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'Fro Paris to Inglond'? The danse macabre in text and image in late-medieval England

Oosterwijk, S.

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CHAPTER 3

‘Owte of the frensshe’:
John Lydgate and the *Dance of Death*

John Lydgate’s poem *The Dance of Death* was a translation ‘Owte of the frensshe’, as the author himself stated in his translator’s ‘Envoye’ at the end of the poem, yet ‘Not worde be worde / but folwyng the substaunce’ (*E*:665-66) – an ancient topos.[1] Even so, Lydgate’s poem was indeed no slavish imitation but an adaptation of a French poem that had been attracting attention since its incorporation in a wall-painting at the cemetery of Les Innocents in Paris not long before Lydgate’s presumed visit in 1426.

Despite being an early adaptation of a popular French text, Lydgate’s Middle English *Dance of Death* has received less notice than it deserves, due to a number of factors. First of all, Lydgate’s reputation greatly declined after the sixteenth century and his ‘aureate’ style is no longer admired, which has affected the study of his work, although there has recently been a revival of Lydgate studies.[2] Secondly, the poem is only a minor work in Lydgate’s huge oeuvre of well over 140,000 lines, and its didactic character has not endeared it to many literary scholars. Finally, the poem has been rather unfairly regarded as a ‘mere’ translation rather than as an original work in its own right, whatever its merits. Even Lydgate revivalists tend to ignore the poem.[3]

While important, the aspect of estates satire will be addressed to a lesser degree here: Chaucer’s influence on Lydgate has already received much scholarly attention. Instead, the aim of this chapter is to investigate the genesis and character of Lydgate’s *Dance*, its incorporation in the painted scheme at Pardon Churchyard in London that helped popularise the theme yet further, and the revision(s) of the text. In addition, the poem will be compared to the French text and studied for further evidence of the lost mural in Paris that apparently inspired its composition.

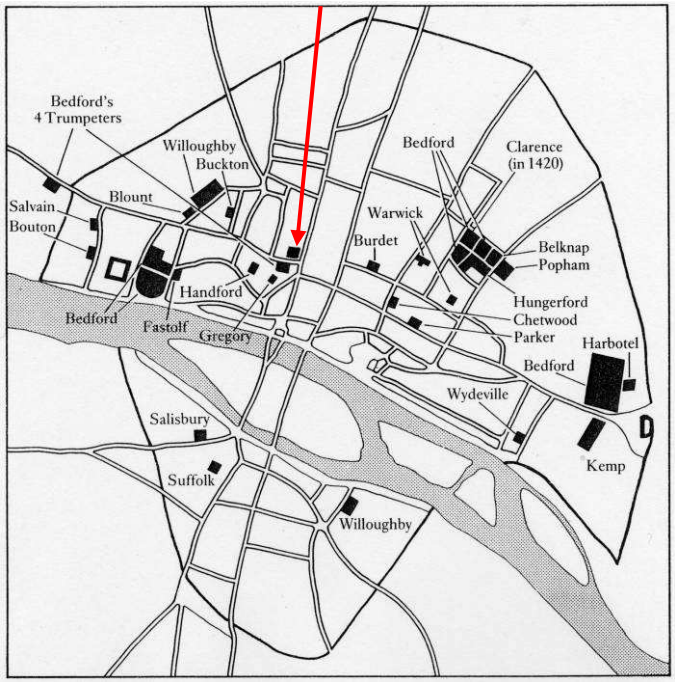
The poet John Lydgate and his visit to Paris

Born *c.*1371 at Lydgate in Suffolk, John Lydgate entered the novitiate at the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds *c.*1387 where he was ordained priest on 7 April 1397.[4] In 1406-8 he was at Gloucester College in Oxford, where he appears to have attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales (later Henry V), but there is no record of his taking a degree.[5] Nothing certain is known about his early poetic work until 31 October 1412 when he began his huge *Troy Book* (a translation of Guido della Colonna’s *Historia Destructionis Troiae*) at Prince Henry’s request; it was not finished until 1420. His next major work was *The Siege of Thebes* (1420-21).

As a monk, Lydgate would have needed his abbot’s permission to travel, and good grounds for going out into society. There is no external proof to corroborate Lydgate’s 1426 visit to Paris, whether safe-conduct or payment: the evidence lies instead in his poems. He may have travelled to Paris to receive a commission from the earl of Warwick to write the propaganda poem *The Title and Pedigree of Henry VI* (actually a ‘translacioun’ of a French poem by Laurence Calot, a notary serving the duke of Bedford in Paris).[6] Admittedly, Warwick could have given him this commission before setting sail for France, but a rubric by the London copyist John Shirley (1366-1456) states that the poem was ‘made by Lydygate Iohn the monke of Bury, at Parys, by the instaunce of my Lord of Warrewyk’.[7] In 1426 Lydgate was

commissioned by Thomas Montacute, earl of Salisbury (Bedford's deputy in France), to translate Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, 'My lord that tyme beyng at Paris', as Lydgate explained in his prologue, and this appears to confirm the year of his own stay there.[8] One can only speculate about how long Lydgate remained in Paris. Some authors assume that he was there for several years, but there is no evidence for an extended sojourn and it is doubtful that the 'monk of Bury' could have obtained such long leave of absence from his abbot.[9]

Whilst in Paris, as Lydgate states in his 'Verba translatoris' prologue, he took 'acqueyntaunce' of 'frensshe clerkes', who persuaded him to undertake a translation of the *Danse Macabre* poem that he 'fownde depicte' on a wall there (*E*:22,20); typical of Lydgate's convoluted style is the mention of the location 'at seint Innocentis' only two stanzas later (*E*:35). The cemetery was not very far from Warwick's residence in Paris and thus easy for Lydgate to visit (**Fig. 1**). Otherwise, Lydgate's rather vague explanation raises some unanswerable questions. For example, it is unclear why the unnamed clerks should have been so eager to persuade him to undertake a translation of the poem, as implied by Lydgate's use of the words 'avyse', 'cownseille', 'sterynge', 'mocioune', and 'requeste' (*E*:25-27). Lydgate seems curiously reticent: he frequently boasts of his aristocratic patrons in his other compositions, so why would he link this poem to some unnamed French clerks? He also fails to mention the author of the poem that had been included in the recently created mural there, but then the original author may have been unknown to him. However, it must have been his own choice not to name the French clerks – or single clerk in some versions[10] – who (as he claimed) instigated his translation.



1. (Left) Map of medieval Paris: the red arrow indicates the location of the church and cemetery of Les Saints Innocents. Compare also chapter 2, fig. 3.

Lydgate's use of the word 'ones' in the lines 'the exawmple whiche that at Parise / I fownde depicte ones on a walle' (*E*:19-20) suggests that he was looking back in time when writing the prologue. Likewise, his 'Envoye de translatoure' states that he 'fro Paris to Inglond hit sent' (*E*:667), again implying an event in the past. The conclusion must be that these stanzas were later additions to his original translation of the French poem. Lydgate is commonly assumed to have composed the first, so-called A version of his *Dance of Death* before 1430 and then revised the text himself not

long after, presumably to suit the painted scheme commissioned for Pardon Churchyard. The case for this later, so-called B text being a revision by Lydgate himself and the version used in the scheme at Old St Paul's will be examined later.

Lydgate's description of his *Dance* as a 'pleyne translacioun / in Inglisshe tunge' (*E*:28-29) is an understatement. It was standard practice for medieval authors to adapt popular foreign texts, and most did not stop at mere translation.[11] Lydgate was particularly inclined to add embellishments in the often convoluted 'aureate' style that characterises most of his work – and that later editors of his work have found difficult to admire.[12] The last lines of his 'Envoye' illustrate this modesty topos well:

> Rude of langage y was not borne yn fraunce
> Haue me excused my name is Jon Lidgate
> Of her tunge I haue no suffisaunce
> Her corious metris In Inglissh to translate. Amen. (*E*:669-72)

Lydgate remained highly influential well into the sixteenth century, although there are occasional notes of dissent about his style even then.[13] His compositions survive in a great number of manuscript copies and were amongst the first texts to be printed by early publishers such as William Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson. However, regard for his work subsequently declined so dramatically that many scholars have felt compelled to adopt an apologetic or defensive stance.[14]

The *Dance of Death* has been relatively little studied since Florence Warren's EETS edition of 1931.[15] Lydgate scholars appear to have regarded the work mainly as a close and 'extremely skilful' translation of the French poem, with Lydgate showing himself 'the most perfect of imitators'.[16] Admittedly, Rosemary Woolf noted in 1968 that Lydgate deviated from his French model in some key respects, but this observation has not really been taken further.[17] Continental *danse macabre* scholars have likewise paid scant attention to Lydgate, perhaps because his poem seems unlikely to contribute anything to the chicken-or-egg debate about the very beginnings of the theme – whether Latin, French or German. Yet the fact that Lydgate's Middle English poem was composed at a very early date in the recorded history of the *danse macabre* makes it an important piece of evidence, quite apart from its literary merits.

Texts and dissemination

The idea that Lydgate's *Dance of Death* can be dismissed as merely derivative would seem to be borne out by Derek Pearsall's overall assessment of the poet in 1970: 'Like any competent professional, he did what was asked of him, and, working within an established literary tradition, he had neither the desire, nor the incentive, nor the creative power to make things new'.[18] Nonetheless, Pearsall described writing about this poem, compared to the author's *Pilgrimage* of the same period, as 'a more congenial task'.[19] He noted how Lydgate evidently relished not only the gnomic quality of the French poem but also the chance to end some of the victims' stanzas with a truism or proverb, especially one related to the speaker's profession as in the physician line 'A-3ens dethe is worth no medicyne' (*E*:432).[20] With mixed praise, Pearsall summed up Lydgate's achievement in the *Dance of Death* as follows:

> In the *Danse Macabre*, what Lydgate had to do for once happily coincided with what he could best do. There is no need for any development of ideas, no narrative, no exposition, only variation, reiteration, insistence on the call of death and man's reply, a prolonged and varied antiphon – 'You must die': 'I must die'.[21]

Lydgate not only translated but also adapted his source text, however. One crucial difference between the French *Danse* and Lydgate's version is the change of *le mort* into 'Death'; only twice does Death invite a figure to dance with 'us' (*E*:222, 317), which may refer to his other victims. The change into Death personified is important in terms of the genesis, reception and development of the theme. The four remaining instances in the *Danse* of *le mort* accosting the preceding character in the first few lines of his new stanza connect the French poem with the Spanish *Dança*, where this feature occurs throughout (see chapter 2). The likelihood is that these linking addresses from an earlier version of the *Danse* were almost all abandoned when the poem was subsequently revised; Lydgate omits them altogether in his *Dance*. Such textual linking of several living and dead dancers in a row might be even more logical if the *danse* had its origins in an actual performance. Yet the personification of Death has a long history in art, literature and drama, and the great dramatic potential of a dialogue between Death and the living must have appealed to Lydgate as it did to others; in later French *Danse* texts *le mort* also becomes *la mort*.

The co-existence of the two distinct A and B versions of Lydgate's *Dance of Death* has posed problems for editors and scholars alike. If Lydgate first produced a fairly close translation of the French poem, then added the translator's stanzas, and finally revised this A version, this would presuppose three separate stages of composition within a short space of time, provided one accepts a date of *c.*1430 for the revision.[22] Yet there are more extant copies of the A text, which is also the longer version as it has one more character than B as well as the translator's stanzas:[23] the text in MS Ellesmere 26/A.13 (Huntingdon Library, California) contains 672 lines against 584 in BL MS Lansdowne 699. Moreover, there are not only variations between the characters in A and B, but also a different order of stanzas throughout the extant versions (see Appendix 2). Pearsall concluded that trying to work out the composition process of the two versions of Lydgate's poem

> would be a laborious and probably impossible task: the two groups are not entirely clearly distinguished; there is no set order after the first ten or so of the 36 victims; there are several victims added and others left out in different manuscripts; the names are changed; there is extensive mechanical disarrangement of leaves in an early exemplar; and there are many opportunities for enthusiastic copyists to introduce new stanzas in such a poem. In fact it is clear that some of the added stanzas in the B version are not by Lydgate, and the *Danse* resembles other poems by Lydgate in being a kind of do-it-yourself kit which anyone could add to, composed according to an indefinitely repeatable design. It would be difficult, in such circumstances, to talk about stages in a process of revision.[24]

Medieval texts often show variance with parts altered, missing or added, as well as other divergences that cannot simply be explained as authorial revision.[25] There is thus no guarantee that either version is wholly Lydgate's.

The complications indicated by Pearsall were also recognised by Warren, who divided the twelve manuscript versions of the *Dance* known to her into groups A and B; as representatives of A and B she edited the Ellesmere and Lansdowne Manuscript versions. Warren warned of variations within each group in the inclusion, order and labelling of characters; for example, some manuscript copies label the characters in Latin, some in English, while others do not label them at all. The title of the poem also varies: thus, Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.21 in the A group uses the title 'Daunce of Machabre', whereas the B version in Leiden University Library MS

Vossius C.G.Q. 9 starts with 'incipit Macrobius' and finishes with 'Explicit Macrabiorum' – an indication of how the term 'macabre' has baffled not just modern scholars. More worrying is the 'serious disorder' of stanzas that Warren noted not only in the latter half of the B text versions, but also throughout the Ellesmere Manuscript (which she reordered for her edition). She tried to explain this disorder as caused by a disarrangement of leaves in an underlying lost master copy used by Lydgate himself for a revision that he never completed.[26] Yet her interpretation of the evidence presumes authorial revision rather than the very real possibility of scribal intervention or *mouvance*.

Warren's explanation of an uncompleted revision by Lydgate may be plausible in itself, but it undermines the traditional belief that this revision was undertaken specifically for the scheme in Pardon Churchyard. Warren even implied that Lydgate continued revising the poem: after pointing out that there are no female characters in the French poem, she claimed that 'all those in our text are original additions [...] probably made at different periods'.[27] Yet she does not explain why Lydgate would wish to continue rewriting such a minor poem when he was busy composing so many other new poems, including his major work *The Fall of Princes* (*c.*1430-38). Revision has not really improved the poem, either: an earlier editor, Eleanor Hammond, already noted 'the general agreement of A-texts' compared to the divergences of the B versions from each other, adding that the latter 'resemble one another in a colorlessness, a tendency to empty generalities, wherever the A-type is abandoned'.[28]

Warren's list was subsequently extended to fifteen manuscript copies by M.C. Seymour (who subdivided Warren's original two groups into four sub-groups), and further refined by Derek Pearsall and Anthony Edwards.[29] Quite apart from the question of whether all these revisions can be safely ascribed to Lydgate himself, Seymour's sub-groups illustrate the complications of trying to compare the various text versions of Lydgate's *Dance of Death*. For example, his sub-group D largely follows the order of sub-group C (both variants of Warren's B group, which emerged around 1435 according to Seymour), but with the *doctor utriusque iuris* as a new character, new verses for the minstrel, and the sequence of the last ten characters altered.[30] The division into sub-groups does not help explain which parts of the poem – if any – were revised by Lydgate himself, however. Increasing awareness of medieval scribes and their practices has meant that it is no longer safe to rely on the traditional assumption that the B version is Lydgate's own revision of the A version, or on the B text being the version used for the scheme in Pardon Churchyard. A full comparison and analysis of the various text versions will require further study, but the problem of textual variance is too important to be ignored and the issue will be raised again later. For the sake of clarity and consistency, references will continue to be made to Warren's groups A and B.

No autograph copy of the poem exists although some extant copies may have been produced in Lydgate's lifetime: only BL MS Cotton Vespasian A. xxv dates probably to the sixteenth century.[31] The number of extant manuscript copies suggests that the poem was well known. The first complete printed version with just two woodcut illustrations was published only in 1554 by Richard Tottel in London as an appendix to Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. Its publication may have been inspired by antiquarian interest in Pardon Churchyard scheme, destroyed only five years previously, yet the prominence of the clergy in Tottel's opening woodcut (Introduction, fig. 12) may also reflect the return to Catholicism under Queen Mary.[32] Tottel's version of the *Dance* was reprinted by William Dugdale in his *History of St Paul's Cathedral in London* (1658) and in his *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1673).[33]

An apparent argument against the popularity of the *danse* in England is the lack of earlier *Dance of Death* editions by pioneering English printers such as Caxton, de Worde and Pynson, to name but three of Marchant's near-contemporaries across the Channel who published other works by the still popular Lydgate. Woolf contrasted this lack with the popularity of the theme on the Continent:

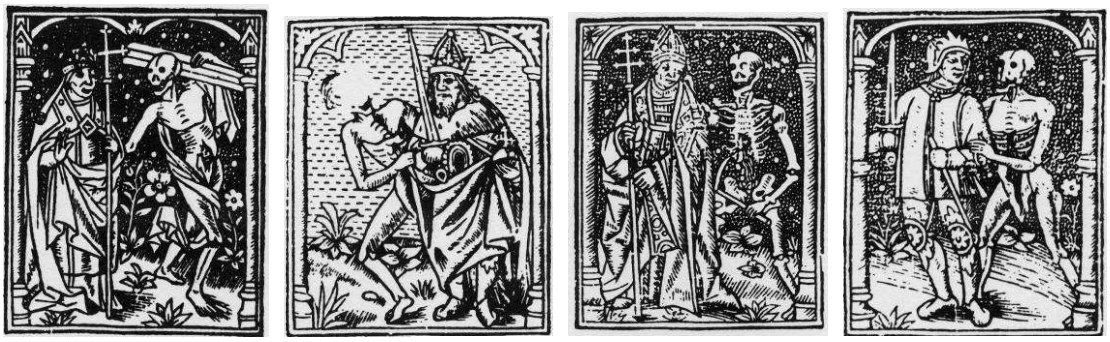
> The difference here is that there is no evidence in England of an actual popular taste for literature on the subject of death. The speed with which Guyot Marchand produced editions of the *Danse macabre* and variations upon it suggests the commercial judgement of a businessman rather than the didactic concern of a preacher. Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde were no doubt likewise shrewdly sensitive to the demands of popular taste, but ignored the poetry of death. There is no suggestion in England, as there is in France and Germany, that a perverse enjoyment was derived from the fear of death and from death's distressing physical signs.[34]

The evidence of a continuing fascination with death in literature and art, including the number of extant cadaver monuments (see chapter 7), belies Woolf's denial of such a 'perverse enjoyment' in England. It may well have been the necessary investment in bespoke woodcuts for an illustrated edition of Lydgate's *Dance* that early English printers found prohibitive (see also chapter 2).

