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Citation

Janssen, G. H. (2009). Political Ambiguity and Confessional Diversity in the Funeral Processions of Stadholders in the Dutch Republic. *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 40, 283-301.
Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14989>

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Political Ambiguity and Confessional Diversity in the Funeral Processions of Stadholders in the Dutch Republic

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This article explores how the funeral processions of the Dutch stadholders negotiated the ambiguous outcomes of the Dutch Revolt and the Reformation. Basing themselves on the obsequies of the former Habsburg sovereigns, the directors of these public ceremonies created a separation between the private and public identities of the deceased. This was important since the sovereignty of the republican Dutch state was no longer involved in the symbolic transfer of dynastic powers to a new heir. The first part of the parade was therefore marked by symbols referring to the private possessions of the family of Orange-Nassau, whereas in the second, public section members of republican institutions participated. Religiously, the funeral processions reveal a program which was deliberately nonconfessional, in order to transcend religious divisions in Dutch society.

IN SPITE OF ITS CELEBRATED IMAGE for religious tolerance and civic republicanism, the early modern Dutch Republic was characterized by many confessional and political ambiguities. Although the United Provinces emerged as a republic from the revolt against the king of Spain, it still retained certain monarchical characteristics. On the one hand, the nascent state system suggested a decentralized form of provincial republicanism, and yet the provinces' highest officials, the stadholders, held semisovereign powers and maintained a princely court. Religiously, too, the outcomes of the Dutch revolt were unforeseen and never clear-cut. The United Provinces described themselves as a Protestant state, but their Calvinist church was not granted the position of true state church. Consequently, no one in the republic had to join the public church formally, or even attend any of its services.¹

Both these political and religious ambiguities were evident in one of the most important public rituals of the Dutch Republic. Since the assassination in 1584 of Prince William I of Orange—the first stadholder after the revolt—the death of a stadholder or his wife had been marked by an elaborate funeral ceremony. During these solemn obsequies the coffin of the deceased was escorted from the stadholder's court to the burial vault in the church by a long heraldic cortège, in

¹Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 276–306, 361–98; Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon, 2003), 269–93.

Research for this essay was generously supported by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and the Modern European History Research Center, University of Oxford.

which many hundreds of courtiers, republican representatives, and family members took part. Strictly speaking, there were two separate models for these ceremonies in the seventeenth century: while the funerals of the Princes of Orange were held in the Holland town of Delft, the Frisian stadholders and their wives of the related house of Nassau-Dietz developed an alternative tradition in Leeuwarden. The composition and order of these public processions are remarkably well documented, in archive sources, chronicles, and prints.

This diversity of sources has not stimulated much research into the possible meanings of princely ritual in the Dutch Republic and the various ways in which the media of the time reported the solemn occasions. This lack of attention is all the more remarkable since historians in recent decades have become more interested in the functions of early modern funerary rites and in the way they articulated changing values in society.² In French, German, and Anglo-American historiography, for example, much attention has been paid to the iconography and composition of heraldic funeral processions, to the political or religious significance which we should attribute to them, and to the transformations which the Reformation and state-building processes brought about in these programs.³ For the Dutch Republic such connections have not yet been established. We still know very little about who exactly organized the funeral ceremonies of the stadholders, or what message the symbols used in them were intended to convey; we know still less about how that ideological language was understood by onlookers or those who made accounts of them.⁴

Such questions are relevant, not only because they can help to assess the functions of dynastic rituals in the United Provinces, but also because this

²Overviews can be found in *Les funérailles à la Renaissance*, ed. J. Balsamo (Geneva: Droz, 2002); *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Macht und Memoria: Begräbniskultur europäischer Oberschichten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mark Hengerer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005); Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); C. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³A classic example is Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva: Droz, 1960). More recent studies include R. J. Meyer, *Königs- und Kaiserbegräbnisse im Spätmittelalter: Von Rudolf von Habsburg bis zu Friedrich III* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000); Sharon Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997).

⁴There has been some recent research on the funerary monuments and the funeral orations of the stadholders. Cf. Frits Scholten, *Sumptuous Memories: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Tomb Sculpture* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2003); Nicole Ex and Frits Scholten, *De Prins en De Keyser: Restauratie en geschiedenis van het grafmonument voor Willem van Oranje* (Bussum: Thoth, 2001); John Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen: De religieuze exempeltraditie in vroegmodern Nederland* (Nijmegen: Van Tilt, 2005), 215–66. A brief analysis of the procession is offered by Olaf Mörke, “Die Annäherung im Tod: Begräbnisse für fürstliche Statthalter und bürgerliche Militärs in der niederländischen Republik des 17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Macht und Memoria: Begräbniskultur europäischer Oberschichten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mark Hengerer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), 187–206.

funerary culture may tell us something about the republic's understanding of itself. In a sense, the burial rites of the stadholders brought out into the open two of the central problems that had confronted the Dutch state since its unintended foundation. In the first place the funerals forced the organizers to define the status of the stadholdership in the republic in a public way. This sensitive political issue was intimately connected with the second problem, that of religion. In the religiously mixed Dutch Republic many citizens could not identify with the Reformed nature of the newborn state. How far, then, should the public funeral ceremonies of the stadholders take on an explicit confessional coloring, and to what extent should the ritual offer the non-Reformed part of the population the opportunity to participate with it? In other words, the interments of its highest officials forced the Dutch authorities to come to terms with two important questions, which went to the heart of the state's political and religious identity.

This article intends to investigate how various parties in the United Provinces formulated an answer to these problems. More precisely, it aims to use the funeral cortège to discover how the political status and the confessional identity of the stadholdership were made visible in the public domain. To do so, it will reconstruct the composition, order, and symbolism of these processions and try to identify the considerations that dictated their structure. Were those who planned the staged events inspired by foreign, princely models, and if so, what strategy did they have in mind? How did the intentions of these organizers relate to the way in which various media reported the event? Did the public ceremony undergo any changes in the course of the seventeenth century, and if so, to what extent did such changes reflect more general political, religious, or social transformations in Dutch society? To allow a comparison of the funeral rituals in Holland and Friesland, this article concentrates broadly on the period 1584–1702, when there were two dynasties of stadholders in the United Provinces.⁵

THE DIRECTORS

Before we can examine the functions of the stadholders' funeral cortèges, we have to identify the people who directed the ceremonies.⁶ Was it the Reformed communities of Delft or Leeuwarden (church), the administrative elite of those cities, the provinces, or the republic as a whole (state), or perhaps the private court of the

⁵This periodization includes the funerals of William I (Delft, 1584), William Louis (Leeuwarden, 1620), Maurice (Delft, 1625), Ernst Casimir (Leeuwarden, 1633), Henry Casimir I (Leeuwarden, 1641), Frederick Henry (Delft, 1647), William II (Delft, 1651), William Frederick (Leeuwarden, 1664), and Henry Casimir II (Leeuwarden, 1696). Since the funerals of the wives of these stadholders have been less well documented, I could only make use of available sources concerning the funerals of Sophia Hedwig of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (Leeuwarden, 1642), Amalia of Solms (Delft, 1675), and Albertine Agnes of Orange (Leeuwarden, 1696). The English Princesses Mary Stuart, Princess Royal (1631–60) and Mary Stuart, Queen of England (1662–94) were buried in London. This was also the case with William III of Orange (1650–1702), the king-stadholder. These foreign royal funerals will not be discussed in this article.

