speculum* was initially intended for the use of preaching monks and clerics.²⁵⁵ The work portrays medieval concept of typology, or the thesis that all events of the New Testament were prefigured by the events recounted in the Old. The *Speculum* is related to the earlier *Biblia Pauperum* or *Biblia Picta* – another medieval work that enjoyed tremendous popularity in the early years of printing – which were also typological, but they were composed almost entirely of pictures, while the first *Speculum* manuscripts included extensive text to explain the miniatures.

Lagging behind Lyons, the first illustrated book was not printed in Paris until 1481, just four years before the first edition of the *Danse*. Published by Jean Du Pré, the *Missale Parisiense* (*Missel de Paris*) was printed on September 22, using woodcuts designed by the German woodcutter, Desiderius Huym.²⁵⁶ DuPré was both a printer and a *libraire* and his workshop specialized in the production of liturgical books often printed on vellum. Although illustrated by a German, the *Missale* featured elements that were derived from the French manuscript tradition such as elaborate borders decorated with foliage, animals and the grotesque.²⁵⁷ With the *Missale* we see the beginning of specifically French style of illustration, which still relied heavily on scribal tradition. By the end of 1481, Dupré began the

times over the course of the fifteenth century (in 1482, 1483, 1483/4, 1488 and 1493).

²⁵⁴ See footnote 156.

²⁵⁵ Wilson and Wilson 24.

²⁵⁶ Dupré's name is also often spelled Du Pré in literature. He was both printer and *libraire* and was active between 1481 and 1496. His workshop specialized in printing liturgical books.

²⁵⁷ Febvre and Martin 92.

collaboration with a prolific French woodcutter and printer, Pierre Le Rouge.²⁵⁸ In 1484, DuPré published *Les cas et ruynes des nobles hommes et femmes* (The fortunes and ruins of noble men and women) a translation of Boccaccio and the first illustrated book in French published in Paris using cuts made by a Frenchman.

In publishing the *Danse*, Marchant was therefore at the forefront of a completely new format of printed matter in France – the illustrated book. For a printer who had just opened his shop, he was taking a huge risk. How did Marchant fund the publication of the *Danse*? What costs were involved in running an illustrated edition? And how much did it take to set up a printing workshop in the first place?

Such questions are difficult to answer because relevant sources, inventories, accounts or daybooks of early printers are extremely rare. In the context of Paris, however, more detailed information is available because of the work of the librarian and archivist Ernest Coyecque, though much of it relates mainly to the sixteenth century context.²⁵⁹ According to sources listed in Coyecque's study, gathering the equipment necessary to open up a small press, was relatively inexpensive. The basic equipment did not cost very much and a printer could easily acquire a press, cases, galleys and a number of fonts.²⁶⁰ For example, an inventory dating from 1513 lists equipment that belonged to a small-scale printer Jacques Ferrebouc, including "one press valued at 10 livres (13 livres with its 2 tympan); various pieces valued under 8 livres; 5 fonts of type, more or less worn, amounting to 40 livres."²⁶¹ As Febvre and Martin explain, "the whole outfit was worth about 60 livres."²⁶² A

²⁵⁸ The best source on the Le Rouge family can be found in Henri Monceaux, *Les Le Rouge de Chablis: calligraphes et miniaturistes, graveurs et imprimeurs. étude sur les débuts de l'illustration du livre au 15e siècle* (Paris: A. Claudin, 1896).

²⁵⁹ Ibid 109. See Ernest Coyecque, *Recueil d'Actes Notariés Relatifs à l'Histoire de Paris et des ses Environs au XVI Siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1905). While there are very few studies on specific fifteenth century French printers, there are several books on early sixteenth century printers and publishers, including: Fred Schreiber, *Simon de Colines: An Annotated Catalogue of 230 examples of His Press, 1520-1546* (Provo, Utah: Friends of the Birgham Young University Library, 1995) and Elizabeth Armstrong, *Robert Estienne Royal Printer: An Historical Study of the Elder Stephanus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1954).

²⁶⁰ Febvre and Martin 114.

²⁶¹ Quoted in Febvre and Martin 110.

²⁶² Ibid. 110.

workshop belonging to a more significant printer, Didier Maheu, was valued at “351 livres” in an inventory of 1520.²⁶³ Unlike Ferrebouc, Maheu owned “three presses equipped with an iron screw thread, platens, nuts and bolts, valued at 60 livres; dies of gothic font, decorated with engraved figures, with two moulds, 24 livres; dies for casting a type called ‘Bourgeois,’ 12 livres; the same for a ‘Lettre de Somme’, 8 livres, and a ‘Some angélique, 7 livres, 8 sols; 8 founts, more or less worn, 122 livres.”²⁶⁴ Finally, a workshop that belonged to Wolfgang Hopyl, a famous printer known for producing theological works and school textbook, was valued at 700 livres in an inventory made after his death in 1523.²⁶⁵ Hopyl’s workshop was equipped with “5 presses valued at 24 livres (46 livres with tympan); ten fonts in good condition valued around 36 livres; a great quantity of punches and particularly of dies valued at more than 200 livres; some ornamental letters, devices, wooden and copper engravings amounting to more than 75 livres.”²⁶⁶

What does the information gleaned from inventory lists tells us? The press, as mentioned earlier, was not a huge investment and could be obtained relatively easily. According to the inventories the presses in Paris between 1520-1523 varied, based on their condition, from 9 to 20 livres, not a huge sum. Moreover, presses could be rented as well; in 1514 it was about 40 sols a year to lease one.²⁶⁷ On the other hand, the purchase of type, which had to be renewed often, was pricey and posed a bigger problem to many printers. In the inventories mentioned above, the price of fonts varied from 10 to 70 livres “depending on the wear on the type face, and variety and importance of the font.”²⁶⁸ The most expensive parts of the printing equipment, however, were the ornamental initials engraved first on wood and later on copper and the engraved plates which were found only in the inventories of major printers, such as Wolfgang Hopyl, that were used in Books of Hours and other

²⁶³ Ibid. 110.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 110.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. 110.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. 110. For more information on Hopyl’s workshop see: Henri Stein, *L’atelier typographique de Wolfgang Hopyl à Paris* (Paris: H. Stein, 1891).

²⁶⁷ Ibid. 110.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. 110.

specialized imprints.²⁶⁹ Such equipment was so prized (and rare) that established *libraire*-publishers such as Antoine Vérard or Jean Petit, who were in possession of ornamental initials or engraved plates, would frequently loan or hire them out to printers employed by them.²⁷⁰ To the list of expense, we also have to add the purchase of quality paper sufficient for printing, which was not cheap. In the early sixteenth century, the price of a ream of paper varied according to quality between 10 to 30 sols.²⁷¹ As Febvre and Martin explain, the purchase of “paper sufficient for printing one impression represented a large part of the total expenditure.”²⁷² As this evidence shows, depending on the kind of shop they were running, early printers required considerable resources to get established.²⁷³

However, if a printer was also the publisher of the books he was printing, which was the case with Marchant, then his investment in his business was substantial. For example, in 1524 the same Didier Maheu mentioned above, printed 400 missals for the Bishop of Senils (Oise department, Northern France) for 350 livres – a total value of his printing enterprise (!).²⁷⁴ In August of 1523, another printer from Paris produced 600 breviaries of the form approved in the diocese of Nevers for 300 livres, while Joost Bade’s edition of 1225 folio copies of Claude de Seyssel’s *Thucydides* required a whopping 612 livres²⁷⁵ On the basis of this evidence, we can conclude that much more capital was needed to bring out a single edition than to equip a decent size printing workshop, all the more reasons to

²⁶⁹ Ibid. 111.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. 112.

²⁷¹ Ibid. 112.

²⁷² Ibid. 112.

²⁷³ Ibid. 111.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. 111.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 111. Joost Bade (also known as Badius Ascensius, Josse Bade or Jodocus Van Asche Badius) (1462-1535) was one of the main printer/publishers working in France in the sixteenth century. He was also a noted scholar and a writer. Initially, Bade worked in Lyons for the workshop of Jean Trechsel, but then moved to Paris and established his own shop in 1503. Bade’s most important business partner was the *libraire*-publisher Jean Petit. Bade’s edition of *Thucydides* was printed in March of 1528. For information on that edition see Ernest Coyecque, “Josse Bade et les Traductions de Claude de Seyssel,” *Bibliothèque de l’école de chartes* vol. 55 (1894): 509-514.

question Marchant's decision to publish an expensive illustrated folio volume so early on in his career. What was his strategy? Did he have a financial backer or a publisher with whom he collaborated?

In the early years of printing, books sold slowly and to dispose of an edition (the principal goal for every imprint) the printer was required to distribute his copies to the main European centers.²⁷⁶ The dispersal of bookshops across Europe assured the spread of ideas and the exchange of texts and images that marked this transitional period, but it was still difficult to recoup quickly any capital locked up in the business. For this reason, it was crucial to discover a marketplace, ideally on the spot, and a line of books for which there was a sufficient demand. It was also important to put out a number of titles simultaneously to avoid risks resulting from a poor sale of a single volume, which in turn meant a higher investment of capital and raised an issue of finance. Unless they were independently wealthy – and we do not know if Marchant was at the time he started his business and published the *Danse* – the majority of printers needed financial backing from a specific institution or an individual to assure a successful run of their enterprise.²⁷⁷

The latter model was employed by Guillaume Le Roy. As mentioned earlier, Le Roy set up the first printing press in Lyons with the help of Barthélemy Buyer. Buyer was not just backer in this business enterprise; he played an active part in the shop and actually chose the texts for printing. As printing industry developed in the 1480s other publishers began to copy this model, especially in Paris. The famous *libraire*-publishers, Jean Petit and Antoine Vérard, rarely printed any books themselves. Rather, they employed numerous printers – typically the best of the best – to print the books for them. Over the course of his career, Marchant collaborated

²⁷⁶ Febvre and Martin 115.

²⁷⁷ A great example of a failed printing enterprise can be found in an account of the career of Linehart Holle from Ulm whose workshop operated from spring 1482 to late 1483 during which time he published six imprints of deluxe illustrated books. Because he did not cater to the type of audience who purchased printed books in Ulm, he was forced to close his shop in late 1483, declare bankruptcy and was even banished from the town for his debts. This example also shows how quickly things could go bad for printers, Holle's business failed in less than two years. See Tedeschi, "Publish and Perish."

with both. In the 1480s, at the beginning of his vocation, he frequently worked for Vérard, printing illustrated books (including an edition of the *Danse*) in 1485/6 (?), 1488 (?), 1489, and 1493.

Vérard is best known for publishing lavish editions intended for the upper class clientele and for creating the market for printed Books of Hours in Paris.²⁷⁸ What Vérard achieved was quite ingenious; he relied on the long-standing tradition of manuscript production in Paris, and adapted it to the new medium of print. From his two shops, one located on the Notre Dame bridge, the other in the Palais of the Cité, in a very privileged position in front of the Sainte-Chapelle, Vérard employed scribes and printers to work on a new format – the illustrated book.²⁷⁹ Over the course of his career, which spanned from 1485 –1512, Vérard published over 280 editions, a quarter of which were printed Books of Hours.²⁸⁰ Prayer books became the bestseller of the new printing industry and Paris led the way, just as it did in the age of illuminated manuscripts. Printers in Paris, first led by Vérard, produced Books of Hours for customers all over France and as far away as England and Flanders.²⁸¹ Marchant had printed at least one *Horae* for Vérard in January of 1489/90.²⁸² It is also believed that he worked exclusively for Vérard in the period between July of

²⁷⁸ The most complete study on Vérard's career and publications is Mary Beth Winn, *Anthoine Vérard Parisian Publisher, 1485-1512: Prologues, Poems and Presentations* (Geneva: Droz, 1997). For an extensive list of publications on Vérard or his books, see Winn 508-511. An earlier monograph on Vérard was written in the early twentieth century and does contain some faulty remarks, see also John Macfarlane, *Antoine Vérard* (London: Chiswick Press, 1990). The link between Vérard's printed Books of Hours and illuminated manuscripts is explored in Delauney's thesis.

²⁷⁹ Winn 16. Unlike Marchant or printers who set up their shops near Rue St Jacques, Vérard's two stores were located in the center of scribal book production. Moreover, both shops operated under the sign of St John the Evangelist, patron saint of scribes and by extension of the book industry in general.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. 15.

²⁸¹ Reinburg 29. While Vérard led the way for printed Books of Hours, other important printers of prayer books were Simon Vostre, Phillipe Pigouchet and Thielman Kerver.

²⁸² Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 94.

1486 and March of 1489/90 – the second recorded interlude in his career – when he mostly produced illustrated books.²⁸³

Marchant had an even closer relationship with Petit who must have been his business partner and for whom Marchant printed a number of works. Despite his upbringing, Petit became the leader of the Paris book trade at the end of the fifteenth and in the early sixteenth century. As Febvre and Martin explain, “[f]rom 1493 to 1530 he published more than a thousand books, most of them of major importance, amounting to one tenth of the entire output of the Paris trade.”²⁸⁴ Petit collaborated with many early printers and his shop sold a wide range of books: in Latin or French, illustrated and not illustrated, secular and religious and expensive or cheap.²⁸⁵ Most crucially, Petit was also one of the four official booksellers/publishers of the University of Paris, the main publisher for its students and one of the individuals most responsible for the diffusion of humanism in Paris.²⁸⁶ As such, Petit really was the ideal business partner for Marchant. As an official bookseller for the University he could easily disperse Marchant’s theological and humanist tracts to clientele beyond the College of Navarre but he could also act as a financial backer and distributor of Marchant’s more risky endeavors, namely his illustrated books. Marchant published at least twenty-four books for Petit and, from 1500 he seems to have only worked for him.²⁸⁷ It also appears that in 1493 Marchant temporarily transferred some of his stock to Petit’s store because books printed in July, September and December of that year (including an edition of the *Kalendrier*), include a reference to the store located at the sign of the *Fleur de Lys* in the Rue St Jacques, which was Petit’s establishment.²⁸⁸ Whether Marchant published the works

²⁸³ Ibid 71. During the three years interlude, Marchant did not print an edition under his name. The belief that he worked for Vérard during this time is based on the appearance of Marchant’s typefaces in between two and five of Vérard’s books published during this time.

²⁸⁴ Febvre and Martin 121.

²⁸⁵ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 83. Given Petit’s role in the Paris book trade during the transitional period, it is surprising that as of yet no detail account of his career has been written.

²⁸⁶ Febvre and Marin 121.

²⁸⁷ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 82 and BMC xxv.

²⁸⁸ BCM xxv.

at Petit's store or just sold them there is unclear, but this example further testifies to the close businesses connection Marchant established with the book magnate.²⁸⁹

Did Marchant finance the first edition of the *Danse* alone? Without specific archival documents, we can only speculate, but it seems likely that he would need a financier or a partner at least. The fall of 1485 seems to have been an important moment for the history of illustrated books in France. Marchant had published the *Danse* and Vérard had issued the first edition of the *Horae* on September 12, which was also his very first recorded publication.²⁹⁰ Two months later, in November of 1485, Vérard hired Du Pré, the printer of the first illustrated book in Paris, to print an edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron*.²⁹¹ The market for illustrated books in Paris was thus developing rapidly and it all revolved around Vérard. Besides Du Pré, Vérard had also collaborated closely with printer/woodcutter Pierre Le Rouge on several editions of the *Horae* printed between 1486 and 1488 and an undated edition of the *Art de bien mourir* (The Art of Dying).²⁹² We will recall that Le Rouge made woodcuts for Du Pré's first illustrated book and that he is often credited for designing the illustrations used in the first edition of the *Danse*.²⁹³ Moreover, according to Claudin,

²⁸⁹ Marchant frequently sold his stock at Petit's store – and also at the bookstores of other *libraires* such as Geoffroy de Marnef, Alexander Aliate and Denis Roce, since these shops were located on Rue St Jacques – in the main hub for printed books and closer to the Sorbonne proper.

²⁹⁰ Winn 15.

²⁹¹ Ibid. 17. The type used for the *Decameron* belonged to Du Pré.

²⁹² Ibid. 17. Some of Le Rouge's woodcuts were also transferred over to Vérard's shop.

²⁹³ Le Rouge came from Chablis, from a family of calligraphers and woodcutters, and moved to Paris sometime in the mid 1480s when he began to work as a printer as well La Rouge had a close connection with the bookseller Vincent Commin, for whom he printed and possibly also partially illustrated the most ambitious illustrated French incunabulum, *La Mer des histories* (The Sea of Histories) in 1488/89. This publication, which consists of almost 600 leaves printed on vellum and hand-illuminated, is the French translation of a universal chronicle entitled *Rudimentum novitiorum* (A Handbook of Beginners) first printed in Lübeck by Lucas Brandis in 1475. The book was presented to Charles VIII and besides the French translation of the *Rudimentum* included added texts, most notably a genealogy of the kings of France extending to the coronation of Charles VIII in 1484. During this period, Le Rouge was the official printer of the king and signed his colophons with the title *imprimeur du roi*.

the type used in Marchant's first publications, including the *Danse*, is similar in style to Du Pré's type, suggesting perhaps that the two printers had collaborated at some point.²⁹⁴ We know that Marchant worked exclusively for Vérard in the late 1480s and Hindman also suggests that Marchant's second edition of the *Danse*, published between September 1485 and June 1486, was printed for Vérard, so it is possible that the *libraire* was involved in the creation of the first edition as well.²⁹⁵

This seems all the more likely since Vérard had published his own editions of the *Danse macabre* books: 1485/86 (?) (printed by Marchant), 1491/92 (printed by Pierre Le Rouge) and 1492 (printed by Gillet Coteau and possibly also Jean Menard) – and thus clearly had an interest in the series. Importantly, Vérard's editions only include the *Danse macabre des hommes* and the *Three Living* with no additional texts or figures. Vérard also used woodcuts that are different from Marchant's and his editions, as I will elaborate in the fifth chapter, were addressed at the nobility and the upper class clientele. For example, the edition printed by Le Rouge in 1491/92, was originally intended as a placard, hence its unusual size (56cm x 40cm), and it was part of the royal library of King Charles VIII at the Château de Blois (Figs. 22 and 23).²⁹⁶ The edition printed by Coteau and Menard is equally impressive, printed on parchment and hand colored to mimic illuminated manuscripts (Fig. 21).

Why did Marchant decide to publish an illustrated book on the Dance of Death? What made the subject so appealing to Marchant and later other printers that they would decide to make multiple editions of the books? Why the *Danse* and not some other subject? Part of the appeal, as I argued in the first chapter, has to do with the composition of the work – it portrays different classes, laymen and ecclesiasts, and it relies on satire and didactic verses to make its point. The composition, as well, depends on a close relationship between text and image, which made it ideal an ideal subject matter for an illustrated book.

²⁹⁴ Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie* 336. As Claudin explains the font that Marchant used for his early publications was based on the Gothic script used in the missals of Du Pré.

²⁹⁵ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 94.

²⁹⁶ This edition is preserved at the BN as Rés. Te 8.

On the other hand, Marchant had a keen ability to interpret the market and anticipate trends, which must have been a factor in his decision to print the *Danse*. In December of 1483, he published an edition of the *Ars moriendi*, already popular in Europe, and knew there was a market for books dealing with death and dying. Illustrated books published in France up to that point have either taken up Italian authors (Du Pré's edition of *Le cas*, for instance) or depicted popular devotional works. For example, the *Speculum* (or the *Mirouer*), the first illustrated book printed in France, belongs to the same genre of books as the *Danse*.²⁹⁷ As Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson explain, "[i]n its text and pictures the *Speculum* contains a vivid account of the religious and artistic forces at work in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the lessons in piety, the allegories, and all of the arts were devoted to instilling in the minds of the people the need for salvation and the dread of eternal damnation."²⁹⁸ While the *Danse* is not concerned with typology, its basic premise emphasizes the transient nature of earthly life and demonstrates the importance of piety and repentance. The *Danse* captures the moment of physical death and shows what happens to the body after it dies, but the verses allude to the same theological notions as the *Speculum* books: the Last Judgment, damnation and the possibility of salvation. It is thus not surprising that when in 1486 Marchant began to expand the series by adding additional titles and images, he chose the subjects that would address the fate of the soul after death (*The Debate Between the Body and the Soul*, *The Complaint of the Damned Soul*).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the format of the *Danse* and the *Speculum* books is also similar. Like the Dance of Death, the *Speculum* featured two woodcuts per page and included text printed in double columns below. While Husz's 1478 edition contains simple, unframed woodcuts, more typical versions of the book, printed throughout Western Europe, include the page layout that is almost identical to the one used in the *Danse macabre* books. In the *Speculum* books, the typological pairs, or scenes taken from the Old and the New Testament are framed with embellished arches and columns (the middle column separates the scenes) and

²⁹⁷ See footnote 156.

²⁹⁸ Wilson and Wilson 10.

the text is written in double columns and placed below the images. The similarity in the design of *Speculum* books and Marchant's first edition of the *Danse* suggests that the French printer had at least seen some of the Latin editions.

The word *speculum*, which means mirror or reflection, was used in the titles of many medieval compendia such as the famous *Speculum ecclesie* of Honorius of Autun (written in c. 1213-14), the *Speculum Maius* of Vincent of Beauvais (written in mid thirteenth century) or the *Speculum vite humane* of Rodericus Zamorensis (written in 1468).²⁹⁹ Such works were inspired by the desire to encompass a vast, encyclopedic knowledge within a single text and were hugely popular both in scribal and print culture. It is not incidental therefore that by the time Marchant had issued the first edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes* in July of 1486 he named it *Miroir salutaire* (Salutary mirror) – it was a clever advertising strategy and a way to link his publication to some of the most celebrated texts of the later Middle Ages.³⁰⁰

When Marchant published the first edition of the *Danse*, macabre sensibility was still prevalent in the art and literature of late-medieval France. Fifteenth-century prayer books frequently featured the Dance of Death or other macabre scenes in the section dedicated to the prayers for the dead. As discussed in the previous chapter, in 1470, the Abbey church of La Chaise-Dieu was decorated with a mural depicting the Dance of Death. In the same year, a moralistic and allegorical poem, *Le mors de la pōme*, was illustrated in a single manuscript preserved at the BN (MS. fr. 17001) (henceforth the *Mors*).³⁰¹ Best described as an expanded Dance of Death, the *Mors* begins with the Garden of Eden when Death first entered the world. We then follow Death through different vignettes, which illustrate apocryphal events (Death receives the instruments of his office, Death kills Abel while Cain, the indirect agent of Death,

²⁹⁹ Ibid. 9.

³⁰⁰ Also, in 1482, printers Nicolas Phlippi and Marcus Reinhardt from Lyons published *Le miroir de la vie humaine* by Zamorensis, which included plates showing representatives of specific trades: physicians, notaries, farmers, etc. Like the *Danse*, this book demonstrates late fifteenth century predilections towards portrayal of social classes.

³⁰¹ For a discussion of this manuscript see Leonard Kurtz ed., *Le mors de la Pōme* (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1975).

appears armed with a cudgel) and secular scenes (Death kills the Pope, Death takes away an infant) (Fig. 33). As Leonard Kurtz explains:

The miniature and the accompanying text form an interesting link in the historical development of the motif of the Dance of Death theme in art and literature. We observe that the *Danse macabre* has been drawn up as a base, and that the theme has now been expanded in several directions.³⁰²

Like the *Danse*, the *Mors* includes the figure of the Author and the verses are also set up as a dialogue between Death (*La mort*) and the protagonists. Although the living figures in the *Mors* are not always arranged in a hierarchical order, many of the same characters that appear in the *Danse* are also present in the manuscript.³⁰³ However, as Kurtz points out, Death in the *Mors* differs from the cadavers in the *Danse* in that it is a single personified figure of Death.³⁰⁴ The poem also includes representations of female protagonists (the Queen, the Princess and the Young Girl, for example), which were not featured in the mural at the Innocents.

French late fifteenth century poets frequently wrote on death and other morose subject matter. The works of the best French poet of the later Middle Ages, François Villon (d. 1463) were still popular and often published by early printers, including Marchant. In 1484 Olivier de la Marche wrote *Le chevalier délibéré* (Resolute knight), another moralistic poem that described the last travels of a knight, including his encounter with Death.³⁰⁵ The book enjoyed great popularity at the time and was illustrated in manuscripts and printed books, including an edition that Marchant printed for Vérard in June of 1488. Elsewhere in Europe, macabre subjects were also taken up by early printers. One of the very first illustrated books

³⁰² Ibid. v.

³⁰³ For example, the King, the Cardinal, the Peasant and the Lover are featured both in the *Danse* and in the *Mors*.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. v.

³⁰⁵ On Olivier de la Marche see Catherine Emerson, *Olivier de la Marche and the rhetoric of fifteenth century historiography* (Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2004) and Olivier de la Marche, *Le chevalier délibéré*, intro. and trans. Sylviane Messerli (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2004).

printed in Europe was Albrecht Pfister's *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* (The Ploughman of Bohemia) published in Bamberg in c. 1462. Written around 1401, *Der Ackermann*, like the *Danse*, is composed as a dialogue between the figure of the ploughman and Death and was portrayed in illuminated manuscripts before Pfister made his first printed edition. The ploughman – a long-standing symbol of Bohemian kings – accuses Death for taking his wife, Margaretha, and the two exchange views on mankind, morality and life.³⁰⁶

In choosing to print the *Danse macabre*, Marchant was therefore responding to the demand of the market for books exploring variations on macabre themes. In addition, one of the most popular subject matters in the early years of printing were books that promoted piety and penance, like the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. Treatises by the French theologians Jean Gerson (d. 1429) and Nicolas de Clamanges (d. 1437) were also popular and Marchant actually published works by both authors.³⁰⁷ Interestingly, Gerson and de Clamanges were alumni of the College of Navarre and thus it is especially appropriate that Marchant frequently published their texts since he printed works for the College. Although never officially confirmed, Gerson and de Clamanges, or someone from their intellectual circle, are also often credited for composing the verses that accompanied the *Danse macabre* mural from the Innocents.³⁰⁸ This assumption is based on the fact that the manuscript (BN Ms. lat. 14904), which contains the transcribed verses from the Innocents, also includes tracts by Gerson and de Clamanges. Moreover, the verses of the *Danse* poem, especially the Author's prologue and the epilogue, contain theological and devotional ideas that are often found in the writings of Gerson and de Clamanges. Is it possible

³⁰⁶ For the text of the poem see *Death and the Plowman; or, The Bohemian Plowman; a disputation and consolatory dialogue about death from the year 1400* (Chapel Hill University of North Carolina, 1958).

³⁰⁷ For example, Marchant printed Gerson's *Conclusiones de diversis materiis moralibus* in 1484, 1489/90, and 1497/98. He also published Gerson's *De ecclesiastica potestate et De origine juris et legum tractatus* in 1484. In 1490, Marchant published works by de Clamanges, *Tractatus super exhortatione peccatoris ad poenitentiam* and *Latinum super duabus materiis divresis*.

³⁰⁸ See, for instance, Clark 28-29 and Ann Tukey Harrison, "The Text," *The Danse Macabre of Women Ms. fr. 995 of the Bibliothèque nationale*, ed. Ann Tukey Harrison (Kent, Ohio and London, England: The Kent State UP, 1994): 1-14, 7-8.

then that there is a connection between the College of Navarre, where the potential authors of the poem studied and where the printer who issued the first edition of the books worked, and the *Danse macabre* poem? More research is needed before any conclusions can be made, but it is a point worth investigating further.

Marchant's gamble with the first edition must have paid off, if we are to judge by his subsequent publications. Between September of 1485 and June of 1486, he published the second edition of the *Danse*, virtually the same as the first and likely printed for Vérard, another reason to suspect that the *libraire* was more directly involved in printing the series.³⁰⁹ Then, in June of 1486, came the augmented edition of *Danse*, with six additional woodcuts that Marchant named *La danse macabre nouvelle* (Figs. 34 and 35). To complete the edition he had to invest even more capital into the series – it was necessary to hire an artist (not Le Rouge because he was unavailable at the time working on another volume, but perhaps someone from his workshop) to engrave the woodcuts and a writer to compose the verses. Just a month later, in July, Marchant published the third (or technically the fourth) edition of the *Danse*, which is actually a completely original work, the Dance of Death of women.³¹⁰ Since no female characters were included in the Cemetery of the Innocents mural, Marchant had a chance to invent the whole series. By this time, he also began the practice of appending additional illustrated texts, such as the *Debate* and the *Complainte* no doubt to broaden the appeal of the books and showcase his talent as an editor of tract volumes.

The first edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, which Marchant named the *Miroir salutaire*, seems hastily published as it included the complete verses of the poem, but only two woodcuts. It is likely that Marchant, recognizing the popularity of the books, wanted to claim the market for the *Danse* books for himself and hastily issued the first edition of the women's series before he was able to secure funds for the full set of woodcuts. Such strategizing was typical for early printers and reveals the precarious nature of the industry. In order to maintain and expand the public interest in his publications, Marchant had to opt for versatility and

³⁰⁹ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 94.

³¹⁰ See footnote 4.

innovation, hence the creation of the women's series as a complementary edition to the men's *Danse*, but because he was competing with other printers of illustrated works it was also important to issue the new edition quickly, even if it was missing the majority of woodcuts.

How-to-live and How-to-die: The Shepherd's Calendar and the Danse macabre

Marchant's more concentrated work came in the 1490s when he published between six and nine books a year; though in exceptionally good years (1494, 1498 and 1499) he published as many as thirteen to fifteen.³¹¹ His first book published following the hiatus of the late 1480s was a reprint of Bonaventura's *Soliloquium*. It is during this period, in the 1490s, that Marchant established his practice of publishing short tracts intended for the (typically) poor students of the College of Navarre. These included theological texts by Gerson, de Clémanges and Raymond Lull, but also "time-honored classics in grammar and philosophy, such as works by Barzizius and Nebrissensis, who had recently been acclaimed in Paris, and by Aristotle and Diogenes, who were old favorites."³¹² Among the established titles of grammar and theology, Marchant's repertoire also included texts by contemporary humanist writers. For example, he published letters by Erasmus, who in late 1490s was a student at the College of Montaigu in Paris, and by Pico della Mirandola, a famous humanist scholar.³¹³ Marchant also published treatises by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaple, a pre-Reformation humanist and a professor at the University of Paris and works containing postscripts or edited by Jodocus Clichtoveus, the humanist scholar who became librarian of the Sorbonne in 1505.³¹⁴ Many of these new authors had never had their works published in manuscript form – an example of how instrumental the medium of print was for the spread of Renaissance ideals at the

³¹¹ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 71.

³¹² *Ibid.* 80

³¹³ *Ibid.* 80.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* 80.

turn of the century.³¹⁵ That Marchant had published these works also suggests that he was in contact with the humanist scholars in Paris and thus at the forefront of the new ways of thinking.

Marchant's relationship with the humanists may have also sparked his interest in science and, especially, in the works on astronomy, astrology and medicine. He published books on mathematics, such as a folio edition of the popular *Sphera mundi* by Johannes de Sacro Busto and two texts on speculative arithmetic and geometry by the fourteenth-century English prelate and theologian, Thomas Bradwardine, *Arithmetica speculativa* and *Geometria speculativa*. No other copies of Bradwardine were published before 1500, not even in England, which again highlights Marchant's ability to predict or popularize specific titles.³¹⁶ In 1490, Marchant published the *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum* (The Salernitan Rule of Health), a medieval didactic poem concerned with domestic medical practice such as hygiene, proper diet and the science of phlebotomy, or bloodletting (henceforth the *Regimen*). His press also put out at least one edition of Anianus's *Computus cum commento*, printed for Petit in 1497. Provided with a prose commentary and elementary arithmetic, the *Computus* was hugely popular in France in the early years of printing; it was published in at least thirty-one editions (printed in Paris, Lyons and Rouen) as opposed to only three in other countries. Though the purpose of my project is to understand the *Danse macabre* books in the context of the early printing culture, we should not forget that this period is located on the cusp of major advances in the fields of anatomy and medicine and that the printed books contributed to the spread of medical knowledge – and very crucially – medical illustrations and diagrams that became so important in the mid-sixteenth century with the publication of Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* in 1543. Anianus's text, for example, is famous for its diagram of the human hand, which explains how the hand can be used as a mnemonic device.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Ibid. 80.

³¹⁶ Ibid 80.

³¹⁷ For a discussion of hands as mnemonic devices see Claire Richter Sherman and Peter M. Lukehart, eds., *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Seattle: Washington UP, 2000).

It is in the context of his scientific and medical publications, that I would place Marchant's second illustrated bestseller, the *Kalendrier*, which he published at least eight times between 1491 and c. 1501.³¹⁸ Since, as I will show, the *Kalendrier* draws important parallels to the *Danse* and actually includes the *Danse macabre des femmes* cycle in one of its editions (published in 1499), it is important to consider it here in some detail. Moreover, like the augmented editions of the *Danse*, the *Kalendrier* is a publication assembled by Marchant from multiple sources, textual and visual, which are then skillfully edited into a cohesive volume. As such, it represents a new type of book that surfaced during the transitional period of bookmaking in France, an anthology for which, in the words of Jane Taylor, the printer provides "an elaborate narrative-editorial context" and formulates connections between disparate sections in order to guide the reader.³¹⁹

A precursor to modern day almanac, the *Kalendrier* is a compendium of practical and religious lore aimed at a wider reading public. It typically consists of five parts: "The Calendar", which includes the prologue of the Author and the Master Shepherd, the Calendar proper and the Labors of the Month and tables that provide instructions on how to calculate movable feasts; a section on the Trees of Vices and Virtues and the Pains of Hell; "Salutary Science and the Garden of Virtues", which includes specific Christian prayers such as the Credo, the Ten Commandments and the Five Commandments of the Church; "Of Physics and Governance of Health",

³¹⁸ Given the fact that the *Kalendrier* is one of the most popular illustrated books in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is surprising that it has not been studied in much detail in the past. The most recent publication includes a facsimile of Marchant's 1493 edition, see *Calendrier des Bergers*, intro. Max Engammare (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008). This book also includes a full list of known imprints of the *Kalendrier* with detailed description of each edition, 41-49; Marie-Dominique Leclerc, "Le macabre des Calendriers des Bergers," *11e Congrès International d'études sur les Danses macabres et l'art macabre en general* (2003):107-133; Guy Marchant and G. C. Heseltine, *Calendar and Compost of Shepherd* (London: Peter Davis, 1930), this book includes a facsimile of the English translation from c. 1518; *Le Compost et Kalendrier des Bergiers: Reproduction en fac-simile ed l'edition de Guy Marchant (Paris, 1493)*, intro. Pierre Champion (Paris: Editions des Quatre Chemins, 1926).

³¹⁹ Jane H. M. Taylor, "A Priest of Poetry to the People: Antoine Vérard and the Anthology," *The Making of Poetry: Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007): 229-291, 230.

which discusses anatomy, physiognomy and phlebotomy and includes practical advice on healing and medicine; and “Astrology and Physiognomy”, dedicated to the twelve signs of the Zodiac and their relation to the human body. While the *Kalendrier*, unlike the *Danse*, does not include illustrations on every page, it features many large woodcuts and a number of religious, scientific and medical diagrams. The text and the majority of illustrations included in the *Kalendrier* are assembled from multiple sources, but the idea for the book is likely Marchant’s own.³²⁰ It is occasionally suggested that the *Kalendrier* originated in Germany, but this has never been confirmed and no German sources predating Marchant’s first edition in 1491 have been found. Given Marchant’s predilection for putting together compendia of shorter, thematically related tracts and his interest in publishing sources on mathematics and astrology, it seems very probable that Marchant had indeed ‘invented’ this book.

Like the *Danse*, the *Kalendrier* proved to be an incredibly successful publication. Marchant printed the work multiple times over the course of the fifteenth century – a sure sign the book was selling. In addition, Marchant printed the book for other printers, most notably Petit, and he famously collaborated with Vérard on a deluxe edition of the *Kalendrier* from 1493 which was printed on parchment and intended for King Charles VIII (BN Vélins – 518).³²¹ The title was so popular that in 1503 Vérard translated the book into English and began to distribute it through his London outpost.³²² In France as well, the title was popular and often reprinted by different presses through the sixteenth century.³²³

³²⁰ Heseltine v.

³²¹ For an electronic facsimile of this edition see <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b86267664>

³²² For the first English edition see *The Kalendar of Shepherds The Edition of Paris 1503 in Photographic Facsimile. A Faithful Reprint of R. Pynson’s Edition of London 1506. Edited with a Critical Introduction and Glossary by H. Oskar Sommer, PhD* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & CO., Ltd., 1892).

³²³ For the most recent list of sixteenth century edition of the *Kalendrier* see Andrew Pettegree, Malcom Walsby and Alexander S. Wilkinson, *French Vernacular Books: Books Published in the French Language before 1601*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2007) especially pages 242-243. 58 editions of the book were printed from 1491 to c.1597.

In its general theme, the *Kalendrier* can be understood as a complementary book to the *Danse* and it should not surprise us to learn that the two titles were often found in the libraries belonging to the same owners.³²⁴ Both are, in a sense, how-to-manuals. While the *Danse* reminds us of the inevitability of death and the importance of reaching salvation through devotion, the *Kalendrier* is, conversely, a practical guide listing ways to extend our earthly life. The purpose of the *Kalendrier* is made obvious from the very first page. In the opening paragraph of the prologue of the Author, we learn that “the thing we desire most in this world is to live long, and the thing that we most fear is to die soon.” And since, as the Author explains, a man should live in the course of nature to seventy-two years, the *Kalendrier* with its practical advice and useful diagrams shows the reader how to achieve this goal. However, maintaining a healthy body is not the book’s sole concern. Rather, the *Kalendrier* emphasizes the dual nature of body and soul and offers as much advice – via prayers, diagrams and vivid illustrations – on how to protect the soul and prepare for the afterlife as it does on human anatomy or physiognomy. For example, the second chapter is dedicated to the study of vices and virtues and includes dramatic illustrations of the sinners in Hell, their bodies – the source of their moral corruption – being broken, pierced, bitten and boiled by devils and serpents (Figs. 36 and 37). The striking woodcuts, most likely designed by Pierre La Rouge, are taken from Vérard’s edition of the *Ars moriendi*, which Marchant had printed several times prior to 1491. The presence of Vérard’s woodcuts and the fact that Marchant had printed the deluxe edition of the *Kalendrier* for Vérard just two years later implies that the *libraire* was probably more directly involved in the making of this book. Did Vérard offer financial backing or other form of support to Marchant?³²⁵ This seems

³²⁴ As Hindman noted “one third of the owners of the *Dance of Death* also owned the *Shepherd’s Calendar*, so it would seem that the two works were considered comparable by the book buyers and readers of the period,” 91.

³²⁵ In discussing the deluxe editions Marchant completed for Vérard, Hindman suggested that the profit Marchant made on the expensive editions for royal and aristocratic patrons may have been the basis for his financial success, 90. Perhaps Vérard offered some financial backing for the first edition and helped further by procuring the commission for Charles VIII.

likely given the fact that the *Kalendrier* was an expensive book and, at the time of its original publication, a novel work and thus a risky undertaking.

The textual sources Marchant drew from in compiling the *Kalendrier* are varied and not always traceable.³²⁶ This is in part what makes the book so appealing – it is an amalgam of texts and images derived from multiple sources and different periods that are put together in a completely new way by a savvy compiler. I have already mentioned the *Computus com commento* and the *Regimen sanitatis* as sources for specific sections of the book, but a few others have also been identified. The Trees of Vices and Virtues have been a popular subject in medieval art and literature, though the text used in Marchant's book likely stems from the work of Friar Laurentius Gallus for Philip II, entitled *Le Somme des Vices et des Vertus*. The idea for the book and the Shepherd as the main character is probably derived from a treatise written in c. 1379 by Jehan de Brie. Known as *Le Bon Berger* or *Le vrai régime et gouvernement des Bergers et Bergères*, it was one of the earliest how-to manuals, which provided information regarding farming practices.³²⁷ Divided into thirty-nine chapters, de Brie's book offered advice on how to take care of sheep in different weather conditions, a monthly guide on what to do with the flock and information regarding ways to protect the animals from disease.³²⁸ The popular prayers of the *Credo*, *Pater*, *Ave* and the Commandments that were featured in the third section derive from *L'Art de bien vivre et mourir*, a translation of the *Ars moriendi*. Besides the *Computus*, in compiling the section on astrology, Marchant relied on the work of Regiomontanus (Johannes Müller von Königsberg, d. 1476), a German mathematician, astronomer and astrologer.³²⁹

³²⁶ Heseltine vii

³²⁷ For a recent discussion of de Brie's book see Carlton W. Carroll and Lois Hawley Wilson, *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean de Brie's Le Bon Berger (1379)* (Arizona State University, 2012).

³²⁸ Although written in the fourteenth century, de Brie's title became popular again in the early sixteenth century (perhaps because of the *Kalendrier*?) and was printed in Paris by Denis Jahnot and Jean Trepperel, who also published sixteenth century editions of the *Danse*. Parenthetically, the shepherd as a figure frequently appeared in the literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when it was typically used as a way to lament the agrarian reforms and the changing social order.

³²⁹ Engrammare 14.

Like the text, the images used in the *Kalendrier* are compiled from various sources. Woodcuts illustrating the Labors of the Month are based on the images from printed Books of Hours, while, as mentioned earlier, representations of Hell are borrowed from the *Ars moriendi*. The image of the Author comes from the *Danse macabre des femmes*, while a striking woodcut depicting Death on a Horse and the Mouth of Hell – which may have been initially made for the first edition of the *Kalendrier* – appears in several Dance of Death books as well (Fig. 38). As an amalgam of texts and images, the *Kalendrier* is thus a true product of the transitional period drawing inspiration from both manuscript and printed sources.

The book is perhaps best known for its diagrammatic images of the human body and celestial spheres. A particularly curious image, which marries Marchant's interest in the macabre with his knowledge of anatomy and medicine, is the Human Skeleton (or Zodiac Skeleton) featured in the fourth section of the *Kalendrier* (Fig. 39). The full-page woodcut portrays the influence of the planets on different parts of the human skeleton. The image is based on the so-called bloodletting figures (Vein Man) and, especially, on the Zodiac Man (*Homo signorum*) that were popular in late medieval manuscripts.³³⁰ Both diagrams are included in the *Kalendrier*, the Zodiac Man typically precedes the Human Skeleton and the bloodletting figure follows it.³³¹

³³⁰ For a discussion on the bloodletting figure and the zodiac man see Peter Murray Jones, *Medieval Medical Miniatures* (Austin and London: University of Texas and The British Library 1984) and Peter Whitfield, *Astrology: A History* (London: The British Library, 2001). The most thorough discussion of the origins and the usage of the zodiac man diagrams is still found in the following article: Harry Bober, "The Zodiacal Miniature of the Très Riches Heures of the Duke of Berry: Its Sources and Meaning," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. 11 (1948): 1-34. These types of anatomical diagrams were also often included in the folding calendar (*vade mecum*) made for medieval physicians. They were made from six or more small pieces of parchment, folded together in the middle and then folded again into sections. The pages were then sewn together at the bottom and the calendar was carried in a pouch at the belt where they could be accessed quickly.

³³¹ For example, in the edition Marchant printed on April 18, 1493, the Zodiac Man appears on the first page of the fourth section of the book, on folio hⁱ, the Human Skeleton is depicted on hⁱⁱ and the bloodletting figure is placed on hⁱⁱⁱ verso. The Zodiac Man and the Vein Man are complementary images it was believed that one should not engage in bloodletting or any other type of treatment of a particular part of a body if the Moon stood in the Zodiac sign that governed that body part. The

In Marchant's rendition, the human skeleton is surrounded with wavy banderoles, which link specific body parts (or bones) to different planets and with two long scrolls placed on either side that provide instruction on how best to use the diagram. As Peter Parshall has shown, Marchant's Human Skeleton is similar in style and content to a German woodcut of the same title printed in Nuremburg in 1493.³³² The German cut is believed to have come from the estate of the Nuremburg physician, Hartmann Schedel (d.1514), who owned several copies of the diagram, two of them glued into a manuscript containing medical texts.³³³ Together with Marchant's woodcut printed the same year, Schedel's diagram is one of the earliest depictions of the human skeleton and as such, as Parshall and Schoch note, it "represents a milestone in the history of anatomical illustrations before Vesalius."³³⁴

The figure of the skeleton, with the left arm bent slightly, and the usage of the descriptive banderoles, imply that Marchant's and Schedel's woodcuts are based on the same model.³³⁵ The xylographic text placed in the upper register of the German woodcut, identifies the French physician, Richard Helain, as the author of the image. Helain was the Dean of the medical faculty at the University of Paris from 1485 to 1488 and served as King Charles VIII's personal physician from 1491 to 1496. He argued that the human skeleton, including the teeth, consists of 248 bones, identified in the German cut by the banderoles in Latin or the transliterated Greek or Arabic. In the spirit of the humanistic science, Helain derived his ideas from late

Zodiac Man thus functioned as a visual mnemonic for use in phlebotomy. On the science of astrology and its usage in late Medieval and Renaissance Europe see Whitfield, especially pages 77-114.

³³² Discussed and reproduced in Parshall and Schoch 216. Further discussion on the history of the Human Skeleton diagram can be found in Christian Coppens, "For the Benefit of the Ordinary People: The Translation of the *Fasciculus medicinae*, Antwerp 1512," *Quaerendo* 39. 2 (2009): 168-205.

³³³ Parshall and Schoch 216.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* 216. However, this is not the first representation of the human skeleton in a medical book. A frontispiece to a German translation of the *Chirurgia Magna* of Bruno da Longoburgo from 1452 features one of the most naturalistic pictures of a skeleton in the Middle Ages, but this was a manuscript not a printed book. The manuscript is now preserved at the British Library as Additional MS 21618, the skeleton is shown on folio 1v. For information on the miniature see Murray Jones 46-48.

³³⁵ Parshall and Schoch 216.

classical and Arabic texts that fell out of use in the Middle Ages, but were gaining in popularity in the late fifteenth century.³³⁶ This is especially true for Italy where, from the fourteenth century onward, attempts were made at most universities to revive the practice of anatomy by performing autopsies, even though they were banned by the Church. Since it features fewer banderoles, Marchant's image may appear less scientific or instructional, but the text that accompanies the woodcut implies that, it too, was based on Helain's study of the skeleton. Titled *Les noms des os du corps humain et le nombre diceuly qui sont en somme deux cens xlviij*, the caption makes reference to same number of bones as the German cut, 248. That Marchant was familiar with Helain's work is certain. The printer's close link with the University and the circle humanist scholars working in Paris has already been discussed. In addition, Marchant's interest in mathematical and scientific treatises would have also made him aware of the new teachings at the Faculty of Medicine.

Marchant's inclusion of the Human Skeleton in the *Kalendrier* showcases his ability to fuse together seemingly disparate subjects, an editing strategy that marked his illustated editions. The diagram follows the section of the book, which depicts the scenes of torture and pains of Hell (Figs. 36 and 37). In those images, the body is identified as the source of moral corruption and the naked bodies of the sinners are hence subjected to unimaginable suffering. Likewise, in macabre art, it is the body that is continually degraded; seen as a source of vermin and stench. While Marchant's Human Skeleton is not a macabre image per say, the mocking grin and the strings of hair on the back of the skull (not shown in the German woodcutcut) certainly reference macabre sensibility (Fig. 39). In fact, the Human Skeleton is preceded in the volume by a woodcut showing Death and the Mouth of Hell – featuring another grinning skeleton with thinning hair – one that Marchant (and later other printers) also incorporated into editions of the Dance of Death books published in the 1490s (Fig. 38).

However, in the Zodiac Skeleton diagram, the body is treated differently than in macabre art or scenes showing Hell and Punishment (Fig. 39). No longer a threatening, putrid corpse, the skeleton is controlled by stars, which govern its every

³³⁶ Ibid. 216.

part and consideration of it will promote health. In Marchant's woodcut, as in the German image, the body becomes the source of knowledge and the basis for an emerging science of anatomy. Interestingly, Schedel, the owner of the German cut, was the author of the famous *Liber Chronicarum* (Nuremberg Chronicle), which was also published in 1493 by Anton Koberger.³³⁷ One of the most lavishly illustrated early printed books, the *Liber* is an encyclopedia of biblical and human histories as well as a chronicle of several important Western cities. Among its many illustrations, diagrams and maps, is the so-called *Imago mortis* – a woodcut that depicts a lively dance of death of human skeletons resurrected at the Last Judgment and expressing joys of having escaped the imprisonment of the body.³³⁸ This image – about which much can be said – is another adaptation of the *Danse* and together with Marchant's Human Skeleton, demonstrates how the image of death was beginning to take on new meanings and circulate in different contexts (religious, but also medical and astrological) at the end of the century.

