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Suppl. ad Ducang. v.



CHAPTER II.

*Places where the Dance of Death was sculptured or depicted.—
Usually accompanied by verses describing the several charac-
ters.—Other Metrical Compositions on the Dance.*



We find the Dance of Death often represented, not only on the walls, but in the windows of churches, in the cloisters of monasteries, and even on bridges, especially in Germany and Switzerland. It was sometimes painted on church screens, and occasionally sculptured on them, as well as upon the fronts of domestic dwellings. It occurs in many of the manuscript and illuminated service books of the Middle Ages, and frequent allusions to it are found in other manuscripts, but very rarely in a perfect state, as to the number of subjects.

Most of these representations were accompanied by descriptive or moral verses in different languages. Those which were added to the paintings of this subject in Germany appear to have differed very materially, and it is not now possible to ascertain which among them is the oldest. Those in the Basle painting are inserted in the editions published and engraved by Mathew Merian, but they had already occurred in the *Decennalia humanæ peregrinationis* of Gaspar Landismann in 1584. Some Latin verses were published by Melchior Goldasti at the end of his edition of the *Speculum omnium statuum*, a celebrated moral work by Roderic, Eishop of Zamora,

1613, 4to. He most probably copied them from one of the early editions of the Danse Macabre, but without any comment whatever, the above title-page professing that they are added on account of the similarity of the subject.

A Provençal poet, called *Marcabres* or *Marcabrus*, has been placed among the versifiers, but none of his works bear the least similitude to the subject; and, moreover, the language itself is an objection. The English metrical translation will be noticed hereafter. Whether any of the paintings were accompanied by descriptive verses that might be considered as anterior to those ascribed to the supposed Macaber, cannot now be ascertained.

There are likewise some Latin verses in imitation of those above mentioned, which, as well as the author of them, do not seem to have been noticed by any biographical or poetical writer. They occur at the end of a Latin play, entitled *Susanna*, Antverp. apud Michaelem Hillenium, MDXXXIII. As the volume is extremely rare, and the verses intimately connected with the present subject, it has been thought worth while to reprint them. After an elegy on the vanity and shortness of human life, and a Sapphic ode on the remembrance of Death, they follow under this title, "Plausus luctificæ mortis ad modum dialogi extemporaliter ab Eusebio Candido lusus. Ad quem quique mortales invitantur omnes, cujuscujus sint conditionis: quibusque singulis Mors ipsa respondet."

Luctificæ mortis plausum bene cernite cuncti.
Dum res læta, mori et viventes discite, namque
Omnes ex æquo tandem huc properare necessum.

Hic inducitur adolescens quærens, et mors vel philosophus respondens.

Vita quid est hominis? Fumus super aream missus,
Vita quid est hominis? Via mortis, dura laborum
Colluvies, vita est hominis via longa doloris
Perpetua. Vita quid est hominis? cruciatus et error,
Vita quid est hominis? vestitus gramine multo,
Floribus et variis campus, quem parva pruina
Expoliat, sic vitam hominum mors impia tollit.
Quamlibet illa alacris, vegeta, aut opulenta ne felix,
Icta cadit modica crede ægritudine mortis.
Et quamvis superes auro vel murice Croesi m,

Pr

The Dance of Death.

17

Longævum aut annis vivendo Nestora vincas,
Omnia mors æquat, vitæ meta ultima mors est.

IMPERATOR.

Quid fers? Induperator ego, et moderamina rerum
Gesto manu, domuit mors impia scepra potentum.

REX RHOMANUS.

Quid fers? en ego Rhomulidum rex. Mors manet omnia.

PAPA.

En ego Pontificum primus, signansque resignans.
Et cælos oraque locos. Mors te manet ergo.

CARDINALIS.

Cardineo fulgens ego honore, et Episcopus ecce
Mors manet ecce omnes, Phrygeus quos pileus ornat,

EPISCOPUS.

Insula splendidior vestit mea, tempora latum
Possideo imperium, multi mea jura tremiscunt.
Me dicant fraudis docti, producere lites
Experti, aucupium docti nummorum, et averni
Causidici, rixatores, rabulæque forenses.
Hos ego respicio, nihil attendens animarum,
Ecclesiæ mihi commissæ populivæ salutem
Sed satis est duros loculo infarcisse labores
Agricolûm, et magnis placuisse heroibus orbis.
Non tamen effugies mortis mala spicula duræ.

ECCLESIAE PRÆLATUS.

