From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art & Craft of Dying in Sixteenth Century Spain. Carlos M.N. Eire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Prologue: Death and the sun

"… Spanish culture has long confronted mortality in its own ways." [1]

Regarding St. Francis Borgia's conversion following the death of the Empress Isabel: "it was the culmination of a long process of introspection, the logical endpoint for a mentality that had been shaped by certain aspects of Spanish culture." [3]

> "Francis did more than mirror certain paradigms. He embodied them. He verified their significance. Francis, himself, in turn, became a paradigm and a vision for others." [3]

Contra Aries, Purgatory had been "one of the chief focal points of popular religion." [4]

"… convinced that attitudes toward death and the afterlife are indeed a barometer of faith and piety, and a unique manifestation of the interrelationship between belief and behavior, between the abstract world of theology and the practical world of deeds and gestures." [5]

> Death "was arguably the consummate Catholic experience, the ultimate expression of a society's beliefs, and also the ultimate opportunity for shaping and controlling a society's behavior." [5]

Spain was chosen for this study because "heaven, hell, and purgatory were as much a part of the nation's topography as Madrid, Gibraltar, and the Pyrenees." [6]

> "… some unique relationship between death and Spanish culture." [8]

Combination of quantitative and qualitative methods "juxtaposes the actual and the ideal and analyzes the way in which belief shapes society and culture and how in turn society and culture define and express belief." [8]

> "… apparent dichotomies in faith and piety are viewed as dynamically interrelated than as dramatically opposed." [8]
>
> Juxtaposes the paradigmatic good deaths of Monarch (Phillip II) and Saint (Teresa of Avila) with attitudes of more mundane social types (revealed in wills/testaments). [8]

"… myth as the symbolic synthesis of a people's ethos at a specific time and place and as the conceptual foundation of their major social institutions." [10]

> "Kings and paupers may share no common experiences throughout life, but they will inexorably be drawn toward the common predicament of death." [10]

Geertz holds that "Sacred symbols… synthesize a people's worldview – the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order." [10]

> "… symbol, myth, and ritual are the stuff of which mentalities are constructed." [11-12]

Sacred/Profane dichotomy is helpful in understanding "the ways in which people approach their own myths and rituals, especially in regard to death, the ultimate passage to the realm of the sacred." [12]

"Purgatory loomed large and near in the mentality of early modern Spain… Though eager for heaven, most sixteenth-century Spaniards hoped, at best, for a stint in purgatory. They also lived cheek by jowl with purgatory; it was as near to them as their own graves and those of their dearly departed and was as much a part of their reality as the churches in which they were buried and the coins with which they paid for masses." [15]

BOOK ONE: EAGER FOR HEAVEN – DEATH AND THE TESTAMENTARY DISCOURSE IN MADRID, 1520-99

Chapter 1. Wills and the history of death in Madrid

Legal documents for this world and the next

Two functions of the will: [19-20]

1. A "salvific instrument;'
2. Control and distribution of the estate, minimizing discord.

Wills were "imbued with a transcendent religious purpose." [20]

> A 1357 Spanish Synod had forbidden Christian burial to anyone who died intestate (at least until certain conditions were met). [20]
>
> The will was a custom of Roman law, purely practical; its renewal 1000 years later included the spiritual purpose. [20]

Essential were "the ordering of alms and pious bequests." [21-22]

> "The primary function of the will, therefore, from a theological and pastoral perspective, was to provide the faithful with the opportunity to request suffrages for their passage to the hereafter." [22]
>
> > "… its function in the arrangement of those liturgical rites that helped insure salvation." [22]

"The writing of a will was considered a penitential act and a rehearsal for death, an exercise that could help the faithful accept death and detach themselves from the things of this world." [22]

> Periodically rereading one's own will was also recommended. "A full charitable assent to one's will counted much more in the afterlife than a troubled or grudging acceptance." [23]
>
> > "… a spiritual exercise that was not only a sober meditation on death but also on the whole of one's life and on one's hope for the hereafter." [23]
> >
> > > "… placing one's sour on the road to salvation." [23]

The art of dying in early modern Spain

Preparation for death throughout life meant that "one would know how to act" as death approached. [24]

