Caminante, son tus huellas el camino, y nada más; 
caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar. 
Al andar se hace camino, y al volver la vista atrás 
se ve la senda que nunca se ha de volver a pisar. 
Caminante, no hay camino, sino estelas en la mar. 
Antonio Machado, ‘Proverbios y cantares’, in Campos de castilla (1907-17)

Jorge Manrique (c. 1440-79), *Coplas que fizo por la muerte de su padre*

Recommended edition:
- OR ed. Vicente Beltrán, Biblioteca Clásica, 15 (Barcelona: Crítica, 1993)
- also in *The Oxford* and *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*

Useful critical vocabulary

*arte mayor*: long line with two strong beats / stresses per hemistich (= half line)

- Al muy prepotente / don Juán el segundo
- Aquél con quien Júpiter / tóvo tal zélo
  (Juan de Mena, *Laberinto de Fortuna*).

*arte menor*: shorter lines, typically 8 syllables.

*cancionero*: Renaissance songbook.

*conceptismo*: use of literary conceits or startling and witty comparisons (*agudeza*), with paradox & ambiguity enjambement: sense runs on over 2 ll.

*exclamatio*: rhetorical term, exclamation

*exemplum/*pl. *exempla*: a pattern or model (i.e. an character whose behaviour is a model for others); a tale which moralizes

*pie quebrado* (lit. broke foot): a stanza mainly of octosyllabic lines, with some tetrasyllabic lines interspersed regularly

*repetitio*: rhetorical term for repetition of the same word or phrase at the same position in successive lines, sentences, stanzas, paragraphs etc.


Wheel of Fortune (adapted)

Who was Jorge Manrique?

- birth: details unknown
- son of don Rodrigo Manrique (Knight of Order of Santiago by 12; partisan of Isabel & Fernando) and nephew of Gómez Manrique (important court poet & dramatist; for 13 years corregidor of Toledo, that is, highest official, in charge of justice
- warrior: captain of the Santa Hermandad during period of instability (see Domínguez and Mackay); loyal to extended family; supporter of Isabel & Fernando’s marriage
- court poet: the Coplas, 45 courtly poems on religion and love, 3 burlesque poems against women
- died April 1479 of wound to the groin; poem probably composed the same year (see Kinkade)

Form

40 coplas of pie quebrado in arte menor; rhyme scheme ABcABcDEfDEf

(upper case for 8(+) syllables; lower for less; here 4 syllables; stressed final syllables count as two syllables; recuerde and el in l. 1 count as 1 syllable = asynalepha)

Recuerde el alma dormida,
avive el seso e despierte,
contemplando

Cómo se passa la vida
cómo se viene la muerte
tan callando;

cuán presto se va el plazer;
cómo, después de acordado.
da dolor;
cómo, a nuestro parescer,
cualquiere tiempo passado
fue mejor.

Language notes:

Med. form -ss- -sc- f- -z- cualquiere
Mod. form -s- -c- h- -c- cualquier (apocopation)

Structure (see Domínguez, Round and Salinas)

Tripartite

Stanzas 1-13 Meditation on mortality
Uses topoi from Medieval Death literature (such as the *Dance of Death* tradition; Death the Leveller) but introduces Christian Neo-Stoic view of life and death.

St 3-4 Note central images of río and camino: contrast Heraclitus - ‘Upon those who step into the same rivers different and ever different waters flow down’ with John’s Gospel – ‘Jesus sayeth unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father but by me’ (14: 6): it is not dissolution that awaits after death but entry to the Kingdom of God, and life ever lasting if life is lived well.


7-13: transitory nature of temporal goods; with historical example of the Visigoths; motif of Fortune’s wheel.

