

GIAMPAOLO MELE

*“Scribere proposui”:
Notes on the “Danza della Morte” in the “Llibre
Vermell”*

“Macabre/Macabré” and “Machabæorum chora”. The “Dance Macabre”

As the 14th century unfolded, the great famine of the years 1315-1317 and, above all, the spread of the Black Death in 1347/1348, which swept across the European continent in endemic cyclical waves, were compounded by permanent war conflicts, such as the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), and the unprecedented harshness of a new 'little ice age'. In the West, at all levels of medieval society, this evoked a widespread sense of the transience of human existence and a true, daily familiarity with death. From this historical and cultural climate emerged the 'sense of the macabre' and *horror vacui*, a sort of psychological code of the tormented, long twilight of the Middle Ages. This common 'feeling' is vividly represented by the *Dance of Death*, in iconography, literature, and especially poetry (with or without music).

On the whole, the *Dance of Death* embraces a boundless *mare magnum* of diverse sources that can be ascribed to different artistic and literary typologies and reach down all the way to our times – even in films, as shown by the final sequence of Ingmar Bergman's *Seventh Seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, 1957). In his powerful monograph ranging from the 13th to the 17th century, Victor Infantes provided a paradigmatic definition of this composite genre:

Por Danza de la Muerte entiendo una sucesión de texto e imágenes presididas por la Muerte como personaje central – generalmente representada por un esqueleto, un cadáver o un vivo en descomposición – y que, en actitud de danzar, dialoga y arrastra uno por uno a una relación de personajes habitualmente representativos de las más diversas clases sociales.¹

¹ «By Dance of Death I mean a succession of text and images presided over by Death as the central character - generally represented by a skeleton, a corpse or a decomposing living person - who, in a dancing ritual, addresses and drags one by one a list of characters usually representative of the most diverse social classes.» Cf. VÍCTOR INFANTES, *Las danzas de la muerte. Génesis y desarrollo de un género medieval (siglo XIII-XVII)*, Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, 1997 («Acta Salamanticensia. Estudios filológicos», 267), p. 21.

The usual tendency is to make the *Dance of Death* coincide with the *Dance Macabre*. However, according to Infantes' definition, Montserrat's dance *Ad mortem festinamus*, the subject of this note, is not a *Dance of Death* in a narrow sense – which normally includes the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia, with the personification of Death – but rather a dance of devotees (in this case pilgrims) expressing contempt of the world (*de contemptu mundi*), the transience of time, and the brevity of life. Nevertheless, the denomination "dance of death" should be preserved even for *Ad mortem festinamus* without indulging in pointless disquisitions.

The first record of the word *macabre* dates back to the *Respit de la mort*, by Jean Le Fèvre (ca. 1325-post 1380), a work in verse written by the author after surviving a serious illness and handed down in six manuscripts from the 15th century: Bibliothèque national de France (= BnF), fr. 1543, fr. 994, fr. 1445, fr. 24309, fr. 19137, and Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, 4373-4376.² Le Fèvre's verses stand out as vivid, sarcastic, and enigmatic:

Je fis de macabre la dance
 Qui toutes gens maine a sa tresche
 Et a la fosse les adresche
 Qui est leur derraine maison.³

The text dates back to 1376, as we read in the manuscript tradition: for example in BnF, fr. 1543, f. 240r, line 3: «mil .CCC. soixante seze». The line *Je fis de macabre la dance* remains obscure; there are various hypotheses

On the *Dance of Death*, music, and the harmony of the spheres, see KATHI MEYER-BAER, *Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970; REINHOLD HAMMERSTEIN, *Tanz und Musik der Todes: Die Mittelalterlichen Totentanz und ihr Nachleben*, Bern-Münich, Francke Verlag, 1980. For the Iberian tradition, see FLORENCE WHYTE, *The Dance of Death in Spain and Catalonia*, New York, Arno Press, 1977. Among the latest monographs on the subject, and for an updated reference list, see John Lydgate, *The Dance of Death, and its model, the French Danse macabre*, edited by Clifford Davidson, Sophie Oosterwijk, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2021.

² *Le Respit de la mort par Jean le Fèvre*, edited by Geneviève Hasenohr-Esnos, Paris, Picard («Société des anciens textes français», 143), 1969; the edition is based on MS. fr. 1543, copied in 1402, whose composition dates from 1376-1377; the codex can be consulted at <<https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc45872j>> [Accessed April 10, 2021].

³ Transcription from BnF, fr. 1543, f. 261ra, lines 17-20. «I did the Macabre [*Macabré?*] dance, which drags all people into its spell and sends them to the grave, which is their final dwelling».

for it. According to an old thesis that has been much discussed, but never substantially rejected, it could allude to a mysterious figure, *Macabré*, author of a pioneering *Dance of Death*.⁴ We should also not exclude a connection, via the liturgy, with the second book of Maccabees, which exhorts prayer for the dead: «sancta ergo et salubris est cogitatio pro defunctis exorare, ut a peccatis solvantur» [Hence it is a saintly and beneficial thought to pray for the deceased, that they may be absolved of their sins] (*II Machabaeorum*, 12:46). Du Cange records the entry «Machabæorum chora», a central expression in the lexicographic history of the *Macabre Dance*, even though the precious lemma is not usually cited as explicitly as it deserves. The *Dance of the Maccabees*, called *Dance Macabre* in the vernacular, is defined as follows:

Machabæorum chora, vulgo *Dance Macabre*. Ludicra quædam ceremonia ab ecclesiasticis pie instituta, qua omnium dignitatum, tam ecclesiæ quam imperii personæ choream simul ducendo, alternis vicibus a chorea evanescebant, ut mortem ab omnibus suo ordine optendam esse significarent.⁵

We therefore learn that the *Dance Macabre* was a *ludicra* ('playful', 'comic') ceremony, piously instituted by the ecclesiastics. During the dance, people alternated (*alternis vicibus*) in disappearing, that is they went out of the dance, meaning that everyone had to meet death in a composed way, in an orderly fashion, waiting for their turn. Du Cange also mentions a historical document referring to the *Dance of the Maccabees* that took place on July 10, 1453: «choræam Machabæorum fecerunt 10. Julii (1453)», immediately after mass, at the church of St. John the Evangelist on the day of the provincial chapter of the Friars Minor.⁶ Under the same header is the famous report, drawn from the diaries of Charles VII's reign (1422-1461), «ad ann. 1424. fol. 509», of the *Dance Macabre* held in 1424 in the cemetery attached to

⁴ P. G. [signed with initials only], *La "Dance Macabré" de Jean Le Fèvre*, «Romania», XXIV, 93, 1895, pp. 129-132, especially on p. 131: «Il résulte clairement de ces vers que Jean Le Fèvre avait, antérieurement à 1376, composé un poème intitulé *La dance Macabré* ou de *Macabré*».

⁵ «Dance of the Maccabees, commonly known as *Dance Macabre*. A playful ceremony, piously instituted by churchmen, in which people of all classes, both religious and civil, dance together, alternately came out of the dance, to show that all must go to death at their turn». CHARLES DU FRESNE, SIEUR DU CANGE, s.v. «Machabæorum chora», in *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis*, expanded edition, Niort, L. Favre, V, col. 161a <<http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/MACHABAEORUM>> [Accessed 10 April 2021].

⁶ «nuper lapsa hora missæ in Ecclesia S. Joannis Evangelistæ propter capitulum provinciale Fratrum Minorum», *ibid*.

the church of the Holy Innocents in Paris: «Cette année fut faite la dance Macabre aux Innocens».⁷ However, an explicit reference to the Parisian cemetery is already found in the context of Jean Le Fèvre's *Respit* of 1376, in the same folio that contains the first mention of *Macabre/Macabré*. The author, after doing the *Dance of Death*, states that he does not want to end up with all those bones of the Holy Innocents, «avec ceulx de saint Innocent»,⁸ a statement preceding the mention of the *Macabre dance* in the diaries of the French monarch by forty-eight years.

The whole cultural universe of the *Dance of Death* relates to other genres and/or themes that can be described as 'macabre' *ante litteram*. Suffice it to think, first and foremost, of the underlying material for the *Memento mori*, the *Vado mori*,⁹ and above all the *Ubi sunt?*.¹⁰ In the iconographic tradition the encounter of the *Three Living and Three Dead* and the *Triumph of Death* stand out, as in the majestic fresco by Buonamico Buffalmacco (1336-1341) in the Cemetery of Pisa, which also includes the *Three Living and Three Dead*.¹¹ The ancient iconography of the Last Judgment and the ancient *Iudicii signum/Sybil's song* hold a place of their own, separate from

⁷ «ad ann. 1424. fol. 509», *ibidem*.

⁸ See BnF, fr. 1543, f. 261rb, line 26.

⁹ See *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* [= AH], edited by Guido M. Drevés e Clemens Blume, voll. 55, Frankfurt am Main, Minerva GmbH, 1961²: XXXIII, p. 285; XLVI, p. 351 f.

¹⁰ The essential reference on the *Ubi sunt?* is C. [CARL] H. [HEINRICH] BECKER, *Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere*, in *Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Sprachgeschichte vornehmlich des Orients: Ernst Kuhn zum 70. Geburtstag am 7. Februar 1916 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern*, München, Breslau Von M. und H. Marcus 1916, pp. 87-105; ÉTIENNE GILSON, *De la Bible à François Villon*, «Annales de l'École pratique des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses», Année 1923-1924, XXXII, 1922, pp. 3-24 (pp. 21-24 feature a *Table pour l'histoire du thème littéraire Ubi sunt?*, divided into 12 sections on various ancient and modern languages, including Syriac and Slavonic patrology, with references also to *De contemptu mundi* and *Gaudeamus igitur*); MARIANTONIA LIBORIO, *Contributions to the History of 'Ubi sunt'*, «Cultura neolatina», XX, 1960, pp. 141-209; CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA, *The "Ubi Sunt" Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships*, «The Journal of English and Germanic Philology», CV, 3, 2006, pp. 365-387.