⁶Parts of the argument in this section were published in Dutch as Geert H. Janssen, "Dynastieke transfer in de Republiek: De politieke en religieuze betekenis van de stadhouderlijke begrafenistoet," *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 122 (2007): 208–32. I am grateful to J. C. Grayson for his translations.

prince (family) which organized the public event? The question first became urgent in 1584, when William of Orange was assassinated by Balthasar Gérard in Delft. The chaotic state of the revolt at the time, the ambiguous status of its leader, and the Spanish occupation of Breda—the traditional burial place of the Netherlandish Nassaus—compelled those responsible for the ceremony to improvise.⁷

According to chronicler Pieter Bor (1559–1635), the prince himself had once indicated that he wished to be buried “without great expense and state.”⁸ But if he ever made such a request it was not honored. The impression exists that it was the authorities in the rebel provinces above all who urged that their leader be given a magnificent funeral. Evidence for this can be found in the behavior of the States of Holland, who offered to bear the costs of the funeral as soon as they heard of the murder.⁹ It is not so clear, however, whether we should interpret this willingness to pay as an attempt to assume responsibility for the direction of the public event. Although there are indications that Orange’s chamberlains held discussions with representatives of the States of Holland, the sources make it clear that the organization of the funeral was ultimately left in the hands of the family.¹⁰

The “private” nature of the ceremony was to be confirmed in later funerals in the seventeenth century. The numerous minutes of the meetings of the family councils of the Princes of Orange and the Counts of Nassau-Dietz show that republican representatives never attended the discussions on the composition of the funeral procession.¹¹ The large payments that the States of one or more provinces often made to reimburse the family’s expenses after the event did not change this. The decision of the republic’s state councils to take part in the ceremonies was not due to their involvement in the organization, but rather because of the family’s decision to invite them. The same was true for the presence of ministers or other representatives of the Reformed Church.

If we approach the stadholder’s funeral as a family matter that was in part financially supported by the state, we still need to ask from where or from whom the directors in 1584 drew their inspiration, and what they were trying to achieve. Several historians have pointed out that the cortège of William of Orange

⁷Marie-Ange Delen, *Het hof van Willem van Oranje* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2002), 262.

⁸All translations are mine. Pieter Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin, en vervolgh der Nederlandsche oorlogen, en borgerlyke oneenigheden* (Amsterdam, 1680), 2:435. For similar requests, see Monique Chatenet, “Quelques aspects des funéraires nobiliaires au XVIe siècle,” in *Les funéraires à la Renaissance*, ed. J. Balsamo (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 37–54; Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 225–31.

⁹The high level of these costs—16,000 guilders—did however cause some disturbance. Eventually the provinces of Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland also paid their part. Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:435. Cf. P. Scherft, *Het sterfhuis van Willem van Oranje* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1966), 24–25; K. W. Swart, *William of Orange and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1572–1584* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 255.

¹⁰Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:57–58 (supplements); Scherft, *Het sterfhuis*, 16, 24–25, 284.

¹¹For the Oranges see Koninklijk Huisarchief, The Hague (hereafter KHA), Archive Willem II, IV–1, Overview of expenses regarding Frederick Henry’s funeral, 1647; Nationaal archief, The Hague (hereafter NA), Nassause domeinraad (hereafter ND), 7, Minutes November–December 1650 and January–February 1651; NA, ND, 185, Additions to minutes, 7 January 1651. For Nassau-Dietz: KHA, Archive Willem Lodewijk, 221, Minutes, 1–11 June 1620; KHA, Archive Ernst Casimir, 142, Minutes and concepts, January 1633; KHA, Archive Hendrik Casimir I, 5, Documents concerning the funeral, December 1640 and January 1641,

displayed striking resemblances to that staged in Brussels in 1558 in honor of Emperor Charles V, the former sovereign of the Netherlandish provinces. They have seen this as a strategy of the rebels to emphasize continuity with the past and the legitimacy of their revolt. Orange's funeral was deliberately modeled on that of the former Habsburg sovereign, to allow the prince to be presented as his lawful successor.¹²

However plausible this interpretation may seem, it may not do full justice to the complex form of Orange's funeral ceremony and the ways in which the media reported the solemn ritual. The parallels between the funerals of 1558 and 1584 have been drawn chiefly on the basis of two famous series of prints, both published shortly after the event.¹³ It is doubtful, however, if these visual media were intended to give an accurate picture of the procession. Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), who depicted the funeral of Orange, may have had many reasons to model his images on the example of Charles V, whose funeral had been illustrated in prints published by Christopher Plantin (ca. 1520–89) in 1559. Early modern pictorial conventions, artistic ambitions, and even a lack of information on Orange's funeral may have shaped Goltzius's representation of the event (see fig. 1). The printmaker's intended market will also have influenced the form that was thought suitable for this particular genre.¹⁴ A few years later, when Sir Philip Sidney was buried in London, the publisher Theodore de Bry (1528–98) characteristically based his series of prints of that event on Goltzius's depiction of Orange's procession.¹⁵ Although these prints have fixed the image that was created after the event, they do not necessarily tell us what the organizers of the ceremony had in mind.

That is not to say that there were no similarities between the structure of Orange's funeral procession and that of Charles V. The detailed account given by Pieter Bor, probably based on the archives of those responsible for the direction, also reveals striking parallels between the cortèges of 1558 and 1584. The place reserved for the heir and the use of such specific symbols as an unsheathed sword and a riderless horse appear to have been taken directly from Charles V's example.