Ars Moriendi = a genre of practical, devotional literature which "emphasized the doctrines of grace and forgiveness over those of punishment and damnation but insisted that these benefits could be gained only through deliberate effort and preparation." [24-25]

Initially these manuals focused on assisting the dying to escape hell/purgatory, but with Renaissance humanism the added purpose of showing how to live a good Christian life ("an are of living") came to the fore. [25]

Counter-Reformation writers "placed greater emphasis on the freedom of the will, the power of the sacraments, and the intercessory role of the church and the saints." [26]

Venegas' *The Agony of Crossing Over* was far more popular in Spain than was Erasmus. The Erasmian focus was on charity and faith in Christ as more important that death rituals; "Venegas emphasized the traditional significance of these rituals with a reverent vengeance." [27]

Dying was understood as a social process, and there was step-by-step advice both for the dying person and for family/neighbors. [29]

Relatives, neighbors, confraternity members assisted the dying person in recitation of prayers." [29-32]

Priest would carry the viaticum in procession, and then hear the dying person's confession, administer viaticum, and finally Extreme Unction – priest was to remain until death, if possible. [31-32]

Belief in the presence of demons at the deathbed shaped much of the ritual – "The devil would make one final terrifying assault and turn the final hours of life into a pitched battle." [32]

Venegas numbered seven temptations: "desire for a longer life, impatience with suffering, attachment to one's family, attachment to riches and honors, false confidence in one's merits, fear of hell and punishment, and a denial of one's faith." [33]

"Prayer was the most immediate recourse against this onslaught." -- Here the assistance of family/neighbors/priest was crucial. [33]

The wills, "drawn up by a notary as the dying person stood on the rim of eternity" … "give us, centuries later, the privilege of peering into the hearts and minds of those who knew they were about to die." [34]

<u>The nature and function of the will</u>

Notaries followed a precise outline. [36]

"Medieval and early modern Catholicism made detachment from this world one of the principal Christian virtues." [37]

"… the will functioned as an extension of the counsel of poverty to all Christians" … "the act of voluntarily redistributing one's earthly possessions in the will came to be regarded as a demonstration of the proper detachment required from those who hoped to join the saints in heaven." [38]

Executors were vitally important – "it was up to them to ensure 'relief from the pain of purgatory.'" [39]

Wills and the history of mentalities

"It is only when many wills from a given time and place are studied as a group that the larger patterns begin to emerge, revealing the structures of the social mentality." [42]

> "… wills define and modify the social mentality as much as they reflect it." [43]
>
> "The cumulative effect of a gradually increasing number of wills that begin to express new kinds of requests for funerary or postmortem devotions can be tremendous, leading eventually to the redefinition of what is acceptable." [43]

Recent studies of Spanish wills

Sara Nalle's independent research largely coincides with Eire's. [46]

Madrid's wills

For much of the 16th century, Madrid was relatively 'rural,' and by the end of the century more rural; wills from Madrid, therefore, reveal something of the mentality of both rural and urban Catholics. [46-50]

> But Madrid was also, at least at times, the seat of the royal court and thus the wills reflect "those social values that were being promoted as narrative by the ruling elite." [51]
>
> > In 1561, Madrid became the permanent capital, and a sudden population boom followed. [52]
>
> This "offers the historian an opportunity to analyze change and continuities in attitudes toward death." [53]
>
> "… the documentation from Madrid after 1561 bring the historian closer to the models proposed by king and church. At the same time, however, this documentation never ceases to reveal the beliefs and practices of more ordinary people." [53]
>
> > The council of Trent also played a role. [53]

The demographics of Madrid's testators

36 wills (from 1520 to 1599) were studied – this period "spans the whole of Phillip's life, the whole of Madrid's early transformation, and the whole of the most crucial periods of the Catholic Reformation." [54-55]

The sample "represents a fairly wide spectrum of people from sixteenth-century Madrid." [59]

Chapter 2: Approaching the divine tribunal

Invocation

Latin: "In Dei Nomine, amen." – close to the language of the Mass, thus the quasi-liturgical function of the will. [62]

> Served to make the will a religious document. [63]

Identification

Preparing one's will while still healthy showed not only prudence, but piety – through the 16th century, there was a gradual increase in the number of healthy testators. [64]

Since "A willing acceptance of disease and death had long been considered to be a 'proper' Christian attitude," formulaic expressions were commonly used to accept one's illness as God's will. [66]

"For those who are healthy, the realization of death is forced upon them; for the sick, acceptance of their condition is forced upon them." [67]

The preamble : (1) Supplication; (2) meditation on death; (3) meditation on judgment; (4) profession of faith.