However, Lydgate's *Dance* had appeared in print prior to Tottel's edition: twenty stanzas with ten accompanying woodcuts (**Fig. 2**) were included in the small-sized *Horae Beate Marie Virginis* (Use of Sarum) printed *c.*1521 by Johan Bignon in Paris for the London bookseller Richard Fakes (Faques).[35] The only extant copy of these *Horae* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce BB.53) was at one time owned by Francis Douce.[36] The poem is incomplete and the order of characters somewhat haphazard: the stanzas are those of Death and the pope, emperor, cardinal, patriarch, judge, king, archbishop, knight, mayor and baron/earl. Red rubrics underneath each woodcut identify the characters; the verse dialogue is printed as prose because of the narrow text area. The inclusion of the judge and the mayor corresponds to the B version, but there are textual divergences. For example, the king's penultimate line 'who is moost meke I holde he is moost sage' matches the A version's 'Who is moste meke I holde he is moste sage' (*E*:119) instead of 'Who that is most meek hath most avauntage' (*L*:111) in B. Also, the king's fourth line 'wat pride is wo[r]th or force of hie lignage' is closer to 'What pride is worth force or hye lynage' (*E*:116) than to 'What pride is worth force or high parage' (*L*:108).[37]

More research is needed into the model for Fakes' text and also into the source for Bignon's woodcuts (compare **Figs 2-3**). One plausible explanation is that the latter were originally part of a complete (but since lost) early printed edition of Lydgate's *Dance of Death* and merely inserted rather haphazardly at the end of the *Horae* to fill the remaining ten empty pages.[38] It is equally possible, however, that Bignon in turn re-used woodcuts from a different, but as yet unidentified French *Danse Macabre* edition. The ornamental arches and outdoor settings strewn with plants are reminiscent of Marchant's woodcuts (Appendix 1), but Bignon's woodcuts show single dead figures each flanking their victims on the right; the exception is the emperor, who is dragged off to the left and whose woodcut features a different background (**Fig. 2**). The suggestion of perfunctory and partial re-use by Bignon of an available larger scheme is reinforced by the inappropriate choice of woodcuts for the stanzas:[39] for example, the fourth woodcut illustrates a Carthusian instead of the patriarch of the matching stanza, while a woodcut of a patriarch accompanies the

archbishop's stanza (**Fig. 2**). Likewise, the earl or baron is dressed more like a merchant or burgher, whereas the supposed mayor with his rather fanciful armour, raised sword and baton must represent the constable (**Fig. 2**); outfit worn by the supposed Lord Justice is also wrong.



2. (Above) The pope, the emperor, the archbishop (actually the patriarch) and the mayor (probably the constable), woodcuts accompanying stanzas from Lydgate's Dance of Death *in a printed edition of the* Horae Beate Marie Virginis *produced* c.*1521 in Paris by Johan Bignon for the London bookseller Richard Fakes. Compare the pope in fig. 3 and also Appendix 1 for Marchant's woodcuts of the pope and constable.*

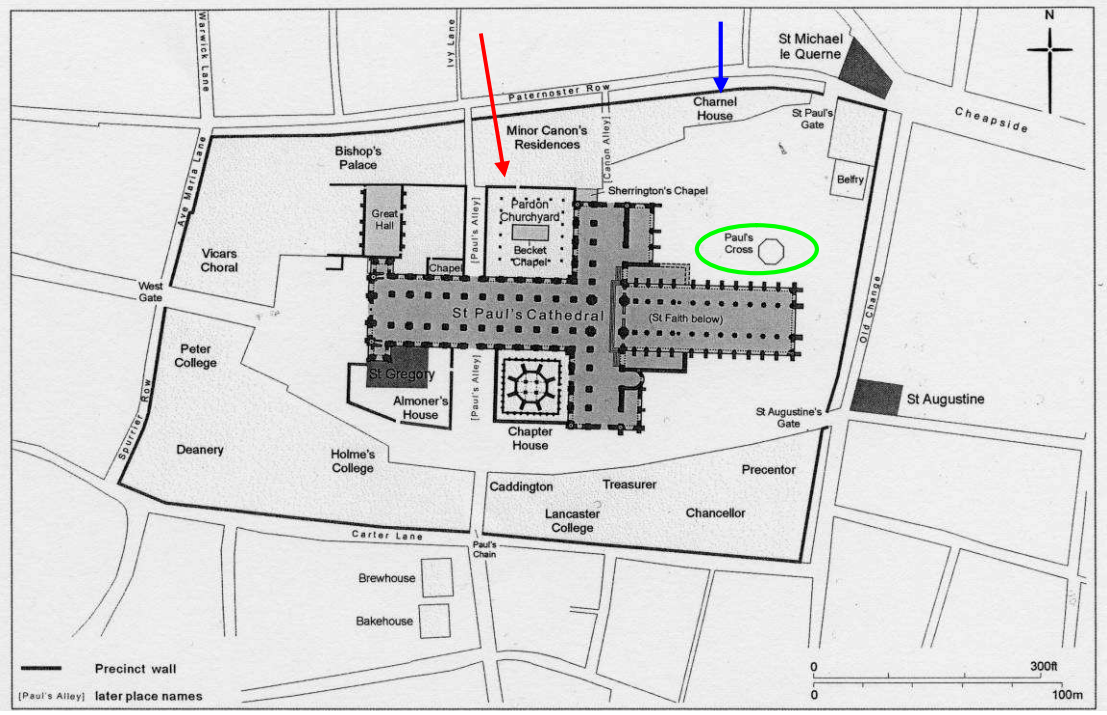
3. (Left) The pope, detail from a danse macabre *border decoration in a Parisian book of hours of* c.*1430 (Paris, BNF ms. Rothschild 2535, fol. 108v): see also chapter 2, fig. 7.*

As will be evident from this section, the dissemination of Lydgate's poem is extremely complicated, not merely because of the 'revision' of the original A version or the likelihood of scribal divergences and interpolation of new lines or stanzas not by the author himself (see below). Lydgate almost appears to invite his readers to interfere with his text when he asks these 'lordes and maistres' to support his translation and 'To correcte where as 3e see nede' (*E*:660). Although this appeal is part of the modesty topos, some admirers may have taken the invitation further than the author intended. The fairly large number of extant manuscripts suggests that Lydgate's *Dance* was popular and well known, and the variances are further evidence of engagement with the text, even if the late appearance of the poem in print would seem to contradict its renown. Admittedly, Bignon's incomplete *Dance* edition in the *Horae* of *c.*1521 predates Tottel's by more than three decades, but it does not constitute firm evidence of an earlier full (but lost) *Dance of Death* edition.[40]

The inclusion in Bignon's *Horae* of parts of Lydgate's *Dance* may initially have been inspired by the frequent occurrence of *danse macabre* woodcuts as marginal decorations in books of hours that were published from the late fifteenth century by other Parisian printers such as Antoine Vérard, Simon Vostre and Thielman Kerver.[41] Yet whereas the marginal woodcuts in French books of hours do not comprise accompanying texts except for labels identifying each character, Fakes must have supplied Bignon with Lydgate's verses specifically for inclusion in these *Horae* for the English market. The combination of stanzas and woodcuts – even if incomplete and with incorrect illustrations in places – suggests that Fakes expected his clientele to know and appreciate the *Dance* either as a poem by Lydgate or as the scheme from St Paul's in which images and texts were considered equally important.

Lydgate's *Dance of Death* and the '*Dance*' of Old St Paul's Cathedral

The mural at Les Innocents in Paris, which is still the earliest datable example of the *danse*, may have been followed fairly closely by the lost scheme commissioned for Old St Paul's Cathedral in London, which featured a version of Lydgate's *Dance of Death* poem (**Fig. 4**).[42] Walter Schirmer's interpretation of the testimony by the antiquarian John Stow (1525-1605) cited below was that Lydgate sent his translation of the French poem from Paris to London where it captured the interest of John Carpenter (*c.*1372-1442), who then suggested that the text be included in a similar painted scheme in the cloister of Pardon Churchyard.[43] Schirmer added: 'The verses provided an explanatory commentary on the paintings. It is striking how often Lydgate wrote works for such a purpose.'[44]



4. Precinct of Old St Paul's Cathedral, London, c.*1500, with Pardon Churchyard to the north of the nave (red arrow) and the charnel house with the chapel of the Virgin Mary above it (blue arrow), situated along Paternoster Row, and Paul's Cross to the north of the choir (circled in green).*

There is no absolute proof that Lydgate wrote his *Dance of Death* with such a painted scheme in mind.[45] None of the surviving manuscript copies of the poem are illustrated, but the same is true of early extant copies of the French text. References to Lydgate's readers 'seeing' the dance vary per version. For example, the French *acteur* in the prologue addresses the viewer (rather than the reader) with 'Tu vois les plus grans commancer', but Lydgate changes this line completely.[46] Allusions to visual imagery instead occur earlier in both the A and B prologue with the exhortation '3e mai *sene* here doctryne ful notable' (*E*:43, *L*:3 – my italics). If this line suggests that Lydgate composed his translation with a visual scheme in mind, then the emphasis on visual imagery is reinforced in the B version where the line 'How 3e schulle trace the daunce of machabre' (*E*:46) was changed to read 'How ye shal trace the daunce *which that ye see*' (*L*:6 – my italics). Even so, this by itself does not prove that it was the B version on which the Pardon Churchyard scheme was based, for the term 'daunce of machabre' tends not to be used in B version manuscripts whose titles instead refer to 'Macrobius' or more generically to the 'Daunce of Powlys' (see below).[47] Lydgate

must have seen the mural during his visit to Paris, but it is not certain that he copied the text himself *in situ* with the paintings in front of him; he might have based his translation on a manuscript copy obtained locally – perhaps one that contained illustrations or even variations on the text at Les Innocents.

Lydgate's huge oeuvre indicates that he was a fast worker so he could easily have composed the relatively short *Dance* while in France, as his 'Envoye' implies. One suggestion is that he sent his original translation from Paris to his supposed literary friend John Shirley in London, who copied numerous works by Chaucer, Lydgate and others. The two men may have been acquainted; Pearsall even referred to Shirley as being 'at once his [Lydgate's] publisher and his literary agent'.[48] However, the idea of Shirley being a commercial entrepreneur who ran a highly successful 'lending library' has since been questioned. According to a recent study, Shirley may have been in France himself as a member of Warwick's retinue around this time;[49] he only settled in London in the late 1420s, already an old man.[50] Instead of a commercial copyist and book producer, Shirley may have been an amateur gentleman of letters with a predilection for the work of Lydgate and other Chaucerian poets; although he did lend out his books and anthologies, others may not have been copied until after his death. Shirley dabbled in poetry and also engaged in translation work himself, adding material of his own in places: a 'tendency towards expansiveness' and a 'preference for elaboration' are noted of his translation of the French *Secret des Secres*.[51] If Lydgate sent his *Dance of Death* from Paris to England, there is no proof that Shirley was its recipient. Yet it may have been admirers like Shirley who 'revised' the poem.

Whatever the circumstances surrounding Lydgate's original translation of the French *Danse Macabre* text and its initial reception in England, the poem somehow attracted the attention of John Carpenter. According to the first edition of John Stow's *Survay of London* published in 1598,

> There was also one great Cloyster on the North side of this church, inuironing a plot of ground, of old time called Pardo[n] church yard, whereof Thomas More (Deane of Pauls) was either the first builder, or a most especiall benefactor, and was buried there. About this Cloyster, was artificially & richly painted, the dance of Machabray, or dance of death, commonly called the dance of Pauls: the like wherof, was painted about S. Innocents cloister, at Paris, in Fra[n]ce: the metres or poesie of this daunce, were translated out of French into English, by Iohn Lidgate, the Monke of Bery, & with ye picture of Death, leading all estates painted about the Cloyster: at the speciall request and dispence of Iankin Carpenter, in the Raigne of Henry the 6. In this Cloyster were buried many persons, some of worship, and others of honour: the monuments of whom, in number and curiouse workemanship, passed all other that were in that church.[52]

Carpenter, *secretarius* of the City of London, was a wealthy and educated man who was named as principal executor in the will of the famous London mayor Richard ('Dick') Whittington (1358?-1423). As Town Clerk he was acquainted with many men of culture, including the prolific preacher-poet William Lichfield, the author Reginald Peacock, and possibly the poet Thomas Hoccleve (1366/7-1426), who worked as a scribe in the Privy Seal Office and who addressed the petitionary *Ballade to Master John Carpenter* to him.[53] Whether or not Lydgate was part of Carpenter's intimate circle, the two men could have been acquainted professionally: in the 1420s Lydgate was commissioned to write a number of 'mummings' or pageants, not just for the court but also for some of the leading London guilds.[54]

Stow's 1598 mention of Carpenter as the patron who commissioned this first painted *Dance of Death* scheme in England may be based on a rubric to the poem in the fifteenth-century Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.21 (see below). Slightly different details are provided in a shorter account published in the 1603 edition of Stow's *Survay*, which the title page claims to be a new text based on the 1598 edition 'Since by the same Author increased, with diuers rare notes of Antiquity'. While incorrectly – but perhaps significantly – redating Carpenter's commission to Henry V's reign, the text introduces interesting new elements:

> *Iohn Carpenter* Towne Clarke of London, in the raigne of *Henrie* the fift, caused with great expences to bee curiously painted vpon boord, about the North Cloyster of Paules, a monument of death, leading all estates, with the speeches of death, and answere of euerie state. This Cloyster was pulled downe 1549.[55]

It is impossible to verify Stow's claim that the scheme was 'curiously painted vpon boord', rather than directly onto the walls, or on what documents he based his assertion about the 'great expences'. A wall-painting might seem more logical yet Stow's revised account – perhaps based on his own recollections or on testimony from others – could be reliable evidence to the contrary: apart from being a keen observer interested in minute details, Stow was also a born Londoner and old enough to have seen the scheme before its destruction.[56]

Exactly when Carpenter commissioned the *Dance of Death* paintings is unknown but there may be a connection with another project at Old St Paul's Cathedral. On 12 January 1430 Carpenter was granted a licence to pay eight marks a year for a chantry priest in the old chapel of the Virgin Mary situated above the charnel house on the north side of St Paul's Precinct, bordering the houses on Paternoster Row (see **Fig. 4**).[57] Consequently, a date of *c.*1430 is often cited for the commission of the *Dance of Death* scheme at the nearby Pardon Churchyard, and thus for Lydgate's supposed revision of the original A version at Carpenter's request.[58] As we have seen, however, the question of authorial revision is debatable, and because there is no firm link between Carpenter's two projects at Old St Paul's Cathedral the licence to found a chantry there cannot serve as definite proof for the date of the *Dance of Death* paintings or, for that matter, of the revised poem.

Pardon Churchyard was one of several burial places within the precinct of St Paul's Cathedral. It became an elite and enclosed burial ground although, just like Les Innocents in Paris, it also served as a cemetery for London parishes lacking their own churchyards and it furthermore received the bodies of destitute citizens who had died in the vicinity.[59] Unlike at the cemetery of Les Innocents, however, sermons and public announcements took place not in Pardon Churchyard but around Paul's Cross in the great cemetery north of the choir (**Fig. 4**).[60] Nothing remains of Carpenter's *Dance of Death* paintings since the demolition of Pardon Churchyard in 1549, but Sir Thomas More's brief but telling allusion (see Introduction) implies wide-spread familiarity with the scheme or at least with the idea of what it represented.

Because of the renown of this first English *danse macabre* scheme, the Dance of Death soon became known in England as the 'Dance of [St] Paul's'. Already in late 1440s Bristol, a shoe-maker named William Wytteney spent the substantial sum of £18 on 'a memorial that every man should remember his own death, that is to say, the Dawnse of Powlys' for display in the church of All Saints (see also chapter 8).[61] Wytteney's will illustrates how rapidly the theme became known across the country by the generic name of 'Dance of Paul's', a term also used in other records of the

period; yet Wytteney's textile hanging (presumably stained cloth) need not have been closely modelled on the London scheme.