**Stanzas 14-24 Negative exempla using ubi sunt topos** - develops idea of transitory nature of worldly power; and death as a social leveller, and rejects the pagan tradition, often associated with Latinate humanism (st. 15); humanism is the phenomenon of a renewed, interest in and accurate understanding of Classical learning and languages

16-24: introduces ‘ubi sunt…?’ (where are they now…? through ¿qué se hizo…? formula) & narrows scope:

- historically 1406-70s
- geographically Castile
- numerically 9 (?) men (number depends on how the Infantes of Aragón are counted)

The dead: 9 men, only named are 2 Kings; in hierarchical order including royalty, and royal favourites, and advisors; cf. Dance of Death tradition); linked to their worldly achievements & 4 of the 5 senses (smell, hearing, sight, touch; interestingly not taste with is heavily emphasized in the Dance of Death)

**St. 16-7** King Juan II of Castile (1406-54): known for the courtliness of his retinue, and the literary output of his court during period of profound social & political crisis, which he managed poorly.

**St. 16, l. 182** The Infantes of Aragón: Alfonso (V, King of Aragon, 1416-58); Juan, (King of Navarre, II of Aragón, 1458-79); Enrique (Master of the Order of Santiago, Count of Albuquerque), Sancho (Master of the Order of Alcántara, d. 1416): used marriage, war and intrigue to threaten Castilian monarchy; esp. Juan and Álvaro de Luna.

**St. 18-9** ‘su heredero / don Enrique’: Enrique IV of Castile (1454-74): son & heir of Juan II; weak ruler given to taking advice from unpopular favourites (Juan Pacheco, Beltrán de la Cueva); forced to accept illegitimacy of his daughter, Juana; rumoured to be homosexual, displayed over generous largesse to his favourites, and was dissolute.

**St. 20** ‘su hermano el inocente’: Prince Alfonso: half-brother to Isabel; Enrique named him heir in 1464; the nobles burned an effigy of Enrique and crowned one of Alfonso at the Farce of Ávila (1465); d. 1468 probably from the plague.
St. 21 ‘aquel grande condestable’: Don Álvaro de Luna, Constable of Castile, Master of the Order of Santiago (opposed by Don Rodrigo); favourite of Juan II; endured an ignoble execution, and was then quartered & publicly displayed in Valladolid.

St. 22 ‘los otros dos hermanos’: Juan Pacheco and Pedro Girón, favourites of Enrique IV.

Links into the ‘claros varones’ tradition and the concept of the three lives (physical, fame, eternal).

‘Claros varones’ = ‘illustrious men’; thumb-nail sketches of historical figures; develops from humanistic Latin tradition (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio) – tries to be balanced in assessment; move away from partisan nature of medieval chronicles which flatter the patron and condemn his enemies.


Overall effect: proximity to audience in space, time and specificity; humanizes the topos; veracity of detail adds to power (& increases sense of veracity of final portion). Use of specific exempla of worldly power within in generalization:

Las huestes innumerables, Huestes = hosts; groups of soldiers
Los pendones, estandartes, e banderas, ll. 278-9: in hierarchical order; of nobility, military orders, knights
los castillos impugnables, impugnables = inexpugnable
los muros e baluartes, walls, bulwarks
e barreras, parapets
la cava honda, chapada, trenches, reinforced with wood
o cualquier otro reparo, ¿qué aprovecha?
Cuando tú vienes airada, Apostrophe (direct address) to Death
Todo lo passas de claro (feminine because la Muerte); Death as
Con tu flecha. (St. 24) hunter contrasted with mortal warrios

Conceit of the uselessness of human defences against the weapons of Death; Death the Hunter is a commonplace in death literature.

**Stanzas 25-40 Positive exemplum (Don Rodrigo) - encomium (= rhetorical term for praise) of Rodrigo. Dialogue with Muerte. Compare Coplas with the dialogues between the Constable and the Knight, and Death from the Danza general de la Muerte (mid 15th C):**
Above: still from Ingmar Berson’s *The Seventh Seal* (1957) http://course1.winona.edu/pjohnson/images/sealdance.jpg
Dize la muerte
[...] Pase el condestable por otra tal via.