One more comment about the body: in the German woodcut, the registers containing information about the image are placed in the two upper corners. In Marchant's image, however, the registers are turned into two long scrolls that are placed on either side of the main figure. In order to look at the figure *and* read the text, the viewer/reader has to manipulate his body or turn the book around. In so doing, Marchant pulls the viewer into the image and makes him explore the diagram the same way a physician would explore the corpse, by moving around it, touching and probing. The same strategy was employed several times in the *Kalendrier*, mostly for diagrammatic images. In an edition now preserved at the British Library, a diagram showing the Tower of Wisdom – a popular medieval mnemonic diagram –

³³⁷ Ibid. 216. In the 1490s, Nuremberg was the center of humanism in the north, so it is not surprising that the book was published there. See: Stephan Füssel, *Die Welt im Buch: buch künstlerischer und humanistischer Kontext der Schedelschen Weltchronik von 1493* (Mainz: Gutenberg-Gesellschaft, 1996) and Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle* (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1976).

³³⁸ Parshall and Schoch 216.

was printed on a larger sheet of paper and folded into the book.³³⁹ In order to examine the diagram, the viewer had to turn the book sideways and unfold the page. Images such as these represent important innovations in the process of reading brought forth by the print medium and also foreshadow the development of the interactive (pop-up) medical books popular from the sixteenth century that included flaps the reader could open or close.³⁴⁰

The interactive aspect of the *Kalendrier*, in which the relationship between the book and the reader is continually emphasized, is similar to the *Danse* where the dialogue forms the link between the dead and the living and between the protagonists and the viewer. Yet, one would read the two books differently. The *Danse* is read in one sitting, whereas the *Kalendrier* is a book examined in sections and over time. It is a more ambitious work; it presents itself as a manual for living and is an encyclopedia of knowledge. Like the Book of Hours, on which it is partially based, it is a type of book that a family would own for generations. In fact, the copy at the British Library discussed above, is heavily inscribed with reader's marks, in different hands, which demonstrates that the book was used for a prolonged period of time.

Translating, Augmenting or Reinventing: Strategies for Marketing Illustrated Books

Despite their differences, both the *Danse* and the *Kalendrier* were intended for wider audience than his typical university clientele and Marchant employed similar strategies to market the books. These included adapting or reinventing the books, but also collaborating with publishers and booksellers who had access to a

³³⁹ British Library IB. 39718. This is an edition of the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* (*Kalendrier et compost des bergeres*) that Marchant printed in August of 1499.

³⁴⁰ On pop-up illustrations in the Renaissance see: Andrea Carlino, *Paper Bodies: a catalogue of anatomical fugitive sheets, 1538-1687*, trans. Noga Arikha (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1999). Although the print medium had allowed for greater experimentation with interactive aspects of books, it is also important to note that such images were not unknown in medieval manuscripts.

wider network of buyers. This is an important point as it shows that the print market had a direct impact on the *Danse macabre* series. For example, like the *Danse*, the *Kalendrier* was also published with female instead of male protagonists, hence the *Compost et kalendrier des bergères* (Shepherdesses' Calendar) published on August 17, 1499.³⁴¹ Although most authors refer to it simply as the female edition of the *Kalendrier*, it is in fact not. The content of the book – though not the illustrations – is markedly different from the *Kalendrier*, its focus placed more sternly on the relationship between astronomy, astrology and death. Structured as a dialogue between the two shepherdesses, Biatrix and Sebille, and two shepherds, named simply *L'un* and *L'autre*, the book follows the women's visit to the city of Paris and also includes sections on astronomy and astrology from the *Kalendrier*. The emphasis on the dialogue between the protagonists, recalls the structure of the *Danse* and the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* actually includes the Dance of Death of women in its last section. Like the poem of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, the text of the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* references late fifteenth century Paris – its markets, monuments, and beauty – in very specific terms. As the title-page of the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* explains, Marchant had printed two editions of the work, one for his press and the other for Jean Petit.³⁴² Since the book was published for the two presses at the same time, it is likely that Marchant and Petit collaborated closely on the making of this edition. As an adaptation of the *Kalendrier*, the book included new text – particularly the verses uttered by the Beatrix and Sebille and the two shepherds – and Marchant would have needed financial support to hire a writer and put together an expensive volume, which Petit could provide. Moreover, Petit had an interest in the *Kalendrier*, Marchant had printed an edition of the book specifically for Petit in 1496/7, and promoting the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* in Petit's store was especially advantageous to Marchant. As the main *libraire*-publisher in

³⁴¹ For an electronic facsimile of this edition preserved at the BN (Rés. V. 1266) see <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327363075/date>

³⁴² The elaborate title page which features the figure of Prestre Jehan (one of Marchant's printer's marks) reads: *Imprime a Paris en lostel de Beauregard en la rue Cloppin, a l'ensigne du roy Prestre i[e]ghan ouquel lieu sont a vendre, ou au Lyon d'argent en la rue saint Jaques*. Both editions were printed in August of 1499. The store at the sign of *Lyon d'argent* belonged to Petit.

Paris at the time, Petit owned several stores in the Rue St. Jacques, the main hub of the printing shops in the city, and had access to a more varied and affluent clientele. Their decision to issue a female version of the *Kalendrier* also reflected the popular trends in publishing devotional works. Marchant's publication of the Dance of Death of women in 1486 was one of the books that generated interest in works with female protagonists, but there are other examples as well.

In 1498, just a year before the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* was issued, the Flemish humanist and printer/publisher, Josse Bade, working in Lyons and Paris, decided to publish a Latin supplement in verse and prose to Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, titled *Sultifere naves sensus animosq; trahentes Mortis in exitium* (*The Ship of Female-Fools and the Five Senses*).³⁴³ In his preface, which was written in the form of a letter to his friend and publisher Angelbert (Enguillbert) de Marnef, Bede "remarked that his text should be inscribed in the long tradition of edifying literature aimed at enlightening and guiding readers toward prudent and virtuous choices."³⁴⁴ De Marnef, in turn, wanted to test the appeal of Bede's supplement by publishing a French vernacular adaptation of it. He hired Jehan Druyon, who had devoted his whole career on the theme of folly and already translated Brant's *Ship of Fools* into French (*Le grande nef des Folz du Monde*), to translate and adapt Bede's text.³⁴⁵ Published by de Marnef also in 1498 as *La Grant nef de folles selon les cinq cens de nature*, Druyon's work deviated significantly from Bede's *addendum* and included thirteen additional illustrated chapters.³⁴⁶ Both the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* and the *Ship of Female-Fools* were popular though not as frequently

³⁴³ Pinson 69.

³⁴⁴ Ibid 69.

³⁴⁵ Ibid 69.

³⁴⁶ Ibid 70. Note also the similarity in the way the *Ship of Fools* and the *Dance of Death* were marketed in France – in print medium the titles of both works become *Le Grand...* and as publishers add more books or chapters, the names of those are included in the title so that the books become closer to compilations. This is not unique to just these two works, but actually reflects the trend in early publishing used, no doubt, to entice and appeal to a wider audience.

printed as the original works from which they were adapted.³⁴⁷ Apart from Marchant's and Petit's 1499 edition, only one other issue of the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* is known, printed in Paris in 1505 by Gaspard Philippe, whose press was often under employment by the Petit family, which is probably the reason he published the title in the first place.³⁴⁸ While the *Kalendrier* enjoyed enormous popularity in the sixteenth century and was printed in France and England, the *Shepherdesses' Calendar*, with its focus on Paris and the late fifteenth century urban milieu, was perhaps too specific and hence not as appealing to publishers in later periods.

Marchant would have been aware of Brant's text and Druyon's adaptation of Bede's *addendum*, because, as noted earlier, he also printed an edition of the *Ship of Fools* and often collaborated with the de Marnef family. Entitled *Der zotten ende der narrenscip* and printed in 1500, Marchant's edition was the first book published in Flemish in Paris. It was a product of partnership between Marchant and Geoffroy de Marnef, Angelbert's brother, and it was illustrated with woodcuts used in the de Marnef's French translation of the *Ship of Fools* discussed in the previous passage. This is yet another example of how tightly knit the community of printers and publishers of illustrated works was at the time and how often images and texts were adapted, translated and reused for different publications.

For the purposes of our discussion, Marchant's collaboration with Geoffroy on a Latin translation of the *Danse* is especially important. The book, *Chorea ab Eximio Macabro versibus alemanicis edita*, the book was published in October of 1490 and translated into Latin by Pierre Desrey (Petrus Desrey) from Troyes (henceforth *Chorea*).³⁴⁹ It features twenty-three woodcuts and, in terms of the

³⁴⁷ *The Ship of Female-Fools* was printed three times in the early sixteenth century, whereas Brant's book was published at least twenty-six times across Western Europe.

³⁴⁸ Engrammare 45.

³⁴⁹ A facsimile of this edition is found in *The Dance of Death Printed in Paris in 1490. A Reproduction Made from the Copy in the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress*, with introduction by William M. Ivins Jr. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1945). For an electronic facsimile of this edition preserved at the Library of

content, it is virtually identical to Marchant's 1486 edition of the *Danse macabre des hommes* except that the verses and the names of the living dancers are given in Latin.³⁵⁰ The *Chorea* includes a fairly elaborate title-page that contains the full title of the volume and provides information on the translator, printer and publisher of the book.³⁵¹ Below the text is de Marnef's device, an elaborate emblem depicting the pelican feeding its young and another bird nestled in the trees. Unlike other editions of the *Danse*, the *Chorea* does not include a colophon at the end of the book, most likely because the practice of printing colophons (a device derived from scribal culture) was beginning to wane at the end of the fifteenth century.³⁵² In comparison to Marchant's title-page for the 1486 edition, the *Chorea* demonstrates just how fast the appearance of printed books was changing at the time. While the former featured only a single line of text (*La danse macabre nouvelle*) and no additional information, the Latin version, printed only four years later contains most of the information we would find in books printed today, namely the title-page, publisher's logo and date of publication.

In collaborating with de Marnef on the Latin edition, Marchant yet again displayed his astute commercial skills. Originating from a family of established booksellers in Paris, de Marnef's shop on the Rue St. Jacques specialized in popular vernacular books for devout Christians.³⁵³ Among the books sold at Marnef's shop were bilingual copies, in French and Latin, of the Rule of St. Benedict, bilingual copies of Saint Jerome's *Regle de dévotion*, several editions in Latin and French of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, and the Books of Hours in the most popular

Congress see http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collid=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2007rosen0406page.db

³⁵⁰ In addition, unlike the 1486 edition, the Latin version does not include the poem of the *Three Living*, which typically follows the *Danse*, and it includes an additional woodcut showing the Author at the end of the book.

³⁵¹ The full text of the title page reads as follows: *Chorea ab eximio // Macabro versibus alemanicis edita, // et a Petro Desrey Trecacio, quodam orato//re, nuper emendata, Parisiusque per ma//gistrum Guidonem Mercatorem, pro // Godefrido de Marnef ad intersignium // Pellicani in vico Divi Jacobi commoranti, anno Domini // quadringentesimo nonagesimo supra millesimum, idibus // octobris impressa.*

³⁵² Pettigrew, *French Vernacular Books* xi.

³⁵³ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 86.

liturgical uses, the Use of Paris and the Use of Rome.³⁵⁴ What an ideal place to market the Latin edition of the *Danse*! Moreover, Geoffroy de Marnef worked with Angelbert and another brother, Jean, who were also booksellers-publishers and with whom he maintained the Paris bookstore and their provincial outlets in Poitiers, Angers and Bourges.³⁵⁵ Expanding the business to smaller towns was a common practice among successful booksellers and de Marnefs were no exception. In partnering with Geoffrey, Marchant gained the commission for the Latin edition, which de Marnef almost certainly fully financed, and an access to a wider audience for his illustrated books, not just in Paris but also elsewhere in France.

Although not directly related to the *Danse*, two other works by Marchant should be mentioned as they demonstrate his involvement with broader European market for printed books and his willingness to experiment with format. In discussing his career, Hindman had pointed out that Marchant's experience with publishing short tracts had led him to experiment with even more concise formats, most notably letters.³⁵⁶ One of the markers of the early print culture is the way the medium took over and popularized short works – royal edicts, pamphlets and letters. While the practice of printing such documents reached its pinnacle in the sixteenth century when debates concerning the Reformation were made public through print, there are examples of it from the fifteenth century as well.³⁵⁷ For instance, in 1482 the French crown made sure that the provisions of the Treaty of Arras – a document signed by King Louis XI and the Archduke Maximilian I – were made available in print and thus distributed more widely, initiating the tradition that only grew in the subsequent century.

Although Marchant did not print royal documents, his short publications nevertheless participated in the public discourse surrounding historical events. One letter was especially timely: the document announcing Christopher Columbus's

³⁵⁴ Ibid. 86.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. 86.

³⁵⁶ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant," 83.

³⁵⁷ Pettigrew x.

discovery of the New World, which Marchant had printed in 1493/4.³⁵⁸ When Columbus returned from his voyage to the New World in January of 1493, he wrote a letter in Spanish recounting his observations and experience. Written in Lisbon and dated March 14, 1493, the letter was first published in Barcelona by Pedro Rosa.³⁵⁹ Shortly after, on April 29, Columbus' letter was translated into Latin by Leander de Cosco (Leandre di Cosco) and printed in Rome in early May as *Epistola de insulis nuper inventis* ("A Letter about the Islands newly discovered").³⁶⁰ Following its translation into Latin, the letter was rapidly published throughout Europe, with editions printed in Basel, Antwerp, Strasbourg and Paris.

Importantly, Marchant was the only French printer to publish the letter, which points to his connection with the printing industry outside of France and his keen sense for interpreting the trends in the market.³⁶¹ What makes this document especially interesting is the format in which it is printed. Consisting of a single folio sheet of paper folded twice to make a pamphlet of eight pages, the *Epistola* is a precursor of modern newspaper.³⁶² Marchant's edition features the title page (hence we know the document was meant to be folded) with the title of the letter and an advertisement for his shop at Champ Gaillard: *Epistola de insulis de nouo repertis. Impressa parisius in capo gaillardi*.³⁶³ On the verso of the title page, he included the epigram written by the Bishop of Monte Peloso, R. L. de Corbaria, entitled *To the Most Invincible King of Spain*, and the woodcut portraying the Annunciation to the

³⁵⁸ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant," 83. Marchant had allegedly printed three variants of the letter, all published in 1493, of which there are only two recorded copies of each edition. For a discussion of Marchant's letter and the list of other editions of the work (nine, overall) see Wilberforce Eames, "Columbus Letter on the Discovery of America," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 28 (1924):595-99.

³⁵⁹ Eams 596.

³⁶⁰ Ibid 596.

³⁶¹ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 84.

³⁶² Eams 595. For a reproduction of this image, see Eams.

³⁶³ Ibid. 596. While the image of the letter included in this text contains just a reference to Marchant's shop in the title, one of the other two editions actually features his printer's mark, the *Sola fides sufficit*.

Shepherds.³⁶⁴ The illustration does not appear in other European editions and Hindman suggests that Marchant took it from a group of woodcuts that he reused from time to time and “that are thought to come from a Book of Hours, which has yet to be identified.”³⁶⁵ As a possible source, Hindman lists the fragmentary *Horae* printed for V  rard in 1489, now preserved at the BN (R  serve B. 27814).³⁶⁶ In 1492 Marchant had also printed two editions of the *Kalendrier*, including the deluxe edition for V  rard, in which he used similar cuts depicting shepherds in the fields. It is possible therefore that the woodcut used in the *Epistola* was modeled after the illustrations in his editions of the *Kalendrier*, but what I would argue is more significant here is Marchant’s ability to adapt his illustrations to different texts. The figure of the shepherd is an important one in the Bible: Abel was a keeper of sheep, Abraham, Isaac and Joseph were shepherds, Moses kept the flock of Jethro, and King David was also a shepherd.³⁶⁷ In the New Testament, the shepherds were the first to hear about the birth of Christ from an angel (Luke 8-20) – the scene depicted in the *Epistola* – and Jesus is also often described as the Good Shepherd.³⁶⁸ By using the image of the Annunciation to the Shepherds in the *Epistola*, Marchant is suggesting to his readers that they too, like the shepherds in the Bible, are made privy to a special proclamation, one that will usher in the beginning of a new era.

The notion of travelling or exploration was taken up in another publication that deviated from Marchant’s general *oeuvre* of scholarly texts. Published in November

³⁶⁴ Ibid 596. As quoted in Eames, the epigram reads: “No region now can add to Spain’s great deeds/ To such man all the world is yet too small./ An Orient land found far beyond the waves/ Will add, great Betica, to thy renown./ Then to Columbus, the true finder, give/ Due thanks; but greater still to God on high./ Who makes new kingdoms for himself and thee/ Both firm and pious let thy conduct be.”

³⁶⁵ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 84. As a possible source, Hindman lists the fragmentary *Horae* published by V  rard in 1489, now preserved in Paris at the BN (R  serve B.27814).

³⁶⁶ Ibid. 84. As the BN catalogue explains, this *Horae* is now bound with another printed Book of Hours, which includes the sentence *Sola fides sufficit*, thus suggesting that Marchant may have been involved in the printing of this volume.

³⁶⁷ Heseltine v.

³⁶⁸ In the *Kalendrier*, the shepherd should be understood as a representation of everyman and the figure is often used metaphorically to describe aspects of the human condition.

of 1499, *Les merveillies de Romme* (The marvels of Rome) was a French translation of the pilgrim guide to the monuments in Rome, *Mirabilia Romae vel potius historia et descriptio urbis Romae*. While in the *Epistola*, Marchant dabbled in pamphlet publications, here he tackled the format of travel guides. This hugely popular pilgrim's guide to the monuments in Rome, reproduced in many manuscripts, was one of the bestsellers in the early years of printing.³⁶⁹ The work was translated into vernaculars, multiple editions in German are known, two Italian and two French translations, one of which was published by Marchant.³⁷⁰ While most editions of the *Mirabilia* were printed in octavo (8^o), Marchant's work is unique because it is a dudodecimo (12^o), and as such truly a pocket size book.³⁷¹ Like the Latin *Danse*, Marchant's *Les merveilles* was published for Geoffroy de Marnef no doubt because it fit perfectly with the types of books – vernacular texts for devout Christians – for which the de Marnef shop was renowned.³⁷²

When we survey the career of Guy Marchant in detail, a more complex picture emerges than the one typically found in studies on macabre art. Rather than seeing Marchant simply as a printer who happened to have published editions of the *Danse*, we see him as a shrewd entrepreneur and an innovator in the field of early printed books. His ability to move fluidly between short, plain tracts intended for the

³⁶⁹ The ISTC lists 64 editions printed up to 1500 throughout Western Europe.

³⁷⁰ The other French translation was printed by Pierre Le Carron after 1493.

³⁷¹ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 84. A duodecimo format refers to a book made by folding a sheet of paper into twelve leaves. Hindman mentions that the only smaller version of the book was published in Rome by Stephan Planck four months after Marchant. Planck's book was a twentyfourmo (24^o), and Hindman suggests that it was perhaps made because Marchant had such success with his edition.

³⁷² Ibid. 86. Hindman also suggests that Marchant's *Les merveilles* was popular in part because it was well marketed through the de Marnef operations and available not just in Paris, but in their other outposts in France. As a side point, it should also be noted that some of the same printers who had published editions of the *Epistola* also printed the *Mirabilia*, most importantly Stephan Planck and Eucharius Silber, both working in Rome. Among the titles from their presses *De conservations sanitatis* and the *Prognosticon*, which are thematically similar to parts of the *Kalendrier*. More research is needed here, but it is likely that Marchant had also established connections with Italian printers and looked to Italy for inspiration for his illustrated volumes. This seems all the more plausible since Marchant had clearly been involved in the humanist circles in Paris and would thus be familiar with Italian publications.

students of the College of Navarre and parchment copies of illustrated books created for the King of France is as remarkable as it is unusual in the world of early printing where such wide range of publishing would often have disastrous consequences. Marchant's education and familiarity with established theological tracts, but also his interest in the emerging humanist and scientific discourses reveal the depth of knowledge a printer needed to have to become successful in the new industry. Marchant's publication of the *Danse macabre* was therefore not a happenstance. He did not print the first edition because the mural was a popular monument; he did it because he knew the market was interested in books on death and dying and probably also because there was the German blockbook precedent, which he must have known. In printing the *Danse*, Marchant did not only adapt the late medieval theme to the medium of print, he reinvented it altogether by adding new figures and complementary texts and thus placed the subject into a wholly new context so that it was, especially in the context of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, almost an autonomous work. In the process, Marchant created a new type of book – one of the earliest examples of specifically French incunabula, different in style to either German or Italian printed books. The same can be said about his other 'invention', the *Kalendrier*, which is really the magnum opus of his whole enterprise. Although he was not the writer of the texts or the creator of the images, he was the compiler who put together a new product – one that remained popular and often copied through the sixteenth century – and in that sense put a stamp on the history of early printed books.

A review of Marchant's career and publications also allows us to see how small and interconnected the world of printing was in the early years of the industry. The majority of printers and publishers collaborated with one another on a regular basis, which helped to popularize the *Danse* and other similar illustrated titles. Marchant's success with the Dance of Death editions sparked the interest of other printers to produce their own volumes, which vary in terms of format, content and quality. Certain printers had clearly worked only with Vérard's illustrations for the *Danse macabre des hommes*, while others copied Marchant's books. As I will elaborate in the fifth chapter, Husz was in possession of both versions because he

combined Vérard's and Marchant's woodcuts and also included all other appended texts. Actually, Husz's book is probably the most comprehensive edition of the *Danse* in the fifteenth century since it included all known woodcuts and his own added inventions.

His most famous adaptation of the *Danse* is the woodcut of the *Printers* (Fig. 10). While, as discussed earlier, Husz introduces printers as new members of society and celebrates their skills, the image is not entirely positive. Revealing his understanding of macabre sensibility, Husz creates a self-referential image that combines the notions of death and printing. Inherent in the composition is a sense of entrapment and claustrophobia: the compositor is squeezed between the table and the bench, the inker is blocked by the press and the *libraire* is trapped between the bookshelves and the counter. Unlike the other cadavers in the *Danse*, Husz's dead are giants; they are nearly twice as tall as the printers and the bookseller, which makes them particularly threatening. This is especially obvious in the 'panel' depicting the printing workshop where the heads of the two cadavers are almost touching the ceiling even though neither is standing fully upright. Since one of the dead had seized the pressman in the center of the composition, at this moment no one is pulling the bar on the press or making books. Like a weapon, the bar now points into Death; into nothingness. Even more symbolically, Death's hand and the pressman's hand are clasped together and hover over the printing press. Their bodies too, are mirroring one another – both pulling in the opposite direction. Death and the printer, Husz tells us, are doubles. In accordance with macabre spirit, Death is the future image of the pressman and if the woodcut showed the more common right-handed press, the pressman would actually be standing exactly where Death is now. Perhaps it is also not a coincidence that the doubling of Death and the printer takes place right above the printing press – the machine celebrated for its ability to produce multiple, identical copies.

CHAPTER FOUR

La danse macabre nouvelle: Women, Fools and the Agency of the Printer

The Big Twist

Awkwardly tiptoeing on his left foot, one of the giant cadavers in Mathias Husz's woodcut depicting Death visiting the printing workshop and the bookstore is shown grabbing the printer and pulling him over the printing press (Fig. 10). The other workers in the image are also being dragged away from their posts: the compositor is interrupted as he is putting together a line of text, while the bookseller on the far right stands behind the counter in front of an open book. Although the woodcut is part of the *Danse macabre* book, the act of dancing – a crucial element of the theme – is not immediately apparent in the image.

In a more typical portrayal of the *Danse*, such as the mural painting from La Ferté-Loupière in Yonne, Burgundy (c.1500), the living and the dead are lined up facing the viewer (Figs. 12, 40 and 41). While the figures do not hold hands, as they would in many dances, their bodies are in contact because the cadavers yank on the living persons' sleeves, pull on their belts or grab their arms, which create a sense of a unified, choreographed movement. What is especially striking in the example from La Ferté-Loupière is that the dead appear more energetic than the living: they twist, hop and jump lifting their knees and elbows as they force the living into the dance.³⁷³ Their facial expressions are also more animated the dead frequently grimace and grin flashing teeth at their horrified dancing partners. Although the exact style of dancing is not often identified in the verses that accompany the *Danse*, the medieval audience, accustomed to dances performed at feasts, processions, courts or even

³⁷³ It should be noted that in the printed editions, the difference in movement between the living and the dead is not as obvious as it is in the mural paintings because we can only view two pairs per page.

funerary rituals, would no doubt be able to 'read' the body-language of the figures portrayed in the picture.³⁷⁴ As scholars have pointed out, the living and the dead in the *Danse* actually dance two different dances: the sprightly, jerky movements of the dead resemble the peasant dance known as *Morris Dance* (or a *Morisco*), while the controlled, gliding motion of the living figures is more typical of the courtly dance style known as the *basse-dance* ("low dance").³⁷⁵

Associated with the court, the *basse-dance* was the most popular style of dancing in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. A few extant choreographies of the dance show that the steps are executed close to the ground in order to create "a gentle rising and falling gliding motion."³⁷⁶ The dancers shy away from any sudden movements and there is no hopping, twisting or jumping associated with the *basse-dance*. In fact, as Frances Eustace has recently noted, the dancers' steps "remain low even in the more rapid sections" of the dance; this translates into virtual stillness when the dance is depicted in a painting or an illumination.³⁷⁷ This, at least, is the impression we get when we look at the portrayal of the *basse-dance* from the Italian

³⁷⁴ Frances Eustace with Pamela M. King, "Dances of the Living and the Dead: A Study of the *Danse Macabre* Imagery Within the Content of Late-Medieval Dance Culture," *Mixed Metaphors: The Danse Macabre in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds: Sophie Oosterwijk and Stephanie Knöll (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 43-71, 43.

³⁷⁵ For a discussion of these two styles of dancing and their social implications see Robert I. McGrath, "The Dance as Pictorial Metaphor," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 89 (1977): 81-92 and D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962). For an analysis of the dance in the context of the *Danse macabre* see: Eustace, "Dances of the Living and the Dead"; Elna Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, especially chapter 2; Jane H. M. Taylor, "Que signifiait *danse* au quinzième siècle? Danser la *Danse macabre*", *Fifteenth Century Studies* 18 (1991): 259-77; and Susanne Warda "Dance, Music and the Inversion of the Natural Order in the Medieval *Danse Macabre* eds: Sophie Oosterwijk and Stephanie Knöll (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 73-100.

³⁷⁶ Eustace 56.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 56.

manual on dancing written by Guglielmo Ebreo in 1463 or the figures of the living in the La Ferté-Loupière (Figs. 40 and 41).³⁷⁸

However, in Husz's woodcut no such dances are shown (Fig. 10). The figures are neither dancing in an obvious way, nor are they arranged in a processional line facing the viewer. We only know that the living and the dead in the image are meant to be dancing because the verses placed below the image tell us so. *Venez danser ung tourdion*, says *le mort* to the printers in the opening line of the dialogue, thus referencing not only the act of dancing per se, but also a very specific style of dancing known as *La Grant Tourdion* (loosely translated as the "Big Twist"), which became popular at the turn of the century.³⁷⁹ On the one hand, Husz may have wanted to emphasize that a dance is taking place in the image since the composition does not elucidate that clearly and hence included a reference to the *Tourdion* in the verses and, on the other, his choice of this particular dance made the woodcut more relevant to its late-fifteenth century audience. Updating the *Danse* by referencing contemporary fashion or popular dances as well as by inserting new social types, like printers, into the hierarchy of figures that made up the composition was an effective strategy through which Husz made the book appealing and pertinent to wider publics. At the same time, Husz's decision to allude to a particular dancing style in the verses or depict the new technology of printing in the woodcut highlights his crucial role as the editor responsible for assembling text and images and providing the narrative framework of the book.

The New Danse

The practice of updating the *Danse* did not of course begin with Husz. We will recall that even in the first edition of the *Danse*, published in 1485, Marchant, the

³⁷⁸ For a color reproduction of the miniature from Ebreo's tract, *De practica seu arte tripudii vulgare opusculum* (BN, Ms. ital. 973) see Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, plate 19, page 340.

³⁷⁹ The translation is found in Jody Enders, *Murder by Accident: Medieval Theatre, Modern Media, Critical Intentions* (Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 2009) 89.

printer modernized the costumes of the living figures and matched them to the fashion of the 1480s. Marchant had also expanded the *Danse* by adding ten new male figures in June of 1486 and he published a whole new series with only female protagonists in July of the same year. The rapid expansion of characters in the printed versions of the *Danse* – overall, forty-six male and female figures were added to the series in five years – revealed an interest in exploring the burgeoning social sphere at the turn of the century.³⁸⁰

Part of the reason for the additions was the appeal of the new. *Nouveauté*, as Leah Chang has recently noted, attracted readers in the early years of printing and printers frequently made an effort to market their work as new or revised.³⁸¹ Marchant certainly understood this strategy well because he entitled the augmented edition of the men's *Danse*, *La danse macabre nouvelle* (The New Dance of Death). Yet, the expansion of figures signified more than just a marketing strategy of a savvy printer. Despite its religious and didactic origin, the *Danse* was predicated on a portrayal of society and its satirical verses were often aimed at the secular and ecclesiastic elite. Who was included or excluded from the *Danse* or how a given figure was represented in the image could (and did) have particular political or social connotations. The best example of this may be the curious absence of the Duke – the most prominent title among the French nobles in the later Middle Ages – from the roster of male figures included in the mural from the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris. As Sophie Oosterwijk reminds us, in 1424-5 when the mural was painted, the complex and often bloody political situation in Paris implicated several French dukes and the portrayal of such a figure in the image could have been construed as a risqué political move.³⁸² Sixty years later, however, the stigma surrounding the Duke had apparently cleared since the figure was included in

³⁸⁰ It is also worth mentioning that the majority of new figures were actually added in 1486 – Marchant augmented the men's *Danse* with ten figures in 1486 and published the women's *Danse*, consisting of thirty-four characters a month later. The last two female figures were included in April of 1491.

³⁸¹ Leah L. Chang, *Into Print: The Production of Female Authorship in Early Modern France* (Newark: Delaware UP, 2009) 29.

³⁸² See Oosterwijk, *Fro Paris to Inglond*.

Marchant's augmented edition of 1486 in which the Duke is depicted as a handsome man wearing a long brocade coat as befits his status and rank (Fig. 34).

While the hierarchy depicted in the *Danse macabre* printed books should not be read as a literal portrayal of society (characters such as the female Theologian (*la Thelogienne*), for example, unattested in historical records, may have been included as a way to ridicule the idea of women as preachers not to depict an actual social role), in their attempt to modernize the theme the printers nevertheless paid close attention to their social world and so should we.³⁸³ During the transition from the medieval to the Renaissance era, French society underwent significant transformation and one of the main ones involved, importantly, the growing prominence of aristocratic women in social and political realms. In particular, the reign of Anne of Brittany (d. 1514), twice the Queen of France, demonstrated an involvement in political and public life that far surpassed those of her predecessors. Aristocratic women were also important patrons of books, both manuscripts and printed editions, and, as Martha Wolff has pointed out, for some of these women "the opportunity for artistic patronage seems to be tied to some degree of independent political power."³⁸⁴ Prominent printers and publishers, like Antoine Vérard worked hard to establish close connections with women at the French court and he published notable volumes (often with women as the main protagonists) for Anne of Brittany and Louise of Savoy (d. 1531), the Duchess of Angoulême and the mother of Francis I.³⁸⁵ Women also actively participated in mercantile economy and worked as merchants, artisans and even printers. The case of Charlotte Guillard, who

³⁸³ Female saints, such as Catherine of Sienna (d. 1380), are exceptions. Catherine's spiritual texts, including her most famous treatise *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*, were read and respect by the contemporaries and in that sense she may have been viewed as a theologian. However, there are no known female theologians who lived in France at the end of the fifteenth century and though women occasionally preached in Paris and elsewhere, they were generally not taken seriously. On this issue see Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992).

³⁸⁴ Martha Wolff, "Princess as Patrons", *Kings, Queens, and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France*, 35.

³⁸⁵ For Vérard's relationship with both Anne and Louise, see Mary Beth Winn, *Antoine Vérard*, especially chapter IV.

worked as a printer for fifty years and published 158 editions is quite famous and well documented, but there were other notable female printers working in France at the time including the widow of Jean Trepperel who even published an edition of the *Danse* in the early sixteenth century.³⁸⁶ At the same time, as a recent study has shown, notions of masculine identity and especially aristocratic masculinity were being re-forged and what it meant to be, for example, a Knight, in the early fifteenth century was no longer valid in the context of the late 1400s.³⁸⁷ Given such shifting paradigms of identity and social order, we have to wonder whether the appeal of the *Danse macabre* books in this period has in part to do with an attempt to reinsert older and contested social categories or perhaps provide a tangible means of classifying and hence controlling the transforming public sphere.

Considering these issues, the present chapter will focus on two specific themes within the *Danse macabre* books that are, as I will show, a particular invention of the print medium, namely the *Danse macabre des femmes* series and the inclusion of the Fool (henceforth *des Femmes*). While examples of the *Danse* that predate the illustrated books occasionally featured female characters, prior to Marchant's edition there was never more than a few women depicted in the *Danse* and certainly no Dance of Death that was composed solely of women. Although *des Femmes* was likely intended as a companion-piece to the men's *Danse* and the two books share the same composition and are embedded in the same religious and moralistic concerns, they also differ considerably. Developed out of the late fifteenth century allegorical and moralistic poetry, *des Femmes* reveals concerns over women

³⁸⁶ For a discussion of Guillard's career see B. Beech, "Charlotte Guillard: A Sixteenth-Century Business Woman", *Renaissance Quarterly* 36, (1983):345-367. Information regarding the widow of Jean Trepperel can be found in: see: Stéphanie Ohlund-Rambaud, "L'Atelier de Jean Trepperel, Imprimeur-Libraire Parisien (1492-1511)", *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400*, eds. Godfried Croenen and Peter Ainsworth (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2006, 123-142). The edition of the *Danse* printed by the widow of Trepperel was published in c. 1511 in collaboration with her second husband, Jean Jehannot, is in a private collection. For sources on women in the book industry see Chang, *Into Print* and Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

³⁸⁷ See Darrin M. Cox, *Aristocratic Masculinity in France (1450-1550): From Knight to Courtier*, Lewiston (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012).

as sources of sin and moral corruption, while at the same time attempting to negotiate anxiety over the growing prominence of women in public life of the period. As befits the macabre genre, the work is purposely ambivalent – neither completely misogynistic nor exactly salutary – *des Femmes* is a fascinating portrayal of thirty-six women situated specifically in an urban late-fifteenth century Parisian context.

Marchant's second important modification of the genre is the inclusion of the Fool (*le Sot*) and the Female Fool (*la Sotte*) in the *Danse* in 1486 and 1491 respectively (Figs. 35 and 42). To an extent, the *Danse* was always about the foolishness of the human kind, about the way men and women continually fault by clinging on to their status, beauty or material possessions while disregarding their soul and their chance of salvation. The verses carried within a healthy dose of satire and humor, aimed particularly at the wealthy and the powerful, and as I discussed in the first chapter, depending on the context in which one views the *Danse*, the text and the image could be construed as a farce of sorts rather than a serious contemplation on death and mortality. For these reasons, an inclusion of the Fool into the roster of figures that make up the *Danse* may not be so surprising. However, whereas in medieval morality discourse and particularly treatises on vices and virtues, folly held a position opposite Prudence and symbolized moral failing, at the end of the fifteenth century in Northern Europe the theme of folly began to take on an all encompassing meaning, which up until then had been mainly reserved for Death.³⁸⁸ Referencing the *Danse*, Michel Foucault had famously argued that in the last years of the fifteenth century “the mockery of madness replaces death and its solemnity.”³⁸⁹ As we will see, Foucault was only partially right, Death did not fully disappear at the end of the century, but the theme of the fool and folly did begin to challenge Death's position as a common allegorical figure in art and literature of the period. Marchant's inclusion of the Fool and the Female Fool in the *Danse*, and especially, his decision to place them at the end of the dance, standing as the last living figures, I will argue, reveals his interest in adjusting the theme to fit these new

³⁸⁸ Yona Pinson, *The Fool's Journey* 2.

³⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988) 15.

moral and didactic concerns. It also further highlights the satirical and the topsy-turvy elements already inherent in the structure of the *Danse*. Both the publication of the *des Femmes* and the inclusion of the Fool opened up the *Danse* to new interpretations and emphasized the crucial role the printer had in designing the book and imbuing it with meaning through a careful editorial strategy.

Marchant and the Framing of the Danse macabre of Women

The women's Dance of Death is in part modeled after the men's *Danse* and the two books were complementary from the beginning. While Marchant published the first and the second edition of *des Femmes* separately from the men's series, it is certainly true that many printers, including Husz and Nicolas Le Rouge, printed the two dances in single books thus emphasizing their status as companion-pieces. Early illustrated books were also typically sold unbound and it is not unreasonable to assume that a bookseller would have pitched the two titles together to potential customers or that readers would have bound the works in single volumes as a complete series. In fact, a study of the notarial inventories of the sixteenth century Parisian private libraries, suggests that the two dances were frequently bought together as a pair.³⁹⁰

However, the obvious similarity in theme and composition between the men's and the women's series also tends to overshadow the inherent differences between the two works. To see *des Femmes* merely as a variation of the *Danse* with female protagonists, as scholars often do, is to forget that from the very first edition *des Femmes* was marketed in decisively different ways from the men's series and hence carried its own sets of concerns. It is worth recalling that Marchant published the first edition of the women's series in July of 1486 and, importantly, that he entitled the

³⁹⁰ See Alexander H. Schutz, "Vernacular Books in Parisian Private Libraries of the Sixteenth Century According to the Notarial Inventories", *University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures*, 25 (1955). Interestingly, this study shows that families that owned copies of the *Danse* also often owned editions of Marchant's other illustrated bestseller, the *Shepherd's Calendar*.

work not the *Danse macabre des femmes* (which he probably would if he intended it *only* as a companion piece to the *des Hommes*), but the *Miroer salulaire* (Salutary Mirror). Much has been made in literature about Marchant's wording of the title, and rightly so.³⁹¹ Marchant's use of the word *miroer* recalls a long established medieval tradition of the *Speculum* works, a smart strategy to use for a new illustrated book as it allowed him to access a wider range of readers and buyers, but it also references the theme of mirroring, and especially the distorted mirror that is so important in the macabre genre. In the *memento mori* tradition, the dead are what the living (and the viewer) will become at one point in the future. In the context of the *Danse*, as I elaborated in the second chapter, scholars frequently debate about the nature of the dead in the image and question whether they are in fact specters of the living figures in death. Is it the dance of death or the dance of the dead? The power of horror in the *Danse* lies not in the fact that the image shows decomposing bodies, though they are certainly meant to shock us, but that we are seeing reflections of ourselves, our own distorted doppelgangers, as dead bodies in a future moment that is fast approaching.

Marchant's use of the term *miroer* may actually have been even more instructive. As he explains in the 1486 introductory colophon, the book was intended as a self-help guide for all who desire salvation and want to make sure they achieve it (*Miroer salulaire pour toutes gens et des tous estats/ et est de grant utilite ...pour celux qui desirent acquerir leur salut et qui le voudront avoir*). Taylor has pointed out that by the late Middle Ages, the verb '*se mirer*' had been used not so much to denote an act of looking at oneself in the mirror, as to imply a form of meditation or contemplation, which is exactly what Marchant was suggesting in the colophon.³⁹² For him, the book was an instrument for the betterment of the reader and thus functioned as a contemplative tool. What made *des Femmes* different from the men's *Danse* – itself a form of *exempla* for the reader/viewer – is that from its inception it only existed within the framework set up by Marchant. Unlike the men's *Danse* which was initially published in 1485 as a book of fifteen woodcuts and

³⁹¹ See for instance Taylor, "Un Miroer Salulaire."

³⁹² *Ibid.* 30.

accompanying verses, *des Femmes* was never printed without at least two other didactic texts, namely the *Debat dun corps et dun ame* and the *Complainte de lame dampnee* (henceforth the *Debat* and the *Complainte*).

I will discuss the implications of this compilation of texts later in the chapter, but for now I wish to emphasize the importance of Marchant's intervention with *des Femmes*. Marchant, as we will recall, was neither the author nor the artist for the works he published. His talent was located not in his ability to compose but to compile texts and images from disparate sources and assemble them in his publications in new and innovative ways. In the context of *des Femmes*, it was Marchant's editorial skills that supplied the narrative for the work and in turn informed the viewer's experience of it. For this reason, I would argue that our understanding of *des Femmes* has to take into consideration the two other works, the *Debate* and the *Complainte* not only as complementary texts concerned with similar didactic ideas, but as essential components of *des Femmes* and as parts of a unified whole.

In the past, *des Femmes* attracted scholarly attention because it is a poignant portrayal of women from all strata of the late fifteenth century society. Authors such as Ann Tukey Harrison and Sandra Hindman, Suzanne Wemple and Diane Kaiser and Josette Wisman have discussed aspects of class, gender, and social and political concerns regarding the representation of women in *des Femmes*, all of which enriched our understanding of the work.³⁹³ Scholars writing primarily on macabre art had focused more on the book's relationship to the men's *Danse* and typically see it as a work of lesser quality. For example, Mâle described *des Femmes* as the product of "an untalented poet", while for Kinch the development of

³⁹³ See Ann Tukey Harrison ed. *The Danse macabre of Women ms. fr. 995 of the Bibliothèque nationale* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State UP, 1995); Ann Tukey Harrison, "Fifteenth-Century French Women's Role Names", *The French Review* 62 (1989):436-444; Suzanne F. Wemple and Denise A. Kaiser, "Death's Dance of Women", *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986):333-343; Josette A. Wisman, "La Symbolique du miroir dans les *dances macabres* de Guyot Marchant", *Romanische Forschungen* 103 (1991): 158-171 and "Un miroir déformant: hommes et femmes des *Dances macabres* de Guyot Marchant", *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23. 2 (1993): 275-299.

the women's series is a sign of the narrowing down of audience, a notion he believes undermines the social impact of the original mural examples.³⁹⁴ According to Kinch, *des Femmes* was intended primarily for "rich, bourgeois women who sought edifying reading material" and who were attracted to work that catered to their own particular interests.³⁹⁵ Kinch's claim, however, is only partially correct. While it is likely that *des Femmes* appealed to some women, it is doubtful that women were the only readers of the series. In the opening colophon, Marchant had clearly stated that the book is intended for both men and women (*pour toutes gens et de tous estates*) and, even more significantly, woodcuts from *des Femmes* were frequently included in the margins of the printed Books of Hours where they were exposed to an even wider community of readers.

What has been missing from the studies on *des Femmes*, however, is the acknowledgment of the crucial role Marchant had in assembling the book. In the early years of printing in France successful printer-publishers, such as Marchant, frequently inserted their agency into the work they were publishing and took it upon themselves to reinvent or even adapt a given text. For instance, Lori Walters has studied the process of V  rard's reframing of Christine de Pizan's *Tr  sor de la cit   des dames* (Treasury of the City of Ladies), first written in 1405, that he published in 1497 for Anne of Brittany in which he positioned himself as an intermediary between Christine and Anne, a move that emphasized his role as the propagator of Christian doctrine to the French monarchy.³⁹⁶ Similarly, Taylor has show the importance of V  rard's editorial strategy and intention in assembling the *Jardin de Plaisance*, an anthology of poetry first published in 1501.³⁹⁷ I see Marchant's publication of *des*

³⁹⁴ Emile M  le, *Religious Art in France* 344-5 and Ashby Kinch, "The *Danse Macabre* and the Medieval Community of Death", *Mediaevalia* 23 (2002): 159-202, 188.

³⁹⁵ Kinch, "The *Danse Macabre*," 188.

³⁹⁶ Lori J. Walters "Anthoine V  rard's Reframing of Christine de Pizan's *Doctrine* for Anne de Bretagne", *The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne: Negotiating Conventions in Books and Documents*, ed. Cynthia J. Brown (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010) 47-63.

³⁹⁷ See Taylor, "A Priest of Poetry to the People." Taylor's discussion of V  rard's edition has been instrumental in forming my arguments regarding Marchant's intervention with *des Femmes*. According to Taylor V  rard's books exemplifies the

Femmes as belonging to such practices of early printers which were in part experimental – certain compilations worked and found audiences and others did not – but which also demonstrated an increasing importance of the role of the editor or compiler in giving meaning to the work.

While it is true that Marchant also reinvented the men's *Danse* by adding new text and new figures – a strategy that, as we have seen, was later continued by Huz – what I think is particularly interesting about *des Femmes* is that Marchant did not have a pictorial model to work from. We will recall that his 1485 edition of the *Danse* was likely based on the famous mural located at the Paris Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, which Marchant adapted to fit into the new medium. Such a strategy was not possible with *des Femmes* because prior to Marchant's book, female figures were only occasionally included in the *Danse*. Although there was no image to model the book after, the verses of *des Femmes* poem were written several years before Marchant's publication, probably in 1482, and circulated in manuscripts of the period. In discussing *des Femmes*, I will argue that Marchant assembled the work by relying on such existing manuscripts and literary traditions and that he also, importantly, borrowed heavily from the pictorial language of satirical prints popular in Northern Europe from the 1450s onward. His editorial influence is evident from the introductory colophon and the layout of texts which start with the death of the body and end with Hell and damnation and in that sense he corrected the inherent ambiguity of the *Danse*; yet unlike the men's series, *des Femmes* is also more

early printers predilection towards assembling (or “packaging” as she states) different texts in new formats. As she explains, it is erroneous to think of Vérard's edition as merely a compendium – a notion that denies a premeditated intention on the part of the collector/compiler. Rather, she argues, we ought to think of such works as anthologies or compilations, terms that suggest a conscious intervention on the part of the editor in putting the disparate works together. According to Taylor, Vérard's *Jardin* is an anthology made by “using paratexts to create an aesthetic expressiveness, by arranging its miscellaneous contents so as to encourage the perception of an artful whole” (233). Although *des Femmes* is a much shorter and to some extent less complex work than the *Jardin*, I would argue that Marchant's mode of operation functioned in exactly the same way.

staunchly urban and topical, interested as much in a serious contemplation on death and salvation as in a satirical portrayal of women and their role in society.

Women and Death in French Manuscripts and Literary Traditions, c. 1460-1520

Marchant's interest in publishing *des Femmes* was almost certainly prompted by the *nouveauté* strategy frequently employed by the early printers who marketed their books as revised, augmented or otherwise improved in hopes of attracting new or wider readership. At the same time, however, we know from the previous chapter that Marchant had a keen ability to recognize the trends in the market and a book with solely female protagonists would have appealed to a number of readers at the time. Throughout the fifteenth century in France there was an avid interest in books about women from Christine de Pizan's *Trésor de la cité des dames* and Pierre Michault's *Procès d'Honneur Féminin* (1461) to Antoine Dufour's *Vies des femmes célèbres* (1504) and Symphorien Champier's *Nef des dames vertueuses* (1503).³⁹⁸ In addition, fifteenth century French poets like as Eustache Dechamps (d. 1406), Pierre de Nesson (d. before 1442), François Villon (d. c.1463) and Olivier de la Marche (d. 1502) explored macabre themes in their verses or utilized the figure of death personified in their allegorical poems with female protagonists.³⁹⁹ To understand the genesis of Marchant's *des Femmes*, it will be useful to explore the conjunction of related themes in earlier allegorical poems. Of special interest to present discussion are two poems written in the latter decades of the fifteenth

³⁹⁸ For a recent discussion of these works see: Helen J. Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France, 1440-1538* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008) and Michel Szkilnik, "Mentoring Notable Ladies: Antoine Dufour's *Vies des femmes célèbres*", *The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne: Negotiating Conventions in Books and Documents*, ed. Cynthia J. Brown (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010) 65-80.

³⁹⁹ On this issue see Christine Martineau-Genieys, *Le thème de la mort dans la poésie française de 1450 à 1550* (Paris: H. Champion, 1977).

century in which death is linked directly to the Original Sin and thus given specific historical origin in Adam's and Eve's trespass.⁴⁰⁰

Around 1465 Pierre Michault composed an allegorical poem *La dance aux aveugles* (the Dance of the Blind), which is thematically and compositionally related to the *Danse*. The poem is occasionally referred to as *La dance aux trois aveugles* (the Dance of the Three Blind) because the work is divided into three sections (*Blind Love*, *Blind Fortune* and *Blind Death*). Michault's poem was illustrated in several manuscripts (most notably Arsenal Ms. 5113, d. 1486) and also published in incunabula editions. Like the *Danse*, Michault's poem begins with the prologue of the *Lacteur* and includes images of figures from different strata of society dancing, albeit blindfolded. In the work, the personified figure of Death is portrayed riding an ox, a point meant to emphasize Death's slow but steady progress.⁴⁰¹ In the verses, Death is linked to Adam and Eve and the Original Sin, the act blamed for bringing death into the world in the Genesis. That contemporaries recognized the similarities between Michault's poem and the *Danse*, by the 1460s already an established pictorial and literary theme in France, is evident from the fact that the two dances were included together in a partially illustrated manuscript dating from c. 1482, which was also, as we will see, the earliest known occurrence of the *Danse macabre des femmes* poem (BN, Ms. fonds français 1186). Marchant must also have been familiar with Michault's work since he included a version of the verses from the *Dance aux aveugles* in a section on death and mortality in his editions of the *Kalendrier*.