It seems likely that Lydgate was directly involved in Carpenter's *Dance of Death* scheme at Pardon Churchyard, albeit that he may not have had a patron for such a project in mind when he first translated the French poem. He certainly knew of the scheme, for in another of his poems about the transitoriness of life, *Tyed with a Lyne*, he reminds the readers that 'Both high and lough shal go on dethis daunce, / Renne vnto Powlis, beholde the Machabe [*sic*]'.[62] This original term for the Dance, but without reference to St Paul's, is also used in another poem sometimes attributed to Lydgate, *The Prohemy of a Mariage betwix an Olde Man and a Yonge Wife, and the Counsail, &c.*, where a philosopher friend warns the old man of the title:

> Make thou no doute but thou may leed the daunce
> Of Makabre, and the mene-while thi wife
> Is syker of suche as she loved in thi life.[63]

These two references bring to mind Jehan le Fèvre's line 'Je fis de Macabré la dance [...]', which may also refer to such a poem by the writer himself (see chapter 2).

It is interesting that both *Tyed with a Lyne* and *The Prohemy* mention the term Machabe/Makabre, which matches its use in the A version text and brings us back to the question of which version was used in the Pardon Churchyard scheme. Besides causing editorial problems, the textual variance also affects how one views Carpenter's lost scheme. First of all, the omission of the translator's verses in the B version raises questions about whether Lydgate was himself named or depicted in the scheme. Mention should be made here of the *Dance of Death* mural in the Guild Chapel at Stratford, which was probably executed in the early sixteenth century (see Introduction). Its text appears to have been largely based on the B version, albeit with certain characteristics of A. Yet inspection in 1950 of what remained of the mural suggested that the first and third stanzas of the 'Verba translatoris' from the start of the A version were rather incongruously included at the very end of the scheme, apparently without the final 'Envoye'.[64] In other words, textual variance also affected how the scheme was presented in art or, *vice versa*, the text may have been adapted to suit a painted scheme. Secondly, the variation in characters between the two main versions is considerable: nine figures in the A version are replaced by eight new ones in the B text, while the order and labelling of characters also differs.

In a recent article, Amy Appleford presented an interesting new interpretation of the lost scheme that hinges, however, on one key assumption:

> The B version, which I take to be Lydgate's revision for the *Daunce of Poulys* project (not least because it bears the title *Daunce of Poulys* in two manuscripts), reorders the A version in a number of places and omits several characters from this version while adding eight new ones, seemingly with a powerful London civic audience in mind.[65]

Rather than argue the case for the B version being Lydgate's own revision for Carpenter's scheme, Appleford assumed this to be correct 'not least' because two manuscript versions of the B text bear the title 'Daunce of Poulys'; she then proceeded to explain how well the revised *Dance* fitted the civic setting of the London churchyard. Yet, as we have seen, 'Daunce of Poulys' was a generic term used for any version of the theme and not a specific reference to the version displayed in Pardon

Churchyard. Therefore, its occurrence in the title of only two manuscript copies is a spurious argument to use in support of the B version or any new hypothesis.

If one dare rely on titles used for the poem, more cogent evidence for the A text being the version used for Carpenter's scheme is found in the rubric to the A version of the poem in Trinity College Cambridge MS R. 3. 21, which states:

> This Daunce of machabre is depaynted rychly at sent innocents closter in parys in fraunce. Ere foloweth the Prologe of the Daunce of Machabre translatyd by Dan John lydgate monke of Bury out of Frensshe in to englyssh whiche now is callyd the Daunce of Poulys. & these wordes paynted in y^{e} cloystar at y^{e} dispensys & request of Jankyn Carpynter.[66]

This rubric not only provides the history of the poem, its author and the name of the patron who commissioned the paintings, but also explains that the 'Daunce of Machabre' is now called the 'Daunce of Poulys'. Furthermore, it claims to offer the text as painted in Carpenter's scheme, *i.e.* the A version. Nonetheless, there are problems. This fifteenth-century manuscript features a new one-stanza Envoy in Latin before the 'Verba auctoris', which in turn is followed by two extra stanzas entitled 'Mors ad Adam' and 'Adam respondit'. Then a different scribe copied the two stanzas for the empress from the B version at the bottom of the page with an inserted note 'Dethe to y^{e} mprise [*sic*] shuld folow next' beside the rubric 'Responsio Imperatoris'. Moreover, the Doctor's second (variant) stanza at the end of the B text is added to the A version's two epilogue stanzas for the 'Doctor Machabre'. In other words, this manuscript carries its own degree of scribal variance and may therefore not be wholly reliable evidence for the composition of the Pardon Churchyard scheme, either.

Even so, when Tottel printed Lydgate's *Dance* in 1554, not long after the destruction of Pardon Churchyard, it was the A version that he chose to publish, complete with the translator's stanzas. Once again there are inconsistencies. Tottel's edition retains the constable but omits the empress, while the 'tregetour' and parson are placed before the juror and minstrel.[67] Furthermore, the 'Verba translatoris' are labelled 'Prologue', whereas the Prologue proper is ascribed instead to the translator. Yet these are relatively minor deviations from the A version. If this late appearance in print of Lydgate's *Dance of Death* was indeed prompted by antiquarian motives, surely a Fleet Street-based publisher like Tottel would have wanted his version to correspond to the famous 'Dance of Paul's' in the nearby, newly demolished Pardon Churchyard, which would provide another argument in support of the A version.

According to Appleford, the revision of the text for the Pardon Churchyard scheme was made 'seemingly with a powerful London civic audience in mind'. In support of her hypothesis she also cited the reduction of courtly figures from twelve to eight and the reworking of figures belonging specifically to the urban community, which would have rendered the estate designations more nuanced. The introduction of the mayor and the omission of the 'tregetour' might support that idea, even if the new figure of the empress does not. Appleford furthermore mentioned the unusually positive presentation of the newly added canon regular, which might be a nod to the cathedral authorities, yet the original canon or *decanus* is still presented as enjoying his prebendary income too much. Interesting to observe is also the introduction of new juridical characters (including the civic *famulus*) in the B version, but the verses for the *iudex* are clumsily phrased and scan differently (see below): a poet like Lydgate would surely not mix up octosyllabic and decasyllabic verse in this way, especially in rhyme royal, which raises doubts about his authorship of these particular stanzas.[68]

Yet Appleford chose to ignore the possibility that the B version is not wholly Lydgate's. After describing how Pardon Churchyard had previously formed part of the route of the mayor's civic processions until the enclosure of the churchyard by Dean Thomas More (d. 1421), she concluded that Carpenter's *Dance of Death* scheme was a deliberate response to that enclosure as well as a canny civic expression of London's self-perception. Clever though this hypothesis may be, it would carry more conviction if the revision could be proved to be by Lydgate and at Carpenter's request. Appleford's article offers no such proof and fails to address the many divergences within the six known B texts or the possibility of later interpolations. Scribes and patrons other than Carpenter may have had their own reasons for wishing to alter Lydgate's original text, while some variance may not even be deliberate revision. A rubric in BL MS Vespasian A. xxv introduces its B variant as 'An history & Daunce of Deathe of all estatte & degres writen in the cappell of Wortley of Wortley Hall'; this fragmentary copy is believed to date to the sixteenth century when variance in the scheme is more likely to have occurred than so soon after Lydgate's original composition of the *Dance*.[69] These flaws in Appleford's argument weaken her claims about the Pardon Churchyard scheme. Nonetheless, irrespective of whether Carpenter commissioned a scheme based on the A or the B version, it is still likely that as Town Clerk he intended the *Dance* to be a combination of didactic warning and estates satire within a civic context, rather in the tradition of Chaucer whom Lydgate greatly admired.[70] However, there may have been yet another subtext.

Because of the uncertainties about Carpenter's project and Lydgate's text, it is impossible to reconstruct the original layout or appearance of the painted scheme at Pardon Churchyard. There are no visual records, detailed descriptions, or extant copies modelled on it, nor is there any record of the artist(s) responsible. A recent suggestion that the London scheme could have featured 'elements of the city's landscape' may be wishful thinking, yet not completely impossible.[71] After all, recognisable townscapes and architecture occur in other art of the period, most notably the castles in the calendar miniatures, the view of Paris as a backdrop to the Meeting of the Magi (fol. 51v) and the view of Bourges in the Adoration of the Magi (fol. 52r) in the Limbourg brothers' *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (Chantilly, Musée Condé) of *c.*1412-16.

5. Detail of the Totentanz *scheme formerly in the* Beichtkapelle *of the Marienkirche in Lübeck (photograph predating the destruction in 1942): although the scheme was renovated in 1701 the townscape setting is believed to be based on Bernt Notke's original design of* c.*1466.*

There is an admittedly later example of such a topographical element in the *Totentanz* of *c.*1466 in the Marienkirche at Lübeck: painted not directly onto the walls of the *Beichtkapelle* but onto canvas, it also had a townscape as its backdrop (**Fig. 5**).[72] The Hanseatic connection between the two cities might explain how the Lübeck paintings could have been inspired by those in London. Yet such realism seems rather too innovative for English art of this period; although the scheme could have been the work of a foreign artist, there is no indication of an immediate or clear impact of any such topographical elements on painting elsewhere in England.[73] Even so, it is not inconceivable that the Paris mural itself featured a townscape in the background, notwithstanding the arched settings of Marchant's woodcuts. Such a presentation of the French capital in a monumental mural could have been an added expression of nationalistic pride, especially during the Anglo-Burgundian occupation. A similar background in the London scheme would support Appleford's ideas, based though they are on some incorrect assumptions, but it is no more than speculation.

Within 120 years of its creation Carpenter's scheme was destroyed, as recorded by Stow:

> In the yeare 1549, on the tenth of Aprill, the said Chappell [in the middle of Pardon Churchyard] by commaundement of the Duke of Summerset, was begun to bee pulled downe, with the whole Cloystrie, the daunce of Death, the Tombes, and monuments: so that nothing thereof was left, but the bare plot of ground, which is since conuerted into a garden, for the Pety Canons.[74]

According to Appleford, the scheme was not specifically attacked for doctrinal reasons, but was instead a casualty of a new Reformation attitude towards the tomb of St Thomas Becket's parents within the churchyard; its supposed civic message was also no longer relevant in the altered political dynamics between capital and sovereign. Yet the greater number of religious characters presented in the A version would likewise have invited attack. James Simpson noted that the structure of English society had in any case changed dramatically by 1549; the international roles of the pope, emperor and cardinal were no longer pertinent in England, while such religious characters as the abbot, abbess, monk, friar and Carthusian were definitely out of favour.[75] The same argument applies to the Dance of Death at Stratford, which is unlikely to have been spared when all other potentially 'idolatrous' murals in the Guild Chapel were whitewashed in 1563-64 (see Introduction and below).

Prologue and epilogue, author and translator

The French *Danse Macabre* text that Lydgate originally translated as his A version included the four stanzas with which the *acteur* or 'Doctor' introduces and concludes the poem, to which Lydgate then added his own translator's stanzas. As discussed in chapter 2, the author of the French poem is unknown and Lydgate does not name him, either. The prologue in the Ellesmere Manuscript is labelled 'Verba auctoris' and only the heading for the two stanzas preceding the translator's 'Envoye' mentions 'Machabre the Doctoure', but Lydgate seems to imply a person in his reference to 'Macabrees daunce' (*E*:24); this has fuelled speculation about the origins of the term 'macabre'. In the French poem, the *Danse* is officially named by the *acteur* in his first stanza, 'La dance macabre sappelle', which Lydgate translates as an exhortation to the reader to learn how to 'trace the daunce of machabre' (*E*:46, rhyming with 'degre').

Many purely visual schemes omit the figure of the author altogether. Morgan MS M.358 has the preacher in his red academic gown at least at the start of its series of

danse macabre roundels (**Fig. 6**), but not at the end. Yet the author played a crucial textual role and we find him both at the start and the end of the French poem and – as a preacher – in both the Latin-German *Totentanz* (**Fig. 7**) and the Spanish *Dança General* (see Appendices 3-5). The moral lesson of the *Danse* would be incomplete without the explanation and admonition offered to readers by the author, who presents the theme as a mirror to all mortals destined to join the dance one day, 'En ce miroer chascun peut lire / Qui le conuient ainsi danser' or, in Lydgate's close translation of these lines, 'In this myrrow[r]e eueri wight mai fynde / That hym behoueth to go vpon this daunce' (*E*:49-50). The *acteur* thus introduces the mural in the way that preachers such as brother Richard in Paris may have used it as a visual preaching aid.

7. (Right) The preacher in his pulpit at the end of the Totentanz *mural, towards 1500, originally on the outside of the charnel house in Metnitz (Carinthia).*

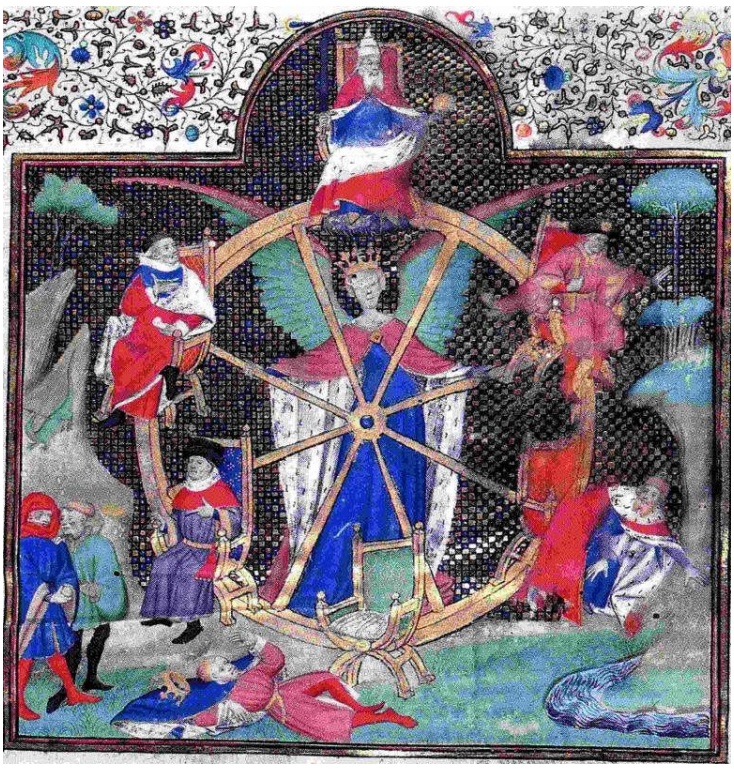
6. (Below) The author at his desk, start of a sequence of danse macabre *medallions in a Parisian book of hours of* c.*1430-35 (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.359, fol. 123r).*

Both the French *acteur* and Lydgate's author (*E*:41) address the reader in the first line as a 'creature roysonnable' desirous of eternal life, which is a deliberate contrast to the evidence of man's mortality in the schemes' cemetery settings in both Paris and London. The piles of skulls and bones visible in the nearby charnel houses would have made the truth of the last lines of both stanzas abundantly clear: 'Mort nespargne petit ne grant' or 'For dethe ne spareth hye ne lowe degre' (*E*:48), and 'Tout est forgie dune matiere' or 'Of oo matier god hathe forged al' (*E*:56). Lydgate closely follows the first ten lines of the prologue by the *acteur* in the French poem, but then introduces his own variant lines such as 'Death spareth not pore ne blode royal', which occurs in both the A and B versions (*E*:54; *L*:14). It is a curious divergence for there is no specific mention of royalty in the French prologue, despite the allusions to Charles VI later in the scheme (see chapter 2); this line may merely be a new truism introduced by Lydgate, yet rhyme alone does not explain the inclusion of 'blode royal'. In the author's last line Lydgate adheres to the French text: 'Of oo matier god hathe forged al' (*E*:56; *L*:16) closely matches 'Tout est forgie dune matiere'.

The 'Verba translatoris' that open Lydgate's A version consist of five stanzas in which the poet expands the didactic lesson of the French prologue and explains how the text came to be written. He does not reveal his own identity until the last stanza of his 'Envoye', however, where he combines the modesty topos with the statement 'my

name is Jon Lidgate' (*E*:670). Typical of Lydgate's elaborate style is his use of several metaphors within just a few lines. For example, the second stanza of the 'Verba translatoris' describes how Death does not spare those of high degree: 'When thei schyne moste in felicite / He can abate the fresshnes of her flowres / Ther bri3t sune clipsen with hys showres' (*E*:11-13). The stanza then moves from Death as the downfall of the mighty to another metaphor, *viz.* Fortune throwing popes, kings and emperors from her Wheel 'Maugre the myght of al these conquerowres' (*E*:15).

The traditional Wheel of Fortune shows four kings rising and falling as they utter the words 'Regnabo', 'Regno', 'Regnavi' and 'Sum sine regno' (I shall reign; I am reigning; I have reigned; I am without a kingdom). Lydgate's expansion of this image to include popes and emperors as well as kings may have been influenced by Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, which starts with the image of the Wheel of Fortune. Laurent de Premierfait completed a French translation of Boccaccio's text in 1409 and dedicated it to the duke of Berry; John the Fearless also received a richly illuminated copy. One manuscript of Premierfait's text, which was produced in Paris *c.*1415 for one of Charles VI's Italian courtiers, opens with a miniature that shows an intriguing degree of iconographic parallels with the *Danse* as depicted at Les Innocents a decade or so later (**Fig. 8**). Instead of the traditional four kings it depicts six different figures of high rank: a fallen king beneath the Wheel, his crown rolled to the ground, who is followed by what appear to be the author with his hands in a rhetorical gesture of debate (bottom left), a scholar(?), a pope with a raised sword and orb as emblems of secular power, a constable(?) with his baton, and finally an emperor(?) tumbling down on the right.[76] In the period 1430-38 Lydgate was to translate Premierfait's prose text into verse as *The Fall of Princes* for his patron Duke Humphrey, Bedford's younger brother, and in this later poem he also expressed his intention of speaking 'Of alle estatis, off hih and louh degre' and of 'Shewyng a meror how al the world shal faile'.[77] Lydgate's *Dance* may thus have presented itself to Tottel as an appropriate coda to his edition of *The Fall of Princes*, especially as the second stanza of the prologue reads like an epitaph for Henry V (see below).