¹²This vision is particularly expressed by Delen, *Het hof*, 263–64, and Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen*, 219–29. A more nuanced interpretation is in Catrien Santing, "Spreeken vanuit het graf: De stof-felijke resten van Willem van Oranje in hun politiek-culturele betekenis," *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 122 (2007): 193–200.

¹³The print of the funeral procession of Charles V was executed by Johannes and Lucas van Duetecum after designs by Hieronymus Cock. It has been reprinted in Stephanie Schrader, "Greater than ever he was: Ritual and Power in Charles V's 1558 Funeral Procession," *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 49 (1998): 69–94. The mourning procession of William of Orange is reprinted in W. L. Strauss, *Hendrick Goltzius 1558–1617: The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts* (New York: Abaris, 1977), 1:324–35. See also E. I. Jimkes-Verkade, "De grafstoet van Willem van Oranje," in *Boeken van en rond Willem van Oranje* (The Hague: Koninklijke bibliotheek, 1984), 41–48.

¹⁴Cf. among others Georges Fréchet, "Forme et fonction des livres de pompes funèbres," in *Les funérailles à la Renaissance*, ed. J. Balsamo (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 199–224; Christi Klinkert, *Nassau in het nieuws: Nieuwsprenten van Maurits van Nassau's militaire ondernemingen uit de periode 1590–1600* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2005), 22–31, 41–47.

¹⁵Elizabeth Goldring, "The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney and the Politics of Elizabethan Festival," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance*, ed. E. Goldring and J. R. Mulryne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 199–224.



Fig. 1. Funeral procession of William I of Orange (detail). Engraving by Hendrick Goltzius, 1584. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Used by permission.

But the conclusion that the organizers of 1584 sought to refer explicitly to the precedent of their former sovereign is not so unavoidable as the resemblances in Goltzius's prints suggest. Some of the elements, such as the trumpeters who opened the procession and the horses bearing heraldic coats of arms, can be found in the funerals of several great nobles in France and England, including Philibert de Chalon, a prince of Orange who had died in 1530. Such elaborate burial symbolism was probably part of the wider tradition of renaissance *pompae funebres*, which offered countless opportunities for imitation but was not necessarily bound to a single model.¹⁶

The impression is confirmed by a closer examination, which shows that the directors in 1584 were selective in their borrowings from the Habsburg model of 1558. For example, the giant ship that bore an empty throne in the Brussels ceremonies was absent from Orange's funeral. Hung with coats of arms and surrounded by sea monsters, this emblematic vessel could in fact be regarded as the pinnacle of Habsburg funerary ritual.¹⁷ The heraldic trappings and the place assigned to the state's bodies in the cortège were subtly but eloquently adjusted in Orange's case as well. Finally, the directors in 1584 removed the representatives of the Catholic Church from the program.

¹⁶The distinctions between royal funerals and those of high nobles were not as strict as some historians have assumed. Cf. Chatenet, "Quelques aspects," 37–54. See also Malcolm Vale, "A Burgundian Funeral Ceremony: Olivier de la Marche and the Obsequies of Adolf of Cleves, Lord of Ravenstein," *English Historical Review* 111 (1996): 922–24; C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988), 166–87; Woodward, "Theatre of Death." For Philibert de Chalon see Hans Cools, "Willem van Oranje lezing," (unpublished manuscript, 2008).

¹⁷Schrader, "Greater than ever he was," 75–78. A similar ship had been used at the funeral ceremony of Charles V's grandfather Ferdinand of Aragon in 1516. Yona Pinson, "Imperial Ideology in the Triumphal Entry into Lille of Charles V and the Crown Prince (1549)," *Assaph: Studies in Art History* (2001): 222–24.

The considerations that prompted this strategy of imitation and adaptation can be brought to light by a closer analysis of the discussions that preceded Orange's funeral ceremony. The scanty details show that the family initially hoped to present the prince as the new sovereign of the province of Holland, and in that way to model the ceremony on that of Charles V. They had every reason to do so, since there had been well-advanced plans in 1584 to elevate William of Orange to the dignities of Count of Holland and Zeeland and Lord of Utrecht. If that plan had succeeded Orange would have been transformed from an official (stadholder) of the States into the new sovereign (count) of the same States. His assassination on 10 July had frustrated the scheme, yet on 26 July Orange's chamberlains asked for permission to bear "the arms of the County of Holland" in the cortège. That would retrospectively have given the prince the prestige of a sovereign count; the ceremony would thus have taken on the character of a true state funeral.¹⁸

The States of Holland, however, were divided on this. Some of the towns, including Amsterdam, were reluctant to grant Orange sovereign status, even posthumously. Probably this reluctance was explained by awareness that the burial ritual could be interpreted as a symbolic transfer of dynastic titles to the new heir. If the sovereignty of the rebel provinces were visually expressed in the procession, that could be regarded as a *form* of transfer of this sovereignty to Orange's heir. The States of Holland therefore blocked the proposal and resolved that there could be no place for the emblems of the province in the ceremony. The symbols used in the cortège might refer only to the prince's hereditary dignities, but must not in any way allude to the sovereignty of the young state. In doing so, the States reduced the late prince expressly to a private nobleman who did not have the status of their ruler, but had been no more than their highest official.¹⁹ By placing responsibility for the ceremony with the family, the States also emphasized that in the current political context the funeral had essentially become a private family affair.

FROM BURGUNDIAN MODELS TO REPUBLICAN PRACTICE

A reconstruction of the personal composition and ritual forms of William of Orange's funeral cortège reveals the consequences of this reasoning very clearly. Though the States wished to be lavish in paying their respects to the prince, the guidelines they laid down for the family were intended to ensure that it was made clear which of Orange's functions were and which were not involved in this symbolic moment of dynastic transfer. That created a distinction between the private identity of the deceased as a prince and his public role as stadholder.

Orange's funeral procession was opened by the civic militia of Delft. They did not so much form part of the cortège (and they are not even shown in Goltzius's print), as accompany the solemn ritual. The impression is confirmed by the place assigned to the trumpeters, who followed the militia and heralded the cortège proper. The whole of the first part of the procession, from the trumpeters to the bier, was the most spectacularly equipped and consisted of three elements. First of

¹⁸Lieven de Beaufort, *Het leven van Willem de I. Prins van Oranje, Graef van Nassau* (Leiden, 1732), 3:693–94; Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:57 (supplements); Swart, *William of Orange*, 243–47.