Supplication

"… essentially a plea for mercy and a call for assistance at the hour of death." [68]

Revealed is a belief in death as a moment of judgment, and of heaven as a 'court' (both in the sense of the seat of the Highest Sovereign and a place where the ultimate judgment is administered). [68]

In the Spanish court, "to have the king come to someone's assistance usually required the cooperation of others close to him" – [69]

Thus, saints were described as intercessors, "like courtiers soliciting favors from their king." [69]

The intercessors are also often envisioned "as attorneys pleading their case before a judge." [69]

"Most often, it is the Virgin Mary who is called upon to fulfill this function." [69]

"… by far the most popular intercessor." [69]

But overall the request for intercessory assistance is rather surprisingly infrequent. [71]

The Saints were clearly extremely important in Spanish piety, but "the invocation of the saints had not made its way universally into the document of the will." [71]

After midcentury, there is a trend toward invocation of personal patrons. [72]

"… one thing is certain: Some Madrileños believed that intercession was as necessary in heaven as it was on earth… Just as no one on earth would have the presumption to approach the king directly, without the assistance of a powerful patron at court, so should no one expect to deal with God on a one-to-one basis." [72]

The meditation on death

An almost always *pro forma* statement. [72]

The meditation on judgment

"The wording of most Madrid wills makes it clear that death was not regarded as the *end* of life, but, rather as its most significant transition point. Above all else, death was a moment of

judgment. It was the most crucial phase in one's existence, the instant at which the merits of one's life were closely examined by God and when one's eternal fate was decided." [75]

> "… the moment of reckoning was viewed with apprehension." [75]
>
> "… it was of supreme importance not to be unprepared at the moment one was summoned to appear before the divine judge." [76]
>
> "… uneasiness over the hour of death precisely because so much was at stake during this particular moment. No other single instant in one's life was as important as the hour of one's death, for without a 'good death' one could not hope to gain heaven." [76]
>
> > "… a mixture of hope and fear." [77]
> >
> > "For most, these existed an uneasy equilibrium between dread and hope, between the notions of God as judge and God as father… It was a complex dialectic fueled by raw emotion but controlled by carefully measured thinking expressed in dogmatic phrases." [78]

The profession of faith

Formulaic affirmations of the testator's orthodoxy and right to Christian burial. [78-79]

> "… to show their conformity to the teachings of the Catholic Church." [79]
>
> "… as far as the actual doctrines were concerned, the last thing anyone would have wanted to do was express creativity." [79]
>
> "The single most important item to confess, it seems, was to voice assent with the teachings of the Catholic Church." [79]

The encommendation

"… testators placed their destiny in God's hands." [80]

1. As the ultimate act of submission, it confirmed the faith that the testator had just expressed. [80]
2. A declaration of trust demonstrating that the testator was fulfilling the conditions necessary for 'a good death.' [80]
3. A plea for mercy, reminding god of the work of redemption accomplished in Christ. [80]

This accepted and reinforced the notion of the duality of the human self – body and soul are sundered at death. [80]

> "Little mention is ever made of the promised resurrection of the body." [81]
>
> "… a different origin and destiny are proposed for body and soul, as if they were essentially incompatible" (echoes of Plato's Phaedrus). [82]
>
> "The body was not believed to be absolutely essential for existence." [85]

The fundamental attitude was that, while the body/soul unity would be restored, there was an intervening time of nonexistence for the body. "… this belief made attitudes toward the body very complex." [85]

> "At best, then, the body was a temporary husk for the soul; at worst it was an awful burden and a great risk." [85]

This scorn for the body led to a common practice of not even washing the body for burial. [86]

> The Inquisition even investigated cases of corpse washing, for this was seen as a sign of false belief. [86]
>
> Yet funeral practices reveal an underlying belief in an essential connection between body and soul. [86]

Chapter 3: Relinquishing one's body

Reading the meanings of death ritual

"… the corpse is a threat and a symbol of danger. It is a tangible reminder of the fact that death is a certainty and an omnipresent menace to all members of society." [87]

> Death ritual closes the circle of community that death has broken. [87]

For Victor Turner, sacred symbols/rites are "the code that enables societies to coalesce and that renders social life intelligible."