8. (Left) Wheel of Fortune with clockwise the figures of the fallen king (bottom), the author(?), a scholar(?), the pope, the constable(?) and the emperor(?). Manuscript of Laurent de Premierfait's Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, produced in Paris* c.*1415 for the Luccan financier Augustin Isbarre (Sbarra), who was also an adviser to John the Fearless (Paris, BnF ms.fr. 16994, fol. 1r).*

The two-stanza epilogue is once again an adaptation by Lydgate of the French text, and revised completely in the B version. The *acteur* warns his readers that man is nothing: 'Cest tout vent: chose tra[n]sitoire'. Therefore, one should think of heaven instead of following those who act as if there is neither paradise nor hell; the *acteur*'s ironic conclusion that such fools 'auront chault' (will be hot) is not found in the *Dance*. Lydgate's literal translation of man being 'But as a wynde whiche is transitorie' (*E*:642) becomes a more poetic 'puff of wynde that is transitorie' (*L*:570), yet not all revision is an improvement. The warning that there is no better victory than to flee sin in order to feast in heaven is turned into a much duller exhortation in which 'gostly liff' rhymes with 'gostly stryff' (*L*:574, 576). Overall the B epilogue seems rather clumsy and Lydgate's authorship questionable.

Marchant concluded his 1485 edition with a short colophon giving his name and the date, but no further details about the mural or its patron; whether the wall-painting ever contained a prayer for the original patron is unknown. We also do not know if Lydgate or Carpenter were ever named in the Pardon Churchyard scheme, nor even if the translator's verses were included. Yet some visitors might have identified the 'Doctor' in the scheme as the 'monk of Bury' himself, especially if the London paintings included cryptoportraits like the Paris mural (see chapter 2 and below).[78] One printed image should be discussed in this context. Around 1520 the London publisher Richard Pynson included a woodcut in his edition of Lydgate's *Testament* that has since been reproduced in various Lydgate studies and editions (**Fig. 9**). It is a conventional representation of a cleric in the tradition of St Jerome or Petrarch at their desks, and thus not a true portrait of Lydgate who, in any case, had been dead for some seventy years. Yet the setting – with the author seated underneath an arch supported by two decorated pillars – is reminiscent of that of the *acteur* in the French scheme as known through the woodcuts of Marchant's 1485 edition, where the arches presumably reflect the setting of the Paris mural (see Appendix 1). The question is whether Pynson's woodcut can tell us anything about the London scheme.[79]

From 1502 until his death in 1529/30 Pynson ran his printing business 'at the sign of the George' on the north side of Fleet Street, not far from St Paul's Cathedral. Pynson must have known about Lydgate's authorship of the famous 'Dance of Paul's' poem that Sir Thomas More alluded to around this time (see Introduction). If Lydgate were widely known to be the author of the *Dance*, it could have been a shrewd move by Pynson, in an edition of what purports to be Lydgate's most autobiographical poem, to base his author 'portrait' on the image of the 'Doctoure' in the scheme at St Paul's. The early fifteenth century witnessed an increased interest in the figure of the author, as evident from extant (if posthumous) miniature portraits of Chaucer, for example.[80] However, we do not know if the London paintings had arched settings like the *Testament* woodcut. Instead, Pynson's print closely resembles another woodcut used by Marchant in 1491 to illustrate the *acteur* at the start of his *Danse Macabre des Femmes* (**Fig. 10**). 'Lydgate' in Pynson's woodcut is tonsured and wearing clerical instead of academic dress, but both authors are shown in the same pose and with similar props, such as the wooden dais, the ornate pillars and foliate decoration on the spandrels, and especially the flowery pattern on the back of the writer's elaborate chair that the later artist copied without apparently quite understanding its function.[81] These similarities make it unlikely that Pynson's woodcut was modelled on the image of the 'Doctour' in the Pardon Churchyard scheme, nor is it probable that the publisher chose this image because of a perceived Dance of Death connection. The woodblock may have belonged to the Parisian printer Vérard originally, and Pynson had already used this same woodcut for his 1513 edition of Lydgate's

Hystorye of Troye; he was to use the block again in at least six more publications up to 1529(?), of which only the *Testament* of *c.*1520 was another Lydgate text.[82]

9. Author writing at his desk, woodcut included as the frontispiece in Richard Pynson's edition of Lydgate's Testament *printed in 1520(?): compare Figs 3 and 5 and the representations of the* acteur *in Appendix 1.*

10. Lacteur *at his desk, woodcut at the start of Guy Marchant's expanded edition of the* Danse Macabre des Femmes *of 1491.*

It was common for early printers to re-use woodcut illustrations for different works, even if the image did not always quite fit the text, and later to lend or sell the woodblock to another printer: representations of authors were especially suitable for such re-use.[83] Pynson's woodcut is but one in a string of author representations that have several features in common – whether an arched setting or a similar pose or props – and that may ultimately derive from a common prototype. Another image of a scholar at his desk, which was used even more frequently as an author 'portrait' by Pynson from 1497 on, and copied by both Wynkyn de Worde and Julyan Notary, also shows some similarities to the 1491 Marchant woodcut, but without the arched frame.[84] The woodcut used in Pynson's edition of the *Testament* is therefore not in any way a 'portrait' of Lydgate but a generic author portrait, nor can it serve as visual evidence for the scheme in Pardon Churchyard.

Even if the figure of the author was not always considered important enough to be included in depictions of the *danse* in art, the prologue and epilogue were essential parts of the poem: they emphasised the moral lesson for the reader. Lydgate not only retained these stanzas but added his own translator's verses in order to reinforce the message of his poem and to add some details about the origins of the text and his own role as translator. Unfortunately for later scholars, his explanatory details fail to name the author of the French poem or the reasons behind its translation into English.

The characters in Lydgate's *Dance of Death*

Lydgate's A version matches the alternating sequence of clerical and lay characters in the French poem fairly closely, but it adds three female and two new male characters. Both poems follow a largely logical social hierarchy which contemporaries would have recognised, even if the ranking of some figures – especially the physician, lawyer and clerk – may seem anomalous. Yet the surviving B copies show a more random order and a number of new characters that may not all have been by Lydgate.

The *Danse Macabre* poem as we know it through Marchant's 1485 edition was itself a development from an earlier version: it includes some textual variance and

alters the order of four characters (see chapter 2 and Appendix 3). Further disruption in the sequence of characters occurred when ten new characters were added in Marchant's 1486 edition.[85] The sequence of ten clerical and fourteen non-clerical characters in the Latin *Totentanz* is also rather haphazard and perhaps a sign of later variance or interpolation.[86]

The order of speakers in the *Vado Mori* verses, which are often suggested as a precursor to the *Danse Macabre*, offers further comparisons. The theme first appeared in France in the thirteenth century, and variations in Latin and the vernacular soon followed.[87] Hellmut Rosenfeld published two related versions, of which the 'Erfurt' version has the shorter and more logical hierarchy of characters: *papa - rex - praesul - miles - monachus - legista - logicus - medicus - sapiens - dives - cultor - pauper*.[88] The longer 'Paris' version (of which Marchant included a variant in his 1486 *Danse Macabre* edition) shows a more arbitrary sequence: *rex - papa - praesul - miles - pugiles - medicus - magnus - logicus - juvenis - senior - dives - judex - pauper - voluptas - genitus - pulcher visu - sapiens - stultus - vino repletus - sperans - gaudens*.[89] A surprising omission is the emperor in both *Vado Mori* poems. On the whole, the characters are more generic in the 'Paris' version and less based on social rank than those in the *Danse Macabre*.

The *danse macabre* theme lent itself well to variation and interpolation. We can observe this in the preponderance of religious characters in Morgan MS M.359, which must reflect a deliberate choice by the unknown patron of this bespoke book of hours. It seems plausible that the original *danse* was based on a logical hierarchy of alternating clerical and lay characters, which was largely followed in the scheme in Paris and by Lydgate.[90] This arrangement was subsequently affected by variance and the addition of new characters; a process that occurred wherever the theme was developed further by writers or artists for whom the original order was less important.

Lydgate may have based his poem on the French *Danse* yet he could not but be influenced by the medieval tradition of estates satire, especially Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. It is well known that Chaucer was a major influence on Lydgate and the two works have many characters in common.[91] Space does not allow yet another comparison of the two authors nor an exhaustive study of each character in both versions of Lydgate's *Dance*, but an overview will help explain the nature of the poem, its satire as well as its variance. The characters will be discussed in four groups, *viz.* the clerical male figures; the lay male figures; youth as represented by the squire, the amorous squire and the amorous gentlewoman; and the other new male and female figures introduced in both versions. The main focus will be on the A text, but variations between the A and B versions will be indicated when appropriate; where both versions are virtually identical, the Ellesmere Manuscript version will be quoted but with reference to the matching lines in the Lansdowne Manuscript copy as edited by Warren.

● *The clerical male characters in Lydgate's* Dance of Death

The term 'clerical' is used here in its widest sense of literate or educated. Few of the characters are prepared for death, despite their learning, and certain themes recur with variations as befit each figure's perceived persona and status, most notably the sins of pride and greed. In places Lydgate adds irony to the original French satire.

For the **pope** Lydgate uses hyperbole to enhance the satire of the French poem. Omitting the *mort*'s general address to the living in the first four lines, he expands Death's pseudo-reverential address in order to describe the pope as having sovereignty 'liche as Petur [...] / Ouer the churche and states temporal' (*E*:59-60; *L*:20

'Ovir the chirche most in especiall'). Whereas the French pope doubts the seemliness of his leading the dance, Lydgate's pope instead happily believes himself fittest to do so as one who 'sate yn erthe hyest yn my see' (*E*:66; *L*:26). Lydgate's ironic presentation of the **cardinal** is largely modelled on the French poem. The main emphasis is on the cardinal's red hat and his 'grete a-rai' (*E*:93; *L*:53). It is doubtful that Lydgate intended to satirise the rich and powerful Cardinal Beaufort who, having been Chancellor under both Henry IV and Henry V, was at this time engaged in a power struggle with the duke of Gloucester for control over government in England. Perhaps to avoid any resemblance to the wealthy Beaufort, Lydgate replaced the lines 'Vous auez vescu haultement / Et en honneur a grant deuis' (You have lived in a high manner, and in honour to your great content) with a less pointed attack.

The main themes amongst other targets for anti-clerical satire are pride and greed. Lydgate strengthens the contrast between the **patriarch**'s 'humble chere' when facing Death, and his rich cross, power and dignity that he is about to lose. The **archbishop** is likewise guilty of worldly vanity, pride and love of luxury, as his words indicate: 'A-dewe my tresowr my pompe & pride al-so (*E*:166). The **bishop** is accused of putting treasure and worldly goods above heavenly concerns. He responds to Death's 'sodeyne tidinges' along the same lines as his French counterpart, except for the line 'Mi festes turned in to simple ferie' (*E*:211). The idea that bad news can turn one's feastdays (or church festivals) into ordinary weekdays is really rather clever in this episcopal context, but that joke is lost in the B version.

The **abbot** was traditionally satirised for over-indulgence, so Lydgate rhymes a reference to his 'brode hatte' with the line 'Grete is 3owre hede 3owr beli large & fatte' (*E*:235; *L*:179). Death gleefully tells the abbot that he must dance 'thow3 3e be nothing light' (*E*:236; *L*:180) and that 'Who that is fattest [...] / In his graue shal sonnest putrefie' (*E*:239-40; *L*:183-84; see chapter 7). The abbot himself contrasts his life as a cloistered monk with his liberty and 'grete habundaunce' (*E*:245; *L*:189). The stereotypical **monk** of medieval satire (absent in the B version) is keen to escape the seclusion of his cloister walls and also loves good food, fine clothes and hunting. Responding to Death's warning that he must give account 'towchyng yowre laboure / How 3e haue spente hit in dede worde & thought' (*E*:381-82), Lydgate's monk admits that his labours have not all been exemplary. He expresses a belated hankering after the cloister as a place of contemplation, knowing himself himself to be guilty of many vices, 'Liche as a fole dissolute and nyce' (*E*:389).

Medieval friars were known for their eloquence, as shown by Chaucer. Death reminds the **friar minor** of his graphic sermons about the horrors of death, 'Al-be that folke take ther of none hede' (*E*:565; *L*:389), which makes Lydgate's 'Cordelere' seem less persuasive than Chaucer's friar while admonishing those who fail to heed the same message in the *Dance*. Now himself the target of Death's sermon, the friar acknowledges the vanity of strength, wealth and worldy wisdom. The concluding truisms of both stanzas well befit a preacher: 'For dethe eche owre is present & redy' and 'Wise is that synner that dothe his lif a-mende' (*E*:568, 576; *L*:392, 400).

In contrast to the B version's *Canonicus Regularis*, the secular **canon** (*Decanus* in B) lived in the outside world. He has to forego his comfortable income from prebends and recognises too late that his 'benefices with many a personage' (*E*:321; *L*:297 'My divers cures my riche personages') now offer little comfort. The main theme is again greed, just as in the presentation of the **parson** whose verses Lydgate freely adapted from the French. His worldly 'Sire Curate' is a far cry from Chaucer's idealised counterpart and certainly no mirror to others: he is wholly preoccupied with his tithes and 'oblacioun' (*E*:532), the offering made at the Holy Eucharist. Bidding

farewell to his revenues, he resigns himself to giving final reckoning for the care of his flock in accordance with Death's final truism, 'And to eche laboure due is the salarie' (*E*:536). In a break with medieval tradition, the parson is here unfavourably juxtaposed with the hard-working labourer, the hero of Langland's poem.[92]

The **astronomer**'s celestial focus is contrasted with the earthly fate of Adam's descendants, doomed because of 'an appil rounde' (*E*:288; *L*:376). Lydgate cannot resist showing off his own knowledge of astronomical calculation and 'domefyinge' (*E*:292; *L*:380), for which confused scribes substituted variant readings such as 'demonstrynge', 'domyssesence' and 'dome seyng'.[93] The **physician** was traditionally satirised as a quack or as a learned man too fond of gold, like Chaucer's 'Doctor of Physic'. Not all medieval doctors were frauds, however:[94] the physician is presented as a man of science and a true healer, if helpless against death, in the French *Danse*, which also provided an apt truism, 'Good leche is he that can hym self recure' (*E*:424). Lydgate introduces a sour note by mentioning the physician's desire for renown and the gold that he has won through his craft. Except for sharing these mercenary allusions absent in the French poem, the physician's stanzas in the A and B versions are totally different: the variant B phrase 'herbe nor roote / Nor no medicyne' (*L*:478), which matches the French 'herbe ne racine: / Nautre remede', illustrates once again the complicated nature of the *Dance* text variations.

For the **man of law** – addressed as 'Sir aduocate' in the A text and 'sir Sergeant' in B – Lydgate follows both the French *Danse* and Chaucer in using legal terminology to characterise a typical lawyer. His main incentive is lucre, which will not benefit him as he 'mote come plete a-fore the hye Juge' (*E*:466; *L*:338). The final truism fits the man of law well: 'God quyte al men liche as thei deserue' (*E*:480; *L*:352). Also keen on earthly possessions is the young **clerk** (absent in the B version), who differs from the stereotypical young eternal student satirised only gently by Chaucer. Death accuses him of vain ambitions to 'haue risen vn-to hye degre / Of benefices or somme grete prebende' (*E*:594-95), which indicates the sins of pride as well as avarice.

Better prepared for death is the abstemious **Carthusian**, whose 'chekes dede & pale' (*E*:345; *L*:321) are contrasted with Death's loathsome appearance. Like his French counterpart, Lydgate's Carthusian calmly concedes victory to Death: he has long been dead to the world already. The **hermit** provides a fitting *contemptus mundi* finale as the last living victim in the *Dance*, although his juxtaposition with the clerk interrupts the clerical/lay alternation. His humble gratitude for God's 'grete habundaunce' is praised in the third stanza labelled 'Dethe a-3en to the Ermyte' in the Ellesmere Manuscript (omitted in B). The infant might have been a more logical hierarchical choice to conclude the *Danse*, which is what we find in Morgan MS M.359 (see chapter 2, Fig. 9, and also chapter 5). Yet the unknown French poet must have preferred a pious conclusion, and Lydgate follows his example.