Ecclesiæ prælatus ego multis venerandus
Muneribus sacris, proventibus officiorum.
Comptior est vestis, popina frequentior æde
Sacra, et psalmodum cantus mihi rarior ipso
Talorum crepitu, Veneris quoque voce sonora.
Morte cades, annos speras ubi vivere plures.

CANONICUS.

En ego melotam gesto. Mors sæva propinquat.

PASTOR.

En parochus quoque pastor ego, mihi dulce falernum
Notius æde sacra: scortum mihi charius ipsa
Est animæ cura populi. Mors te manet ergo.

ABBAS.

En abbas venio, Veneris quoque ventris amicus.
Cœnobii rara est mihi cura, frequentior aula
Magnorum heroum. Chorea saltabis eadem.

PRIOR.

En prior, ornatus longa et splendente cuculla,
Falce cades mortis. Mors aufert nomina honoris.

PATER VESTALIUUM.

Nympharum pater ecce ego sum ventrosior, offis
Pinguibus emacerans corpus. Mors te manet ipsa.

C

VESTALIS NYMPHA.

En monialis ego, Vestæ servire parata.
Non te Vesta potest mortis subducere castris.

LEGATUS.

Legatus venio culparum vincla resolvens
Omnia pro auro, abiens cœlum vendo, infera claudo
Et quicquid patres sœmperunt, munere solvo
Juribus à mortis non te legatio solvet.

DOMINUS DOCTOR.

Quid fers? Ecce sophus, divina humanaque jura
Calleo, et à populo doctor Rabbiq̄ue salutor,
Te manet expectans mors ultima linea rerum.

MEDICUS.

En ego sum medicus, vitam producere gnarus,
Venis lustratis morborum nomina dico,
Non poteris duræ mortis vitare sagittas.

ASTRONOMUS.

En ego stellarum motus et sydera novi,
Et fati genus omne scio prædicere cœli.
Non potis es mortis duræ præscire sagittas.

CURTISANUS.

En me Rhoma potens multis suffarsit onustum
Muneribus sacris, proventibus, officiisque
Non potes his mortis fugiens evadere tela.

ADVOCATUS.

Causarum patronus ego, producere doctus
Lites, et loculos lingua vacuare loquaci
Non te lingua loquax mortis subducat ab ictu.

JUDEX.

Justitiæ judex quia sum, sub plebe salutor.
Vertice me nudo populus veneratur adorans.
Auri sacra fames pervertere sæpe coëgit
Justitiam. Mors te manet æquans omnia falce.

PRÆTOR.

Prætor ego populi, me prætor nemo quid audet.
Accensor causis, per me stant omnia, namque
Et dono et adimo vitam, cum rebus honorem.
Munere conspecto, quod iniquum est jure triumphat
Emitto corvos, censura damno columbas.
Hinc metuendus ero superis ereboque profundo.
Te manet expectans Erebus Plutoque cruentus.

CONSUL.

Polleo consiliis, Consul dicorque salutor.
Munere conspecto, quid iniquum est consulo rectum
Quod rectum est flecto, nihil est quod nesciat auri
Sacra fames, hinc ditor et undique fio opulentus
Sed eris æternum miser et mors impia tollet.

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CAUSIDICUS.

Causidicus ego sum, causas narrare peritus,
Accior in causas, sed spes ubi fulserit auri
Ad fraudes docta solers utor bene lingua.
Muto, commuto, jura inflecto atque reflecto.
Et nihil est quod non astu pervincere possim.
Mors æqua expectat properans te fulmine diro.
Nec poteris astu mortis prævertere tela.

SCABINUS.

Ecce Scabinus ego, scabo bursas, prorogo causas.
Senatorque vocor, vulgus me poplite curvo,
Muneribusque datis veneratur, fronte relecta.
Nii mortem meditor loculos quando impleo nummis
Et dito hæredes nummis, vi, fraude receptis,
Justitiam nummis, pro sanguine, munere, vendo.
Quod rectum est curvo, quod curvum est munere **rectum**
Efficio, per me prorsus stant omnia jura.
Non poteris duræ mortis transire sagittas.

LUDIMAGISTER.

En ego pervigili cura externoque labore.
Excolui juvenum ingenia, et præcepta Minervæ
Tradens consenui, cathedræque piget sine fructu.
Quid dabitur fructus, tanti quæ dona laboris?
Omnia mors æquans, vitæ ultima meta laboris.

MILES AURATUS.

Miles ego auratus, fulgenti murice et auro
Splendidus in populo. Mors te manet omnia perdens.