¹¹ For the 14th century, we should mention that the theme of the *Three Living and the Three Dead* is found in Bosa, Sardinia, in the castle of Serravalle, Giudicato d'Arborea, within an evocative cycle of frescoes (post 1323 - ante 1370). Cfr. ATTILIO MASTINO, *Bosa in età giudicale: nota sugli affreschi del Castello di Serravalle*, Sassari, Gallizzi, 1991 («Storia di Bosa», 1).

the new macabre aura of the 14th century.¹² They date back to millenarian trends that predate the psychological, subjective terror that broke out in the 14th century and spread widely in the 15th century.

The 'macabre' quality of *Ad mortem festinamus* is epitomized above all by the iconography on f. 27r, where a tomb with a badly decomposed corpse is depicted, in line with a typical pictorial taste of the International Gothic, influenced by the theme of the *Three Living and Three Dead*. Above the open tomb, the copyist inserted the inscription «O mors, quam amara est memoria tua!» [O death, how bitter is your legacy!]. Under the tomb follows a rhymed, seven-line warning that reminds the pilgrim of the inevitable fate of the vile corpse awaiting him: «Vile cadaver eris. Cur non peccare vereris? Vile cadaver eris. Cur intumescere queris? | *Vile cadaver eris ...*» (italics mine).¹³

The "Llibre Vermell"

The *Llibre Vermell* (= *Ver*) – Codex 1 of the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat (Catalonia), dating from the end of the 14th century – stands out as one of the most representative sources of the Middle Ages containing literary, devotional and musical repertoires for pilgrims.¹⁴ The other central

¹² See MARICARMEN GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El canto de la Sibila: orígenes y fuentes*, in *Fuentes Musicales de la Península Ibérica*, actas del coloquio internacional, Lleida, 1-3 abril 1996, edited by Maricarmen Gómez e Màrius Bernardó, Universitat de Lleida – Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs, Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2001, pp. 35-69, with 4 comparative musical examples and 4 tables [pp. 54-69]; EAD, *Del "Iudicii signum" al Canto de la Sibila: primeros testimonios*, in *Hispania Vetus. Manuscritos litúrgico-musicales de los orígenes visigóticos a la transición francorromana (siglos IX-XII)*, edited by SUSANA ZAPKE, Bilbao, Fundación BBVA, 2007, pp. 159-173 [= *Hispania Vetus. Musical-liturgical manuscripts from visigothic origins to the franco-roman transition (9th-12th centuries)*, *ibidem*]; GIAMPAOLO MELE, *Nota sul "Cantus Sibyllae" e un "testimonium" recenziore del "Senyal del Judici" (Alghero)*, in *Quod ore cantas corde credas. Studi in onore di Giacomo Baroffio Dahnk*, edited by Leandra Scappaticci («Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica», 70), Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013, pp. 335-352.

¹³ «A vile corpse you will be. Why are you not afraid to sin? A vile corpse you will be. Why do you become arrogant? A vile corpse you will be». See <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/llibre-vermell-de-montserrat-0/html/ff6fe3e2-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_94.html> [Accessed April 10, 2021]. A parallel is in AH, XXXIII, p. 352: «Mors est ventura, cuius conclusio dura, | Mors est ventura tibi pro meritisque datura, | Mors est ventura...» [italics mine].

¹⁴ On the *Llibre Vermell*, see AH, XX, pp. 160-162; XXI, p. 101 f, mus. ex. 21 on p. 220; ANSELM M. ALBAREDA, *Manuscrits de la biblioteca de Montserrat*, «Analecta Montserratensia», I, 1917, pp. 3-9 (with facsimiles); *Textos catalans del Llibre Vermell*, *ivi*, pp.

source for documentation, including music, on the lively and complex world of medieval pilgrimages is the famous 'Pseudo-Callixtus' codex, *Liber Sancti Jacobi* (Santiago de Compostela, Archivo Capitular, ms. s.s., mid-12th century), which includes, in f. 185r, the oldest written example of polyphony for three voices, *Congaudeant catholici*.¹⁵

The prestige of the monastery of Montserrat is linked to the cult of the Virgin *Mare de Déu*, portrayed in a delicate wooden Romanesque sculpture from the end of the 12th century or early 13th. Originally, the monastic house depended on the powerful monastery of Santa Maria of Ripoll; in 1025 the abbot of Ripoll, Oliva, also an authoritative musicographer, transformed one of the four hermitages of the Montserrat massif into a priory, which in turn the Avignon pope Benedict XIII (the Aragonese Pedro de Luna) converted into an abbey in 1409.¹⁶

201-225; GREGORIO M. SUÑOL, *Els cants dels romeus. Segle XIV*, *ivi*, pp. 100-192; OTTO URSPRUNG, *Spanische-katalanische Liedkunst des 14. Jahrhundert*, «Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft», IV, 1921-1922, pp. 136-160; HIGINIO ANGLÉS, *El «Llibre Vermell» de Montserrat y los cantos y la danza sacra de los peregrinos durante el siglo xiv*, «Anuario Musical», X, 1955, pp. 45-78 (= *Scripta Musicologica*, edited by José López Caló, introduction by José M. Llorens, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1975-1976 («Storia e Letteratura. Raccolta di Studi e Testi», 131), I, pp. 621-653); CEBRIÀ BARAUT, *Els manuscripts de l'antiga biblioteca del monestir de Montserrat (segles XI-XVIII)*, «Analecta Montserratensia», VIII, 1954-55, pp. 339-398: 343-348; RAMÓN ARAMON I SERRA, *Els cants en vulgar del Llibre Vermell de Montserrat (assaig d'edició crítica)*, «Analecta Montserratensia», X, 1964, pp. 9-54 («Miscel·lània Anselm M. Albareda», 2) (= ID., *Estudis de llengua i literatura*, with presentation by J. A. Argente, preface and edition by J. Carbonell, Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1997, pp. 79-130 [«Biblioteca Filològica», 33]); FRANCESC XAVIER ALTÉS I AGUILÓ, *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat: Edició facsimil parcial del manuscrit núm.1 de la Biblioteca de l'Abadia de Montserrat*, Barcelona, Abadia de Montserrat, 1989; *Poliphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century. French Sacred Music*, XXIIIA/B edited by Giulio Cattin e Francesco Facchin, with the assistance of Maria del Carmen Gómez Muntané, Monaco [Principauté de Monaco], L'Oyseau-Lyre, B Num. 95-104; MARICARMEN GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell de Montserrat. Cantos y danzas s. XIV*, s. l., Los libros de la Frontera, s. a. [1990], («Papeles de Ensayo», 5); MARICARMEN GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *La Música Medieval en España*, Kassel, Reichenberger, 2000 («De Musica», 6), pp. 270-272; EAD., *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo*, Madrid, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Madrid, 2017.

¹⁵ On the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, see editions and studies in GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *La Música Medieval en España* cit., p. 150 f.

¹⁶ Cf. ANSELM M. ALBAREDA, *Història de Montserrat*, revised by Josep Massot i Muntaner, Barcelona, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1977⁶, p. 265.

Montserrat's ms. 1 is a miscellaneous codex; below is a description of its diverse content, based on a valuable table by Francesc Xavier Altés (the texts with an asterisk are facsimile reproductions by the author himself).¹⁷

Ff. 1r-21v: *Book of the miracles of Our Lady, in Latin. Ff. 21v-27r: *Songbook of Montserrat, in Latin and Catalan. Ff. 27v-29v: **Breu tractat de confessió*. Ff. 30r-31v: *Concession of the jubilee of St. Mary of the Portiuncula in Montserrat the year 1397. Ff. 31v-40v: **Ystoria indulgentie sancte Marie de Angelis*. F. 40v f.: **Privilegium pro indulgentiis impetrandis*. Ff. 41v-46v: *Pontifical privileges (1409-1430) granted to Montserrat. Ff. 47r-56v: *Collection of various orations, in Latin and Catalan. Ff. 57r-58r: **Articles of the holy Catholic faith*. Ff. 58r-65v: **Instrumenta spiritualia artis et norme vivendi S. Isidori*. Ff. 65r-67r: **Anselmus de deploratione virginitatis*. F. 67r f.: Apology of the Christian faith, in Latin. Ff. 68r-70r: *On the universe and praise to its creator, in Catalan and Latin. Ff. 70v-72r: *Hours of the Mother of God, of the Passion and orations, in Latin and Catalan. Ff. 72r-74v: **Memoriale de mirabilibus et indulgentiis urbis Rome*, written in the year 1382. F. 75r f.: Abbreviated Psalter, in Latin. Ff. 77r-80r: **Brevis exhortatio ad sermocinandum*, in Latin and Catalan. Ff. 80r-93v: **Viridarium consolationis de viciis et virtutibus*. Ff. 93v-118v: **Opusculum de decem preceptis legis, de quatuordecim fidei articulis, et de septem ecclesie sacramentis*. F. 119r f.: **Varia montserratina*, in Latin. Ff. 120v-132v: **Kalendarium sanctorum monachorum*. F. 133r: Note on the rights of the penitentiaries. F. 133v f.: **Capítols de la confraria de Montserrat*. F. 134v f.: *Plenary indulgence for the confreres of Montserrat, in Latin. F. 135v: Empty. F. 136r f.: **Assí comensa lo libre appellat del peccador lo qual feu monsényer sent Agustí*. F. 137r f.: Notes concerning the church of Montserrat.

The Catalan source constitutes a *unicum* primarily because, besides the songs, it contains original dances to be performed by the faithful in the churchyard and within the church itself in the last part of the 14th century. The Canoniere of 10 songs, included in the codex around 1397-1399,¹⁸ occupies ff. 21

¹⁷ See ALTÉS I AGUILÓ, *Llibre Vermell* cit., p. 27 f.