The other important work is an anonymous *Mors de la Pomme* (The Bite of the Apple) that I already discussed in the previous chapter (henceforth the *Mors*). The poem appears in a single illustrated manuscript (BN, Ms. fonds français 17001),

⁴⁰⁰ In his discussion of Death and the Maiden series by Hans Baldung Grien, Joseph Leo Koerner makes a point that the historical origin of death was of vital importance to much of macabre imagery, see Koerner 292.

⁴⁰¹ For a recent discussion on the image of Death riding a bull see Sylvie Bethmont-Gallerand, "Death Personified in Medieval Imagery: The Motif of Death Riding a Bovine", *Mixed Metaphors: The Danse Macabre in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sophie Oosterwijk and Stefanie Knöll (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) 169-188.

which also includes poems and translations by Jean Miélot (d. 1472), a noted author, translator and illuminator who worked at the court of the Duke of Burgundy.⁴⁰² Almost certainly derived from the *Danse macabre* genre the *Mors* consists of individual scenes in which Death, referred to as *la Mort*, encounters its victims, converses with them and ultimately kills them (Fig. 33). As Leonard Kurtz explains, in the poem “Death is depicted as an abstract concept, personified to a high degree. He enters into the social life of mankind and strikes him down with a javelin.”⁴⁰³ The poem is illustrated with thirty miniatures, twenty-six of which show individual victims, two depict scenes of Hell and torture and two small ones portray the figure of the *Lacteur* who provides the prologue and the epilogue. In contrast to the *Danse*, however, the figures in the *Mors* are not arranged hierarchically. The upper sections of the poem feature Biblical characters (Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel or Noah) while in the middle sections are figures that represent specific social types (the King, the Cardinal, the Queen, or the Money-Changer) all of which are haphazardly placed. The poem also includes an impressive number of women, ten overall.

Although presently extant in a single manuscript the *Mors* appears to have been quite influential at the time. According to Mâle, in the late fifteenth century, the poem was famous enough to have inspired border imagery included in a printed Book of Hours published in Paris by Simon Vostre c. 1512, which shows Death attacking individual victims in a series of vignettes.⁴⁰⁴ Mâle even argued that the composition of the *Mors*, which links Death with Original Sin and adapts the *Danse* by portraying not the whole of community dancing together, but independent scenes in which Death strikes its victims at their places of rest or work, have influenced

⁴⁰² The manuscript, which contains 116 folios, is a compilation of various works associated with Miélot. Although it includes a preface written by Miélot and dated 1468, it is possible that the works were assembled over time and that not all of them were completed by this date. For a facsimile edition of *Le Mors de la Põme* section of the manuscript see Leonard P. Kurtz, ed. *Le Mors de la Põme*, 1937 (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1975).

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.* v.

⁴⁰⁴ Mâle 347. For examples of border imagery featured in Vostre’s edition from 1512 see Mâle, page 346, figures 217 and 218.

Holbein's *Simulachres*. First published in 1538, the *Simulachres* also begins with Adam and Eve and is characterized by genre images in which Death attacks specific characters (Figs. 16 and 17).⁴⁰⁵ More recently, Gertsman suggested that the poem might have served as inspiration for the mural of the *Danse* painted at the church of La Chaise-Dieu in the 1470s, which includes images of Adam and Eve and the Original Sin on the pillars incorporated into the Dance of Death (Fig. 28). At present no direct connection between the *Mors* and *des Femmes* can be made, though similarities between the two works suggest that Marchant may have been familiar with the manuscript.⁴⁰⁶ The existence of these works demonstrates that by the 1480s in France there was an increased interest in the subject of women's Dance of Death as well as a tendency to adapt and expand the *Danse* by linking it more specifically to Original sin in moralizing and allegorical poems.

Women's Dance of Death: Layout and Content

Like the men's *Danse*, *des Femmes* had literary origins. The earliest known manuscript that includes the *des Femmes* poem dates from 1482 (BN, Ms. fonds

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. 347. More recently, another scholar has shown that Holbein's woodcutter Hans Lützelburger had based the composition of many of his images in the *Picture of Death* series on miniatures depicting the Labors of the Month from a sixteenth century printed Book of Hours, which is certainly in keeping with the spirit of the transitional period in which such exchanges were very common, but the idea to include Original Sin and place the figures in independent vignettes may indeed have come from the *Mors* poem. See Stephanie Buck, "International Exchange: Holbein at the Crossroads of Art and Craftsmanship", *Hans Holbein: Paintings, Prints and Reception*, eds. Mark Roskill and John Oliver Hand (Washington, London and New Haven: National Gallery of Art and Yale UP, 2001) 54-67.

⁴⁰⁶ In the second chapter I discussed the possibility of Marchant being of Flemish origin. If this is indeed true, it would be interesting to research his connection with the court of Burgundy. We will recall that Philip the Fair, the Duke of Burgundy has been discussed as a potential patron of the *Danse macabre* mural painted at the Innocents and the Burgundian court seems to have had a particular predilection for macabre art and the *Danse* in general. Since the *Mors* poem was found in a manuscript containing works by Jean Miélot, who was employed by the Duke of Burgundy, there is even more reason to look into this connection.

français 1186) and the poem is also featured in three other manuscripts, the last one dating from 1519.⁴⁰⁷ On July 7, 1486, however, Marchant printed the first edition of *des Femmes*. The verses used in Marchant's book are virtually identical to those found in the manuscripts although he added two more female characters (*L'Abesse* and *La Prieure*) bringing the number of women from thirty-two found in Ms. 10032 and Ms. 25434 to thirty-four.⁴⁰⁸ As is evident from the following list, the women are not just characterized by status and occupation, but also by stage in the life span. Included in Marchant's 1486 edition are: *L'acteur*, the Four Dead Musicians, *La royne* (the Queen), *La duchesse* (the Duchess), *La regente* (the Regent), *La femme du chevalier* (the Knight's Lady), *Labesse* (the Abbess), *La femme du lescuier* (the Squire's Lady), *La prieuse* (the Prioress), *La damoiselle* (the Debutante), *La bourgoise* (the Townswoman), *La femme vefue* (the Widow), *La marchande* (the Merchant Woman), *La balliue* (the Bailiff's Lady), *Lespousee* (the Bride), *La femme mignote* (the Darling Wife or the Spoiled Wife), *La pucelle vierge* (the Virgin), *La theologienue* (the Theologian), *La nouvelle mariee* (the Newlywed), *La femme grosse* (the Pregnant Woman), *La chamberiere* (the Chambermaid), *La recommanderesse* (the Hosteler), *La vielle damoiselle* (the Old Debutante), *La cordeliere* (The Franciscan Nun), *La femme daccueil* (the Friendly Woman), *La nourrice* (the Wetnurse), *La bergiere* (the Shepherdess), *La femme aux potences* (the Woman on Crutches), *La femme de village* (the Village Woman), *La vielle* (the Old Woman), *La revenderesse* (the Saleswoman), *La femme amoureuse* (the

⁴⁰⁷ For a discussion of the manuscripts in which the *des Femmes* poem is featured see Harrison, "The Text." The other three manuscripts that contain the poem are: BN, Nouvelles Acquisitions françaises 10032, BN, Ms. fonds. français 25434 and Arsenal, Ms. 3637.

⁴⁰⁸ It is unclear who wrote the verses for the additional figures. As Oosterwijk explains, medieval texts were "subject to scribal variance and the additional stanzas may have already been in circulation." In other words, there is no proof that Marchant commissioned a writer to compose the new text. See Sophie Oosterwijk, "'Alas Poor Yorick.' Death, the fool, the mirror and the *danse macabre*", *Narren – Masken – Karneval: Meisterwerke von Dürer bis Kubin aus der Düsseldorfer Graphiksammlung "Mensch und Tod"*, ed. Stephanie Knöll (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009) 20-32, 26.

Prostitute), *La garde dacouchees* (the Bathhouse Attendant)⁴⁰⁹, *La ieunne fille* (the Girl), *La religieuse* (the Nun), *La sorciere* (the Witch), *La royne morte* (the Dead Queen), *Lactuer*.⁴¹⁰

Marchant's editorial input is evident from the way he expanded the textual framework of the book. As discussed earlier, the introductory colophon names the work the *Miroer salutare* and outlines the intended usage of the book as a devotional tool for the betterment of the reader. Marchant also expanded the Author's prologue and inserted the woodcut and the verses of the Four Dead Musicians – figures he first introduced in the augmented edition of the men's *Danse* from 1486 – and placed it as the beginning of the dancing sequence (Fig. 9). Most notably, the printer added the illustrated poems of the *Debat* and the *Complainte* and placed them at the end of the book. That Marchant intended the three works to function as a coherent unit is evident from the final colophon where he states: *Ce petit livre contient trois choses: Cest la danse macabre des femes. Le debat du corps et de lame Et la complainte de lame dampnee.*

Even though the verses are fully reproduced in the book, Marchant's 1486 edition of *des Femmes* is only partially illustrated. Since the men's *Danse* was such a success – selling out three editions in only nine months – Marchant may have wanted to claim the market for the Dance of Death books for himself and hence rushed to publish the women's *Danse* before he had a full set of illustrations, something he remedied in the edition from 1491. The 1486 edition therefore features only four woodcuts three of which (the Author, the Four Dead Musicians and the

⁴⁰⁹ For a discussion of this role see Ann Tukey Harrison, "Fifteenth-Century French Women's Role Names", *The French Review* 62, (1989): 436-444. As Harrison explains, the compound term *garde d'acouchees* is not documented in other contemporary sources. The word *acouchee* was used since the fourteenth century and refers to a woman giving birth. *Garde* (watcher) is an even older term, first recorded in the tenth century. However, the woman described in the *Danse* is not a midwife. Rather, the verses seem to describe a woman who works in a bathhouse: *lay voyrement dresse maintz baingz/Pour les comperes et commeres* (I have certainly arranged a lot of baths/For men and women). If she is indeed a bathhouse attendant, Harrison wonders why the author did not use the term *estuviere*, which was commonly used in the fifteenth century to refer to this profession.

⁴¹⁰ The English translations of the roles of women are taken from Harrison, *The Danse Macabre of Women* 46-133.

Author with the Dead King) have been published in previous editions of the *Danse*. Only one woodcut, showing the opening pair of the Queen and the Duchess, has been designed specifically for this edition.

The first fully illustrated edition of *des Femmes*, was published in April of 1491 at which point Marchant had added two new female figures *la Bigote* (the Hypocrite) and *La Sotte* (the Female-Fool), which brought the final number of characters to thirty-six (Fig. 42).⁴¹¹ Ending the women's *Danse* with the figure of the Female-Fool and not the Witch, as was the case with the 1486 edition, was probably meant to complement the men's *Danse*, which also included the Fool as the last living figure.⁴¹² The 1491 edition is thus the first fully illustrated version of *des Femmes* and one that includes the highest number of female figures.⁴¹³

The identity of the artist who designed the woodcuts for Marchant's edition of the *des Femmes* has never been established. We will recall that Pierre Le Rouge, the famous woodcutter and a printer, has been named as a potential designer of the *Danse macabre des hommes* illustrations and his close connection with both Vérard and Marchant certainly gives validity to such claims. We also know that Le Rouge had published Vérard's edition of the men's *Danse* c.1492 and that he also designed the striking woodcuts depicting the pains of Hell used in Vérard's edition of *L'arte bene moriendi* and later borrowed by Marchant for his editions of the *Compost et Kalendrier des bergiers* (Figs. 36 and 37). However, in the late 1480s and early 1490s, the time period during which the woodcuts for *des Femmes* were likely designed, Le Rouge was busy putting together the impressively illustrated *Le Mer des histoire* and working as *l'imprimeur du roi* (the King's printer) and it seems unlikely that he would be commissioned to design the cuts for the women's

⁴¹¹ The electronic facsimile of this edition preserved at the BN (Rés. Ye. 86) can be found at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b2200006t>

⁴¹² The Fool was one of the ten new figures added in June of 1486 to Marchant's augmented edition. Marchant had also updated the 1491 edition by adding a new woodcut of the Author, now shown indoors writing and reading from an open book, and a revised version of the Four Dead Musicians created by the same woodcutter that designed the other images in the book.

⁴¹³ Unless otherwise noted, my analysis of *des Femmes* will reference this edition.

Danse.⁴¹⁴ In his study on the Paris presses, Anatole Claudin has noted that the woodcuts found in *des Femmes* are not designed by the same artist who worked on the men's *Danse*, while Henri Monceaux argued that it may have been another Le Rouge who designed the cuts, possibly Guillaume, Pierre's son or Nicolas, his nephew.⁴¹⁵ Whether it was a member of the Le Rouge family or another woodcutter altogether that designed the illustrations for *des Femmes*, it is important to emphasize that contrary to the men's *Danse* which was available in two renditions of woodcuts, one produced for Marchant and the other for Vérard, this was the only version of the women's *Danse* that was used in France at the time.

On Death and Dancing

Three aspects of *des Femmes* differentiate this work from the men's *Danse*: women are portrayed as more submissive and more willing to dance, the verses and woodcuts include references to the female body as a site of corruption while the interaction between women and cadavers often carries specific sexualized connotations, and the series references late fifteenth century Paris and the urban context.

In the literature on *des Femmes*, scholars often point out that just like men, women in the book resist the *Danse* and refuse to move along with the cadavers.⁴¹⁶ However, while it is true that women often complain or resist the dead in the verses, for example, the Duchess cries out that she is not even thirty years old (*Je nay pas encore trent ans*) and the Debutante protests that she is being taken away against her will (*Oultre mon gre et voulente*), I would argue that the confrontation between women and cadavers in the images is portrayed in much more subtle terms. In the men's *Danse*, cadavers continually push or pull the living into the dance and nearly every male character displays signs of an open resistance. Consider, for instance,

⁴¹⁴ On Le Rouge's career see Monceaux. In 1492, Pierre did publish an octavo edition containing a poem of Martial d'Auvergne, *Le Louanges de la Vierge Marie*.

⁴¹⁵ Monceaux 43.

⁴¹⁶ See for instance the study by Harrison, *The Danse Macabre of Women*.

the figure of the Knight who crosses his arms in defiance and stubbornly refuses to move or the Squire, who turns his entire body away from Death, raises one arm in refusal and is even trying to walk away (Figs. 29 and 30). In contrast, most women turn their bodies towards the cadavers and only some of them raise their hands in protest or turn their heads away (Fig. 43). Among the thirty-six women in the final version of the book, only six are portrayed as openly confronting the dead, as opposed to seventeen men. Moreover, in the men's *Danse* the cadavers hold hands with only two figures (the Bishop and the Canon), yet in *des Femmes* they hold hands with nearly every woman in the procession (Fig. 44). The gesture of handholding implies that women are partaking in the *Danse* more willingly than their male counterparts, while at the same time it also functions to emphasize the act of dancing by visually unifying figures across multiple folios.

That the figures (both dead and living) are actually dancing together is especially well captured in the woodcut depicting the Regent and the Knight's Lady (Fig. 45). In the image, the exuberant nature of the dance causes the Regent's frontlet (the long part of her headdress that frames the face) and especially the cadaver's shroud to billow wildly in the air. The bodies of the Regent and the middle cadaver are also synchronized – they both extend one leg and turn their heads to the right – thus highlighting the uniform choreography of the *Danse*. A similar unity in movement is observed in the woodcut showing the Townswoman and the Widow, where the Widow twists her torso and crosses her legs thus mimicking the body position of the cadaver on the far left.

In the literature on the macabre art, the allegory of dance in the *Danse* has been interpreted in multiple ways and there is no consensus as to what it actually signifies. Gertsman has argued that the Dance of Death can be understood as a visual representation of the moment of passing away.⁴¹⁷ The image shows the viewer exactly what death takes away in the final moments: the ability to move, to see, to hear and, ultimately, to be.⁴¹⁸ For this reason, according to Gertsman, it is the dead who are dancing and moving widely, while the living figures appear stiff

⁴¹⁷ Gertsman 69.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.* 69.

and immobile since they have already lost their ability to dance.⁴¹⁹ On the other hand, Eustace has noted the subtle ways in which the bodies of the living and the dead actually mirror one another, which she argues corresponds to the norm of the fifteenth century dance styles and denotes a more complex way of reading class relations.⁴²⁰ However, the difficulty in pinpointing the meaning of dance in the *Danse* may also be tied to the fact that in the Middle Ages dancing had a polyvalent meaning and was presented as both angelic and divine as well as sinful and diabolical.⁴²¹

Nevertheless, in the context of the *Danse* books (both men's and women's series) evidence suggests that dancing and music-playing is represented in negative terms, not as a sign of aristocratic refinement or the heavenly sphere, but as a symbol of inversion and even a practice associated with Hell and damnation. The woodcut depicting the Four Dead Musicians is particularly evocative in this regard (Fig. 9).⁴²² The image depicts a musical quartet with four cadavers each playing a particular instrument (from the left): a bagpipe, an organetto (or portative organ), a harp and a pipe and tabor. Rather than just posing with the instruments, the dead musicians are portrayed actively playing them – the harpist picks the strings with his bony fingers, while the last cadaver drums the tabor – thus adding a crucial performative element and imbuing the silent and fixed medium of the book with specific auditory reference clarifying that what is being viewed is indeed a dance.

The idea that Death can play instruments and produce music emphasizes the topsy-turvy element of the *Danse* and the same can be said about the selection of

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. 69.

⁴²⁰ Eustace 68.

⁴²¹ An excellent summary of the different meanings of dance in the Middle Ages can be found in Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, especially chapter 2.

⁴²² I should note here that authors still debate about whether or not the mural at the Innocents featured musicians as well. For Gertsman, evidence is inconclusive, Oosterwijk claims that it likely did not include music-playing cadavers. However, such figures did appear in other examples that predate the printed books, such as for instance in the *Totendanz* block book from the 1450s and were thus not Marchant's invention.

instruments portrayed.⁴²³ Instruments such as the bagpipe and pipe and tabor were associated with public processions and carnivals while string instruments such as the harp bear connection with heavenly music or with the King David, the composer of the Psalms and Biblical prototype of the harp-player.⁴²⁴ Angels in Heaven are also frequently depicted playing harps while the organetto was often played in churches and occurs in connection with clerics.⁴²⁵ The juxtaposition of both 'heavenly' and carnivalesque instruments is of course not accidental and it is in fact questionable to what extent the loud strident sounds of the bagpipe and the pipe and tabor would fit the more melodic music produced by the harp and the organetto. In other words, are the Four Dead Musicians really making music or merely producing noise? We know that the music being played in the *Danse* was not pleasant because the King complains that he is not accustomed to dancing to such a savage tune (*Je nay point apris a danser/A danseet not si sauvaigez*). According to theological tradition, Hell has no music, only noise, and the usage of musical instruments as tools of torture was frequently evoked in the late fifteenth century eschatological imagery, most notably in Hieronymus Bosch's depiction of Hell in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1490-1510) in which sinners are tormented by devils playing a variety of instruments.⁴²⁶

In the verses of the *Danse*, dancing is repeatedly associated with vanity and foolish behavior. In the men's *Danse*, the dead tell the Minstrel, who unlike the Dead Musicians no longer plays the instrument, his lute is on the ground, that his music and dancing have long entertained male and female fools (*Menestrel qui dances et notes / Sauvez et avez beau maintien/ Pour faire esioir sos et sotes*). Many women in *des Femmes*, especially those from the upper classes, described their lives as

⁴²³ The most recent discussion of instruments and music playing cadavers in the *Danse* can be found in Warda, "Dance, Music and the Reversal of the Natural Order," 73-100. See also: Reinhold Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes: die mittelalterlichen Totendänzen und ihr Nachleben* (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1980) and Kathi Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death: Studies in Musical Iconology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970).

⁴²⁴ Warda 78.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. 78.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. 81. The bagpipe is a particularly apt instrument for the *Danse* because it is made from dead animals.

being filled with enjoyment and dance. For example, the Regent lists feasts, weddings and parties as well as musical instruments that have provided great entertainment for her (*Quant me souvient des tabourins /Nopces festes harpes trompetes/ Menestrelx doulcines clarins/ Et des grans cheres que iay faictes*). The only figure in the men's *Danse* who is actually dancing with the dead is the Fool, the significance of which I will elaborate later in the chapter (*le Sot*) (Fig. 35). Shown dressed in the Fool's costume and carrying a *marrotte*, the Fool smiles at Death and is shown lifting his right foot off the ground, moving in the direction of the dance.⁴²⁷

Women, Sin and the Gender of Death

Yet women, as I argued, appear more willing to dance and the act of dancing is more emphasized in the women's series. While it is possible that this is merely a product of design, it could also refer to attitudes about women that were persistent in moralistic literature and art of the period. As descendents of Eve, women were held responsible for the loss of paradise and labeled as temptresses and sinners.⁴²⁸ The patristic literature of the fourth and the fifth century, which was still read widely in the later Middle Ages and informed the theological thought of the period, was especially responsible for promoting such negative views of women. For Tertullian, Eve was the eternal temptress and Augustine, again relying on the typology of Eve, preached that in women "the good Christian ... likes what is human [quod home est], loathes what is feminine [quod uxor est]."⁴²⁹ Such language is particularly revealing as it implies that humanity is essentially an attribute of the male gender.⁴³⁰ For early Church Fathers, evil was identified with the flesh and sexual desire was, from the

⁴²⁷ The same observation regarding the Fool dancing was also made by Oosterwijk in her article on the fool. See Oosterwijk, "Alas Poor Yorick" 26.

⁴²⁸ On patristic literature and attitudes towards women see Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1997).

⁴²⁹ Quoted in Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ* 157.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.* 157.

start, linked to death as sign of “fallenness.”⁴³¹ That death and the Original Sin were intrinsically linked is also evident from the fact that the word “cadaver” comes from the Latin *cadere*, meaning, “to fall”.⁴³² For St Jerome, whose *Adversus Jovianum* written c. 393 was especially critical of women and influenced much of medieval thinking on the subject - merely touching a woman has evil consequences and that a presence of the wife could distract a husband from his prayer.⁴³³ Such views are reflected even in the sermons of a fifteenth-century French preacher like the Franciscan Michel Menot (d. 1518) who employed specifically macabre themes to evoke his disgust of beautiful women: “Nothing comes from a beautiful woman but fetor ... Alas, that which is pleasing in this world, is nothing but stench!”⁴³⁴

A very similar attitude towards female flesh is also noted in the verses of *des Femmes*, particularly in the stanzas delivered by the Four Musicians, which emphasize gruesome aspects of bodily decomposition and putrefaction. Consider the verses of the Second Musician:

Quoy sont voz corps: ie vous demande
Femmes iolies tant bien paree:
Ilz sont pour certain la viande
Qun iour sera aux vers donne.
Des vers sera doncques devoree
Vostre cher qui est fresche et tendre
Ja il nen demourra goulee.
Voz vers apres deviendront cendre.

Such focus on the corporeality of women, on their fresh and tender bodies (*Vostre cher qui est fresche et tendre*) and on their corpses becoming food for worms (*Ilz sont pour certain la viande/Qun iour sera aux vers donne*), is very different from the

⁴³¹ Koerner 294.

⁴³² Ibid. 294.

⁴³³ Grössinger, *Picturing Women* 1.

⁴³⁴ Quoted in Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ* 158. The text in Latin reads: “Non potest exire de pulcherrima muliere mundi nisi fetor O quicquid est in hoc mundo placens, non est nisi fetor.”

men's *Danse* in which we do not encounter the same fascination with the body and the flesh. While the first Musician in the men's *Danse* warns of putrefaction (*Et ils seron menge de vers*), the other three discuss the dangers of not contemplating death and remind the living that we are all mortal, hence focus more on salvation than decomposition.

Although it is true, as Larisa Taylor has shown, that late medieval preachers in France did not always evoke only negative attitudes towards women in their sermons and in fact often praised women for their compassion and devotion, this was nevertheless the prevailing view.⁴³⁵ That death is linked to the Original Sin and in turn to Eve as the instigator of the sinful act in the Garden of Eden was the dominant thesis in the allegorical poem the *Mors de la Pomme* and the same view is even expressed in Michault's *Dance aux aveluges* which as we will recall also discusses Adam and Eve in the section on Death.⁴³⁶ As the ordained priest and the official printer for the college of Navarre – a school known for its ascetic views – Marchant was certainly well acquainted with religious writing on women, but I wish to suggest that in putting the woodcuts for *des Femmes* together he also relied on moralistic and satirical prints popular in Northern Europe at the time, which often centered on women as source of men's foolish behavior or even death.

In her study of secular and satirical prints, Christa Grössinger has shown that during the transitional period of bookmaking, prints and engravings replaced

⁴³⁵ Ibid. 172. Late medieval preachers praised women for their compassion in healing the sick and for their religious devotion. Sermons by preacher Guillaume Pepin (c. 1463-1533), for example, did not categorize women as personifications of either Good or Evil, but discussed everyday problems of women with compassion and sympathy and often recalled examples of independent and strong minded women. For a discussion of Pepin's sermons on women see Larissa Taylor, "Images of Women in the Sermons of Guillaume Pepin (c. 1463-1533)", *Journal of Canadian Historical Association* 5.1 (1994): 265-276.

⁴³⁶ It is interesting, however, to note that according to Taylor many important late medieval preachers preferred to place the blame for the trespass in the Garden of Eden on Adam rather than Eve. For instance Menot – the same preacher who expressed such disgust towards female beauty – shows little sympathy for Adam and argues that his attempt to blame the act on Eve alone, only made things worse. Likewise, Guillaume Pepin, Menot's contemporary, finds both sexes equally culpable and finds it upsetting that men place all the blame on women, without attributing part of their salvation to a woman. See Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ* 158.

medieval model books and were used as patterns for a production of art in multiple media, from enamel beakers and wooden caskets to manuscript illumination.⁴³⁷ While borrowing from secular and profane prints was especially prominent in the Netherlands, it was also done in France especially in the last decades of the century. For example, the Book of Hours of Charles d'Angoulême (BN, Latin MS. 1173), produced in the early 1480s, features forty-three identifiable examples of miniatures derived from print models.⁴³⁸ A number of these miniatures are based on secular and profane prints including those that emphasize the folly of love or the Power of Women theme.⁴³⁹ It is possible then to argue, especially in light of the fact that Marchant had no pictorial model to work from, that the woodcuts in *des Femmes* are also, at least in part, modeled after such imagery. In secular prints and engravings of the period, the encounter between men and women is often sexually charged – a point I want to argue is also present in *des Femmes* in ways that has not been discussed much in the past.

In the first edition of *des Femmes*, which was only partially illustrated, the cadavers are referred to in the text as *la morte* (the dead woman). By 1491, however, when Marchant issued the fully illustrated edition the word was changed to *la mort* (Death), a modification that I do not believe is accidental. In his discussion of the series, Mâle, who did not actually acknowledge the change in terminology between the 1486 and 1491 editions, argued unequivocally that the dead in *des Femmes* represent female corpses because many have strands of hair still hanging

⁴³⁷ See Christa Grössinger, *Humor and Folly in Secular and Profane Prints of Northern Europe, 1430-1540* (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2002), especially chapter 2, "Prints as Pattern", 13-53.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. 28. On this manuscript see Anne Matthews, "The Use of Prints in the *Hours of Charles d'Angoulême*", *Print Quarterly* 3 (1986): 4-17.

⁴³⁹ For example, a border illustration for the August calendar page in the *Hours of Charles d'Angoulême* depicts an image of a man pushing a wheelbarrow with his drunken wife in it. While the themes of secular and profane prints varied, they typically centered on women as reasons for men's wild erratic behavior, on peasants, often featured as bawdy, and soldiers. Bibliography on this subject is vast, one of the first studies on the subject was Keith Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 1989).

on their skulls.⁴⁴⁰ A similar view was later expressed in Jane Taylor's study on the theme of the mirror in the *Danse* in which she argued, partially relying on Mâle, that the cadavers in the woodcuts represent the future mirror images of women, which is to say female corpses.⁴⁴¹ Given the history of macabre representations, however, I am inclined to question such assumptions. Although Death is typically genderless, there are a number of macabre images in which the sex of the corpse, especially the female corpse, is rendered with particular detail. For instance, in the famous *Imago Mortis* woodcut included in Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum* (*Nuremberg Chronicle*) published in 1493, which shows four cadavers dancing at a cemetery and one emerging from a grave, the figure on the far right with her guts spilling out, is a dead woman.⁴⁴² Her long blond hair falls down her back, while one of her breasts is sagging awkwardly. A female cadaver, hairless but again with sagging breasts, was also included in the *Totendanz* blockbook from c.1455 and there were at least two specifically male cadavers featured in Vêrard's version of *Danse macabre des hommes* woodcuts.⁴⁴³

In *des Femmes*, however, such obvious allusion to the gender of death is not actually portrayed. Although it is true that many cadavers in the book are depicted with strands of hair hanging from their skulls, this does not mean they are necessarily representations of female cadavers. After all, men in the late fifteenth century typically had longer hair – the Knight, the Squire, or the Lover in the *Danse* are depicted with shoulder-length hair (Figs. 29, 30 and 34). Moreover, many cadavers in *des Femmes* have a particularly masculine physique with broad shoulders and some even have flaps of skin that hang suggestively between their legs, which could indicate that they are male rather than female corpses (Fig. 46). This is all the more likely when we consider the interaction between cadavers and women in the book, which is often rendered in particularly sexualized terms. For instance, when death tells the Newlywed that she will be put in the ground (*Au*

⁴⁴⁰ Mâle 335.

⁴⁴¹ Taylor, "Un Miroer Salutaire", 34.

⁴⁴² Reproduced in Oosterwijk, "Dance, Dialogue and Duality," page 10, figure 1.

⁴⁴³ For an electronic facsimile of this edition preserved at the University Library of Heidelberg as Cod. Pal. germ. 438, <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg438>

iourduy serez mise en terre), she replies that Death weighs heavily on her (*Mais la mort de trop pres me charge*).⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand Death is much more direct with the Bride, portrayed with beautiful long hair and a belted dress. Addressing her, the corpse suggests that she needs to take its hand and take off her clothes (*Sa la main espousee iolie! Allons nous en deshabiller*) to which the Bride responds that she has hoped for a special joy in her life on that day (*En la iournee quavoye desir/ Davoir quelque ioye en ma vie*).

Such evocative language is perhaps nowhere as pronounced as in the pairing of Death and the Prostitute (Fig. 47). Dressed in a tight V-neck bodice, the Prostitute arches her back and gazes flirtatiously at the cadaver. Not only is she willingly participating in the dance, the Prostitute lures Death by offering it a flower, probably a red rose. In the famous thirteenth century allegorical poem the *Roman de la Rose*, which was still popular in the late fifteenth century and actually printed in at least ten incunabula editions, the “rose” in the title symbolized both the name of a woman and female genitalia.⁴⁴⁵ In the poem, which is rich with symbolism and moralizing warnings about lust and love, the sleeping figure of the Lover enters a garden and becomes infatuated with a rosebush enclosed by a hedge. In the hand-colored woodcut included in Vérard’s composite edition of the *Roman de la Rose*, published in 1494/95, we see the figure of the Lover at the moment he plucks the rose from the rosebush and gazes at it lovingly.⁴⁴⁶ The flower is certainly the dominant feature in the portrayal of the Prostitute in *des Femmes*. She holds a plucked flower in each hand, has one tucked into the decorative band on her headdress and the bottom of her dress is covered with them.⁴⁴⁷ In other words, as the woodcut tells us, the Prostitute is in bloom.

⁴⁴⁴ Harrison, “The Text,” 9.

⁴⁴⁵ The poem was first written in 1237 by Guillaume de Lorris and then finished in 1277 by Jean de Meun. It is a quintessential example of French courtly love poetry and it is rich with allegory and symbolism.

⁴⁴⁶ For an illustration of this image see Virginia Tuttle Clayton, *Gardens on Paper: Prints and Drawings, 1200-1900* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1990), figure 21, page 34.

⁴⁴⁷ In her discussion of the Prostitute in *des Femmes*, Sandra Hindman argues that the woman is wearing a “fetching floral-patterned robe”, but I am not convinced that

The pairing of Death and the Prostitute recalls popular prints that satirize the theme of courtly love and depict lovers, typically in a garden setting. In the *Large Garden of Love* by the Neatherlandish Master of the Garden of Love, c. 1450, which is meant as an inverted reference to the idyllic garden in the *Roman de la Rose*, we see young couples fashionably dressed offering each other food and drink, playing cards, making wreaths and playing music.⁴⁴⁸ Such a tranquil place, however, also includes moralizing symbols intended to warn the viewer of the dangers and foolishness of love, most notably the unicorn, a symbol of Christ, shown on the right hand side in the middle of the image, who dips its horn into the stream in order to purify the water and erase the sinful acts taking place in the garden.⁴⁴⁹

Compositionally closer to Death and the Prostitute are prints and engravings depicting couples such as, Van Meckenem's "The Knight and His Lady", part of the *Scenes from Daily Life* series produced c. 1493-1503, or the bawdy engraving by Master E.S., *A Couple Embracing*, c.1460 (Fig. 48).⁴⁵⁰ In van Meckenem's image, the Knight and the Lady are placed in an exterior setting and are shown gazing at each other, much like Death and the Prostitute in the *Danse*. While the Knight places his left arm around the Lady she in turn points to the keys and the purse hanging from her belt – symbols of her power and avaricious nature – and puts her hand behind her back in a gesture of rejection.⁴⁵¹ A less subtle portrayal of the dangerous allure of women is seen in the image by Master E.S. The man – shown with his sword hanging between his legs, fondles the woman's breast while she makes a token gesture of resistance and at the same time gazes flirtatiously at the viewer. In both images, it is the woman who has the power (Fig. 48).⁴⁵²

the flowers on the dress are actual pattern decorations since they are not distributed equally over the entire garment.

⁴⁴⁸ Reproduced and discussed in Grössinger, *Humor and Folly* 108-109, figure 119.

⁴⁴⁹ Grössinger, *Humor and Folly* 108.

⁴⁵⁰ Van Meckenem series is discussed and reproduced in Grössinger, *Humor and Folly*, pages 75-77, figures 82, 83 and 84.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid* 74.

⁴⁵² Parenthetically, I should note that the link between women, lust and Death developed in the early sixteenth century in Germany into the theme of Death and the Maiden portrayed by artists such as Hans Baldung Grien, Hans Sebald Beham and others. In her study of the theme, Jean Wirth had famously argued that the Death

Despite such an enticing portrayal of the Prostitute in the *Danse*, the verses that accompany the image are more subdued and, in fact, recall sermons by popular preachers at the time. Although Death calls the Prostitute a worthless woman (*Femme de petite value*), she in turn places the blame for her sin at those who have not guided her well and led her astray (*Pedus sotet ceulx qui my ont mise/ Et au mestier habandonnee/ Las se ieusse estoy bien menee/ Et conduite premierment*). A similar criticism can be found in contemporary sermons in which preachers repeatedly underline that creating the opportunity for sin by placing women in morally questionable environments or situations was at the root of the problem.⁴⁵³ For instance, Menot argued – echoing the verses of the Prostitute – that if a woman was properly brought up in an honest surrounding she would not succumb to the sin of prostitution.⁴⁵⁴

More than giving in to carnal sin, women in *des Femme* are criticized for being vain, envious or avaricious, which are precisely the sins often evoked in sermons and also portrayed in satirical prints of the period. While only a few men in the *Danse* – figures such as the Merchant or the Usurer – are shown carrying money bags, a large number of women in *des Femmes* have one or even two pouches hanging from their belts. That a Merchant woman or the Resaleswoman would need

and the Maiden theme developed directly out of the *Danse macabre* tradition, but more recent studies by Joseph Leo Koerner and Stefanie Knöll have challenged that view and actually linked the theme to the discourse of popular prints, especially representations of *Voluptas*. Moreover, Knöll has argued that the theme of Death and the Maiden diverges significantly from the *Danse* because women in such imagery do not resist Death and are almost always depicted nude or semi-nude. While I agree with Knöll, I also believe that the pairing of Death and the Prostitute in the *Danse* functions along similar lines, emphasizing the sexual tension between the figures and denoting the Prostitute's willingness to flirt and lure Death. For a discussion of Death and the Maiden theme see: Jean Wirth, *La Jeune Fille et la Mort: Recherches sur les thèmes macabres dans l'art germanique de la Renaissance* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979); Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*; and most recently Stefanie Knöll, "Death and the Maiden", *Women and Death: Representation of Female Victims and Perpetrators in German Culture 1500-2000*, eds. Helen Fronius and Anna Linton, *Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2008) 9-27.

⁴⁵³ Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ* 170.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 170.

a money-bag is clear, but they are also included in the depictions of the Witch and even the Young Girl, who in theory would not need one, and thus signify more than just a representation of a practical accessory. As in Van Meckenem's portrayal of "The Knight and His Lady", the purses in *des Femmes* are symbols of avarice and the women's love of material possessions.⁴⁵⁵ The fact that a money-bag is worn by women of different professions and of different ages (the Young Girl, the Pregnant Woman and the Spinster) is also meant to suggest that avarice is a sin engrained in women from the beginning and follows them through their lives.⁴⁵⁶ In the verses, the Debutante laments that she will have to lose her headdresses, her clothing, youth and beauty (*Que me valet mes gras atours/ Mes habitz ieunesse beaute*), while the Spoiled Wife lists her material possessions and the fact that she has a successful husband as main reasons she regrets having to dance with Death (*Jay mary de si bon affaire/ Aneaulx robes neuf ou dix paire*). Even the Young Girl cries out to her mother to take care of her most beloved things: her dolls, her stones and her beautiful coat (*Pour dieu quo garde ma poupee/ Mes cinq pierres ma belle cotte*). Such dependence on material possessions – and especially beautiful clothing or jewelry – was particularly condemned by the preachers. Evoking a *memento mori*, the Franciscan friar Olivier Maillard (d. 1503) warns women where such love of things will lead: "When you are at the hour of death and see a thousand devils at your side who want to take your soul, then you will wish that you never had led such a life of pomp and excess. Take care!"⁴⁵⁷

Women's propensity for gossip and mindless chatter is also emphasized in the verses. *La mort* accuses the Bailiff's wife of chitchatting in the church, instead of listening to the sermon (*Après ma madame la ballive/ Des quaquetz tenus en leglise*), while the Chambermaid is criticized for gossiping at the oven or window (*Bauer au four na la fenestre*). In the poem workingwomen were reprimanded for tricking or stealing from their Masters or from their customers. While it is true that women in *des Femmes* seem to accept Death more willingly – some even embrace

⁴⁵⁵ See footnote 450.

⁴⁵⁶ Hindman, "The Illustrations" 18.

⁴⁵⁷ Quoted in Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ* 159.

it (the Franciscan, the Old Debutante, or the Prioress, for example) – as in the men’s *Danse*, the poem does not include specific references to either God or salvation and thus appears closer to a satirical portrayal than a serious didactic allegory.

The Here-and-Now: Paris and the Urban Context

While it is clear from Marchant’s introductory colophon that he intended the book to be a didactic tool, it would be a mistake to assume that this is the only way it was actually used. Part of the appeal of the *Danse*, even in the monumental mural examples placed in churches and cemeteries, was the satirical dialogue between the living and the dead and the hierarchical portrayal of social types. In other words, the *Danse* was as much about humor and social critique, as it was about the solemn and the serious. This is perhaps nowhere as obvious as in *des Femmes*, which, as Sandra Hindman has pointed out, is predicated on “a sense of the nitty-gritty of day-to-day life and a tone of social satire.”⁴⁵⁸

Although the theme of the *Danse* was first painted in Paris in 1424-25 and the verses that accompanied the mural may have also been composed there, the men’s *Danse* does not emphasize its urban origin openly. In contrast, the *des Femmes* poem is composed using Parisian Middle French and the city is also referenced in the verses.⁴⁵⁹ For example, the Squire’s Lady laments that she will never be able to wear the textile she purchased at a fair (*Javoye achete au lendit/ Du drap pour taindre en escarlete*). The *lendit* mentioned in the verses refers to the annual fair held in the plain of St. Denis north of Paris.⁴⁶⁰ It was one of the oldest fairs in Europe, founded by King Dagobert in the seventh century and by the time the verses of *des Femmes* were composed it was renowned especially for its selection of textiles.⁴⁶¹ In another example, the Theologian mentions the Petit Pont, a bridge that connects the Latin Quarter with the Ile de la Cité (*Femme qui de clergie*

⁴⁵⁸ Hindman, “The Illustrations” 17.

⁴⁵⁹ Harrison, “The Text” 9.

⁴⁶⁰ Harrison and Hindman 62.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.* 62. The fair was held between June 11-24.

*respond/Pour avoir bruit ou quon lescoute/ Est des morues de petit pont/Qui ont grans yeulx et ne voient goute).*⁴⁶²

The poem's continual reference to specifically Parisian sites and events makes this version of the *Danse* conceptually similar to the Hanseatic Dance of Death paintings, which were unique because they featured elaborate townscapes in the background. Painted in Lübeck at the Church of St. Mary's in 1463 and in Reval (Tallinn) at the Church of St. Nicholas sometime after 1463 by the artist Bernt Notke (d. 1508), the two paintings are closely related, yet also quite different.⁴⁶³ We will recall that in a typical portrayal of the *Danse* the background is left purposely generic – the flowery exterior locale we see in Marchant's cuts, for example – and the image focuses instead on the dancers, gestures and especially the decomposing bodies of cadavers. There is often little in the composition of the *Danse* that distracts the viewer from the main narrative or gives reprieve from the vivid didactic lesson portrayed in the image.⁴⁶⁴ But, this is not the case with the Hanseatic examples. As Gertsman has shown, the exactness with which the cityscapes are replicated in the Lübeck and the Reval paintings where recognizable landmarks of both cities are clearly demarcated, transforms the abstracted didactic lesson about the equalizing power of death and locates it in the 'here-and-now' of the beholder.⁴⁶⁵ For the viewer, this is an important change as it not only transports the spectator into the realm of the image, but also because of it makes the *Danse* more impactful and perhaps also more horrifying. Although *des Femmes* does not include a Parisian cityscape in the background, the topical references to the city and its sites inform the reader's experience of the poem and make it more relatable and memorable than the generic tone found in the men's *Danse*.

A similar insistence of the 'here-and-now' is also present in the way costumes are rendered in the woodcuts. Marchant updated the 1485 editions of the men's

⁴⁶² As transcribed in Harrison and Hindman 78.

⁴⁶³ For the most recent comparative analysis of the Lübeck and Reval paintings see Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, especially chapter four. For reproductions of the Hanseatic murals, see Gertsman, foldout 1 and 2.

⁴⁶⁴ Gertsman 119.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 119.

Danse by changing the costumes and the shoes worn by the living protagonists to match the fashion of the 1480s. The same concern for the accuracy of the dress and the style is seen in *des Femmes*, where costumes are perhaps even more central in constructing the identity of female characters. For example, the only woodcut of *des Femmes* produced for the 1486 edition, featuring the Queen and the Duchess, depicts female costumes that adhere to the fashion of the mid 1480s (Fig. 54). The Queen wears a gown made of brocade and trimmed with ermine fur. Her sleeves are narrow – a style popular in the early to mid 1480s – and both the Queen and the Duchess wear round toe shoes as well as crowns and necklaces. By 1491, however, when the full set of illustrations was issued, the style of dresses was changing and wider sleeves were becoming more fashionable. We see that change depicted in the woodcut showing the Regent and the Knight’s Lady in which both women wear sleeves widened at the wrist, the first step in the revival of the bombard sleeve (Fig. 49).⁴⁶⁶ Their gowns are also molded to the body and provided with a new short V-neck. On their heads the ladies wear longer frontlets and the coifs (a close fitting hat) are more puffed up, as was the style at the time.

Such close attention to the costumes of the noble women calls to mind the sumptuary laws passed in 1485 issued by King Charles VIII.⁴⁶⁷ The concern over clothing as marker of social identity and especially the inappropriate usage of certain materials such as furs or silk by members of the lower nobility or even lower estates was a hot topic in France through the fifteenth century. As early as 1400, the poet Christine de Pizan repeatedly noted that “people were dressing above their estate: a farm laborer’s wife as the wife of a craftsman, a craftsman’s wife as the bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie as a gentlewoman, a gentlewoman as a lady, a lady as a countess or duchess and a countess or duchesses as a queen.”⁴⁶⁸ A similar complaint was

⁴⁶⁶ Van Buren 248. That the artist paid close attention to the details of the dress is also evident from the fact that the Knight’s Lady’s dress has a slit on the right hand side, an adaption that was meant to help her saddle the horse more easily.

⁴⁶⁷ For the most recent discussion of King Charles VIII’s edict from 1485 see Van Buren 4-5. The ordinance are also discussed by Sandra Hindman in “The Illustrations” 20-21.

⁴⁶⁸ Van Buren 4. Christine’s complains over the misuse of costume was included in her book *Livre de trois vertus*.

raised by councilors of King Charles VII (r. 1422-61) who asked that he regulate the dress of his subjects:

... one cannot tell people's estate or occupation, be they princes, noblemen, citizens, merchants or craftsmen, because everyone, man or woman, is allowed to dress as they please in cloth of gold or silver, silk or wool, regardless of their origin, estate or occupation.⁴⁶⁹

The ordinance of 1485 was therefore meant to regulate fashion in France and bring forth a better sense social readability. The King prohibited most of his subjects to wear garments spun with silver, gold and silk, or with linings made out of silk. Aside from the princes, only the descendants of the ancient nobility were now allowed to wear silk. As van Buren explains, only knights (*chevalier*) who received an income of 2,000 *livres* a year could wear any kind of silk, while squires (*escuier*) with the same income could only wear damask or plain and patterned satin.⁴⁷⁰ Neither category of knight could wear crimson or patterned velvet – material, which was reserved for the high nobility like the Queen and the Duchess in Marchant's woodcut (Fig. 49).⁴⁷¹ Individuals who ignored the King's sumptuary law (and there seems to have been many who did) risked having their 'faulty' garments confiscated and paying a hefty fine.⁴⁷² The careful rendering of costumes in the *Danse* books suggests an interest in adhering to the sartorial rules of the period and the need to rely on garments to further emphasize class and social positions of the different protagonists.

Given the historical context of both the book and the poem, the portrayal of one aristocratic woman is particularly interesting to consider. In 1486 when the first edition of the book was published, King Charles VIII (b. 1470) was only sixteen and though he was officially the crowned King of France, the country was ruled by his

⁴⁶⁹ Quoted in van Buren 4.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. 5.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. 5. The Queen is the only figure in *des Femmes* that wears a brocade gown, while the Duchess is likely wearing a gown made of velvet.

⁴⁷² Hindman, "The Illustrations" 21. Hindman explains that even though the sumptuary law "was largely ignored ... class differences were understood partially in terms of dress."

elder sister Anne of France (Anne de Beaujeu, d. 1522) and her husband Pierre de Beaujeu, the Duke of Bourbon (d. 1503). Anne assumed the title of the Regent of France in 1483 upon the death of her father, King Louis XI, and held the title until 1491 when Charles turned twenty-one. The period of Anne's regency was particularly tumultuous and marked by conflicts among the French nobility vying for power over the young King, which eventually resulted in the princely revolt known as the Mad War (*Guerre folle*) that lasted from 1487 to 1488 and was aimed directly at the Beaujeus.⁴⁷³

Referred to as "Madame la Grande", Anne was a powerful figure and by all accounts the dominant partner in the Beaujeus regency of France. Ambassadors of the time were always received by Anne and they were typically instructed to woo her and not her husband in whatever affairs they were coming to discuss.⁴⁷⁴ Contemporary chroniclers almost always focused on Anne, while Pierre de Beaujeu was regularly passed over.⁴⁷⁵ A witness from the period described Pierre as "kind and easy-going, with nothing of the severity of his wife" while Anne was seen as the master who retained dominancy over Pierre because she was the king's daughter.⁴⁷⁶ Anne's political power affronted many because it lacked a historical precedent. Women such as Blanche of Castille (d. 1252) or Isabeau of Bavaria (d. 1435) who were also Queens and Regents were more accepted because they were wives of one king and mothers of another, but, as a sister of a king, Anne was in a position

⁴⁷³ Besides the princely conflict, the Beaujeus also faced problems with the Duchy of Brittany that aspired to seek independence from France, an issue that eventually resulted in the so-called Breton Wars from 1487-1491. The situation was eventually resolved when Charles married Anne of Brittany in December of 1491, a move that was largely orchestrated by the Beaujeus. A good summary of the years that marked the minority of King Charles can be found in R. J. Knecht's *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France 1483-1610* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) especially chapter 2. For a discussion of women in power at this time, including Anne of France, see Pauline Matarasso, *Queen's Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

⁴⁷⁴ Matarasso 20.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid 20.