> "… a lively theater of the collective psychology." [90]
>
> Religious ritual "is a form of cognition that constructs models of reality and paradigms of behavior." [90]
>
> > "… funerals conveys their social messages by means of systems of repeated analogies." – "Their intelligibility was derived from a commonly understood set of symbols and also gave shape to and confirmed this means of communication." [90]

Place of burial

Virtually all Madrid burials were inside churches." [93]

> "These church buildings became true houses of the communion of saints, where the dead and the living shared the same space. For those families that had long resided in Madrid, the presence of several generations within the sacred space of the churches must have produced an intense feeling of endurance and continuity." [94]
>
> "It is not hard to imagine many of these living parishioners pondering their own fate as they gazed at the very spot where their own remains would one day be buried, or even as they sat directly over it." [97]
>
> Crowding became a serious problem, and it is difficult to determine where the poor were buried. [97]

Some of the poor were given charity burials by parishes; but some (at least elsewhere in Spain) were buried in outdoor cemeteries. [98]

As crowding became ever more a problem, a hierarchy of space within churches (in times of preferable burial sites) became evident: "The closer one could be to the eucharist, the better." [99]

Even those who could not afford the choicest spots often requested other specific locations – e.g., near the holy water font, a painting of a saint, etc. [100]

One will asked only to be buried "wherever it is that the poor people who die in this Royal Hospital are customarily buried." [100]

"Generally, entire families were buried in the same cramped location." [100]

A few wealthy persons established family chapels to secure a permanent and prominent place of burial. Theologians and bishops were often critical of this practice. [101]

Still, after 1561, the practice became more frequent. [103]

As the century progresses, it becomes more common for testators to request specific locations. [103]

Monasteries and convents also served as burial places. This choice was generally "reserved for the more privileged families of Madrid." Throughout the 16th Century, between 14% and 38% of testators requested monastic burial. [104]

<u>Burial dress</u>

Lay people could choose: a linen shroud; a religious order habit; a confraternity tunic. [105]

"… many lay people considered it advantageous to be buried in a religious habit." – Franciscan was the most popular. [105]

"'… so that St. Francis may serve as my advocate.'" [105]

"Some testators sought even more security by asking for two habits." [108]

Some wanted to wear a habit during their final illness. [108]

"Because the habit symbolized in a very palpable manner the monk's renunciation of the world, it naturally came to be regarded as a physical manifestation of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As a funerary gesture, the habit was an external sign of humility, especially in cultures where sumptuous dress was part of the death ritual." [109]

Also: "it was commonly believed that anyone who died in a monastic habit would gain preferential treatment in heaven." [109]

Medieval exempla told many stories about the importance of habits to monks' entrance into heaven. [109]

Bonaventure and Aquinas speak of the sacramental significance of habits. [110]

"The sacred powers associated with monastic habits, especially their alleged ability to gain one direct entrance into heaven, are based upon a series of interdependent assumptions, all of which reveal much about attitudes toward death and the afterlife." [110]

1. Body must be holy/pure to enter heaven, and this holiness can only be achieved through renunciation of the world; [110]
2. The habit, as sign of renunciation, is indispensable for gaining entrance into heaven; [110]
3. The habit conveys an identity of holiness to its wearer; [110]
4. The habit "actually crosses over into the afterlife with its wearer" and "those in heaven can somehow see that a person's corpse is wearing it." [111]

Chapter 4: impressing God and neighbor

Preparing the funeral

Because funerals separated people on the basis of status, the "could easily become public statements regarding the status, rank, privilege, and wealth of the dead and their families." [114]