¹⁸ Regarding the *datatio chronica*, in the apparatus of AH XXI, p. 101 f., the codex is erroneously dated to the 15th century: «Cod. Montis Serrati s. n. saec. 15». In DOMINIQUE DE COURCELLES, *L'écriture dans la pensée de la mort en Catalogne. Les joies/goigs/ des saints, de la Vierge et du Christ de la fin du Moyen-Âge au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, École des Chartes, 1992 («Mémoires et documents de l'École des Chartes», 35), p. 83, the manuscript is inexplicably dated to 1330. The date in f. 20v, «1397», has sometimes been read differently, e.g., in the excellent essays in ANGLÉS, *El "Llibre Vermell"*, p. 624: «Para nuestro caso interesan más especialmente los dos milagros últimos, que preceden la colección de cantos que estamos comentando. Estos milagros se describen en los folios 20v y 21r. Son dos milagros obrados por intercesión de "Madona Sancta Maria de Montserrat" el año [sic] 1398: f. 20v "De incarceratis liberatis Anno Domini M.CCC.XCVIII", que va seguido de otro que empieza: "De quodam presbitero a captione liberato. Eodem anno [1398] de mense Novembris" ...

v-27r:

1. *O virgo splendens* (ff. 2v-22r)¹⁹
2. *Stella splendens* (ff. 22r-23r)²⁰
3. *Laudemus virginem* (f. 23r)²¹
4. *Splendens ceptigera* (f. 23r)²²
5. *Los set gotxs recomptarem* (f. 23v f.)²³
6. *Cuncti simus concanentes* (f. 24r)²⁴
7. *Polorum regina* (f. 24v)²⁵
8. *Mariam matrem* (f. 25r)²⁶
9. *Inperayritz/Verges ses par* (f. 25v f.)²⁷
10. *Ad mortem festinamus* (f. 26v f.)²⁸

The song *Rosa placent* [No. 11] should be added to this list.²⁹ Mention of this song goes back to Father Jaime Villanueva, who first reported the *Llibre Vermell* after analyzing it personally during his bib-

Atendiendo a la nota del folio 56v que dice: "La VI [edat de món] del dit adveniment [de Jesucrist] entrò a la fin del món; e aquesta i a durat MCCCXCIX anys", resulta que el manuscrito fue terminado en 1399»; GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *La música medieval*, p. 265, «dos colecciones de milagros atribuidos a la Virgen de Montserrat; la última de la cuales está fechada en 1396 (fols. 1-21r). Un compendio de doctrina cristiana que se copia más hacia delante (fols. 56r-57r) data del 1399, y por tanto el cancionero tuvo que ser incorporado al manuscrito entre este año y el de la segunda colección de milagros». GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., has restored the correct date, 1397, appearing on f. 20v. The *Llibre Vermell* should be ascribed to the historical-musical influence of the King of Aragon John I, the Hunter (1387-1396), who stood out among the greatest musical patrons of the 14th century; cf. GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *La Música Medieval*, pp. 219-280; GIAMPAOLO MELE, *I cantori della cappella di Giovanni I il Cacciatore, re d'Aragona (anni 1379-1396)*, «Anuario Musical», XLI, 1986, pp. 63-104, with an extensive reference list.

¹⁹ GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., pp. 35-38, mus. ex. p. 125 f., text 133-135, facs. f. 21v f., p. 110 f.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 38-40, mus. ex. p. 127 f., text p. 13 ff., facs. f. 22r f., p. 111 f.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 44-46, mus. ex. p. 127, text p. 136, facs. f. 23r, p. 113.

²² *Ibid*, pp. 44-46, mus. ex. p. 128, text p. 136, facs. f. 23r, p. 113.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 59-76, mus. ex. p. 128, text pp. 137-139, facs. f. 23v, p. 114.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 47 f., mus. ex. p. 129, text p. 139 f., facs. f. 24r, p. 115.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 47, mus. ex. p. 129, text p. 140, facs. f. 24v, p. 116.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 52 f., mus. ex. p. 130, text p. 141 f., facs. f. 25r, p. 117.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 52-57, mus. ex. p. 131, text pp. 142-145, facs. f. 25v f., p. 118 f.

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 77-95, mus. ex. p. 132, text pp. 145-147, facs. f. 26r f., p. 120 f.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 30 f.

liographical explorations in Montserrat, in the context of his *Viaje literario* of 1806. The Spanish scholar writes: «Pónense igualmente y con canto las canciones latinas y lemosinas que debían cantarse durante las vigiliass. De las últimas pondré la mostra siguiente» [There are also Latin and Limousin songs, with the music, to be sung during vigils. Of the latter I give the following example], and subsequently copies the text of the four stanzas of the song he refers to as «Birolay de Madona Sancta María: *Rosa plasent, soleyl de resplandor*».³⁰ The issue with *Rosa plasent* is closely tied to the ‘external history’ of Montserrat’s Codex 1. Immediately after Villanueva’s literary journey, the monks of the monastery lent the *Llibre Vermell* to the Marquis of Lió, president of the “Accademia de Buenas Letras” of Barcelona. It proved to be a providential loan for the precious Montserrat codex. During the invasion of Napoleon’s troops in 1811-12, the monastery was plundered, and the library was set on fire along with the archives; thus, a precious heritage of books and documents was lost forever. This heritage included rich collections of polyphonic and instrumental music, as well as important ancient collections of popular songs. *Ver*’s transfer to Barcelona therefore led to the rescue of the codex.³¹ In 1885, the manuscript was returned to the monastery by the Lió family, but it was mutilated of some sheets, including those with the text and music of the lost *virelai*, *Rosa plasent*.³² The adjective *vermell* was attached to Codex 1 because of its red velvet binding, dating back to the time of its providential ‘relocation’ to Barcelona.

The *Dance of the Death* of Montserrat essentially takes the form of a monodic *virelai*, but with peculiar metrical features. The same form of danced *virelai*, albeit with significant strophic-musical variations that cannot be described here, is found in six other pieces of the manuscript (in addition to the lost ‘birolay’ *Rosa plasent*):

- No. 2, *Stella splendens* (for 2 voices).
- No. 5, *Los set gotx* (for 1 voice) [ballad-virelai].
- No. 6, *Cuncti simus* (for 1 voice).
- No. 7, *Polorum regina* (for 1 voice).

³⁰ See JAIME VILLANUEVA Y ASTENGO, *Viaje literario á las iglesias de España*, VII, Valencia, Venancio Oliveres, 1821, pp. 151-153.

³¹ Cf. ANGLÉS, *El “Llibre Vermell”*, p. 622.

³² Cf. J. MASSÓ I TORRENTS, *Repertori de l’antiga literatura catalana*, Barcelona, Alpha, p. 262.

No. 8, *Maria matrem* (for 3 voices).

No. 9, *Inperayritz/Verge ses par* (for 2 voices, bi-testual).

No. 10, *Ad mortem festinamus* (for 1 voice).³³

[No. 11: *Rosa plasent*].

The ultimate, and explicitly declared purpose of the song included in the *Llibre Vermell* was to entertain, with melody and dance, the pilgrims who wished to sing and dance (*volunt cantare et tripudiare*), both in the square during the day, and inside the church at night, during vigils. For this reason, as explained in f. 22r of the codex, the monks prepared a specific anthology of «honest and devout chants» («honestas ac devotas cantilenas»), as attested by a well-known rubric, reproduced below in our 'conservative' transcription:

Quia interdum peregrini quando vigilant in ecclesia beate marie | de monte serrato
volunt cantare et trepidare. et etiam in | platea de die. Et ibi non debeant nisi hon-
estas ac devotas cantilenas | cantare. idcirco superius et inferius alique sunt scripte.
et de hoc | uti debent honeste et parce. ne perturbent perseverantes in orationibus |
et deuotis contemplationibus. in quibus omnes vigilantes in|sistere debent pariter et
deuote vaccare.³⁴

³³ In addition to the studies cited in notes 19-29, see ANGLÉS, "El Llibre Vermell", p. 645, mus. ex. p. 655, p. 646, mus. ex. p. 657 f.; p. 646 f., mus. ex. p. 658; p. 647, mus. ex. p. 658; p. 647 f., mus. ex. pp. 658-660; p. 648, mus. ex. p. 660 f., p. 649 f., mus. ex. p. 661.

³⁴ «So sometimes pilgrims, when they keep vigil in the church of Montserrat, want to sing and dance, and also in the square during the day. And there they must not sing but honest and devout chants, so a few of these are written above and below, and they must do this with respect and moderation, so as not to disturb those who carry on with praying and devout contemplation, to which all participants in the vigil must together devoutly dedicate themselves.» On the rubric of f. 22r see also ANGLÉS, *El "Llibre Vermell"* cit., p. 624, partial transcription, and a complete translation in Castilian in GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *La música medieval* cit., p. 266. Regarding the dance in churchyards and in squares, or *in platea*, in Sardinia until some time ago it was believed (a belief shared by the author of this article) that the scene depicted on a capital in the 14th-century church of San Pietro di Zuri, in the Giudicato d'Arborea, was a *ballu tundu*. In fact, it is a 'jubilation' of mystical souls, as shown by the sculpted acanthus leaf, a symbol of resurrection and eternal life: «one of the capitals of the church of Saint Peter of Zuri (1291- before 1336) portrays some dancers in what has been considered a Sardinian *ballu tundu* (round dance). However, the presence of stylized acanthus leaves suggests that, instead, this is an idealized carol (ring dance) of blessed souls in heaven, which symbolized the resurrection and the eternal life in Romanesque church

Dances inside churches are widely documented since the early Middle Ages, as attested by an extensive bibliography.³⁵ In particular, *Ver* includes precious rubrics/captions that also describe the mode of dancing, in a circular choreography:

Nº 2: «Ad trepidium rotundum»

Nº 5: «Ballada dels goytxs de nostre dona en vulgar cathallan, a ball redon»

Nº 6: «A ball redon»

Nº 7: «A ball redon»

An interesting euchological section is included in ff. 70v-72r, which concerns the hours for Our Lady, for the Passion, and other orations, in Latin and Catalan. The focus of this tiny celebration are the *gaudia*,³⁶ which have no music and are used in the form of a prayer, broken down and staggered over the hours.³⁷ These are *Gaude, virgo mater Christi, | quæ per*

decoration.... The depiction of a heavenly carol – a mystical *trepidium* (rejoicing) of souls in paradise – well documented in the Medieval literature and iconography, does not exclude the fact that in the churchyard of Zuri, as well as in those of other Sardinian churches, ring dances of pilgrims were performed». See GIAMPAOLO MELE, *A Historical Overview of Musical Worship and Culture in Medieval Sardinia*, in *A Companion to Sardinian History, 500-1500*, edited by Michelle Holbart, Boston - Leiden, Brill, 2017, p. 454 f. note 85, p. 455 (Figure 17.3).