¹⁹Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:58 (supplements).

all came a long train of noblemen bearing coats of arms or banners and accompanied by horses draped in black, which were also hung with coats of arms. As the States had demanded, these emblems did not refer to the provinces or the institutions of the Netherlands (as had been the case for Charles V), but exclusively to the prince's private domains and hereditary titles.

This was followed by a second group of men, who carried banners bearing mottoes from ancient and Christian history. The third element, immediately preceding the coffin, was formed of noblemen who bore the separate quarters of the late prince's coat of arms and presented various symbols to the public. These were the insignia of chivalry, such as the helmet, Orange's coat of mail, and the princely coronet. Like the coats of arms, these were the emblems of William's identity as a private nobleman. Because he had been a sovereign in his capacity as prince of the tiny state of Orange in southern France, there could be no objection to the inclusion of an unsheathed sword, the emblem of sovereignty. But there was no reference whatever in this part of the cortège to the role Orange had played as stadholder in the Low Countries or as leader of the revolt.²⁰

The central place in the cortège was reserved for the bier on which lay the prince's coffin, borne by twelve noblemen and draped in black cloth, on which the prince's coats of arms were again displayed. The whole was escorted by three chamberlains who walked before the bier, some halberdiers, and the prince's herald, who followed it. Immediately after the bier walked Orange's sixteen-year-old son, Maurice. Although he was not the eldest male heir, he fulfilled that role by being clothed in a long mantle, its train borne by noblemen. Orange's eldest son, Philip William, was in captivity in Spain and therefore unable to take his rightful place in the cortège. Maurice was followed by a small group of the prince's male relatives. Pieter Bor remarks significantly that the last of these "closed the mourners."²¹ The prince's funeral procession was thus considered to be completed.

Yet, there was still to come a very long procession of men who represented the various national, provincial, and local authorities of the republic. Their presence thus referred to the public role that Orange had played as stadholder and as leader of the revolt. Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, a member of the States of Holland, had suggested shortly before the funeral that these state colleges should not walk in the procession itself but should "follow the mourners."²² That was not surprising at first sight, for a similar order of precedence had been observed at earlier Burgundian funerals, including that of Charles V.²³ Yet the lengthy discussions in the States provoked by Oldenbarnevelt's suggestion show that in the dramatically changed political circumstances this piece of stage management could take on a new meaning. The second half of the procession, which was explicitly referred to

²⁰Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:435; Delen, *Het hof*, 262–64; Jimkes-Verkade, "De grafstoet," 41–48.

²¹Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:435.

²²Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:58 (supplements).

²³However, in the 1558 arrangement some authorities, such as the magistrates of the city of Brussels, had walked in front of the coffin. Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V, 1500–1558* (London: Arnold, 2002), 4.

as “after the mourners,” had to be regarded as a separate unit, spatially distinct from the representatives of Orange as lord of his domains and head of a private noble house. In that way a line was drawn between the part of the procession that gave visual expression to the dynastic transfer, and the part that was literally detached from it. The prince’s cortège thus reflected a distinction between Orange the nobleman and Orange the stadholder, in other words between the prince and the official, between private and public.

THE NEED FOR CONTINUITY

The example given in 1584 was to set the pattern in later years. The funerals of Maurice in 1625, Frederick Henry in 1647, and William II in 1651 explicitly imitated the style of the procession of William of Orange. This deeply felt need for continuity in ritual can also be inferred from the minutes of the meetings of the family council, which turned to its old scenarios whenever a prince of Orange died.²⁴ This did not imply that the procession remained entirely unchanged. There are unmistakable signs of professionalization and expansion in the seventeenth century. While the funeral of 1584 is estimated to have numbered about two hundred participants, this total rose in Maurice’s case to six hundred, and there must have been at least eight hundred following the funeral cortèges of Frederick Henry and William II. In addition, in the private part of the procession Maurice’s spurs were added as a further symbol, while in the funerals of Frederick Henry and William II the insignia of the Order of the Garter were also displayed. From 1625 some foreign ambassadors were invited to join the public part of the ceremony and given precedence before the States General of the United Provinces. The ceremony was even more impressively staged from 1647, when a coach was introduced to carry the bier, the whole drawn by eight horses and surmounted by a canopy.²⁵

The results of this expansion of scale are only partly reflected in the prints that were produced to record the ceremony. Not all of the six hundred participants in Maurice’s funeral cortège are shown in the print published by Claes Jansz Visscher (1586/87–1652), and Pieter Post (1608–69) apologized for omitting some elements of Frederick Henry’s funeral “which could not be illustrated” (see fig. 2).²⁶

²⁴As is evident from documents in KHA, Archive Willem II, IV-1, Overview of expenses of Frederick Henry’s funeral, 1647; NA, ND, 7, Minutes November–December 1650 and January–February 1651; NA, ND, 185, Additions to minutes, 7 January 1651. Cf. the coverage of Maurice’s procession in Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh, in, ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden* (The Hague, 1669), 1:441–45. For Frederick Henry see Pieter Post, *Begraeffnisse van sijn Hoocheijt Frederick Hendrick* (Amsterdam, 1651), and Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh*, 3:173–75. For William II see Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Herstelde Leeuw, of discours over ’t gepasseerde in de Vereenigde Nederlanden in ’t jaer 1650, ende 1651* (Utrecht, 1652), 418–22.

²⁵KHA, Archive Willem II, IV-1, Documents concerning the funeral of Frederick Henry, 1647; NA, ND, 7, Minutes 9 November and 5 December 1650, 20 January 1651; Post, *Begraeffnisse*, 4–12.

²⁶Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (hereafter RPK), Collection Frederik Muller, 1536; Post, *Begraeffnisse*, 2. John Landweh; *Splendid Ceremonies: State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low Countries, 1515–1791: A Bibliography* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1971), offers an (incomplete) overview of the mourning processions.



Fig. 2. Funeral Procession of Frederick Henry of Orange (detail). Engraving by Pieter Post, 1651. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Used by permission.

