IDENTITY IN THE MIDDLE AGES
APPROACHES FROM SOUTHWESTERN EUROPE

Edited by
FLOCEL SABATÉ
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LET ME BEGIN by using this foreword to explain briefly the aims and ideas that inspire the present book, both through a substantial introduction analyzing what we understand by identity in the Middle Ages, and through specific studies that deepen our knowledge of relevant aspects of a topic of great political importance today.

The “power of identity,” to use the title of the second volume of the study of “The Informacion Age” by sociologist Manuel Castells, has been strongly emphasized during the last decades. Different studies have been devoted to analyze the search for identity in our plural societies, the intertwining of various types and levels of identity, the risks around identity conflicts and, in any case, the rise of identity, with its different meanings, in the articulation of current society. Too often history has been used to justify real, recreated, or imagined identities. This is not our aim. Noticing the search for identity in individuals and collectivities throughout history, and looking for new perspectives to reach the core of precedent societies, we adopt identity as an object of analysis, that is, as a challenge to open new ways and tools for historians’ work.

Certainly, this book places identity at the centre of a project to better understand medieval society. By exploring the multiplicity of personal identities, the ways these were expressed within particular social structures (such as feudalism), and their evolution into formal expressions of collective identity (municipalities, guilds, nations, and so on) we can shed new light on the Middle Ages. A specific legacy of such developments was that by the end of the Middle Ages, a different sense of collective identities, supported by the late medieval socio-economic structure, backed in law and by the theological, philosophical, and political thought, defined society. What is more, social structures coalesced across diverse elements, including language, group solidarities, and a set of assumed values.

We understand that identity occupied that central position in defining medieval society with two allied concepts: memory and ideology. The former served to ground identity, while the latter consolidated a coherent common memory and identity. For this reason, this book has two companions devoted to each of these concepts. We think that

2 Among others: Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (Oxford, 1996); Gerd Baumann, The Multicultural Riddle (New York, London, 1999); Mario Carretero, Documentos de identidad. La construcción de la memoria histórica en un mundo global (Buenos Aires, 2007); Gérard Noiriél, À quoi sert l’identité ‘national’ (Paris, 2007); Chatterje Partha, La nación en tiempo heterogéneo y otros estudios subalternos (Buenos Aires, 2008); Hermenegildo Fernandes, Isabel Castro Henriques, José de Silva Horta, Sergio Campos Matos, ed., Nação e identidades. Portugal, os Portugueses e os Outros (Lisbon, 2009); Francesco Remotti, L’ossessione identitaria (Bari, 2010); Diego Bermejo, ed., La identidad en sociedades plurales (Barcelona, 2011); Zygmunt Bauman, Oltre le nazioni. L’Europa tra sovranità e solidarietà (Bari, 2012); Francesco Remoti, Contro l’identità (Bari, 2012).
this is a good path for approaching an understanding of the values and interpretative axes that informed the thinking of women and men in the Middle Ages. This holistic vision requires interdisciplinary approaches, as opposed to academic compartmentalization of history, art history, and the study of languages and literatures.

With this in mind, we present a work structured in a particular way, beginning with a long introductory chapter (by Flocel Sabaté) on medieval identity. This introduction does not aim to map out identity in its entirety, but rather to provide insights into key aspects of the medieval understandings of identity. It frames ensuing discussions by exploring the various ways in which individuals affirmed their notion of identity, always involving the individual’s relation to a group with which they felt solidarity. A sense of one’s own identity involves notions of otherness, and therefore involves both external perceptions and an internal sensibility, and relates to ideas concerning “representativity” (the conditions of a representation, from the French word représentativité). In the Middle Ages, this generated various discourses and cultural displays in order to support particular identities, which generated specific collectively-held memories and descriptions of teleological destiny, associated with particular societies and territories.

Having established an overview of identity in the Middle Ages, the introduction is followed by twenty-one focused chapters by leading researchers which delve deeper into specific fields. They share a concern for illuminating medieval thought, focusing on concrete cases, and prioritizing examples from southern Europe, a region with a large amount of documentation, but which to date has occupied a relatively minor position in the overall spread of research into the Middle Ages. We acknowledge this emphasis in the title of this book, Identity in the Middle Ages: Approaches from Southwestern Europe, which is offered as a means of enriching study of the Middle Ages.

The resulting chapters are organized into four domains representing the four parts in the book, offering, in our view, useful ways of exploring identity.