Funeral ceremonies "were a key step in the passage to the afterlife. Every gesture performed by the survivors in a funeral could be viewed as an intercessory act on behalf of the dead." [115]

Mundane funeral functions "were imbued with a transcendent, otherworldly purpose." [115]

Prior to 1560, almost all testators planned their funerals in detail. For the rest of the century, this steadily declined. This drop corresponds with a trend toward increased pomp. As funerals became more complex, more testators left the planning to their executors." [116]

This reflects "an increased codification of ritual based on status." [117]

Perhaps the growth in complexity of funeral ritual was related to "a corresponding change in attitude toward the religious value of specific funeral ceremonies." [119]

There was also "an increased demand in postmortem devotions." [119]

These changes coincide with the closing of the Council of Trent. [119]

In this period many traditional religious practices (especially those opposed to the Protestant challenge) we3re rigorously promoted. [119]

"The Protestant denial of the salvific value of ritual, their repudiation of intercessory prayer, and worst of all, their rejection of purgatory had to be answered through the reaffirmation of the value of well-established burial customs and postmortem devotion." [119]

Death and vigil

Generally, people desired a quick, effective burial – usually within twenty-four hours. [120-121]

The presence of others around the corpse from the time of death to burial was immensely significant." [121]

The cortege

During the trip from the home to the church, the presence of others around the corpse was also deemed essential. [121]

In the *Ars Moriendi*, "the function of the cortege was supposed to be an intercessory one. The presence of others in the burial ceremonies ensured that the deceased would not be alone in death and that others in the community would share the responsibility of lessening the spiritual burdens of the dead, beseeching God for mercy as a group." [123]

> Venegas "promoted a nearly mathematical formula: the longer the cortege, the shorter one's time in purgatory." [123]

<u>The parish clergy</u>

"From the moment of death, the clergy hovered around the corpse constantly, uttering prayers and accompanying it every step of the way from the deathbed to the grave." [123]

> The parish funeral cross was also important, frequently specifically requested in wills [123]
>
> There were pauses during the procession to the church, during which litanies were prayed. This provided rest for the pallbearers. [124-125]

As the century progresses, testators request more and more clergy. [125]

> "… Madrileños seemed to be taken with the idea that, in death as in life, *more* was always *better*." [127]
>
> > "… they also requested more confraternities, more poor people, more orphans, more candles and torches, more prayers, and more masses, plunging into a grand numerical obsession." [127]

<u>Mendicant friars</u>

In the last three decades of the century more testators requested mendicants, and also asked for them progressively in higher numbers. [128]

> "… the abrupt appearance of the friars in non-noble Madrid wills indicates how intensely the question of status became related to public gestures such as funerals." [132]

Two royal funerals in 1568, with many mendicants participating, may have led testators to emulate them. [132-133]

<u>Confraternities</u>

"… many confraternities were burial clubs of sorts…" [134]

"So deep was the anxiety about dying alone that confraternities were established for the sole purpose of assisting condemned criminals in their death and burial." [135]

"… a marked increase in the number of confraternity participants, an inflation that closely parallels that which also accrued for priests and mendicants." [136]

> "Most often, the confraternities were requested so that the deceased would have certain intercessory prayers and gestures performed on their behalf." [138]

"Confraternities were but another important link in the chain of intercession that linked all human beings and that strengthened the position of any single individual before the divine tribunal: [140]

Poor people and orphans

Asking poor people to the funeral was an act of almsgiving, earning merit. It also functioned as an intercessory act, because "The prayers of the poor were deemed to be especially powerful." [141]

As in other respects, more poor people were requested as the century progressed." [148]

> "By the end of the century, the custom had become an unofficial but well-established means of relief for the poor of the city." [142]
>
> It also confirmed the social status of the deceased. [144]
>
> Frequently, the poor are requested to carry torches, honoring the cross. Easter symbolism: the triumph of light over darkness. [145]

In the 1550s, orphan children were added to the cortege. [145]

> They could offer powerful prayers since there were not only poor, but pure. [146]

Funeral meals

Graveside feasting "could at times become both lavish and raucous." [148]