⁴⁷⁶ Quoted in Matarasso 20. Not all accounts of Anne were as severe, though it seems that the general impression was that she and not Pierre was in control of the regency.

that traditionally she had no right to be and criticism spread widely.⁴⁷⁷ For example, the conversations between the dukes of Brittany and Orléans were reported as commenting on the importance of “getting rid of the said lady and sending her back to her house in Gien to busy herself with her household duties [*tenir et faire son mesnaige*]”.⁴⁷⁸

It is surprising therefore, in light of such controversy over Anne’s regency, that in *des Femmes*, the Regent is described as a woman concerned only with frivolous affairs. In the poem, Death explains that she is known for good conversations and for making people laugh (*Qui avez renom de bien dire/ Vous soliez autres faire rire*), while the Regent laments feasts, weddings and music she will miss when she dies. Although the sixteenth century dictionaries define the word *regente* as a woman who governs or rules and is thus active in political terms, as Anne of France had strongly asserted, the poem restricts her power and reduces the Regent to a mere hostess of a banquet or a feast. It is certainly possible to make an argument that *des Femmes* should not be seen as a literal portrayal of French society or its historical figures, but it is also true, as we know from the mural at the Cemetery of the Innocents that the *Danse* could be viewed as a clever political allegory.⁴⁷⁹ Given the topicality of the *des Femmes* poem and the attention the artist paid to the accuracy of costumes and jewelry, there is no reason to assume that the women’s *Danse* was not seen in similar terms, especially since Anne’s political power was at the time a contested issue.

The Aftermath of Death

In contrast to the men’s *Danse*, however, from its very first publication *des Femmes* included two additional illustrated poems, *Le Debat dun corps et dune ame*

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid 20. This was all the more pronounced because according to Salic Law that was passed in France women were excluded from inheriting the throne and they were not present at the Council chamber meetings, except of course in the case of a queen regent.

⁴⁷⁸ Quoted in Matarasso 20.

⁴⁷⁹ See Oosterwijk, “Of Constables and Kings” and Dujakovic, “The Dance of Death, the Dance of Life.”

and *La complainte de lame dampnee*, which emphasized direct consequences of sinful behavior (henceforth the *Debat* and the *Complainte*). In the second chapter, I pointed out that neither the verses in the dialogue section of the poem nor the images of the *Danse* include specific reference to God, the Last Judgment or salvation. Perhaps even more troubling for a Christian audience is the fact that the *Danse* did not contain allusions to religious rituals that signified good death according to models established in the *Ars moriendi* tracts and other religious texts of the period. In the *Danse*, there is no depiction of a deathbed, no representation of priests administering the Last Rites and no portrayal of a proper Christian burial. Actually, the *Danse* does not even show death and dying per se, it only hints at it through the allegory of the death's dance. In compiling *des Femmes*, Marchant must have been aware of such shortcomings of the *Danse* – after all he published an edition of the *Ars moriendi* in 1483 and published the title at least one more time during the course of his career – and perhaps sought to correct the *Danse* by adding the *Debate* and the *Complainte*, two works that discuss the fate of the soul in the aftermath of death.

Derived from the text known as *Visio Philiberti*, a work that from the thirteenth century onward helped to shape and popularize the body/soul debates in Western Europe, the *Debat* concerns the period of time immediately following physical death and it is structured as a dialogue between the Body and the Soul.⁴⁸⁰ Much like the *Danse*, the *Debate* also includes verses of the Author (*Lacteur*), though the actual figure is not portrayed in the woodcuts that accompany the poem. The work is illustrated with nine woodcuts. However a number of them are repeated several times throughout the poem.⁴⁸¹ The opening woodcut, the largest one in the *Debat*, features an elaborate canopied bed with a dying person in it (Fig. 50). Further in the background a nude child-like Soul is shown debating with a shrouded Body rising from a coffin. Oosterwijk has noted that the Soul's position, standing on a ledge and

⁴⁸⁰ For a discussion of the poem see Neil Cartlidge, "In the Silence of a Midwinter Night: A Re-evaluation of the *Visio Philiberti*", *Medium Aevum*, lxxv (2006):24-45.

⁴⁸¹ There are three versions of woodcuts depicting the Body/Soul dialogue in which the Body is in the coffin and the scenes takes place outdoors, that are repeated in the middle section of the work.

hovering over the risen corpse signifies its upper hand in the dispute.⁴⁸² The composition of the image, and especially the canopied bed with a sleeper/dying person in it, recalls illustrations of medieval allegorical poems such as the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Dance aux aveluges*, both of which start with a similar image of a vision, while at the same time the bed alludes to the act of dying and thus to the Last Rites' rituals that are missing from the portrayal of the *Danse*.

For our present discussion, however, the last image in the *Debat* is especially interesting (Fig. 51). The woodcut portrays the Body, now almost fully shrouded, as was the custom of the period, prostrated in the coffin. Above the Body, three winged devils battle over the Soul – a fearful reminder of the final outcome of sinful living, damnation. Seated at the far right, in front of the coffin, is the figure of the hermit, perhaps Philibert himself. It is important to emphasize that the hermit does not participate in the drama unfolding in the image he merely observes the scene while holding an open book in his hands. As discussed in the first chapter, the hermit also appears in Marchant's portrayal of the *Three Living and the Three Dead* where he is shown looking but not partaking in the encounter between the living and the dead (Figs. 24 and 25). As stated in the second chapter, according to Kinch, the hermit in the *Three Living* provides the viewer with a model of moral behavior, a notion that, I would argue, can also be extended to his role in the *Debat*.⁴⁸³ In the poem, the hermit becomes the projection of the reader/viewer (also seated in front of an open book), who is meant to observe and *learn* from the scene and the text before him.

The last poem in the book, the *Complainte*, is also the shortest, comprised of only two folios illustrated with a single woodcut (Fig. 52). The text is derived from the *Ars moriendi* tract and addresses sinners directly (*Vous pecheurs qui fort regardez*). Depicting different forms of torture, boiling in cauldrons, hanging from the gallows or being pricked and bitten by devils, the *Complainte* is a logical continuation of the *Debat* and explores the pains of Hell that await the sinners. What is especially striking about the image is its highly composite nature. Lacking an identifiable narrative focus, the illustration is an amalgamation of multiple woodcuts (or parts of

⁴⁸² Sophie Oosterwijk, "Dance, Dialogue and Duality" 22.

⁴⁸³ Kinch, *Imago Mortis* 158.

woodcuts) that Marchant and other printers commonly featured in their illustrated books at the time. For example, a version of the elaborate Mouth of Hell, portrayed on the right, is also found in Marchant's woodcut with Death on the Horse that he included in editions of the *Kalendrier* and later even in *des Femmes* (Fig. 38). The boiling cauldron on the left, packed with sinners, recalls Pierre Le Rouge's famous woodcut renditions of the pains of Hell that accompanied Vérard's editions of the *Ars Moriendi* and which Marchant had also borrowed for his work on the *Kalendrier* (Figs. 36 and 37).⁴⁸⁴ While *des Femmes* is particularly topical, situated specifically in the urban context of the late fifteenth century Paris, the *Complainte* woodcut is exactly the opposite. It is placed in an unspecified moment at the end of time and none of the figures actually retain any markers of their previous social or professional status. Rather, the woodcut depicts the inevitable and never ending threat of damnation – a striking warning placed at the end of the book intended as a didactic tool. Considering the Salutory Mirror as a whole, Marchant's editorial strategy becomes obvious: the *des Femmes* portrays sins committed in the present (which the reader can still correct), the *Debat* offers a sense of what happens to the body and the soul after physical death, while the *Complainte* depicts the ultimate result of sinful and foolish living.

Thus far I argued that the *des Femmes* is a direct product of Marchant's compiling strategy and that it reveals references to sources, both textual and pictorial, that see women as cause of sin and death. While it is comparable to the men's *Danse* in terms of layout and composition, its principal theme is considerably different. This is not merely a case of the printer/publisher playing on variations, though there is an element of that as well in Marchant's decision to publish the female version of the *Danse*, but an example in which careful editorial strategy

⁴⁸⁴ The grouping of the three hanged sinners in the middle ground is also reminiscent of the image Marchant used to illustrate his edition of François Villon's *Testament*. It is important to highlight that versions of many if not all of these scenes also frequently appeared in other publications by Marchant's and his colleagues. It is not my intention to pinpoint the exact source for each element that makes up the woodcut, but rather to emphasize the process of cutting and pasting from multiple sources that Marchant employs here and that, I want to argue, reflects his overall editorial approach.

informs our experience of the work. Marchant's colophons at the beginning and the end of the books, directly link *des Femmes* with other poems in the compilation and suggest to the reader a precise way in which the book should be used. At the same time, the portrayal of women and especially the satirical nature of the verses evoke a contemporary Parisian context and situate the book in a specific time and place, a concept that is markedly different from the men's *Danse*. While the new addition of the Dance of Death of Women in the printed books provided a whole new roster of the female gender to consider in parallel with men, the addition of the Fool added an altogether different status of being, one that ironically had a lot in common with the figures of Death.

Fooling with Death

At what point, we might ask, did the Fool begin to dance in the *Danse*? What role did the Fool serve in the composition that already relied on humor and satire even before the jester was added to the roster of figures? In asking these questions, it is important to emphasize that although the figure appeared in earlier German examples, prior to Marchant's inclusion of the Fool (*Le Sot*) in the 1486 augmented printed edition of the men's *Danse*, it was not featured in any other known French renditions of the theme. It was not depicted in the *Danse* mural from the Cemetery of the Innocents (or any other French mural that predate the printed books) nor was it included in the two Books of Hours that featured the Dance of Death cycles in margins of the Office of the Dead (BN, ms. Rothschild 2535 and New York, Morgan Library, ms. M. 359).⁴⁸⁵ The insertion of the Fool and the Female Fool into the *Danse* was, at least in France, the invention of the print medium (Figs. 35 and 42).

The allegorical figures of the Fool and Death share much in common and it is not surprising that *le mort* addresses the Fool as "*Mon amy sot*" in Marchant's 1486 edition of the men's *Danse* (Fig. 35).⁴⁸⁶ In the *Danse*, the dead continually mock or

⁴⁸⁵ See chapter 1 for a discussion of the *Danse* in these two manuscripts.

⁴⁸⁶ On this issue see especially Sophie Oosterwijk, "Alas Poor Yorick"

ridicule members of all social classes and pay no respect to status or importance of any living figures in the procession. Traditionally, the Fool is also no respecter of rank or status and tends to treat everyone alike in his satirical speeches.⁴⁸⁷ Like Death, who stands for Everyman, the Fool's position is not easy to define because he occupies an elusive place between masters, courtiers and servants.⁴⁸⁸ This is especially significant in the context of the *Danse*, which is structured around a careful demarcation of social status, yet the Fool is in a specific position of an outsider, a figure with an indeterminate class and status. In addition, both Death and the Fool are figures that invite a form of self-reflection. The dead in the *Danse* stand as visual reminders of what the living will become in the future moment that is approaching and the entire composition, as the Author implies in the prologue, is envisioned as an instructive mirror aimed at the viewer/reader (*En ce miroer chascun peut lire/ Qui le convient ainsi danser*). Similarly, the Fool often holds a *marotte*, a staff carved on the top with a miniature image of fool's face that functions as the Fool's alter ego (or mirror image) and which he uses during mock-conversations or satirical commentary, which itself mirrors the dialogic set up of the *Danse*. It is perhaps such inherent similarity between the Fool and Death that had prevented the former from being included in the early depictions of the *Danse*, though curiously the Fool (*Stultus*) does appear in the Latin *Vado Mori* poem, which is often regarded as the precursor of the Dance of Death theme. In that poem, preceded by the *Sapiens* (the Wise Man), the *Stultus* proclaims: "*Vado mori stultus. Mors stulto vel sapienti / non jungit pacis foedera: vado mori* (I, the fool, am going to die. Death signs a peace deal with neither fool nor wise man: I am going to die).⁴⁸⁹ Marchant was certainly familiar with the *Vado mori*, because he included the transcribed verses of the poem above the woodcuts in his editions of the men's

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. 20. As Oosterwijk points out, in medieval and renaissance culture the Fool could be defined in any number of ways. For one, there was a difference between the 'natural' and the 'artificial' Fool, the former being a mere dimwit or a simpleton. The Fool could also be a prankster of sorts and his performance would in that sense be defined as a farce or he could be the wise jester whose shrewd and often biting commentary was meant to address (and correct) the foolish acts of his superiors.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. 21.

⁴⁸⁹ Quoted and translated in Oosterwijk, "Alas Poor Yorick" 21.

Danse, a practice that was also adopted by many other French printers who published the work. Although the *Vado mori* is not structured around a dialogue between the living and the dead, but on a series of proclamations made by the dying, the inclusion of the verses in the printed editions nevertheless further heightens the performative aspects of the books.

The first Dance of Death that included the figure of the Fool was painted in Basel in the churchyard of the Dominican convent around 1440.⁴⁹⁰ Nowadays known only through fragments, the Grossbasler *Totendanz* was allegedly painted to commemorate the outbreak of the plague that hit Basel in 1439 and it included thirty-nine living protagonists with the *Narr* (or jester) being the thirtieth figure. That the Fool appears first in Basel should not surprise us. The city had a long tradition of the *Fastnachtspiele* (carnival plays) and it was also the place where Sebastian Brant was to publish the first edition of his famous treatise the *Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools) in 1494. The Fool was also included in the Kleinbasler *Totendanz* produced in the second half of the fifteenth century and it appears in the Berlin Dance of Death painted in the bell tower of the Mariankirche church c. 1490.

Whether Marchant was familiar with the Grossbasler example is unknown, but even before he published the books there was a growing interest in exploring the themes of death and folly in French manuscripts of the period. For our discussion, a miniature from the *Mors de la Pomme*, is especially interesting (Fig. 53). In this image, Death is seen attacking the *docteur* (a Theologian or a scholar figure) who is seated at his desk in the position that mimics that of the Author in the *Danse*. Pierced by Death's arrow, the *docteur* is dying amidst the open books, while the figure of the Fool, dressed in the traditional costume and holding a *marotte*, stands near the desk and looks over his shoulder with a sly smile. In the image, the Fool is neither a participant in the scene, nor Death's next victim. Rather, he is an observer and a commentator and his verse is directed at the reader/viewer *Qui bien scet morir*

⁴⁹⁰ This mural is typically referred to in literature as the Grossbasler *Totendanz* to distinguish it from the second mural of the theme that was painted later in the Dominican nunnery in Klingenthal known as the Kleinbasler *Totendanz*.

Il est sage (It is a wise man who knows how to die well), the main recipient of the moral lesson portrayed in the miniature.⁴⁹¹

The Fool and Death are also the main protagonists in the poem *Complainte contre la Mort*, written by King René of Anjou's court jester Triboulet, which was illustrated in a manuscript copy of c. 1480 (The Hague, Royal Library, Ms. 71 G. 61).⁴⁹² In the poem, Triboulet accuses Death of attacking him without cause, a complaint that is illustrated in five striking miniatures in which the jester is shown at the court of King René in a coffin, encountering Death in a scene set outdoors and even lying dead in a grave at the cemetery with charnel houses packed with bones – a setting reminiscent of the Cemetery of the Innocents – surrounded by well-dressed ladies shown gasping in horror.

While manuscripts such as the *Mors* and the *Complainte contre la Mort* are evidence of the emerging interest in exploring the theme of Death and the Fool in visual arts at the turn of the century in France, the figure of the jester was becoming increasingly more prominent in the realm of theatre and performance as well. In particular the development of the *sottie* – a comical play performed by actors dressed like jesters – which flourished at the end of the fifteenth century is important to consider. As Heather Arden explains, one third of the 61 plays that belong to the genre of the *sottie* have been written between 1480 and 1500, the same time period in which the *Danse macabre* books were also most frequently published.⁴⁹³ A typical

⁴⁹¹ Oosterwijk, "Alas poor Yorick", 22.

⁴⁹² Ibid 22. For the miniatures from the manuscript, see <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/iconclass/31F> On René's manuscript see Anne S. Korteweg, *Splendour, Gravity & Emotion: French Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collection*, trans. Beverly Jackson (Zwolle: Waanders, 2004), especially pages 158-159. The name Triboulet was frequently given to jesters in France and comes from the verb "to torment". A succession of court fools named Triboulet were accompanying French Kings in the late medieval and early modern periods, from Louis XI to Louis XII and François I. The name also appears in Rabelais who has Panurge consult the Triboulet of François I on the issue of marriage. On these issues see: Heather Arden, *Fool's Play: A Study of Satire in the Sottie* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1980).

⁴⁹³ Arden 14. According to Arden, the second half of the fifteenth century was the heyday of the *sottie*. 43 of 61 plays were written between 1460 and 1540, only four date before 1460 and six are believed to have been produced after 1540.

sottie is a short comic play in verse, generally less than 400 lines long, which includes five characters that represent specific social types. Sometimes the characters are given names denoting particular titles (the General, the Abbot, the Prince or the Doctor) or they are named after a specific personal quality of the character (for example, Nyvelet from the verb *niveler*, 'to waste one's time with foolishness').⁴⁹⁴ Like the *Danse*, the *sottie* present women as if they constitute a class apart from the principal estates and satirize them by evoking the same complaints about women that are also present in *des Femmes*: they are described as chatty, as far too changeable and as willing to spend too much of their husband's money.⁴⁹⁵

Such similarities between the *sottie* and the printed editions of the *Danse* suggest a possible crossover between the illustrated books and late medieval theater that is worth investigating further. After all, as discussed in the second chapter, the *Danse* was likely performed at least twice in the fifteenth century and the composition of the work carries within specific performative elements. As Gertsman has argued in relation to the *Danse* murals, gestures play a crucial role in medieval theatre and dance and they are also incorporated into the composition of the *Danse* and help to emphasize social roles and the antagonism between the living and the dead.⁴⁹⁶ Furthermore, the placement of the Author at the beginning and at the end of the *Danse* is similar to the role of the Expositor, a type of choric figure, who regularly appeared in late-medieval plays (Figs. 18 and 19).⁴⁹⁷ Remaining present on the stage during the course of the play, the Expositor, much like the Author, served as an intermediary between the audience and the actors and helped guide the viewers' response by occasionally commenting on the play and delivering the prologue and the epilogue.⁴⁹⁸ Marchant had clearly understood the theatrical aspect of the *Danse* because he imbued the illustrated editions with yet

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid. 38.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid. 81.

⁴⁹⁶ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 84.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. 84.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. 84.

another performative element: the dissonant tune played by the Four Dead Musicians (Fig. 9).

While the similarities between the painted versions of the *Danse* and medieval theatre have been explored in literature, most recently by Gertsman, the relationship between illustrated editions of the theme and early printed plays have not, at least to my knowledge, been discussed in detail. In the late fifteenth century, well established forms of medieval theatre – biblical stories enacted on platforms, mummeries, songs of court poets and costumed civic festivals – were actually being confronted (and eventually replaced) by the fixed medium of the printed play text.⁴⁹⁹ As Julie Stone Peters has shown, the printing press had a pivotal role in the rise of the modern theatre because it allowed for a circulation of dramatic texts and renewed interest in classical playwrights, especially Terence, Plautus and Seneca.⁵⁰⁰ In France, the comedies of Terence were particularly popular and frequently printed often times by the same printers or publishers who produced the *Danse* editions, including Husz (1491), Vérard (c.1499), de Marnef (1493 and 1519) and Petit (1496, 1499, 1519 and 1529).⁵⁰¹ Terence's comedies explore social roles and are structured in such a way as to invite responses from the audience through prologues and speeches directed at them, another way they are similar to the *Danse*. The fifteenth century French editions of Terence are also often illustrated with woodcuts that feature depictions of actors on stage gesturing and enacting the play, thus adding a performative element to the book itself.

Although Johann Trechsel's edition of Terence published in Lyons in 1493 is perhaps the best known of the French examples, Vérard's version from 1499 is interesting because of the innovative technique he used: interchangeable blocks. Invented by a publisher from Strasbourg, Jean Gruninger, for his own edition of Terence published in 1496 and then borrowed by Vérard, this technique involves

⁴⁹⁹ Julie Stone Peters, *The Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 1.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid* 1.

⁵⁰¹ For a discussion of Terence's comedies in France, see: H.W. Lawton, *Contribution à l'histoire de l'humanisme en France: Térence en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Jouve, 1926).

permuting a series of woodblocks in order to obtain illustrations for every conceivable scene.⁵⁰² Gruninger's series of blocks included some thirty-one characters, both male and female, of different age and social occupation depicted with a variety of gestures and facial expressions.⁵⁰³ Included in the series were five architectural settings (two different castles, a city, a tower and a gateway), a set of four varied looking trees and some miscellaneous vegetation such as shrubs and foliage.⁵⁰⁴ From this collection of figures, settings and flora, the printer could then create any number of scenes by simply compiling the elements in whatever way he wanted. To make scenes compiled from interchangeable blocks appear close to the text, Vérard included banderoles above the figures on which he supplied identification, if needed. Illustrations created with interchangeable woodblocks are more extreme versions of the composite images like the one Marchant used for the *Complainte* – which he compiled by using scenes borrowed from multiple sources – but they also further emphasize the crucial role of the printer/publisher in manipulating the book. By assembling texts from different sources and placing the work in a specific framework, the printer enforces a particular kind of narrative for the book he prints, the editing strategy we saw Marchant employ in *des Femmes*. At the same time, the usage of interchangeable woodblocks allows for an even greater control not only of text, but of images as well, which can now be manipulated in whichever way the printer see fits. In theory at least, the interchangeable woodblocks also diminish the need for the artist (the engraver or the woodcutter) who, once the set of permuting woodblocks is created, is no longer needed to design individual illustrations – an appealing prospect for the printers, no doubt, since it meant lowering the price of running an edition while at the same time ensuring a greater control over the look of the final product.

⁵⁰² Taylor, "A Priest of Poetry to the People" 239.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. 239. The interchangeable blocks must have been quite useful to Vérard because he used them again for his edition of the *Jardin de Plaisance* (BN, Rés. Ye. 168). The woodcuts from this edition are reproduced in Taylor, "A Priest of Poetry to the People" figures 19, 20, 21 and 23.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. 239.

The emergence of the *sottie* as a theatrical genre in this period together with the renewed interest in classical comedies frequently published by French printers suggest that the public at this time was increasingly interested in representation and exploration of different social types. An avid interest in the portrayal of society must be one of the reasons for the popularity of the *Danse* books in this period especially since the books, in contrast to the painted versions of the theme, are characterized by a proliferation of figures. We will recall that forty-six new characters were added to the series by Marchant alone, an impressive number that at least in part reflects the burgeoning public sphere at the turn of the century in France. In her discussion of the *sottie*, Arden has pondered the purpose of satirical texts and performances in this period particularly their social and political implication.⁵⁰⁵ Who exactly was doing the satirizing and why? According to Arden, the *sottie*, though it revealed forms of discontent that affected the lower classes, was essentially a conservative force that sought to laugh away and therefore lessen the impact of any kind of change or *nouveauté*, whether it was social, political, religious or even sartorial.⁵⁰⁶ As she states: “this theater was not fundamentally progressive (in the sense of advocating new forms of social organisation). The *sots* judge the abuses of the present from a retrospective vantage point: things are not what they should be, the fools believe; but long ago they were as they should have been.”⁵⁰⁷

Since there is much similarity in the type of humor and the choice of characters used in both the *sottie* and the *Danse*, I wonder if the latter can also be understood along the same lines: as a moralizing illustrated text that halts rather than embraces any fundamental social change. This may be a particularly apt definition for *des Femmes*, which while portraying an array of female characters and thus giving women visibility in a seemingly new way, also reinforces deeply seated religious and moralistic attitudes towards women that place them in a position of inferiority and describe them as chatty, frivolous or morally corruptive. After all, *des Femmes* was published at the time when women such as Anne of France and later

⁵⁰⁵ Arden 74.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 74.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 74-5.

Queen Anne of Brittany, were actually becoming politically active and involved in the affairs of the state in a way not previously seen, a development that was not met warmly by their male counterparts, as I discussed earlier. Though some women in the book are portrayed as exceptionally pious and devout and women do seem more willing to embrace death than men, the *des Femmes* book does not offer a particularly positive portrayal of women in general.⁵⁰⁸

Marchant's decision to include *La Sotte* (the Female-Fool) as the last figure in the dance is particularly illuminating in this regard (Fig. 42). Although Death addresses her directly (*Sus tost margot venez avant*), the *Sotte* – wearing a traditional fool's costume and holding a *marotte* – offers a reply that is aimed not at her dead companion but at the women who danced before her.⁵⁰⁹ Referring to them as the “pretty, trim ladies” (*Entre vous conctes y iolies*), the *Sotte* demands that the women listen to what she has to say and let go of their foolish ways (*Femmes oyez que ie vous dis/ Laissez a heure voz folies*). That the *Sotte* is depicted speaking to women rather than conversing with the dead, is quite unusual in the context of the *Danse*. Typically, it is only the Author, who delivers the prologue and the epilogue and thus addresses both the protagonists of the *Danse* as well as the viewer. The *Sotte* reminds women that they will certainly die (*Car vous mourrez sans contredis*) and also turns her *marotte* – the staff with a face on the top that normally signifies the Fool's mirror-image or an alter ego – towards the women that precede her in the *Danse*, suggesting perhaps that they are all Female-Fools.⁵¹⁰ Alternatively, the

⁵⁰⁸ I would therefore disagree with Harrison who argues that “the *des Femmes* is objective in its presentation of women, and it is certainly not misogynistic. The faults attributed to participants in this danse macabre arise from their situation in life and its temptations, not from a nature basically flawed from beginning” (11). While the interest in the portrayal of women from different classes is new and reveals an interest in giving women greater social visibility, the poem and the images in *des Femmes* are rooted in views about women that are neither objective nor complimentary.

⁵⁰⁹ Margot is a traditional stage name used by the *sotte* in the medieval morality plays and the *sottie*, hence another link between *des Femmes* and late medieval theatre. The word also denotes a magpie, a bird that chatters constantly – a characteristic given to the Female-Fools, but also women in general.

⁵¹⁰ In contrast, the Fool in the man's *Danse*, which is also shown with a *marotte*, points the staff towards him and is depicted gazing at it with a comical expression.

position of the *Sotte's marotte* may also be understood as reinforcing Marchant's main thesis in the *Miroer salulaire*, betterment through self-reflection, for both the protagonists and the book's reader.

One last illustrated text that references women, fools and death is important to consider as it shares much in common with *des Femmes* and points to the kind of literature about women that was commonly taken up by printers of illustrated books. In France, the interest in the Fool as the new allegorical figure is evidenced by the popularity of Sebastian Brant's famous treatise, *Das Narrenschiff* (*The Ship of Fools*), which was translated into French very soon after it was first published in Basel in 1494. Translated by Jehan Drouyn, the French version of *Das Narrenschiff* (*La grande nef des Folz du Monde*) was first published in Lyons in 1498 and widely disseminated; at least twelve editions were issued in the course of the sixteenth century.⁵¹¹ That same year, 1498, the Flemish humanist and a noted *imprimeur-librairie*, Jodocus Badius Ascensius (Josse Bade van Asche), working in Lyons and Paris, decided to write a supplement (*additamentum*) in Latin to Brant's *Narrenschiff* titled *Stultifere naves* (*The Ship of Female-Fools*). Bade's supplement was essentially another example of the printer-publisher inserting his agency by modifying or expanding the original text. It was published in Paris in 1500 by his friend and colleague Angelbert de Marnef.⁵¹² Interestingly, prior to publishing Bade's original text, Marnef wanted to test the appeal of the work for a larger public by commissioning a French vernacular adaptation. He approached Drouyn, who had ample experience with Brant's treatise, to translate Bade's supplement and published it as *La Grant nef des folles* (henceforth *Nef des folles*).

As Yona Pinson has shown, the French translation of Bade's text should be treated as an autonomous work since it deviates considerably from the original

⁵¹¹ Pinson 69. The first edition of Drouyn's translation must have sold out quickly. The second edition was published a year later, in 1499.

⁵¹² Pinson 69. The edition was printed by Thielmann Kerver for Angelbert and Geoffrey de Marnef on February 18, 1500 (Paris, Arsenal, Rés.-8-BL-5805). The book was illustrated with six woodcuts and printed in *quarto* format.

source.⁵¹³ Drouyn expanded Bade's more refined text by adding thirteen additional chapters, including one entitled *La nef de la mort* (The Ship of Death), all of which are illustrated with complementary woodcuts.⁵¹⁴ The book was apparently aimed primarily at a female readership ("*affin que les femmes le lisent à leur aise*") and like *des Femmes* it is overtly didactic and, at times, misogynistic. *La Nef des folles* is another important example of the predilection of French printers towards publishing companion-pieces of popular illustrated texts and it is likely that the *Danse* and this book shared the same audience. After all, a number of printers and publishers who produced editions of the *Danse* were also involved in issuing copies of Drouyn's vernacular adaptation. We will recall that de Marnef brothers commissioned Marchant to print the Latin edition of the *Danse* in October of 1490 and they also hired him to print a Flemish translation of the *Narrenschiff* in 1500. Parisian printers Le Petits Laurens (commissioned by Geoffroy de Marnef) and Jean Trepperel, who published editions of the *Danse* also printed *La Nef des folles* in 1498 and 1501 respectively.

Both Bede's supplement and Drouyn's adaptation stem from the same religious and didactic literature that describes women as the source of evil. Bede's text includes the woodcut portraying the *Ship of Eve* (also reproduced in Drouyn's edition), which leads all other ships filled with fools on their way to the land of Venus.⁵¹⁵ Two horned grotesque looking fool-devils row the ship, while the banner fluttering above the ship's prow displays the image of a basilik-like dragon, a symbol of the devil (Fig. 54).⁵¹⁶ Standing at the center of the ship, to the right of the Tree of Knowledge, Eve is visually isolated from the other figures in the vessel, perhaps in order to emphasize her active role in the trespass at the Garden of Eden.⁵¹⁷ While Eve is about to touch the fruit handed over by the serpent coiled around the Tree,

⁵¹³ Ibid 70. A full list of illustrations can be found in Pinson's study. For a recent critical edition of the *Nef des folles* see Olga Anna Duhl, *La Nef de folles, adaptation de Jean Drouyn* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013).

⁵¹⁴ Ibid 70. The six 'original' cut that accompanied Bade's Latin supplement are also included in Drouyn's adaptation.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid. 78.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. 84.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. 82.

her accomplice, Adam, is shown embarking on the ship and raising both hands in the air – a gesture that denotes his passivity and innocence. In the *Ship of Smell*, women dressed as Fools pick flowers and offer bouquets to their foolish suitors, while in the *Ship of Touch* several couples are shown embracing. Although all figures aboard the ship are dressed as fools, the woodcut depicts women, not their male counterparts, as inherently more errant. The main Female-Fool in the center of the ship, embraces her young lover, while still holding the hand of the older one. The couple on the left recalls secular and profane prints that emphasize female seductive and avaricious nature: while the male fool fondles the woman's breast, she is shown reaching for his purse. Sailing under the banner decorated with a peacock, a symbol of pride, the personification of Sight in the *Ship of Sight* is an elegantly dressed courtesan holding a comb and a mirror. A long line of Female-Fools await to embark on the ship, while Sight turns her mirror towards the viewer – the ultimate recipient of the moral lesson portrayed in the image.⁵¹⁸ Much like Marchant's *Miroir salutaire*, the mirror in the *Ship of Sight* functions as an edifying tool for the betterment of the reader. Actually, according to Pinson, like Marchant, Drouyn described his edition as a *speculum*, but for him *La Nef des Folles* functioned as "an inverted mirror" reflecting exactly that which the reader/viewer should avoid.⁵¹⁹

Given such interest in the themes of death and folly at the end of the fifteenth century, it is not surprising that Marchant decided to expand the *Danse* by adding the figure of the jester in both the male and female editions of the book. In so doing, he extended the scope of the *Danse* and made the theme more relevant and appealing to its turn of the century audience. Readers interested in moralizing and didactic treatises would certainly find the *Danse* appealing, but so could the audience more fascinated with the folly of human nature and the satirical portrayal of various social types. The implication of Marchant's expansion of the *Danse* is especially evident when we compare the different endings of the 1485 and 1486 editions of the men's Dance of Death. The final woodcut of the 1485 edition depicts the pairing of the Cleric and the Hermit, who is the last 'living' figure in the *Danse*

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. 79.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid 80.

(Fig. 55). Curiously placed between two cadavers, the Hermit, a model of penance for the viewer, holds an open book and a rosary and looks directly at the viewer. On the other hand, in the 1486 edition it is the Fool who becomes the last figure in the dancing procession (Fig. 35). As mentioned earlier, the Fool is the only figure in the *Danse* that actually dances along with the dead. Lifting his right leg, the Fool turns his entire body towards the cadaver and gazes at it with a smile. That his body is in movement is also implied by the fabric on the Fool's sleeve that billows wildly in the air. Death, in turn, does not acknowledge the Fool, but looks out at us, the viewers, with a coy smile as if suggesting that we are the next ones to go. The dialogue between the Fool and Death is also a bit unusual since it is not constructed as a typical dialogue per se. *Le mort* addresses the Fool with a sense of familiarity ("*Mon amy sot*") and then goes on to comment in general terms on how every man must participate in the dance ("*Tout homme danser y convient*") and that everyone progresses towards the final end ("*Chascune chose a la fin tend*"). The Fool, in turn, does not resist Death, but seems to pay homage to *le mort* by suggesting that it has the power to bring together great enemies and neutralize class and social distinction.

The examples derived from scribal culture, popular poetry, and illustrated books discussed in this chapter suggest that the macabre discourse was changing at the end of the fifteenth century. Allegorical poems such as the *Mors* and *La danse aux aveugles*, which were at least partially derived from the *Danse*, offered new ways of representing the figure of Death and expanded the framework of macabre art and verses by linking them more closely to biblical texts. At the same time, popular contemporary poets such as François Villon or Olivier de la Marche imbued their verses with macabre sentiment and extended the interest in the theme beyond religious and didactic literature. The turn of the century in France was also marked by profound changes in the social sphere and especially the growing prominence of women in public and political realms, a development that was both a source of fascination and anxiety. Works written by women as well as treatises for or about women were growing in popularity and printers were increasingly more interested in publishing editions focused solely on female protagonists, from Marchant's *des Femmes* and the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* to Dryon's *Ship of Female-Fools*. In

addition, the fascination with representation of class and the changing social sphere was also of interest to the late medieval theatre, especially the *sottie* genre, which shared much in common in terms of language and humor with the theme of the *Danse*. The question of why at the end of the fifteenth century the *Danse* became such a popular subject matter in French illustrated books may therefore be found in the combination of discourses I just laid out. With their ever expanding roster of figures and social types, the *Danse macabre* books engaged the public interest in exploring class representations and ridiculing or undermining certain segments of society, while also responding to the need of the more devout audiences, which sought edifying texts and images in their quest for salvation.

Importantly, the chapter also highlights the crucial role of the printer in editing and constructing a particular narrative for each edition of the work – a point that will be elaborated further in the subsequent section by discussing specific editions in more detail. In particular, I argued that the choice of content included in the *Danse* books was not a happenstance, a mere compilation of texts and images with similar subject matter, but rather a deliberate and conscious effort on the part of the printer to put together a book that would appeal to a wider and ever shifting audience. In so doing, printers like Marchant, Husz and others, expanded the *Danse* by including new figures – women, workers in the printing industry and the Fools – and added a selection of carefully curated texts and images that further extended the implications of the *Danse*. In their pursuit of new readers, the printers continually experimented with the theme and modernized the *Danse* by paying attention to contemporary costumes, social customs and trends in art and literature. Marchant's publication of the *des Femmes* relied on the verses of the poem that already circulated in the scribal and literary culture of the early 1480s, but introduced visual elements in the woodcuts that relate more closely to the realm of popular prints especially those that depicted profane representations of women. Such interventions with the theme of the *Danse* on the part of the early printers demonstrate their entrepreneurial skills and their familiarity with visual and literary inclinations of the period while also suggesting that the theme circulated in much broader contexts at the turn of the century than it is typically assumed.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Salutary Mirror: Editing and Viewing the Illustrated Book

Death and the Viewer

Although they storm into the Printing Workshop and the Bookstore and snatch the living figures from their places of work, the three cadavers in Mathias Husz's woodcut, depicted on folio b¹ of his edition of the *Danse macabre*, gaze neither at the Printers nor at the Bookseller (Fig. 10). Rather, they stare at us, the viewers, with a sinister smile while making pointing gestures for our benefit. Husz's unusual rendition of the *Danse* – the woodcut positions its protagonists in specific interior locations and portrays them as working rather than dancing – nevertheless highlights the central premise of much of macabre art, namely the intricate relationship between the viewer and the image.

Despite its many variations, the *Danse* had always functioned as a visual lesson intended for the benefit of the viewer. In the verses that accompany the first known visual rendition of the theme painted on the walls of the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris, the Author (*L'Acteur*) describes the image as a mirror from which all can read ("*En ce miroer chascun peut lire*"), thus implying that the *Danse* should be regarded as a didactic and visual lecture for the audience (Fig. 18). As we have seen, a similar sentiment was expressed half a century later, in 1486, when the printer Guy Marchant published the first edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes* under the general title *Le miroer salulaire* (Salutary Mirror). As Marchant explained in the colophon that accompanied this edition, the book was to be used by its readers as a self-help guide and a universal tool that would aid in the quest for salvation.⁵²⁰ Moreover, the Latin phrase "*Eram quod es, eris quod sum*" (I was what

⁵²⁰ The colophon to the 1486 editions of the *Danse macabre des femmes* reads: *Ce present livre est appelle Miroer salulaire pour toutes gens et des tous estats, et est*

you are, you will be what I am) was frequently evoked in macabre imagery, including versions of the *Danse*. Addressing the living figures (and by extension, the viewer) at the beginning of the *Danse*, the First Dead Musician in Marchant's 1486 augmented edition, proclaims: "*Helas: regardez nous/ Mors, pourris, puans, decouverts/ Comme sommes: telx seres vous*" (Alas! Look at us: dead, rotten, stinking and naked. As we are so you will be) (Fig. 9). Although there has been much debate as to the status of the dead in the *Danse* – do they represent Death personified or the dead in general? Are they mirror images of the living in the *Danse* or merely their dead companions? – the dancing corpses in the image are ultimately reminders to the viewers of their impending physical demise.

In Husz's woodcut the relationship between Death and the viewer is made even more prominent because of the composition and the placement of the image in the book. As discussed in previous chapters, the scene with the Printers and the Bookseller is preceded by eight woodcuts in which the dancing partners are all situated in a simple outdoor location (Figs. 14 and 15). By the time the viewer reaches folio b¹, the model for the *Danse* has already been established through the replicating composition of the preceding images. The woodcut is then followed by nine other scenes that revert back to the conventional framework – the figures dance outdoors in a procession facing the viewer. Embedded in the middle of the *Danse*, the woodcut with the Printers and the Bookseller functions as an interlude in the dance because its composition and arrangement of figures diverges so significantly from the expected model (Fig. 10). Yet, and this is worth emphasizing, it is left up to the viewer to 'discover' the image by leafing through the book because nothing in the title or the colophon hints at its existence or placement in the work.

The effects of Husz's clever insertion of such an unexpected image are multiple. Since the Printers and the Bookseller are placed in different settings from the rest of the figures in the *Danse*, their professions are emphasized over all others. While other social types are represented though a single figure (the King, the

de grant utilite et recreacion pour pleuseurs ensegnemens tant en latin comme en françoys les quelx il contient. Ainsi compose pour ceulx qui desirent acquerir leur salut, et qui le voudront avoir.

Merchant, the Schoolmaster), the printing profession is portrayed by three different individuals all of whom are responsible for specific parts of the printing process (the Compositor, the Inker and the Pressman, even the Bookseller). In 1499, when the book was published, the printing technology was still a novelty and part of Husz's intervention with this woodcut must have been initiated by his desire to introduce the audience to aspects of the printing process they may not have been familiar with. Although neither the Printers nor the Bookseller will actually survive the deadly attack – as William Engel points out, they are mockingly “subjected to the very process [they] strive to allegorize, namely death” – the products of their work will nevertheless continue to circulate and exist in multiple copies long after they are gone.⁵²¹ The books piled on the counter and arranged on the shelves behind the Bookseller may thus be reminders of the durability of the printed word, which unlike the rotting flesh, is actually enduring.⁵²²

Leafing through Husz's volume, the viewer uncovers the image, but also becomes implicated in it. If, as I proposed in the second chapter, Husz's image presents the steps in the production and distribution of the printed word, then as users of books we are also given a role in this process. The books are put together and printed in a workshop; they are sold in a bookstore and, finally, read by a reader. Since the cadavers have already captured their victims in the Workshop and the Bookstore and they are shown staring at us with a cheeky smile, it may be that as readers we are the next ones to go. Moreover, by looking directly at us, the dead become, in the words of Wolfgang Kemp, “our vehicles of identification, [or] figurations of the beholder in the image.”⁵²³ They communicate with the viewer not

⁵²¹ William E. Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst: Massachusetts UP, 1995) 77.

⁵²² Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies and Bibliomania* (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2006) 1. After all, at the time when Husz published his book, there were heated debates regarding the longevity of works printed on paper. While some hailed the new technology or at the very least acknowledged its usefulness, others were convinced that books printed on paper were perishable goods, which could never outlive or permanently replace manuscripts. On this issue, see the third chapter.

⁵²³ Wolfgang Kemp, “The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception”, *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in*

only through their gazes, but also through their gestures though the implications of the latter are somewhat ambiguous. The cadaver in the shop may be pointing towards the Bookseller; identifying him as its next victim. However, his companion in the workshop, standing behind the printing press, points simply to the left, to no one person specifically. By pointing in the opposite directions, the two cadavers may be attempting to visually reinsert the unusual image into the dancing sequence that precedes and follows it, or they may be signaling to the viewer that the final outcome of their visit to the Workshop and the Bookstore is exactly the same as with all other scenes of the *Danse*, even if the composition is so very different.

In most examples of the *Danse*, the dancing partners are typically shown facing the viewer and there is a sense that the procession of the living and the dead is meant to be observed, hence the Author's comment regarding the mirror discussed above (Figs. 14 and 15). This is not the case with Husz's *Printers* (Fig. 10). Save for the three cadavers, the other figures in the woodcut are completely unaware of our presence, each of them engrossed in a futile fight for their lives. What's more, the scene takes place indoors in two distinct spaces that while not necessarily private, are nevertheless places in which the viewer is not expected to be present at that moment. Much like the dead, we intrude into the Printing Workshop and the Bookstore and become privy to individual dramas that are unfolding. This creates a more personal and to some extent a more impactful effect than previous renditions of the theme. If anything, Husz's image is an example of the narrowing down not only of audience who viewed the image, but also of the sequential procession that aims to replicate the whole of society. A single viewer leafing through the book alone is now presented with a scene that can function outside of the conventional framework of the *Danse* and the woodcut demonstrates how experimentation with the *Dane* in the medium of print offered new and original ways of representing the macabre.

Contemporary Perspective, eds. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Cambridge UP, 1998) 187.

The Material Nature of the Printed Book and the “Acts of Viewing”⁵²⁴

There are approximately nineteen known extant editions of the *Danse macabre* printed books published between 1485, the date of the first edition, and the early sixteenth century.⁵²⁵ The books continued to be published, though more sporadically, through the sixteenth century and random editions even surfaced as part of the *Bibliothèque bleue* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵²⁶ Although studies on the *Danse*, such as the ones published by Leonard Kürtz or Hélène and Bertrand Utzinger, provide description of content for many early printed editions, there is of yet no comprehensive account that acknowledges the diverse

⁵²⁴ The term “acts of viewing” is borrowed from Areford’s study on the materiality of the printed image in which he suggests that the act of viewing was rarely a passive experience and typically involved a series of manipulations on the part of the viewer, including cutting away parts of the image, adding paint or painted details, and including hand written text. See Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed*, especially chapter 2.

⁵²⁵ The list of known editions and the libraries that house them can be found on the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue (ISTC) published online by the British Library. While the ISTC catalogues only editions published by the early sixteenth century (c.1503), the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC) issued by St. Andrew’s College considers a wider scope of early printed books and includes editions of the *Danse macabre* books published up until the end of the sixteenth century.

⁵²⁶ *Bibliothèque bleue* is the term used for a type of ephemera and popular literature that was published in France between c.1602 and c.1830s. Closer to brochures than proper books, works that belong to this category were typically illustrated with low quality prints, printed in small formats and sold with blue paper cover, hence the name. The *Danse macabre* books that belong to this group were mostly published in Troyes and can be seen as the continuation of the practice of publishing the title established by the printer Nicolas Le Rouge in the early sixteenth century. The first known edition of the *Danse* that can be categorized as belonging to the *Bibliothèque bleue* was published by Nicolas Oudot in 1641. Later editions include the one printed in 1729 by the widow of Jacques Oudot and by his son Jean and the one published in 1770 by Jean-Antoine Garnier. These editions typically include both men’s and women’s dances. For information on the books see: *Danser avec le mort: Les danses macabres dans les manuscrits et les livres imprimés du XVe au XXe siècle*, eds: Marie-Dominique Leclerc, Danielle Quérueu and Alain Robert (Lyon: Musée de l’imprimerie, 2004). See also Marie-Dominique Leclerc, “Les Editions bleues de la Danse macabre: Continuité et rupture”, *Actes du dixième Congrès international sur les Danses macabres* (Vendôme, 6-10 septembre 2000), Meslay-le-Grenet, Association européenne des Danses macabres, 2000, (93-110).

nature of the editions, especially in terms of their layout and physical characteristics.⁵²⁷ Focused predominately on the painted examples, previous works on the *Danse* tend to discuss the printed books in general terms, as if the extant editions are merely repetitive and identical, when in fact they are not. Actually, it would be rather difficult to define what constitutes a ‘typical’ edition of the *Danse*, since the known examples range considerably. It could perhaps be argued that Marchant’s books come closest to being the model – no doubt because he published the highest number of editions and his version of woodcuts was most often used by other printers and publishers – but there are notable variations even across his editions. For example, a copy of the *Danse macabre des femmes* he published in 1491 and currently housed at the BN (Réserve Ye. 86) features woodcuts that have been hand painted after the book was printed.⁵²⁸ Moreover, in October of 1490 Marchant printed an edition of the men’s *Danse* translated into Latin by Pierre Desrey and published by the bookseller Geoffrey de Marnef.⁵²⁹ Much like the hand-colored copy of the women’s *Danse*, the Latin edition was modified to cater to specific clientele – the pious Christians who frequented de Marnef’s shops where ‘popular’ devotional books were sold in both French and Latin.⁵³⁰

Editions published by other printers are equally varied. Sometime after June of 1492, the *libraire*-publisher Antoine Vérard commissioned Gillet Couteau and Jean Menard to print a lavish edition of the men’s *Danse*, which was printed on vellum and extensively hand-colored (Fig. 21).⁵³¹ In terms of the content, the two

⁵²⁷ See Leonard P. Kürtz, *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit* 42-69 and Hélène and Bertrand Utzinger, *Itinéraires des danses macabres* (Chartres: Garnier, 1996).

⁵²⁸ Sandra Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 87. Hindman explains that the hand-colored copy was in the royal library and that it was likely commissioned for an aristocratic or royal patron.

⁵²⁹ As discussed in the third chapter, this book was printed in folio format and titled *Chorea ab eximio macabre versibus alemanicis edita*.

⁵³⁰ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 86. As I discussed in the third chapter, de Marnef owned a shop in Paris but also, together with his two brothers Jean and Enguilbert, kept store in towns such as Poitiers, Angers and Bruges where the books he published also circulated.

⁵³¹ Two copies of this edition are known. One is housed at the BN (Vélins 579) and the other at Lambeth Palace Library in London (MS 279). Information regarding the

extant copies are identical. They are printed in folio format and include V  rard's version of woodcuts featuring the men's *Danse* and the verses of the *Three Living* illustrated with two woodcuts.⁵³² However, subtle variations in the way the woodcuts are painted – especially noticeable in the altering backgrounds of the Lambeth Palace copy in which even the figures in the same woodcut are occasionally placed against a different setting – make it difficult to describe the copies as being exactly the same. In fact, the two books function in somewhat paradoxical terms: they are at once the products of mechanical reproduction and at the same time each copy is an example of a unique, hand-made and authentic work of art. As such, they are the embodiments of the transitional period of bookmaking during which scribal and print culture were still heavily interwoven and where formal aspects of a given book – in this case, the application of hand-painted color – had significant impact on how the work was perceived.