The overall concept is part of a long historiographical journey, linked particularly to the return of cultural history in the search for new perspectives with which to develop historical research. That is why we invited Jaume Aurell to launch this volume with an overview of this historiographical development.

Having provided the historiographical framework, we delve deeper into the function of identity in the Middle Ages through four blocks we consider axial: constructing individual identity; social identity; identity and territory; and forms of collective identity.

Constructing individual identity is, in fact, one of the vital contributions of the Middle Ages, by defining the individual elements that allow a person to define himself or herself, and this continues today. For instance, adopting a name seems crucial in the perception and assumption of individuality. Igor Filippov provides here a fascinating study of baptismal names and self-identification in the Early Middle Ages. Moisés Sélia goes on to show how names reflect a specific identity in a particular social context. Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues then shows how the personal identity that one accepts is fundamentally linked to the cultural model of gender. She presents varying degrees of acceptance, by different women, of specific ideals of femininities. At the same time, the awareness of one’s individuality, the struggle between individual and group, was evident for instance in twelfth-century literature, where shared memories might include autobiographical
expressions, as Meritxell Simó shows. The assumption of an identity means the integration of a memory, and Maribel Fierro shows, in Islamic society, how this implies specific religious and legal values. Society supplies models into which individuality can fit, but it can also offer space for exceptions, as in the case of eunuchs in Islamic society, as shown in the chapter by Cristina de la Puente.

People were never alone in the Middle Ages. They formed part of a group in which they felt integrated and protected. We therefore need to consider identity in terms of the social group. Given that the rules for social order were based on the majority religion, it was necessary to adopt specific status for minorities when Christians, Jews and Muslims shared a same space, as John Tolan analyzes. At the same time, social identity requires us to understand that appropriate models were generated for each social group. Paul H. Freedman shows us how a specific image of the peasant was created in line with the values of medieval society, and accepted by the members of that social group. At the same time, at the other social extreme, a clear chivalric identity was formulated, well enough assumed to be widely reflected in contemporary texts, as Noel Fallows demonstrates. And Flocel Sabaté sketches how the Late Middle Ages supplied the economic, ideological, and cultural framework that gave rise to a specifically bourgeois identity. Social order was achieved by combining these units of collective identity. Conversely, we see these marks of identity in social outcasts in the chapter by Ricardo Córdoba that concludes the second part of this volume.

Human activity takes place in a determined space, over which mutual influence is developed. Strong relations between people, territory, and identity arise almost naturally. Hence the third part of this book focuses on identity and territory at different levels: firstly, in the smaller space in which everyday life happens, as Raquel Torres shows when analyzing how medieval parishes supported individuals in forming a local community. We see another field for social identity within the lordships, a setting in which José Ramón Díaz de Durana and Arsenio Dacosta show us the rise and consolidation of factions (bandos) from lineage, with their solidarity connections. They were a powerful form of mutual identity, which became very complex and affected all relations, either with other powers or the sovereign, and determined the management of the territory and society. Another very different scenario is derived from the political will to promote identification between territory, population, and certain rulers. This led to interesting discourses in which a common identity tried to fashion a specific memory, as Luciano Gallinari shows for Sardinia. Also in Sardinia, Alessandra Cioppi presents the changes it underwent after its incorporation into the Crown of Aragon: the shaping of a specific identity through the implantation of a particular institutional model.

Finally, the Late Middle Ages furnished identities based on representativeness, so much so that it is one of the great legacies of medieval society. The rise of the urban patriciate was accompanied by the promotion of a specific identification between the ruling elite, municipal government, and city, as Yolanda Guerrero demonstrates. The increasing assertiveness of cities gave them a dominant position over the surrounding territory and the ability to manage their own resources, not least through taxation. José Antonio Jara shows us how a city could portray a unifying discourse to reinforce its dominant position, which in turn meant the generation of a shared identity. Urban
power not only assumed a representativeness with which it could address the sovereign on behalf of the municipality, but this in turn affected the profile of sovereignty itself. Thus, urban identity helped model a specific definition of the country, apart from the sovereign, and became a counterpoint in defining a duality between the country and the monarch (a distinction, as Eloisa Ramirez presents, in the case of Navarre, that came to be made between the Kingdom proper and the King). In this framework, the construction of an identity for citizenship needed specific rituals, festivals, and symbols. Shared urban self-expression facilitated social cohesion within a common identity, as outlined in Paola Ventrone’s chapter. The cities then went on to strengthen an identity based on their own social cohesion and projected this over their hinterlands. As a result, urban identity could adopt a social, political, and even the sense of being a “state,” as Giorgio Chittolini shows from cases in central and northern Italy.