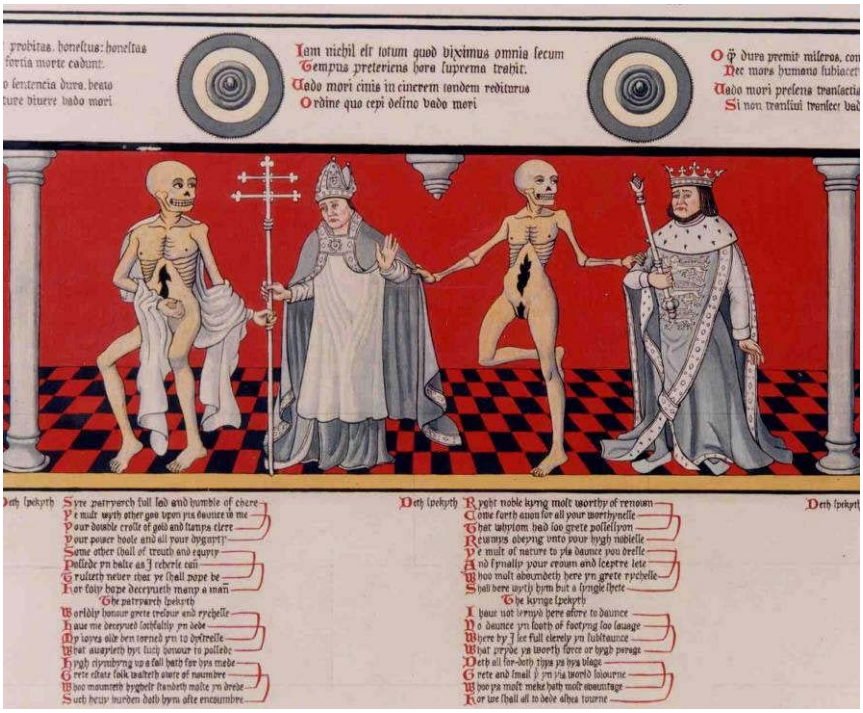
Lydgate often refers to his characters' appearance, such as the canon's 'Amys o[f] gris' (*E*:325; *L*:301) or the archbishop's posture, here interpreted as a sign of disdain (*E*:153-54; *L*:113-14). He also enjoys using (and mixing) metaphors, as in the bishop being 'brow3t to lure' to render account for his 'prelacie' (*E*:206-7; *L*:150-51), the lure being a device to recall hawks but also already a common metaphor.[95] Some are less apt: the metaphor about the need to settle one's debts and pay the host seems inappropriate for the archbishop, yet it is also found in the French poem.[96] New is Lydgate's reference to the Wheel of Fortune in Death's words to the clerk, 'Who clymbeth hyest somme-tyme shal dessende / Lete no man grucche a-3ens his fortune' (*E*:597-98). The Wheel may also be implied in the patriarch's recognition that 'Hi[e] clymbyng vp [a f]alle hathe for his mede' (*E*:133; *L*:93) and Death's truism to the

bishop 'No wight is sure that clymbeth ouer hye' (*E*:208; *L*:152) from the French line 'Nest pas asseur qui trop hault monte' – a lesson also for the reader.

● ***The lay male characters in Lydgate's*** **Dance of Death**

Like the French *danse*, Lydgate includes few working-class representatives other than the labourer; the 'artifex' in the B version is an exception. The theme's adaptability to social change is evident in the larger number of trades presented in the *Danse Macabre des Femmes*, and far more so yet in the German *Totentanz* tradition. Social representation was to become much broader still in the post-medieval *Ständebuch* that was in many ways the secular successor of the *danse*.[97]

Lydgate's allusions to characters' appearance and attributes, such as the physician's urine flask (*E*:417), may have been intended just as recognition factors. The **emperor**'s acceptance of a 'simple shete [...] / To wrappe yn my bodi and *visage*' (*E*:85-86 – my italics) raises the question whether the scheme in London might have depicted a recognisable emperor. However, there are no pointed references to support any such identification in the virtually identical A and B stanzas, which follow the French poem fairly closely (see also chapter 2).



11. The patriarch and the king in the Dance of Death *mural of the early sixteenth century in the Guild Chapel at Stratford-upon-Avon, watercolour reconstruction painted by William Puddephat when the mural was uncovered in 1955. Compare also Marchant's figures of the patriarch and the king (in separate woodcuts) in Appendix 1 and the overall view in chapter 1, fig. 6.*

The A and B verses for the **king** retain the French king's complaint about the dance being 'sauage' and the line 'For [w]e shalle al to dede asshes turne' (*E*:120; *L*:112). If the interpretation of these French verses in chapter 2 is correct, it raises the question whether Lydgate grasped the political meaning within the overall didactic context. Yet in England his stanzas about the downfall of a king 'moste worthi of renown' (*E*:105; *L*:97) would have applied very well to the late Henry V, especially in combination with the references in the second stanza of the 'Verba translatoris' to 'conquerowres' who are struck down 'When thei schyne moste in felicite' (*E*:11) and the addition of the named character of 'Maister Jon Rikelle some tyme tregetowre / of nobille harry' (see below).[98] There is no firm proof to support suggestions of a cryptoportrait in the Pardon Churchyard scheme, although such imagery was sometimes altered or appropriated by later kings.[99] Yet there is the evidence of the

Dance of Death mural in Stratford-upon-Avon for comparison. When the remains of this scheme were exposed in 1955 (**Fig. 11**), the king was found to wear a mantle decorated with the English royal device of three lions *passant gardant*. Yet even if they took their inspiration from the Pardon Churchyard scheme, the Stratford artists appear to have used Marchant's woodcuts as their model, albeit that they adapted the king's mantle (see Appendix 1); the heraldry may – yet need not – imply that this figure was intended to be a cryptoportrait of the then reigning monarch, Henry VII.[100]

With slightly revised verses Lydgate's **constable** becomes a 'Riht myhty prynce' (*L*:129) in the B version, although one manuscript labels him 'duke'.[101] A new *ubi sunt* comparison with 'worthy Arthour of prowes ful notable / With al his knyhtes [of] the rounde table' (*L*:132-33) is added to the original mention of Charlemagne. The constable's line about his ambition to 'brynge folke vn-to subieccioun' receives a new target of 'Rebellis' (*E*:147; *L*:139) – perhaps a topical allusion? Less martial is Lydgate's **baron** or **knight**, who shares the French *chevalier*'s interest in dancing and flirting 'with ladies and wymmen hye of [n]ame' (*E*:180) as well as in trumpets and clarions, *i.e.* the music of battle, hunting and action. Yet the banter about his womanising is changed in the B version to a pursuit of power and status.

Legal jargon is used to satirise the **bailiff**, just as it is for the man of law. Death summons him 'to a newe assise / Extorcions & wronges to redresse' (*E*:267-68), but ironically it is for his own venality that the bailiff must give account. The truism that no appeal avails against death fits his profession. Pride and anger are the typical sins of the **sergeant**; his mace in Marchant's woodcut is also mentioned by Lydgate and the French poet. Death warns him to 'make no defence ne no rebellioun' (*E*:362; *L*:402) because nothing avails even the strongest champion. The indignant sergeant cannot escape: Death has arrested him, 'the kynges chosen officere' (*E*:370; *L*:410).

Money and worldly goods are the theme in the stanzas for the burgher, the merchant and the usurer, which closely follow the French poem; the B version has only the merchant. The **burgher** is told that his wealth will not save him; it will merely pass to another. His regret at having to leave 'Howses rentes tresoure & substauns' anticipates the truism 'And w[h]o moste hathe [l]othest dieth euer' (*E*:307, 312). The well-travelled **merchant** is satirised because of his greed;[102] Death's closing words complement those for the burgher, 'No[ne] more coueite than thei that haue ynow' (*E*:336; *L*:488). A stereotypical villain in medieval culture, the **usurer** only now recognises his sins to which he had previously been blind; an image also used in the truism 'Somme haue feyre y3en that seen neuer a dele' (*E*:408). His greed is underlined by a poor man to whom he hands money as Death pulls him away – but only as a loan, the French recipient explains to the reader; Lydgate's third stanza instead resembles a sermon about the differences between rich and poor.

Though a stock character in the *danse*, the **labourer** is an exception in being both a rural figure and a lowly worker. Despite the consolation that death will release him from this false world – for Death shows him some sympathy – the labourer would rather live his life of toil and foul weather. Lydgate deviates from the French text in replacing the French vineyards with the plough and other agricultural labour. Another exception because of his age is the **child** (see chapter 5): an English iconographical variation on the infant in his cradle of French tradition is the bare-legged young child in Tottel's 1554 woodcut (see Introduction, figs 12-13, and chapter 2, figs 7 and 9).

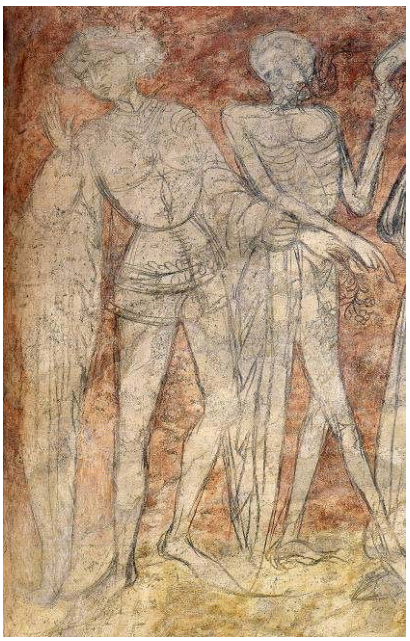
Lydgate's A text softens the French criticism of the **minstrel** for entertaining fools with his music; he may be able to 'note & pipe', but he must join a different dance. The theme of the minstrel's own stanza in the A version is his dismay at this new dance with its 'dredful fotyng' and varying measures that Death forces him to

join. The B verses for the *Mimus* read and scan totally differently, however, and may not be by Lydgate; it is impossible to find any reasons for this 'revision'.

● ***Figures of youth: the squire, the* amoureux *and the amorous gentlewoman***

By making the *amoureux* an amorous squire, Lydgate introduced an anomaly: the poem already contains a **squire**. The virtually identical A and B versions are closely modelled on the French poem. Like his counterpart in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the squire ('Miles & Armiger' in B) is 'fresh' and adept at dancing, fighting and horsemanship. Reluctantly he bids adieu to mirth, solace, beauty, and to 'my ladyes somme-tyme so fressh of face' (*E*:228; *L*:252), which shows him to be young: lust was held to be a sin of youth whereas greed typifies the old. His final lines are a reminder to heed one's soul before it is too late, 'For al shal rote & no man wote what tyme' ((*E*:232; *L*:256).

By comparison, the figure of the ***amoureux*** is as much about age as about rank: Marchant's woodcut shows him far more elegantly dressed than the *escuier*, albeit in late-fifteenth-century style like most of Marchant's figures. He epitomises youth, or *Adolescentia* in the Ages of Man tradition. If lust was regarded as a typical sin of youth, so was vanity.[103] Lydgate uses the language of courtly love for his 'amerous Squyere', who is gentle, fresh, young, 'flowryng in 3owre grene age', lusty, 'fre of herte and eke desyrous' (*E*:433-35). Not everything is positive: green may be the colour of Spring, youth and vigour, but in comparisons with the transitory leaf it could also connote inconstancy.[104] The tone changes completely after the line 'Plesaunt of porte of loke & [of] visage' (*E*:437) when the squire is reminded that everything shall be turned into dead ashes; after all, beauty is 'but a feynte ymage' (*E*:439). The squire answers with an 'Allas allas' and a string of adieux – seven of his eight lines begin with A – to the 'lusti fressh floure' of youth, to the vainglory of beauty and pride, to all service to Cupid, and to his ladies 'so fresshe so wel be-seyne' (*i.e.* dressed, adorned). Nothing can resist death; not even youth or beauty.



12. The amoureux (with a flower – inset) in the unfinished fifteenth-century Dance Macabre *fresco in the choir of the abbey church of St Robert, La Chaise-Dieu (Auvergne).*

The French poem often alludes to attributes that the mural would also have shown, so what distinguishes the *amoureux* besides youth and elegant attire? He bids adieu to his 'amourettes', 'chapeaux bouques fleuretes', 'amans: et puceletes', but

Marchant's woodcut shows him with only a stylish hat and attire. Yet the *amoureux* in the *Danse Macabre* fresco at La Chaise-Dieu (Auvergne) has a flower as his attribute (**Fig. 12**): a token not just of ephemeral youth and life, but also of courtship. The age of courtship was *Adolescentia*, its equivalent in the medieval calendar being the month of May.[105] The Ages of Man is usually an all-male scheme in medieval art, yet in the fourteenth-century encyclopaedia *Omne Bonum* the entry for *Adolescentia* shows a woman offering a mirror to a young man, whose sword hangs rather suggestively between his legs (**Fig. 13**); the accompanying text confirms *Adolescentia* as the Age of 'heat' that needs to be restrained.[106] In an illuminated diagram of the Ages of Man in a Bavarian manuscript of *c.*1330-40, *Adolescentia* is represented by a young man with a flower embracing a woman (**Fig. 14**).[107] A Flemish miniature of *c.*1480 depicting The Three Living and the Three Dead also includes a female companion as a love interest for one of the three stereotypical young male hunters (**Fig. 15**).

13. (Far left) The Age of Adolescentia *represented by a young noble couple in the fourteenth-century encyclopaedia* Omne Bonum *(BL MS Royal 6 E. vi, fol. 58v).*

14. (Left) Adolescentia *represented by a romantic couple,* c.*1330-40, from a diagram on a single Bavarian manuscript leaf illustrating the five Ages of Man according to Bartholomaeus Anglicus'* De Proprietatibus Rerum *(Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 19414, fol. 180r).*

15. (Right) The Three Living and the Three Dead, miniature in a Flemish book of hours of c.*1480 (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 B 14, fol. 227v): the knight on the white horse has a female companion.*

16. (Below left) The amoureux *and his female companion(?), detail from a* danse macabre *border decoration in a Parisian book of hours of* c.*1430 (Paris, BNF ms. Rothschild 2535, fol. 108v): see also chapter 2, fig. 7.*

So could there have been a female companion to the *amoureux* in the mural that Lydgate saw at Les Innocents in 1426? The near-contemporary *danse macabre* marginalia in BnF ms. Rothschild 2535 feature another elegantly dressed couple who are difficult to interpret otherwise (**Fig. 16**; see also chapter 2). Moreover, there is the precedent of the poor man as an added foil to the usurer; although no copy of the French poem contains an additional stanza for a woman, it is not impossible that she was included in the mural as a mere attribute without her own verses. Further support for this hypothesis may lie in Lydgate's *Dance* where the amorous squire is succeeded by a '**gentilwoman amerous**' 'of 3eres 3onge & grene' (*E*:449; *L*:353). Death's stanza overflows with the *ubi sunt* references to beautiful heroines long dead – Polyxena, Penelope, Helen of Troy – that we find in other poems of the period, including Lydgate's. There is also the courtly love element in the word 'daunger' and in the gentlewoman's 'straungenesse' (*E*:454-55; *L*:358-59). Misogyny colours her lament about the loss of her beauty: the lines 'For yn my 3owthe this was myn entente / To my seruyce many a man to a lured' (*E*:461-62; *L*:365-66) carry more than a hint of Chaucer's Wife of Bath.

Even without an *amoureuse* in the Paris mural, Lydgate could have found inspiration elsewhere to include female figures, especially in *The Canterbury Tales*. There is the juxtaposition of the *nobilis* and *nobilissa* in the Latin *Totentanz*, but neither is presented according to courtly love conventions and it is debatable when the *Totentanz* tradition emerged.[108] The A and B verses for the gentlewoman are virtually identical and Lydgate's authorship is not in question. Yet as part of the 'revision' the stanzas for the amorous squire were omitted from the B text, probably because they were considered superfluous when there was already a squire earlier in the poem.

● ***The additional characters in Lydgate's*** **Dance of Death**

Besides the amorous gentlewoman, Lydgate added four more new characters to his original *Dance*. Like the bailiff and the man of law, the **juror** is another corrupt official: he is involved in the valuation of land and property.[109] Legal terminology is again used to satirise this character, who is unlikely to acquit himself before the ultimate judge. A medieval hate figure, especially among the poor, the juror himself admits that 'Of my dethe many a man is glad' (*E*:496; *L*:432).

The second new male character is the **'tregetour'** (court juggler or magician), who is also the only named character in the *Dance*: 'Maister Jon Rikelle some tyme tregetowre / Of nobille harry kynge of Ingelonde / And of Fraunce the myghti Conquerowre' (*E*:513-15), *i.e.* a servant of the late Henry V. The words and metaphors used in the poem befit the 'tregetour', whose profession appears to involve not only 'legerdemeyn' but also 'maugic natural' and astrology. Yet sleights of hand will not help him: Death is 'not deceyued be noon illusiouns' (*E*:520). No historical figure of this name has yet been found in the royal records, though Rikil or Rikhill was a familiar London surname.[110] Yet there are no known precedents for such a named character in the European *danse macabre* tradition at this time (although Chaucer's host Harry Bailey is an obvious literary precedent) and it seems likely that Lydgate's contemporaries were meant to know this figure. The introduction of the late king's tregetour may well support the idea of allusions to Henry V earlier in the poem.

The '**lady of great estate**' is censured for aloofness ('grete straungenesse') and the usual female vanities, much like the gentlewoman. Her beauty, rich array and dalliance with different men will no longer help her, for she must learn the 'foting' of Death's dance. The lady (or 'Princesse') recognises that queen, countess nor duchess

is safe: Death is impervious to their charms and beauty is ephemeral. The lady is thus very much a misogynistic stereotype with few original traits.

