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The Political Funeral of Isabella the Catholic in Rome (1505): Liturgical Hybridity and Succession Tension in a Celebration *Misere a la Italiana et Ceremoniose a la Spagnola*

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Abstract: Based on the interest aroused by royal funerals at the end of the Middle Ages, this paper analyses the obsequies held in the Eternal City on the occasion of the death of Isabella the Catholic (1474–1504)—Queen of Castile and Aragon—in a context of international tension and succession unrest. The papal diaries, diplomatic documentation and Ludovico Bruno's *sermo funebris* allow us to reconstruct the liturgical, scenographic and rhetorical display of a ceremony that seduced with its solemnity and elegance, the fruit of a hybridism that combined Spanish and Italian funerary traditions in the Rome of Julius II. The creativity of the Spanish community is thus evident in its ability to convert the Isabelline funeral ceremony into an expression of dynastic power in the context of Spanish–French competition and incipient tensions between the Habsburg and Fernandine courts over the Castilian succession. Only by starting from this intertwining of the political and the liturgical will we be able to understand the transformations undergone by the funeral ceremonial in its passage—still little explored—from late medieval customs to modern scenographies.

Keywords: royal funerals; Renaissance; propaganda; succession crisis; papacy; Julius II; Hispanic monarchy; Isabella and Ferdinand; Habsburgs

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1. Introduction

Royal funerals underwent profound transformations in the late Middle Ages due to their capacity to stage monarchical power through the exaltation of the deceased monarch[1]. In addition to the funeral ceremonies held at the place of death with the attendance of the court, other funerary events were usually organised in the main cities to make the royal memory present in the territory and to consolidate the population's support for the established power. The liturgy deployed on these occasions was enriched with increasingly complex scenographies to convey the different meanings of the transience of the individual person and the continuity of the royal ministry at that particularly delicate moment of the monarchical succession. Seduced by the semantic richness of funerary acts, historiography in recent decades has delved ceaselessly into their political, anthropological, ritual and artistic dimensions, exploring their function within national communities and in the relationship between the prince and his subjects (Gaude-Ferragu 2005; Hengerer et al. 2015; Booth and Tingle 2020; Chatenet et al. 2021).

Although we lack a complete study of royal funerals in the Iberian Peninsula, we do have research on funerary practices that—with certain regional varieties—evolved towards a progressive ritual multiplication, a solemnisation of their expression and a monumentalisation of their spaces in the form of royal pantheons. The debate on the political and propagandistic significance of royal funerals (Menjot 1987; Nieto Soria 1993, pp. 97–118; Guiance 1998, pp. 318–24) has given way to more detailed analyses of the funerary ritual (García and González 1995–1996), its link with the rite of proclamation (Nogales 2019) or its relationship with sepulchral iconography (Pereda 2001; Pérez Monzón 2008, 2011). From these studies emerges the importance of mourning, the funeral procession

or religious ceremonies in Castile, together with the greater Aragonese attention to the exposition of the corpse, the ceremony of "correr las armas" (running the arms) and the use of effigies or figurative representations of the deceased monarch (Laliena and Iranzo 1991; Sabaté 1994; Español 2007; Pascual 2016).

This rich funerary tradition saw a growing sophistication during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, monarchs of Castile and Aragon (1474–1516), whose court facilitated interaction between Castilian and Aragonese customs and the establishment of certain ritual patterns (Gamero 2017). This is revealed by the account of the funeral rites held in Barcelona and commissioned by the monarch following the death of his father Juan II (1479), or the presence of ever more enriched musical funeral pieces in courtly compilations (Wagstaff 1995; Knighton 2000, pp. 140–41; Knighton 2014). Although it has been suggested that ritual was toned down during the reign in favour of pantheon building (Nieto Soria 1999, p. 55), it seems clear that funerary activity intensified in the 1490s as a result of the deaths in the royal family: Prince Alfonso of Portugal (1490), the Queen Mother Isabella of Portugal (1496), Crown Prince John (1497) and the Infanta Isabella of Portugal (1498), not to mention aristocrats with special ties to the Crown, such as Cardinal Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1495) (García Marco 1993; Cabrera 2001, 2014; Cañas 2017; Zalama and Pascual 2018, pp. 41–68).

In line with the practice of multiplying the ceremony to perpetuate the dynastic memory, the main cathedral centres—Toledo, Seville, Zaragoza or Barcelona—then displayed their liturgical and scenographic potential, erecting increasingly large and refined funerary structures which marked a degree of transition from the traditional *chapelle ardente* to new forms, with inscriptions and possibly allegorical representations (Arbury 1992, p. 125; Schraven 2014, pp. 62–65). In addition to this, phenomena of emulation or mimetic rivalry derived from the Crown's marriage policy have been detected in the Prince of Wales' funeral (1502), held in the Church of San Juan de los Reyes (Toledo) before the Catholic Monarchs and the Archdukes of Burgundy (Domínguez Casas 1990; Knighton 2001).

The greatest ceremonial expression needed to be achieved following deaths that compromised dynastic continuity and succession to the throne, such as those of Prince John (1497) or Isabella the Catholic (1504), with repercussions beyond the peninsular boundaries and major celebrations in Flanders and the Italian peninsula (Ruiz García 2003). As the symbolic centre of Christendom, Rome could not remain on the sidelines of these events determining the future of a monarchy that was increasingly involved in Italian affairs, especially after the war in Naples (Fernández de Córdova and Villanueva Morte 2020). The Isabelline funeral held in the Urbe was an indication of this, its originality noted by Vaquero Piñeiro when he examined the papal diaries (Vaquero Piñeiro 2001). Other authors have since explored the Hispanic inspiration of the *apparati* used for this purpose (Noehles-Doerk 2006), noting its influence on the development of 16th-century Roman funerals, with their exuberant architectural and iconographic elaboration (Schraven 2014).

By focusing on artistic aspects, these works have neglected the context of a celebration that reflected the new international balances defined at Blois (22.IX.1504) and the succession crisis caused by the death of the Catholic Queen (26.XI.1504), a situation which this paper takes as its starting point to interpret the Isabelline funeral, reconstruct its scenographic resources and identify the messages conveyed by the Spanish community. Together with the meticulous analysis of the papal diaries, we contribute new diplomatic and literary sources—including Ludovico Bruno's *sermo funebris*—that will allow us to understand how political and religious concerns were articulated in a celebration that left its mark on the Rome of Julius II.

From a methodological point of view, a contextualist approach is adopted here that will allow us to realistically interpret the celebratory event, without engaging in abstractions or interpretative models detached from the spatio-temporal reality, as some Cambridge School theorists have shown in relation to the political thought of the modern period (Skinner 1978; Pocock 2009). Thanks to this perspective, we will see that the international scenario and the succession challenge of the Hispanic monarchy constitute the essential coordinates

for interpreting the novelties and objectives of the Catholic Queen's funeral. Reconstruction of this event has involved a thorough review of the papal diaries and the contribution of new diplomatic and literary sources (Venetian, Spanish, etc.), including the previously unstudied *sermo funebris*, all critically analysed according to the interests of their issuing agents.

In the study of the ritual and iconography of funerals, a comparative approach to the Hispanic and Italian traditions based on Peter Burke's reflections on cultural hybridisation (Burke 1998, 2009) has been adopted, as it is particularly valid for understanding the assumption of new forms in a different cultural sphere that reinterprets them. All this has required moving between a deductive reflection—based on the results of the bibliography—and an inductive procedure in the interpretation of the elements of the ceremony. Thanks to the attention paid to the context, the new documentary information and the methodological flexibility described, it is possible to offer an exhaustive analysis of a little-studied event, providing a novel interpretation of the Isabelline funerals that explains their liturgical and artistic innovations in the light of the political and religious concerns of the Spanish community in the Rome of Julius II.