That does not mean that these visual records were not intended to be informative, but rather that the form in which this information was given was influenced by artistic and, above all, financial considerations. Because the production of a series of prints was expensive, publishers usually preferred to summarize the event, updating old designs for new events. The result was that these pictorial sources suggest more continuity and imitation of the ceremonial than was really the case. It is therefore doubtful if we should read this suggestion of continuity as an explicit political strategy or ideological message. In the seventeenth century, parallels between series of prints could also be interpreted as a form of artistic *imitatio* or simply as a sign of the publisher's lack of funds.²⁷

For all that, those responsible for the funeral did sometimes borrow their inspiration from earlier prints, especially those of foreign funerals. For instance, it is very plausible that the print of the funeral cortège of Archduke Albert of Austria in 1623, published by Jacques Francquart (1583–1651), was studied by William II.²⁸ In 1647 the prince proposed to add luster to Frederick Henry's funeral by clothing the horses that represented the late prince's lordships, not in black cloth as before, but "wholly in colors with the arms of the same." William wanted them to be designed "as was done in the funeral of Archduke Albert and other great princes." It is not clear from this remark whether the prince referred to Albert's funeral cortège because he regarded the stadholder's funeral as a variant on an original Habsburg model, or if he simply wished to give a specific example, as the second part of the quotation suggests. At any rate, the family council decided to

²⁷Fréchet, "Forme et fonction," 199–224; Klinkert, *Nassau in het nieuws*, 41–51. Also Peter Schmid, "Sterben–Töd–Leichenbegängnis Kaiser Maximilians I.," in *Der Tod des Mächtigen: Kult und Kultur des Todes spätmittelalterlicher Herrscher*, ed. Lothar Kolmer (Paderborn: Schönigh, 1997), 187–91.

²⁸Jacques Francquart, *Pompa Funeris Optimi Potentissimique Principis Albert* (Brussels, 1623). Cf. Jan Papy and Toon van Houdt, "The Image of Archduke Albert in Seventeenth-Century Funeral Literature," in *Albert and Isabelle, 1598–1621: Essays*, ed. Luc Duerloo and Werner Thomas (Brussels: Brepols, 1998), 319–34; Margit Thofner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2007), 299–321.

stick to the traditional style, “as was done before in the funeral of the Princes William and Maurice of laudable memory.”²⁹ The expansion of scale in the funerals in 1625, 1647, and 1651 therefore changed little in the basic structure of the cortège, and made no change in the division between the family (private) and official (public) spheres, which it had been decided to observe in 1584.

Not all seven provinces of the Dutch Republic had chosen the Princes of Orange as their stadholders after the revolt. In the northern province of Friesland, the provincial States gave preference to the Counts of Nassau-Dietz, who were closely related to the house of Orange-Nassau. For these so-called Frisian Nassaus, however, a similar identification with the murdered Prince William of Orange was less obvious, and it did not go without saying that they would follow his funeral model of 1584. Moreover, in contrast to the Princes of Orange, the Counts of Nassau did not have any sovereign dignity. William Louis of Nassau’s funeral in 1620 was therefore preceded by intensive discussions about the appropriate symbolism. The sources show that in the end the funeral certainly was based on the model of that of William of Orange. Even the unsheathed sword—a clear emblem of sovereignty—was carried in the procession through the center of the Frisian capital of Leeuwarden on 23 July.³⁰ The documents offer no justification for this explicit imitation, but the fact that William Louis had succeeded William of Orange as stadholder of Friesland in 1584 may have given the analogy a certain legitimacy. The procession through Leeuwarden was on a smaller scale than that in Delft, while in the private part of the cortège the princely coronet was replaced by the comital coronet. In the public part of the procession representatives of the Frisian University of Franeker made their entrance. Yet the distinction between the public and private spheres was characteristic of William Louis’s variant too, and was to remain so in all later funerals in Leeuwarden.³¹

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IDENTITIES

The need felt by both families to preserve continuity in the structure of their funeral cortèges was not self-evident. In neighboring countries princely funerals in the seventeenth century regularly changed as fashion or circumstances dictated. In England, for example, in the course of the century it became customary to replace heraldic funerals with more modest evening ceremonies by torchlight,

²⁹NA, ND, 185, Additions to minutes, 7 January 1651. In the case of William II’s own funeral in 1651, Mary Stuart also decided to follow the “arrangement” of Frederick Henry’s funeral. Some small adjustments were necessary since the Duke of York, who stayed in exile in The Hague, participated in the procession. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Clarendon MS, 95, fols. 366v–67r; NA, Archive Aitzema, 95, Documents concerning the House of Orange, 1651–52.

³⁰KHA, Archive Willem Lodewijk, 221, Documents concerning the funeral, June–July 1620. See also Wiebe Bergsma, “Willem Lodewijk en het Leeuwarder hofleven,” *It Beaken* 60 (1998): 191–256.

³¹In this case the terminology “closing the mourning” is also used to separate the private from the public parts. KHA, Archive Hendrik Casimir I, 5, William Frederick to the deputies of Groningen, 26 December 1640 from Leeuwarden. Cf. Claude Fonteyne, *Afbeeldinghe der gedenck-weerdighe, heerlijcke, ende treur-statighe ... Ernest Casimir* (Leeuwarden, 1634).

which have been said to offer more privacy to the relatives.³² Although these foreign models and transformations must have been noticed at the stadholder's court, and William II even referred to them, the heraldic ritual in the Dutch Republic remained remarkably traditional and unchanged.³³

It may be that the great need to identify with the iconic figure of William of Orange was responsible for this conservatism in the United Provinces. Yet it seems that the structure of the processions also remained unchanged because it reflected the various roles that were assigned to the stadholders in the Dutch body politic. In the republican system the Princes of Orange and the Counts of Nassau were only stadholders (officials) of the various provincial States. That official status, however, was ambiguous, because the Oranges and Nassaus could also claim private roles as great nobles alongside their official functions as stadholder. In their private capacities they owned extensive domains, had their own courts, and in the case of the Oranges, the title of prince. Thus the sovereignty of the republican provinces and the private court of the prince were not integrated in one and the same person or institution, as they were in the monarchical states. The result was that the constitution of the Dutch Republic created, in a sense, two distinctive spheres, a public and a private, in which the Oranges and Nassaus could appear in different roles.³⁴

Their funeral ceremonies made this distinction manifest. In the first, or private, part of the cortège the Oranges and Nassaus were displayed in their capacities as private noblemen. The symbolism in this part of the procession, in which the coffin was carried, referred to their dynastic possessions and the way in which they were passed on to the heir. The official function that the prince or count also held as stadholder was not given visual expression until the second, or public, part of the cortège, which was accompanied by the state's functionaries, and was spatially separated from the first part. Thus, the split between public and private spheres created by the republic's state system was more than a paper distinction, and influenced the role allotted to representatives of the two circuits in the cortège.

It could therefore be argued that elements of Burgundian-Habsburg funeral models were not only adapted to a new republican practice but also deliberately redefined.³⁵ The basic structure of the stadholders' funerals was almost the same as those of the former Habsburg sovereigns; yet the stadholders' archives reveal

³²Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); Gittings, *Death, Burial*, 188–215; Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 176–207.