There are also significant differences in terms of content across the extant editions. Books published by V  rard included only the men's *Danse* and the *Three Living* while Marchant, as discussed in previous chapters, began to expand his works with new woodcuts and additional texts just months after he issued the first edition. Not only did he add the ten new living figures to the men's *Danse* by June of 1486, but he also invented a whole version of the women's *Danse* in July of the same year. By this time, Marchant had started to append other devotional texts and images that complimented the *Danse* including the *Three Living*, the *Debate* and the *Complainte*. In the 1490s, printers such as Guillaume Le Rouge working in Troyes and Husz in Lyons continued to expand and modify the theme by including other texts and images, related predominately to the themes of sin and judgment.

publication of this edition is scarce in part because the colophon printed at the end of the book does not provide specific information regarding the date of the publication, the printers or the publisher. The ISTC dates it after June 26, 1492 and state that it was printed for V  rard by Couteau and possibly also Menard.

⁵³² For a brief discussion of the difference between V  rard's and Marchant's version of woodcuts see the first chapter. As with all other editions published for V  rard, this one includes only the thirty male characters that are found in Marchant's first edition from 1485 and which were based on the mural from the Cemetery of the Innocents.

Such diversity in format and content can be, at least partially, explained by two points. First, the assortment of editions reflects the transitional nature of the period in which the illustrated book as the medium was in the process of becoming and still heavily embedded in scribal culture. This is especially true for books produced in Paris, which from the thirteenth century onward was the center of manuscript production in Europe and where scribes, illuminators and printers frequently collaborated.⁵³³ Moreover, printed images and illustrated books produced at the end of the fifteenth century influenced other media – works on enamel, textiles, and stained-glass windows, for example – but were also heavily influenced by them, as I discussed in the second Chapter. The collaboration of artists working in different media and the intermediality of much of artwork produced in France at the turn of the century is also reflected in the *Danse* books. We will recall that copies of the men’s and women’s *Danse* were used to create a lavish manuscript in 1500 (BN, Ms. fr. 995) and that the editions were also used as models for the Meslay-le-Grenet and La Ferté-Loupière frescoes produced in the early sixteenth century (Figs. 1-7, 11 and 12).

Second, the diversity of the printed editions of the *Danse* was prompted by the demands of the marketplace and particularly the appeal of the new that characterized much of the early printed works published at the time. Printers and publishers frequently marketed their works as revised, augmented, newly translated, or recently illustrated in hopes of attracting readers and expanding the market for their books. The need to change or reinvent popular and established titles initiated numerous collaborations between printers and booksellers – such as, for instance, the partnership between Marchant and de Marnef that resulted in the Latin edition of the *Danse* – and also created a demand for experimentation. Printers frequently ‘tested’ the market by producing altered versions of popular titles and partnered with other workshops or publishers in hopes of diffusing the costs and protecting their own enterprises since not all of the trial editions were bound to succeed and find sufficient readership. As I suggested in the previous chapter, the creation of the *Danse macabre des femmes* was almost certainly initiated by the appeal of the new

⁵³³ See Delaunay, “Echanges artistiques.”

and by Marchant's ability to recognize the market's need for such a title. By all accounts, the experiment worked – Marchant continually published the book and, even more importantly, printers such as Husz or Nicolas Le Rouge incorporated the women's *Danse* in their own editions, thus further expanding the popularity of the title. On the other hand, Marchant's attempt to publish the female version of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, which he produced in collaboration with the publisher Jean Petit seems to have been much less successful, with only two editions recorded.

Given the range in the production and content of the printed editions of the *Danse*, any viewer's impression will be affected by the material aspects of the book itself. One of the goals of this chapter will therefore be to focus on specific editions of the *Danse* and analyze them in detail by focusing both on the content and the material aspects of each book. As Areford has argued, the early printed image is not a product of a single artist, but the result of multiple steps and often multiple hands (woodcutter, printer and painter, for example) and as such carries many layers of meaning.⁵³⁴ At the same time and in contrast to the widespread belief that mechanically reproduced images are inherently repetitive or identical, Areford claims that "most early prints are characterized by a materiality that reinforces their singularity."⁵³⁵ Although his study centers on single sheet prints, Areford's points regarding the materiality of early prints are also applicable to the medium of illustrated books in the fifteenth century. Even though early printed images were often designed to purposely simulate other media – colored drawings, woven textiles or, as was the case with Vérard's books, illuminated manuscripts – it would be erroneous to assume that this was done solely for economic purposes in order to substitute for more expensive, hand-made and authentic objects.⁵³⁶ According to Areford, the formal characteristics of early prints go beyond mere imitation or decoration; rather they are often suggestive of the print's symbolic meaning.⁵³⁷ Crucial among the formal elements is the role of color, as Susan Dackerman's study

⁵³⁴ Areford 28.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.* 14.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.* 14.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.* 14.

on the painted prints has recently shown.⁵³⁸ While the earlier scholarship tended to view color in prints as inherently corruptive and typically ignored or criticized it, Dackerman's work on the fifteenth and sixteenth century prints demonstrates that the presence of color is often integral in promoting the viewer's compositional or symbolic understanding the work.⁵³⁹ In discussing painted prints, Barbara Welzel suggested that we should reconsider how we think about editions of prints as identical or uniform objects and disregard the notion that every impression was necessarily intended to have the same meaning or function.⁵⁴⁰ Such an approach would then result in changing the notion that the application of color diminishes the value of prints and, instead, prompt us to consider other contexts or reasons behind the existence of the 'altered' versions.

Part of my interest in emphasizing the materiality of the different editions of the *Danse* is to show that not only through a selection of content, but also through the choice of design and layout printers such Marchant, Husz or V rard had a crucial role in representing the theme of the *Danse*. What materials were used to fashion an edition, whether it was painted or not, how large or small it was – all these elements had an impact on how the *Danse* was perceived by the viewer. In fact, I would argue that a close examination of editorial strategies used to fashion different editions of the *Danse* is just as important for our understanding of how the theme was

⁵³⁸ See Dackerman, *Painted Prints*.

⁵³⁹ Ibid. 3. In the introduction of her book, Dackerman quotes the statement by the Dutchman Wilem Goeree who in the late seventeenth century stated that "To color prints is to spoil prints", a point of view that has pervaded much of the literature on the prints since then. The marginalization of color in the study of prints is prompted, at least in part, by the fact that the hybrid nature of colored prints – at once printed and painted – calls into the question the issue of originality and authenticity of works of art. Since color is typically not applied by the engraver/woodcutter, it is seen as a form of alternation that diminishes the inherent value of the original. This was especially problematic since it was believed that color in many prints produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was applied much later than the works were initially produced and hence seen as a mere embellishment. See the introduction of Dackerman's book, 1-6. On Western contempt for color in art see David Batchelor, *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002).

⁵⁴⁰ Barbara Welzel, "Zur Vielf ltigkeit eines Bildmediums: Monochrome und illuminierte Druckgraphik im fr hen 16 Jahrhundert," *Der Bordesholmer Altar des Hans Br ggeman: Werk und Wirkung*, ed. Uwe Albrecht (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1996).

presented in the medium of print as it is to consider the setting and context of each painted example, a strategy used convincingly in Elina Gertsman's recent study of the murals.⁵⁴¹ By analyzing the spatial location and the overall pictorial programs of the churches in which the *Danse* murals were placed, Gertsman has shown that each example, though representing the same theme, actually functioned in a unique manner.⁵⁴² At the same time, regardless of the differences in layout or design, each fresco implicated the viewer directly and demanded his active participation.⁵⁴³

The second aim of the present chapter will thus be to address the role of the viewer in the printed books. One of the main criticisms of illustrated books in the scholarship on the *Danse* has been the assumption that the translation of the theme from painted murals to printed books resulted in a narrowing down of audiences and a more prescribed interpretation of the subject matter.⁵⁴⁴ In the public spaces of churches and cemeteries, the community as a whole was free to view and interpret the image together whereas the medium of the illustrated book radically reduces the viewers to a single person leafing through the pages alone. According to Gertsman, such a change in audience had a negative effect on how the theme was perceived:

In the private viewing experience afforded by the book format, the desire to actively involve the beholder in the process of viewing is tempered, as the life-

⁵⁴¹ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, 125-159.

⁵⁴² In earlier studies on the Dance of Death murals, the authors tended to isolate the image from the larger pictorial program in a given church and rarely studied the architectural setting of different examples.

⁵⁴³ For examples, in cases in which the *Danse* was painted along a straight wall, as in the church in Reval in Estonia or at the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris, the beholder was allowed an unobstructed view of the image. However, the monumental nature of frescoes, which typically stretched over twenty or thirty meters in length, required that the viewer perform a sort of dance of her own by coming closer to observe the details and stepping away to consider the entire image while at the same time moving along with the procession. Conversely, the murals at La Chaise-Dieu in Auvergne and the church in Berlin in which the procession of dancers was divided or obstructed by architectural elements and altered by the changes in design resulted in a markedly different reading of the *Danse*. See Gertsman, especially pages 125-159.

⁵⁴⁴ See, for instance, Ashby Kinch, "The *Danse Macabre*" and Gertsman, *The Dance of Death*, 165.

size processions of Death and the living are replaced by the episodic structure of separate vignettes, which hardly exert the same kind of power over the reader as do the solemn processions of lifelike figures in large-scale paintings.”⁵⁴⁵

Moreover, in the printed books the *Danse* was almost immediately situated alongside other devotional texts and images and therefore encased in what Ashby Kinch has described as “doctrinally rigid and interpretively narrow material.”⁵⁴⁶ As Kinch argues, the choice of texts appended to the *Danse* offered the reading subject a singular view of death and the afterlife with no recourse for an alternative reading of the theme.⁵⁴⁷

While it is undoubtedly true that the transition from one medium to another had profound effects on how the *Danse* was presented and viewed, is it actually productive to view the function of the books in such narrow terms, especially given their range and disparity? I have already shown in previous chapters that a broader examination of the historical and cultural contexts in which the books were published, suggests that they participated in discourse beyond the macabre including scientific and astrological debates or the interest in exploring the theme of the folly at the turn of the century. Moreover, the very medium of the illustrated book emphasizes the act of reading and looking – both of which are integral in experiencing the theme of the *Danse*. Even if, as Gertsman argues, the viewing experience afforded by the book format is “tempered”, that does not mean that it is always necessarily negative. In fact, could we not argue that V  rard’s painted copies in which the figures of the dead and the living are rendered with extreme attention to detail, afforded a view of the *Danse* that might not have been possible with all mural examples? For instance, the fresco at La Chaise-Dieu was executed using *sgraffito*, a technique created by applying layers of plaster tinted in contrasting color, and the image was only partially completed (Fig. 28). As a result, the silhouettes of yellowish

⁵⁴⁵ Gertsman 165.

⁵⁴⁶ Kinch, “The *Danse Macabre*” 187.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 187.

figures are shown dancing against a fiery red background, which does imbue the image with an ominous quality, but prevents the viewer from observing the physical differences between the dead and the living or marvel at the opulence of costumes. Likewise, the mural at Mesely-le-Grenet, which is actually based on Vérard's woodcuts, features fully painted figures, but its position, above the viewer's head, made it difficult to see all the details of costumes and faces while at the same time engaging with the verses below (Figs. 1-5).⁵⁴⁸ In contrast, Vérard's books offered the viewer an unrestricted view of both figures and text and the richness of colors used to illuminate the woodcuts highlighted the contrast between the plump clothed bodies of the living and the emaciated, blackened features of the dead (Figs. 21 and 56). The focus on the details in the woodcuts – a pink rosy glow of the King's visage, a shiny metal armor that encapsulates the body of the Constable or the subtle shading used in the Lambeth Palace copy – all help to stimulate the viewing process and encourage an active participation on the part of the beholder.

A similar point can be made regarding the content of the *Danse* books. Medieval manuscripts and printed books often provided instructions on how to read a given text or a set of prayers and even, as Laurel Amtower has shown, went so far as to project “a reader as a psychological being whose mind, emotion, and personality might be opened up and “completed” by the text.”⁵⁴⁹ This is certainly what Marchant had in mind when he composed the colophon in 1486 in which he referred to the *Danse* as the “Salutary Mirror” and sketched out the ideal users of the book – devout men and women who desire to obtain salvation. The texts that Marchant appended to his augmented editions and those that were later added by other printers and publishers do indeed stem from didactic and religious literature and focus mainly on sin and punishment. As such, they are in Kinch's words “doctrinally rigid and interpretatively narrow”, yet we should not assume that there is *only* one way in which they were read, especially given the fact that the *Danse* was

⁵⁴⁸ This is even more true for the mural at La Ferté-Loupière in Burgundy, which is painted high above the viewer's head and can only be observed from the distance.

⁵⁴⁹ Laurel Amtower, *Engaging Words: The Culture of Reading in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2000, 6).

from its inception such a malleable theme.⁵⁵⁰ After all, as Roger Chartier reminds us, no written work has a universal, stable or fixed meaning and there are multiple ways in which it can be interpreted by different audiences that take a hold of it.⁵⁵¹ Literary reception theorists have long studied the “role of the reader” in the text and explored ways in which reception can often diverge significantly from the intended meaning of a work.⁵⁵² However, for my purposes here, the work of cultural historians, especially Chartier and more recently Karen Littau who explore the act of reading as an embodied process and for whom the materiality of the book plays an important role in how the text is interpreted is especially useful. As Littau points out:

Since a text is also [...] an embodied material object, this object’s materiality and physical organization conditions our reading. Thus conceived, texts bring into contact *content*, *form* and *matter*, and readers respond to linguistic and literary codes as well as bibliographical and medium specific ones.⁵⁵³

In the context of the *Danse macabre* books that are, as I outlined above, vastly different in terms of medium and layout, Littau’s approach could help expand our understanding of how the books may have been read.

The readers of medieval and early modern works often left traces of themselves on the pages of books they were using. Such ‘remnants’ of the reader in the book, or what Areford refers to as “traces of reception”, could take many forms: some users left written prayers, commentary or instructions, others added drawings in the margins or in the main image, and there were also those who cut away parts

⁵⁵⁰ Kinch, “The *Danse Macabre*” 187.

⁵⁵¹ Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) ix-v.

⁵⁵² See for instance Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979); Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1978); or Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crossman eds., *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1980).

⁵⁵³ Littau 2.

of the page or the image and even pasted new material in the book they were reading.⁵⁵⁴ According to Areford, these alterations of the preexisting text and image suggest that the “act of viewing” was not a passive experience, but one that involved an active participation on the part of the viewer.⁵⁵⁵ In terms of the *Danse* books, the presence of the reader can be traced in several copies of the existing editions – a fact that has not been acknowledged in the literature on the subject thus far. Such evidence of the reader’s presence in the books adds another layer of meaning and helps to understand how the audience interacted with the theme of the *Danse* in the medium of illustrated books.

The Question of Audience

Who were the readers of the *Danse* books? We know that some copies, especially hand-painted ones, were listed in the royal libraries and were obviously intended for aristocratic readers, but what about the other, less adorned editions? In the studies on the early printed books, editions of the *Danse* are often credited as helping to create the market for ‘popular’ illustrated works in Paris – a genre previously published mostly in Lyons by printers such as Husz and others – though we have to wonder what exactly is meant by the term ‘popular’?⁵⁵⁶ Although the process of mechanical reproduction allowed for the creation of multiple, identical copies and helped to disseminate the theme to a wider group of readers, it would be wrong to assume as David Bland and other scholars in the past have done that the editions of the *Danse* are examples of “poor man’s books.”⁵⁵⁷ Just because printed

⁵⁵⁴ Areford 15.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. 15.

⁵⁵⁶ Hindman, “The Career of Guy Marchant” 68. For a discussion of ‘popular’ printing in Lyons with a comparison to Paris, see Dominique Coq, “Les incunables: Textes anciens, texts nouveaux,” *Histoire de l’édition française*, vol. 1, *Le livre conquérant: Du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIe siècle*, eds. Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier (Paris, 1982, 177-193).

⁵⁵⁷ David Bland, *A History of Book Illustration: The Illuminated Manuscript and the Printed Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958) 131. In his study, Bland only

books were generally cheaper than illuminated manuscripts, does not mean that they were necessarily affordable and available to members of the lower classes or that they were popular across all strata of late fifteenth century French society. In her seminal essay on early printing in France, Natalie Zemon Davis has shown that popular books were not read and bought only by the “*petites gens*” and that the content and appearance of books should not be used to define their audiences.⁵⁵⁸

Because the information regarding the late fifteenth century printing workshops and bookstores – especially data pertaining to the cost of specific titles or the type of clientele that purchased books – is fairly scarce, scholars have been relying on other sources of information to identify the audience of early printed books. Chief among these are book transfers, formal catalogues of princely families and appraisals of estates for legal purposes that are found in notarial inventories.⁵⁵⁹ Although such documents date mainly from the sixteenth century, a study conducted by Alexander Schutz in which the author examined notarial archives of Paris, known as the *Minutier Central des Notaires*, is particularly useful for our purposes here because it considers vernacular works.⁵⁶⁰ Schutz consulted approximately 220 inventories of private libraries from the sixteenth century listed in the state appraisals and catalogued popular titles that frequently appeared on such lists, including copies of the *Danse* books and the *Shepherd’s Calendar*. According to Schutz, the majority of book owners listed in notarial inventories came from the upper middle classes and the lower nobility.⁵⁶¹ Among them were members that belonged to the legal circle

discusses Marchant’s editions and does not acknowledge the existence of other printers and publishers who produced the work. According to him, Marchant’s editions of the *Danse* were aimed at “the under-privileged” who must have enjoyed looking at Death that strikes the great and the wealthy, 131.

⁵⁵⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Printing and the People”, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1975), 189-226, 191.

⁵⁵⁹ One of the most famous studies of French notarial inventories was conducted by Albert Labarre in the 1970s. See: Albert Labarre, *Le livre dans la vie amiennoise du seizième siècle: L’enseignement de inventaires après décès, 1503-1576* (Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1971).

⁵⁶⁰ See Alexander H. Schutz, *Vernacular Books in Parisian Private Libraries of the Sixteenth Century According to the Notarial Inventories*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, no. 25 (Chapel Hill, 1955).

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.* 6.

including counselors at court, members of the parliament, lawyers and notaries.⁵⁶² Physicians, including surgeons, were also listed as were those belonging to the *marchand-bourgeois* class and other trades people including apothecaries, innkeepers and haberdashers.⁵⁶³ As expected, booksellers and members of the clergy owned books, as did individuals that belonged to the noble families.

Of what value are notarial inventories when it comes to assessing the popularity of a given title? Just because a book was listed in a private library, does not necessarily mean that the title was popular at a particular time. Much like modern day book owners, individuals in the sixteenth century had books on their shelves that they inherited or received as gifts but that they never actually read. In addressing these issues, Schutz makes two important points. One, when it comes to book collecting, the state of affairs in the early modern France was actually quite unusual.⁵⁶⁴ During the transition from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, several strata of French society, especially the bourgeoisie, expanded or came into being at the time, thus constituting a brand new social group. These were groups that burgeoned under the rule of Francis I – often stemming from the legal circles – that bought noble lands and elevated their social status rapidly.⁵⁶⁵ For the most part, libraries belonging to such families – the nouveaux riches of the period – were typically fairly new and reflected specific tastes of the period. Second, the presence of printed books in a given library could help to ‘date’ the collection. In the sixteenth century, printing was still relatively new and printed editions dated back to, at the most, the last two decades of the previous century. For this reason, as Schutz states, “the gap between the date of the publication and the date of the acquisition had to be more limited than at any subsequent time.”⁵⁶⁶

Who then were the owners of the *Danse* books listed in Schutz’s study? Half of the owners came from the bourgeois classes, whereas only one quarter was

⁵⁶² Ibid. 5.

⁵⁶³ Ibid. 23.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. 8.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. 5.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. 8.

found in the noble libraries.⁵⁶⁷ Among the bourgeois owners of the books, three-quarters were women, though as Sandra Hindman has argued, this data is difficult to interpret.⁵⁶⁸ Since in this period women were typically a whole generation younger than their husbands, they may have just inherited their husbands' libraries.⁵⁶⁹ In other words, we should not assume that the *Danse* books were largely preferred by female readers, though the presence of many women owners is certainly interesting and worth researching further. By comparison, the *Shepherd's Calendar*, the other illustrated bestseller first published by Marchant, was also largely owned by bourgeois families with a slightly higher percentage of owners from the nobility.⁵⁷⁰ In fact, one-third of owners of the *Danse* also owned copies of the *Shepherd's Calendar* – a point that suggests that the two works were seen as comparable by the readers and buyers of the period.⁵⁷¹ Interestingly, largely absent from the list of owners of either the *Danse* or the *Shepherd's Calendar* were members of the nouveaux riches, or the freshly constituted classes that developed in the early sixteenth century.⁵⁷² Libraries of such individuals seem to include works that had a long-standing manuscript tradition among the royal and noble circles such as Boccaccio's *Decameron* or Bartholomeus Anglicus' *On the Property of Things*.⁵⁷³ As Hindman explains, this information is also not easy to understand. It could be that in desiring to mimic the reading practices of the nobility, members of the nouveaux riches classes stayed away from the new works and opted for the more established

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. 44. One is a copy that was allegedly owned by Anne of Brittany, though that book is yet to be located. The second is an edition found at the royal library at the castle of Blois. On the missing copy that belonged to Anne of Brittany see Alphonse M. Chazaud, *Enseignements d'Anne de France: Inventaire des meubles estans en la maison de Monseigneur le duc de Bourbonnais et d'Auvergne estant en sa ville d'Aiguesperses* (Paris: 1507).

⁵⁶⁸ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 90. For example, Claude Cousin, the wife of Nicolas Millot, a *docteur regent* of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, was listed as one of owners. Two women from Amiens, Jeanne Labbé and Jacqueline Martin also owned the books.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. 90-91.

⁵⁷⁰ For instance, a copy of the *Shepherd's Calendar* was listed in the princely library of the Châlon-Orange family and in the library of Francis I at Blois.

⁵⁷¹ Hindman, "The Career of Guy Marchant" 91.

⁵⁷² Ibid. 91.

⁵⁷³ Ibid. 91.

titles.⁵⁷⁴ At the same time, the nobility in choosing to purchase the *Danse macabre* and the *Shepherd's Calendar* were expanding their libraries and “setting new patterns of taste.”⁵⁷⁵ However, both Schutz and Hindman suggests that the *Danse* was essentially a medieval work, related more to the scribal than the printing culture and thus hardly an example of a new type of book.⁵⁷⁶ Alternatively, it may be possible, as I suggested in the third chapter, that the *Danse* was essentially a conservative theme that aimed to halt rather than to embrace any real social change. As such, the work would undoubtedly be more appealing to the aristocracy who wished to maintain their long-standing social status and embrace the view of world as it was, than to those upwardly mobile classes who actually benefited from the ongoing stratification of the late medieval and early modern French society.

One last point regarding the data collected from the notarial inventories should be made. While the *Danse* and the *Shepherd's Calendar* shared the same audience initially, the popularity of the latter persisted through the sixteenth century whereas the interest in the *Danse* seems to have dwindled by about 1525. The latest occurrences of the *Danse* in the inventories surveyed by Schutz date from 1551, but these are libraries that belonged to two booksellers, one of which was Gailot du Pré.⁵⁷⁷ In each case, the booksellers owned a hundred copies of the book, which suggests that they were having a difficult time finding buyers for the title. The inventory of bookseller Denis Janot, which dates from 1522, lists fifty copies of the

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid. 91.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. 91.

⁵⁷⁶ According to Schutz, the breakdown of owners of the *Danse* books suggests that the title “essentially a medieval work, but in its day popular in more than one social class”, 44. On the other hand, Hindman notes that the practice of creating hybrid copies of the books, links the subject matter of the *Danse* more to scribal culture and medieval sensibility than to the works produced exclusively in the print medium at the turn of the century, 90. This is because Marchant never published texts by, for example, Clichtoveus or other humanists tracts in such dual editions. According to Hindman, this may be because the works by these authors were never associated with scribal culture and first circulated in the medium of print, hence there was no need to simulate manuscripts in hybrid editions. The *Danse*, on the other hand was a medieval subject matter and, as I noted in the first chapter, occasionally appeared in the margins of medieval manuscripts and was thus closer to the world of scribal culture than the more modern, humanist texts.

⁵⁷⁷ Schutz 44.

Danse – another sign that the interest in the subject matter was beginning to wane.⁵⁷⁸ Parenthetically, the seemingly large number of copies on stock in three separate inventories of booksellers suggests that the *Danse* was originally published in fairly large editions while it also shows how few copies actually survived to present day.⁵⁷⁹ The period that marks the decline of popularity (c. 1525) also corresponds to the drop in the frequency of editions, another point that implies that the *Danse* was no longer of interest to a wide group of readers.

The Impact of Color: Hand-Painted Editions Published by Antoine Vérard

In comparison to Marchant's editions, especially his *editio princeps* from 1485, the *Danse* books published by Vérard are rarely studied in detail. Scholarly texts on the *Danse*, even the ones that include color reproductions of Vérard's woodcuts, seldom discuss different features of the editions or even comment on the details of the images.⁵⁸⁰ Yet, visually Vérard's editions are among the most stimulating examples of the *Danse* in any medium and much of it has to do with the usage of color and the clarity of the design.

There are two or possibly three extant editions of the *Danse* that were printed for Vérard in Paris in the 1490s.⁵⁸¹ As one of the most successful *libraire*-publishers, Vérard rarely printed the books himself, but rather hired other presses in the city to produce the work under his name. During the course of his career at least twenty different printers were under his employment, including those that are associated with the *Danse* books such as Marchant, Nicole de la Barre and Pierre Le Rouge. Typically, he financed the editions and provided the typographical materials to the

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid 44.

⁵⁷⁹ Hindman 92.

⁵⁸⁰ For example, Gertsman's study of the *Danse* includes a full page color reproduction of an edition published for Vérard by Pierre La Rouge c.1491-92, but does not discuss the uniqueness of this book, especially in terms of its size, layout and color. See Gertsman, "The Dance of Death," 355.

⁵⁸¹ To date the most comprehensive study of Vérard's career is Winn, *Anthoine Vérard*.

printers he employed.⁵⁸² As a result, most colophons in the books he issued declare the editions to be published “*pour Anthoine Verard*”, while the names of the printers or the presses are not always included.⁵⁸³ To make matters even more confusing for the scholars of the French incunabula, colophons of Vérard’s editions are often partially rubbed off so that the names of the printers or even Vérard’s own publishing house are no longer visible.⁵⁸⁴ Vérard’s books are therefore frequently identified on the basis of the printing materials, such as the type, woodblocks or borders, which he lent to the printers he hired.⁵⁸⁵

Two of the three known editions of Vérard’s *Danse* are hand painted. The first was printed by Pierre Le Rouge c. 1491-92, while the second painted edition came from the press of Gillet Couteau, and possibly also Jean Menard, sometime after June 26, 1492.⁵⁸⁶ The third edition was also the work of Couteau and Menard and it was printed in Paris on June 26, 1492. Although neither Vérard’s name nor his printer’s device are featured in the edition, the book’s content and illustrations are identical to the other two editions of the *Danse* and hence it is possible that it was also printed for the famous *libraire*-publisher.⁵⁸⁷ All three editions feature the same

⁵⁸² Ibid. 18.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. 18. As Winn explains, a few editions in the period from 1486-1489 indicate printing “*par Vérard*” it is very unlikely that he actually operated the press himself.

⁵⁸⁴ This is the case with the vellum copies of the *Danse* housed at the BN and the Lambeth Palace Library. Although both books contain a colophon, the last few lines are erased. Identity of the printers of Vérard’s books are typically established by examining the type used in specific editions.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid 30. However, in a number of cases, Vérard did use his printer’s mark, a heart with the letters AV, in the books he published.

⁵⁸⁶ The sole copy of Le Rouge’s edition is preserved at the BN as Rés Te. 8. This is the copy that was found at the royal library of the castle at Blois. Vérard’s second painted edition is found in two copies, one at the BN and the other at the Lambeth Palace Library in London. See footnote 17.

⁵⁸⁷ The sole copy of this edition is preserved in the library of the Petit Palais in Paris as Dutuit 301. For information on this edition see Frédéric Barbier, ed, *Paris: capital des livres. Le monde des livres et la presse à Paris, du Moyen Âge a XXe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), especially page 88 and image 35. Barbier suggests that it is likely that the book was printed for Vérard and a similar assumption is made in the written commentary on the cover page of the edition printed by Le Rouge (BN Rés. Te 8), which states “...Un autre exemple fait partie de

content: text and illustrations of the *Danse macabre des hommes* and *Three Living*. The woodcuts used for Vérard's editions differ significantly from those found in Marchant's versions, though the identity of the artist who designed them has never been established. Given the prominence of Vérard's publishing enterprise and his trade practices, it is safe to assume that he was the owner of this set of woodcuts (and probably also the person who commissioned them) and that he lent them out to the presses he employed.⁵⁸⁸

Vérard's practice of producing vellum copies for his printed editions is one of the hallmarks of his career. According to Mary Beth Winn, parchment copies exist for some 150 editions published by Vérard, which is an impressive achievement.⁵⁸⁹ Along with publishing new 'modern' works, Vérard included many established 'classics' in his *oeuvre* and maintained a very traditional typographical style. His books were typically published in folio format, printed in the *bâtarde* type and heavily illustrated to mimic medieval manuscripts.⁵⁹⁰ The idea of simulating manuscripts in the new medium of print was not originally Vérard's – the scribe and printer Colard Mansion from Bruges began the practice – but the Parisian publisher really

la collection de Petit Palace.” The ISTC lists only Couteau and Menard as the printers of the edition.

⁵⁸⁸ Even though Vérard's cuts were not used in as many versions of the *Danse* books, they must have been fairly well known since they were copied or used as models for representations of the theme in several mediums. Printers such as Nicole de la Barre and Matthias Husz used Vérard's version for their editions of the *Danse* printed in Paris and Lyons respectively. Likewise, Simon Vostre and Philippe Pigouchet, who became famous for their editions of printed Books of Hours, often relied on Vérard's cuts to make borders with the figures from the *Danse* that decorated the Office of the Dead. Vérard's woodcuts also served as the model for the miniatures of the men's *Danse* in the *Danse macabre* manuscript produced c. 1500 (BN Ms. fr. 995) and they were likely used for the creation of the mural at Meslay-le-Grenet.

⁵⁸⁹ Winn, footnote 52, page 31. As she states, copies on vellum tend to be better preserved than those printed on paper, though we have to assume that even some of those have been lost over time and that the original total number of parchment editions exceeds what is now known.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid 31. *Bâtarde* was a Gothic script used in France, Burgundy and Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The early printers adopted the script and created the new typeface, which was used in France until the mid sixteenth century.

popularized the idea.⁵⁹¹ These “printed manuscripts” were meant to attract not only the nobility, though they were certainly one of the main customers, but also the burgeoning classes made up of parliament officials and members of the legal circles who were in the process of assembling their libraries and wanted copies of books that resembled manuscripts.⁵⁹² As Winn suggests, although they all belong to a general category of printed manuscripts, there is in fact variation in terms of quality and style amongst V  rard’s vellum copies.⁵⁹³ Those aimed at the royal and princely clientele are highly personalized and expertly painted by the finest artists. On the other hand, the more commercial versions include woodcuts painted more hastily with lots of color, but not much skill. Each example, however, “alerts us [...] to an essential characteristic of V  rard’s books: the individuality of each copy.”⁵⁹⁴

The traditional account of the history of printed images argues that color diminishes and virtually disappears as the technique of printmaking improved over the course of the fifteenth century. According to Dackerman, “is a truism in the history of art that color was applied to the earliest prints to compensate for their technical shortcomings.”⁵⁹⁵ Yet, as Dackerman’s study shows, application of color was practiced and promoted through the seventeenth century and, even more significantly, color often served a pivotal role in the design and meaning of the

⁵⁹¹ Ibid. 31. Because Anatole Claudin suggested that V  rard was initially a miniaturist and a scribe, scholars have assumed that his interest in vellum copies of printed books is result of his background and that he may have even illustrated the works he published. Winn disputes this idea by arguing that there is not enough documentation to support such a claim, though he must have had some connection with the scribal culture before he ventured into the world of printing. On the issue of scribes who became printers see Sheila Edmunds: “From Schoffer to V  rard: Concerning the Scribes Who Became Printers”, *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991) 21-40.

⁵⁹² Coq 189.

⁵⁹³ Winn 31.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. 32. This point is tied to the argument I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, namely that at this early stage of printing in France editions of the same title, even those issued by the same press, differ considerably and should thus be studied individually.

⁵⁹⁵ Dackerman 9.

printed images.⁵⁹⁶ Since in the past scholars tended to assume that paint was applied to prints at some later point when the image was already “completed”, not much research has been done regarding the artists that colored the images. Typically, the colorist was an individual other than the woodcutter or engraver who was hired to work on the printed image.⁵⁹⁷ Dackerman’s inquiry into the archival records of the city of Nuremberg in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth century suggests that the profession of the print colorists did exist, though it was recorded under several different names.⁵⁹⁸ Attempting to regulate their trade, the colorists petitioned together with card painters in 1477 and 1482 and demanded that the court provide classification for the two professions.⁵⁹⁹ By 1546, however, the colorists petitioned together with the illuminators – a move that suggests that by the mid sixteenth century the makers of illuminated manuscripts found themselves in need of expanding their trade to include woodcuts and engravings as the popularity of the printed books increased.⁶⁰⁰

In Paris, as Richard and Mary Rouse have shown, scribes and illuminators collaborated with printers and publishers almost as soon as the printing industry was established in the city in 1470.⁶⁰¹ Vérard employed a number of illuminators in his enterprise the most famous of which was the Master of Jacques de Besançon who painted miniatures that depicted Vérard presenting copies of his lavish books to royal patrons.⁶⁰² Even Marchant, whose press did not frequently produce hand painted books, seemed to have had a business relationship with Jehan Le Cousturier, the illuminator from the place Maubert, though the exact circumstances of their collaboration require further research.⁶⁰³ It is very likely, therefore, that Vérard’s painted editions of the *Danse* were colored by some of the illuminators that

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. 11.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. 15.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. 19.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. 21.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. 22.

⁶⁰¹ See Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, especially pages 321-323.

⁶⁰² Winn 35.

⁶⁰³ Jérôme Pichon et Georges Vicaire, Pichon and Vicare, *Documents pour servir à l’histoire des libraires de Paris, 1486-1600* (Paris: n.p., 1895) 14.

worked for the publisher and it is also obvious from the design that color played an integral role in these renditions of the theme. Not only is every costume carefully rendered to denote the status of the living figures, whether lay or clerical, but the artist employed delicate shading techniques in gold to emphasize the folds of the textile and the three dimensionality of the bodies (Figs, 21-23 and 56). This is particularly obvious in the Lambeth Palace copy and the version printed for Vérard by Le Rouge in which we also note the striking presence of saturated ultramarine blue in the background (Figs. 21, 22 and 23). Thomas Primaeu, who studied the types of pigments used in Renaissance and Baroque prints, pointed out that prior to 1500 the presence of the color blue is much less common in printed images than hues of reds, yellows or greens.⁶⁰⁴ Although available from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and frequently employed in manuscript illuminations and paintings, it was seemingly (especially the precious ultramarine blue) too expensive to be frequently used in print.⁶⁰⁵ A closer examination of the pigments used in Vérard's copies of the *Danse* would be necessary to identify the precise hues used in his books, but the frequency of the color blue in the woodcuts certainly further links these editions to scribal culture and emphasizes their uniqueness and opulence.

Neither of the two vellum copies published for Vérard includes the title page, printer's device or a table of contents. The only information pertaining to the content and publishing details is found in the colophon at the end of the work and in both cases the colophon is partially rubbed off. In their present states, the colophons read: "*Cy finist la dāce macabre historiee et augmentee de plusieurs nouveaux personnages et beaux dits. Et les trois mors y trois vifs enseble nouvellemet ainsi cõposee et imprimee a paris*". The two books begin with a large illustration showing the figure of the Author with the two-stanza prologue printed below. The *Danse* is illustrated on both recto and verso pages and each woodcut depicts two pairs of

⁶⁰⁴ Thomas Primeau, "The Materials and Technology of Renaissance and Baroque Hand-Colored Prints", *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color in Northern Renaissance and Baroque Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts*, ed. Susan Dackerman (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art and University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2002) 49-76.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 60.

dancing partners arranged according to their station in medieval secular and religious hierarchies. As in Marchant's version of woodcuts, the illustrations are framed with arches and columns, though in Vérard's rendition a single column is also placed between the dancing pairs (Fig. 56). The insertion of the additional column gives the effect that figures are actually dancing beneath an arcade while at the same time it also works to visually separate the two dancing pairs shown on each page. This is especially obvious in the Lambeth Palace copy in which, as stated earlier, the background for each pair is painted in different colors. For example, the woodcut depicting the Abbot and the Bailiff shows the figures dancing in an exterior locale, with delicate grass and foliage visible on the ground, yet the Abbot stands against a starry blue sky while the Bailiff is positioned opposite a plain gray colored background (Fig. 56). The work is printed using the *bâtarde* typeface that mimics script and adds to the illusion that we are looking at a manuscript rather than the printed book. Remnants of scribal culture are also visible in the decorated initials, painted red, that are placed at the beginning of the poem and at the opening of each new stanza (Fig. 57).

The principal differences between Vérard's vellum copies and the more common editions of the *Danse* such as, for instance those published by Marchant, is in the overwhelming dominance of the visual over the textual components. This is obvious even from the first page that depicts the figure of the Author seated in an elaborate chair in front of an open book. The woodcut is unusually large, measuring 15cm x 17cm and takes up almost the entire page.⁶⁰⁶ The Author's prologue, written in double columns is relegated to the lower part of the folio and cannot compete with the vivid colors and the large size of the image above. In Marchant's versions, the woodcuts were typically 'framed' by the text since he included verses of the *Vado mori* poem in Latin above the illustrations and the dialogue of the *Danse* below, thus delegating practically equal amount of space to both the text and image on a single

⁶⁰⁶ This is the largest image in the book. As a means of comparison, Marchant's illustrations of the Author typically measure 15cm x 14cm.

page (Figs. 29 and 30).⁶⁰⁷ As a result, the viewer remains focused on the text and the image simultaneously especially because both the word and the picture have the same black and white structure.⁶⁰⁸ This is not the case with V  rard’s vellum copies that are marked by the “Technicolor flashiness” in which the eye of the viewer is continually directed towards the image and away from the text (Figs. 21, 56 and 57).⁶⁰⁹

For example, the gaunt bodies of the dead are rendered with detail and attention is paid to different aspects of corporeal decomposition. Like Marchant’s cadavers, the dead in V  rard’s books are occasionally shown with blackened torsos filled with vermin, but they are also depicted with worms in their chest cavities or under the stretched skin of the shoulders – a feature not seen in other renditions of the *Danse* (Fig. 58). In the Lambeth Palace copy, the cadavers are painted in hues of either ochre or gray – perhaps hinting at stages of decomposition – while also adding visual interest by portraying diverse figures of death (Fig. 21 and 56). In addition, at least two cadavers in V  rard’s books are shown with male genitalia and of them, featured next to the figure of the Bourgeois, uncharacteristically, still has a striking human face (Figs. 58 and 59). The figures of the living are equally individualized not only because their costumes are colorful and hence more impactful, but also because their age and facial expressions are carefully rendered. For example, the Bailiff’s youthful visage is in stark contrast to the Abbots’ wrinkled face (Fig. 21). The juxtaposition between the decomposing, vermin-infested bodies of the dead and the clothed and adorned figures of the living is more effective than in the black and white editions and serves to highlight the frivolity of costumes and earthly possessions, while also potentially fostering an interest in the opulent and

⁶⁰⁷ A similar point was made by Michael Camille who analyzed the visual structure of the pictorial narratives in woodcuts and miniatures of the *P  lerinage de la vie humaine*, another popular illustrated work, and concluded that the most significant changes in the visual representation of the poem occurred not when it was translated from one language to another, but when it transformed from the medium of manuscript to that of print. See Camille 259-291.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. 283. Camille argues that “the print medium creates less of a rift between image and text than occurs in manuscript illustrations” because the woodcut has the same black and white structure as the text on the page, 281-83.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. 267.

beautiful things. The shiny metal armor worn by the Constable can provide no protection from the assault by the dead, nor can the Sergeant, decked out in the most fashionable red and blue costume with slashed leggings and a hat with large plumes, escape the dance though he is certainly trying to (Fig. 57). In V  rard's hand painted editions, the application of color thus serves to enhance the impact of gestures, expressions and costumes of the figures in the *Danse* and maintain the viewer's interest in exploring each woodcut.

In the BN copy, the dancing figures are all placed against the same background – they are standing on grass covered ground, while the blue sky behind them is shaded naturalistically from dark to light (Figs. 57, 58 and 59). The consistent background visually unites the woodcuts so that the viewer 'reads' each scene as taking place at the same time and at the same location. This is not the case, however, with the Lambeth Palace copy in which backgrounds vary with almost every pair: an azure colored sky speckled with gold stars, burgundy colored background with gold embellishments, and dark blue or simple gray backgrounds (Figs. 21 and 56). Such diversity of colors and choices for backgrounds enhances the opulence of this particular copy, but it also serves to fracture the visual unity of the woodcuts since each pair is presented as being a separate encounter with Death.

While editions published by Marchant, Husz or Guillaume Le Rogue, encased the *Danse* in a broader framework by adding other moralizing texts and images, V  rard's books remain focused solely on the *Danse* and its macabre companion, the *Three Living*. V  rard also never included any additional figures to the male *Danse* or published an edition of the *Danse macabre des femmes*, choosing instead to focus on the original format of the *Danse* as it existed in the mural from the Innocents. It is possible that his clientele was more interested in macabre subject matter than in didactic literature in general and hence favored the *Danse* and the *Three Living*. It is also true that unlike the other titles typically appended to the *Danse* in the printed books, the *Three Living* is the only other one that relies equally on both the text and the image to convey its message – an aspect that was undoubtedly appealing to V  rard who preferred to adorn his works with lavish illustrations. In his books, as in

all other editions, the *Three Living* is placed after the *Danse* on two facing folios (Figs. 60 and 61). The design of V  rard's cuts is similar to Marchant's although, again, the presence of color and attention to detail enhances the impact of the subject matter depicted. The encounter between the living and the dead takes place outdoors in the presence of a Hermit who is pictured seated behind the three corpses on the far left holding a scroll that reads: *Omnium terribilium mors*. In the Lambeth Palace copy, the three dead are painted in different colors: two are ochre-yellow, while the one in the middle is dark grey, possibly, again, to heighten the visual lure of the image. The dead stand next to the large yellow cross with a crucifix, which functions as a barrier that separates the world of the living from that of the dead in most depictions of the legend. Further in the distance is a walled town with rooftops and a church that adds visual interest to the image, but also signals the society at large. As in Marchant's edition, the living figures are portrayed on horses and the woodcut shows them in an attempt to flee the deadly encounter their arms raised in shock and their falcons flying away. In the Lambeth Palace copy, the horses are painted in different colors (white, brown and black) and the three figures wear costumes adorned with intense ultramarine blue – perhaps another hint at the luxurious nature of this particular copy.

V  rard's third hand-colored edition of the *Danse* is probably the most unusual. Extant in a single copy preserved at the BN (Estampes, R  s. Te 8), the work was printed for V  rard by Pierre Le Rouge using the same woodcuts as seen in the other two editions (Figs. 22 and 23). The book was part of the royal library at the Ch  teau de Blois and it was presented as a gift to King Charles VIII. That Le Rouge was asked to print the edition is not surprising: at the time the book was made he held the title of "printer to the King" and produced numerous illustrated books for the collection of Charles VIII. According to Winn, the artist who painted the woodcuts is also known – the Master of Jacques de Besan  on who, as stated earlier, often collaborated with V  rard.⁶¹⁰ The format of this edition is exceptional. Originally intended as a placard, a poster typically mounted on the wall, it was two

⁶¹⁰ Winn 109.

meters long and 56cm high.⁶¹¹ In its present state, the placard is cut up into five folios, glued onto a thick, carton-like material and bound in a large book (40cm x 56cm). The first pages of the book are made of parchment and include a painted frontispiece – two angels holding the arms of France and two falcons standing on the grass covered ground below – along with another inscription.⁶¹²

Because the original format has been altered, the book now features four woodcuts per page and the hierarchical order of the *Danse* is severely compromised. The *Danse* begins with the figure of the Author – in the handwritten inscriptions at the front of the book he is referred to as the *Moraliste* – followed by the new order of dancing figures: the Pope and the Emperor, the Monk and the Usurer (with the Poor Man), the Doctor and the Lover, the Cardinal and the King, the Patriarch and the Constable, the Lawyer and the Minstrel, the Curate and the Laborer, the Archbishop and the Knight, the Bishop and the Squire, the Cordelier and the Infant, the Cleric and the Hermit the Abbott and the Bailiff, the Astrologer and the Bourgeois, the Canon and the Merchant, the Carthusian and the Sergeant, the Author (*Moraliste*), the *Three Living and the Three Dead*. It is not clear when the placard was cut up and reassembled into a book – the question of whether it was ever mounted on a wall is certainly important and worth investigating further – but it is interesting that this format was chosen over the illustrated book in the first place. The idea to display it on the wall relates to the preferred medium for the *Danse* in the fifteenth century, namely mural paintings, but obviously on a smaller scale and produced using the new format of the printed and hand painted image. The existence of the placard also points to a wider usage of woodcuts in late medieval France, which circulated not only as single sheets or as illustrations in printed books, but as wall decoration that simulated paintings and tapestries as well.

In its present state, each of the five folios feature differently colored margins and the figures are painted using saturated pigments, reds, greens and blues.

⁶¹¹ Ibid. 109.

⁶¹² According to Winn, the frontispiece was actually V  rard's printing device – two angels holding a heart – which was initially placed at the end of the placard. It was subsequently altered through painting so that the heart was replaced by the coat of arms of France. See Winn 109

Although the hierarchical order of the *Danse* is fractured, the woodcuts include a uniform border – blue sky adorned with gold stars – that helps to provide a sense of continuity across different scenes. Because of its unusually large size and the fact that the woodcuts are glued onto a stiff carton, it is difficult to read this book in its present state while sitting down. To be able to leaf through the pages and observe the details in the woodcuts, the viewer must adjust his or her body and stand up – an action not required to read any of the other editions of the *Danse*.

The existence of V  rard’s hand painted copies alludes to a broader context in which the *Danse macabre* printed image circulated at the time. The books were not only immersed in the moralizing and religious discourses of the period, but were also appealing to an audience interested in luxurious books that could be modeled to cater to their particular tastes. The cruder aesthetic of the black and white woodcut is purposely altered in V  rard’s versions and replaced and improved upon with color applied by the hand of the skilled illuminator. The end result is a striking series of hand painted woodcuts that seem to relegate the text to a secondary function. When leafing through the vellum copies, the viewer cannot help but admire the opulence of color and marvel at the details of costumes and faces of the figures portrayed. It is the particular nature of vellum copies, as Michael Camille pointed out, to pretend to be what they are not, namely illuminated manuscripts.⁶¹³ It would be interesting to know whether the owners of such books actually fooled themselves into believing that they were really in possession of a handwritten and handmade manuscript and not a mechanically reproduced and then altered object.⁶¹⁴ Conversely, there may have been some viewers who were attracted to vellum copies precisely for their transitional and hybrid nature, as simultaneously products of the new technology and as handmade books. However, it is clear from V  rard’s copies that in the late fifteenth century there were some readers of illustrated texts who were interested in both looking and reading and some who were more attracted to the lure of the visual.⁶¹⁵ This is evident even from the two vellum copies of the *Danse*, which as I

⁶¹³ Camille 272.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid 272.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid 272.

stated earlier although part of the same edition are still individualized to match the particular tastes of their initial owners. The Lambeth Palace copy was clearly produced for a client fascinated with excess of art and embellishment, hence the varying backgrounds, the differences in the color of cadavers and the exquisite shading behind the dancing figures that gives the whole procession a more naturalistic and three-dimensional feel. It could be argued that such attention to the visual details further dilutes the importance of the text – this was certainly the argument Camille made with regards to another series of vellum copies produced by Vérard.⁶¹⁶ In the context of the *Danse*, which was intended as a moralizing visual lesson regarding the futility of earthly life and material possessions (including luxurious books), the celebration of art and the visual was to some extent in opposition to the central premise of the theme. In other words, the vellum copies seem to celebrate the opulence of the visual decoration at the expense of offering a stern warning to its viewer in the manner done by Marchant in the *Salutary Mirror* editions. However, there is evidence in the handwritten notes made by a reader of the BN copy that the user of the book was at least interested in the text, even if we cannot deduce the exact nature of that appeal. In at least four folios of the BN copy, a reader inserted text in the margins next to the verses of the poem. For example, the words “*Au Chartreux*” appear in between the third and the fourth line of verses uttered by the dead figure addressing the Carthusian monk (Fig. 57). The same is done with the verses directed at the Pope (“*Au Pape*”) and the Hermit (“*A L’hermite*”), while the opening line of the text aimed at the Minstrel includes the word “*Vous*” before the first line (as in “*Vous Menestrier*”). The addition of the handwritten notes suggests that the reader was interested in the dialogue aspect of the *Danse* and included the individual words to clarify for himself and for the future user how the living and the dead addressed one another.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid 272. Camille discussed Vérard’s vellum copies of *Le pilgrimage de l’homme* made in 1511.