2. Fernandine Politics and Curial Reactions to the End of a Queen

Having presented the state of the question and the objective of this work, it is necessary to reconstruct the political and diplomatic scenario in which the death of the Queen took place, so as to understand the reactions that arose at the court of Ferdinand the Catholic and in the Papal Curia. We will see that the apparent stability conveyed by some sources has disorientated the analysis of the funeral ceremonies, which took place at a time of international tension and uncertainty over the succession. This chapter reconstructs this turbulent context that explains the measures taken by the Aragonese monarch regarding the funeral of his wife, and the negotiations of his agents to make the event an extraordinary happening in the Rome of Julius II.

This analysis does not start from scratch. The anomalous funeral of Isabella the Catholic has given rise to some debate about its political significance and propagandistic scope. By symbolising the death of the monarch and her replacement by her successor, the royal funeral required attitudes of support through the participation of the council or ecclesiastical authorities, the local nobility and the popular sector (Nieto Soria 1993, pp. 111–12). To the political value, some specialists have added a propagandistic effect, arguing that ceremonial acts could guide the political behaviour of the recipients by transmitting certain values, ideas or emotions, through ritual, iconographic or rhetorical resources (Maire Vigueur and Pietri 1985; Balandier 1994). This propagandistic dimension could be intensified at times of greater political instability or contestation of royal power, resulting in a greater solemnity in the funerary acts.

Although in Nieto Soria's judgement the political stability of the kingdom in 1504 made a resort to propagandistic use unnecessary, he does note a certain incoherence between its bare ceremonial expression—due to the Queen's testamentary dispositions[2]—and other local celebrations that deployed the ritual customary in cases of royal death (Nieto Soria 1993, pp. 109–11). This imbalance was attributed to the desire to express the ideal of the virtuous king by means of a ceremonial reduction that would end up suffocating the funerary exaltation. Guiance has explored this line in greater depth, recognising in the chronicles a "propagandistic framework" that seeks to emphasise the "good death" of the sovereign—with signs of personal sanctity—as opposed to the archetype of the "bad death" of the impious king, which would also be reflected in some literary testimonies published after the death (Guiance 2002; González 2005; Fernández Terricabras 2005).

However, these analyses should be interpreted in the light of a historical context and on which is far from the messages of stability conveyed from the court. Lucius Marinius Siculus warned of this when he wrote that "the day this queen ended her life, not without cause was there fear, especially among the people who wished to live in peace and tranquillity, who greatly feared that the disturbances and wars (which ceased while the said queen was

alive) would begin again and be worse than they had been before" (Marineo Sículo 1943, pp. 178–79). To this disturbing prognosis, Bernáldez added the seismic "because of the loss that would be felt in her kingdoms, and because of the tribulations that would befall them after her end" (Bernáldez 1962, p. 723). These impressions were not so much due to fear of a power vacuum as to the complex articulation of the Castilian succession, which was beginning to generate tensions between the Catholic King—appointed governor by his wife—and the Flemish court, where the heirs resided: the first-born Juana, who was married to Philip of Habsburg, the son of Maximilian, King of Romans.

As is well known, although Ferdinand ordered the immediate proclamation of his heirs, his wife had arranged for him to exercise his rights to govern if Juana "did not want to, or could not govern", thus blocking any attempt by Philip to rule alone (Carretero Zamora 2005; Val Valdivieso 2018; Ladero Quesada 2019). In this delicate situation, the Aragonese monarch set himself up as the guarantor of his wife's will of succession, acting as a *governor king* in the correspondence sent to the Castilian cities to communicate the death, where he expressed his *spousal piety*—not the *filial piety* required of the heir—in the feelings of grief and in the order to hold the funeral with the restrictive measures set out in the will. A legitimising framework was thus set up in which respect for the funeral rules was to reinforce Ferdinand's power in the heirs' absence.

However, the monarch also wanted to take advantage of the propagandistic possibilities of the obsequies through the gradual easing of restrictions in the different kingdoms of the monarchy. This is demonstrated by the requirements imposed on the cities or the Castilian aristocracy (Galende Díaz 2015), as opposed to the more lax instructions sent to the cities of the Crown of Aragon, which maintained the prohibitions on *jergas*—highly expensive mourning clothes—and left open the possibility of erecting the funerary structures that the Queen had vetoed (Batlle i Prats 1952, pp. 250–52; Miró i Baldrich 1993, p. 140; Guiance 2002, pp. 368–69). This ritual modulation would explain why the funerary restraint in the cities receiving the coffin during its journey to Granada (Simancas 1904; Szmolka Clares 1969) gradually eased in more distant localities such as Murcia (Martínez 2016) until virtually dissipating in the Crown of Aragon, where "they were ordered with the apparatus and pomp that could be celebrated if she were queen and natural lady of these kingdoms", as happened in Zaragoza or Barcelona (Zurita V/LXXXIV; Sans i Travé 1994, pp. 310–11), or as if she were present in the flesh, as was the case in Tarragona (Miró i Baldrich 1993, pp. 140–41).

The Italian sphere was also jeopardised by this event, which raised worrying questions about the future of the Kingdom of Naples, now under Spanish rule following Garellano's victory over the French army (29.XIII.1503); even more so, when the *Regno* once again became a bargaining chip in the Franco-Imperial alliance of Blois (22.IX.1504), isolating the Catholic Monarchs and threatening their Venetian ally (Seneca 1962; Fernández de Córdova 2021, pp. 492–503). Nor did Ferdinand and Isabella's unstable relations with Pope Julius II, who was reluctant to hand over the Neapolitan investiture to them and reproached them for their friendship with Venice, usurper of the papal enclaves in Romagna, help to improve this murky outlook. In this tense context, it is understandable that the death of the Queen was considered in Italy to be an "event of great importance", and gave "much to talk about" in the Eternal City, where the news arrived on 24 December via French couriers sent to the treasurer Francesco Alidosi, Julius II's adviser (Guicciardini 2006, p. 401; Giustinian 1876, pp. 345–46; Burckardi 1942, pp. 465–66). His triumphalist tone explains why Spanish agents reacted with scepticism, and why the viceroy of Naples did not publish the rumour, nor order the mourning "so as not to discourage your servants, nor give hope to the opponents" (Serrano y Pineda 1918, pp. 105–6).

Aware of the disturbances that could arise in Italy, Ferdinand sent his wife's will to his ambassadors, clarifying the order of succession. The Aragonese also sought support in the Curia by re-establishing relations with the only Castilian cardinal, Bernardino López de Carvajal, a former procurator who had had some disagreements with the monarchs. The Catholic King wrote to him in the most cordial terms, asking him to indicate to Julius

II that nothing had changed following the death of his wife, and that he maintained his determination "to do everything that would comply with his Holiness", continuing with "greater force and rigour [. . .] that of our Kingdom of Naples and the things of our friends", i.e., the pontifical legitimisation of the *Regno*, and the safeguarding of Venetian friendship.[3] Ferdinand was thus retaining Carvajal's services, asking him "that you continually let us know the things there, and write to us your opinion on everything that happens". As a month later Philip of Habsburg adopted a similar approach, the cardinal from Extremadura found himself in a privileged position to mediate in the foreseeable tensions between two monarchs who sought the support of the Apostolic See to legitimise their pretensions.[4]

Ferdinand's letters took a month to reach their Italian destinations. On Christmas Eve, Francisco de Rojas—the royal ambassador in Rome—communicated the news to the Pope and the Spanish cardinals (Burckardi 1942, p. 465). He had most probably read the Queen's will before the Curia—as Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa did before the Venetian government—since the papal secretary Segismundo da Conti records the designation of Juana as universal heiress ("universali herede") and Ferdinand as administrator ("administratore") (De' Conti 1883, p. 341). The Spanish cardinals then wore "cappas violatias" as an expression of mourning, forming an emotional community that defied the curial liturgy, and could be interpreted as a form of political protest. It was a provocation that Ambassador Rojas prevented by ordering the cardinals to abandon their mourning "ad laudem et honorem sedis apostolice" (Burckardi 1942, pp. 465–66).