Food offerings were also made to the clergy who were saying Masses for the deceased." [149]

Mourning gestures

Restriction were placed on excessive mourning cries and on mourning attire, perhaps out of fear of contagion from Jewish and Muslim influences." [151]

> Ancient grieving practices (including mutilation) clearly persisted, though, as edicts continued to criticize and proscribe them. [152-153]

Some ecclesiastics and devotional writers in the 16th century decried excessive grieving (superfluous tears, rejection of consolation, prolonged fasting, perpetuation of vigils). [158]

> Continued friction "between popular customs and the gestures allowed by law." [159]

"… some tension existed between the models and behavior proposed by church and state and those gestures commonly performed by the majority of the people." [167]

Chapter 5: Planning for the soul's journey

Pious bequests

Prayers, vigils and masses were required by law to be requested in every will. [169]

> Spanish: *obras* (work) or *sacrificio* (sacrifice) – gestures to be performed on behalf of the testator. [169]

Salvation and the mass

Catholic "soteriological system" = "an elaborate network of beliefs and practices." [170]

Regarding Eucharist: "its beneficial, timeless effects applied both to this life and the next." [170]

"It could be quantified." [170]

Purgatory and the salvific value of the mass were "inextricably linked" beliefs. [171]

Protestants rejected both, and Trent reaffirmed both – calling for "a more vigorous promotion of these beliefs." [171]

In Spain, wills reveal that "the church sanctioned and promoted an ancient redemptive system that was deeply ingrained in the social consciousness and that this liturgical apparatus was eagerly kept in motion by Spanish society as a whole." [172]

Inevitable suffering, indispensable suffrages

16th century = "beginning of a 'golden age of purgatory' in Spain" (Nalle). [173]

"Catholic eschatology was highly complex but not totally incomprehensible to the laity." [173]

"Located within the earth, directly above hell, formed by its fires, purgatory was a place of torment where souls received the punishment still due to forgiven sins." [174]

"Suffering in this life, though lesser in degree, counted more in the eyes of God and therefore had a greater time-related redemptive value." [174]

Suffrages lessened the time of purgatory, which one theologian estimated at 1,000 to 2,000 years for the average Christian. [174]

In the mass, "the suffering of Christ could be selectively applied toward the suffering of any Christian soul still owed in purgatory." [174]

"… a piety steeped in accounting, shaped and governed by numbers, focused squarely on debts and credits, driven by the desire to transfer specific amounts from one ledger to another." [174-175]

"Theological rationalizations for the liturgical suffrage system were intricate, complex, and overlapping." [175]

Basic principle: "the more the better." [175]

"… this swarm of minute distinction shaped the mentality of Madrid's testators." [176]

The arithmetic of salvation

Throughout the 16th century, all testators requested masses, but as the century progressed, "there is a gradual, substantial increase in the number of masses requested." [176]

"… the actuarial compulsion to request specific numbers of specific kinds of masses at specific times in specific places." [177]

Average number of masses: 90 in 1520s; 777 in 1590s. [177]

(data on pp. 178-179).

"… the spiritual value of each mass declined relatively… very much like the purchasing value of currency." [180]

Masses and the inflationary economy

"… the general inflation that gripped the Spanish economy in the sixteenth century." [180]

> A "sliding scale" of price for different kinds of masses was introduced – but, in general, "the increases in mass prices seem to be about one a par with the nominal price averages for other basic commodities." [182]

But wages did not keep pace with inflation, "making the life of those at the bottom of the economy increasingly difficult." [185]

Real Wages in Sixteenth-Century Spain

The poor were generally paid in copper, not gold of silver. [186]

"… a mass was a relatively expensive commodity that was beyond the ordinary daily exchange of the poor and dispossessed." [186]

Laborers make requests for lower number of masses, but their requests do increase through the century. The number of working-day's wages to meet these requests steadily increased. [187]

> "… a proportionately larger percentage of their incomes or estates had to be spent on these pious bequests." [188]

Anxiety over the hereafter and confidence in masses

Some testators left their entire estate to mass bequests. [189]

> This reveals "a mixture of anxiety and confidence." (Anxiety over the afterlife; confidence in the power of masses.) [191]