These are the various of lines of enquiry on the theme of identity in the Middle Ages that have occupied the work of the Consolidated Medieval Studies Research Group “Space, Power and Culture,” based at the University of Lleida, especially through the research project Identity, Memory and Ideology in the Middle Ages (HAR2009–08598/HIST) financed by the Spanish government, to link the study of identity, memory, and ideology in the Middle Ages. It was a challenge taken up from an earlier project: Historical Memory: Images of the Middle Ages. The Real World and Recreated Space (BHA2003–00523). Both projects aimed to advance new perspectives on the study of the Middle Ages. Close collaboration with the Institute for Research into Identities and Society (IRIS), based at the University of Lleida between 2009 and 2013, worked towards the same objective. The work of its research team and numerous wider scholarly meetings held at Lleida helped to consolidate these objectives. This was also made possible with the support of various complementary projects financed by the Spanish Ministry of Research: Identities (HAR2008–02766–E/HIST); Sacred Voices (FFI2008–03031–E/FILO); Identities: A Definition (HAR2010–10915–E/HIST); Identities: Definition and Context: A Multidisciplinary Approach (HAR2010–10803–E/HIST); and Hybrid Identities: An Interdisciplinary Vision of the Social World (HAR2011–13084–E).

Thanks to these projects, various co-authored books on the subject of identity in the Middle Ages have appeared, bringing together the work of leading researchers from varied fields of study related to the Middle Ages.\(^3\) This book builds on prior studies and is, to a large extent, a culmination of the work done previously. In producing, selecting, revising, and bringing to fruition the final texts in this volume, the research projects financed by the Spanish government Feelings, Emotion, and Expressivity (HAR-2016-

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75028-P) and *Power Experienced in the Late Middle Ages: Perception, Representativeness and Expressiveness in the Management and Reception of Power* (PID2019-104085GB-100), the ICREA–Academia award to Flocel Sabaté (2016–2020), and supported by Arc Humanities Press’s peer review and pre-press processes, have all been instrumental, for which we are sincerely grateful. We hope that this volume, together with *Ideology in the Middle Ages: Approaches from Southwestern Europe* and *Memory in the Middle Ages: Approaches from Southwestern Europe* will illuminate in new depth the links between identity, ideology, and memory in the Middle Ages and open new pathways to how we interrogate and understand the Middle Ages.4

4 Translations into English are generally provided as close to the original text as possible, and the original text and edited source is provided in the notes. We follow the press’s practice as a worldwide publisher in retaining native forms as far as possible. Abbreviations to sources from the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter MGH) follow the guidelines of the *Deutsches Archiv* journal: www.mgh.de/fileadmin/Downloads/pdf/DA-Siglenverzeichnis.pdf.
Chapter 13

IDENTITY AND THE RURAL PARISH IN MEDIEVAL IBERIA

RAQUEL TORRES JIMÉNEZ

THE PURPOSE OF this study is to contribute to the understanding of the role of Christianity in the creation of identity in medieval Western society through an examination of the part played by parishes in the formation of local rural communities.

Today the topic of identities is being widely explored on the basis of assumptions underlying cultural history. Myriad studies exist on the role of language and identity, social groups and identity, the function of identity in urban contexts, of ideologies, of teaching, the construction of political identities, the relationship between identity and conflict, as well as the whole symbolic sphere, and political and territorial configurations, among many more.

* This chapter derives from the research projects “Órdenes Militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental. Cultura, religiosidad, género y desarrollo social en los espacios de frontera (siglos XII–XV)” (HAR2013–4350–P) and “Órdenes Militares y religiosidad en el Occidente medieval y el Oriente latino (siglos XII–1/2 XVI). Ideología, memoria y cultura material” (PGC2018–096531–B–100), funded by the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad of the Government of Spain (MCIU/AEI/FEDER, UE). Some of the material here has been developed in “Parroquias rurales e identidad en Castilla al final de la Edad Media. El caso del Campo de Calatrava,” in Christian Discourses of the Holy and the Sacred from the 15th to the 17th Century, ed. Teresa Hiergeist and Ismael del Olmo (Berlin, 2020), 299–324.


2 José Antonio Jara, Georges Martin, and Isabel Alfonso Antón, eds., Construir la identidad en la Edad Media. Poder y memoria en la Castilla de los siglos VII a XV (Cuenca, 2010). See also Huw Price and John Watts, Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Rees Davies (Oxford, 2007).