This did not prevent Carvajal—the Queen's "creature"—from retiring to his palace "molto addolorato", without making an appearance at the Christmas Vigil. He thus circumvented the ban by expressing mourning through seclusion, practised by the Spanish community in Rome as a form of political contestation. In fact, Carvajal's gesture provoked the indignation of other members of the College of Cardinals for this "luctum particulare" that postponed the universal joy of Christ's birth. With this provocation, the cardinal from Extremadura was declaring himself in the Curia as an inevitable interlocutor in the possible confrontation between the Aragonese monarch—ready to unleash his aggression against France—and the young Habsburg, whose Francophilia could hinder his accession to the Castilian throne, as Carvajal revealed to the Venetian ambassador (Giustinian 1876, p. 348).

Julius II also expressed his grief at the death of the Queen, aware that he had lost an important supporter for his recovery of the lands held by Venice (Giustinian 1876, pp. 361–62). Additionally, there was no shortage of curials close to the Pope to express their affliction with the "nuncius luctuossisimus" that had shaken Italy ("universa Italia"), such as the pontifical preacher Friar Egidio da Viterbo, convinced that with her the light of the sun and the stars was extinguished ("Visa est enim eripi non Regina Hispaniarum, sed solis et siderum universa lux") (Egidio da Viterbo 1990, pp. 257–58), or the secretary Segismundo da Conti, who lamented the disappearance of that "glorious woman, a distinguished ornament of our century and of the Catholic faith" ("magnum seculi nostri et fidei Catholicae decus") (De' Conti 1883, p. 341).

Meanwhile, Ambassador Rojas began to organise the Isabelline funeral with the same flexibility as the King had arranged in Naples and his patrimonial kingdoms, where "the obsequies and sentiments that are customary in such a case" (Serrano y Pineda 1912, pp. 517–18) were to be held. He therefore urged the cardinals ("solicitante maxime oratore regio") to obtain permission from Julius II to hold the funeral in the papal chapel, as Alexander VI had granted in 1498 in honour of the recently deceased Prince John (Grassis *Tractatus*, f. 215v). However, relations with Pope della Rovere were not as easy as those with Pope Borgia, who—in need of Spanish support—had made the heir of the Catholic Monarchs the first non-ruling prince to receive funeral honours in the Vatican chapel (Vaquero Piñeiro 2001, p. 645). Julius II not only refused to cede his chapel, but vetoed the celebration of the Queen in Rome, claiming that such honours were only paid to sovereigns ("si pro regibus fiunt, pro reginis fieri non debent"). The Spanish prelates replied that both Ferdinand and Isabella had been crowned, and Isabella had ascended the throne even before her husband as Queen Proprietor "in qua est titulus et caput regni". For this reason, if Isabella died

before Ferdinand, she should receive the honour due to her, even if it meant forcing the papal ceremonial.

Faced with this argument, Julius II postponed his decision for more than a month ("quod multo tempore distulit"). Beyond the protocol dispute, this delay must also have been due to the tensions that had arisen between the Flemish and Fernandine courts, which explain the letters the Catholic King sent to the Pope at the end of January, expressing his willingness to cede the throne to his daughter Juana—whom he was expecting with her husband—and his hope of achieving the peace the pontiff longed for (Giustinian 1876, p. 385): happy omens that belied the news of Philip and Juana's imminent journey through France—a power hostile to the Catholic King—to take possession of the Castilian throne. Hence, in early February, Julius II decided to send a nuncio to the Iberian Peninsula to oversee the transfer of the succession (Giustinian 1876, pp. 402–3). All this must have been on Julius II's mind when he communicated his decision to deny the Vatican chapel for the Isabelline obsequies, allowing them to be held instead anywhere in Rome "cum omni solemnitate" and the participation of the whole Curia (Grassis *Diarium*, f. 82v). With Vatican diplomacy, the Ligurian pope avoided committing himself to a celebration that could displease the French or be manipulated in the face of Castilian succession tension.

The controversy over the Queen's funeral is a sign of a papal circumspection that can also be glimpsed in Las quince preguntas que fizo el Papa Julio a Gracia Dei sobre las excelencias de la Reina Doña Isabel, nuestra Señora de Castilla, de León, de Aragón, attributed to Pedro Gracia Dei (c. 1469–1530), the pseudonym of a poet, chronicler and genealogist linked to the court of the Catholic Monarchs (Paz y Melia 1892, pp. 371–78; Perea 2007). The poem, written after Isabella's death, describes the answers to the fifteen questions that Julius II had supposedly posed in order to learn about the personality, power and work of the deceased Queen; no doubt a real or fictitious pretext allows the poet to deploy his panegyric highlighting the harmony between the Queen's moral qualities and her exercise of power. With its clichés and schematisms, the composition can be seen as a "poetic canonisation" of the sovereign, an exemplum regis linking Isabelline memory with the figure of the Roman pontiff. It was not the only propagandistic text on the death of Isabella, as evidenced by the compositions attributed to Crespí de Valldaura, Luis Miquel Trilles, Cayzedo and Jerónimo del Encina, or the two romances that poeticise her succession dispositions from a pro-Fernandine angle (González 2005; Fernández Terricabras 2005; Marías 2017, p. 403).

3. *Diva Elisabeth, Semper Augusta*: Hybrid Scenographies between Spain and Rome

The reactions to the Queen's death and the funeral negotiations having been described, there now follows an analysis of its liturgical and artistic display, with consideration of its novelty and the messages conveyed. We will thus see to what extent the Spanish elites integrated Italian and Hispanic forms in a hybrid celebration that was to show the Papal Curia the political and religious values embodied by the new Hispanic power installed in Italy and threatened by the Blois coalition.

The funeral for the Catholic Queen was held on 26 February 1505 in the Church of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, located in the Piazza Navona. This temple erected in the mid-15th century had become a soundbox for the victories of the war of Granada (1484–1492) and was the venue for the funeral of Prince John (1498) (Vaquero Piñeiro 2001; Schraven 2014, pp. 37–42; Gómez Moreno and Jiménez Calvente 2015; Salvador Miguel 2017; Jiménez Calvente 2021). In the late 15th century, it had been embellished and extended in response to the new demands for representation, which culminated under the government of Diego Meléndez Valdés, Bishop of Zamora and collaborator with Francisco de Rojas in his assertion of Neapolitan rights.

The leading role taken by the ambassador shows the Crown's commitment to a celebration that was to have an impact on the Roman audience. Rojas, Carvajal and Meléndez Valdés all had experience in artistic patronage. Rojas had promoted several projects during his embassy in Flanders and was now managing the construction of his

funerary chapel (Pascual and Fiz Fuertes 2015; Vázquez 2017). Carvajal collected antiquities and was in charge of the construction of the church-convent of San Pietro in Montorio sponsored by the Catholic Monarchs (Cantatore 2001; Martín-Esperanza 2020), while Valdés promoted works on the Jacobean church and the cathedral of Zamora (Rivera de las Heras 2017).

For the organisation of the exequies, there was the precedent of the recent funeral held in the cathedral of Naples (16.I.1505) with an imposing structure in the form of an illuminated fortress ("castellana grande") that raised the customs of the ancient Aragonese dynasty to their highest expression (Hernando Sánchez 2004, pp. 177–78). With that "officio degnissimo", reproduced in other cities such as Cava or Taranto, the Gran Capitán offered a show of loyalty that earned the *laudatio* of the Sicilian humanist Pietro Gravina. Given the communications that the viceroy maintained with Rojas and Carvajal, it is possible that the Neapolitan example stimulated the emulation and audacity of the Roman agents.