Dize el condestable
Yo vi muchas danzas de lindas donzellas,
De duennas fermosas de alto linaje;
Mas, segunt me paresçe, no es esta d’ellas.
Ca el thannedor trahe feo visaje.
Venid, camarero, dezid a mi paje
Que traiga el cavallao, que quiero fuir,
Que está es la dança que dizen morir;
Si d’ella escapo, tener me han por saje.

Dize la muerte
Fuir non conviene al que ha de estar quedo;
Estad, condestable, dexat el cavallo;
Andad en la dança alegre, muy ledo,
Sin fazer ruido, ca yo bien me callo;
Mas verdad vos digo que, al cantar el gallo,
Seredes tornado de otra figura:
Allí perderedes vuestra férmosura.
[...]

Dize el cavallero
A mi non paresçe ser cosa guisada
Que dexe mis armas e vaya dançar
A tal dança negra, de llanto poblada,
Que contra los bivos quesiste hordenar.
Segunt estas nuevas conviene dexar
Merçedes e tierras que gané del rey;
Pero, a la fin, sin dudba non sey
Quál es la carrera que avré de levar.

Dize la muerte
Cavallero noble, ardit e ligero,
Fazed buen senblamte de vuestra persona.
Non es aquí tiienpo de contar dinero;
Oid mi cançión por qué modo cantona.
Aquí vos faré correr la athaona,
e después veredes cómo ponen freno
a los de la vanda que roban lo ageno.
[...] From Dança general, pp. 301-3.

Final stanza linked to the Ars moriendi (Art of Dying Well) - see entry in Dictionary of the Middle Ages, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1982):

Arte de bien morir (Zaragoza: Paul Hurus [1489-91])
http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/ib/texts/ars/3v.html & 18r.html
VIDA Y MUERTE
Definition of Life and Death (mortality); the three lives (physical, fame, eternal)
Central images: río and camino; living and dying well

‘COPLAS’ AS A MEDITATION/CONSOLATION
Stoic and Christian perspectives - syllogisms. Note the use of tenses.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (stanzas 6-23):
A. Mackay; Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (see above); Hernando del Pulgar (above); T.R.S. Boase

Other useful quotations from John: ‘He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.’ (1: 10); ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death.’ (8: 51); ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things happy are ye if you do them.’ (13: 16-17).

Bibliography (items marked • are essential reading & on reading list at:
http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/spanish/courses/reading/sp2_read.html, with UL shelf mark)
• Binski, Paul, Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation (London: British Museum, 1996)
• Boase, T. R., Death in the Middle Ages: Mortality, Judgment and remembrance (London, 1972)
Danza general de la Muerte, in Teatro medieval, ed. Ana María Álvarez Pellitero (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe), pp. 279-319
• Dunn, Peter A., ‘Themes and Images in the Coplas por la muerte de su padre of Jorge Manrique’, Medium Aevum, 33 (1964), 169-83
Lida de Malkiel, Rosa María, La idea de la fama en la Edad Media (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Ecomómica, 1983)
Mackay, Angus, Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1680 (London: MacMillan, 1977)
• Salinas, Pedro, Jorge Manrique, o tradición y originalidad (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1947).
**Issues to consider**
'claros varones': What is the 'claros varones' tradition? Who are the contemporary historical figures referred to by Manrique? What is their significance to the *Coplas*? How does the ‘claros varones’ tradition relate to Rodrigo?

'Fama y Fortuna': Consider the role/function of these two figures/concepts in the *Coplas* and, where relevant, Manrique’s manipulation of the traditions which lie behind their presentation. (See Lida de Malkiel and Patch) on the bibliography.

**Essay Questions**
Assess what Manrique’s use of the *pie quebrado* form contributes to the poem’s message.

‘Manrique’s technical achievement outweighs the meditative tone of the poem.’

‘Manrique’s direct language and simple form never fail to touch.’

‘Here personal bereavement is given universal meaning.’ Discuss with reference to Manrique’s *Coplas*.

‘Manrique’s use of the commonplaces of the Middle Ages lacks intellectual originality but has great emotional power.’
(See Binski or Boase for details on the commonplaces of medieval death literature).