The gentle-born **abbess** also enjoys a pampered lifestyle, as evident from her rich apparel – her 'mantels furred large & wide' and 'wimple passyng of grete richesse' – and even her 'beddes softe' (*E*:250-52; *L*:194-96). Inevitably this has called forth comparisons with Chaucer's Prioress.[111] With mock courtesy Death offers to guide her to the dance, while the abbess reminisces about her singing, her 'varnished' round cheeks, and her (unlicensed?) freedom as suggested by the line 'Ungirte ful ofte to walke atte large' (*E*:262). The abbess thus presents herself as less than modest: the word 'ungirte' may even suggest a girdle as a symbol of chastity.[112] Yet this satirical stanza ends on an oddly nautical note with the line 'Who hath no ship mote rowe yn bote or barge' (*E*:264), which does not appear in the B stanza. Instead, all but the first two lines are revised in favour of a more serious tone as the abbess piously accepts that 'This pilgrymage to every man is dewe' (*L*:205), which does not really rhyme with her frivolous character in the first stanza. The line that she 'must his [*i.e.* Death's] trace sewe' may have been copied from the discarded lady of great estate for re-use in the revamped abbess's B stanza (*L*:204; *E*:198).

The **nun** ('monialis') is one of eight new figures to appear only in the B version. She is defined by her nun's apparel: 'barbid & claad in clothis blaake' (*L*:305), and wearing the mantle and the ring with which she chastely espoused Christ.[113] The irony is that whereas nuns are not supposed to dance, she can no more decline Death's invitation than can any other 'maide widewe nor wiff' (*L*:310): it is the course of nature. In reply, the nun counsels everyone to be prepared 'a-geyn this fel batayle' as 'Vertu is sewrer than othir plate or maile' (*L*:316-17) – two of several military metaphors ill befitting a nun. The stanza ends with the devout advice 'With the hand of almesse to love god & drede' (*L*:320), but the awkward metre throughout both stanzas gives reason to doubt Lydgate's authorship.

The B stanzas for the **empress** were added by a different hand in at least two A version copies, including Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.21 (see above), which suggests that some early readers considered them part of Lydgate's poem.[114] Death offers himself as the empress's dancing partner: 'Have no disdeyn with me for to daunce' (*L*:66). However, she must relinquish her riches, fresh attires, clothes of gold, 'strange countenaunce' and other such vanities. The empress bemoans all transitory pleasures in repeated phrases of 'what availeth hih blood or Ientylnesse' (*L*:74-76). Woolf suspected these verses to have been derived from some lost French analogue, especially because of the variation on the *Que vaut biautez* motif, but that would most likely have been another form of *vanitas* poem rather than a *danse macabre* proper.[115] A clever detail is Lydgate's line 'Deth seith chek-mat to al sich veyn noblesse' (*L*:77) – chess was a traditional aristocratic pastime. The same metaphor is also used in the amorous gentlewoman's stanza (*E*:459; *L*:363) and elsewhere in Lydgate's work.

So why is there an empress and not a queen? After all, the saved pope, emperor and king in the Chester *Last Judgement* (play XXIV) have the 'Regina Salvata' and 'Regina Damnata' as their female counterparts (see chapter 4). The empress is absent from the *Danse Macabre des Femmes* where the queen occupies the highest position, although in the German *Totentanz* her presence is understandable. Empress (if uncrowned) in this period was Sigismund's second wife Barbara of Cilli (1392-1451), an intelligent and ambitious woman who was reviled by contemporaries.[116] Yet the empress is not a logical choice for Lydgate who could have included a queen instead, unless he wished to avoid any resemblance to a living queen, *i.e.* Henry V's young widow Catherine of Valois (1401-37); she secretly married Owen Tudor around this

time. (Lydgate probably knew Catherine personally.)[117] James Clark attributed the absence of a queen in the *Dance* to the fact that Henry VI became engaged only in 1444, thereby ignoring the possibility that the omission may have been deliberate and that satirising a token empress would have been safer.[118]

Apart from the nun and the abbess's pious lines in the B version, the female characters in Lydgate's *Dance* are fairly stereotypical representations of womanhood at its most frivolous. It is hard to detect any real sympathy or engagement, but then the presentation of women veers between the courtly ideal and misogyny throughout Lydgate's oeuvre.[119] Pearsall summed up the poet as someone who 'had neither the desire, nor the incentive, nor the creative power to make things new'.[120] Yet Lydgate introduced at least some new characters, for they cannot all be explained away as later interpolations. He added embellishments in his massive verse adaptation *The Fall of Princes* as well, even if these were usually based on additional sources and not always improvements.[121] It is impossible to determine what inspired him to include at least some token females in his *Dance*: whether any (hypothetical) image of a woman in the mural at Les Innocents, or the precedent of Chaucer's Prioress and Wife of Bath in the predominantly male *Canterbury Tales*, or even an awareness of female figures in the Latin-German *Totentanz* tradition (if any such version was available to him). Whatever his inspiration, Lydgate did introduce a new female element in his *Dance of Death*.

The question of authorship also applies to the six male characters found only in the B version. The verses for the erring **iudex** or Lord Justice are uninspired and scan so very differently that they are unlikely to be by Lydgate. The **mayor**'s stanzas also contain some questionable metre, but with more inventive satire of the mayor who has 'gouernaunce / Bi pollicie to rewle this cite' (*L*:257-58). Guilty of pride and greed, the mayor learns that neither wealth nor 'force of officeres' can help him (*L*:264). Satire combines with doubtful metre in the stanzas for the venal **famulus** ('Seruant or officer'), who is told not to fear the dance if he has done justice to rich and poor alike and 'Fled extorcioun with al thy myht' (*L*:451). This is evidently not the case and the famulus can only warn others: 'In office lat no man doon outrage' (*L*:462).

More plausibly Lydgate's in style are the verses of the **doctor of canon and civil law**. Instead of pointed satire they contain a mix of metaphors, however, such as the appropriately legal line 'No man of his liff hath charter nor seele' (*L*:235) and rather incongruous comparisons with an 'amorously floorsshyng' flower bitten by frost and Death's message leaving all life in the shade. Death's stanza to the **regular canon** and the latter's pious response suggest that this canon is indeed humble and chaste; there is no hint of the greed that typifies his secular counterpart.[122] Yet the stanzas for the **artificer** are suspect because of both their metre and a curious mix of metaphors, such as the legal truism 'Eche man mote passe whan deth settith assise' (*L*:504) and the martial references to Death piercing shields, plate and mail. Unusual here is also the presentation of Death as female: 'She pershith sheeldis she pershith plate & maile / A-geyns her strok [...] What that hir list' (*L*:509-11).

As the above outline will have shown, the traditional assumption that Lydgate's original 'A version' was revised to make a 'B version' is too simplistic. More analysis is required to determine which stanzas are definitely Lydgate's: it is possible that some were added later by Lydgate himself, but others may have been either created or 'revised' by different writers. One detail is worth noting: whereas several A and B stanzas open with the summons 'Come', Death's command 'Geve me 3owre honde' to the Carthusian recurs (with variations) only in four of the new B stanzas.[123]

Conclusion

Lydgate's *Dance of Death* is more than merely a translation of the French *Danse Macabre* poem: it may follow its model very closely in places, but it is an adaptation as well as a re-interpretation. We may not know the reasons why Lydgate chose to translate the *Danse Macabre* poem that he saw in the newly created mural in Paris, or who supported him in this undertaking. If he was aware of any historical or political allusions in the French scheme, he may have interpreted the poem initially as a combination of a moralising lesson about death and estates satire in the tradition of *The Canterbury Tales*, albeit that he maintained the French preponderance of clerical figures with hardly any trades or craft representatives. Nonetheless, in Henry V's former 'tregetour', 'Maister Jon Rikelle', Lydgate appears to have introduced at least one new contemporary character, just as the second stanza about 'conquerowres' being cast down when in their prime and at the height of their felicity and power reads very much like an epitaph for Henry V. This idea needs further investigation, but it would tie in well with the hypothesis in chapter 2 about a cryptoportrait in the *Danse Macabre* mural in Paris. A similar cryptoportrait of the late lamented Henry V in the London scheme would help explain the rapid dissemination of the *Dance* in England.

The addition of new characters is one of the differences between the French poem and Lydgate's *Dance*. Chaucer's Prioress and Wife of Bath may have been a factor in the introduction of women in Lydgate's *Dance*, regardless of whether or not the *amoureux* at Les Innocents had a female companion. Yet we cannot rule out the possibility that there were other versions of the *danse* in circulation: the mural that Lydgate claimed as his inspiration was evidently a later development of an earlier prototype. No date can be assigned to the Latin-German *Totentanz* tradition, but one of the features it has in common with Lydgate's *Dance* is the inclusion of female characters, especially the figure of the empress in the so-called B version.

The 'revision' of Lydgate's *Dance* remains a problem. The traditional assumption that the original text was specifically adapted to suit John Carpenter's painted scheme in Pardon Churchyard cannot be substantiated or even sustained. There is no recorded date for Carpenter's commission nor any evidence that can tell us on which version of the *Dance* his scheme was based. While it remains possible that a revised version of the so-called A text was used in the Pardon Churchyard paintings, the B version contains too many suspect lines to be regarded in its entirety as a revision by Lydgate. Instead some stanzas appear to have been altered or added by later writers. It is doubtful that Carpenter's scheme could have incorporated stanzas not by Lydgate himself: references to the *Dance* at 'Powlis' in his poem *Tyed with a Lyne* and in *The Prohemy* suggest that Lydgate was personally involved in the project.

Surviving manuscripts and contemporary references to the *Dance* confirm a wider familiarity of the poem, or perhaps with the theme as it was presented in Pardon Churchyard. It is unfortunate that we have lost the visual context of Lydgate's poem in Carpenter's scheme, regardless of whether the *Dance* was written with a pictorial scheme in mind.[124] It is telling that the *danse macabre* became known across England as the 'Dance of Paul's' so soon after Carpenter's scheme, as the Bristol will of William Wytteney indicates in the late 1440s. Just as in Paris, it was the combination of text and images – yet perhaps also the topical allusions to each nation's deceased monarch – that made the theme famous. The rapid spread of the theme across the country and into different media will be discussed further in the next chapters.

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NOTES

[1] O. Timofeeva, '*Word be worde – andgit of andgite*: A Study of the Medieval Rhetorical Formula', in R.W. McConchie, O. Timofeeva, H. Tissari and T. Säily (eds), *Selected Proceedings of the 2005 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX)* (Somerville, MA, 2006), pp. 135-42, traces the convention via King Alfred back to late Antiquity.

[2] See, for example, L. Scanlon and J. Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate. Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England* (Notre Dame, 2006), and L.H. Cooper, and A. Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters. Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York/Basingstoke, 2008).

[3] An exception is J. Simpson, 'Bulldozing the Middle Ages: The Case of "John Lydgate"', *New Medieval Literatures*, 4 (2001), pp. 213-42, while there is an interesting but flawed reading of Lydgate's B version in A. 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), pp. 285-314: see also the discussion below.

[4] D. Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371-1449): A Bio-bibliography*, English Literary Studies Monograph Series, 71 (Victoria, 1997), with a table of dates (pp. 50-52) and documents relating to Lydgate (Appendix); also W.F. Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century* (1952, transl. London, 1961), chapter 2 on the monastery of Bury.

[5] In a surviving letter the Prince of Wales asks the abbot and chapter of the Bury monastery to allow 'J.L.' (presumably John Lydgate) to continue his studies at Oxford on the recommendation of 'R.C.' (*i.e.* Richard Courteney, Chancellor of Oxford). Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 15 and Appendix nr. 8.

[6] Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, pp. 26-27. Lydgate himself claimed that he first began *The Title and Pedigree of Henry VI* in 'The monyth of Iuyll twenty daies comen, / and eight ouere' when 'Henry the Sext, of age ny fyve yere ren': see H.N. MacCracken and M. Sherwood (eds), *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, part II, Secular Poems, EETS, o.s. 192 (London, 1934), no. 28, ll. 290-91 and 30.

[7] Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 26, quoting a rubric copied in BL MS Harley 7333. Shirley's rubrics provide important early evidence on Lydgate but their reliability has been questioned. M. Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 1998), esp. pp. 11, 14-23, 52-54, claims that Shirley had been previously in the service of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, and that he was certainly with his lord in France in early 1427 (p. 23), being sent back to London from Paris on 4 February but once again back in France in April 1427. If this is correct, Shirley may have met Lydgate or been aware of how Lydgate was commissioned to write the poem.

[8] Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 27; F.J. Furnivall and K. Locock (eds), *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, EETS, e.s., 77, 83, 92 (London, 1899, 190, 1904). For earlier doubts about Lydgate's authorship of the English *Pilgrimage*, see K. Walls, 'Did Lydgate Translate the "Pèlerinage de Vie Humaine"?', *Notes and Queries*, 222 (1977), pp. 103-5, and R.F. Green, 'Lydgate and Deguileville Once More', *Notes and Queries*, 223 (1978), pp. 105-6.

[9] L.A. Ebin, *John Lydgate* (Boston, 1985), p. 2, claimed: 'From 1426 to 1429, Lydgate lived in Paris, in the train of the duke of Bedford'. Actually Bedford was in England from late December 1426 through to March 1427. Schirmer, *Lydgate*, p. 91, believed that Lydgate remained in Paris 'presumably until Henry's coronation in 1429'. Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 27, assumed that Lydgate left Paris shortly after being commissioned by the earl of Salisbury to translate the *Pèlerinage*, but also hinted at an alternative scenario of the *Dance of Death* being originally a commission from John Carpenter, which would mean that Lydgate was still in Paris in 1430. See also the discussion of Carpenter's commission below. It should be noted that this stay in Paris coincides with Lydgate's priorate of the small Benedictine priory of Hatfield Regis (or Hatfield Broad Oak) in Essex, which began in 1423 and officially ended on 8 April 1434 with a letter of release permitting him to return to Bury, although in reality he may have relinquished the role of prior much earlier. See Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, pp. 24-25 and Appendix nr. 12.

[10] F. Warren (ed.), *The Dance of Death, edited from MSS. Ellesmere 26/A.13 and B.M. Lansdowne 699, collated with the other extant MSS.*, EETS, o.s. 181 (London, 1931, repr. 2000), p. 110, notes that the versions in Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.21 and Tottel's edition speak of just one French clerk.

[11] J. Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, The Oxford English Literary History, 2, 1350-1547 (Oxford, 2002), p. 64, 'Most English writing, secular or religious, of the period 1350-1550 is translation'. On Lydgate's translation of the French *danse macabre* poem, see J.H.M. Taylor, 'Translation as Reception: *La Danse Macabré*', in K. Pratt (ed.), *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narrative: A Festschrift for Dr. Elspeth Kennedy* (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 181-92.

[12] For example, H. Bergen (ed.), *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, part 1, EETS, e.s. 121 (London, 1924), p. xxi: 'A writer who usually contrives to spoil even his most felicitous passages before he has done with

them, who systematically pads out his lines with stock phrases and rhyme-tags, and pours out unending streams of verse during apparently the whole of a very long life, cannot well be taken seriously as one of the great poets'. For Lydgate's 'aureate' diction – a term coined by the poet himself – see J. Norton-Smith, *John Lydgate: Poems* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 192-95.

[13] Whilst expressing praise for Lydgate, John Skelton (*c.*1460-1529) remarked in his poem *Philip Sparrow* (ll. 811-12) that 'some men fynde a faute, / And say he wryteth to haute'. See D. Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London, 1970), pp. 2-3.

[14] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, pp. 8, 11, 14, admits that it cannot be denied that 'Lydgate is by nature long-winded', 'incurably didactic', 'prolific, prolix and dull', but nonetheless important and 'perfectly representative of the Middle Ages' – thereby contradicting those who have tried to present Lydgate as a Renaissance poet. Compare A. Renoir, *The Poetry of John Lydgate* (London, 1967), p. 143, but also the views in Simpson, *Reform*, esp. pp. 46-50, 67. There is a partial defence of Lydgate's 'so-called faulty construction' in P. Hardman, 'Lydgate's Uneasy Syntax', in Scanlon and Simpson, *John Lydgate.*, pp. 12-35, while the title *Lydgate Matters* for the edited volume by Cooper and Denny-Brown is a deliberate pun (see the editors' Introduction, esp. p. 1).

[15] Pearsall's only article specifically devoted to the poem is 'Signs of Life in Lydgate's *Danse Macabre*', in J. Hogg (ed.), *Zeit, Tod und Ewigkeit in der Renaissance Literatur*, 3, Analecta Cartusiana, 117 (Salzburg, 1987), pp. 58-71. No mention of the poem whatsoever is made in Renoir, *Poetry*. The EETS published an unaltered reprint of Warren's edition in 2000. Another edition of the poem is found in E.P. Hammond, (ed.), *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey* (1927, repr. New York, 1965), pp. 131-42, with an introduction on pp. 124-30.

[16] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 178.

[17] R. Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 350-51; passing mention of the inclusion of 'Lydgate's own additions to the French, particularly the women' is made in Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 178.

[18] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 18.

[19] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 177.

[20] Pearsall, 'Signs of Life', p. 63. The prosodic device of ending an octave with a proverb, which Lydgate adopted from the *Danse Macabre* poem, was a popular convention in French poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Mostly either biblical in origin or derived from classical as well as patristic texts, these proverbs were intended to add authority to the texts in which they were cited. See J.H.M. Taylor, 'Poésie et prédication. La fonction du discours proverbial dans la *Danse macabre*', *Medioevo Romanzo*, 14 (1989), pp. 215-26.

[21] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, pp. 177-78; repeated almost literally in Pearsall, 'Signs of Life', p. 63.

[22] Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, Table of Dates, p. 51: '1430 *Danse Macabre* redone for John Carpenter'.