The papal postponement of the Hispanic consultation made it possible to prepare the event almost two months in advance. Julius II ordered the cessation of audiences to facilitate the attendance of the Curia, and the suspension of the weekly market in Piazza Navona—planned for that day—allowed the participation of the urban popular sector (Grassis Diarium, f. 82v). The descriptions of the masters of ceremonies Jacob Burcardo (Burckardi 1942, pp. 465–66) and Paris de Grassis—Carvajal's assistant in the liturgical organisation[5]—are the fundamental texts for the reconstruction of an event that also left its mark on the courts of Mantua and Urbino.[6]

One of the aspects that attracted the most attention was the scenography of the interior of the church of Santiago, especially the *castrum doloris* erected in the central nave, which Grassis judged to be more elegant than the papal or cardinal funerary monuments ("non simpliciter, sicut pro pontifice aut cardinalibus sed *maiore elegantia* ne dicam ambitione pro pontifice et cardinalibus solitum") (Grassis *Tractatus*, f. 216r). Unlike what happened in 1498, his admiration is devoid of the indignation aroused by the outsized structure—in the form of a baldachin—erected by the prince, who surpassed the *apparati* of kings or popes with a present body (Visceglia 2013, pp. 99–103), allowing himself to be carried away by the growing gigantism of late-15th-century Iberian funerary furniture, an excess that could be justified in the Rome of Alexander VI—akin to the Catholic Monarchs in their struggle with France—but not in the Curia of Julius II, more suspicious of the Hispanic power installed in Naples (Fernández de Córdova 2008–2009).

At 5.5 m high, 8.5 m long and 6 m wide, the Isabelline *castrum* was little more than half the size of the one erected by the prince—9 m high—with the intention of avoiding scandal and concentrating attention on the new stylistic elements. The architectural structure had a rectangular base with four three-metre columns at each corner giving it a baldachin-like appearance, recalling its 1498 precedent and other Hispanic funerary architecture (Varela 1990, p. 50; Arbury 1992, pp. 41–42; Allo Manero and Esteban Lorente 2004, p. 68; Zalama and Pascual 2018, p. 66). The black velvet that covered the columns was enriched by the Queen's emblematic green (Fernández de Córdova 2005, p. 47), adding the values of youth and hope to the mournful black (Pastoureau 2013). This chromatic note personifying the monument was not out of keeping with Castilian funerary customs, where personal emblems—and not only the coat of arms—were usually adorned with royal sepulchres (Fernández de Córdova 2014a, 2016).

The baldachin had a pyramid-shaped roof covered with candles which—unlike the *castrum* 1498 *castrum*—was embellished with five turrets over two metres high, crowned with pinnacles ("turricellas cum suis propugnaculi") with massive torches ("intorticia"). Four of them were placed at the corners, with the fifth rising from the centre of the roof holding the ensigns with the coat of arms and titles of the sovereign. The traditional *chapelle ardente* was thus transformed into a structure closer to a slender baldachin with a palatial appearance, showing possible similarities to the turreted structure erected in Seville by the Crown Prince (Romero Abao 1991, pp. 59–60).

Between the four columns of the baldachin was the *Thalamus*, or four-sided "constructum aedificium", raised on seven steps in the form of a stepped pyramid, perhaps similar to the "graderías" used in the Catalan territory (Allo Manero and Esteban Lorente 2004, p. 71): three steps covered with black cloth projected out of the columns—raised on the fourth step—and the other three went into the *castrum* and were lined with Isabelline green velvet. On the upper tier, Paris de Grassis described a conical structure—"non sicut nos facere solemus"—which served as the base for the Queen's *cenotaphium* or fictitious coffin.[7] It was a conical dais that can be identified with the Iberian "bed" that acquired sophisticated forms during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, such as the hexagonal catafalque erected in Messina for the Prince's funeral (Bianca 1984), or the star-shaped sepulchre sculpted by Gil de Siloé for the parents of the Catholic Queen in the Cartuja de Miraflores (Burgos) (Pereda 2001). The Roman coffin was covered with a luxurious golden cloth—the gold eschatological, a symbol of divine light and absolute clarity (Pastoureau 1993, p. 104)—and with green brocade, a cross embroidered on the upper part, suggesting the salvation of the soul, like the scriptural inscriptions placed on the catafalque, which we will comment on below. With this sumptuous decoration, the Spanish community was trying to make up for the insignia placed on the coffin, which had no place in the papal city, or the figurative representations used in some cities of the kingdom of Aragon, and perhaps also Castile (Pérez Monzón 2011, p. 237).

An emblematic and epigraphic feature in the form of shields and inscriptions was placed on the *castrum doloris*, which was particularly novel in terms of its quality and size. Unlike the cardinal's funerary coats of arms—drawn on cloth ("telas depicta")—the Elizabethan ones were embroidered on dark velvet with gold and silver thread ("argentoque contexta quasi per modum aurifrigionum") (Grassis *Diarium*, f. 83r), sparkling colours linked to light (gold) and purity (silver). This preciousness could be related to the function of the coats of arms less as an identifier than as a substitute for the deceased in the Hispanic funerary tradition, as shown by the rites of breaking of shields or their inverted placement in funeral processions (Pérez Monzón 2011, p. 239). At the end of the 15th century, funerary scenographies also experienced a heraldic saturation reflected in the stone armorials carved in the chapels of Álvaro de Luna (Toledo Cathedral), the Constables of Castile (Burgos Cathedral), or in the chevet of San Juan de los Reyes, designed by the monarchs as a pantheon (Domínguez Casas 1990; Noehles-Doerk 2006; Pérez Monzón 2011, pp. 238–39).

Visual resources were not limited to emblematic decoration. Epigraphy was also used as a memory strategy to display the identity of the deceased, her qualities, genealogical affiliation and the most important achievements of her life (Ariès 1983, pp. 184–94). On the central turret crowning the baldachin tumulus, there was a luxurious sign with the Queen's titles engraved in golden letters, probably using humanistic capitals: DIVA ELISABETH, DEI GRATIA HISPANIARUM, UTRIUSQUE SICILIE AC HIERUSALEM, REGINA CATHOLICA, POTENTISSIMA, CLEMENTISSIMA, SEMPER AUGUSTA (Burckardi 1942, p. 466; Grassis Diarium, f. 83r). The use of the Latin formula "Diva Elisabeth" emphasised—with its classical resonances—the political power of the sovereign and her religious excellence, in imitation of the princesses of the Julio-Claudian dynasty who, after their death, became part of the list of imperial divinities (Martín-Esperanza n.d.) With a rhythmic cadence, the inscription began with the proclamation of her holiness and the power received from God ("Dei gratia"), and then went on to list her Hispanic dominions and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, including Naples and Jerusalem, underpinning rights to the *Regno* that Julius II had not yet confirmed. For his part, Carvajal had just received the patriarchate of Jerusalem, where the Queen had exercised a protectorate that Ludovico Bruno explains in his *sermo funebris*.

Alongside the territorial domains, the title "regina catholica"—granted by Alexander VI in 1496—was followed by the epithets "potentissima, clementissima, semper augusta", used in ancient Rome on the death of emperors and empresses: an evocation of the imperial past that introduced a new decorative element *all'antica* developed by humanistic epigraphy. The inscription was flanked by the royal arms with the Isabelline motto ("Sub umbra alarum

tuarum protege nos") in the form of a semicircle at the bottom, and at the ends two golden inscriptions announced the salvation of the deceased: "Surrexit" was written on the right-hand panel, and *Non est hic* on the left, alluding to the resurrection of Christ (Mk 16:6) in which the sovereign took part.

With this suggestive combination of inscriptions, the idea of royal "immortality" that gave continuity to the monarchical institution was strengthened, as Kantorowitz explained (Kantorowicz 1998, pp. 436–37); Nieto Soria notes—in Castile—the elevation of the deceased king to the celestial plane as protector of the kingdom (Nieto Soria 1993, pp. 114–15). The case of the Catholic Queen was enhanced by the sanctity conveyed by certain testimonies (Guiance 2002, pp. 262–63) and present in some funeral sermons, such as the *oratio* of Bruno, where the incorruptibility of her corpse is affirmed, or the *Sermo de morte regine Helisabete* preached by Fray Martín García at the Zaragoza funeral, which describes the particular judgement of the Queen and her final glorification (Cirac 1956, pp. 115–24).