³³The funeral of Amalia of Solms in 1675 probably took place in the evening, as can be concluded from RPK, Collection Frederik Muller, 2578. In other cases, funerals generally took place "about nine o'clock before noon." Cf. KHA, Archive Sophia Hedwig, 38, Documents concerning the funeral, 1642.

³⁴Geert H. Janssen, *Princely Power in the Dutch Republic: Patronage and William Frederick of Nassau (1613–64)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 7–8, 78–80. See for the stadholderate in general, Olaf Mörke, "Stadholder" oder "Staetholder": *Die Funktion des Hauses Oranien und seines Hofes in der politischen Kultur der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster: Niederlande Studien, 1997); Herbert Rowen, *The Princes of Orange: The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

that the meaning to be attached to this layout had changed dramatically after the revolt. In the Habsburg funerals of Charles V and Albert of Austria the two parts of the cortège had been linked by the clear reference in the coats of arms carried in the first part to the provinces whose representatives walked in the second part. That link was broken for the stadholders, and as a result a distinction between public and private spheres emerged. Such a redefinition of appropriated funeral symbolism was necessary because the status of the deceased had fundamentally changed after the revolt, whereas the participation of the state, now that it had become republican in form, came to be seen in another light. To justify their presence in the second part of the cortège, the authorities in the republic claimed that they only came to pay their last respects to the deceased, on the invitation of the family.³⁶

The funeral processions of the stadholders' wives confirmed this new view of the state's role, for the cortèges that followed Sophia Hedwig of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in 1642 or Amalia of Solms in 1675 did not differ essentially from those that had attended the funerals of their husbands.³⁷ Here too the distinction between private and public spheres was characteristic. As countesses and princesses these women had not held any official position whatever in the republican state system, but that was no reason to modify the structure or the policy on invitations, for it was not the stadholdership or the state that determined the form of these solemn events, but the private identity of the late prince or princess. Republican authorities had no difficulty in performing an *acte de présence* at the funerals of the stadholders' wives. By taking their place in the public part of the cortège, "after the mourners," they made sure that there could be no misunderstanding of the symbolic meaning to be attached to their participation.

However similar male and female funerals may have been, the public setting of the ceremony prevented women from taking part in the procession. Neither the widow of the deceased stadholder, his female relatives, nor female personnel were assigned a place in the public event. They may not even have attended the church service, but remained at court in The Hague or Leeuwarden throughout the ceremony.³⁸ The archive sources never mention, still less justify, the notable absence of women, but it appears that the organizers found it a complicated matter to allocate a place for the inferior sex in the hierarchy of a patriarchic structured

³⁵The Spanish Habsburgs did not have a tradition of "pompae funebres." See Steven N. Orso, *Art and Death at the Spanish Habsburg Court: The Royal Exequies for Philip IV* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 6–9.

³⁶Even the States assemblies representing provinces, of which the deceased had never been stadholder, could therefore participate. KHA, Archive Hendrik Casimir I, 5, Lists of invites, January 1641. See also KHA, Archive Sophia Hedwig, 38, Concept invitations from William Frederick, 1642.

³⁷KHA, Archive Sophia Hedwig, 38, Concept invitations from William Frederick, 1642; RPK, Collection Frederik Muller, 2578.

³⁸Women were, however, present among the spectators, as can be concluded from the eyewitness account of Agatha van Tjaerda Starckenborgh regarding William Frederick's funeral. Tresoar, Leeuwarden, Archive Thoe Schwartzenberg en Hohenlansberg, 220b, Agatha van Tjaerda Starckenborgh to Michael Busschius, 28 December 1664, from Leeuwarden.

funeral cortège.³⁹ This strict policy of exclusion did not imply that women could not make any mark on the public event. It is noticeable that Sophia Hedwig and Mary Stuart played guiding role in the funerals of their husbands in several respects. The archives reveal that they were constantly present at the meetings to organize the ceremonies, and always had decisive voices in them. In 1651 the council of the prince could not place orders with painters and embroiderers until it received explicit “orders and instructions” from Mary Stuart. In addition, it was the widow who wrote the invitations to the funeral and thus could shape invitation policies.⁴⁰ Apparently there was a distinction between the role that these noble ladies could play in the sphere of the princely court and the place that was thought appropriate for them in the public “republican” space.⁴¹

Against this backdrop, it becomes obvious why the funeral ritual of the stadholders and their wives developed along such different lines from similar events in the monarchies. In countries where the sovereignty of the state was vested in the person of the prince a distinction between the two institutional spheres was not visible, or it was expressed in a different way. In the funeral cortèges of early modern kings of France or England the representatives of court and state took part in a single stage-managed event.⁴² It has been argued that the funeral ceremonies of the French king even illustrated the conception that the sovereignty of the state cannot die. The dead king was present not only as the deceased in his coffin, but also in the form of a wax or wooden figure. Ernst Kantorowicz famously described this concept, in which one body is physical and transitory and the other sovereign and eternal, as “the king’s two bodies.” According to him, this interpretation explains why the successor to the French throne could not appear in the procession or in public until the sovereign’s body had been interred in the church of St. Denis.⁴³ Kantorowicz’s thesis has been subject to debate, yet there is clear evidence that the complex French burial ritual

³⁹This argument can also be found in Cornelis van Alkemade, *Inleidinge tot het ceremonieel, en de plegtigheden der begraavenissen* (Delft, 1713), 95–105. Cf. James S. Amelang, “Mourning Becomes Eclectic: Ritual Lament and the Problem of Continuity,” *Past & Present* (2005): 26–27; Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 175–209; Strocchia, *Death and Ritual*, 10–13; Gittings, *Death, Burial*, 118–19, 174, 189–91; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion*, 263, 272.

⁴⁰KHA, Archive Ernst Casimir, 142, Letters from Sophia Hedwig, December 1632; KHA, Archive Willem Frederik, A-III-9, Mary Stuart to William Frederick, 11 February 1651 from The Hague; KHA, Archive Willem II, XIII-4, Correspondence Mary Stuart; NA, ND, 7, Minutes, 9 November 1650, 18, 31 January 1651.

⁴¹This may be linked to Natalie Zemon Davis’s more general observation that princely environments gave early modern women a stronger position than civic or republican ones. Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women in Politics,” in *A History of Women in the West: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 167–83.