Husz and the Total Edition

Extant in two copies, one at the British Library (IB. 41735) and the other at the William H. Scheide Library at Princeton (WHS 35.4.6), the *Danse macabre* book published by Mathias Husz on February 18, 1499 (1500), is probably the most comprehensive of the known editions.⁶¹⁷ It contains not only the complete version of the *Danse macabre des femmes* with woodcuts based on those printed in Marchant's editions, but it also features a composite version of the men's *Danse* with thirty woodcuts modeled after V  rard's version and the ten additional male figures that Marchant included in his augmented edition from June of 1486. We will recall that Marchant did not typically publish the men's and women's dances in a single volume, though it is possible, given their complementary nature, that the books were pitched together to potential customers at the time when they were sold.⁶¹⁸ The fact that Husz issued an edition of both men's and women's *Danse* together is therefore quite unusual and made even more unique by the fact that he combined the woodcuts from V  rard's and Marchant's books. Typically, the printers based their editions on a particular version of woodcuts, either Marchant's or V  rard's. For example, when Nicole de la Barre printed his edition of the *Danse* in July of 1500 (British Library, IA. 40884), he relied solely on V  rard's version of cuts. Similarly, Nicholas Le Rouge's edition published in Troyes in 1532 (BN, R  s V-278), did include both men's and women's dances but all of his woodcuts were based on Marchant's versions.

That Husz had access to both versions of woodcuts is certainly not surprising. As I discussed in the second chapter, he was one of the first printers of illustrated books in France and is often credited with helping to establish Lyons as the initial

⁶¹⁷ During the course of my research, I only examined the copy at the British Library. My comments regarding the edition will therefore relate only to that copy. The book is printed in folio format and it contains 42 leaves, collated a-g⁶. The dimensions of the book are 25cm x 29cm.

⁶¹⁸ This is the case with an incomplete copy of the two dances from the British Library (IB. 39618), which includes works published in April of 1491 (*Danse macabre des hommes*), May of 1492 (*Danse macabre des femmes*) and May of 1492 (*The Three Living and the Three Dead*), all bound in a single volume.

center for the popular books in vernacular. By the turn of the century he was one of the most prolific printers in France, known for at least 125 editions. Although much less is known about his collaborations with other printers and publishers than what has been discovered regarding Marchant or V  rard, Husz must have been aware of the types of illustrated books published in Paris at the time, since he was the pioneer of the industry and the world of illustrated books was still relatively small.⁶¹⁹ At the same time, the fact that Husz had access to copies of both versions of woodcuts suggests that by the end of the fifteenth century, the printed image of the *Danse* circulated in different cities in France and that both adaptations were well known. While Husz relied on V  rard's and Marchant's woodcuts, the images included in his edition must have been made specifically for his press since the style of figures and the overall design is quite similar to some of the other illustrated books issued by Husz's workshop. His edition also features the image of the Printers and the Bookseller, which was probably made specifically for his book since no other precedent has been found, and it includes at least one other original woodcut, the illustration that accompanies the poem *Exhortation de bien vivre y de bien mourir* (folio g¹r).

The content of Husz's edition is impressive as it includes, besides the *Danse macabre* and the *Three Living*, six additional illustrated texts, four more than typically printed in Marchant's books. The 42-leaves edition opens with a title page that features an elaborate decorated initial placed next to the table of contents, which lists the following texts: *La gr  t danse macabre des homes y des femes hystoriee y augmnetee de beaulx dis en latin*, *Le debat du corpse et de lame*, *La c  plainte de lame dampnee*, *Exhortation de bien vivre y bien mourir*, *La vie du mauvais antechrist*, *Le quinze signes* and *Le iugement* (Fig. 62). Although not listed in the table of contents, the *Three Living* is included at the end of both dances as are two

⁶¹⁹ We do know that 1483, Husz entered into a partnership first with Petrus Ungarus (Pierre Hongre) and then with Johannes Schabeler (or Battenschne). The latter was still printing with Husz in July of 1484. From that point onwards, it appears that Husz was working alone, but receiving financial help from Jacques Buyer in 1487. In the following year, he split his profits with Ludovicus de Venetia. See *Catalogue of the Books Printed in the XVth century now at the British Museum*, part VIII (Trustees of the British Museum: London, 1949) 257.

other illustrations that Husz borrowed from Marchant. The first one features the image of Death on a Horse and the Mouth of Hell, which Marchant typically included in the *Shepherd's Calendar* and in the later editions of the women's *Danse* (Fig. 38). At the end of the men's *Danse*, Husz paired this illustration with a poem in which the viewer – referred to as the sinner – is asked to look at his face which is disfigured in this Death (“*Pecheaux regarde ta figure/ En celle mort desfiguree*”). In the women's *Danse*, the same woodcut of the decomposing cadaver is accompanied by two strophes taken from the *Danse aux aveugles* written in 1465 by Pierre Michault that begin with the following verses: “*Je suis la mort de nature ennemye. Qui tous vivās finablement consōme.*” The second woodcut taken from Marchant's books, features a black man, dressed in simple attire, standing on a rooftop and blowing on a horn (Fig. 63). The image is meant to accompany a poem entitled *Cry de la Mort* and it is actually featured three times in Husz's edition: at the end of the men's *Danse* (folio c³), at the beginning of the women's *Danse* (folio c⁶r) and once again at the end of the women's *Danse* (folio f²r).⁶²⁰ Also not listed in the table of contents is a full-page woodcut depicting the Holy Trinity that appears twice in Husz's book, at the beginning of the men's *Danse* (folio a¹r) and at the beginning of the *Danse macabre des Femmes* (folio c⁶).⁶²¹ The image shows the figure of God the Father placed in a mandorla and surrounded by three angels on either side. Below him is the figure of the dove, signifying the Holy Spirit, depicted with outstretched wings followed by the crucified Christ surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists.

For the reasons outlined above, Husz's book can be understood as the most comprehensive and complete edition of the *Danse*. Going beyond the macabre subject matter, the book is best described as a type of didactic anthology on death,

⁶²⁰ Each time, the illustration is accompanied by different verses. At the end of the men's *Danse*, the verses declare: *To to to que chascun savance/ Main a main venir a la dance*. At the beginning of the women's *Danse*, the poem is modified to address the women dancers: *Tost tost venez femmes danser / Apres les hommes incontinent*. In its last appearance on folio f²r, the verses below the image are actually unrelated to the illustration and relate to the lines uttered by the third dead person in the *Three Living* poem.

⁶²¹ This is the largest image in the book (19cm x 21cm) and it not accompanied by text. To my knowledge, this image has not reproduced in any sources.

dying and the consequences of sinful living. Husz' editorial input is especially evident in the way the printer seemed concerned with structuring the *Danse* in a specific religious framework. Contrary to how the theme is depicted in other illustrated books – where regardless of the additional texts, the *Danse* is only paired with the macabre legend of the *Three Living* – Husz expanded it to include the image of the Apocalypse and the Mouth of Hell along with the figure of the horn blower calling all to join the deadly dance. The book then continues with other moralizing texts and images that focus on the aftermath of sinful living, including the *Debate* and the *Complaint*. The edition culminates with the verses of the *Fifteen Signs of Judgment* and the Last Judgment (*Le iugement*), although the latter is illustrated with the small woodcut (5cm x 7cm) showing Christ in Majesty surrounded with the symbols of the four evangelists, which denotes the Second Coming and not the Last Judgment per se. To the medieval viewer, accustomed to seeing this image on the portals of Christian churches, the woodcut would inevitably signal the moment of the Second Coming, even if the verses were not included on the page. If Vérard's hand colored editions emphasized the captivating juxtaposition between the beautifully dressed living figures and the naked and ghastly rotting corpses, without revealing to the viewer what happens after the *Danse*, Husz's edition suggests that the *Danse* is merely a prelude to the Last Judgment, which should be the real focus for all devout Christians.

Husz's was not the first printer to include specific references to the Judgment in the *Danse* book – Guillaume Le Rouge's edition published in Troyes in 1491 included an elaborate section on the Fifteen Signs illustrated with striking images of events that precede the Judgment Day.⁶²² In fact, the existence of both Le Rouge's and Husz' editions demonstrate that in the 1490s printers were continually interested in expanding the theme of the *Danse* and placing it in more serious, didactic

⁶²² The incomplete copy of this edition preserved at the *Bibliothèque municipale* in Bourges (Inc. 68) has been scanned and is available on their website: <http://www.bvh.univ-tours.fr/Consult/index.asp?numfiche=904>. The *Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday* or *Quindecim Signa ante Iudicium* in Latin, was a popular text in the later Middle Ages, which lists catastrophic events expected to take place prior to the Apocalypse. I will discuss the theme in more detail later in the chapter.

contexts. Not only do Husz's images show an interest in adaptation of the genre – the most obvious being the woodcut with the Printers and the Bookseller – but his edition also suggests that the idea of the *Danse* in the book has changed significantly by the turn of the century. If Marchant's first edition merely replicated the mural from the Cemetery of Innocents and included no additional texts or figures, by 1500 the theme was encased in a more comprehensive context. Husz's edition is only thematically related to the mural from the Innocents – it contains fourteen more figures in the men's *Danse* (ten from Marchant's augmented edition plus the three Printers and the Bookseller), the *Danse macabre des femmes* and seven other illustrated texts that were not part of the original fresco. His edition is therefore not just about the *Danse*, but concerns larger issues regarding the Christian faith. We can also observe the changes in the medium of the illustrated book between Marchant's first edition and Husz's expanded volume. Not only does Husz's book feature a title page with the table of contents, but each section of the book is carefully demarcated and includes the introductory headings and the concluding remarks.⁶²³ It is also worth noting that the *Danse* and the *Three Living* are the only poems in the book in which the text and the image are of equal importance. In the latter sections of Husz's editions, especially in the last three poems, the illustrations are scarcer, only one per text, they are noticeably smaller and they are only symbolically related to the verses.

Husz had also made some changes to the structure and the appearance of the *Danse*. Although he included the ten additional male figures derived from Marchant, he chose not to end the men's *Danse* with the figure of the Fool – as was the case with Marchant's editions – but instead with the Hermit who was the last figure in the original mural. This is certainly in line with the more serious tone of Husz's edition, which placed a particular emphasis on piety and redemption from sin. As noted in the previous chapters, the Hermit, who appears not only in the *Danse*

⁶²³ For example, the men's *Danse* ends with the following text: *Cy finist la danse macabre des homes avec les trois mors y les trois vifz. Et sensuit la danse macabre des femes*. The colophon at the end of the book is simple and refers only to the place and the date of publication without refereeing to Husz or the location of his printing enterprise: *Imprime a lyon le xviii iour de fevrier. lan mil.cccc.xixi*.

but also in the woodcut of the *Three Living* and even in the last image illustrating the *Debate*, can be understood as presenting to the viewer the model for moral behavior or at least serving as a poignant reminder of the need to live a pious and devout life.⁶²⁴ Throughout the book, the text instructs the viewer (sinner) to look at the images and contemplate their didactic message so it is no wonder that figure of the Hermit – the most pious Christian – is repeated several times in different segments of the volume.

As stated earlier, the women's *Danse* opens with the figure of the Trinity and the illustration that accompanies the *Cry de la mort* poem (Fig. 63). This is the most logical placement for the latter because the black figure standing on the rooftop is meant to summon the women to the dance. The verses included below the image directly reference the men's *Danse* ("*Tost, tost venez femmes danser. Apres les hommes incontinent*"), and thus present the two dances as complimentary units, which is a novel approach. The woodcuts for the women's *Danse*, however, appear to be more crudely executed, as if another (lesser?) artist was commissioned to design them (Fig. 64). This is especially obvious in the way the bodies of the dead are rendered: they appear almost cartoonish and lack details that typically mark their states of decomposition. The same is true for the portrayal of women, which are missing some key elements that helped to define their moral character and position in society. In comparison to Marchant's renditions of the women's *Danse*, in Husz's version the Queen does not wear the brocade dress, the Regent Lady is not depicted with long hair and her dress is not decorated with a gold chain, while the Knight's Lady is missing the falcon – a symbol of her noble status. Likewise, the Wife is shown without the garland in her hair and the Chambermaid is missing keys and the moneybag that typically hang on her belt. These omissions may be merely a choice of the artist, but the roughness of the design also implies that the printer was more concerned with presenting the moralizing aspect of *des Femmes* than with enticing the viewer with details of costumes and accoutrements, a strategy that was prevalent in earlier editions of the poem.

⁶²⁴ Kinch, *Imago Mortis* 125.

A similar interest in revising the images or reducing the visual details is also seen in other illustrated poems that follow the *Danse* in the book. For instance, Marchant's striking woodcut that accompanied the *Complainte*, which I argued is a composite image made up of several scenes of hell and punishment that appeared in other printed books of the period, is in Husz's volume replaced by a completely new illustration (Fig. 52).⁶²⁵ Focusing solely on the pain and suffering of a single sinner, Husz's presents a figure of a naked man chained around his waist with his arms raised up in a gesture of surrender. Strapped on the belt around his waist are four long chains that are held by four devils, each portrayed differently but all equally horrifying.⁶²⁶ Not only are the devils holding the man captive, they are about to strike him either with their hands or with the weapons that they hold. Although the figures are standing outdoors – the ground seems to be covered with small bushes – the background is left unadorned, which only works to heighten the dramatic appeal of the central image. While Marchant's illustration of the *Complainte* is visually compelling as he introduces multiple scenes of hell – the large Mouth of Hell with the sinner being pushed inside, cauldrons in which the devils are boiling men and women and even the gallows in the background – there is actually no single focus in the image and no main protagonist. Husz's illustration is exactly the opposite. It centers on a specific figure through which the horrors of hell are emphasized and the woodcut further underlines the tension of the moment by hinting at more suffering to come when the devils unleash their weapons. The insistence on a single protagonist works well with Husz's overall strategy for the book because it forces the viewer to identify with the sinner and to experience through him the torment of hell.

The other four poems that follow the *Complainte* stem from similar didactic and eschatological literature. The *Exhortation de bien vivre y de bien mourir* is taken from the *Ars Moriendi* (the Art of Dying) tract that, as discussed in the first chapter, offered specific instructions on preparing the soul and the body for death and dying

⁶²⁵ To my knowledge, this image from Husz's book is not reproduced in any sources.

⁶²⁶ The woodcut is quite large (18.5cm x 14.5cm) and takes up the better part of the folio (f^{6r}). One of the devils, depicted on the right, is probably a female since it is shown with sagging breasts. She holds a wooden club and sticks her tongue out at the chained man.

(henceforth the *Exhortation*). Although written in the early fifteenth century, the treatise was popular with early printers and both Marchant and Vérard published editions of it. In Husz's book, the poem is illustrated with a single woodcut, which seems to have been made specifically for his edition (Fig. 65). Much like the *Three Living*, the woodcut centers on an encounter between the living and the dead, though this time it involves two women. The well-dressed lady on the left is depicted wearing the fashionable wide-sleeve gown as she picks jewelry from the open chest in front of her. She is clearly interrupted in her search – her body hunches forward and hovers over the trunk – by a female corpse that rises from the open coffin and approaches her holding a scythe. The dead woman is nude save for the elaborate *henin* – a cone shaped headdress – that was in style until about the 1460s, which suggests that she has been deceased for a while. The juxtaposition between the clothed and adorned body of the lady on the left and the nude and vermin infested cadaver is striking and made even more apparent by the fact that the two figures stand on either side of the large cross. Alluding to the visual vocabulary of the *Three Living*, the cross in the middle of the woodcut functions to separate the realm of the living and that of the dead (Fig. 24, 25 and 65). Moreover, the frame with the embellished arches and the column on the side along with the fact that the scene takes place outdoors further compares to the woodcuts of the *Three Living* but also to the *Danse*. Such layout facilitates the act of reading as it relates the disparate poems together while also providing the sense of visual unity throughout the volume. Husz's choice to focus on women in this scene is not, I believe, coincidental. The image helps to balance the macabre themes in the book – not only are there two dances, but there are also two encounters with the dead, one directed at women and the other, the *Three Living*, at men.

The final section of Husz's book, which includes the poems *La vie du mauvais antechrist*, *Les quinze signes* and *Le iugement*, functions as a single thematic unit and addresses apocalyptic subject matter.⁶²⁷ The first two poems and possibly also the text that accompanies *Le iugement*, relate to the popular German work *Antichrist*

⁶²⁷ Woodcuts illustrating these sections of Husz's edition have not been reproduced in any sources I am familiar with.

that was written in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.⁶²⁸ Itself derived from earlier eschatological literature, the German book was first printed in the mid fifteenth century and went through several different editions and translations.⁶²⁹ In England, the work was known as *The Byrth and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceyfull Antecryst* and it was first published in 1505.⁶³⁰ At least partially derived from the German model, the English translation was also influenced by the French versions of the book including the *Livre de Auctorites de Saintes Docteurs: Touchant de L'Advenement et du mauvais Antechrist*, published in Lyons in 1495. Vérard is also believed to have published a folio edition of *L'Advenement de l'Antechrist* in Paris in 1492 though no copies of this work have apparently been found. According to Andrew Gow, the *Antechrist* book was included, together with other didactic literature, in Vérard's edition of *L'Art de Bien Vivre et de Bien Mourir*, which was published in Paris in 1493.⁶³¹ At least one other edition from Lyons is known, printed in 1499, the same year in which Husz published the *Danse*. We should not forget that Guillaume Le Rouge's edition of the *Danse* from 1491 included illustrations of the *Fifteen Signs*, a text that was often part of the *Antechrist* book, and thus it seems that in including these works in his book Husz was following a particular trend of the period. This is not surprising given the fact that the year 1500 – being a half-millennium - was rife in apocalyptic fever. Contemporaries believed they were living through the Last Days, apocalyptic preaching was on the increase propagated further through printed tracts such as the *Antichrist*, and even the Roman curia, which typically discouraged eschatological speculations, had

⁶²⁸ For a discussion of this work see Andrew Gow, "Jewish Shock-Troops of the Apocalypse: Antichrist and the End, 1200-1600", *Journal of Millennial Studies*, I (1998): 1-19.

⁶²⁹ Ibid. 5. For example, there is a xylographic edition from Nuremberg printed in 1472 that includes illustrations and a typographically printed one from Strasbourg published in 1480 also with woodcuts. For a facsimile of the Strasbourg edition see Karin Boveland, *Der Antichrist und Die Fünfzehn Zeichen vor dem Jüngsten Gericht*. Kommentarband zum Faksimile der ersten typographischen Ausgabe eines unbekanntes Straßburger Druckers, um 1480, Hamburg, 1979.

⁶³⁰ On the English versions of the books, see Joseph M. Ricke, "The Antichrist *Vita* at the End of the Middle Ages: An Edition of *The Byrth and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceyfull Antecryst*", diss., U of Rice, Houston, 1982.

⁶³¹ Gow, 6 footnote 12.

proclaimed the year 1500 to be “a special Jubilee year, a holy year, where pilgrimage would be particularly rewarded.”⁶³²

The woodcut that illustrates *La vie du mauvais antechrist* in Husz volume is the last large image in the book (19cm x 13.8cm) (henceforth *Antechrist*). In the upper register, it portrays the Judging Christ surrounded by angels blowing horns and signaling the end of time. Below is the figure of St. John the Evangelist shown writing the Book of Revelation on a long scroll. To his left is an eagle, a symbol of St. John in Christian imagery. That Husz’s illustration makes reference to St. John in this context is, of course, not surprising. From the time of the Church Fathers, Christian theology and Biblical exegesis have interpreted the Beast of Revelation 13 as the source of the Antechrist legend.⁶³³ In the woodcut, St. John looks towards the approaching angel holding a large book, while the seven-headed dragon, symbolizing the Antechrist, is depicted on the opposite side of the image.

Although the text of *Le quinze signes* lists the events that will unfold on earth prior to the end of times, including trees and plants sweating blood, earthquakes toppling buildings and the bones of dead men rising, the work is illustrated with a woodcut portraying an indoor sermon.⁶³⁴ The final image in the book is the woodcut that accompanies the text of *Le iugement*, which, as stated earlier, depicts Christ in Majesty surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists. The woodcut marks the end of time and the moment when the dead will rise again in order to be judged. As such, it works well in conjunction with the opening image of the book – the large woodcut depicting the Trinity or the Throne of Mercy – in which Christ is shown crucified, sacrificing himself for the sins of the humankind.

Husz’s edition exemplifies a group of the *Danse* books published from the 1490s onward that reveal a growing interest in framing the theme in strict religious

⁶³² Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 1. In fact, the fascination and the fear of the Apocalypse and the coming of the Antichrist was so pronounced in this period that the Fifth Lateran Council held in 1513 actually had to forbid preaching about such topics.

⁶³³ Gow 1.

⁶³⁴ In the fragmentary edition by Guillaume Le Rouge, these events are actually illustrated by woodcuts.

terms. The trend continued into the sixteenth century with editions published in Troyes by Nicholas le Rouge (p. 1531) and in Lyons by Pierre de Saintelucie (p. 1555) that followed the model established by Husz. At the same time, Husz's work is also indicative of the continual practice of modifying the *Danse* and imbuing it with new texts and images. Chief among these is the *Printers* because it was such a departure from the established model (Fig. 10). While Marchant did invent the new male figures and the women's series, his woodcuts, novel as they may have been, nevertheless replicated the structure established by his first edition and by extension the mural from the Innocents. On the other hand, Husz's woodcut, which places Death in specific interior spaces, shifts the theme into a new direction and reveals an interest in rethinking the *Danse* in the medium of illustrated books before the sixteenth century.

This is particularly interesting in relation to Holbein's *Simulachres*. First published in Lyons in 1538 by the brothers Trechsel, the series is generally credited, even by scholars of macabre art, as the work that transformed and eventually completely replaced the medieval concept of the *Danse* (Figs. 16 and 17).⁶³⁵ Undoubtedly, Holbein's work is of incredible importance – artistically, it is far superior than any edition of the *Danse* and it offers radically new ways of representing the genre. However, I would argue that while different from the medieval *Danse*, Holbein's series is not as divergent from the illustrated books, such as the one published by Husz, as previously assumed. Following the trend of augmenting the *Danse* by insisting on a particular Christian narrative that defines Death – especially its origin and its consequence – Holbein expanded the framework of his series and began with Genesis and the *Creation of All Things*.⁶³⁶ The book then follows with *Adam and Eve in Paradise*, *The Expulsion*, a crucial moment in which Death entered the world, portrayed by Holbein with the skeleton holding a string instrument and

⁶³⁵ Both Gertsman and Kinch, the authors of the newest and most compelling studies on the *Danse* in English, dedicate significant space in their works to Holbein and his series. For a discussion of the innovative aspects of Holbein's series, see especially Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 169-180.

⁶³⁶ As stated in the previous chapters, it is possible that in designing the *Simulachres* Holbein was influenced by the *Mors* poem, which also begins with Adam and Eve and the Original Sin.

standing next to Adam, and *Adam Tilling the Soil*. Like Husz, Holbein ends the book with an image of the *Last Judgment* followed by the *Escutcheon of Death*, which portrays Death through emblematic coat of arms and an hourglass. As Gertsman argues, what Holbein depicts is “a comprehensive view of the history of the humankind, from Creation through the Last Judgment, with the Dance of Death as a necessary and repeating episode in this chain of events.”⁶³⁷ Placed at the beginning and the end of the book, the Fall and the Last Judgment in Holbein’s series denote the beginning and the end of time, while the rest of the woodcuts are set between these two events in order to demonstrate the progress of death in the mortal world.⁶³⁸ This is certainly a more comprehensive account of the role of Death in Christian terms than what we have seen in Husz’s volume, but the point is that the interest in expanding the religious framework of the *Danse* had already begun with the illustrated books a few decades before Holbein designed his series.

The same can be said about Husz’s innovative woodcut of the Printers and the Bookseller (Fig. 10). Despite the technical advances of Holbein’s *Simulachres*, there is not much difference between the composition of Husz’s woodcut and the Holbein’s series. Both works relocate the *Danse* from an unspecified exterior location to a particular place: a printing workshop, a busy harbor or a nun’s room (Figs. 10, 16 and 17). Both do away with the dance and depict figures caught by Death as they are completing their everyday activities: a bookseller seized by Death while working in his shop in Husz or a Merchant captured as he is unloading his packages from a ship docked in a harbor in Holbein. Finally, both Husz and Holbein created autonomous images that are able to function outside of the series in which they are placed. The *Printers* is part of the *Danse*, but it is also temporally and spatially divorced from it because the figures do not occupy the same environment as the rest of the dancers. Holbein’s engravings are even more fundamentally disconnected from one another because each character is structured within his or her uniquely composed scenes. In Holbein’s work, Death is no longer merely a dead companion that pulls the living into the dance, but Death personified – a singular,

⁶³⁷ Gertsman, *The Dance of Death* 170.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.* 172.

frightening and omnipresent threat. What is different between Husz's image and Holbein's series is that the latter splits the image from the text – the verses are biblical and not directly related to the prints – and the *Simulachres* is not nearly as didactic as the *Danse* and thus even more prone to diverse interpretations as studies by Natalie Zemon Davis and Peter Parshall have shown.⁶³⁹ According to Gertsman, the biblical verses in Holbein's series are aimed at the viewer as a form of commentary that elucidates the images.⁶⁴⁰ The cheeky dialogue between the main protagonists – the living and the dead and by extension the image and the viewer – that formed the core of the *Danse* is thus removed from this work. As a result, the complex interplay between reading, looking, and interpreting the *Danse* – that was essential to the medieval experience of the theme – is replaced by a different set of expectations, which detached the viewer from the image and turned him into an observer rather than an active participant.⁶⁴¹

The Viewer in the Book

In 1531 the printer Nicolas Le Rouge published an edition of the *Grant danse macabre des hōmes y des femes* in the city of Troyes (BN, Rés.- V-278). In its present state, the book is bound with Le Rouge's edition of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, which was also published in 1531. It is unlikely, however, that the works were published as a single edition – each book features its own title page and colophons at the end – but it is possible that the two books were owned by the same person and bound together in one volume shortly after they were purchased.

Even a provisional glance at Le Rouge's title page for the *Danse* reveals how much the medium of illustrated book has developed in the forty-six years since the publication of Marchant's first edition in 1485 (Fig. 66). While Marchant's book featured no title page, not even the printer's mark, Le Rouge's book presents a title

⁶³⁹ See Zemon Davis, "Holbein's *Pictures of Death*" and Parshall, "Hans Holbein's *Pictures of Death*."

⁶⁴⁰ Gertsman 179.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.* 179.

page that in many ways resembles the covers of modern-day publications. Using the technique of printing with red and black ink, Le Rouge's title page incorporates both text and image. Commencing with the decorated initial "L" in the upper left corner of the page, the title of the book, *La grant danse macabre des hōmes y des femes hystoriee y augmetee de beaulx ditz en latin*, is printed in largest letters. Below it is a table of contents – again, printed in interchanging red and black ink – that includes six additional illustrated texts in the following order: *Le debat du corps et de l'ame*, *La complaincte de lame damnee*, *Exhortation de bien vivre et bien mourir*, *La vie du mauvais antechrist*, *Les quinze signes* and *Le iugement*.⁶⁴² In the middle of the page is the woodcut depicting the Four Dead Musicians, which open the *Danse*, and below it in red ink – to increase its advertising appeal, no doubt – is the publishing information and the address of Le Rouge's printing enterprise.⁶⁴³

As is evident from the title page, the book includes both men's and women's dances as well as the same additional works that were featured in Husz's volume, which suggests that by the 1530s the expanded version of the *Danse* became the norm. It is important to note, however, that Le Rouge's book is based entirely on Marchant version of woodcuts and does not include Husz's images of the Printers and the Bookseller or the illustration that accompanies the *Exhortation* poem. Nicholas came from the long line of printers and engravers of the Le Rouge family, together with Pierre and Guillaume, which originated in the town of Chablis but eventually moved their enterprise to Troyes in the Champagne region.⁶⁴⁴ In the fifteenth century, Troyes became noted for its paper making mills – the industry that eventually facilitated the spread of printing and publishing in the city. Nicholas seems to have been focused predominately on publishing illustrated books – he printed at least five editions of the *Danse* (1501, 1510, 1515, 1528 and 1531) –

⁶⁴² Much like Husz's volume, Le Rouge's edition includes the *Three Living* after both dances and the woodcuts that show the Apocalypse and the Mouth of Hell and the *Cry de Mort*, though these works are not listed in the table of contents.

⁶⁴³ The text reads: *Imprime a Troyes par Nicholas Le Rouge demourant en la grāt rue a lenseigne Sainct lehan levangeliste Au presla belle croix.*

⁶⁴⁴ See also Monceaux, *Les Le Rouge de Chablis*.

along with Books of Hours and the *Shepherd's Calendar*.⁶⁴⁵ According to Marie-Dominique Leclerc, it was probably one of the editions of the *Danse* published by Nicholas Le Rouge that was used as the model for the fresco painting at La Ferté-Loupière in Yonne, Burgundy made in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁶

In historical records, Le Rouge's name appears in relation to the spread of Calvinism in the region though more research is needed to understand exactly how this affected his printing practices, especially his illustrated books. In the registers of the bishop's court in Troyes in the early 1520s, the printer was accused of repeated offence for "producing 'superstitious' literature contrary to the Catholic faith", specifically prayers in Latin and French.⁶⁴⁷ The material left unsold was burned and Nicholas was fined. It appears that the printer was aware of the risks he was taking in producing the 'superstitious' work since he was warned before, but given the fact that most of his books were didactic in nature and that his printer's device contained the motto "*Mon coeur à Dieu*", religion was obviously important to him and he was willing to proceed despite the obvious objections from the official church.⁶⁴⁸

One of the most interesting aspects of the preserved copy of Le Rouge's 1531 edition of the *Danse* are marks left by the viewer, which may actually reflect the religious tensions of the period. In a number of woodcuts of the men's *Danse*, the faces of the dead are rubbed off or cut out, a practice seen even in the title page in which the third cadaver's face is partially damaged (Figs. 66 and 67). The same

⁶⁴⁵ For a list of books printed by Nicolas, see the USTC.

⁶⁴⁶ Leclerc, *Danser avec la Mort* 26.

⁶⁴⁷ Penny Roberts, *A City in Conflict: Troyes During the French Wars of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996) 33.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 33. According to Roberts, Le Rouge admitted to selling two copies of the contested material to friars minor, most likely from the convent of the Cordeliers, and it is exactly from within the religious orders in Troyes that the first calls for reform were issued. That Calvinism spread to Troyes early on is not surprising. The city was located on route from Paris to Geneva and it had ties with Meaux, which was the center of religious reforms in France. When it began to spread, Calvinist thought first attracted individuals working in the printing and textile industry in the city, which would explain Le Rouge's involvement in the matter. On this issue see also Mark W. Konnert, *Local Politics in the French Wars of Religion: The Towns of Champagne, the Duc de Guise, and the Catholic League, 1560-1595* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) especially pages 45-49.

interest in revising the image by cutting its parts – what Areford coins “visual subtractions” – is also seen in the woodcut of the black figure blowing the horn that follows the men’s *Danse*.⁶⁴⁹ Illustrating the poem *Dictz des trespassez*, the woodcut shows the same figure we have seen in Marchant’s and Husz’s editions, but this time completely missing his head, which was removed by the viewer. We will recall that in its present state this copy of the *Danse* is bound with Le Rouge’s edition of the *Shepherd’s Calendar* and it is worth noting that the similar marks are also present in that book, suggesting that a single viewer was involved in revising the images. For example, the woodcut with the black figure also appears in the *Shepherd’s Calendar* and in this book his entire body is damaged and missing.⁶⁵⁰ Moreover, much like the dead in the *Danse*, the faces of the devils in the *Shepherd’s Calendar* are cut out or erased and eventually patched up by plain pieces of paper (Fig. 68). One example is especially striking as it demonstrates both the viewer’s interest in removing aspects of the image, but also adding to it by including specific details. In the section of the *Shepherd’s Calendar* that illustrates the pains of Hell, the face of the devil that stands at the rim of the cauldron and boils sinners is completely cut out and replaced by blank paper (Fig. 69). Typically, this devil looks out at the viewer while pressing a pitchfork into the cauldron and the boiling bodies within. In Le Rouge’s work, however, he is now missing the face, but the viewer added a pom-pom to each of his horns so that it looks as if the devil is wearing the Fool’s hat (Fig. 70). This is not just an example of revising the image by subtracting from it certain elements, but actually an attempt to reformulate the entire implication of the work. By effacing the devil and transforming him into the Fool, the viewer was ridiculing the whole portrayal of Hell in Le Rouge’s work, rendering it inconsequential.

Such practice of modifying the printed image was not uncommon and it was, as Areford has shown, “just another way to interpret the image and reconfigure it to

⁶⁴⁹ Areford 69.

⁶⁵⁰ The same woodcut appears one other time, just before the *Danse macabre des femmes*, and this is the only instance in which the image is left intact.

fulfill a viewer's needs."⁶⁵¹ In the context of Le Rouge's book, the viewer was clearly equating the dead with devils and seeing them in negative terms since they were both effaced and removed from the work. This may be prompted by the fear – the notion that even looking at such faces is intrinsically dangerous – or by that viewer's particular religious and sectarian beliefs. In any case, the need to eradicate death from the images is especially curious given the fact that in the macabre discourse, the dead, though certainly threatening, do not signify devils and wickedness, but the essential aspects of the human condition, namely transience and mortality. In the book, the viewer was essentially denying Death the power to speak and interact with the living, which has been the pivotal aspect of the *Danse* from the beginning. The same can be said about the need to efface the black figure from Le Rouge's work. To an extent, he is meant to personify Death – in Le Rouge's book, the words "*Message de la Mort*" are actually included in the woodcut – and his role is to summon the dancers/sinners to their final procession (Fig. 71). Actually, he functions in much the same way as the angels who blow trumpets or horns in the depictions of the Last Judgment, announcing the end of time, except that he leads the dying and declares the end of the physical life. It is possible, especially given the religious turmoil of the period in which the books were published, that the viewer was uncomfortable with the overt insistence on sin and corporeal punishment that both works exude and hence revised the woodcuts to fit his own personal interest.⁶⁵²

An edition of the *Danse* published by an anonymous printer (BN, Rés-Ye-331) also features interesting additions made by the viewer. Printed in quarto format and published in Geneva in 1503, the book contains only the *Danse macabre des hommes* and the *Three Living*, all based on Vérard's version of woodcuts.⁶⁵³ However, this is a much simpler version of the *Danse* than Vérard's lavish volumes. The woodcuts are small and take up just the top part of the page, the rest being filled

⁶⁵¹ Areford 71.

⁶⁵² Not all examples of the viewer's interaction with the woodcuts in the volume involve subtraction. In at least one example, the woodcut showing the Halberdier (in the book, he is referred *Laventurier*) and the Fool, the viewer added decoration to the costumes of the two figures in a playful manner.

⁶⁵³ The book is smaller than earlier editions of the *Danse*, measuring 11.5cm x 17.5cm. The woodcuts are also significantly smaller, 8.5cm x 6cm.

with text. None of the images feature the arches and columns that typically frame the *Danse* and each woodcut portrays a single pair of dancing figures (Fig. 72). Moreover, the images are outlined by a thick, black border and the figures seem to occupy different spaces: an exterior location, an interior paved with checkered or diamond shaped tiles (Figs. 72 and 73). Although the cuts are made based on Vérard's images, the edition features thirty-four living figures, five of which (the Papal Legate, the Duke, the School Master, the Promoter and the Jailer) are borrowed from Marchant's augmented version. However, the woodcuts used to portray these figures are not Marchant's; instead they are merely repeats of the same images that are already featured in the book.⁶⁵⁴ The work does not include a title page – it begins with the figure of the Author that is typically shown at the end of the *Danse* – and ends with a simple colophon that reads: "*Cy fine la dace macabre avecques les ditz des troys mors et de troys vifz. Imprime a genesve lan Mil. ccccc. iiii.*"⁶⁵⁵

Of particular interest for the present discussion is the last page of the book that depicts the repeated image of the Author seated in front of the Dead King, the only figure who has actually died in the *Danse* (Fig. 74). In the context of the *Danse*, the last scene can be difficult to interpret. Is the prostrated body of cadaver shown next to the toppled crown a reference to the figure of the King depicted at the beginning of the procession, who wears a crown, or is it meant to represent the king of the dead in a metaphorical sense? The verses that accompany the figure seem to allude that the former is true ("*Si ay je este roy couronnez*") yet remain fairly vague and address the viewer of the image and not the figure of the Author:

Vous: qui en ceste portraiture

Veez danser estas divers

Pensez que humaine nature:

⁶⁵⁴ For example, the woodcut depicting the Cardinal is also used to portray the Papal Legate. Likewise, the woodcut for the Lawyer also stands for the Promoter and the figure of the Sergeant becomes the Jailer in the latter part of the book.

⁶⁵⁵ It is also worth noting that the second page of the book includes the four strophes of the verses delivered by the Four Dead Musicians, though they are not illustrated. It appears that by the early sixteenth century, elements added by Marchant in his augmented edition were becoming accepted as the norm.

*Ce nest fors que viande a vers
Je le monstre qui gys envers
Moy qui estoys roy couronne
Telz seres vous bons et pervers
Tous estas sont a vers dōnes.*⁶⁵⁶

Portrayed on the right hand side of the image, the Author holds one end of a large banderole, the other tip being held by an angel in the top left corner. As in the opening page, the banderole was left blank by the printer, but in the final image the viewer added several lines of text in French (Fig. 75).⁶⁵⁷ According to Areford, it was not uncommon for early printers to leave images of banderols, scrolls or even open books empty and they were almost certainly meant to be inscribed by the users, facilitating the interactive relation between the book and its viewer.⁶⁵⁸ Although only parts of the inscription from the banderole are legible, the viewer was clearly relating the image of the Author with the Dead King to his own historical context. Containing the words “...*le roy Charles Roy de France est...*” the writing on the banderole may be a reference to King Charles VIII who died a few years before the book was printed, in April of 1498.⁶⁵⁹ On the other hand, if the banderole was inscribed later in the sixteenth century, it could also relate to Charles IX (d. 1574), who was involved

⁶⁵⁶ The verses are transcribed from Marchant’s edition of the *Danse* printed in Paris between September 1485 and June of 1486 (BN Rés.-Ye-88). It should be pointed out that this is the only example in the *Danse* in which there is no dialogue featured between the two protagonists. As stated, the Dead King addresses the viewer and not the Author. Likewise, the Author offers a lengthy didactic summary of the usefulness of thinking about death and living a pious life.

⁶⁵⁷ In most other editions of the *Danse* the banderole features printed text in Latin.

⁶⁵⁸ Areford 69.

⁶⁵⁹ I wish to thank Professors Carol Knicely and Chantal Phan for their help in transcribing the inscriptions on the banderole. Charles died young, at the age of 28. His death was deemed an accident – he hit his head on a lintel of a door – though some factions within the French court believed that he was murdered. Charles left no heirs and was succeeded by Louis XII from the Orléans cadet branch of the Valois dynasty.

in the French Wars of Religion.⁶⁶⁰ However, regardless of which King Charles the inscription refers to – further research may determine this more precisely and it is certainly a crucial point – the fact that the writing relates the image to a specific historical figure and not to a larger religious doctrine is significant. Despite its didactic origin, the *Danse*, as discussed in the earlier chapters, was often understood as a poignant political allegory.⁶⁶¹ This is true as much for the painted examples – the lost mural from the Innocents being perhaps the best and the most researched case – but also apparently for the illustrated books. Contrary to the argument advanced by Kinch and others according to which the viewer could not escape the doctrinally rigid framework of the books and was thus driven solely “by individual devotional concerns”, the copy of the Geneva edition alludes to the possibility that the users of the books could understand the *Danse* as a didactic in multiple terms.⁶⁶²

Even the copy of Husz’s edition at the British Library contains marks of the reader. On the page that features the Author with the Dead King at the end of the men’s *Danse* (folio c¹r), the viewer added lines on the Author’s hat and collar, which mimic the shading used in the woodcuts throughout the volume. The Author’s chair is also embellished with further additions to the carving on the side. Moreover, in the section on the *Debate*, on folio f⁴r, the margins are filled with inscriptions made by the reader. In the left margin are individual letters, as if someone was practicing writing. In the bottom are two annotations, one in French and the other, seemingly in Dutch. The French inscription reads: “*Plus penser que dire*”, while the verses in Dutch begin with: “*Kinderen die niet en willen leeren....*” The former was used in heraldic devices, including the coat of arms for the town of Bar-le-Duc, located in the

⁶⁶⁰ Nothing is known about the provenance of the work, which would perhaps help to ‘date’ the inscription.

⁶⁶¹ For example, in an article discussing the political contexts surrounding the creation of the mural from the Innocents, I argued that the figure of the Dead King almost certainly took on a political dimension. At the time the mural was painted, in 1424-5, the political situation in France was dire. Both King Charles VI and his successor, the English King Henry V died three years earlier leaving the Dauphin (a bastard child of Charles VII) to battle with the English for the rights to the French Crown. See Dujakovic, “The Dance of Death, the Dance of Life” 206-232

⁶⁶² Kinch, “The *Danse Macabre*” 186.

Meuse region of Lorraine in northeastern France. The French motto may thus be a reference to a heraldic device of a family that owned the book – it was common to mark ownership of manuscripts and early printed books by adding the coat of arms – or an allusion to the town in which the owner lived. On the other hand, the Dutch verses are more difficult to ascertain and further research into the provenance of the book is needed before they can be explained.

The examples listed above are by no means the only copies of the *Danse* that include reader's marks. I have already discussed Vérard's vellum copy from the BN that contains notes made by the viewer, but there are other cases as well. An incomplete copy of the *Danse* preserved at the British Library (IA. 40884), published on July 23, 1500 in Paris by Nicole de la Barre, is interesting because it contains printed pages as well as folios that are hand painted and hand written, some perhaps in the hands of the viewer.⁶⁶³ In addition, a copy of Marchant's 1499 edition of the *Shepherdesses' Calendar* (British Library, IB. 39718), which features the *Danse macabre des femmes* in the last section of the book, is heavily annotated on many pages by the hand of different users.⁶⁶⁴ These copies point to the different ways in which the viewer was involved with the book and reveal layers of reception – some historical or political, others defiant – that complicate the singular way in which the illustrated books and their audience have been discussed in the past.

Editions of the *Danse* form a link between between the traditional mural examples and the sixteenth century reiterations of the theme, most notably Holbein's printed series. Despite being the products of mechanical reproduction, each edition is unique and reveals specific concerns in representing the *Danse* on the part of the printer or publisher. While the first edition replicated the mural from the Innocents and translated it into the medium of print, subsequent editions sought to expand the traditional framework of the *Danse* by including new figures or additional didactic and eschatological texts and thus distanced the illustrated book from the original painted model out of which it emerged. More than being mere distributors of the

⁶⁶³ This edition is similar to the Geneva copy by the anonymous printer (BN, Rés-Ye-331), though it contains more images.

⁶⁶⁴ For example, on the back of the title page is a long paragraph in Latin written by the reader that begins with the following words: "*Omnibus Christi fidelibus.*"

printed books, printers and publishers actually had a pivotal role in articulating specific aspects of the *Danse* through their selection of content and format in the works they produced. The diversity of formats in which the books circulated – black and white folios, printed and hand painted vellum copies and even a placard – allude to the transitional nature of bookmaking in the late fifteenth century while also reflecting the varied tastes of readers in the period. While some may have been interested in fulfilling Marchant's vision of the *Danse* as the Salutory Mirror and viewed the book as a self-help guide in their quest for salvation, there were also others who were drawn to the theme for entirely different purposes. The medium reduced the audience of the *Danse* from a community at large to a single viewer exploring the book in private and facing Death alone.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

On March 15, 1555, Pierre de Sainte Lucie (Saintelucie) published an edition of the *Danse* in Lyons.⁶⁶⁵ Titled *La grand danse macabre des homes et des femmes*, the 40-folio book was printed on paper and published in quarto format. De Sainte Lucie's book was almost certainly modeled after Husz's edition of the *Danse* as it contains the same sections and many of the same woodcuts, including a version of the *Printers* (Fig. 76). Continuing with the tradition of modifying the printed image of the *Danse*, de Sainte Lucie's woodcut is a simplified adaptation of Husz's initial image (Figs. 10 and 76).⁶⁶⁶ Instead of an elaborate frame with two arches and a column portrayed in Husz's woodcut, de Sainte Lucie's image features only part of a carved arch in the upper left corner. While Husz's version includes three cadavers that take away the Printers and the Bookseller, de Sainte Lucie's woodcut depicts a single figure of Death placed in the middle of the image. Most crucially, de Sainte Lucie's version revises Husz's image by eliminating the space of the bookstore and the figure of the Bookseller, focusing instead only on the Compositor, shown on the left in front of a slanted type case, and the two Printers standing on either side of the printing press.

⁶⁶⁵ A sole copy of this edition is preserved at the British Library (C.47.h.12). The book measures 18.5 x 26.5cm.

⁶⁶⁶ The transcribed title of de Sainte Lucie's edition is: *La grand danse macabre des homes des femes hystoriee et augmentee de beaulx dictz en Latin. Le debat du corps y de lame. La complaincte de lame damnee. Exhortation de bien vivre y bien mourir. La vie du mauvais Antechrist. Les quinze signes. Le iugement.* The edition features an elaborate title page, with the names of the illustrated poems printed in interchanging red and black ink and the woodcut showing the image of the Four Dead Musicians. Below the illustration, printed in red ink, is the information regarding the de Sainte Lucie's workshop in Lyons: *On les vend a Lion sur le Rosne / par Pierre de Saintelucte dict le Prince / Imprimeur pres nostre Dame de Confort.*

Like Husz before him, in order to adapt the image, de Sainte Lucie had to hire an artist to design the woodcut – likely the same individual who worked on the other illustrations in the book, which are characterized by a cruder aesthetic – as well as a writer to adjust the verses of the accompanying poem. While the text printed below Husz’s woodcut featured dialogues between Death and the Printers, as a group, and Death and the Bookseller, de Sainte Lucie’s version focuses instead on the conversation between Death and the Compositor and Death and the Printers. The changes made to the verses in de Sainte Lucie’s version are subtle, only several lines are altered; yet the implications of the revised text and image are indicative of the different status of the printing industry by the mid-sixteenth century.

As I argued in previous chapters, Husz’s *Printers* captures the process of printing and functions as an advertisement that showcases the new technology and the whole enterprise of making and selling books. While it conveys certain features typical of the *Danse*, the playful dialogue between the living and the dead or the way the image implicates the viewer, for example, it also diverges from the conventional model of representing the theme by emphasizing the scope of the printing and bookselling vocations. Husz’s woodcut portrays the printers in a unique manner, as a group of workers that are involved in and responsible for a particular step in the printing process, while the accompanying verses highlight the range and importance of their work. When Death approaches them to join the dance, the printers reply by listing their accomplishments and suggesting that they aim to please the diverse demands of the people for books (*Imprime avons tous les cours / De la sainte theologie loix decret y poeterie / Par nostre art plusieurs sont grans clers / Relevee en est clergie / Les vouldoirs des gens sont divers*). Moreover, by depicting two distinct spaces, the printing workshop and the bookstore, Husz’s image underlines the integral link between printers and booksellers that characterized the beginnings of the industry in France. Accomplished bookseller-publishers, like Vérard or Petit, who traded equally in printed books and manuscripts and encouraged collaborative practices between scribal and printing workshops were, as I argued, essential for the success of many printing establishments, especially those that focused on the production of illustrated works.