The walls and columns of the church were covered with dark cloth bearing the arms of the sovereign—Castile and Aragon—and mixed ("simul et mixtim") with the coats of arms of the kingdoms linked to her descendants: Portugal—where Mary of Portugal settled—and Austria–Burgundy, which belonged to Juana and Philip of Habsburg (Grassis Diarium, f. 84r). This type of hanging was common in the Iberian Peninsula, where Latin inscriptions could also be found next to the coats of arms (García and González 1995–1996, p. 133; Cabrera 2001, p. 548; Martínez 2016, pp. 817–18; Nogales 2019, pp. 185–87). Indeed, on the walls near the altar, under the coats of arms, there were two panels with golden letters, which exalted the Queen's lineage, her divine election, and the power bequeathed to her descendants: "Propterea elegit te Deus pre consortibus tuis, patribus tuis; nati sunt tibi filii; constitues eos principes super omnem terram". Taken from the offertory of the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul (Psalm 44:17–18), the texts attributed the universal power of the Church to that of the heirs, as if the eschatological exaltation of the sovereign (upper part of the catafalque) overflowed around the perimeter of the temple dedicated to her descendants. This is a scenographic game which, as we shall see, will have its rhetorical correspondence in the preacher's exaltation of Isabelline marriage policy.

Finally, we should not forget the lighting arrangement, particularly well developed in the Trastámara court, and which in a funerary context acquired theological connotations as an expression of life overcoming death/darkness. At Isabella's funeral, 1350 kilos of wax were used, slightly less than the 1800 used in the prince's funeral, which were concentrated on the roof of the *castrum*. In 1504 a more balanced arrangement was observed: the main light source was still located at the top of the baldachin—with 16 large candles ("intorticia") and 32 candles ("faculae")—but instead of lighting on candelabra, as in 1498, two trestles were placed on either side of the catafalque with 15 large candles each. The aisles of the church were illuminated with 74 large candles, creating a luminous axis that connected the door of the temple—with 12 large candles—and the choir, whose entrance was illuminated by another 12 large candles (Burckardi 1942, p. 466; Grassis Diarium, f. 83v). Grassis also noted the magnanimous distribution of candles to those present, noting the three-pound candles received by prelates and ambassadors—not the two-pound ones given to popes and cardinals—and those distributed among the *cubicularii* with "multa confusio et horror".

The liturgical celebration was significantly better attended than in 1498. Following Roman custom, the pontiff did not appear, but the entire College of Cardinals did: twenty-five cardinals—six of them Spanish—dressed "di morello scuro, che in loro è corotto", more than double the eleven who attended the prince's funeral, and many more than the eighteen who attended the funeral of Charles VIII of France (1499) (Grassis Tractatus, ff. 215v–216r; Luzio and Renier 1893, p. 165; Burckardi 1942, pp. 90–91). The cardinals were joined by four archbishops, nine ambassadors, and a remarkable number of lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries (Giustinian 1876, p. 434; Castiglione 1978, p. 53). All of them were arranged in the choir in two groups separated by the corridor and seated in their respective "scapna"; the prelates, on the other hand, were installed in the nave.

The main seat was reserved for Ambassador Rojas, who was accompanied by twenty servants wrapped in "mantellos longos et caputia super spatullis" of very thick black cloth, probably the *jergas* forbidden by the Queen in her will.[8] With him were the two Hispanophile agents of the Roman king, Maximilian of Habsburg—Lucca de Reynaldis and the old orator Ludovico Bruno, in charge of the funeral speech, and the Florentine representatives, allies of France. Several of the Pope's relatives were also present, including Cardinal Galeotto Franciotti della Rovere, the Duke of Urbino Guidobaldo da Montefeltro—"cum la gramalia fin a terra"—and the prefect Francesco Maria della Rovere, dressed in black velvet. These two aristocrats and the Prince of Salerno, Roberto II Sanseverino, struck a discordant note at the celebration, refusing to leave the seat they occupied with the cardinals—despite Carvajal's attempts to relocate them elsewhere—"quod fuit male factum sed pro necessitate toleratum". In a city like Rome, where political tension translated into protocol conflicts, this gesture could be interpreted as an attempt by some Francophile aristocrats to tarnish the Spanish obsequies.

Instead of a Spanish ecclesiastic—as was customary in San Giacomo degli Spagnoli—Cardinal Bernardino Carafa, Patriarch of Alexandria and nephew of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, presided over the celebration, showing with his presence the support of an important sector of the Neapolitan elite. Carafa concelebrated with seven chaplains, two more than usual, thus intensifying the solemnity of the ceremony. It was a sung Mass, and at the end the officiant and the four archbishops present went to the *castrum doloris* to give absolution to the sovereign by singular pontifical privilege, "as cardinals do at the funeral of the pope or other cardinals". According to Grassis, Julius II granted this intolerable novelty "cum maxima difficultate et aegre", at the request of the Valencian Cardinal Juan de Vera and with the approval of the College of Cardinals, astutely achieved by the "cardinales Hispani" (Grassis *Diarium*, f. 84r).

Such manoeuvres reveal the interest of the Spanish elites in offering a spectacle out of the ordinary thanks to a liturgical and artistic display that was combined with innovative details that did not go unnoticed. The overall judgements are particularly expressive. Paris de Grassis praised the liturgical solemnity and the admirable mournful scenography ("apparatus fuit pro maestitia satis spectabilis, et missa satis solemnis") (Grassis *Diarium*, f. 82v), and Baldassare Castiglione noted the template of that funeral celebrated "very solemnly according to the custom of Spain" (Castiglione 1978, p. 53). However, not everything was Hispanic in those exequies, which Emilia Pío acutely described as "misere a la italiana et ceremoniose a la spagnola" (Luzio and Renier 1893, p. 166), evidencing a hybridism that combined Italian penitential intensity—pathos, perhaps—with Hispanic magnificence, typical of a solemnity understood as a mark of power and a sign of the *maiestas regia*.

This can be regarded as the embodiment of what Burke has called creative reception, whereby a group would take new or different ideas from another cultural sphere, adapting and moulding them according to ceremonial requirements, establishing cultural patterns and local styles (Burke 1998, p. 13; Knighton 2001, p. 130). In this case, the Spanish community settled in Rome would have undertaken a process of accommodation, assimilation or syncretism, adapting Hispanic ceremonial to Roman forms, with the idea of projecting an image of prestige, elegance and solidity understandable to the Roman audience. Its success can be seen in the drawing of the *castrum doloris* that Burcardo reproduced "in alia carta" (Burckardi 1942, p. 466), and the detailed description that Grassis incorporated into his *Tractatus de Funeribus et Exequiis in Romana Curia*, turning the Isabelline celebration into a model that surely inspired the exuberant Roman exequial exuberance of the 16th century (Schraven 2014).

4. Isabelline Virtues for Political Concord: The *Sermo* of Ludovico Bruno

Along with the liturgical and artistic aspects of the celebration, we must pay attention to its homiletic dimension, especially relevant in a city like Rome, where humanist rhetoric had reached high levels of development (O'Malley 1979). This last section will analyse

the *oratio* composed for funerals, which has gone unnoticed by scholars of the Catholic Queen. Its text not only shows the image of the sovereign projected to the international community, but also makes it possible to see the connection of the homiletic discourse with the ritual and iconographic resources used, facilitating a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the 1505 funeral service.