3 Linda Clark, ed., Identity and Insurgency in the Late Middle Ages, The Fifteenth Century 6 (Woodbridge, 2006); Paul Maurice Clogan, ed., Civil Strife and National Identity in the Middle Ages (Cleveland, 1999).


5 Gregorio del Ser and Iñaki Martín Viso, eds., Espacios de poder y formas sociales en la Edad Media. estudios dedicados a Ángel Barrios (Salamanca, 2007); Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, eds., Medieval Practices of Space (Minneapolis, 2000); Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, Espacios del hombre medieval (Madrid, 1992).

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The religious element was undoubtedly a powerful identifying factor in Western medieval society, especially from the eleventh century onwards; one might argue that it was in fact the most important defining element, even more so than territory, for instance. During the Middle Ages, the Christian faith was not restricted to the realm of belief; it was at the core of Western civilization and the Latin world; it permeated social, mental, and everyday life and provided a theocentric vision of the world, of society, and of mankind. Of course, this does not deny that rural life was framed by Christian references before the Middle Ages.

The focus of this study (on the role of Christianity and parishes in the configuration of local identities) is a district over a hundred kilometres (sixty-five miles) broad, comprising 11,500 square kilometres of rural Castile, the so-called Campo de Calatrava, a lordship of the Calatrava Military Order in the south of the Castilian plateau, located in the Guadiana river basin, between the Toledo Mountains and the Sierra Morena, an area which today mainly forms part of the province of Ciudad Real. At its centre was the Villa Real or Ciudad Real crown property. The military order itself was actually created here

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9 Arón Guriévich, Las categorías de la cultura medieval (Madrid, 1990), 26–34.
in 1158. Thirty-nine parish churches, which our sources call great churches (iglesias mayores), are documented here for thirty-three rural and semi-rural villages with an agricultural population of fewer than a thousand people. The map shows the location of the most important population centres.

The key institutional centres for religious life in this area were the archdiocese of Toledo and the military order itself. They had conflicts over their respective jurisdictions throughout the Middle Ages, but after a series of agreements a status quo was reached in which the archbishop’s jurisdiction was notably reduced, even though he still received part of the tithes, and the order remained in charge of the parish churches and the religious life of the people of the lordship and appointed the clergy. This responsibility even increased when the Calatrava mastership was annexed to the Crown in 1489.

The sources we have for the religious practices and how religiosity was expressed in the lordship are the visitations, periodic inspections carried out by visitors (whom I will call inspectors below) from the Calatravan order in the villages and other places in the Campo where, besides economic control, they exercised religious supervision. The councils (concejos) and institutions for public affairs (cosas públicas), parish churches, shrines, hospitals, and confraternities were also subject to such visitations, which included making inventories of goods and income, and allotting corrections, fines, and instructions. They are extremely rich sources. Eighty-five such visitations were carried out between 1471 and 1539 and have been examined.

Our analysis focuses on the rural parish. The parish as a pastoral, spatial, and economic unit of ecclesiastical land management developed after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, although the earlier Gregorian Reform had given greater prominence to the parish. What defines the parish in terms of canon law is the delegation of diocesan authority over pastoral care, clergy, churches, the altar, visitations, and synods, and over the territory in which parishioners must receive the sacraments and pay tithes, obligations, and offerings. However, many rural parish churches were in fact “private”; they depended on a patron, either lay or ecclesiastical, who created them and appointed the clergyman, received a handsome part of their income, and hindered the activities of

11 Francisco Ruiz Gómez, Los orígenes de las Órdenes Militares y la repoblación de los territorios de La Mancha (1150–1250) (Madrid, 2003); Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea Matilla, La formación del feudalismo en la meseta meridional castellana. Los señoríos de la Orden de Calatrava en los siglos XII–XIII (Madrid, 1994); Emma Solano Ruiz, La Orden de Calatrava en el siglo XV. Los señoríos castellanos de la Orden al fin de la Edad Media (Sevilla, 1978); Carlos de Ayala Martínez, “Las Órdenes Militares y la ocupación del territorio manchego (siglos XII–XIII),” in Alarcos 1195, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Francisco Ruiz Gómez (Cuenca, 1996), 47–104.


diocesan priests. In general, this was the situation of the great churches (iglesias mayores) of the Campo de Calatrava.

The study of parishes, which in the Middle Ages were important social structures, has given rise to a rich variety of approaches. Numerous studies have considered the role of parish churches in the social delimitation of territories and power, and the part ecclesiastical boundaries played in the distribution and demarcation of space during the Middle Ages. More specifically, across the medieval Western world, the expansion of the parish network, particularly between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, was the main factor in the process of sacred delimitation of space; it contributed to conferring status on settlements and indeed to promoting settlement.