MILES ARMATUS.

Miles ego armatus, qui bella ferocia gessi.
Nullius occursum expavi, quam durus et audax.
Ergo immunis ero. Mors te intrepida ipsa necabit.

MERCATOR.

En ego mercator dives, maria omnia lustrò
Et terras, ut res crescant. Mors te metet ipsa.

FUCKARDUS.

En ego fuckardus, loculos gesto æris onustos,
Omnia per mundum cõmens, vendo atque **revendo**
Heroës me sollicitant, atque æra requirunt.
Haud est me lato quisquam modo ditior orbe.
Mortis ego jura et frameas nihil ergo tremisco
Morte cades, mors te rebus spoliabit opimis.

QUÆSTOR.

Quæstor ego, loculos suffersi arcasque rapaces
Est mihi prænitidis fundata pecunia villis.
Hac dives redimam duræ discrimina mortis
Te mors præripiet nullo exorabilis auro.

NAUCLERUS.

En ego nauclerus spaciosa per æquora vectus,

The Dance of Death.

Non timui maris aut venti discrimina mille.
Cymba tamen mortis capiet te quaeque vorantis.

AGRICOLA.

Agricola en ego sum, praeduro saepe labore,
Et vigili exhaustus cura, sudore perenni,
Victum praetenuem quaerens, sine fraude doloque
Omnia pertentans, miseram ut traducere possim
Vitam, nec mundo me est infelicior alter.
Mors tamen eduri fiet tibi meta laboris.

ORATOR.

Heroum interpres venio, fraudisque peritus,
Bellorum strepitus compono, et bella reduco,
Meque petunt reges, populus miratur adorans.
Nulla abiget fraudi linguève peritia mortem.

PRINCEPS BELL.

Fulmen ego belli, reges et regna subegi,
Victor ego ex omni praeduro quamlibet ecce
Marte fui, vitæ hinc timeo discrimina nulla.
Te mors confodiet cauda Trigonis aquosi,
Atque eris exanimis moriens uno ictu homo bulla.

DIVES.

Sum rerum felix, foecunda est prolis et uxor,
Plena domus, lætum pecus, et cellaria plena.
Nil igitur metuo. Quid ais? Mors te impia tollet.

PAUPER.

Iro ego pauperior, Codroque tenuior omni,
Despicio cunctis, nemo est qui sublevet heu heu.
Hinc parcat veniens mors: nam nihil auferet a me,
Non sic evades, ditem cum paupere tollit.

FENERATOR.

Ut loculi intument auro, vi, fraude, doloque,
Fœnore nunc quæstum facio, furtoque rapinaque,
Ut proles ditem, passim dicarque beatus,
Per fas perque nefas corradens omnia quæro.
Mors veniens furtim prædabitur, omnia tollens.

ADOLESCENS.

Sum juvenis, forma spectabilis, indole gaudens
Maturusque ævi, nullus præstantior alter,
Moribus egregius populo laudatus ab omni.
Pallida, difformis mors auferet omnia raptim.

PUELLA.

Ecce puellarum pulcherrima, mortis iniquæ
Spicula nil meditor, juvenilibus et fruor annis,
Meque proci expectant compti, facieque venusti.
Stulta, quid in vana spe jactas? Mors metet omnes
Difformes, pulchrosque simul cum paupere dices.

NUNCIUS.

Nuncius ecce ego sum, qui nuncia perfero pernix

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¹ Bibl. Reg

Sed retrospectans post terga, papæ audio quidnam ?
Me tuba terrificans mortis vocat. Heu moriendum est.

PERORATIO.

Mortales igitur memores modo vivite læti
Instar venturi furis, discrimine nullo
Cunctos rapturi passim ditesque inopesque.
Stultus et inspiens vita qui sperat in ista,
Instar quæ fumi perit et cito desinit esse.
Fac igitur tota virtuti incumbito mente,
Quæ nescit mortem, sed scandit ad ardua cœli.
Quo nos à fatis ducat rex Juppiter, Amen.

Plaudite nunc, animum cuncti retinete faventes.

FINIS.

Antwerpia apud Michaellem Hillenium M. D. XXXIII. Mense Maio.