³⁵ See HANS SPANKE, *Tanzmusik in der Kirche des Mittelalters*, «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen», XXXI, 1930, pp. 143-170; ID., *Zum Thema "Mittelalterliche Tanzlieder"*, «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen», XXXIII, 1932, pp. 1-22; HIGINIO ANGLÉS, *La danza sacra y su música en el templo durante el Medioevo*, in *Medium Ævum Romanicum. Festschrift für Hans Rheinfelder*, Herausgegeben von Heinrich Bihler und Alfred Noyer-Weidner, München, Hueber, 1963, pp. 1-20 (rist. in HIGINIO ANGLÉS, *Scripta Musicologica*, I, edited by Joseph López-Calo, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1975, pp. 351-373); JACQUES CHAILLEY, *Un document nouveau sur la danse ecclésiastique*, «Acta Musicologica», XXI, 1949, pp. 18-24.

³⁶ Cf. GIAMPAOLO MELE, *De VII Gaudiis Beatae Mariae Virginis. Historical, metrical, and musical notes*, «Critica del testo», XXIII, 2, 2020, pp. 117-138.

³⁷ Montserrat, Biblioteca del Monasterio, ms. 1, f. 70v (conservative transcription is ours; italics indicate the rubricated text, the oblique slash the end of the line): «*Si vols lohar: e breu oratio far. a nostra dona sancta Maria. offrir |lli quescon die aquestes hores segents. A matines dignes | Ave Maria. gratia plena. dominus tecum. benedicta in mulieribus. et benedictus | fructus ventris tui Ihs. Sancta Maria ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Amen.* Gaude virgo mater Xpi: que per aurem concepisti, Gabriele nuntio ...». See also the transcription in CEBRIÀ BARAUT, *Textos omilètics i devots del "Llibre vermell" de Montserrat*, in *Collectanea E. Serra Buixò*, «Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia», XXVIII, 1955, pp. 25-44: 40 f. The *Llibre Vermell* also contains *septem dulcissima gaudia*, f. 51v: *Gaude flagrans cella diva*, rather rare (not

aurem concepisti, | *Gabriele nuntio* ... [Rejoice, o Virgin Mother of Christ, who conceived upon hearing Gabriel's announcement], of which we have an interesting 15th-century version with a mensural melody.³⁸ What is certain is that the *septem gaudia* of the Holy Virgin were absorbed by pilgrims especially through *Los set gotxs recomptarem*, f. 23v f., which were danced in the form of ballad-virelai, «a ball redon».

However, the mass of pilgrims - a shapeless *massa damnationis*, according to well-known Augustinian theological concepts - was highly diverse from a social and cultural standpoint. Large groups of pilgrims had to participate in the ritual of dances such as *Los set gotx* and the *Dance of Death* itself, under the more or less overt direction of the monks (or their trusted assistants), but at the Catalan sanctuary there were also spaces and specific moments reserved for 'niche' devotions, as it were, such as the recitation of stanzas from *Septem gaudia*, divided according to the liturgical hours. Surely the pilgrims *perseverantes in orationibus et devotis contemplationi-*

found in AH and RH), edited in *ivi*, p. 41 f.

³⁸ These are the BMV *gaudia* published in AH XV, p. 96. An interesting monodic mensural transcription is in Biblioteca de Catalunya (= BC), 865, *Ritual* for Poor Clares, 15th century, 69r-71v, with melody in the form of a stanza sequence, 8 stanzas (metrical structure of the 1st and 2nd three-line stanzas: a a8 8x7 b b8 8x7); other sources may exist, still to be catalogued and studied. See MELE, *De VII Gaudiis* cit., pp. 126, 128 f., 132, 134, 138. The recognized model is the famous *Gaude, flore virginali*, in AH XXXI, p. 198 f. - traditionally attributed, without historical evidence, to Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (1152-1170) - which intones the seven 'celestial' *gaudia* of the Virgin Mary, with the scheme: a a8 8b7 8c 8b 7 x 7. See *ivi*, pp. 119, 123, 126 f., 129. Melodic versions of these *gaudia* are found in BC, M 1327, *Cantoral*, 15th century, ff. 171r-173v, edited in GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., p. 73, mus. ex. 5; see also MELE, *De VII Gaudiis* cit., p. 134. A transcription without music, in an elegant and airy *lettre bâtarde* is found in BnF, NAL 1544, f. 85r f., albeit in 5 stanzas («Incipiunt quinque gaudia Beate Marie»). The metrical structure of *Gaude, virgo mater Christi*, the climax of the hours for Our Lady in ff. 70v-72r of the *Llibre Vermell*, reveals a jarring anomaly, in that it does not repeat regularly the *versus caudatus tripertitus*, preferred by the Victorine sequences and later also used in the *Stabat mater*, as does *Gaude, flore virginali*. Rather, it is interspersed with septenary three-line stanzas composed *ex novo*, resulting in an unusual mixture of metrically heterogeneous stanzas, with dissonant rhythmic consequences that compromise the formal coherence of the composition. From a strictly musical point of view, *Gaude, virgo mater Christi* in BC 865, ff. 69r-71v, along with *Gaude, flore virginali*, in BC, M 1327, ff. 171r-173v, unequivocally demonstrates a very interesting phenomenon: in the particular case of stanza 8p 8p 7pp, the music can determine and distinguish the literary identity of the chant, connoting it either as a sequence, with the melody applied to strophic pairs, or as a hymn, with a single melody valid for all isometric and isorhythmic stanzas. Cf. *ivi*, p. 129.

bus, mentioned in f. 22r of the *Llibre Vermell*, needed specific euchological material. The *gaudia* suggested by the monastery provided an excellent, streamlined basis for prayer, *breu oratio*, for devotees throughout the liturgical day (night and day): Matins, First Hour, Third, Sixth, Ninth, Vespers and Compline. *Ver* offers a succinct Marian euchological formulary, skillfully condensed into just 19 lines that occupy half a sheet, preceding the more complex prayers suited for «deuotament contemplar en la | passio del saluador nostre», a specific example of *ontemplations deuotæ*, to which the rubric in f. 22r and verse 8, vv. 2-3 refers: «Si digne contemplemus | Passionem Domini».

The *Dance of Death*, along with the other songs of the *Llibre Vermell*, should therefore be seen in an aura of deep religious contemplation, which embraced various masses (especially the highly popular morning mass), readings/hearing of the miracles of Our Lady - such as those transmitted in ff. 1r-21v (significantly sealed by two empty tetragrammata, without interruption, before the beginning of the *Cançoner montserratí*) - various prayers, and a tiny *ad hoc* psalter. There were also brief services, as we have seen - most notably, the (segmented) recitation of the above-mentioned Marian lyric *Gaude, virgo mater Christi*. All this took place in a religious setting that was thoroughly under the control of the monks, and which therefore could not be further from those forms of popular, apocalyptic hysteria that a distorted 19th-century view of the Middle Ages might improperly associate with *Ad mortem festinamus*.³⁹

“*Scribere proposui*”. *Literary and musical precursors of the Montserrat “Dance of Death”*

The Montserrat *Dance of Death*, *Scribere proposui | de contemptu mundano*, with the refrain *Ad mortem festinamus*, has its literary roots in the ascetic themes addressed by Cardinal Lotario dei conti di Segni, future

³⁹ The reference in stanza 4, vv. 1-2 to the *tuba* is also worth noting: «Tuba cum sonuerit, | Dies erit extrema», which recalls the «Tuba mirum spargens sonum» of the sequence for the Mass of the Dead, *Dies irae* (cf. *Liber Usualis Misse et Officii pro dominicis diebus et festis duplicibus: cum cantu gregoriano*, Romæ-Tornaci, Desclée, Lefebvre & Soc., 1903, pp. 1099-1101). The musical psychology of modern individuals, informed by Romantic, 19th-century conceptions, might expect from a *Dance of Death* mournful melodies in a minor key. In reality, the melody of *Ad mortem festinamus* pertains to the *ambitus* of the Gregorian “authentic” *tritus* mode, which in the musical language of modern times can be ascribed to the reassuring key of F major. In fact, to modern ears the song will likely sound dramatic in its text, but ‘playful’ in its melody.

Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), in his highly successful treatise *De contemptu mundi*, dating back to 1194/95, also known by the title *De Miseria conditionis humanae*.⁴⁰

However, the song *Scribere proposui | de contemptu mundano* also has a direct poetic and musical precursor in *Scribere proposui* with the refrain «Surge, surge, vigila», from a Parisian codex of English origin, BnF, fr. 25408, f.120r, dated 1267. Edélestand de Ménil has published a study and an edition of the text (= *Par*);⁴¹ more recently, Maricarmen Gómez Muntané has also transcribed the music.⁴² Two additional rare and little-known witnesses must be mentioned in connection with this fundamental Parisian source: the Irish trope and sequence collection from around 1360, University of Cambridge Library, Add. 710 (= *Cam*),⁴³ utilized by Guido

⁴⁰ Lotario's text survives in 672 manuscripts. Among the various contemporary editions, see ROBERT E. LEWIS, *De Miseria conditionis humanae*, Athens (GA), University of Georgia Press, 1978. The literary/spiritual genre of *De contemptu mundi*, however, goes back to earlier authors of the 12th century, including Bernard of Morlaix (or Morval, but also known as Bernard of Cluny), who wrote a *De contemptu mundi* around 1140. See GEORGE ENGELHARDT, *The "De Contemptu mundi" of Bernardus Morvalensis - Book 2. A Study in Commonplace*, «Mediaeval Studies», XXVI, 1964, pp. 109-152; RONALD E. PEPIN, *Scorn for the world: Bernard of Cluny's De contemptu mundi: the Latin text with English translation and an introduction*, East Lansing (Mi), Colleagues Press, 1991 («Medieval texts and studies», 8). Bernard of Cluny was also a prolific poet; his verses are published in AH; see MAX LÜTOLF, *Register*, with the collaboration of Dorothea Baumann, Ernst Meier, Markus Römer, Andreas Wernli, Bern-München, Francke Verlag, I 2 vols., 1978, II, *Autoren*, p. 228. Treatises on the theme of *De Contemptu Mundi* are also found in Anselm of Aosta, Herman Contract, John of Fécamp, Hélinant de Froidmont, Pier Damiani and others. See also the numerous cross-references in ULYSSE CHEVALIER, *Repertorium Hymnologicum. Catalogue des chants, hymnes, proses, séquences, tropes en usage dans l'Église latine depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, I-VI, Louvain, Lefever, Polleunis & Ceuterick, F. Ceuterick, Société des Bollandistes, Auguste Picard, 19196 [= RH], VI, p. 23, *Contemptus mundi*, «c.-r.» [= *cantio-rythmus*].

⁴¹ Cf. EDÉLESTAND DE MÉNIL, *Latina quae, medium per aevum, in triviis nec non monasteriis vulgabantur Carmina (...). Poésies populaires latines du Moyen Age*, Ebroicis [Évreux], Typis Ludovici Tavernier, 1847, *Du mépris du monde*, pp. 125-127. Interesting *ivi* is the erudite footnote 1, and in general the commentary on the text, with numerous valuable references, including to *Ubi sunt?*, p. 126, note 2.

⁴² Cf. GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., p. 79.

⁴³ Cf. *Unpublished description by R.A.B. Mynors of Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 710 (Troper ['The Dublin Troper'])* [Dataset], 2021, <<https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/320402>> [Accessed 10 April 2021], where the *datatio chronica* and the *topica* are positively established as: «XIV cent., first half (no doubt written in Dublin)».

Dreves in 1895 in the AH⁴⁴ and later edited in a valuable volume by René-Jean Hesbert, who also published the melody,⁴⁵ and London, BM, Add. 16559, f. 220) (= *Lon*), an English source from the second half of the 13th century first reported in 1890 by the Romanicist Paul Meyer.⁴⁶ *Scribere proposui* also appears along with its own peculiar melody in a collection of *Pie cantiones* printed in Greifswald, Northern Germany, in 1582, and intended for students at the cathedral school of Turku/Åbo, in South-Western Finland.⁴⁷

The diffusion of *Scribere proposui* was certainly much wider than the few extant sources would suggest. In this regard, it is interesting to consider a hitherto unpublished 14th-century reading of stanza 1, incomplete and unfortunately without music, preserved in a monastic codex from northern Italy – namely, Mantua, Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana, 207 (B.III.3) (= *Man*). The manuscript, in a late-11th-century Carolingian script with various additions in Gothic script, formerly belonged to the Benedictine monastery of

⁴⁴ AH XXI, p. 101 f.

⁴⁵ *Le Trotaire-Prosaire de Dublin. Manuscrit add. 710 de l'Université de Cambridge (vers 1360)*, ed. René-Jean Hesbert, Rouen, Imprimerie rouennaise, 1966 («Monumenta Musicae Sacrae», 4). The edition of the text and music from *Scribere proposui* is on pp. 114-116 (mus. ex. 115). The melody differs markedly with respect to *Par*, especially in the original setting of the refrain *Surge, surge, vigila*. Furthermore, whereas *Par* features six stanzas, *Cam* includes seven. Verse VII of *Cam*, «Quam felices fuerint qui cum Christo regnabunt...» appears with some variation as verse V in *Vér*, «Quam felices fuere qui cum Christo regnabunt...». Because of the presence of the refrain, I do not accept the designation «hymn» for *Scribere proposui* proposed for the song in «L'Hymne *Scribere proposui* sur le Mépris du Monde» *ivi*, p. 113.

⁴⁶ See PAUL MEYER, *Rotruenge en quatrains*, «Romania», XIX, 73, 1890, pp. 102-106. The edition of the text of *Scribere proposui* is at p. 105 f.

⁴⁷ Our conservative transcription of the title page: «*Pie cantio=||nes ecclesia-||stice et schola||stice uetervm episcopo-||rum, in Inclyto Regno Sueciae passim usurpatae, || nuper studio viri cuiusdam Reuerendiss. de ecclesia || Dei & schola Aboënsi in Finlandia optimè || meriti accuratè à mendis corre-|cta, & nunc typis commissa, opera || Theodorici Petri || Nylandensis. || His adiecti sunt aliquot ex psalmis recentioribus. Imprimebatur Gryphisvaldiæ, || per Augustinum Ferberum, [colophon: Gryphisvaldiæ typis Augustini Ferberi. Anno 1582]*». The late 16th-century version of *Scribere proposui* printed in Greifswald, which in turn has a melody of its own, as well as some peculiar stanzas, will be explored in more detail elsewhere, along with the medieval texts and melodies of *Par* and *Cam*. The more recent printed source of *Scribere proposui* was already known to Hesbert, *Le Trotaire-Prosaire* cit., p. 113, note 2: «*Pie Cantiones ecclesiasticae et scholasticae veterum episcoporum in inclyto regno Sueciae passim usurpatae*, Gryphisw. [Greifswald] (1582), p. 75».

San Benedetto in Polirone (Mantua), as is also evidenced by several ex-libris, for example at the top of f. 1r: «Iste liber est monasterii Sancti Benedicti de Padolirone», affixed in lower-case *cancelleresca* (14th century?). The codex contains the *Synonyma* of Isidore of Seville (ff. 1v-35r), the *Epistola LXIV ad Augustinum Anglorum episcopum* of Gregory the Great (ff. 35r-48r), the *Sermones* of Cesarius of Arles (49r-103v) and Aristotle's *Tractatus de natura animalium* (ff. 104r-118v). The library has generously made available online the digitized version of this precious manuscript.⁴⁸ F. 48v (cut horizontally in half) features a large erasure in the upper part; with the help of an ultraviolet lamp it is possible to read the initial quatrain of *Scribere proposui*, without the *refrain*, in a Gothic *textualis* script «del sec. XIII» [Library's dating]:⁴⁹ «Scribere proposui De compemptu mundano iam est hora surgere de morte super / sompno vano».⁵⁰ Arguably, «super» should be expunged in order to preserve the septenary meter: «de morte sompno vano». The *Man* reading is an unpublished line-variant, compared to the verses «de sompno mortis vano» in *Par-Lon* and «de mortis somno vano» in *Cam*.

In light of the incipit of the *Summula in foro poenitentiali* of Bérenger Frédol († 1323), quoted seamlessly after the first lines of *De contemptu mundi*, the transcription of the erased lines may be cautiously ascribed to the first half of the 14th century, perhaps to the second quarter.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Cf. <http://digilib.bibliotecaresiana.it/sfoglia_manoscritti2.php?g=Manoscritti%20serie%20generale&csg=Ms.%20207&identifier=MN0035-POLI-ms207_4> [Accessed April 10, 2021].

⁴⁹ <https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=246591> [Last accessed April 10, 2021].

⁵⁰ See <http://digilib.bibliotecaresiana.it/sfoglia_manoscritti2.php?g=Manoscritti%20serie%20generale&csg=Ms.%20207&identifier=MN0035-POLI-ms207_4&op=&offset=50> [Accessed April 10, 2021]. «I proposed to write about contempt of the world, now it is time to rise from the empty sleep of death».

⁵¹ Despite the doubts raised by the puzzling presence of *super* (to be dispelled with Wood's lamp), which would make the original line (a catalectic trochaic dimeter, with dactylic clause, as we shall see) a hypermeter, in turn the lesson *compemptu*, in place of *contemptu*, is not an error of the copyist, but a typo of the modern transcription; even to the naked eye, despite the erasure, the *t can* be seen without any problem. Again in the library card (see previous note), the Latin text that immediately follows the lines of *Scribere proposui* is given as: «[In column A:] "Sacerdos in primis debet interrogare penitentem utrum sciat Pater noster, Credo in Deum et Ave Maria et si non scit instruat eum vel saltem precipias sibi ut adiscat et quia nimis esset difficile addiscere" [Column B is difficult to read, because it has been carefully erased]». The erased and thus far unidentified text, which seems may be mistaken as a continuation of *Scribere proposui*, is the beginning of *Summula in foro poenitentiali* by Bérenger Frédol, called the Elder to distinguish him from a homonymous nephew. See,

With regard to the sources, we would like to recall here our discovery of two additional, hitherto unknown readings of the chant *De contemptu mundi*, respectively in a French codex of probable Cistercian origin, and in an English witness, perhaps from Canterbury, of extraordinary interest by virtue of including the complete text and melody.