[23] Like other B manuscript versions, Leiden University Library MS Vossius C.G.Q. 9 misses the translator's stanzas, which is thus not the 'remarkable hiatus' that it was claimed to be in J.A. van Dorsten, 'The Leyden "Lydgate Manuscript"', *Scriptorium*, 14 (1960), pp. 315-25, at p. 318 and 322. Van Dorsten's article contains a useful discussion of this later fifteenth-century manuscript, its peculiar foliation and its overall contents.

[24] Pearsall, 'Signs of Life', pp. 62-63. Neither in this essay nor in other discussions of the poem does Pearsall indicate which added stanzas in the B version he considers to be not by Lydgate. M.C. Seymour, 'Some Lydgate Manuscripts: *Lives of SS. Edmund and Fremund* and *Dance Macabre*', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, 5:4 (1985), pp. 10-24, at p. 22, claims that the additions of the Juror and the Abbess are 'not necessarily of his composition'.

[25] For example, as pointed out to me by Fr. Jerome Bertram, the Latin *Totentanz* has an *aabb* rhyme scheme throughout, except in the verses of the empress, the count and the cook where we find *abab* (see Appendix 6). On the concept of variance, see B. Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant. A Critical History of Philology* (1989, transl., Baltimore/London, 1999).

[26] Warren, *Dance of Death*, pp. xxiv-xxxi. Warren reordered the characters in the Ellesmere Manuscript for her edition.

[27] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxx.

[28] Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 124. Hammond herself edited the MS Selden Supra 53 version.

[29] Seymour, 'Some Lydgate Manuscripts', p. 22; Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, pp. 68-69, added a one-stanza excerpt in Cambridge (MA), Harvard University, Houghton Library MS English 752 (fol. 44) of Lydgate's *Troy Book*, dated *c.*1475-1500, as well as the early printed version in Fakes' *c.*1521 *Horae Beate Marie Virginis* (only 20 stanzas) and Tottel's inclusion of the poem in his 1554 edition of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (see below).

[30] Seymour, 'Some Lydgate Manuscripts', p. 23. Seymour's statement that the order of the *first* ten characters is altered in sub-group D is demonstrably incorrect.
[31] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxiv and n. 3, dated her twelve manuscript copies to the mid to late fifteenth century, with the exception of BL MS Cotton Vespasian A. xxv. Seymour, 'Some Lydgate Manuscripts', p. 22, dated the latter as *c.*1555 and the majority as '*c.*1450 unless otherwise dated', but two are given an earlier date of *c.*1430 (Oxford, Bodleian MS Selden Supra 53) and *c.*1435 (Oxford, Bodleian MS Bodley 686). Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, pp. 68-69, assigns wider dates of 1430-60 to both these manuscripts as well as to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 735, and to Yale University Library (Beinecke) MS 493.
[32] A. Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author. Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473-1557* (Oxford, 2006), p. 222-23.
[33] Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 125.
[34] Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 353.
[35] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. 108; Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 69; Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 89. The only detailed study to date is H.S. Herbrüggen, 'Ein frühes liturgisches Beispiel für den englischen Totentanz: 'Hore beate marie virginis ad vsum ... Sarū', Paris (1521?)', in S. Füssel and J. Knape (eds), *Poesis et Pictura. Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Bild in Handschriften und alten Drucken. Festschrift für Dieter Wuttke zum 60. Geburtstag* (Baden-Baden, 1989), pp. 235-53.
[36] Herbrüggen, 'Ein frühes liturgisches Beispiel', p. 238. Fakes' device and name on the title-page supplement the publication details in the colophon.
[37] Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.21 and Tottel's edition read 'or force of'. As further illustration of textual complications, in both the Ellesmere and Lansdowne versions Death warns the cardinal that he must leave behind his great array, whereas the Fakes/Bignon text instead reads 'grete royalte', which is also the variant reading in the much later MS Vespasian A. xxv.
[38] Herbrüggen, 'Ein frühes liturgisches Beispiel'.
[39] Linguistic confusion was one of the problems that marred the production in France of early printed books for the English market. Amongst early books that failed to pass muster is the initial translation into English of the *Calendrier des Bergers*. The prologue in the *Kalender of Shepardes* published by Wyllyam Powell in 1556 (London, Lambeth Palace Library 1556.07) explains that 'Thys boke [...] was fyrst corruptly prynted in fraunce and after that at the coste and charges of Rycharde Pynson, newly translated and reprynted, although not so faythfully as the origynall copy requyred'.
[40] Herbrüggen also discussed what he claimed to be a rudimentary English *danse macabre* of eight stanzas under the heading 'How every estate shulde order them in their degre' in Richard Pynson's 1518 edition of the *Kalender of Shepardes*, but Death is absent in these verses that have nothing directly in common with Lydgate's *Dance of Death*. See H.S. Herbrüggen, 'Der Schäfer-Kalender. Zur unbeachteten Rolle des *Kalendrier des bergiers* als Übermittler des *Danse macabre* in die englische Literatur', in M. von Arnim (ed.), *Festschrift Otto Schäfer zum 75. Geburtstag am 29. Juni 1987* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 237-88.
[41] Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik*, p. 177.
[42] Schirmer, *Lydgate*, p. 127, n. 1, repeats the persistent but false claim that the earliest known *danse macabre* scheme was painted in Klingenthal, Basel, in 1312, which is based on a misreading of the date of 1512 that commemorated some minor repainting work carried out on the mural. See R. Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes: die mittelalterlichen Totentänze und ihr Nachleben* (Berne/Munich, 1980), pp. 188-89; also E.C. Williams, 'The Dance of Death in Painting and Sculpture in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd ser., 1 (1937), pp. 229-57, at p. 249. The date of 1312 for the Klingenthal mural was also mentioned by Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. 97, and perpetuated in R.H. Bowers, 'Iconography in Lydgate's "Dance of Death"', *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 12 (1948), pp. 111-28, at p. 112. Schirmer's claim, p. 127, n. 1, that the second scheme in Münden dates from 1383, probably refers to a painted panel at Minden (Westphalia) that had already been established by W. Seelmann in the 1890s to be a single *vanitas* figure and not a full *danse macabre* (Warren, Appendix II, p. 97). The Minden scheme was also mentioned in F. Douce, *The Dance of Death Exhibited in Elegant Engravings on Wood, etc.* (1833, repr. London, 1858), p. 30, but dismissed as not a true *danse macabre* in Mâle, *Religious Art*, pp. 337-38.
[43] Schirmer, *Lydgate*, p. 127. Stow's evidence will be discussed below.
[44] Schirmer, *Lydgate*, p. 128, mentions Lydgate's *Legend of St George* illustrating the paintings in the guildhall of the London armourers, his satire *Bycorne and Chichevache*, his *Pedigree* poem, the lines on the *Kings of England* and other 'lengthy invocative poems', such as 'The Image of Our Lady', which 'were written to go with paintings in churches'. Schirmer may have derived this idea from

Bowers, 'Iconography', p. 115, who claimed that while composing his *Dance of Death* Lydgate was 'restricted to the exigencies of writing for iconographical purposes'.

[45] Yet Lydgate often refers to colour and painting in his poetry: see C. Reynolds, '"In ryche colours delytethe the peyntour": Painting and the Visual Arts in the Poems of John Lydgate', in R. Marks (ed.), *Late Gothic England: Art and Display* (Donington/London, 2007), pp. 1-15, and also C. Cornell, '"Purtreture" and "Holsom Stories": John Lydgate's Accommodation of Image and Text in Three Religious Lyrics', *Florilegium*, 10 (1988-91), pp. 167-78. Lydgate's *Dance* is presumed to have been designed for public display in C. Sponsler, 'Lydgate and London's Public Culture', in Cooper and Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters*, pp. 13-33, esp. p. 20, while evidence for Lydgate's *Legend of St George* having been incorporated in a textile hanging is discussed in J. Floyd, 'St. George and the "Steyned Halle": Lydgate's Verse for the London Armourers' on pp. 139-64 of the same volume. Both authors also discuss the occurrence of Lydgate's *Bycorne and Chychevache* in a cloth hanging.

[46] A similar reference to visual imagery in the French epilogue is the admonition 'Acquitez vous qui cy passes' (You who pass here, fulfil your duty); a line evidently written or adapted with public display in mind, yet retained in Lille ms. 319 and BL Add. MS 38858. Lydgate largely follows the two stanzas of the French *acteur* that come after those of the dead king whose 'purtrature' the poet expects his readers to 'loken vpon' (*E*:633). The stanzas were revised for the B version, which curiously has 'scripture' (*L*:561) for 'purtrature' and a new address to all 'that *reden* this storye' (*L*:572 – my italics), albeit some B version copies still read 'loke vp-on'.

[47] Warren, *Dance of Death*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. BL MS Lansdowne 699, Leiden MS Vossius C.G.Q. 9 and Lincoln Cathedral MS C.5.4. have the former, and Oxford Corpus Christi College MS 237 and MS Bodley 686 the latter, while BL MS Cotton Vespasian A. xxv has 'Daunce of Deathe'. See also Appendix 2.

[48] F. Kloppenborg, 'The London Dance of Death: the Patron and his Circle of Friends', in *Actes du 11e Congrès International d'études sur les Danses macabres et l'art macabre en général* (Meslay-le-Grenet, 2003), pp. 9-24, at p. 9, n. 5; Pearsall, *Lydgate*, pp. 73-78; Schirmer, *Lydgate*, pp. 251-52. Many of Shirley's surviving manuscript copies contain valuable information in their rubrics; see also n. 7 above.

[49] See Connolly, *John Shirley*. A useful recent assessment of Shirley's life and work, this study unfortunately contains no mention of Lydgate's *Dance of Death* poem.

[50] His epitaph on his brass in the church of St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, as recorded by Stow, gives his date of death as 21 October 1456 'In the yeare of his age, fourscore and ten'; see Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 11, and J. Stow, *A Survey of London, reprinted from the text of 1603*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 2 vols (1908, repr. Oxford, 1971), 2, pp. 23-24.

[51] Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 191 and chapter 6, and esp. p. 126-27.

[52] J. Stow, *A Survay of London, Contayning the Originall, Antiquity, Increase, Moderne estate, and description of that Citie, written in the yeare 1598* (London, 1598), pp. 264-65. Stow varies the spelling 'Paul' with 'Powles' (p. 263).

[53] Kloppenborg, 'London Dance of Death', esp. pp. 16-17, 19, 20.

[54] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, pp. 183-88; Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, pp. 29-31. See also Sponsler, 'Lydgate and London's Public Culture', and Floyd, 'St. George and the "Steyned Halle"'.

[55] Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. Kingsford, 1, p. 109. Several revised editions of the *Survey* by other authors were to follow after Stow's death.

[56] According to Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. Kingsford, 1, pp. vii-xxviii, Stow was admitted to the freedom of the Merchant Taylors Company in 1547 and worked for nearly thirty years as a tailor, establishing his business in the Aldgate area between Leadenhall and Fenchurch Street. He was apparently inclined to favour the old faith. His claim that the scheme was painted on boards has gradually become established fact in the literature, often without reference to its (exact) source; see, for example, Clark, *Dance of Death*, p. 11, and Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik*, p. 170.

[57] Kloppenborg, 'The London Dance of Death', pp. 10-12, 20-21. According to Kloppenborg, this chapel had been built at the end of the thirteenth century by a London draper, Roger Beyvin, with a Fraternity of All Souls subsequently founded in 1379 to maintain it; Kloppenborg cites references to documents relating to the original foundation by Beyvin (PRO LR 14/345) and to Carpenter's letters patent. The chapel and chantry are also mentioned in Stow, *Survay of London* (1598), p. 266-67, but with a different patron.

[58] See, for example, Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxiii, n. 1, 'It is probable that the painted dance was executed about the same time'.

[59] C.M. Barron and M.-H. Rousseau, 'Cathedral, City and State, 1300-1540', in D. Keene, A. Burns and A. Saint (eds), *St Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004* (New Haven/London, 2004),

pp. 33-44, at p. 35; also Appleford, 'Dance of Death', and V. Harding, *The Dead and Living in Paris and London, 1500-1600* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. pp. 86-93. It should be noted that the name 'Pardon Churchyard' applied to other London churchyards used for the burial of plague victims, such as one near the church of St Dunstan in the East and especially one in Smithfield said to have been purchased by the bishop of London for the burial of victims of the 1348-49 epidemic. The idea was that those buried there, even if without proper ceremony, would be granted indulgence for their sins.

[60] Barron and Rousseau, 'Cathedral, City and State', p. 44; an inflammatory sermon in 1406 by the Lollard preacher William Taylor and Canon Ralph Shaa's notorious assertions about the bastard status of both Edward IV and his offspring in a sermon delivered in 1483 are but two of the historic events that took place here.

[61] F. Kloppenborg, 'Totentänze in der religiösen Gebrauchskunst Englands', in U. Wunderlich (ed.), *L'art macabre 1*, Jahrbuch der Europäischen Totentanz-Vereinigung (Düsseldorf, 2000), pp. 53-67, at p. 62. From 1449 the All Saints' Church Book contains various entries for the hanging twice a year of a 'Dance of Paul's'. See also C. Burgess, *The Pre-Reformation Records of All Saints', Bristol*, part 1 (Bristol, 1995), p. 88.

[62] MacCracken and Sherwood, *Minor Poems*, no. 74, p. 834, ll. 66-67.

[63] J.O. Halliwell (ed.), *A Selection from the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate* (London, 1842), pp. 27-46, at p. 34, based on BL MS Harl. 372, fols 45-51. The poem is not included in MacCracken's edition of Lydgate's minor poems.

[64] W. Puddephat, 'The Mural Paintings of the Dance of Death in the Guild Chapel of Stratford-upon-Avon', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 76 (1958), pp. 29-35; C. Davidson, *The Guild Chapel Wall Paintings at Stratford-upon-Avon*, AMS Studies in the Renaissance, 22 (New York, 1988), esp. pp. 7-9 and Appendix III. Unfortunately, with the scheme hidden behind oak panelling it is impossible to verify Puddephat's reading of what remained visible of the text; for example, Lydgate's reference to the 'exawmple [...] at Parise' (*E*:19) has instead become 'ensample [..] at paradyse'. The first part of the scheme, including the figures of the pope and emperor, was already lost.

[65] Appleford, 'The Dance of Death in London', p. 295. I am grateful to the author for allowing me to read her text prior to publication.

[66] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxvi and further comments on p. xxvii.

[67] For Tottel's edition of Lydgate's *Daunce of Machabree*, see Bergen, *Fall of Princes*, part 3, EETS, e.s. 123 (London, 1924), pp. 1025-44 (checked in the British Library against a microfilm of Tottel's 1554 edition). Warren's editorial notes indicate many similar variants in Trinity College Cambridge MS R. 3. 21 and Tottel's edition, which suggests that the latter text may have been based on this manuscript copy or on a related version.

[68] I am grateful to Professor Derek Pearsall for confirming my suspicions about the awkward scanning of some of the stanzas.

[69] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxviii; Douce, *Dance of Death*, p. 46. No information has been found on the lost *Dance of Death* scheme at Wortley Hall.

[70] See, for example, J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the* General Prologue *to the* Canterbury Tales (Cambridge, 1973). As Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 348-49, pointed out, versions of Lydgate's *Dance* are usually found in collections of poetic works by Lydgate and Chaucer, or Lydgate and Hoccleve, which convinced her that they were 'not primarily for a didactic or meditative purpose'.

[71] Barron and Rousseau, 'Cathedral, City and State', p. 36.

[72] According to Reiner Sörries in W. Neumann (ed.), *Tanz der Toten – Todestanz. Der monumentale Totentanz im deutschsprachigen Raum*, exhibition catalogue Museum für Sepulkralkultur Kassel (Dettelbach, 1998), pp. 115-16, the Lübeck scheme was designed to express the citizen's pride in their city. For a detailed discussion of the townscape in the renewed 1701 copy, see H. Vogeler, 'Zum Gemälde des Lübecker und Revaler Totentanzes', in H. Freytag (ed.), *Der Totentanz der Marienkirche in Lübeck und der Nikolaikirche in Reval (Tallinn). Edition, Kommentar, Interpretation, Rezeption*, Niederdeutsche Studien, 39 (Cologne/ Weimar/Vienna, 1993), pp. 95-101.

[73] N. Rogers, 'The Bury Artists of Harley 2278 and the Origins of Topographical Awareness in English Art', in A. Gransden (ed.), *Bury St Edmunds: Medieval Art, Architecture, Archaeology and Economy*, The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 20 (Leeds, 1998), pp. 219-227, recognises a greater sense of realism and settings in the miniatures of the 1430s presentation copy of Lydgate's *Lives of SS. Edmund and Fremund* (BL Harley MS 2278), but they contain nothing as innovative as a recognisable townscape. However, the sophisticated frontispiece miniature of *c.*1415-25 to Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* (Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 61, fol. 1v) illustrates what

some painters in this period were capable of. See K.L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 6 (London, 1996), vol. 1, fig. 242; vol. 2, cat. 58, pp. 182-85.

[74] Stow, *Survay of London*, p. 265.

[75] Simpson, *Reform*, p. 55. Throughout his discussion of the *Dance*, Simpson does not appear to make a distinction between the A and B versions. See also Simpson, 'Bulldozing the Middle Ages'.

[76] E. Taburet-Delahaye (ed.), *Paris 1400: les arts sous Charles VI* (Paris 2004), cat. 80.

[77] Bergen, *Fall of Princes*, part 1, ll. 128, 159.