⁴²Gittings, *Death, Burial*, 216–34; Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony*, 1–18; Paul Kléber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 35–36, 77–78, 242–43, 311; Woodward, *Theatre of Death*, 148–65.

⁴³Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 409–31. A similar interpretation had been offered earlier by Kantorowicz’s pupil, Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony*, 177–92.

was redefined at the end of the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ Sovereignty was now held to pass to the heir at the moment of death, so that at the funeral of Henry IV in 1610 the new sovereign Louis XIII took the place formerly occupied by the wax image. The image of the late sovereign was also assigned a prominent place in the funerals of the kings of England, though in their case historians believe that this was not so much to give visual expression to a political idea as to display the majesty of kingship.⁴⁵

In the Dutch Republic, where the stadholdership was no more than an office that the States could confer on or withhold from the heir of the deceased, such complications concerned with the passing on of the sovereignty of the state played no part in funeral ceremonies. That did not eliminate surviving elements in them that were inspired by royal examples. Such symbols as the unsheathed sword and the place reserved for the heir, immediately behind the bier, can be traced back to the funeral rites of the Habsburg rulers. Yet once their original monarchical frame of reference had disappeared, such rituals, which become naturalized in the republic, gained an entirely new symbolic value. They came to be situated exclusively in the private part of the procession, making it clear that in the republic the transfer of titles and dynastic positions did not concern the state or the stadholdership, but only the private dignities held by the late prince or count.

CONFESSIONAL NEUTRALITY

The need to redefine and adjust monarchical rituals to the complex structure of the republic was visible in more than the political program of the cortège; the religious landscape of the United Provinces demanded some creative solutions as well. The Dutch Republic regarded itself as a Protestant state, and its stadholders were all members of the so-called public, or Reformed, church. Their military leadership during the revolt against Catholic Spain had even won the Oranges, a reputation as the protagonists of the Reformed identity of the republic.⁴⁶

But Calvinism had developed its own very clearly defined ideas about funeral ritual. In a sense, the contrasts between Catholic and Calvinist doctrines became especially visible in their attitudes to the dead. By denying the existence of purgatory, Calvin had removed every possibility for the living to influence the salvation of the souls of the dead through their prayers. The consequences that Calvinists drew from this were the abolition of masses for the dead and a far-reaching reduction of the pomp of funerary ritual.⁴⁷ In recent years there has been much research into the practical implications of this radical removal of the dead from the com-

⁴⁴Cf. Alain Bourreau, *Le simple corps du roi: L'impossible sacralité des souverains français, XVe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions de Paris, 1988); Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 257–62. Wax and wooden effigies were not exclusively royal symbols. For a similar use in noble funerals see Chatenet, "Quelques aspects," 37–54.

⁴⁵Woodward, *Theatre of Death*, 61–66. Cf. Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 275–79.

⁴⁶J. L. Price, *Holland and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Politics of Particularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 134–48, 260–77.

⁴⁷Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 506–8; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided*

munity of the living. Historians have pointed to the resistance that Calvinist dogmas provoked and to the continuing need felt by many believers to keep the memory of their dead alive. In practice, Catholic and Reformed funeral rituals did not diverge as widely as many theologians had hoped.⁴⁸

The implications of Calvinist doctrine were just as ambiguous in the funeral ceremonies of the stadholders. In this connection it makes sense to separate the actual interment in the vault and the funeral sermon preached in the church from the cortège that preceded them. The church service, which was generally short and sober, was predominantly Calvinist in character. The preaching of funeral sermons was accepted, but the emphasis had shifted from commemoration of the deceased to the exemplary value of his life for those present in the church.⁴⁹ We do not know if this group would include everyone who had followed the funeral procession. A reconstruction of the cortège tells us that a significant number of participants were not members of the Reformed Church, or even sympathizers with it, but Catholics. There is ample evidence that Catholic nobles walked in the processions of William Louis and William Frederick, while the cortèges of Maurice and Frederick Henry were given luster by the presence of the French and Venetian ambassadors. The Princes of Portugal, who were related to the Oranges, attended some of the funerals as well. Finally, the presence of Catholic household servants added to the outspoken multiconfessional nature of the event.⁵⁰

The separation between two social circuits in the funeral ceremonies of the stadholders was therefore evident in their religious coloring as well: in this case as a distinction between the Reformed church service and the religiously mixed procession. The cortège was not only made up of members of different faiths, but also avoided symbols of explicitly Calvinist inspiration. The mottoes borne on the banners referred at best to general ancient or Christian virtues. Even the Reformed community as such was not prominently represented in the cortège. The court minister, for example, walked among the large group of domestics, in which Catholic servants were also present. And when the ministers of Leeuwarden, Delft, or The Hague joined in the procession they were clearly placed in the public section, at the rear, after the representatives of the national, provincial, and local authorities.

1490–1700 (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 576–83. For the Dutch Republic: A.Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 244–45.

⁴⁸See, apart from the studies mentioned in the previous note, Gordon and Marshall, *The Place of the Dead*, 9–12; Houlibrooke, *Death, Religion*, 264–77; Keith P. Luria, “Separated by Death? Burials, Cemeteries, and Confessional Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies* 24 (2001): 185–222; Koslofsky, *Reformation of the Dead*, 89–95.

⁴⁹Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen*, 215–66.

⁵⁰Catholic nobles and William Louis: KHA, Archive Willem Lodewijk, 221, Order of the processions, June 1620. The ambassadors and Maurice and Frederick Henry: Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh*, 1:441–45; Post, *Begraeffnisse*, 4–12. The Princes of Portugal and William II: NA, Archive Aitzema, 95, Order of the processions, March 1651; NA, ND, 7 and 185, Notes January 1651; Bodleian, MS Clarendon, 95, fols. 366v–67r.

How was this multiconfessional composition of the layout to be reconciled with the position of the stadholders as icons of the Reformed community? More generally, such historians as Joke Spaans and Benjamin Kaplan have pointed out that in many towns of the Dutch Republic funerals were remarkably nonconfessional in character.⁵¹ Above all, the part of the funeral that took place in the open, that is, the procession to the church, as a rule lacked any specifically confessional characteristics and was broadly Christian in nature. That was a practical choice to make, because it allowed family, friends, and neighbors of different faiths to take part in the ceremony. In the religiously mixed urban centers of the Dutch Republic funeral ritual thus developed. This pragmatic attitude appears to have influenced the composition of the stadholders' funeral cortèges as well. In this context the religious discourse of the invitations is typical. These letters, written by the widow or son of the deceased, usually lacked any confessional frame of reference. Instead, they emphasized the "old Christian custom" of burial and the opportunity it offered "to pay one's last respects to the deceased."⁵² By putting these respects to the dead at the center, the funeral ritual was freed from sensitive confessional connotations, and possible objections from the participants were avoided.