A very early allusion to the Dance of Death occurs in a Latin poem, that seems to have been composed in the twelfth century by our celebrated countryman Walter de Mapes, as it is found among other pieces that carry with them strong marks of his authorship. It is entitled "Lamentacio et deploracio pro Morte et consilium de vivente Deo."¹ In its construction there is a striking resemblance to the common metrical stanzas that accompany the Macaber Dance. Many characters, commencing with that of the Pope, are introduced, all of whom bewail the uncontrollable influence of Death. This is a specimen of the work, extracted from two manuscripts :

Cum mortem meditor nescit mihi causa doloris,
Nam cunctis horis mors venit ecce cito.
Pauperis et regis communis lex moriendi,
Dat causam flendi si bene scripta leges.
Gustato pomo missus transit sine morte
Heu missa sorte labitur omnis homo.

Vado mori Papa qui jussu regna subegi	Vado mori, Rex sum, quod honor, quod gloria regum,
Mors mihi regna tulit eccine vado mori.	Est via mors hominis regia vado mori.

Then follow similar stanzas, for presul, miles, monachus, legista, jurista, doctor, logicus, medicus, cantor, sapiens, dives, cultor, burgensis, nauta, pincerna, pauper.

In Sanchez's collection of Spanish poetry before the year 1400,² mention is made of a Rabbi Santo as a good

¹ Bibl. Reg. 8 B. vi. Lansd. MS. 397. ² Madrid, 1779, 8vo. p. 179.

poet, who lived about 1360. He was a Jew, and surgeon to Don Pedro. His real name seems to have been Mose, but he calls himself Don Santo Judio de Carrion. This person is said to have written a moral poem, called "Danza General." It commences thus :

Dise la Muerte.

"Yo so la muerte cierta a todas criaturas,
Que son y seran en el mundo durante :
Demando y digo O ame ! porque curas
De vida tan breve en punto passante ? &c.

He then introduces a preacher, who announces Death to all persons, and advises them to be prepared by good works to enter his Dance, which is calculated for all degrees of mankind.

Primamente llama a su danza a dos doncellas,
A esta mi danza trax de presente,
Estas dos doncellas que vades hermosas :
Ellas vinieron de muy malamente
A oir mes canciones que son dolorosas,
Mas non les valdran flores nin rosas,
Nin las composturas que poner salian :
De mi, si pudiesen parterra querrian,
Mas non proveda ser, que son mis esposas.

It may, however, be doubted whether the Jew Santo was the author of this Dance of Death, as it is by no means improbable that it may have been a subsequent work added to the manuscript referred to by Sanchez.

In 1675, Maître Jacques Jacques, a canon of the cathedral of Ambrun, published a singular work, entitled "Le faut mourir et les excuses inutiles que l'on apporte à cette nécessité. Le tout en vers burlesques." Rouen, 1675, 12mo. It is written much in the style of Scarron and some other similar poets of the time. It commences with a humorous description given by Death of his proceedings with various persons in every part of the globe, which is followed by several dialogues between Death and the following characters :—1. The Pope. 2. A young lady betrothed. 3. A galley slave. 4. Guillot, who has lost his wife. 5. Don Diego Dalmazere, a Spanish hidalgo. 6. A king. 7. The young widow of a citizen. 8. A citizen. 9. A decrepit rich man. 10. A canon.

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11. A blind man. 12. A poor peasant. 13. Tourmenté, a poor soldier in the hospital. 14. A criminal in prison. 15. A nun. 16. A physician. 17. An apothecary. 18. A lame beggar. 19. A rich usurer. 20. A merchant. 21. A rich merchant. As the book is uncommon, the following specimen is given from the scene between Death and the young betrothed girl :

LA MORT.

A vous la belle demoiselle,
Je vous apporte une nouvelle,
Qui certes vous surprendra fort.
C'est qu'il faut penser à la mort,
Tout vistement pliés bagage,
Car il faut faire ce voyage.

LA DEMOISELLE.

Qu'entends-je ? Tout mon sens se perd
Helas ! vous me prenez sans verd ;
C'est tout à fait hors de raison
Mourir dedans une saison
Que je ne dois songer qu'à rire,
Je suis contrainte de vous dire,
Que très injuste est vostre choix,
Parce que mourir je ne dois,
N'estant qu'en ma quinziesme année,
Voyez quelque vielle échinée,
Qui n'ait en bouche point de dent ;
Vous l'obligerez grandement
De l'envoyer à l'autre monde,
Puis qu'ici toujours elle gronde .
Vous la prendrez tout à propos,
Et laissez moi dans le repos,
Moi qui suis toute poupinette,
Dans l'embonpoint et joliette,
Qui n'aime qu'à me réjouir,
De grâce laissez moi jouir, &c.