Several priests named their souls *heredera universal*: "Such manifestly self-centered preoccupation on the part of the clergy may indeed show how deep the anxiety over purgatory extended in Spanish society." [193]

> "Father Juan was making an investment in his future, and he seemed to do it with optimism, as if he fully expected a return for his investment, very much like present-day wage earners who divert part of their salaries into retirement plans." [194]

The complexity of requests for masses

The "uneasy dialectic between anxiety and confidence" revealed "nearly obsessive attention" to details of specific types of masses, places, intentions, etc. [195]

The structure and meaning of the liturgy had become so finely nuanced, tutored to meet a seemingly infinite set of circumstances and contingencies in the afterlife, much like a science…" [195]

"… the dexterity with which testators cold manipulate the liturgical system and the magnitude of their investment in it also hint at a certain degree of security, ease, and comfort on their part…" [195]

"… grand liturgical obsessiveness…" [196]

At least ten different types of masses could be requested. [196]

(table, pp. 196-197)

Perpetual masses

Requests for masses celebrated at specified intervals perpetually "seemed to be informed more by emotion than logic. At bottom, the perpetual mass was an extreme gesture, an indication of some residual uncertainty about the afterlife that no number of masses – even an unusually high number – could ever completely efface." [201]

"… investments in the treasure of merit… Nothing was ever lost…" [201]

For the most wealthy, private chapels were erected to facilitate the practice of perpetual masses. [205-206]

"… the family chapel fostered the privatization of salvation." [206]

"… the elite tried to seize their share of redemption in an extensive manner." [206]

Some of these requests may well have functioned simultaneously as both status symbols and redemptive acts. [207-208]

In some wills, specific priests were named as chaplains – and thus provided with steady income. [208]

Mass intentions

"… postmortem masses were said not just for the self but also for others… "the doctrine of the communion of saints was inseparably linked to belief in the redemptive power of the mass" (Trent). [210]

"Concern for one's own salvation included concern for the salvation of others." [210]

Some wills request masses "for the 'souls for which I am responsible.'" [211]

"In this system, one took on the burdens of others but simultaneously became a burden for someone else." [211]

Some bequests are for "the neediest souls in purgatory." [212]

Over the course of the century, there is a moderate decline in the number of wills requesting masses for 'self' alone. [212]

> But there was still a preoccupation with self: the number of 'masses for others' did not increase at nearly the rate as the number of 'masses for self.' [214]

Coping with the inflation of masses

The high number of mass requests made it extremely difficult for them to be fulfilled. Devotional writings and sermons warned executors to fulfill their duty. By 1596, there was "as it were, a black market in masses" – with some testators paying a higher price than required. [216]

> "Here we see the economy of the marketplace invading the world of pious bequests: You get what you pay for." [217]

At times, derelict priests came to the attention of the Inquisition. [217]

Regional councils (Salamanca, Toledo, Granada, Valencia) carried out the reforming impulse of Trent. They reminded clergy of their obligation, but also warned them against accepting obligation for too many masses – warning that saying mass too frequently debased the value of the mass. [218]

"… the mass requests in Madrid wills were perhaps more of an ideal than a reality – a distant target beyond reach." [220]

> Perhaps some testators, knowing this, requested, e.g., 500 masses in hope that 200 would actually be said. [221]
>
> > Parish archives were destroyed by fire in the 1930s, so it is not possible to determine actual numbers of masses said. [222]

Pious bequests and the Tridentine reform

After Trent, some cycles of Masses deemed 'superstitious' declined. [222]

> "… complex, detailed arrangements and promised specific results in return, or observance of specific instructions." [223]
>
> Erasmian humanists had criticized such practices early in the 16th century. [221]

Madrid wills after Trent attest to the effectiveness of this reform. [228]

A new devotion appears simultaneously, The *Missa del Anima*: "a special approved liturgy that could be said to gain the release of souls from purgatory at specific, indulgenced altars." [229]

> Introduction of this practice was an accommodation to popular piety, while diminishing its superstitious tendencies. [230]