However, in de Sainte Lucie's version of the *Printers* the interest in promoting the industry appears more subdued. Not only is the figure of the Bookseller eliminated from the image, thus dissipating the fundamental link between the two professions, but the verses, especially those assigned to the Composer, seem more limiting in scope. Their focus is not so much on the promotion of the printing profession, as on the specific details of the Composer's work that Death strips away. For instance, Death asks him to let go of letters and fonts (*Lettres y capses fault laisse*), while in turn the Composer complains that he will miss the noise of the printing press (*Laisser le bruyur de la presse*) and the forme, which he used to compose the lines of text (*Ma forme fault que la laisse*). Perhaps because by the mid-sixteenth century the technology of printing was no longer the novelty it was during Husz's career, de Sainte Lucie did not deem it necessary to promote the profession so heartily; yet the dialogue between Death and the Composer is closer in style to the verses that accompanied other living figures in the *Danse*, all of which lament the loss of what is unique to their particular status or occupation.

Although, as de Sainte Lucie's edition demonstrates, the interest in the printed image of the *Danse* continued well into the sixteenth century, the popularity of the books reached their pinnacle in the early years of printing in France, c.1480-1510s. The ambiguous nature of the *Danse*, which could be understood both as a stern moralizing lesson or a satirical allegory that ridicules social hierarchies, and the theme's propensity for adaptation must have been the main reasons that early printers were drawn to the subject matter. Actually, I would argue that the *Danse* perfectly complemented or even encouraged the entrepreneurial nature of the early printing industry because it allowed for augmentations, adaptations and constant experiments with the theme. In the context of the early printing industry when publishing illustrated books was a costly and risky venture, editions of the *Danse* prompted collaborations between printers, publishers, illuminators and booksellers, which further popularized the theme and helped to secure the success of the publications.

The potential for alterations of the *Danse* in the medium of print were almost limitless. The printer could augment the dancing procession by adding new living

protagonists, he could extend the public's interest in the theme by publishing a volume dedicated solely to women or he could simply issue an edition in a different language and thus appeal to a particular group of readers. Furthermore, the adaptability of the theme helped to place the printed image of the *Danse* in editions of varying contents and mediums, from Marchant's *Salutary Mirror* books and Vérard's hand-painted vellum copies to Vostre's and Pigouchet's printed Books of Hours where it served as border illustrations. The composite nature of the printed editions of the *Danse*, particularly those published in the 1490s in which verses and images are assembled from a selection of diverse sources, also meant that a printer had to supply the editing context and establish the narrative framework for each book, requirements that further expanded and complicated the scope of the printing profession.

The *Danse* was an ideally suited theme for illustrated books because its composition depended equally on the visual and the textual elements and required an active participation on the part of the viewer in the processes of looking and reading. Editions of the *Danse* emphasize the integral link between the text and the image in the physical layout of their pages. In Marchant's editions, the Dance of Death woodcuts are situated between shorter columns of text above and longer ones below, which delegates equal amount of space on the page to both verses and illustrations (Figs. 29 and 30). Such connection between text and image is present even in the sections of the book that typically feature fewer illustrations. For instance, in the *Debat*, which usually includes one large woodcut at the beginning of the poem and several smaller ones scattered throughout the text, the elongated rectangular shape of the smaller woodcuts actually mimics the layout of verses on the page (Fig. 51).

Emerging out of scribal culture and still heavily influenced by it, the fifteenth-century illustrated book was a unique product of the transitional period. Editions of the *Danse*, but also of the *Shepherd's Calendar* and other illustrated texts, were developed by printers who, attracted to the possibility of expanding the market for their books, established connections with artists, illuminators and woodcutters and perfected the technique of printing with woodcuts. Mainly published in vernacular,

the illustrated books produced until c. 1530s were characterized by woodcuts that were meant to elucidate and complement the text.⁶⁶⁷ However, as Chrisman has shown, the interest in illustrated books was not maintained through the sixteenth century.⁶⁶⁸ Although illustrated books did not disappear after the 1530s – editions of the *Shepherd's Calendar* were printed throughout the sixteenth century, for example – the use of illustrations in the printed books did decrease significantly. Perhaps prompted by the rise in literacy, images were no longer used in combination with the text, but mainly as embellishments that were only symbolically linked to the main theme of the book.⁶⁶⁹ As a result, the quality of illustrations lessened and they were reduced in size taking much less space on the page than the text.

Some of the changes that marked the illustrated books in the sixteenth century are evident in de Sainte Lucie's woodcut (Fig. 76). While his edition of the *Danse* has the full complement of texts as Husz's earlier version, the production is less elaborate, especially in the quality of the images. Defined by a simplified, almost cartoonish aesthetic, de Sainte Lucie's *Printers* lacks the details present in Husz's rendition (Figs. 10 and 76). Not only is the space of the bookstore eliminated from de Sainte Lucie's illustration, but the portrayal of the three dimensional perspective is also less believable. Even though the tiled floor suggests that the figures occupy an interior space – the rest of the dancers in de Sainte Lucie's *Danse* are all placed outdoors – the background is left blank and no other indication is given of the specificities of the place.

De Sainte Lucie's edition of the *Danse* is indicative of the dwindling interest in the type of illustrated book that was popular in France in the early years of printing. Curiously, at the time when the presence of illustrations was diminishing in printed books, from the early sixteenth century onward, a number of artists, many of them professional painters, were increasingly turning to the medium of print as the means to propagate their work. For the present study, the work of Holbein is particularly important (Fig. 16 and 17). His *Simulachres* series was clearly influenced by the late-

⁶⁶⁷ Chrisman 106.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid. 106.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. 106.

medieval theme of the *Danse*, and perhaps even specific editions of the printed books; yet he completely transformed the subject matter by producing images that focus on individual encounters with Death. It could be argued that Holbein's *Simulachres* is not really an example of an illustrated book per se, but a series of independent, highly sophisticated images that are linked by a common theme. The complex interplay between image and text that characterized the early editions of the *Danse* is missing from Holbein's renditions in which the text is derived from the Bible and is only symbolically linked to the images. In contrast, the *Danse macabre* printed books produced at the end of the fifteenth century depended on the integration of text and image and encouraged the reader to engage in simultaneous acts of reading and looking (Figs. 29 and 30). The inherent adaptability of the *Danse* attracted the early printers to the theme creating a unique match of death and print, one that, ironically, brought life to the new industry.

FIGURES



Figure 1. The Author, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 2. The Pope and the Emperor, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 3. The Peasant and the Infant, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 4. The King, the Patriarch, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 5. The Burgher, the Curate and the Doctor, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 6. The Three Dead, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 7. The Three Living, *La danse macabre*, Meslay-le-Grenet (Eure-et-Loire), fresco, c.1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.

¶ dura premit miseris condicio vite. Nec mors humano subiacet arbitrio
Dado mori: mortem non hoc
 non impedit illud. Quomocunq;
 ferat fors data: vado mori.

Dado mori presens transactis
 equiparando. Si non transiui
 transeo vado mori.



Le mort

Vous faitez les bay se semble
 Cardinal: sus legierement
 Suivons les autres tous enséble
 Rien ny vault ebaissement.
 Vous avez vescu haultement:
 Et en honneur a grant deuis:
 Prenez en gre lesbatement.
 En grant honneur se pert laduis.

Le cardinal

Jay bien cause de mesbaïr
 Quant ie me voy de cy pres pris.
 La mort meït venue assallir:
 Plus ne vestiray vert. ne gris.
 Chapeau rouge. chappe de pris
 Ne fault laisser a grant destresse:
 Je ne lauoye pas apris.
 Toute toyte fine en tristesse.

Le mort

Venes noble roy couronne
 Renomme de force et de proesse
 Jadis fustez enuironne
 De grant pöpez de grant noblesse:
 Mais maintenât toute haultesse
 Lesseres: vous n'este pas seul.
 Peu ares de vostre richesse.
 Le plus riche na qui linceul.

Le roy

Je nay point apris a danser
 A danse et note si sauaigne:
 Las on peut veoir et penser
 Que vault orgueil. force. linaigne.
 Mort destruit tout: cest son vïage:
 Aussi tost le grant que le maindre
 Qui moing se prise plus est sage.
 En la fin fault denenir cendre.

Figure 8. The Cardinal and the King, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Ye. 189.

Hic est hic hof temp cum tpe labi. Et sp quadā ditiōe mori. Et hols nudū nafci nu
 dūq reuerti. Et hols putrere folo limōq fateri. Et miseris gradibus in cinere dūgi.
 kies & opes pstantur / & famulantur ad hozam. Et locuplex mane vespere paup erit.



Omnia cesar erat & gloria cesaris esse destinit / & tumulus hic era octo pedum.

Le premier mort.

Vous qui par diuine sentence
 Qui viuez en estatz diuers
 Tous denserez en ceste danse
 Une fois & bons & peruers
 Et si ferons mengez de bers
 Vos corps / helas regardez nous
 Hols / porris / puans descouiers
 Comme sommes telz serrez vous.

Le second mort

Dites nous par quelles raisons
 Vous ne pensez point a mourir
 Quant la mort va en vos maison
 Hui lung / demain laultre querir
 Sans quon vous puisse secourir
 Cest mal beueu de ny penser
 Et trop grant dangier de perir
 Force est quil faille ainsi denser

Le tiers mort.

Entendez ce que ie vous ditz
 Jeunes & viculz petis & grans
 De iour en iour selon les ditz
 Des saiges vous allez mourans
 Car vos cueurs vont diminuant
 Pourquoi tous serrez trespassez
 Ceulz qui viuent deuant cent ans
 Las cent ans seront tous passez

Le quart mort.

Deuant quil soyent cent ans passez
 Tous les vians comme ie dis
 De ce monde seront passez
 En enfer ou en paradis
 Mon compaignon / mais ie te ditz
 Peu de gens sont qui ayent cure
 Des trespassez ne de nos ditz
 Le fait deulz gist en auanture

a ii

Figure 9. Four Dead Musicians, *La Grant danse macabre des hommes y des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-V-278.

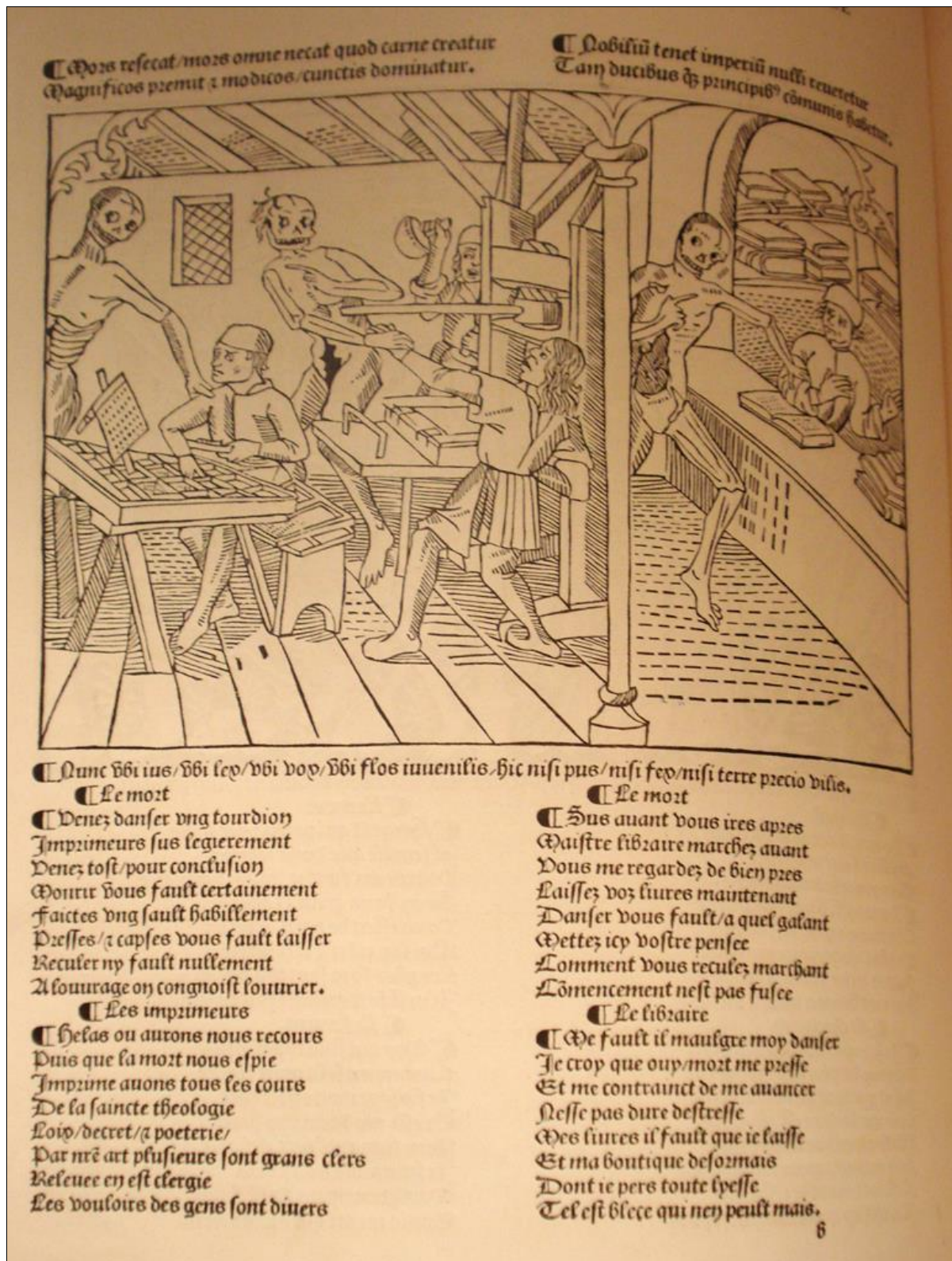


Figure 10. The Printers and the Bookseller, *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.



Figure 11. The King, *La danse macabre*, illuminated manuscript, c.1500, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. fr. 995, folio 3.



Figure 12. *La danse macabre*, La Ferté-Loupière, Yonne (Burgundy), fresco, c. 1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.

¶ Dado mozi videat quod currat quisq; superstes
 Cursor habet mecum dicere vado mozi.

¶ Dado mozi misero sententia dura beato
 Orata mozi sequitur viuere vado mozi.



¶ Es probus/expira probitas/honestus/honestas. Si fueris fortia morte cadunt.

¶ Le mort

¶ Legat vous estes arreste
 Dehors ne prez ie vous affie
 Tenez vous seur et apreste
 Pour mourir ie vous certifie
 Que mort auourd'hui vous deffie
 Entendez y cest vostre fait
 En vie longue nul ne se fie
 Le vouloit de dieu sera fait.

¶ Le legat

¶ Du pape ie auoye la puissance
 Se ne fust cest empeschement
 Daler come legat en france
 Mais faire me fault autrement
 Car mourir voiz/quant ou coment
 Ne en quel lieu ie ne scay pas
 Dieu est qui le fet seulement
 Mort suit l'homme pas apres pas.

¶ Le mort

¶ Tresnoble duc renom auez
 D'auoir fait par vostre proesse
 Par tout ou vous estes trouuez
 Beaulx faitz d'armes et de noblesse
 Monstres cy vostre hardiesse
 Et dances pour gaigner le pris
 Les humains/mort chasser ne cesse
 Les grans souuent sont premier pris.

¶ Le duc

¶ De mort suis assailly tressort
 Et ne scay tout pour me deffendre
 Je voy que la mort le plus fort
 Comme le foible tend a prendre
 Que doy ie faire il fault lattendre
 Pacientment et de bon cuer
 A dieu de ses biens grace rendre
 Haut estat nest pas le plus seur.

Figure 14. The Legate and the Duke, *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

¶ Vado mori senioꝝ iam finis temporis inflat
Jamqꝫ patet mortis ianua / vado mori.

¶ Vado mori pulcre visu. mors ipsa decori
Del forme nescit pattere / vado mori.



¶ Bis duo sunt que cordetenus sub pectorem ipsi. Mors mea / iudicium / baratri nos / sup paradisi.

¶ Le mort

¶ Homme d'armes plus riens ne reste
Allez sans faire resistance
Ly ne pouez faire conqueste.
¶ Vous aussi homme d'astinence
Chartreux / prenez en patience
De plus viure n'avez memoire
Faites vous valloir a la danse
Sur tout homme mort a victoire.

¶ Le chartreux

¶ Je suis au monde pieca mort
Parquoy de viure ay moins enuie
Faisoit que tout homme craint mort
Puis que la chair est assouye
Plaise a dieu que lame rauye
Soit es cieulx apres mon trespas
Lest tout neant de ceste vie
Tel est huy qui demain nest pas.

¶ Le mort

¶ Sergent qui portez ceste mace
Il semble que vous rebellez
Pournant faites vous la grimace
Se on vous greue si appellez
Vous estes de mort appellez
Qui luy rebelle il se decoit
Les plus fors sont tost rauallez
Il nest fort qu'auussi fort ne soit.

¶ Le sergent

¶ Voy qui suis royal officier
Comme mose la mort fraper
Je faisoye mon office hyper
Et elle me vient huy haper
Je ne scay quel part eschaper
Je suis prins deca ⁊ dela
Qu'aultre moy me laisse haper
Enuis meurt qui apres ne la.

Figure 15. The Carthusian and the Sergeant, *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

Est via quæ videtur homini iusta: nouissima
autem eius deducunt hominem ad
mortem.

PROVER. IIII



Telle uoye aux humains est bonne,
Et a l'homme tresiuste semble.
Mais la fin d'elle a l'homme donne,
La Mort, qui tous pecheurs assemble,

Figure 16. The Nun, *Les simulachres et historiees faces de la mort*, designed by Hans Holbein, Lyons, 1538, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Z-1990.

Qui congregat thesauros mendacij vanus
& excors est, & impingetur ad laqueos
mortis.

PROVER. XXI



Vain est cil qui amassera
Grandz biens, & tresors pour mentir;
La Mort l'en fera repentir.
Car en ses lacz surpris sera.

Figure 17. The Merchant, *Les simulachres et historiees faces de la mort*, designed by Hans Holbein, Lyons, 1538, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Z-1990.

Dilecte vos chorea cuncti qui cernitis ista: Et comune mori: mors nulli parcat
 Quantum proffit honor: gloria: diuicie. honori. Mors fera: mors neq: mors
 Tales etis enim natura morte futuri: nulli parcat: et equam cunctis dat
 Quales in effigie mortua turba vocat. legem. tollit cum paupere regem.



Lacteur

O creature roysonnable
 Qui desires vie eternelle.
 Tu as cy doctrine notable:
 Pour bien finer vie mortelle.
 La danse macabre s'appelle:
 Que chascun a danser apprant.
 A homme et femme est naturelle.
 Mort ne spare petit ne grant.

En ce miroer chascun peut lire
 Qui le conuient ainsi d'aler.
 Celuy est eureux qui bien si mire.
 Le mort le vifz fait auancer.
 Tu dois les plus grant com'acer:
 Car il nest nul que mort ne fier.
 Cest piteuse chose y panser.
 Tout est forgie d'une matiere.

A.ii

Figure 18. The Author, *La danse macabre*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, between September 1486 and June 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Ye-88.

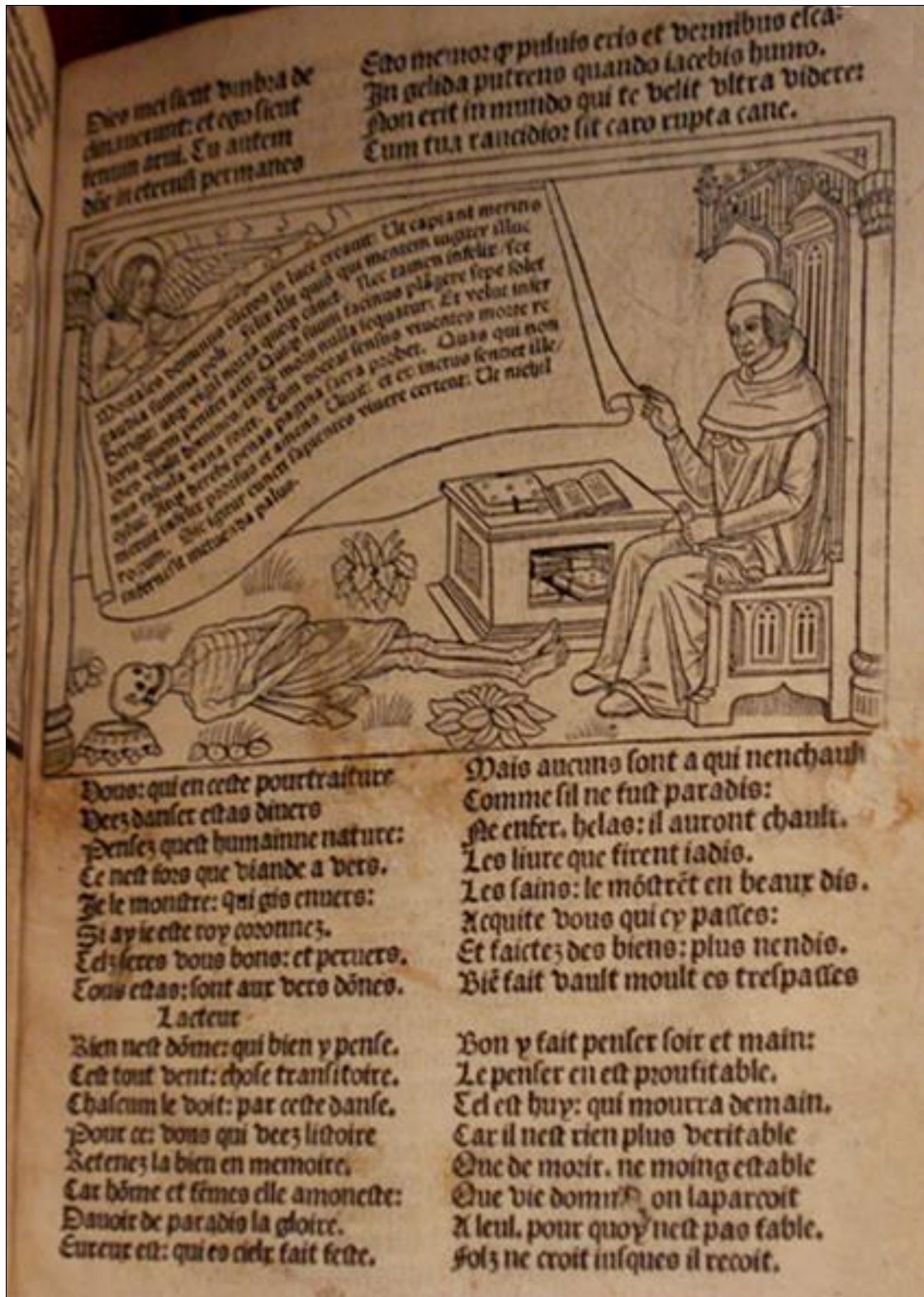


Figure 19. The Author with the Dead King, *La danse macabre*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, between September 1486 and June 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Ye-88.

Figure 20. Anonymous, *The Cemetery and the Church of the Holy Innocents*, c. 1570, oil on wood, Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

Figure 20 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It showed the view of the Cemetery and the Church of the Holy Innocents in Paris. The image can be viewed at: <http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/cemetery-and-church-of-the-innocents-flemish-school-from-news-photo/463907291?Language=en-GB>



Figure 21. The Abbot and the Bailiff, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine V  rard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 279.



Figure 22. The Author, The Pope and the Emperor, the Monk and the Usurer, the Doctor and the Lover, *La danse macabre*, printed by Pierre Le Rouge for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1491-92, originally printed as a placard and hand painted, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Te-8.



Figure 23. The Archbishop and the Knight, the Bishop and the Squire, the Franciscan and the Infant, the Cleric and the Hermit, *La danse macabre*, printed by Pierre Le Rouge for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1491-92, originally printed as a placard and hand painted, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-T-e-8.

iste moritur robustus et sanus: dives et felix: viscera eius plena sunt adipe: et medullis ossa eius irrigantur. alius vero moritur in amarit udine anime sue absq; vllis opibus et tamen simul in puluere dormiet: et vermes operient eos.



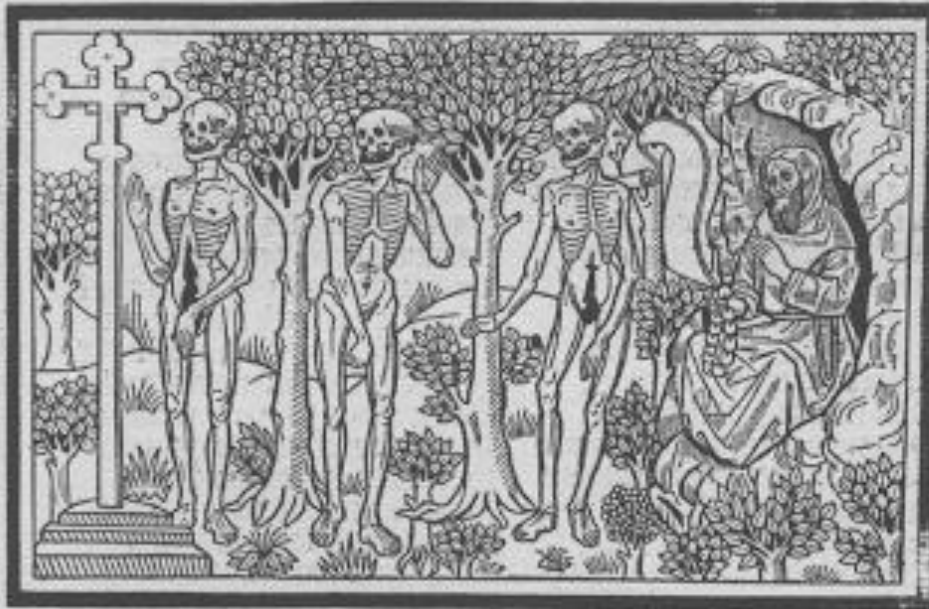
Le premier vif.

O sainte croix par ta puissance
 Don ie voy cy la remembrance.
 Garde mon corps: et ne consens
 Que ie perde aujourduy le sens.
 Pour ceste gent hydeuse et morte
 Que telz nouvelles nous apporte
 Nouvelles dures et peruerles:
 Las: entre les choses diuerses
 Touchans nostre fragilite.
 De quoy nous ont dit verite
 Non poure cuer de paour treble:
 Quāt trois mors aisi voit esemble
 Deffigures: hydeux diuers.
 Tous pourris: et menges de vers.
 Le premier dit: bien men souuient
 Que mort enduret nous conuient
 A grant angosse et grant doule ur
 Dont il me fist muer couleur

Et des ames dist vne chose:
 Que declairer ne veult ne nose
 Je croy cest de leur dampnement
 En enfer perdurablement
 Telz nouvelles ne sont pas bones
 Las: nous chetifnes personne s:
 A quoy nos fist oncques dieu naistre
 En ce meschant monde pour estre
 Si tost liurez a tel odure
 De ma vie nauray iamais cure
 Quant ie voy que les ges qui vinēt
 Tant de malenrte ensuluent
 Que ie prise troup mieuilz assez
 Le pouure estat des trespassez
 Car tousiours sans fin durer a
 Ou cely des vivans finera
 Et en l'estat que tousiours dure
 Chascun viure doit mettre cure.

Figure 24. The Three Living, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Ye. 189.

Vos estis in hoc mundo sicut navis super mare. Semper in periculo:
 semper timens accubare. Prævigilanti oculo deberetis remigare.
 Ne bibatis de poculo dicit mortis et amare.



Le premier mort

Se nous vous aporions nouvelles
 Qui ne soient ne bonnes ne belles:
 A plaisir, ou a desplaisance,
 Prendre vous fault en patience.
 Car ne peut estre autrement.
 Beaux amis: tout premierement
 Non obstant quelconque richesse:
 Puissance honneur force ou femme
 Sous vous dedons tout de voir
 Qui vous convient mort recevoir
 Une mort helas: si douloureuse:
 Si amere: sy angoisseuse:
 Que les mors qui en sont delivre:
 Ne voudroient iamais revivre:
 Pour mourir encor de tel mort
 Et apres quant vous serez mort
 Tout ainsi que pourres frans
 Vous serez hydeux, et puans.

Des nostres: et de nos liuree
 Et vous ames seront liuree
 Je nen dis plus: mais cest d u pire.
 Il me souffit assez de dire
 De vos meschans corps la misere
 Qui ne sont pas dautre matere
 Certainnemēt ne que nous sommes
 Sa guere estions puissans homes
 Or sommes telz comme voyez
 Se vous voules si pourvoyez.
 Et bien y devez pourvoir
 Quant en nous vous poneyz voir.
 Comme de vous il aduendra
 Et quel lonier mort vous rendra
 Car vos corps q sont pleins dordure
 Aller fera a pourriture.
 Telz come vous vn teps no^s fumes
 Tel serez vous comme no^s sommes.

Figure 25. The Three Dead, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Ye. 189.



Figure 26. The Three Living and the Three Dead, *La danse macabre*, La Ferté-Loupière, Yonne (Burgundy), fresco, c. 1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.

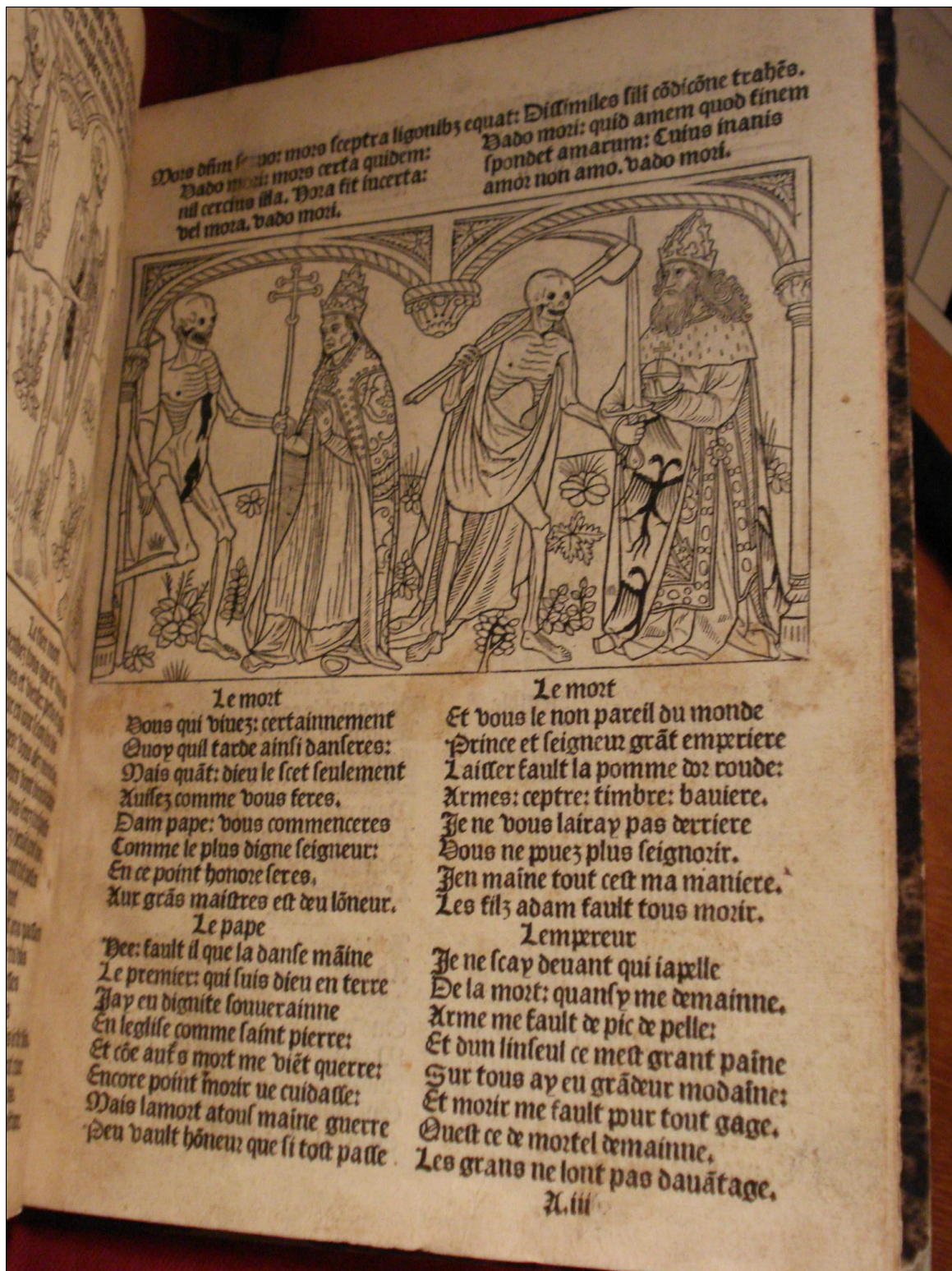


Figure 27. The Pope and the Emperor, *La danse macabre*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, between September 1486 and June 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.-Ye-88.

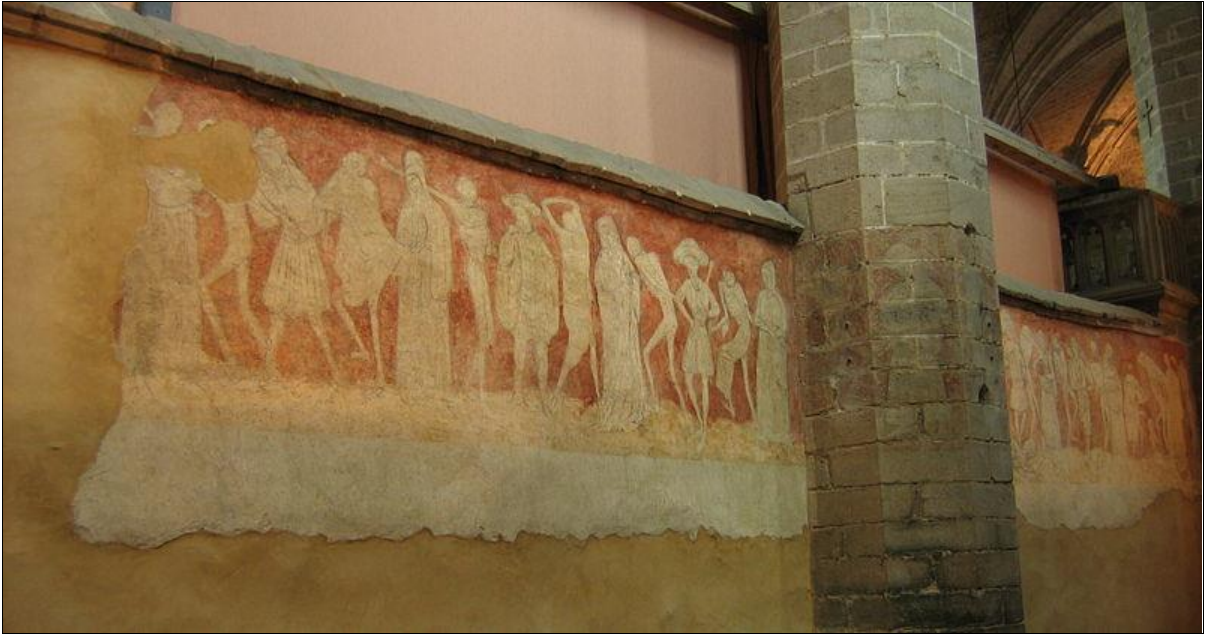


Figure 28. *La danse macabre*, La Chaise-Dieu, Auvergne, c.1470. Photo credit: Alexander Hoernikg.

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Occurrunt aīo pereundi mille figure. Mors q̄ min⁹ pene q̄ mora mortis habet
 Dado mori presul: baculum. Dado mori miles: belli certami
 sādalia. mittram. solens sine ne victor. Mortem non didici
 volens defero: vado mori. vincere: vado mori.

Le mort

Que vous tires la teste arriere
 Archeuesque: tire vous pres.
 Aues vous peur qu'on ne vo⁹ siere
 Ne doutez: vous ventres apres.
 Ne pas tousiours la mort epres
 Tout hōme: et le suit coste a coste.
 Rendre conuient debtes. et prestz.
 Une fois fault compter a loite.

L'archeuesque

Las: ie ne scay ou regarder
 Tāt suis par mort a grant destroit
 Ou fuyray ie pour moy aider:
 Certes qui bien la congnoistroit
 Dois de raison iamais nistroit:
 Plus ne gerray en chambre paite.
 Mourir me conuient cest le droit.
 Quāt faire fault cest grāt cōtraite.

Le mort

Dous qui entre les grans barons
 Aues eu renom cheualier:
 Obliez trompettes. clarons.
 Et me suiues sans sommellier.
 Les dames folies reueillier:
 En faisant danser longue piece.
 A autre danse fault veillier
 Ce que lun fait lautre depiece.

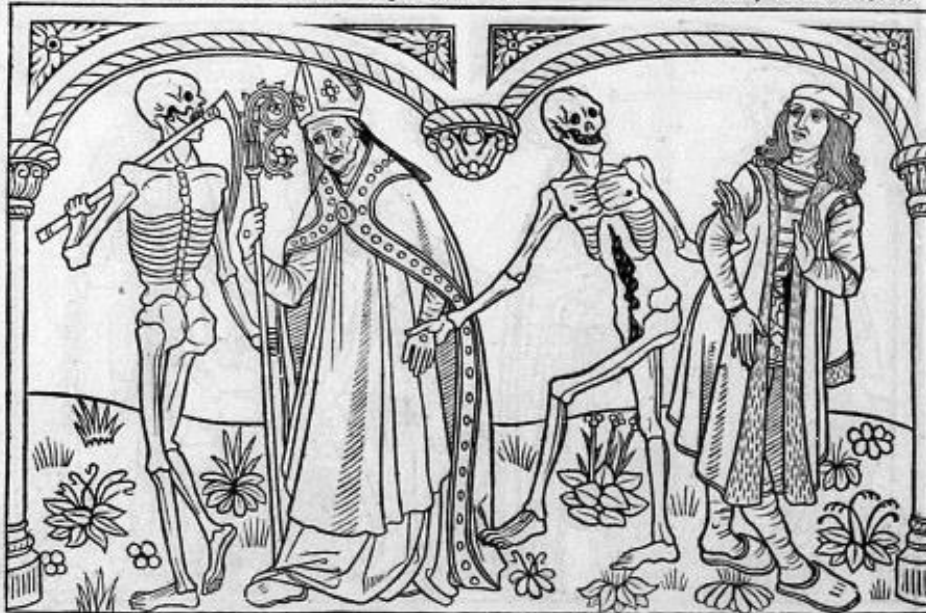
Le cheualier

Oz ay ie este autorise
 En pleuseurs fais: et bien fame:
 Des grans. et des petis prise.
 Auec ce des dames ame.
 Ne oncques ne fus diffame
 A la court de seigneur notable:
 Mais a ce cop suis tout palme
 Dessoubz le ciel na rien estable.

Figure 29. The Archbishop and the Knight, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Ye. 189.

Homo natus de muliere breui diuēs tēpē
repletur multis miseris. qui quasi flos
egreditur ⁊ confertur. et fugit velut
ūbra: et nunq̄ in eodem statu permanet.

Dado mori: genitus de
languine nobiliori.
Nec genus inducias
dat michi, vado mori.



Le mort

Tantost naurez baillant ce pic
Des biens du monde. et de nature.
Euesque: de vous il est pic
Non ostant vostre prelature.
Vostre fait git en aventure.
De vos subges fault rēdre compte:
A chascun dieu ser a droieture.
Nest pas asseur q̄ trop hault mōte.

Leuesque

Le cueur ne me peult esioir
Des nouvelles que mort maporte
Dieu vouldra de tout compte oir:
Cest ce que plus me desconforte:
Le monde aussi: peu me conforte
Qui tous a la fin desherite.
Il retient tout: nul rien nemporte
Tout ce passe fors le merite.

Le mort

Auance vous gent escuier
Qui saues de danser les tours.
Lance pourties: et escu hier:
Et huy vous fineres vos iours.
Il nest rien qui ne praigne cours.
Dansez: et panser de fuit.
Vous ne poues auoir secours.
Il nest: qui mort puisse fuit.

Lescuier

Puis que mort me tient en ses las
Aumoins que ie puisse vn mot dire.
A dieu deduis: a dieu solas:
A dieu dames plus ne puis rire.
Pensez de la vie: qui desire
Repos. ne vous chaille plus tant
Du corps: que tous lesiours empire
Tous fault mourir on ne sctet quant.

Figure 30. The Bishop and the Squire, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Ye. 189.



Figure 31. Guy Marchant's printer's device showing saints Crispin and Crispinian and his motto *Sola fides sufficit*. Detail from the title page of *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergiers*, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1493, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. M. V. 33.



Figure 32. Guy Marchant's printer's device showing the figure of Prestre Jehan. Detail from the title page of *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergeres*, printed by Guy Marchant for Jean Petit, Paris, 1499, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-1266.



Figure 33. Death, the Infant and the Mother and Death, the Peasant and the Sower, *Le mors de la pōme*, Jean Miélot, c. 1470, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. fr. 17001.

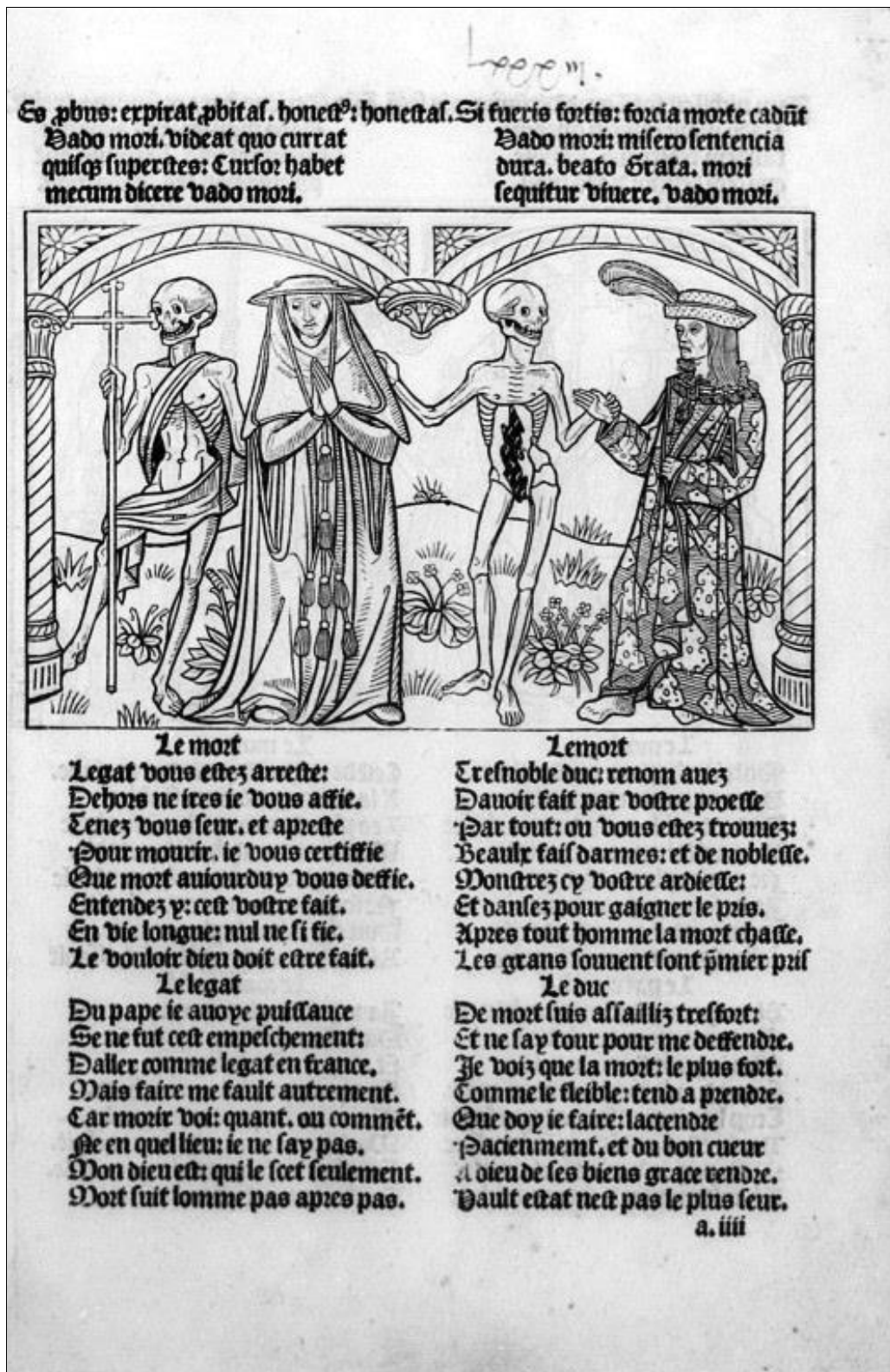
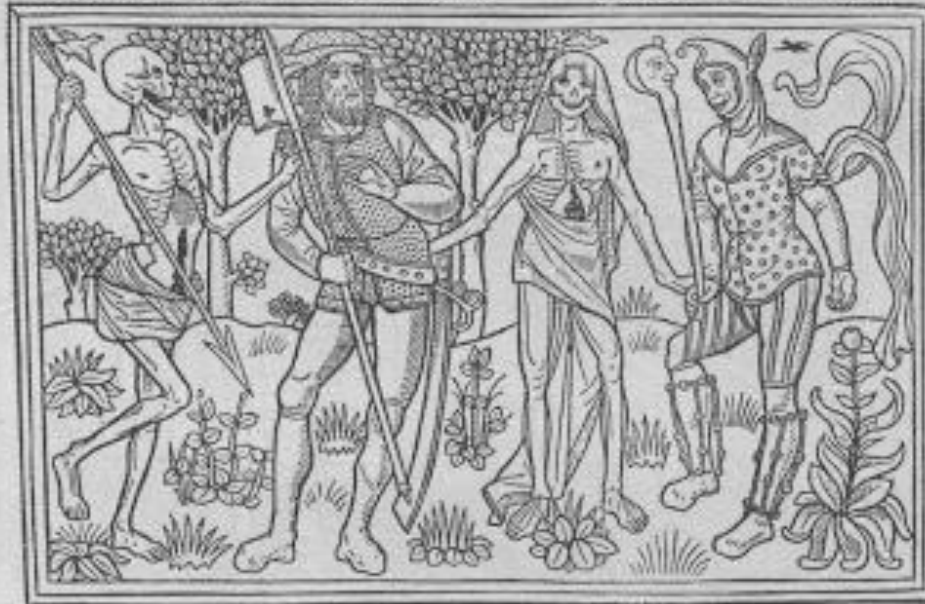


Figure 34. The Legate and the Duke, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Ye. 189.

Ortus cuncta suos repetūt matrē q̄ requit Et redit in nichilli quod fuit añ nichil
 Sanctas dies meorum finietur breui. Vado moritultus. mors stu
 N mictē ergo me dnē vt plāgam paululū to vel sapienti: Non iungit
 dolorē meū: añq̄ vadā et non reuertar. pacis federa. vado mori.



Le mort

Auz bonnes gens de villages
 Auez mengez la poulaille.
 But le vin: faitz grans oultrages
 Sans paier denier ne maille.
 Atout vostre chapeau de paille
 Hallebardie: venez auant
 Et danseres vaille que vaille
 Autant vault dernier que deuant.

Le hallebardie

Je crainsz passer le passage
 De mort. quat bien ie y regarde:
 Qui ne le craint: n'est pas sage.
 Rien ny vaudroit ma hallebarde.
 Ne seroit pas vne bombarde.
 Se ie me cuidoye deffendre.
 Chascun se tienne sus sa garde.
 Quāt mort a assault il se fault redre.

Le mort

Que si dansez n'est que vlage
 Mort amy sot: bien vous aduient
 De y danser comme plus sage
 Tout homme danser y conuient
 L'escripture si men souuient
 Dit en vng pas: qui bien lentend
 L'omme sen vad point ne reuient
 Chascune chose a la fin tend

Le sot

Or sont maintenant bons amis
 Et dansent icy dun accord:
 Pleuseurs qui estoient ennemis
 Quant ilz diuoient et en discord
 Mais la mort les a mis d'accord
 La quelle fait estre tout vng
 Sages et sots: quant dieu la cord.
 Tous mors sont dun estat cōmun.

Figure 35. The Halberdier and the Fool, *La danse macabre nouvelle*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1486, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Ye. 189.



Figure 36. Pains of Hell, showing the gluttons, detail. *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergiers*, woodcuts designed by Pierre Le Rouge, edition printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1493. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. M. V. 33.



Figure 37. Pains of Hell, showing the covetous men and women, detail. *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergiers*, woodcuts designed by Pierre Le Rouge, edition printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1493, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. M. V. 33.