1. Transcription of the first stanza of the *Doppelversen* of *Scribere proposui*/*Surge, surge vigila*, in BnF lat. 7617, second half of the 12th century (1170?), Fontenay (?), which includes Papias, *Vocabularium* [A-E] (= *Par*2). At the end of the codex, on f. 100rb in a blank space, are several lines in *littera textualis* from the 13th century, including: «*Scribere proposui de contemptu mundano | iam est hora surgere de sompno mortis vano | zizanium spernere sumpto virtutum grano | surge vigila semper esto paratus*». [I proposed to write about the contempt of the world/ now it is time to rise from the empty sleep of death/ to disdain the weeds and reap the wheat of virtue/ get up, get up, always be ready]
2. Full transcription of text and melody of *Scribere proposui*/*Surge, surge vigila*, in Rome, Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina, 120, f. 238v, 14th century, England; miscellaneous ms. beginning with the *Vita gloriosi martyris Thomae* (Thomas Becket, 1118-1170).⁵² The text shows some interesting variations. Although the incipit is the same *G-G-A*, the melody is otherwise clearly different from *Par* and *Cam*, especially in the refrain, which has a different setting. Text and music will be the object of a separate critical edition.

for example, «Berengarius Fredolius, *Summula in foro poenitentiali*» (Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, ms. A 34, ff. 1ra-37ra): «In primis debet sacerdos interrogare penitentem utrum sciat Pater noster et Credo in Deum et Ave Maria. Et si nescit instruat eum vel faciat vel saltem precipiat sibi ut adiscat. Et quia nimis esset difficile adiscere». See GIUSEPPE MAZZANTI, *A proposito della "Summula in foro poenitentiali" di Bérenger Frédol e di due opere sulla confessione attribuite a Giovanni da Legnano e ad Antonio da Budrio*, «*Historia et ius. Journal of Legal History of the Medieval and Modern Age*», X, 2016, pp. 1-20: 15. Frédol was a highly prominent Church figure at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries. Born around 1250 in Lavérune, Languedoc, he taught in Paris. A bishop at Béziers, he was subsequently cardinal bishop of Frascati, canonist and great penitentiary of the pope; in 1308 Clement V charged him with the investigation against the Templars. In the conclave that followed the pontiff's death (1314) he obtained numerous votes. He died in 1323. The addition of *Scribere proposui* in codex 207 of the Teresiana should probably be dated to the first half of the 14th century, not to the 13th century as suggested in the library record. The association of the *Summula* with *Scribere proposui* remains a mystery.

⁵² Description of the codex and texts included in *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum prae-ter orientales qui in Bibliotheca Alexandrina Romae adservantur confecit*, edited by Enrico Narducci, Romae, ex typographia romana sumptibus fr. Bocca, 1877, pp. 91-93. (I would like to thank Dr. Enrica Lozzi, of Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina - Rome, for her kind collaboration).

'Macabre' metrics: the (near) chaos of iambic and catalectic trochaic dimeters in the "Dance of Death"

In the context of a predominantly accentual Middle Latin lyric - very far from the sense of classical quantity typified by the long syllable-short syllable alternation - a close analysis of the metrics of *Ad mortem festinamus* reveals a highly inconsistent rhythmic structure, based on iambic and trochaic catalectic dimeters, which are also infrequent in Latin poetry for music. This is the «imitation rythmique du dimètre iambique catalectique».⁵³ As a general rule, for over a thousand years hymnography, in particular, privileged the acatalectic dimeter, almost exclusively iambic, which triumphed thanks to the Ambrosian 4-verse strophes, following the paradigm of *Aeterne rerum conditor*.⁵⁴ Incidentally, in the following discussion we chose to retain the symbols for 'short' and 'long', also used in reference to musical meter,⁵⁵ to mark respectively the atonic syllable (∪), and the tonic one (∟) in accentual poetry; for example, *Peccāre dēsistāmus* yields the pattern ∪ ∟ ∪ ∟ ∪ ∟ ∪ .

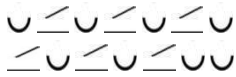
As mentioned above, the *Dance of Death* discussed here shows a very inconsistent, and in some respects a (literally) tangled rhythmic structure. Despite this objective observation, the poetic frame of *Ver* shows a clear ten-

⁵³ E.g., see the hymns cited by DAG NORBERG, *Introduction à l'étude de la versification latine médiévale*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958 («Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Latina Stockholmiensia», 5), p. 110 f, including «*O genitrix aeterni* de saint Pierre Damien († 1072)» preserved along with the music in Rome, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3797, f. 372r, from Fonte Avellana, end of the 11th century.; cf. the melody in BRUNO STÄBLEIN, *Hymnen (I). Die mittelalterlichen Hymnenmelodien des Abendlandes*, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1956 («Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi», 1), p. 462, 47, Mel. 788. Imitations of the catalectic iambic dimeter are found especially in BnF 1139: «In a number of cases we also find an imitation of the catalectic iambic dimeter (7p), normally distributed over complex stanzas or used as a refrain. We have already seen it as the tail of the lines in no. 17. In one case it forms an independent stanza: in the polymeter n. 22, where the 7p lines form stanzas of eight lines each. It is also found in alternation with the minor asclepiadean of no. 6 (...)»; cf. GIORGIO DE ALESSI, *Repertorio metrico del ms. della B.N. lat. 1139*, «Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica», XIII, 1972, pp. 83-128.

⁵⁴ Cf. GIAMPAOLO MELE, *Manuale di innologia. Introduction to hymnody of the fourth-seventh centuries in the West*, I. Sources and instruments: *Repertorium Hymnologicum Novissimum* (1841-2012) [= REHY], introduction by Antonio Piras, preface by Giacomo Baroffio («Studi e Ricerche di Cultura Religiosa. Testi e monografie», 2), Cagliari, PFTS, 2012, pp. XVI-XVII [a new amended, revised and expanded *Editio maior* is in preparation, with a *Supplementum* REHY], pp. 165-169, with 34 examples.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., STEFANO LA VIA, *Poesia per musica e musica per poesia. Dai trovatori a Paolo Conte*, Rome, Carocci, 2017.

dency to alternate catalectic iambic dimeters with catalectic trochaic dimeters (the latter with a dactylic clause), corresponding to 7pp + 7p. The same is true of *Cas* and *Wel*, and it should be remembered that the same metrical structure is also shared by *Par* and *Lon*, as well as by the 13th-century forerunner *Scribere proposui*.



But the pattern, again, is far from consistent, although it tends to become more regular in some stanzas, especially in the last two, IX and X – particularly X, which appears almost perfect in the 7pp 7p rotation.

[St. IX].

Álma Vírgo Vírginum,	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7pp
In célis córonáta,	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7p
Ápud túum filium,	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7pp
Sis nóbis ádvocáta.	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7p
Ét post hóc exílium,	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7pp
Ocúrrrens médiáta,	◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\	7p

Indeed, the pattern 7p + 7pp marks the rhythm, the stanzas, and the metrics. Any irregularity is overcome by the uniformity of the *Doppelversen* rhythm, with proparoxytone and paroxytone clauses respectively. The power of uniform rhythmic clauses prevails, conditioning the ear – and perhaps even the feet – in the dance (for rhythmic poetry think also, *mutatis mutandis*, of the extraordinary uniforming and ‘regularizing’ power of rhyme and assonance).

The variegated metric scenario described in the Appendix can be summarized in the scheme below (the numbers at the beginning indicate the order of first appearance in the song for each type of line):

1. ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ (28 times)
2. ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ (3 times)
3. ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ (10 times)
4. ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ (19 times)
5. ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ ◡\ (6 times)

As shown in the diagram, the most frequently repeated metre is type 1, consisting of a normal iambic dimeter with 'p' clause. The second most frequent metre is type 4, a trochaic dimeter with a dactylic 'pp' clause. The other typologies contribute to form a metric framework that is rather disordered and irregular.⁵⁶ From the point of view of stanzas, among modern editors there is a twofold tendency to use either sestinas, or sequences of double verses.⁵⁷

In a concise but insightful metrical table of five lines, Otto Ursprung (1879-1960) displayed the text of *Scribere proposui* with the refrain *Ad mortem festinamus* as structured in a refrain and nine stanzas, each formed by three 'double verses' (*Doppelversen*): $\underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} || (\cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad}) \cup \underline{\quad} \cup$ ⁵⁸, etc. In the first line the scheme shows the exact same metrical typology, catalectic trochaic dimeter/ catalectic iambic dimeter, which we also regard as the basis of *Ver*'s metrical conception. The useful scheme provided by the illustrious German musicologist, however, does not consider the frequent discrepancies and rhythmic inconsistencies of the Catalan *Dance of Death*, and thus may give the false impression of a well-proportioned metrical structure, which is totally lacking in *Ad mortem festinamus*. Incidentally, Hesbert's morphological analysis of *Scribere proposui* with the refrain «Surge, surge, vigila» is also interesting: here the structure shows the same metrical scheme as *Ver*, *Par* and *Cam*.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ «Ritmi popolari, per quanto appariscano irregolari, erano per lungo tempo coltivati nei bassi strati, come prova il modo in cui sono trasmessi, e venivano alla superficie anche in epoche posteriori. Ne troviamo esempi in un poema, contenuto in un manoscritto dell'anno 1267, in cui l'anacrusi continua sempre ad esser rigorosamente osservata: *Scribere proposui de contemptu mundano* ...». See *Rendiconti della reale Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di scienze morali, storiche, e filologiche*, Serie Quinta. Vol. XIV, Rome, Tipografia della Accademia, 1905: «Seduta del 21 maggio 1905 - F. D'Ovidio, Presidente, "Sul verso de arte mayor"». Note by Dr. John Schmitt, presented by Member Monaci. <https://archive.org/stream/s5rendicontidel114accauoft/s5rendicontidel114accauoft_djvu.txt> [Accessed April 10, 2021].

⁵⁷ The question of the organization of stanzas also concerns other forms, such as the trochaic septenary; cf. GIAMPAOLO MELE, "Sic domus ista". *Poesia agiografica e canto liturgico a Santa Igia* (Cagliari, BUC, S.P. 6 bis 4.7, sec. XIII), in *L'agiografia sarda antica e medievale: testi e contexts*, edited by Antonio Piras and Daniela Artizzu, Proceedings of the Study Days (Cagliari, 4-5 December 2015), Cagliari, PFTS University Press, 2016, pp. 199-237: «L'impaginazione del settenario trocaico, sia nella tradizione manoscritta che nelle edizioni a stampa, è tutt'altro che univoca. (...) è tuttora inevitabile che la peculiare impaginazione di una poesia influenzi l'occhio e la percezione estetica, nonché la fruizione pratica del testo da parte del lettore/declamatore/cantore» (p. 214); see also ID., *De VII Gaudiis* cit., p. 121 ff., note 8.

⁵⁸ See URSPRUNG, *Spanische-katalanische Liedkunst* cit., p. 139.