Perhaps we should interpret this precaution as a deliberate political strategy as well. In the decades after the revolt, Dutch authorities clearly felt the need for unifying symbols, which could transcend religious divisions in local town communities. In recent years scholars have started to study this policy in some greater detail and have tried to identify the messages expressed in public buildings and urban festivals. It appeared that the Holland magistrates generally favored confessionally neutral symbols, often dependent on the city's medieval past. For example, in Haarlem the town council consciously promoted a cult surrounding the capture of Damiette in Egypt, a pre-Reformation event in which Haarlemmers were said to have played a major role.⁵³ Benjamin Kaplan has subsequently shown that the shaping of a unifying, nonconfessional city culture, which could counter the potentially explosive effects of religious discord, was not just the result of government policy, but also of broad support within the local population.⁵⁴ The mixed composition of the

⁵¹This was particularly the case in the western towns of the United Provinces Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie: Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven, 1577-1620* (The Hague: Hollandse historische reeks, 1989), 120-24; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht, 1578-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 270. Also cf. Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 93-96.

⁵²These and similar phrases in: KHA, Archive Willem Lodewijk, 221, Concepts of invitations, 1620; KHA, Archive Ernst Casimir, 142, Invitation letters from Sophia Hedwig and Henry Casimir, 1633; KHA, Archive Sophia Hedwig, 38, Invitation letters from William Frederick, 1642; KHA, Archive Willem Frederik, A-III-9, Invitation from Mary Stuart to William Frederick, 11 February 1651 from The Hague; KHA, Archive Willem II, XIII-4, Correspondence Mary Stuart including concepts of invitations, 1651.

⁵³Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie*, 109-38; Willem Frijhoff, "Religious Toleration in the United Provinces: From Case to Model," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia and H. F. K. van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27-52.

⁵⁴Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 291-94. See also Judith Pollmann, "The Bond of Christian Piety: The Individual Practice of Tolerance and Intolerance in the Dutch Republic," in Hsia and Van

stadholders' funeral processions may be viewed from a similar perspective. For a broad attendance offered onlookers of different religious sympathies clear opportunities to identify with the House of Orange. However eager Calvinist ministers may have been to exploit the stadholders by representing them as champions of the Reformed community, the existing religious divisions in Dutch society made it politically unattractive for the Oranges and Nassaus to be associated exclusively with a privileged confessional minority.

Not all the inhabitants of the United Provinces, however, would have felt at home with such a neutral program, and there are cases of publicists who presented their target group with an alternative message. A striking example of confessional appropriation was offered by the account of Maurice's funeral published in 1626 by the Haarlem minister Daniel Souterius (1571–1634). The interpretative model that Souterius applied to the cortège was emphatically Reformed. He eagerly related the objects carried, such as the sword or coat of mail, to Old Testament symbolism, and even tried to give natural phenomena a religious meaning. In the “neighing and whinnying and other gestures” of the riderless horse during the procession he saw “a divine message that greater sorrow, greater damage, and loss were in store for the republic.” Although most symbols employed in the cortège went back to foreign and Catholic precedents or recent improvisations, the minister eagerly traced them back to biblical sources.⁵⁵

Souterius's account makes us realize that although the funeral ritual was carefully stage-managed, it did not send out a uniform message. Analysis of other printed chronicles shows that most reporters were reluctant to explain symbols for their readers, and particularly to refer to confessional explanations. Authors as diverse as Pieter Bor, Lieuwe van Aitzema, and Famiianus Strada concentrated on giving a factual description of the weather, the number of participants, and the pomp of the funeral. The only recurrent themes were the massive scale of the public event and the splendor and good order of the ritual.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

The funeral cortèges of the stadholders and their wives articulated and negotiated two problems that touched on the political and religious identity of the Dutch Republic. In the first place the ritual forced the organizers to define the position of the Oranges and the Nassaus in the United Provinces explicitly. That was not an easy task, because these great nobles in a sense occupied two separate roles in Dutch society: one as stadholders in the official or public sphere, and the other as prince or count in the domestic or private sphere. The discrepancy between these two institutional spheres, which the republican system of

Nierop, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, 53–55.

⁵⁵Daniel Souterius, *Sainctes funerailles: Historisch verhael over het chrisielijck af-sterven ende statelijck begraeven van den d. prins Mauritius* (Haarlem, 1626), fols. 59v, 69r–73v.

⁵⁶Based on Famiianus Strada, *De Bello Belgico: Decades duae ab excessu Caroli V. Imp. Usq* (Frankfurt, 1651), 543–44; Bor, *Oorsprongk*, 2:434–35; Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh*, 3:173–75. Cf. Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 248–49.

government had created, was expressed in several ways in the funeral ceremonies. To begin with, the states left the arrangement of the ceremony to the family, emphasizing that the stadholder's interment was not a state funeral but a private matter. They also insisted that the heraldic trappings of the cortège, which symbolized the transfer of dynastic titles to the next generation, might refer only to the hereditary dignities of the deceased and must not allude to the provinces or institutions of the republic. Finally, the discrepancy between private (family) and public (official) spheres and identities was made spatially apparent by marking a caesura between the private and public parts of the cortège.

The funeral ceremony also had to find an answer to the problems posed by the complex religious allegiances in the Dutch Republic after the Reformation. The organizers did so by drawing yet another dividing line between social spheres: in this case between the church service and the procession. The latter was deliberately kept confessionally neutral, so that it could accommodate participants of various faiths and also allow the various religious groups in Dutch society to identify with the public event. How far such identification was achieved, and how onlookers in general interpreted the ritual, cannot be distilled from the strategies of the directors, and should be the subject of future research. We saw how some reporters deliberately provided their readers with alternative interpretations. Yet we still know much less about the diverse ways in which spectators and readers attributed meanings to public ritual than we know about the intentions of their creators. Just like many early modern ceremonies, the stadholders' funeral processions tended to conceal potential conflicts in society, and their programs suggested more social harmony than in fact existed.⁵⁷ The stadholders' funerals should therefore be considered as a carefully stage-managed response to the political and religious tensions in early modern Dutch society. ❧

⁵⁷Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 253–54, as well as Edward Muir, "The Eye of the Procession: Ritual Ways of Seeing in the Renaissance," in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 129–53.

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