An important singularity of the Isabelline exequies was the absence of the preaching that had been entrusted to Ludovico Bruno (c. 1445–1508), bishop of Acqui, humanist, poet laureate, "Flemish secretary", and Maximilian's adviser and ambassador to Julius II (Rill 1972; Flood 2006, pp. 248–49). In 1498 he was chosen as Archduke Philip of Habsburg's procurator to be sent to the court of the Catholic Monarchs. Gómez de Fuensalida described him then as a "sane and discreet man and always [. . .] desires to serve VVAA [Isabella and Ferdinand]"; he knew Castilian well and, as an ecclesiastic, "may be brought by the ear in the interest of some benefit" (Gómez de Fuensalida 1907, p. 64). Although the legation did not materialise, he was later able to collaborate with the Spanish agents in the surrender of Forlì (1504), as he had been commissioned by the King of Romans to obtain the return to the Pope of the Romagna territories seized by Venice (Seneca 1962, pp. 53, 59, 66). He settled in Rome in October and remained there as Maximilian's ambassador until April 1505.

Rojas or Carvajal must have entrusted him with the *sermo funebris* because of his Hispanic attunement (Giustinian 1876, p. 486). However, Bruno did not deliver his *oratio*, citing a certain indisposition considered feigned (Burckardi 1942, p. 472), or attributed to a loss of nerves (Grassis *Diarium*, f. 84r), perhaps as a result of political tension. This frustration allows us to conjecture—in line with Pocock's theory—a break in the transition from the speaker's intention to the execution of his speech, which finally found other channels to become public. Although the absence of preaching tarnished the ceremony, the *sermo* must have been published that year by the workshops of Johann Besicken, connected with the Spanish elites in Rome (Blasio 1988). This is suggested by its title *De obitu Serenissime et Catholice d[omin]e Helisabeth Hispaniarum et vtriusq[ue] Sicilie ac Hierusalem Regine Oratio*, which bears the date 22 February 1505, four days before the funeral celebration.[9]

As *caput mundi*, Rome constituted a privileged place for issuing this type of eulogy addressed to a wide audience linked to the Papal Curia (McManamon 1976, 1989; Camporeale 1980). By then, the humanistic *oratio* developed in the Italian peninsula had become detached from the *artes praedicandi* and had approached the epideictic genre (*genus demonstrativum*) developed not so much to teach as to move. If dedicated to a deceased prince, the sermon tended to follow the model of the classical *laudatio*, oscillating between reflection on the ephemeral nature of power and exaltation of the moral qualities of the deceased, held up as an example of action and virtue (D'Avray 1994).

The Spanish agents had taken advantage of the propagandistic value of these interventions in the obsequies for Prince John (1498) by requesting the services of the humanist Tommaso Fedra Inghirami, whose *oratio* was published with a dedication to the ambassador Garcilaso de la Vega. Seven years later, the imperial procurator was chosen to convey the Queen's legacy in the new succession context in favour of the Habsburgs. Additionally, although it is not possible to know the sources of Bruno's speech, much of his information could have been provided by Rojas or the Cardinal from Extremadura, convinced of "la qualità della donna (delle virtù e laude della quale feze un longo parlare)" before the Venetian representative (Giustinian 1876, p. 348).

The 1505 speech comprises the three classic moments of the funeral discourse: the *exordium*, the biography and the *peroratio*, the second being the most extensive part. After a brief exhortation on the Christian meaning of death (1 Te, 4), the preacher describes Isabella's *genos*, recalling her parents—John II of Castile and Isabella of Portugal—her birth on the feast of St George, and her accession to the throne "iure optimo" after the death of her brother without issue, as prescribed by the law of the Goths ("lege gothorum"). Bruno thus appeals to the Queen's Gothic blood ("nobilitatis antiquitas"), developing the neo-Gothic ideal by exalting the power achieved by this people in Hispania, Africa and Gaul, and the determination of their successors to fight the Muslim invaders (Bruni 1505,

f. 1v). Isabella is the last link in a list of Christian monarchs to receive significant epithets from the Apostolic See, such as the "christianissimum" Recaredo, the "religiosissimum" Sisebuto, and the "catholicus" Alfonso I, a title recently bestowed on the "sanctissima Regina" and her "gloriosissimo viro Ferdinando".

Within the framework of this glorious past, Bruno begins the moral portrait of Isabella, describing her as a "santa femina" adorned with the splendid necklace of virtues ("tam preciossissimo monili virtutum omnium ornata") (Bruni 1505, f. 2r). As a sovereign, the preacher begins with her prudence in the domestic ("prudentia familiae") and public ("prudentia politica") spheres, which he illustrates with the Biblical couple of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, model of the "sapientia-gubernatio" and archetype of the Ferdinand and Isabella tandem. He highlights the order of her court ("domus regie") as mother and wife, and her attention to the "regal ceremonies" or "divine ceremonies", referring to her custom of praying with her ladies in a remote palace oratory, and of attending the solemn recitation of vespers in the royal chapel.

With a poet's wit, Bruno describes the marriage policy deployed by Isabella as an "industrious bee" capable of uniting the greater part of Europe through her children ("uti apis argumentosa maiorem Europe partem affinitate sibi devinxit") (Bruni 1505, f. 2v), emblematically represented on the walls of the Jacobean church. The double marriage of Jean-Marguerite and Jeanne-Philippe, which was to unite their lineage with the House of Austria–Burgundy, receives special mention. In this context, Bruno assumes Carvajal's integrating perspective (González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte 1999), announcing the confirmation of this union when Juana—first-born and "as exalted as her mother"—and her husband inherit the Crown of Spain ("Hispanie Corone"). He then mentions Mary's accession to the throne of Portugal and the Anglo–Hispanic annexation through the Infanta Catherine. Thus, it can be said that, with her modest offspring, the Catholic Queen has grafted the branches of the Christian orb onto the same stem.

In the field of political prudence, he recalls her fortitude and constancy from the beginning of her reign—as though she had been born "ad imperandam"—in subduing her Portuguese adversaries and eradicating vice, robbery, homicide and blasphemy from her dominions, eliminating them "in repentina mutatio", as if a splendid sun had dispelled the preceding darkness. This was followed by the restoration of the public purse, the enrichment of the royal patrimony, and the legislative policy to restore the "fraternitatem hispanicam" (Bruni 1505, f. 3rv).

Bruno then turns to certain virtues considered by classical authors, such as intelligence, memory, docility, guile ("solertia"), prudence, discretion ("circunspectio") and caution (Bruni 1505, f. 4r). In each of them, information—sometimes novel, sometimes familiar—about the personality of the Castilian queen is provided (Ladero Quesada 2006). Her "perspicax ingeniun" is highlighted, which made her a very subtle reader and listener, capturing the depths of the mind and synthesising what others fail to grasp even after lengthy expositions. On top of her ability to retain names, Isabella added "docilitas" in the study of the Latin language with her daughters ("latina litteris"), later going deeper with her own teachers to learn the Holy Scriptures, and—in a wink at Bruno's audience—to understand the papal letters. After her accession to the throne, she became familiar with French and Italian, having always spoken and written her in Spanish mother tongue "elegantissime". Bruno was thus not merely valuing Isabelle's linguistic skills, but her involvement in government, where she sought the right counsel to better discern judgement.

Following Aristotle, he opens the chapter on the cardinal virtues with prudence and justice, which the deceased practised by granting civil offices to worthy persons—as had not been done before—and ecclesiastical dignities to spiritual and learned men who deserved them, a statement that possibly concealed a subtle criticism of Ferdinand's first episcopal promotion—shortly after his wife's death—favouring his natural son Alfonso of Aragon (Giustinian 1876, p. 385). In the field of temperance, it is noted that not the slightest dishonest word left her mouth, that she abstained from wine and practised a "heroicae castitatis", sleeping with her ladies if her husband was absent. She combined modesty

with "gravis et regia maiestas" and showed her fortitude by meeting the death of her children—John and Isabella—with serenity and union with the divine will. She endured the hardships of the war in Granada, building the city of Santa Fe after the burning of the royal tents in the siege of Granada and, after the death of his first-born son, suffered illness and weakness without complaint, including the final fever which she endured by consoling others and praising God (Bruni 1505, f. 6r).