[78] It would not be an unnatural assumption to identify the depicted author with Lydgate; W.A. Shaw, 'The Early English School of Portraiture', *Burlington Magazine*, 65 (October 1934), pp. 171-84, p. 183-84, even assumed that because the paintings in Pardon Churchyard included a poem by Lydgate as well as his name (based on Stow's description), he must also have been responsible for the art work: 'If he was not the painter why are they there, and why was his name there?'. I am grateful to Professor Robert Tittler for this reference. For comparison, the poet and painter Niklaus Manuel included his own portrait in his 1516-19 *Totentanz* mural in Berne.

[79] The *danse macabre* scheme in Paris was freely adapted by artists elsewhere. Arches do feature in the mural in the nave of Notre Dame church at Kermaria (Brittany), but not in the schemes at Meslay le Grenet or La Ferté-Loupière that were directly modelled on Marchant's woodcuts; the *acteur* is present at the start of the latter, but not at the conclusion, as is also the case in Morgan MS M.359.

[80] Among these is the half-length portrait of Chaucer commissioned by Hoccleve (BL MS Harley 4866, fol. 88r); see also the discussion in Gillespie, *Print Culture*.

[81] The two author portraits at the start and the end of the *Danse Macabre des Femmes* in the early-sixteenth-century manuscript BNF ms. fr. 995 (fols 24v and 43r), which was evidently modelled on Marchant's 1491 woodcuts, illustrate more clearly a flowery textile canopy; see Harrison, *Danse Macabre of Women*, pp. 51 and 125.

[82] E. Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480-1535* (1935, repr. Oxford, 1973), pp. 44, 350 (no. 1510) and fig. 142.

[83] Thus, the image of the *acteur* at the start of Marchant's 1485 *Danse macabre* edition was re-used as a portrait of the *rhétoriqueur* André de la Vigne (*c.*1470-*c.*1515) in the fifth edition of the anthology *Le vergier d'honneur*. See C. Brown, 'Text, Image, and Authorial Self-Consciousness in Late Medieval Paris', in Hindman, *Printing the Written Word*, pp. 103-42, esp. pp. 119, 121 and fig. 4.7

[84] Hodnett, *English Woodcuts*, pp. 12, 50, 64, and figs 141 (no. 1509), 81 (no. 925) and 205 (no. 2168); the latter block was subsequently passed from Notary to Peter Treveris. Compare the de Worde woodcut in fig. 91 (no. 924), which Hodnett suspected to be copied from a French source, possibly even from the same block used by Pynson from 1513 on (no. 1510); and the de Worde woodcuts in figs 82-83 (nos 926-27), which in turn were copied by John Skot (fig. 209, no. 2373). The somewhat clumsy de Worde woodcut of St Jerome at his desk (fig. 22, no. 800) may be yet another adaptation of the same prototype. See also Gillespie, *Print Culture*, figs 15, 21, 24, 26 and 29.

[85] Marchant inserted the legate and the duke between the king and the patriarch to fill an obvious gap in the hierarchy; the inclusion of the *promoteur* (solicitor) and the *geolier* (jailor) after the *laboureur* makes little sense, however, and still less the addition of the *hallebardie* (halberdier) and the *sot* (fool) after the final response of *le mort* to the hermit at the end of the *danse* proper. The choice and order of female characters in the *Danse Macabre des Femmes* likewise vary per manuscript and cannot simply be attributed to revision by the author, believed to be Martial d'Auvergne (*c.*1430/40-1508); the *bigotte* and *sotte* were likewise later additions by an unkonwn author. See L. Götz, 'Martial d'Auvergne: La Dance des Femmes', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 58 (1934), pp. 318-34, esp. p. 314; and also S. Oosterwijk, '"Alas, poor Yorick": Death, the Fool, the Mirror and the Danse Macabre', in S. Knöll (ed.), *Narren – Masken – Karneval. Meisterwerke von Dürer bis Kubin aus der Düsseldorfer Graphiksammlung 'Mensch und Tod'*, exhibition catalogue (Regensburg, 2009), pp. 19-31, esp. pp. 25 and 132-34 (catalogue entries).

[86] The confused hierarchy in some other versions of the *danse*, as well as in the *Vado Mori*, was also noticed in Corvisier, 'Représentation de la société', pp. 489-539, pp. 496-97. Corvisier tried to explain it as either negligence on the part of the author or copyist, or a deliberate device to show that death strikes at random without respecting rank.

[87] H. Rosenfeld, *Der mittelalterliche Totentanz: Entstehung - Enwicklung - Bedeutung* (1954, revised edn Cologne/Graz, 1968), pp. 38-43, and by the same author 'Vadomori', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 124 (1995), pp. 257-64; also D.Th. Enklaar, *De dodendans: een cultuurhistorische studie* (Amsterdam, 1950), pp. 28-31; Clark, *Dance of Death*, 101-2.

[88] Rosenfeld, *Mittelalterliche Totentanz*, pp. 325-26. A variation of the Erfurt version, found in BL MS Lansdowne 397, is published and discussed in E.P. Hammond, 'Latin Texts of the Dance of Death', *Modern Philology*, 8 (1910/11), pp. 399-410, together with a longer Latin *Lamentatio* poem of later date in BL MS Royal 8 B vi, the latter already noted by Francis Douce.

[89] Rosenfeld, *Mittelalterliche Totentanz*, pp. 323-25. Although Rosenfeld believed the Paris version to be older, its expanded range of characters and the fact that it starts with the king rather than the pope would appear to point to the 'Erfurt' version being earlier.

[90] In contrast, the – admittedly later – *mitteldeutsche Totentanz* variant features a 'block' ordering of different estates, while the late fifteenth-century *Totentanz* mural in the Marienkirche in Berlin shows a strict separation of clerical characters to the left of the Crucifixion and secular to the right. See Brand, 'Mitteldeutsche Totentanztradition', esp. p. 26 and table of characters on pp. 32-33; P. Walther, *Der Berliner Totentanz zu St. Marien* (Berlin, 1997).

[91] For a discussion of the matching characters in *The Canterbury Tales*, see Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, and L.C. Lambdin and R.T. Lambdin (eds), *Chaucer's Pilgrims: An Historical Guide to the Pilgrims in* The Canterbury Tales (Westport, CT, 1996).

[92] Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, pp. 67-73, remarks on the traditional linking of the two ideals of priesthood and labour with reference to the ploughman – the peasant representative used by both Langland and Chaucer.

[93] See Warren, *Dance of Death*, editorial notes on pp. 38-39. The term refers either to dividing the heavens into twelve 'houses' or to locating the planets in their respective 'houses'.

[94] One renowned physician of the period was Guillaume de Harcigny, who managed to cure the young King Charles VI from his first bout of insanity in 1392; he was also the author of various medical treatises. After his death in 1393, aged 93, Harcigny was commemorated in Laon Cathedral with one of the earliest known cadaver effigies that is also surprisingly accurate in its anatomical detail. See K. Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, California Studies in the History of Art, 15 (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1973), pp. 103-4 (notes) and figs 1-2; Taburet-Delahaye, *Paris 1400*, cat. 158.

[95] As noted by Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. 110; Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 420, l. 207.

[96] The line in the Ellesmere Manuscript reads 'Preste & dette mote be 3olde a-3eyne' (*E*:159), but the Lansdowne text has 'Preestes & deth may nat be holden a-geyn' (*L*:119), MS Vossius C.G.Q. 9 has 'Prestis & dethe may not be holdyn ageyne' (p. 62), and other versions contain yet further variants. It is thus unclear whether Lydgate's copyists quite understood this phrase or the French word 'prest' (loan).

[97] These popular woodcuts with accompanying verses that depict the various ranks and professions in a secular way, but without the appearance of Death, include the German *Ständebuch* with verses by Hans Sachs and woodcuts by Jost Amman published in 1568. J. Amman, *Das Ständebuch. Herrscher, Handwerker und Künstler des ausgehenden Mittelalters*, ed. U. Schulze (Cologne, 2006). Like the *danse*, the *Ständebuch* also opens with the pope, but follows on with the cardinal, bishop and three more religious representatives before continuing with the emperor and king. Its later Dutch equivalent (published in 1694) is *De spiegel van het menselijk bedrijf* by Jan Luyken (1649-1712).

[98] Also applicable to Henry V amidst the unnamed 'conquerowres' is the explanation of how Death 'can abate the fresshnes of her flowres / Ther bri3t sune clipsen with hys showres'. Flowers were often used in comparisons with youth and courtly love: Henry was around thirty-five (the exact date and year of his birth are unknown) so in his prime, and had only been married to Catherine of Valois for just over two years. It may also be relevant that the first and third stanzas of the 'Verba translatoris' were included as an epilogue in the Stratford Guild Chapel scheme, but not the second stanza: see above and n. 64. Allusions to Henry V in Lydgate's *Dance* – and thus the possibility that these also featured in the Pardon Churchyard scheme – are still being investigated.

[99] For example, the painted figure of King Arthur – a cryptoportrait of Henry VIII – was added to the so-called King Arthur's table at Winchester probably on the occasion of Henry VIII's visit to Winchester in 1516 or his second visit (with Emperor Charles V) in 1522. The table (which itself dates to Edward I's reign) was repainted in 1789. See P. Tudor-Craig, 'Iconography of the Painting', in M. Biddle (ed.), *King Arthur's Round Table: An Archaeological Investigation* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 285-334.

[100] C. Davidson, *The Guild Chapel Wall Paintings at Stratford-upon-Avon* (New York, 1988), fig. 20. The inclusion of *Vado Mori* verses above the figures indicate that one of Marchant's later editions was used. If the king in the Stratford painting did represent Henry VII, John Shakespeare would have faced the dilemma of leaving exposed 'idolatrous' images of the pope and other Catholic clergy or whitewashing a representation of the reigning mother's grandfather. I am grateful to Ann Donnelly for the illustration and to Dr Miriam Gill.

[101] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 686; see Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. xxviii.
[102] Warren, *Dance of Death*, p. 111, cites H.F. Massmann's 1840s *Literatur des Todtentänze*, p. 88, about there being 'a very close resemblance between the French and German versions here', which is not surprising since the (unnamed) Knoblochtzer *Totentanz* was inspired by Marchant's edition.
[103] The feminist claim in J.A. Wisman, 'Un miroir déformant: hommes et femmes des *Danses macabres* de Guyot Marchant', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 275-99, at p. 284, about there being a 'manque d'attention porté à l'âge des hommes' is at best naïve: the appearance of the characters in the lost mural, and the focus on their individual foibles in the poem, would have signalled their intended ages quite clearly to medieval viewers.
[104] Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 423, mentions the example of the Chaucerian poem 'Against Women Unconstant' printed by W.W. Skeat. The French line 'vous changeres coleur' may have been Lydgate's inspiration here. According to the *MED*, Lydgate uses 'grene' both in the meaning of young, immature or inexperienced, and as a symbol of inconstancy and envy.
[105] See E. Dal, with collaboration from P. Skårup, *The Ages of Man and the Months of the Year: Poetry, Prose and Pictures Outlining the Douze Mois Figurés Motif Mainly Found in Shepherds' Calendars and in Livres d'Heures (14th to 17th Century)*, Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Historisk-filosofische Skrifter 9:3 (Copenhagen, 1980), esp. pp. 12, 46.
[106] L.F. Sandler, *Omne Bonum. A Fourteenth-Century Encyclopedia of Universal Knowledge. British Library MSS Royal 6 E VI – 6 E VII*, 2 vols (London, 1996), vol. 1, p. 97, and vol. 2, p. 24. The scribe (and probably also the compiler of the text) has been identified as James le Palmer (d. 1375), who copied the text for his own use; he relied heavily on Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*. I am grateful to Dr Margaret Scott for bringing this particular miniature to my attention.
[107] E. Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (Princeton, 1986), p. 130 and fig. 65; B. Hernad, *Die gotischen Handschriften deutscher Herkunft in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, 1: *Vom späten 13. bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 2000), cat. 178 and pl. 399.
[108] The *Danse Macabre des Femmes* was not composed until the later fifteenth century, possibly by the poet Martial d'Auvergne (*c.*1430/40-1508) whose name occurs in at least one manuscript (BNF ms.fr. 25434). See Götz, 'Martial d'Auvergne', p. 318; Harrison, *Danse Macabre of Women*, and S.F. Wemple and D.A. Kaiser, 'Death's Dance of Women', *Journal of Medieval History*, 12 (1986), pp. 333-43; also Wisman, 'Un miroir déformant'.
[109] Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 424; Warren offers no explanatory notes on the juror.
[110] See notes in Warren, pp. 112-13, and Hammond, *English Verse*, p. 425. Hammond only managed to find records of a John Michel in the 1415 list of royal minstrels and fools, who is no longer mentioned in 1423 amongst those of the royal servants granted money by the new king Henry VI.
[111] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 178. Seymour, 'Some Lydgate Manuscripts', p. 22, hints that the abbess might not be of Lydgate's own composition but an interpolation.
[112] See Hammond, *English Verse*, note on p. 421.
[113] Warren's glossary defines a 'barbe' as a piece of white plaited linen covering the lower part of the face, which was worn by nuns and for mourning.
[114] Warren, *Dance of Death*, pp. xxvi-xxvii, xxxi: the other manuscript copy is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 53.
[115] Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 351.
[116] Particularly damning was the character reference by the contemporary humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later pope Pius II, 1405-64), who described her as a woman of inexhaustible lust, devoid of any religion, and only bent on vain earthly delights: 'Vivendum suaviter, dum vita suppetit, fruendumque voluptatibus' (*transl.:* She believed that one should live life sweetly, as long as life lasted, and enjoy earthly pleasures). See T. Pálosfalvi, 'Barbara und die Grafen von Cilli', in I. Takács (ed.), *Sigismundus, Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxembourg 1387-1437*, exhibition catalogue (Mainz, 2006), pp. 295-97, and esp. A. Fössel, 'Barbara von Cilli. Ihre frühen Jahre als Gemahlin Sigismunds und ungarische Königin', in M. Pauly and F. Reinert (eds), *Sigismund von Luxembourg. Ein Kaiser in Europa* (Mainz, 2006), pp. 95-112 and n. 18. Barbara was never crowned empress and never used the title *imperatrix augusta* herself, but others referred to her as empress, just as Sigismund was regarded emperor long before his coronation in Rome in 1433.
[117] Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, p. 30, quotes a rubric by John Shirley to the effect that Lydgate wrote the rather morbid *ubi sunt* poem *That now is Hay some-tyme was Grase* 'at the commaundement of the Quene Kateryn as in here sportes she walkyd by the medowes that were late mowen in the monthe of Iulij'. See also Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 184. The poem conjures up the image of dead heroines such as Helen and Dido, and how death destroyed 'Their freshenes, and made them full base' (H.N.

MacCracken (ed.), *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, part I, EETS, e.s. 107 (London, 1911, repr. 1962), no. 69, l. 54) – a line that was to prove almost prophetic in view of the later vicissitudes of the queen's own embalmed corpse at Westminster Abbey where her funeral effigy is still on display.

[118] Clark, *Dance of Death*, p. 12; Clark dates the *Dance of Death c.*1440.

[119] Lydgate's misogyny is evident in his claim that Chaucer 'Was inportable his wittis to encoumbre' to find nineteen examples of 'bounte and fairnesse' for his *Legend of Good Women*. See Bergen, *Fall of Princes*, vol. 1, book I, ll. 335, 333; Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 236.

[120] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 18.

[121] Pearsall, *Lydgate*, p. 232, defines it as Lydgate amplifying 'an already well-padded original' – for Premierfait had already 'inflated' Boccaccio's text – while Bergen, *Fall of Princes*, p. xvii, describes Lydgate as 'suffering under the same inability to let well enough alone'. The latter sentiment becomes more understandable when one reads Pearsall's statement, *Lydgate*, p. 235, that 'the most overwhelming of Lydgate's amplifications in the *Fall* are in the form of moralisation', although there is also added material from Ovid, the Bible, Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum*, and other books lent to him by his patron duke Humphrey (pp. 239ff.).

[122] Regular canons were in holy orders and belonged to a community of priests living under a rule (especially the Augustinian rule).

[123] Compare the multiple variations on Death's 'come forth' summons in both the A and B version: 'Come forth a-noon my lady & Princesse' (*E*:185); 'Come forthe Sire Squyer' (*E*:217); 'Come forthe Sire Abbot' (*E*:233); 'Come forthe Sire Bailli' (*E*:265); 'Come forthe maister' (*E*:281; *L*:369); 'Come forthe Sire Sergeaunt' (*E*:361; *L*:401); 'Come forthe Maistresse' (*E*:449; *L*:353); 'Com forth doctour of Canon & Cyvile' (*L*:225); 'Com forth sir Mayr' (*L*:257); 'Come neer sir Sergeant' (*L*:337); 'Com riche marchant' (*L*:481). The references to hands are: 'Gefe me 3owre honde [Carthusian]' (*E*:345; *L*:321); 'Lat se your hand my lady dame Empresse' (*L*:65); 'That hand of youres my lord Iustice' (*L*:209); 'Lat see your hand sir chanon Reguler' (*L*:273); 'Yeve hidir thyn hand thou Artificeer' (*L*:497). Compare also 'Sire Cordelere to 3ow my hande is rawght' (*E*:561; *L*:385);

[124] For this reason, D.L. Boyd's study of a late fifteenth-century compilation of Hoccleve and Lydgate texts in 'Reading through the *Regiment of Princes*: Hoccleve's *Series* and Lydgate's *Dance of Death* in Yale Beinecke MS 493', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 20 (1983), pp. 15-34, does not give us an insight into how the poem was originally received, but rather into how a later generation read it solely as a text.