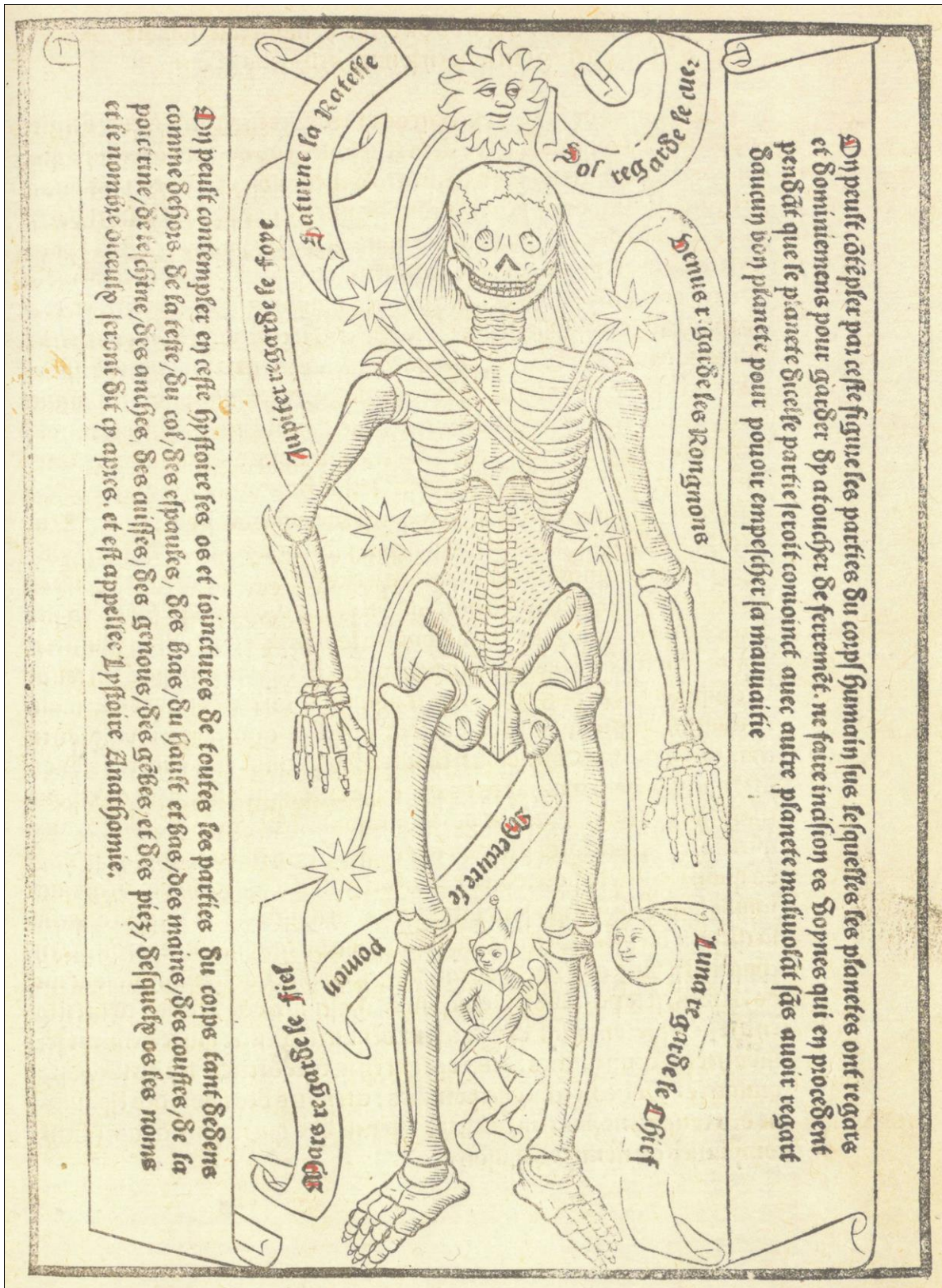
Et cum aperisset sigillum quartum Audiui Vocem quarti animalis. Dicens. Veni et Vido. Et ecce equus pallidus et qui sedebat super eum nomen illi mors et infernus sequebatur eum. Et data est illi potestas super quattuor partes terre interficere gladio. fame. et morte. Apocalipsis quarto capitulo. Quoniã non est in morte qui memor sit tui in inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi.



<p>Sur ce cheual hideux et palle La mort suis: fierement assise Il n'est beaulte que ie ne haale Soit vermeille ou blanche ou bise Mon cheual court comme la Bise Et en courant mort rue et frappe Et ie tue tout. Car cest ma guille To^s viuãl trebuchet en ma trappe</p>	<p>Enfer scatt bien quel tuerie Je fais de gens. car pas a pas Me suit. Et de ma Boucherie Anal lan fais maint gros repas: Quant ie besofingne il ne dort pas Par moy attend que proie aura Daucũs qui ne sen doubtent pas Sen garde qui garder vouldra</p>
---	---

<p>Je passe par mons et par vaulx Sans tenir ne voie ne lente Je prens par villes et chasteaulx Mon tribu mon cens ma rente. Sans donner delay nattente ne iour. ny heure. ne demie Deuãt moy fault quon se presete A tous viuans ie tol la vie.</p>	<p>Encor me suyt raison pour quoy De ceulx qui meurēt de mon dart Et sont sans nombre: Croies moy. Car il en a la plus grant part Paradis nen a mie le quart Se la disme on luy feroit toz Grant. sil nauoit tout au plus tart Lomme pescheur quant il est mort</p>
--	---

Figure 38. Mouth of Hell and Death on a Horse, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.



On peult cōteſper par ceſte figure les parties du corps humain ſus leſquelles les planetes ont regard
 et Dominie mens pour garder Sp atouſher De ferremēt. ne faire inaction es Doynes qui en procedent
 pendāt que le planete dicelle partie ſeroit conioint avec autre planete malivoſāt ſās avoir regard
 d'aucun bon planete pour pouoir empescher la mauuaitie

On peult contempler en ceſte ſpſſoire ſes os et ioinctures De toutes ſes parties Du corps tant Deſens
 comme Dehors. De ſa teſte / Du col / Des eſpaulles, Des bras / Du ſant et bas / Des mains / Des couſtes / De ſa
 portrine / De ſeſſine / Des anſes / Des aiffes / Des genoux / Des gēbes et Des pierz / Deſquelz ce ſes noms
 et ſe nombre dicent ſeront dit cy apres. et eſt appellee L'ſpſſoire Anatomie.

Figure 39. Zodiac Skeleton, *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergiers*, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1493, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. M. V. 33.



Figure 40. *La danse macabre*, La Ferté-Loupière, Yonne (Burgundy), fresco, c. 1500, detail. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.



Figure 41. The Peasant, the Franciscan and the Infant, *La danse macabre*, La Ferté-Loupière, Yonne (Burgundy), fresco, c. 1500. Photo credit: M. Dujakovic.

Si quis sentiret quo tendit et unde veniret
 Quis gauderet sed omni tempore fieret



La mort.

Dieu ayme bien femmes deuotes
 Qui ont consciences nettes
 Et hait sur tout les bigotes
 Aux chaperons sans cornetes
 Come aucunes leurs colletes
 Lesquelles par ypocrisie
 En secretz pechez sont infectes
 Deuant dieu z sa compaignie

La bigote.

Pour verite me suis moitree
 Souuent meilleur que te nestoye
 Aucunefoiz bien desiennee
 Faisant semblât que ie ieunoye
 Et de ma bouche barbetoye
 Sans dire ne mot ne lettre
 Je pry a dieu quen bonne voye
 Plaise ma pouce ame mettre

La mort.

Sus tost margot venez auant
 Estes vous maintenant derriere
 Dons deussiez la estre deuant
 Et danser toute la premiere
 Quel contenance: quel maniere
 Ou est vostre fille marote
 Ne vault faire cy mesgre chiere
 Car cest vostre derniere note

La lotte.

Entre vous colnetes z folles
 Femmes oyez que ie vous dis
 Laissez a heure voz folies
 Car vous mourrez sans contredis
 Si lay ne meffait ne mesdis
 A ceulx qui demeurent pardon
 Requiers et a dieu paradis
 Demander ne puis plus beau don

Figure 42. The Hypocrite and the Female-Fool, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 149, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.Ye. 86.

Ditum suum queqz repetunt. terramqz sequuntur. flos stuit.
 Umbra fugit omnia nata cadunt. Nil reputo longū. Dubius
 quod terminus angit Crastina forte dies. est michi sola dies.



La mort

Alons oultre gente marchande
 Et ne vous chaille de peser
 La marchandise qu'on demāde
 Cest simpleste dy plus miser
 A lame deusses aduiser
 Le tēps sen va heure apres heures
 Et nest tel que den bien vser
 Le merite z biēfait demeure

La marchande

Qui gardera mon ouuouer
 Tendis que se suis a malaise
 Des gēs ne feront que louer
 Les biēs leur viennēt a leur aise
 A dieu ma balance z ma chaise
 Ou say en les yeulx diligens
 Pour pl^r cher vōdre dont me poise
 Avarice decoit les gens

La mort

Après ma dame la balline
 Des quaquetz tenus en leglise
 Jugie auez par raison vīue
 Maintes gēs a la vostre guise
 Je vous signifie main mise
 Pour pouruoir daultre en voz lieu
 Car aujourduy seres demise
 Point ne se fault iouer a dieu

La balline

Que femme se plaint de legier
 La coustume nest pas nouvelle
 Et sent remettre de sugar
 Des fais dautrui z nō pas delle
 Chascune se repoute telle
 Que ce quelle fait est bien fait
 Quoncques mal ne fut dit par elle:
 Il nest riens au monde parfait

Figure 43. The Merchant Woman and the Bailiff's Wife, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.

Est brevis illa dies hodie, quia forte dicuntur Est michi sola dies. haec
 metuenda dies. Atque horrida dies. quia tunc michi meta merendi
 clauditur. illa dies leta Be. Sira Be dies



La mort

Et vous aulli gente bourgoise
 Pour neât certes vous excuses
 Il est force que chascun voise
 Comme veez, et aduises
 Vos beaux gorgias empelez
 Ay font rien, ne large sainture
 Naintz hommes en sont abusez
 En tous est atz il faut mesure

La bourgoise

Mes getz et colletz de letiffes
 Ne me exemptent point de mort
 Mais mes grâs ioyes et delices
 Ne viennent icy a remort
 Ma conscience fort me mort
 Des folies faictes en ieunesse
 Qui me sont a rebours tressort
 Joye en la fin tourne en tristesse

La mort

Femme veuve venez auant
 Et vous auancez de venir.
 Vous veez les autres dauant
 Il conuient vnefoys finir
 Cest belle chose de tenir
 L'estat ou on est appellee
 Et soy tousiours bien maintenir
 Vertus est tout par tout louee

La femme veuve

Depuis que mon mary mourut
 Jay eu affaire grandement
 Sans ce que aucun me secourut
 Si non de dieu gard seulement
 Jay des enfans bien largement
 Qui sont ieunes et nō pourueux
 Dont iay pitie: mais nullement
 Dieu ne lesse aucuns despourueux

Figure 44. The Bourgeois Woman and the Widow, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.Ye. 86.

Paſſibus inuigilat noctis mors: omnia rotare. Nec ſinit eſſe diu quicquid in orbe ſuare
 Continuo cadūnus diuētes. ſila ſororum: Atropos accūmpens enula ſepe venit



La mort.

Oz ca ma dame la regente
 Qui auez renom de bſen dire
 De danser: fringuer: estre gente
 Sur toutes qu'on ſcauroit eſlire
 Vous ſoltez autres faire rire
 Fectier gens et valier:
 Oz est il temps de vous reduire
 La mort fait tresout oublier

La regente

Quant me ſouuient des tabourins
 Apces: fettes: harpes: trompetes:
 Menestrels: doulcines: clarins:
 Et des grans cheres que iay faictes
 Je congnois que telz entrefaictes
 En temps de mort nont point de lieu
 Mais tournent en pources emplaites
 Tout le paſſe fors aymer dieu

La mort.

Gentille femme de chevalier
 Que tant aymes deduit et challe
 Les engins vous fault habiller
 Et ſuyure le train de ma tralle
 Cest bien challe quant on pourchalle
 Chose a ſon ame meritoire
 Car au derrain mort tout enchalle
 Ceste vie est moult transitoire!

La ſeme du chevalier

Pas ſi tost mourir ne cuidoye
 Et coment dea: ie ſoupe hier
 Sur herbe verte a la ſaulfoye
 Ou ſis mon espreuier gayer
 En tiens plus ne ſe fault fier
 Et queſt ce des ſais de ce monde
 Vuy rire demain lermoyer
 La fin de ioye en dueil redonde

Figure 45. The Regent and the Knight's Lady, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Ye. 86.

Non licet ut Video Vane confidere Vite In qua nulla fides est nisi
 certa mori. Ginge q̄ aspicias morientem: sed freme: namq̄
 Consumisti pena te Vocat Vna dies



La mort

Se vous avez sans fiction
 Tout vostre tēps serui a dieu
 Du cueur en la religion
 Laquelle vous auoit vestue
 Celluy qui tous biens retribue
 Vous compensera loyalmēt
 A son vouloir: en temps z lieu
 Biēfait quiett auoir bon paimēt

La prieure

Cestoit en ma religion
 Seruir a dieu tout mon desir
 En cloistre par deuotion
 Dire mes heures a lesir
 Or mest venu la mort saisir
 Au monde nay point de regre
 Face dieu de moy son plaisir
 Prierre doit on la mort en gre

La mort

Venez apres ma damoiselle
 Et serrez tous voz affiquetz
 Pēchault se estes laide ou belle
 Laisser vo^r fault plait z caquetz
 Plus ne ires a les bancquetz
 Ou on sent si souef lean rose
 Ne verrez iouster a rouquetz
 Femmes font faire moult de chose

La damoiselle

Que me vallēt mes grās atours
 Mes habitz, ieunesse, beaute
 quāt tout me fault lesser en plours
 Oultre mon gre et volente
 Mon corps sera tantost porte
 Aux vers et a la pourriturez
 Plus nen sera bale: ne chante
 Joye mondaine bien peu dure

Figure 46. The Priestess and the Lady, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Ye. 86.

Omnium mortalium cura quibus multiplicium studiorum labor exerceat diuersa
quidem calle ad unum tamen beatitudinis finem nititur peruenire Boetius



La mort

Approches vous reuenderesse
Sans plus cy faire demourée
Vostre corps: nuyt et iour ne cesse.
De gaigner pour estre honnoree.
Honneur est de poure duree
Et se part en vng momēt deure
Au monde na chose assuree
Tel rit au matin qui au soir pleure.

La reuenderesse

Faoule hier gaignie deux escus
Pour sourfaire subtilement:
Mais ne scay qui les ma tollus
Argent acquis mauuesement
Ne fait ia bien communement
Delas ie meurs cest dautre metz.
Que prestre aye batinement
Car il vault mieulx tart q̄ iamais

La mort

Femme de petite value
Mal vstuant en charnalite
Vene aues vie dissolue
Entons temps yuer et este
Nies le cueur espouente.
Car vous seres de pres tenue
Pour mal faire on est tourmente
Pechie nuyt quant on continue

La femme amoureuse.

A ce pechie me suis soubz mise
Pour plaisance desordonnee
Pēdus solēt ceulx qui my ont mise
Et au metier habandonnee
Las se ieulle estoy bien menee.
Et conduite premierement
Jamais ny eusse estoy fournee.
La fin suyt le commencement.
b il.

Figure 47. The Saleswoman and the Prostitute, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.

Figure 48. Master E. S. *A Couple Embracing*, engraving, c. 1450-1466.
Figure 48 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It showed an engraving with a man and a woman embracing. In the image, the man kisses the woman's cheek, while she gazes smilingly at the viewer.

Et d'itronatis posita est sepulchra: sed esse Certos: sub sole perpetuare nichil
 Et d'itronatis pedes d'itronatis colle sub ipso Subdola mors comen est nos la jare stua.



La mort.

Noble royne de beau corsatze
 Gentle et ioyeuse aladuenant
 Jay de par le grât maistre charge
 De vous en mener maintenant.
 Et comme bien chose aduenant.
 Ceste danse commencerez
 Saictes deuoir au remenant
 Vous qui vivez ainsi fezes

La royne

Ceste danse m'est bien nouuelle
 Et en ay le cuer bien surprins
 De dieu: quelle dure nouuelle
 A gens qui ne sont pas aprins
 Las en la mort est tout comprins
 Royne dame grant ou petite
 Les pl^r grâs sôt les p^miers prins
 Contre la mort na point de fuyte

La mort.

Après ma dame la duchesse
 Boⁿ bien queir et pourchasser
 Ne penlez plus a la richesse
 A bens ne ioyault amasser
 Aujourduy vous fault trespasser
 Pourquoi de vostre vie est fait
 Folie est de tant embrasser
 On n'importe que le bienfaict

La duchesse.

Je nay pas encor e trente ans
 Helas: a leure que commence
 A scauoir que cest de bon tempo
 Mort me vient tollir ma plassace
 Jay des amis: et grant cheuance
 Soulas. elbas. gens a dents
 Pourquoi mois me plait ceste danse
 Sens alles si meurent enuis

Figure 49. The Queen and the Duchess, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.

Censuit le debat dun corps et dune ame



Une grant vision: en brief icy escripte
Jadis fut revelee a philebert hermite.
Homme de sainte vie: et de si grand merite
Quonques ne fut par luy faulxe parole dicte

Venu estoit au siecle de grant extraction
Mais pour fuyr le monde et la deception
Quant luy fut revelee icelle vision
Tantost devint hermite par grant deuotion

La nuit quat le corps dort: z lame souuēt veille
Aduint a ce preudomme tresgrande merueille
Car vng corps murmurant sentoît a son oreilles:
Et lame dautre part que du corps se merueille

Lame se plaint du corps: et de son grāt oultraige
Le corps respōd que lame a fait tout ce dōmaige
Lors alleguent raison: lors alleguent vsaige
Tout ce retiēt hermite comme preudōme z saige

Figure 50. The Debate Between the Body and the Soul, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.

On ne voit en enfer que tenebres obscures
 Des ennemis sans nombre en horribles figures
 Dragons serpens crapaux tous velins z ordures
 Pour tormenter helas: les damnees creatures

Lacteur

Quant mettoit a parler lame toute sa cure
 Trois diables sont venus en leur laide figure
 Tant horribles visages: plus grât contrefaiture
 Que on ne pourroit veoir en liure ne peinture



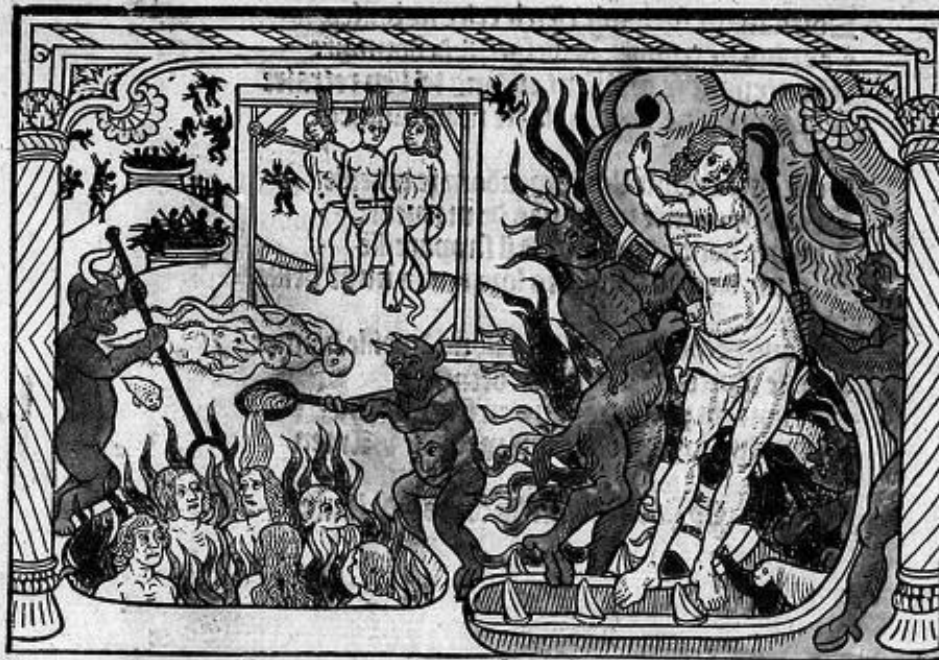
Grasses de fer agues en leurs mains ilz tenoiet
 Feu gregois tout puant par la bouche gettoient:
 Serpens envenimes en leurs oreilles estoient:
 Côme brandons de feu les yeux flambās auoiet

Chascun de ses trois gettoit sa grasse torte
 La poure ame ont chargie cōme vne beste morte
 Mais quant elle congneut denfer lhorrible porte
 Durement se complaint: forment se desconforte.

Et entre ses trois diables a haulte voix secrie
 Secours moy secours moy iesus filz de marie
 Ne considere pas maintenant ma folie
 De dauid se sonnigne et de ta courtaille

Quant les trois ennemis ont ce mot entendu
 Haultement ont crye trop auez attendu
 Nusart: on doit auoir son temps bien despandu
 Deuant que le merite de lenure soit rendu

Figure 51. The Debate Between the Body and the Soul, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 1491, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés.Ye. 86.



C Vous pecheurs qui fort regardez
 Cy de moy l'horrible figure
 De mal faire bien vous gardez
 Car ce monde bien petit dure
 Aduise chascun en quel cure
 Pour les maux que ia y fait suis mis
 Es diables suis baille en cure
 Et en enfer est mon logis

C Chascun apercoist vrayement
 Que de la mort suis supplante
 Viure cuidoye longuement
 Et en enfer si ma plante
 Pour ce chascun entalente
 Soit de bien viure en ce monde
 Afin que par son orphante
 En mort: dieu ne le confonde

Las: le monde mauolt promis
 Que ie viuroye longuement
 Las: voyes le suis icy mis
 A iamaïs sans desinement
 Et combien que ieusse souuent
 Eu volente de mamander
 Pour la mort qui maprins courant
 Je ny ay peu remedier
 Donc bzaire me fault z crier
 Pour le gref mal z le torment
 Qu'il me consent cy endurer
 A iamaïs pardurablement

Vray est que quant i estoie au monde
 En mal mettoye toute ma cure
 Pour ce que du bien ne tins conte
 Le mal mest tourne a vsure
 Donc raison est puis que neuz cure
 Fors seulement dobtemperer
 A la charongne: que la sure
 Denfer me viengne consumer
 A ma charongne consoler
 Las: pour quoy oncques me consenti
 Cest raison de le comparer
 Trop tart ie men suis repente

Figure 52. The Complaint of the Damned Soul, The Debate Between the Body and the Soul, *La danse macabre des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Guy Marchant, Paris, 149, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.Ye. 86.



Figure 53. Death, the Theologian and the Fool, *Le mors de la pome*, Jean Miélot, c. 1470, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. fr. 17001.



Stultiferæ navis explanatio

D Rima igitur inter mortales fatua fuit nimirum prima parens Eva
 omnium insipientium genitrix: quæ quinque sensibus peccati labem
 stultitiæque fomitem concepit: auditu: quo fidem habuit aduersario
 suo dicenti. Nequaquam moriemini: & eritis sicut dii scientes bonum & malum
 Visu: quo vidit quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum & pulchrum oculis aspe-
 ctuque delectabile. Tactu quo tulit de fructu illius. Olfactu quia vidit quod es-
 set suauis ad vescendum. quam suauitatem non tam visu quam olfactu tunc intel-
 ligere potuit: nondum enim gustauerat. Gustu autem: quia comedit: deditque
 viro suo: quod comedit. Quo quidem comedente: nata est omnis stultitiæ ori-
 go. hinc nos miseri mortales egreditur in: morti: laboribus: anxie-
 tatibus: fami: siti: estui: algori: omnibus denique & anime & corporis pe-
 sibus obnoxii sumus. hinc errores. hinc ignauia. hinc mortalitas & om-
 nia mortalitatis mala. hinc alii auaricia stulti: alii luxuria: alii ambitione.

a iiii

Figure 54. The Ship of Eve, Jehan Drouyn, *La nef des folles*, Paris, c. 1500, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. M-YC-750



Figure 56. The Pope and the Emperor, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine V erard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 279.



Figure 57. The Carthusian and the Sergeant, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Vélins 579.



Figure 58. The Archbishop and the Knight, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Vélins 579.



Figure 59. The Astrologer and the Bourgeois, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Vélins 579.



Figure 60. The Three Dead, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 279.



Figure 61. The Three Living, *La danse macabre*, printed by Gillet Coteau and Jean Menard for Antoine Vérard, Paris, 1492, printed on vellum and hand painted, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 279.

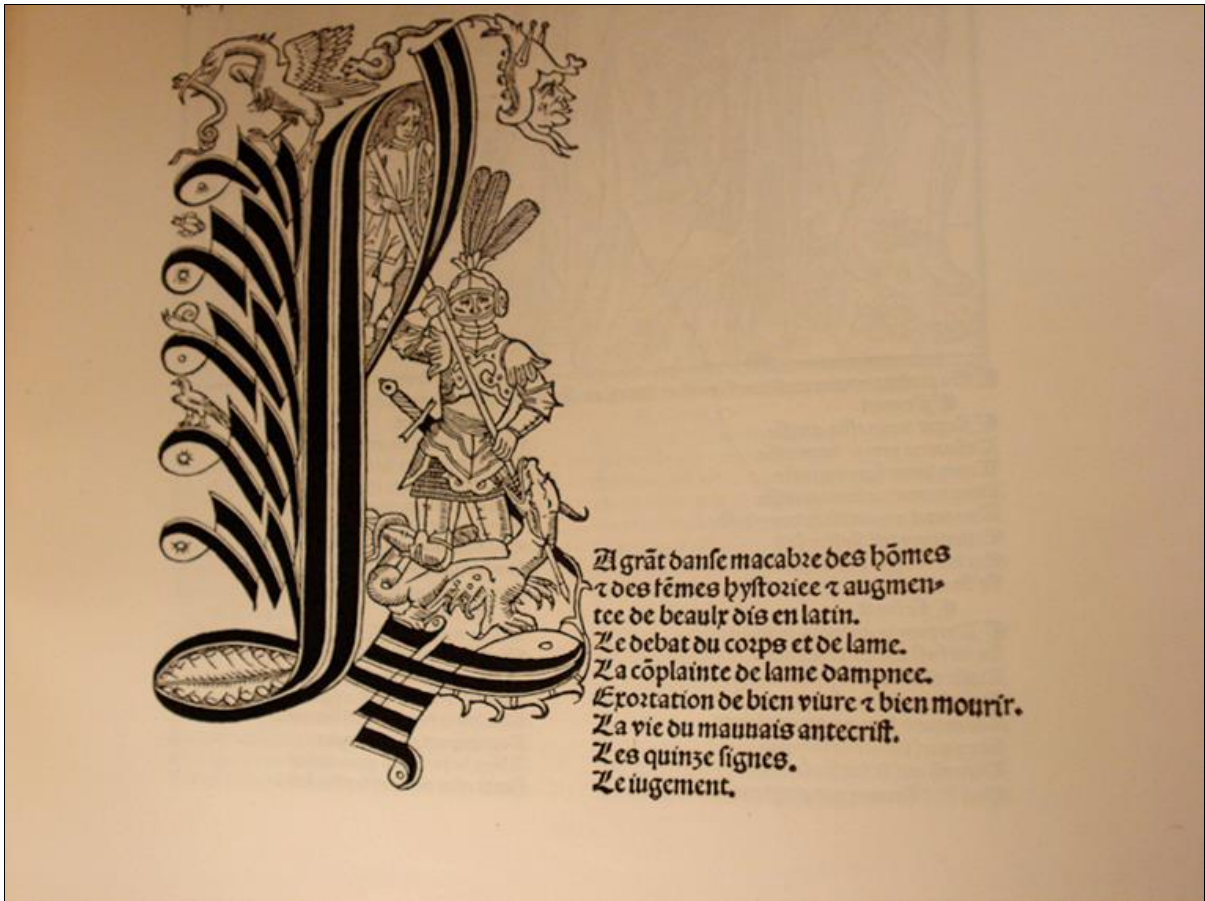


Figure 62. Title page, *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

anse finale.

¶ Le more



¶ Tost tost venez femmes danser
Après les hommes incontinent
Et gardes vous bien de verser
Vous y danseres vraiment
Non comet come bien souuent
Après les petis & les grans
Despetches vous legierement
Après la pluye vient le beau temps.

Figure 63. Cry de Mort, *La grāt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

¶ Quid fetidius humano cadauere, Quid horribilius femina mortua / cuius gratissimus erat
amplexus in vita / molestus erit etiam aspectus in morte / quid ergo valent diuitie,



¶ Non est in multis virtus quibus esse videtur, Decipiant factis lumina nostra suis,

Figure 64. *La grãt danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

Exortation de bien viure ⁊ de bien mourir.



¶ Qui a bien viure veult entendre
A mourir luy couient aprendre
Car nul bien viure ne scaura
Qui a mourir aprins naura.

¶ Retiens cestui enseignement
Pense vne fois tant seulement
Vng chascun iour que tu mouras
Par ainsi bien v:ure pourras.

¶ Aprens a viure moyennement
Ainsi viuras plus seurement
Car de tant plus hault monteras
Plus a la fin doulent sera.

¶ Fuis orgueil ⁊ aussi auarice
Ayme dieux garde iustice

De trop hault estat ne te chaille
Car le plus hault ne vault pas paille

¶ L'estat du monde est variable
Ne cuide nul qui soit estable
Le temps se change en bien peu d'heure
Tel rit au matin qui au soir pleure.

¶ Tant que tu seras en puissance
Chascun te fera reuerence
Mais si fortune t'est contraire
Adonc verras chascun retraire.

¶ Nul ne tiendra de toy plus conte
Et fusses filz de roy ou conte
Chascun de toy s'eslongnera
Et comme fol te laissera.

Figure 65. Exortation de bien vivre y de bien mourir, *La grât danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Mathias Husz, Lyons, 1499/1500, The British Library Board, IB. 41735.

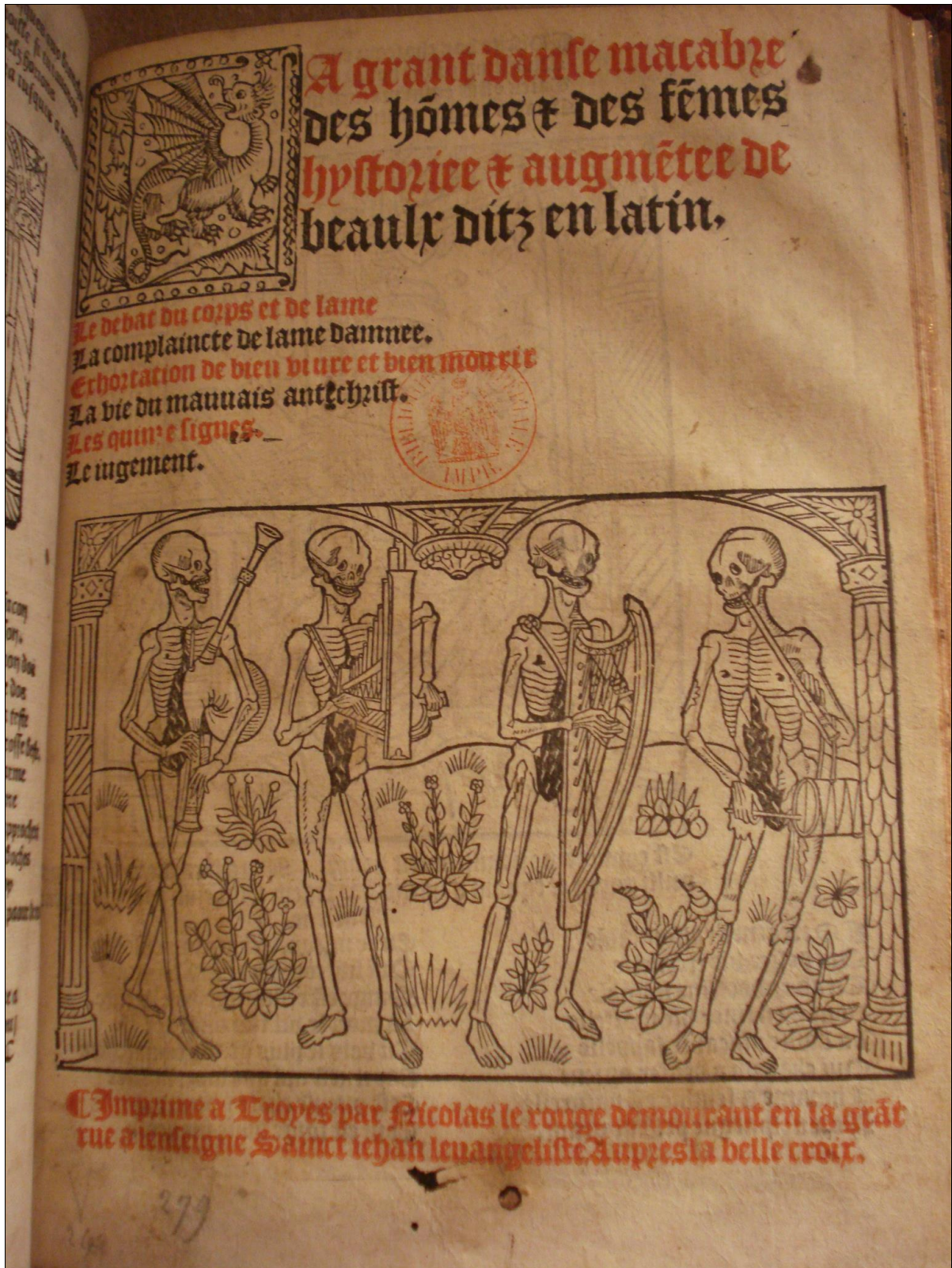


Figure 66. Title page, *La grant danse macabre des hommes y des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278.



Figure 67. The Patriarch and the Constable, *La Grant danse macabre des hommes y des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278.

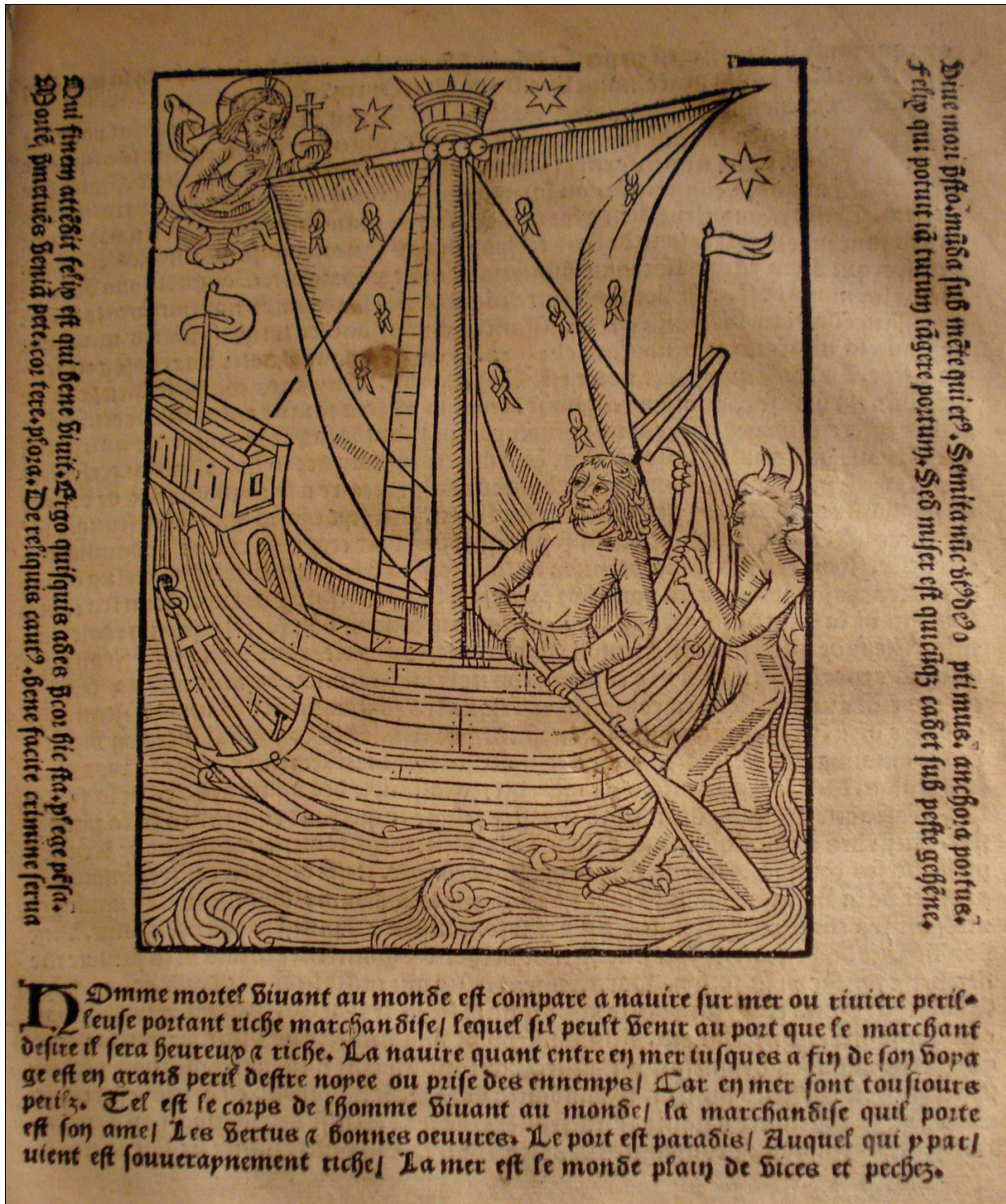


Figure 68. The Ship of the World, *La Grant kalendrier*, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278.



Figure 69. Pains of Hell, *La Grant kalendrier*, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278.



Figure 70. . Pains of Hell, *La Grant kalendrier*, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278, detail showing the reader's marks.

Et telles chose corumpables
 Pour ton meschant corps et rebelle
 Que tu ne fais vne ame belle
 Et si scez bien que tu mourras
 Et en la terre pourriras
 Du lame perdurablement
 En ioye viura / ou en tourment
 Pensons doncques si bien finer
 Que en ioye puissions finer
 Bon y fait penser quant on peult
 Souuēt on ne peult quāt on veult.

Le tiers vif.

Certes cest bien dit / mais au fort
 Il ny a point de desconfort
 Tous nous conuient passer ce pas
 Et croy que dieu ne nous haist pas
 Mes beaultz seignrs & beaultz amis
 Quāt les .iij. mozs nous a trāsmis
 Qui donne nous ont congnoissance
 De la mort / & de la meschance
 Qui nous vient finer nostre ioye
 Helas iamais ie ne cuydoye
 Que ce tēps cy nous deust faillir
 Ne que mort ofast assaillir
 Telz gētīlz gēs cōme nous sommes
 Mais ie voy biē que riche hōmes
 Sont telz / & de nulle balue
 Ne plus ne moins que gens menue
 Ne parlons plus cest pour neant
 Maintenant ie suis cler voyant
 Que la ioye du monde est briefue
 Et la fin delle point ne griefue
 En enfer est horrible peine
 En paradis est ioye plaine
 Sur toute ioye delectable
 Et lune & lautre perdurable
 Or ensuyuons ie vous en prie
 Desormais la meilleure partie
 Fol est qui choisist & depar
 Quant il eslist la pire part
 Deux voye auons deuant noz veulz
 Nous qui viuons ieune & viculz
 Une a ioye & repos meine

L'autre a tourmen & a peine
 Pour ioye & repos auoit
 Bien fault faire / doit on scauote
 Qui mal fait & ne se repent
 Il aura peine & tourment
Finis.



Le cry de mort.

Tost / tost / benez femme dansez
 Apres les hommes incontinent
 Et gardez vous bien de verser
 Car vous danserez vrayment
 Mon cornet corne bien souuent
 Apres les petis & les grans
 Despeche vous legierement
 Apres la pluye vient le beau temps.

Figure 71. Cry de mort, *La Grant danse macabre des hommes y des femmes*, illustrated book, printed by Nicolas Le Rouge, Troyes, 1531, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-V-278.

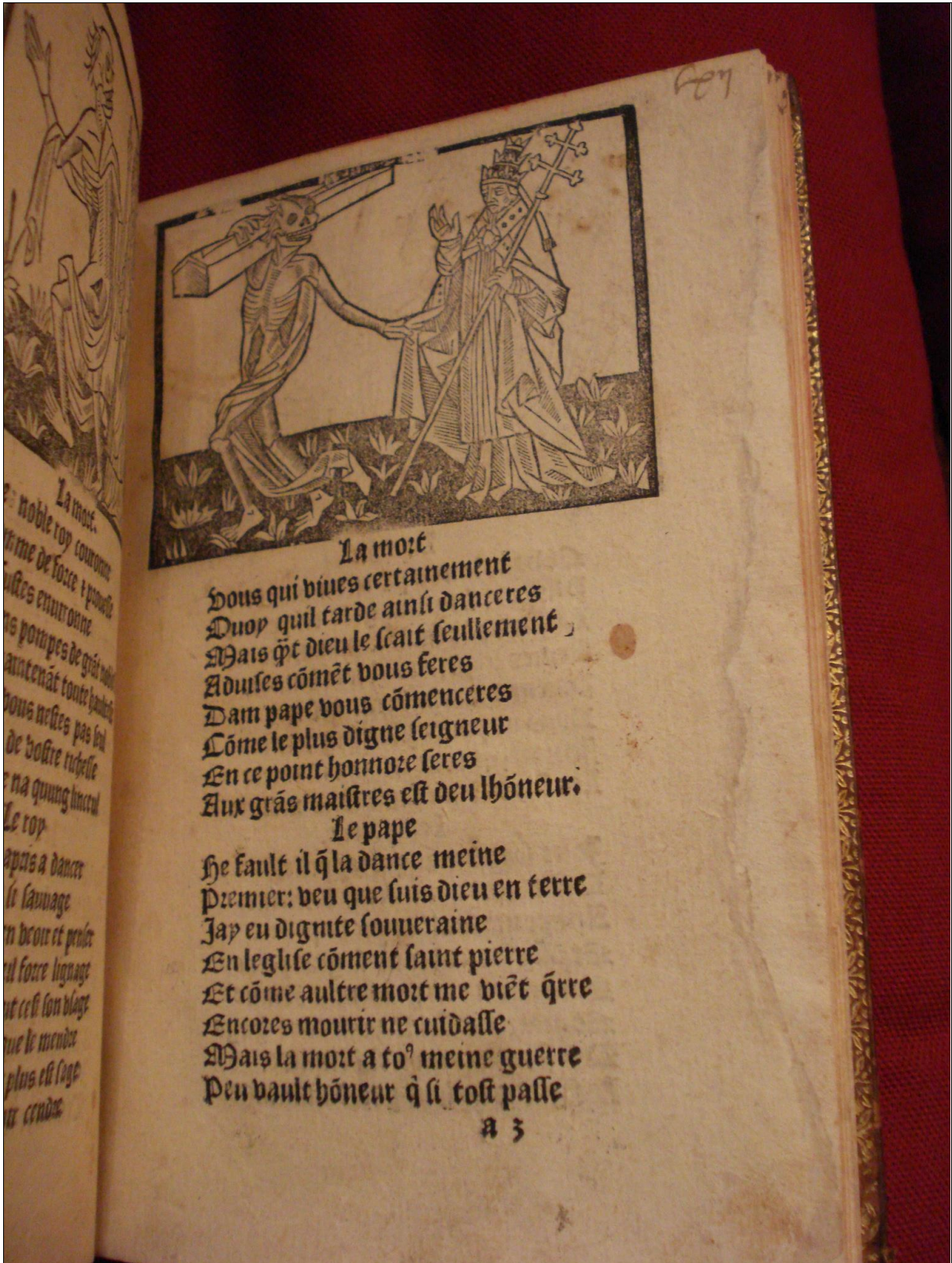


Figure 72. The Pope, *La danse macabre*, unknown printer, Geneva, 1503, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-Ye-331.



La mort

Ha maistre par la passeres
Nayes ia loing de vous deffend:e
Ne iamais abbe ne leres
Mourir vous fault sans plus atēd:e
Du penles vous cy fault entend:e
Tātost aures la bouche close
hōme n'est fors que vent et cendre
Die d'homme est bien peu de chose

Le moine

Jay masse bien mieulx encor: estre
En cloistre et faire mon seruire
C'est vng lieu deuot et bel estre
Dray ie cōme fol et nice
Au temps passe cōmis maint vice
De quoy nay pas fait penitāce
Souffisant dieu me soit propice
L'hescun n'est pas ioyeux qui dance.

Figure 73. The Monk, *La danse macabre*, unknown printer, Geneva, 1503, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-Ye-331.

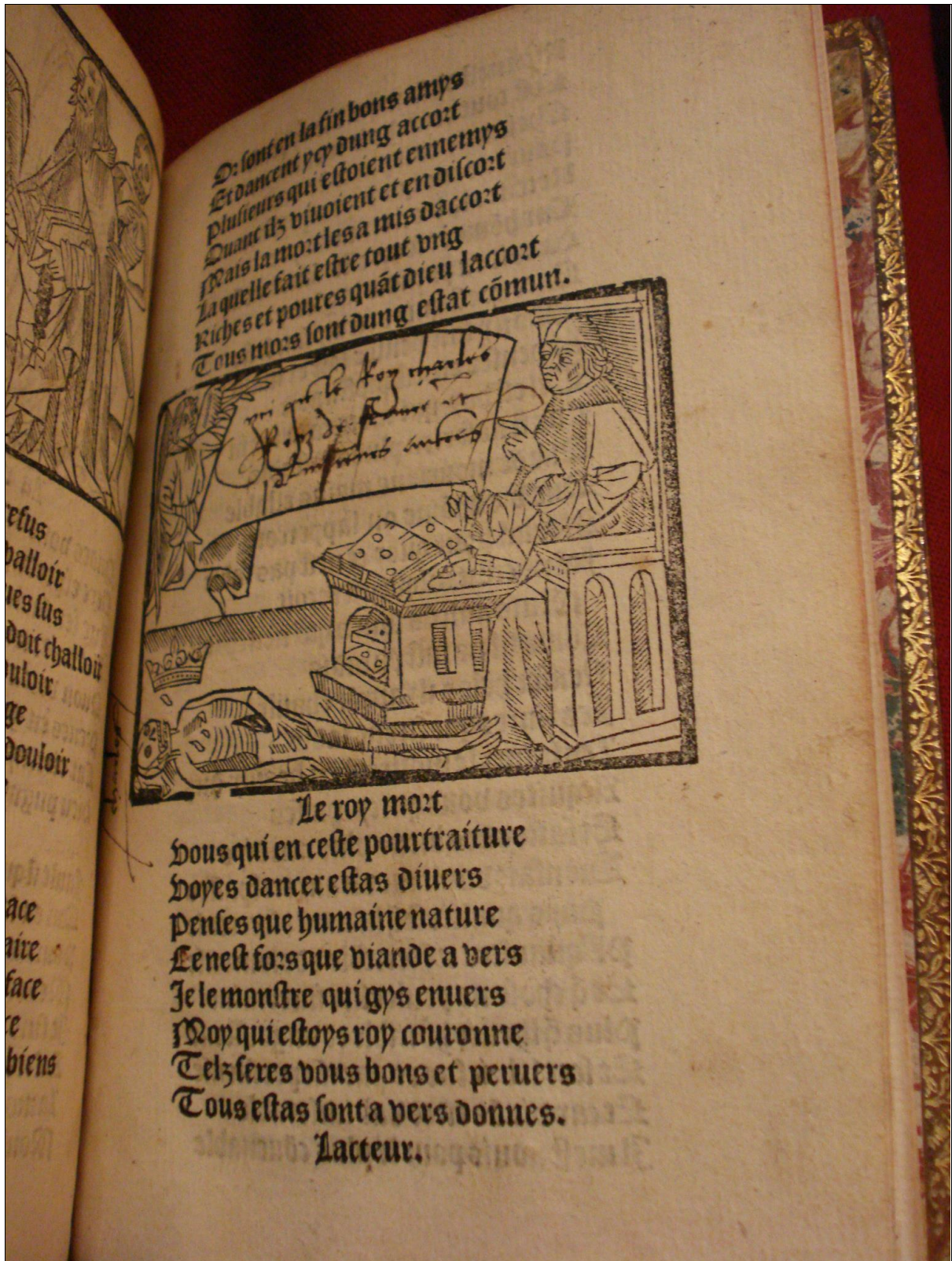


Figure 74. The Author with the Dead King, *La danse macabre*, unknown printer, Geneva, 1503, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-Ye-331.



Figure 75. The Author with the Dead King, *La danse macabre*, unknown printer, Geneva, 1503, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés.-Ye-331, detail showing the reader's writing.



Figure 76. The Compositor and the Printers, *La grand danse macabre des homes y des femes*, illustrated book, printed by Pierre de Sainte Lucie, Lyons, 1555, The British Library Board, C.47.h.12.

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