The theological virtues allow the preacher to highlight the religious motives that guided her foreign ventures, such as the conquest of Granada, recovered for the Christian religion after seven hundred years of Muslim domination. In this "bello mirabile", Isabella exercised charity by building hospitals for the sick and wounded, clothing the freed captives, and supplying the troops (Bruni 1505, f. 7rv).

Less well known than these well-trodden paths of Hispanic propaganda is the reference to the evangelisation of the Indies, in those years when the papal concession of ecclesiastical patronage was being negotiated (Fita 1892). The ambassador refers specifically to the incorporation into the Christian faith ("lucro fidei adiecit") of the seven Canary Islands (*Fortunatas Insulas*)—with their 50,000 inhabitants who knew nothing of Christ—and the very distant *Insulas Atlanticas* ("versus Indos"), "which they now call *Hispanienses*", i.e., Hispaniola (Greater Antilles). According to Bruno, this "studiosa Christi femina" had founded nine cathedral-churches, which does not tally with the three dioceses erected "apud insulas indicas", as cited below (Bruni 1505, f. 7v). However, he provides an interesting reference to the creation of the first Antillean dioceses—a metropolitan see and two suffragans—which the Crown had just proposed in Rome through Rojas and Cardinal Juan Vera, and which Julius II granted in the bull *Illius fulciti* (15.XI.1504) without ceding the patronal rights (Metzler 1991, pp. 91–94). To this ecclesiastical establishment, we can add the two cathedral-churches erected in the Canary Islands and the four in the kingdom of Granada, where the Queen had founded and endowed other minor churches and monasteries.

Referring to Mediterranean expansion, Bruno mentions the occupation of Melilla (1497)—"munitissimum oppidum" in the kingdom of Tagaste—and the island of Cephalonia (1500)—"apud grecos olim Ulixis"—which he liberated from Turkish rule, restoring it to the Venetians. Both references were timely in view of the recent papal renewal of permits to collect the crusading tithe to be used in the African campaign, despite the cardinals' protests at the extension of the tax to the Neapolitan kingdom (Fernández de Córdova 2021, pp. 415–17). Nor did the preacher forget the Queen's support for the Apostolic See, returning the fortress of Ostia thanks to the courage of her troops, preventing the alienation of Benevento from the patrimony of the Church, and restoring the cities of Imola and Forlì to Julius II (Bruni 1505, ff. 7v–8r).

Bruno placed her policy of extirpating heresy, infidelity, apostasy and blasphemy from her kingdoms within the framework of the exaltation of the faith and the Apostolic See. To put an end to crypto-Judaism—spread among converted Jews by the preaching of St Vincent Ferrer—she extinguished more than 50,000 heretics with the severe penalties of fire, deportation or imprisonment; a rather steep figure compared with Fernando del Pulgar's numbers for the first decade of the Inquisition tribunal (Kamen 2011, p. 62). Referring to the Queen's will that only Christ should be worshipped in her dominions, he recalls the expulsion of 600,000 Jews—losing the money they paid in taxes—and her opposition to the continued practice of the Islamic religion in Granada, proposing conversion or expulsion, and achieving the baptism of 200,000 people through the preaching of priests, as in the times of Constantine and Saint Helena (Azcona 2004, 2015). Finally, Bruno mentions the toughening of penalties for crimes of apostasy or blasphemy, and Isabella's determination to eradicate magic.

After faith and hope, Bruno dwells on charity, describing the Queen's beneficence, her donations to the nobility, the cession of the third part of the royal patrimony in the kingdoms of Granada and Naples, and the public and private alms, which can be traced in the documentation (Andrés Díaz 2010; Nogales 2009). However, the amounts destined

for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Chapel of the Tomb of the Virgin (most likely the one in the Kidron Valley) are particularly noteworthy. Like a new St Helena, the Castilian queen wrote to the Sultan of Egypt and the tyrant of Syria so that they would not hinder the work undertaken, and she herself donated golden curtains ("cortinas aureas magni pretii") for the chapel of the Sepulchre of Christ, and four very fine sheets ("sindones lineas quattuor preciossissimas")—which she wove herself while pregnant—to cover the slab that held the body of Our Lord, not forgetting the thousand gold ducats sent annually from 1489 to the Franciscans given custody of the site (Bruni 1505, f. 9r; Lama de la Cruz 2015, p. 233).

Having described the Queen's virtuous necklace, Bruno devotes the last part of the *narratio* to her death. Weakened for four months by the "febris quartane", she died at the age of fifty-six on the feast of Saint Catherine—to whom she was devoted—after providing for the succession of the kingdom, and having ruled for thirty-five years with Ferdinand, accumulating twenty royal crowns. Her death in Medina del Campo with her servants and a group of prelates is described, "with incredible mourning of all Spain and the whole world" ("incredibili totius Hispanie luctu immo et orbis universi") (Bruni 1505, f. 9v). Linking herself to other models of royal sanctity, Isabella ordered her remains to rest in Granada as St Ferdinand chose Seville, and wished to be buried in a humble sepulchre in the habit of St Francis, imitating St Louis King of France—equally devoted to the saint of Assisi—as had other Castilian sovereigns not cited by the preacher (Graña Cid 2021). This Franciscan ideology would connect with what has been called the *Beata stirps* (Vauchez 1977; Boesch-Gajano 2020, pp. 27–28), into which the Castilian queen seems to fit, as her incorrupt body ("integritas cadaveris") was shown after thirty days of the exhausting funeral route.

In explaining the feelings aroused by her disappearance, a new example from the saints' calendar is mentioned, describing the coexistence of sadness and joy at the death of St Martin of Tours. However, Bruno goes further, suggesting the Queen's transit to heaven is because of her good reputation and the order in which she had left her kingdoms, alluding to the widespread wish that her children and nephews—Juana, Philip and Charles—should succeed her, "her most powerful and undefeated husband being the preserver and director of all her dispositions" ("potentissimo ac invictissimo viro suo *conservatore et directore* omnium dispositionum suarum") (Bruni 1505, f. 9v). In an effort to reconcile wills, the imperial ambassador affirmed both the Habsburg succession and Fernandine guardianship, sparing the King no praise as a co-participant in his wife's exploits, consolidating his own propagandistic trajectory (Jiménez Calvente 2017; Fernández de Córdova 2014b, 2017). Additionally, to ensure the peaceful transfer of power, the attendance of the sovereign is suggested, as friar Juan de Ampudia in Valladolid was able to propose, saying in a speech "ansy del tiempo pasado como de lo presente e de lo por venir, diciendo en todo ello aplicándolo todo a las obras y vida de la gloriosa rreyna de España" (Pascual 2013, p. 40). This is a wish that reappears in the final *peroratio*, when imploring the salvation of the deceased and the happiness of her heirs—from whom such fruits are expected—and offering the audience the example of this woman ("tante femine exemplo") in order to achieve eternal life and enduring fame (Bruni 1505, f. 10r).

However, the ambassador's happy omens were being belied by news from Rome of Philip of Habsburg's persistent Francophilia, intolerable to Ferdinand and rebutted by Maximilian through his ambassadors in Rome (Giustinian 1876, pp. 404–6). This was probably what made Bruno hesitate on 26 February, to the point of refusing to deliver his speech in that political context. This fact is fundamental for interpreting his *oratio*, as Skinner's contextualist theory advocates, especially in view of the author's intentionality and the scope of political discourse according to the circumstances of the time. It is no coincidence that months later, that tension ended up dividing the Curia between a Habsburg and a Fernandine faction. In spite of it all, the desire for concord that must have driven the publication of the *sermo* was not extinguished, along with the idea of transmitting—through the printed word—that model of a sovereign capable of uniting Europe and expanding

the Christian faith in a succession situation doomed to political fragmentation, personal ambition and manipulation of information.