"… the liturgical reform of the 1560s seem to have *intensified* popular interest in postmortem devotions by simplifying the liturgical suffrage system and by redirecting public attention to the purported redemptive efficacy of the mass." [231]

Chapter 6. Aiding the needy, aiding oneself

Death and charity

Some collects of the *missa pro benefactoribus* "spoke of charity as a 'second baptism' that wiped out sins." [232]

> This was reinforced at Trent, which "reaffirmed the redemptive value of charity over and against the Protestant challenge." [233-234]

Recipients of alms were asked to pray for the benefactor. [235]

Law both required and limited almsgiving. [235]

<u>The structure of almsgiving</u>

"… a gradual, yet noticeable increase in almsgiving as the sixteenth century progressed." [237]

> "… an increased popularity in testamentary charity, a genuine change in attitude." [239]
>
> > Partially due to Trent's "reinvigorated theology of almsgiving." [240]

<u>The distribution of bequests</u>

Beneficent institutions (especially hospitals) were the primary beneficiaries, moreso than ecclesiastical institutions. [240]

Many almsgiving bequests appear to have "stood squarely in a gray area halfway between charity and self-interest." [244]

> Because charity was regarded as mandatory, there is some evidence of "a grudging sort of philanthropy." [244]

Given that beneficiaries were obligated to pray for their benefactors, "almsgiving was an exchange of services in which both parties enjoyed some benefits." [246]

<u>Conclusion</u>

In Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Don Quixote, thinking he hears the voice of Sancho Panza's ghost, assures the 'ghost' that he (DQ) will obtain the suffrages of the Church for his release from purgatory, pledging to mortgage his entire estate. [248]

"The vast majority of the testators studied here thought there was much they *could* and *should* do for themselves and for others in the afterlife, and they envisioned post-earthly existence as intermeshed with the social realities of their world." [249]

- Commerce between the living and the dead was similar to the earthly marketplace, and monetary inflation also meant inflation in the economy of salvation.
- Because the Heavenly Court was similar to the earthly court, their attitudes/behavior toward death was affected by the increased presence of the King and his court after 1561.

"In myriad ways, death ritual was an extension of the status quo: The more you had to spend, the better your funeral and your pious bequests and the quicker your release from purgatory." [249]

Spanish Catholics saw the 'material' and the 'spiritual' as intimately related. [250]

"Myth and ritual, belief and piety were inseparable from the existing social structures that defined them, but their ultimate goal was to find transcendence through the things of this world." [250-251]

"Paradox was central to this religious mentality." [251]

Matter/spirit interconnection was more emotional than rational. [251]

"Though few, if any, of the testators studied here hoped to go directly to paradise, most of them literally pawned part of their earthly fortune in exchange for a briefer passage through purgatory." [251]

BOOK TWO: THE KING'S DISSOLVING BODY – PHILLIP II AND THE ROYAL PARADIGM OF DEATH

Chapter 1. King Phillip and his palace of death

Pondering the death of kings

"The death of a king teaches a lesson in mortality: By meditating upon the demise of kings, every individual can realize the awful truth that death is the ultimate victor over all human effort and ambition." [257]

Phillips death became a mythic event, pointing toward larger questions about mortality and the royal person. [257]

The Escorial as message

The Escorial was to serve many functions: royal residence, shrine, library – but above all it was to be a mausoleum for the Hapsburg dynasty, and a central was death. [260]

"The place was dedicated primarily to serving the material and spiritual needs of the dead Hapsburg kings and their immediate families according to Roman Catholic belief and practice." [260]

Phillip was preoccupied with the translation of royal corpses to the Escorial: "Phillip was on intimate terms with death." [260]

From the time of its construction to the present, the Escorial has invited interpretation of its meaning. [262]

The interpretations are highly diverse, but "there is no denying the centrality of death in its functional and symbolic plan." [264]

"Kings are the center of the order of symbols, values, and beliefs that govern a society." They embody power and the very existence of the kingdom – i.e., order, security, prosperity. [264]

The Escorial was "a shrine to God and king." [265]

"… the Escorial and the dying king within it were a summation of Spanish attitudes toward death and the afterlife." [265]

Death most horrendous, death most felicitous