⁵⁹ See [HESBERT], *Le Trotaire-Prosaire de Dublin* cit., pp. 113-115.

Ursprung also mentions a thorny historical issue, namely, that of the country of origin of the «death dances», which has been tentatively located between North-Western France, then Germany and Brittany,⁶⁰ not excluding, however, the Iberian peninsula through the circulation of *Contrafacten*,⁶¹ which then effectively came to light.⁶² Finally, it is assumed that the poet would not have focused so much on a link between the text, the melody and the dance, otherwise he would not have written the words «Scribere proposui».⁶³ In any case, the Montserrat source confirms without a doubt that the dance of death was actually danced, with one round performed by the chorus and the main singer.⁶⁴

In turn, with regard to *Ad mortem festinamus*, the philologist Hans Spanke (1844-1944) has pointed out that the Christmas hymn *In hoc anni circulo*, from Southern France, also circulated as a dance song, like *Scribere proposui* in *Ver*.⁶⁵ The same scholar locates in the 13th century the spread of a musical tradition that implied a relationship between secular/vernacular texts, spiritual/Latin texts and dance melodies, making explicit reference to Montserrat and France.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, *Ad mortem festinamus* reflects the circulation of devotional, Latin, poetic-musical traditions with a refrain, in close contact with a flourishing tradition of varied Romance 'fixed forms'.

From a semiographic point of view, the music of *Scribere proposui/Ad mortem festinamus* shows peculiar problems that will be briefly described below.

First of all, it should be noted that the same melody is shared by *Ver*, *Wel* and *Cas*. Secondly, the musical notation of the refrain in *Wel* and *Cas*

⁶⁰ See URSPRUNG, *Spanische-katalanische Liedkunst* cit., p. 142 f.

⁶¹ Cf. *ivi*, p. 143, where it is stated that Montserrat's death song is far removed from any Arab cultural influence: «dass das Montserratenser Totentanzlied jeglichem arabischen Kultureinfluss fern steht».

⁶² GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo*, pp. 91-93, on the fresco in the Franciscan convent of Morella (Castellón) that includes the *contrafactum* of *Ad mortem festinamus*, with music, *Morir, frares nos convé*, from the last quarter of the 15th century.

⁶³ See URSPRUNG, *Spanische-katalanische Liedkunst* cit., p. 142 f.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ivi*, p. 143.

⁶⁵ Cf. HANS SPANKE, *Tanzmusik in der Kirche des Mittelalters*, «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen», XXXI, 1930, pp. 143-170, on p. 147.

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.* See also on the «Tanzlieder der Montserrat», HANS SPANKE, *Zum Thema "Mittelalterliche Tanzlieder"*, «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen», XXXIII, 1, 1932, pp. 1-22: 4.

essentially shows a regular *punctum quadratum-punctum inclinatum* alternation, probably the equivalent of *brevis-semibrevis*. This pattern – ■◆ – can be traced back to the first rhythmic mode of the *Ars antiqua*, based on the trochee, (— ∪ which in the 13th century was usually represented by *longa-brevis*).⁶⁷ The mensural notation is also found in a contemporary Sardinian codex, the Arborean psalter-hymnal P. XIII (14th/15th centuries)⁶⁸ which, however, also features strings modeled after the II rhythmic mode, based on the iamb, ∪ — . ◆ ■ . The specific choice of *brevis-semibrevis* in *Wel* and *Cas* betrays the perception of the trochaic *allure* of the 7pp line by the musical notator, who instead seems to ignore the hammering iambic scansion of line 7p («peccare désistamus»). The copyist of *Ver*, for his part, intended to trace other signs, such as the *semibrevis caudata* (moreover, the small tail may well be spurious).⁶⁹ In summary, especially in the refrain of *Wel* and *Cas*, a paradox becomes evident: a notation of unmistakable trochaic catalectic type, ■◆■◆■◆■, is applied to a song of 7pp + 7p double-lines, that also contains an iamb (obviously with an accentuation function).⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Cf. WILLI APEL, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600*, Cambridge (Mass.), Mediaeval Academy of America, 1949², p. 220.

⁶⁸ The opposite case of mode II (iambic), *brevis-longa*, is effectively attested in 5 hymns in acatalectic iambic dimeter, transcribed in the 14th-century ms. of Aula Capitolare di Oristano (= ACO), P. XIII, written at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, with several 'mensural' hymns, including *Æterne rerum conditor* and *Ad galli cantum*, f. 25r. Cf. GIAMPAOLO MELE, *Psalterium-Hymnarium Arborense. Il manoscritto P. XIII della Cattedrale di Oristano (secolo XIV/XV)*, codicological, palaeographical, textual, historical, liturgical, Gregorian study. Transcriptions. *Hymni*, Associazione Internazionale Studi di Canto Gregoriano-Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Sardegna, Rome, Torre d'Orfeo, 1994 («Quaderni di "Studi Gregoriani"», 3), III, p. 172 f., mus. ex. p. 250.

⁶⁹ On *Ver*'s musical notation, collated with *Wel* and *Cas*, see GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., p. 147: *Variantes melódicas*.

⁷⁰ Fundamental problems persist regarding the *vexata questio* of the relationship between the rhythm of the poetry and the rhythm of the music; cf. LORENZO BIANCONI, *Sillaba, quantità, accento, tono*, «Il Saggiatore musicale», XII, 1, 2005, pp. 183-218, containing an impressive array of examples and instances of general principles, but also a strongly critical and questioning approach, which is always very clear. The following passage is directly relevant to our case: «Il ritmo della poesia e il ritmo della musica rispondono a sistemi metrici diversi, eterogenei: essi un po' convergono e un po' divergono, un po' sono compatibili e un po' sono incompatibili. Non sono mai (mai) totalmente riducibili l'uno all'altro. Mettere in musica dei versi è come un tradur poesia da una lingua in un'altra: operazione notoriamente impossibile, se non come reinvenzione». (p. 184).

“Heu Heu Heu”: the Witnesses *Ver*, *Wel* and *Cas*

Until 2017, studies of *Ad mortem festinamus* were based exclusively on *Ver*. In that year, the leading scholar of the *Libre Vermell*, Maricarmen Gómez Muntané,⁷¹ who has also studied Morella's *contrafactum*, (last quarter of the 15th century⁷², from a Franciscan setting), brought in two additional 15th-century sources, hitherto unknown to musicologists, previously studied by Otto Kurz⁷³ and Fritz Saxl.⁷⁴ They are the codices Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 1404, f. 4v, sec. 1430-1440, *Virtutum ac vitiorum delineatio*, Heidelberg (= *Cas*), and London, Wellcome Library, 49, f. 30v, c. 1420, known as the *Wellcome Apocalypse*, Germania (= *Wel*).⁷⁵ Both are decorated with magnificent miniature;

⁷¹ Cf. GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., pp. 82 f., 85-88, to which we also refer for facsimile reproductions on p. 86 f.

⁷² See *supra*, note 62.

⁷³ OTTO KURZ, *The Verses in the Casanatensis and Wellcome Manuscripts*, «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», V, 1942, pp. 134-137 [published as an appendix to FRITZ SAXL, *A Spiritual Encyclopedia of the Later Middle Ages*, *ivi*, pp. 82-142].

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Regarding the *datatio chronica*, Saxl believes that *Wel* can be dated to one or two decades before *Cas* (*ivi*, p. 199); the latter, according to the current state of studies, should be dated to 1425-1440; cf. *ivi*, p. 92. *Wellcome's* online record indicates «c. 1420», < [http://archives.wellcomelibrary.org/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=\(RefNo==%27MS49%27\)](http://archives.wellcomelibrary.org/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=(RefNo==%27MS49%27)) > [Accessed 10 April 2021]; in turn, Casanatense's online record indicates «datable to 1430-1440». In < <https://edl.beniculturali.it/open/2096744> >, full digitization of *Wel*; consult < <http://opac.casanatense.it/Record.htm?idlist=&record=19917182124917353649> > [Accessed 10 April 2021] for a digitization of some of *Cas's* miniatures, including f. 4v, including *Ad mortem festinamus*. On *Wel*, see the excellent monograph ALMUTH SEEBOHM, *Apokalypse Ars moriendi Medizinische Traktate Tugend- und Lasterlehren Die erbaulich-didaktische Sammelhandschrift London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Ms. 49 Farbmikro-fiche-Edition Introduction to the Manuscript, Descriptive Catalogue of the Latin and German Texts and Illustrations, Index of Incipits*, München, Edition Helga Lengenfelder, 1995, in particular, p. 35: «30v-31r [179 verses about death with two lines of musical notation] “Ad mortem festinamus”», with various cross-references; p. 65: *Scribere proposui de contemptu mundano*. On the two codices, especially in relation to the texts and iconography connected with *Ad mortem festinamus*, see also CHRISTIAN KIENING in collaboration with FLORIAN EICHBERGER, *Contemptus mundi in Verse und Bild am Ende des Mittelalters*, «Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur», CXXIII, 4, 1994, pp. 409-482 (mainly German sources), especially p. 445 (reference to Southern Germany, second quarter of the 15th century), p. 447 f. (reference to *Cas* in connection with *De contemptu mundi* and the wheel of fortune); in note 122 we find an interesting list of codices that can be ascribed to the *Kompilationsformel* typology, including *Wel* and *Cas*; *ivi*, figure 7: reproduction of f. 4v

in particular, the folio containing *Ad mortem festinamus* shows the wheel of fortune next to open tombs with skeletons. Moreover, the two codices belong to the variegated typology of spiritual miscellany that English scholars like to call «spiritual encyclopedia», which often include an *ars moriendi*.