5. Conclusions

Study of the funeral exequies held on the occasion of the death of Isabella the Catholic reveals the involvement of political power in ceremonial displays that were to contribute to the succession in the terms envisaged by the Queen. Thus, whereas in Castile the Catholic King demanded the ceremonial restraint that highlighted his status as governor, in other dominions he allowed a gradual solemnity depending on the political needs of each territory. These measures show that the different modulation of the funerary acts obeyed the same political objective: to reinforce Ferdinand's authority and ensure monarchical stability at a time of uncertainty over the succession. This shows the importance of context in interpreting ceremonial acts, especially in terms of the place where they were held, and the links of the deceased prince with the territory and the interests of his successors.

With the Kingdom of Naples under Spanish control, the Italian peninsula could not remain on the sidelines of this event, which compromised the stability of the monarchy, internationally threatened by the Franco–Imperial Blois entente. This situation of anxiety explains why Spanish agents in Rome wanted to turn the Isabelline mourning into an expression of prestige and power before the Curia of Julius II, which had not yet normalised its relations with the Catholic Monarchs. Ambassador Francisco de Rojas and the Spanish cardinals undertook a complex negotiation—based on concessions and considerations—to obtain privileges from the Apostolic See, which the Pope ended up granting in a limited way, probably so as not to compromise his neutrality in the Spanish–French conflict and with the incipient tension between the Habsburg and Fernandine courts.

The political and religious planes did not cease to interact in the conversations, as although the Hispanic agents justified the request for the papal chapel on the grounds that she was a proprietary queen, the fifteen questions attributed to the pontiff emphasised her religious exemplarity. Julius II probably also made an effort to distinguish between the two spheres in his Solomonic decision to deny her chapel—to avoid interference in this symbolic space of the papacy and to exalt Isabelline memory by allowing the solemn celebration of her funeral rites before the Roman Curia.

In 1505, the Spanish elites designed a commemorative strategy—with liturgical, scenographic, rhetorical and editorial resources—that highlighted the contested propagandistic dimension of royal funerals in the time of the Catholic Monarchs, especially in that context of a succession crisis and international competition. As had happened during the Granada war and in the face of the dynastic events at the end of the reign, the Spanish community in Rome acted as an amplifier of Hispanic power in that "square of the world" which the Eternal City was for Ferdinand. The "propagandistic framework" intuited by Guiance is thus expanded to an extraordinary extent through being projected onto an international stage that is increasingly influential in the internal vicissitudes of the monarchy.

Inspired by the princely obsequies of 1498, the celebration of 1505 polished its ostentatious forms to transform the scandal of the time into admiration. In this exercise of liturgical seduction, a hybrid scenography was developed that combined elements of the Hispanic funerary tradition (palatial baldachin, conical dais, emblematic saturation) with Roman practices (inscriptions *all'antica*, humanist rhetoric). The result was a tumular architecture that was surprising for its elegance, expressed in its baldachin crowned with turrets, decorative sumptuousness, enveloping lighting and a colour palette that ranged from the peripheral black to the Isabelline green that lined the interior of the catafalque to the gilded coffin. Judging by the documented impressions, a ceremonial style was being created that married two artistic traditions to identify the new imperially minded monarchy that had just settled on the Italian peninsula. An interesting conclusion can be drawn from all this: the funerary ritual—usually considered a mere expression of inherited traditions—reveals a suggestive capacity to adapt to the more global and Roman nature of the Hispanic power that was taking shape at the beginning of the 16th century. This

flexibility undoubtedly made it easier for its messages of unity and conciliation to influence a papacy bent on easing the tension between the great powers and avoiding a rupture between Ferdinand the Catholic and Philip of Habsburg.

Beyond the legitimising messages that the obsequies may have projected onto the dominion of Naples or the American ecclesiastical patronage, their main objective was to respond to succession concerns in an adverse international context. Hence, their rhetorical and visual programme linked the memory of Isabella to the European power of her descendants—represented in the emblematic decoration—while the *laudatio* of Ludovico Bruno offered the Roman Curia a model of moral exemplarity that extended its influence over a peaceful transfer of power which was ultimately belied by events.

With its propagandistic virtues and liturgical anomalies, the Isabelline funeral is the result of the process of cultural osmosis experienced by the Spanish community in Rome, and its ability to translate it into an act celebrating the new monarchy that emerged from the dynastic change. In this new situation, Hispanic agents used Isabelline memory to defuse succession disputes and delegitimise any aggression against the heirs of a queen who had ruled virtuously, unified Europe and expanded Christianity beyond her kingdoms. A model of sanctity—with political implications—was thus configured, which had to have an impact on the Curia thanks to its funerary staging. Only on the basis of this overlap between the political and the liturgical in this type of ceremony will we be in a position to understand the transformations undergone by funerary ceremonies in their transition—as yet little explored—from late medieval customs to modern scenographies, as they developed at the centre of Christendom.

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Notes

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2. The Queen's testamentary clause expressly states that "ninguno vista xerga por mí, e que en las obsequias que se fezieren por mí, donde mi cuerpo estoviere, las hagan llanamente sin demasías, e que no haya en él vulto, gradas, ni chapiteles, ni en la iglesia entoldaduras de lutos, ni demasía de hachas, salvo solamente treze hachas que ardan de cada parte en tanto que se hiziere el ofiçio divino e se dixeren las missas e vigilias en los días de las obsequias, e lo que se avía de gastar en luto para las obsequias se convierta en vestuario a pobres, e la çera que en ellas se avía de gastar sea para que arda ant'el Sacramento en algunas iglesias pobres, onde a mis testamentarios bien visto fuere" (La Torre y del Cerro and La Torre 1974, p. 64).
3. Letter from the Catholic King to Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal, Medina del Campo, 26 November 1504, and another from Toro, 14 December 1504; *Registro sobre las Cortes de Toro y las cartas despachadas cuando falleció la Reina Isabel la Católica*; Archivo General de Simancas (Valladolid), *Patronato Real*, Leg.70, doc. 1, ff. 9v–10v.
4. Letter from Philip I of Castile to Carvajal, Brussels 19 December 1504 (*Colección de Documentos Inéditos* 1846, pp. 271–72).
5. The testimony of Paris de Grassis is collected in his *Tractatus de Funeribus et Exequiis in Romana Curia peragendis*; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Vat. Lat.* 5944, ff. 215v–219v; summarised and with some variations in his *Diarium*; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Vat. Lat.* 5635, ff. 82r–84v. Grassis received the honorarium of 25 gold florins for his collaboration (Constant 1903, p. 218).
6. We refer to the letter from Baldassarre de Castiglione to his mother Gonzaga Castiglione, Rome 2 March 1505 (Castiglione 1978, p. 53), and the letter from Emilia Pio to Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, Urbino 10 March 1505 (Luzio and Renier 1893, pp. 165–68). Emilia Pio was the daughter of Marco Pio, lord of Carpí, had married Antonio di Montefeltro, Guidobaldo's natural brother, and lived in Urbino.
7. It was a raised form "in summo rotundi etiam [o et] conexi [. . .] superius circulati", measuring one and a half metres long, one metre wide and half a metre high, the upper part of which ended in a semicircular shape (Grassis *Tractatus*, f. 216v).

[8] Castiglione describes it as "panno grosso acotonato" (Castiglione 1978, p. 53). On the use of jargon in Castile and its prohibition to avoid sumptuary excesses (Cabrera 2001, pp. 556–57).

[9] Ludovico Bruni, *De obitu Serenissimae et Catholicae dominae Helisabeth Hispaniarum et utriusque Siciliae ac Hierusalem Reginae Oratio*, J. Besicken, Rome, 1505; copies located in the British Library, A-B6; Queen's College Cambridge, K. 20. 22 (3); and in Biblioteca Casanatense (Rome), Misc. 130/1.

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