In order to contextualize *Ver*, *Wel* and *Cas* from the point of view of textual criticism, it is useful to start from line 5 of stanza 6 of *Ver*, the rather anomalous reading «Heu heu heu miseri».⁷⁶ This line does not add up to a septenary, on which the whole song is based: if, indeed, we consider «heu» a diphthong, then we obtain a senarius. In order to fit the accentual catalectic meter, we should consider the 3rd «heu» with a dieresis, «hë-u». On the other hand, one could comfortably sing (as some musicians actually do): «Hë-u hë-u mi-se-ri», where two consecutive diereses allow to 'make up' 7 syllables, expelling the 3rd «heu» as an intruder (by dittography, as one would say in textual criticism). It would not be an outrageous solution. Yet, another element must be taken into account. In the interlinear, the syllable «mi» has been interpolated above «miseri» to signify «miserrimi», which is also found in *Wel* and *Cas*. If one accepts the interpolated syllable *mi* in the interlinear, the trochaic septenary squares perfectly considering «heu» as a regular diphthong.

It is likely that the Montserrat copyist originally wrote «miseri», instead of «miserrimi»; then, when the same copyist, or another amanuensis, realized the mistake, perhaps by double-checking the antigraph, he amended «miseri» by interpolating the omitted syllable «mi» in the interlinear in order to restore the reading that was considered correct: «miserrimi».

Regarding *Cas* and *Wel*, which instead have «Heu heu miserrimi», we must start from a similar observation of metrical incongruity. Indeed, «Heu heu miserrimi» does not respect the septenary. If we take «heu» as a diphthong, then the verse is hypometric, i.e., a senarius. On the other hand, if we apply the dieresis to the two «hë-u», the verse becomes hypermetric, an octonary. The only solution, which would be beyond cumbersome, would be to consider the first «heu» as a diphthong, and the second with dieresis, as «hë-u». Our hypothesis, in conclusion, is that the original septenary verse was «Heu heu heu miserrimi». However, before making a conclusive statement, it is necessary to compile a critical edition of the chant, and therefore, at least provisionally, also consider alternative hypotheses, including the one mentioned above of an anomalous septenary with two consecutive diereses: «Hë-u hë-u mi-se-ri».

of *Cas*, with the wheel of fortune and *Ad mortem festinamus*.

⁷⁶ Cf. GÓMEZ MUNTANÉ, *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., p. 146, stanza VI, line 24: *Heu, heu, heu miseri*.

Colophon

The literary precursors of the *Dance of Death* of Montserrat date back to the song *Scribere proposui*/*Surge, surge, vigila*, first documented in the third quarter of the 13th century, which probably arose in northern Europe between France, Germany and England, with subsequent records from Ireland and Italy (though an updated recensio is in order). Its evocative and paradigmatic ‘macabre’ lyricism, arising from contempt for worldly things, even reached as far away as Finland in modern times (the second half of the 16th century, to be precise). In turn, *Scribere proposui*/*Ad mortem festinamus* emerged in the wake of a similar monastic tradition of spiritual and patristic literature, and subsequently spread, especially through the devotional channels connected to the Friars Minor, within a lively cosmopolitan context woven of intense cultic and cultural interrelations of pervasive European inspiration. In this aura of fervid ‘popular’ devotion, permeated with oral and written expressions, Montserrat stood out for its original *Llibre Vermell*, which, thanks mainly to its dances – including the *Dance of Death* – sung in chorus and danced by pilgrims, a *ball redon*, is a precious *unicum* in the poetic and musical landscape of the twilight of the Middle Ages.

APPENDIX

Ad mortem festinamus (*Llibre Vermell*, f. 26v f.).⁷⁷

Strophic structure

We have chosen to transcribe the stanzas in sestinas (with the last line repeated, as indicated in the rubric of the codex) because, unlike the *Doppelversen*, the hexastic stanzas allow to highlight the peculiar organization of the ‘forme fixe’, in which the music of the *refrain* is also applied to the lines of the *volta*. Therefore, the 2nd line of the *responsum*, as indicated in the rubric of the codex, has been reiterated in order to provide a faithful image of the performance of the choir and of the ‘roundabout’ of the pilgrims while singing the refrain. The letters of the Greek alphabet indicate the melody of the stanzas, sung by a solo singer; the refrain $\chi\psi$ was sung in chorus by all the pilgrims dancing in a circle (*ball redon, trepidium rotundum*).⁷⁸ In the two last columns on the right the signs \leq and \cup indicate respectively the tonic and atonic syllables, and the numbers the metric typology.

⁷⁷ Music: AH, p. 101 f., n. 151, mus. ex. XXI, p. 220 (it is the only transcription that indicates *B flat*); Suñol, *Els cantos dels romeus* cit., p. 191, transcription reprinted in Gustave Reese, *La musica nel Medioevo*, ital. trans. Florence, Sansoni, 19802, p. 466, mus. ex. 118; Anglés, *El «Llibre Vermell»* I, n. 29, mus. ex. p. 661; Gómez Muntané, *El Llibre Vermell de Montserrat. Cantos y danzas s. XIV* cit., mus. ex. p. 104 f.; Ead., *El Llibre Vermell. Cantos y danzas de fines del Medioevo* cit., mus. ex. 10, p. 132. A facsimile of the melody is available online: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/llibre-vermell-de-montserrat-0/html/ff6fe3e2-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_93.html> [Accessed April 10, 2021].

⁷⁸ We thank Dr. Gloria Turtas (University of Sassari) for her precious collaboration to the editing and discussion of the graphic schemes.

FORM		RHYME	MELODY	TEXT	METRE	METRIC TYPOL.
[c. 26v] [R./]						
[<i>responsum/ritornello/ refrain/estribillo</i>]	}	a	x	Ad mortem festinamus,		1
		a	y	Peccare desistamus,		1
		a	y	Peccare desistamus.		1
[Str. 1]						
[1° <i>piede/mutazione/ mudanza</i>]	}	b	α	Scribere proposui		2
		c	β	De contemptu mundano,		3
[2° <i>piede</i>]	}	b ¹	α	Ut degentes seculi,		4
		c	β	Non mulcentur invano.		3
[<i>volta/vuelta</i>]	}	d	x	Iam est hora surgere,		4
		c ¹	y	A sompno mortis pravo,		1
		c ¹	y	A sompno mortis pravo.		1
[R./] Ad mortem festinamus						
[Str. 2]						
		e	α	Vita brevis breviter,		4
		f	β	In brevi finietur.		1
		e	α	Mors venit velociter,		5
		f	β	Quae neminem veretur.		1
		g	x	Omnia mors perimit,		2
		f	y	Et nulli miseretur,		1
		f	y	Et nulli miseretur.		1
[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...						
[Str. 3]						
		h	α	Ni conversus fueris,		4
		h	β	Et vitam mutaveris,		5
		i	α	In meliores actus.		1
		h	β	Intrare non poteris		5
		d	x	Iam est hora surgere,		4
		i ¹	y	Regnum Dei beatus,		3
		i ¹	y	Regnum Dei beatus.		3
[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...						
[Str. 4]						
		l	α	Tuba cum sonuerit,		4
		m	β	Dies erit extrema.		3
		l	α	Et iudex advenerit,		5
		m ¹	β	Vocabit sempiterna		1
		n	x	Electos in patria,		5
		m ¹	y	Prescitos ad inferna,		1
		m ¹	y	Prescitos ad inferna.		1
[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...						

FORM	RHYME	MELODY	TEXT	METRE	METRIC TYPOL.
			[<i>Str.</i> 5]		
	l ¹	α	Quam felices fuerint		4
	o	β	Qui cum Christo regnabunt,		3
	p	α	Facie ad faciem,		2
	o	β	Sic cum adspectabunt.		1
	q	x	Sanctus Sanctus Dominus,		4
	o	y	Sabaoth conclamabunt,		1
	o	y	Sabaoth conclamabunt.		1
			[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...		
			[c. 27r] [<i>Str.</i> 6]		
	l ¹	α	Et quam tristes fuerint		4
	r	β	Qui eterne peribunt.		3
	s	α	Pene non deficient,		4
	r	β	Nec propter has obibunt.		1
	t	x	Heu heu heu miserrimi		4
	r	y	Nunquam inde exibunt,		3
	r	y	Nunquam inde exibunt.		3
			[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...		
			[<i>Str.</i> 7]		
	b ¹	α	Cuncti reges seculi,		4
	u	β	Et in mundo magnates		3
	v	α	Adventat et clerici,		5
	u	β	Omnesque potestates		1
	b ¹	x	Fiant velut parvuli,		4
	u	y	Dimittant vanitates,		1
	u	y	Dimittant vanitates.		1
			[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...		
			[<i>Str.</i> 8]		
	z	α	Heu, fratres karissimi,		4
	aa	β	Si digne contemplemus		1
	z ¹	α	Passionem Domini		4
	aa	β	Amare et si flemus,		1
	b ¹	x	Ut pupillam oculi,		4
	aa	y	Servabit, ne peccemus,		1
	aa	y	Servabit, ne peccemus.		1
			[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...		
			[<i>Str.</i> 9]		
	bb	α	Alma Virgo Virginum,		4
	cc	β	In celis coronata,		1
	bb ¹	α	Apud tuum filium,		4
	cc	β	Sis nobis advocata.		1
	bb ¹	x	Et post hoc exilium,		4
	cc	y	Ocurrrens mediata,		1
	cc	y	Ocurrrens mediata.		1
			[R./] Ad mortem festinamus ...		

GIAMPAOLO MELE

Università di Sassari. Dipartimento di Scienze Umanistiche e Sociali

giampmele@libero.it

Abstract

The cod. 1 of the Monastery of Montserrat in Catalonia, known as *Llibre Vermell*, contains a Dance of Death whose roots reach back to 13th-century texts on the *De contempt mundi*. Its refrain begins with *Ad mortem festinamus* and its first stanza with *Scribere proposui*. After a review of the current research on the topic, this study offers new hypotheses and observations on ecdotic, metrical, and strophic aspects of this famous text, which pilgrims routinely sang, while dancing, at the time of the Black Death. New concordances with the 13th-century text *Scribere proposui* are provided; one of them, preserved with melody in a 14th-century manuscript held in the Biblioteca Alessandrina, has not been considered in studies on this topic thus far.

Keywords

Black Death, medieval devotional songs, *Dance of Death*, *Llibre Vermell*, music and poetic meter.

English translation by Elisabetta Zoni