18 José Ángel García de Cortázar, Historia religiosa del Occidente medieval (años 313–1464) (Madrid, 2012), 296–300.


20 For the region between the Toledo mountains and the Sierra Morena, see De Ayala, Las Órdenes Militares; and Luis R. Villegas Díaz, “Religiosidad popular y fenómeno repoblador de La Mancha,”...
The aim here is to consider the rural parish as a socializing factor towards the end of the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern period, rather than looking at it as a territorial division, which was clearly visible in the case of the Campo de Calatrava. I argue that parishes are one of the agents shaping local identity. The period under examination is extended up to the 1530s, given that many of the religious norms followed by the Christian faithful remained in force until the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

The Religious Duties of Municipal Authorities

In the Campo de Calatrava, parishes were under the Military Order’s commanders, but the development of parish life was an institutional responsibility of the municipal concejos. The Order of Calatrava delegated to mayors and aldermen the care of churches and the good administration of their assets and income. The authorities were supposed to appoint a suitable steward and supervise all expenses and they were charged with ensuring the honesty of the clergymen (who were sometimes financially supported by them) and of punishing “public sins” (gambling, cohabitation, blasphemy, sorcery). Therefore, the concejos were in charge of parish churches and local Christian life; this was an extension of the Calatravan prerogatives over the religious affairs of the lordship.

The Parish Church as Social Space and Community Centre

Let us turn to the role parish churches played in social cohesion and in the self-awareness of the locality.

Churches as Centres for Social Life and Civic Spaces

The Calatravan authorities aimed to promote the sacred nature of churches and their appearance, of the ornaments and liturgical objects, the sacraments, and the clergy itself.


22 A repeated formula: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6.109, n. 38, fol. 169r (Torralba, June 4, 1495).

23 For example: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6.110, n. 21, fols. 47v–48r (Almagro, January 10, 1510); 6.076, n. 28, fols. 279v–280r (Fernancaballero, July 1510).
This attitude was in line with norms from the Gregorian Reforms, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and with many synods and Iberian councils between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Inspectors urged devotion, honesty, and fear of God, and promoted the creation of barriers between the faithful and the sacred: gates to chapels, cemeteries, and baptismal fonts; locks on the tabernacles and on drawers and doors; closed sacristies; and safeguarding the presbytery from access by lay people. As well as physical boundaries, these represented mental barriers between the clergy and laity.

These prohibitions were in constant conflict with existing practices. Throughout the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, churches and their cemeteries were spaces for community life. In rural churches everything was nearby and accessible. The church was the dwelling place of God and the patron saint, but sacredness co-existed with profane use of the space. Furthermore, churches provided social cohesion and a focal point for local people. Let us now examine the different forms of this reality.

In the first place, the use of church premises by people was constant: people visited altars and baptismal fonts and entered spaces reserved for the clergy. They persisted in the habit—forbidden by the visitation inspectors, but to no avail—of sticking candles on the walls and columns to commemorate the dead. Social use of cemeteries was intense. There was recreational activity, people danced and played dice and board games, and hopscotch, crossbow practice, and even bullfights were organized there. People entertained themselves “taking and doing business” (hablando e negoçiando sus cosas) instead of attending mass, and cattle passed through the graveyards. Such practices were common in other parts of Europe as well.

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26 Lack of a sacristy was frequent in churches, so inspectors ordered their construction. For example, at the church of Almadén: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 24, fol. 93r (Almadén, June, 1510). Likewise at Santa Cruz de Mudela, Villarrubia, Cabezarrados, Corral de Caracuel, etc.

27 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 20.

28 Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, Las fiestas en la cultura medieval (Barcelona, 2004), 123. Lauwers, Naissance du cimetière.

29 Ladero Quesada, Las fiestas, 148.

30 Sínodo de Salamanca, 1451 and 1457, Sínodo de Plasencia, 1534. Ladero Quesada, Las fiestas, 77–78.

31 1537, Ballesteros. Ladero Quesada, Las fiestas, 77–78; Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 1, fol. 164v.

32 According to Jacques Heers, Carnavales y fiestas de locos (Barcelona, 1988), 44–45, satirical dance performances were organized at cemeteries in Paris.
Second, churches were vulnerable spaces adjoining areas used for profane purposes. Intruders took advantage of the state of disrepair of buildings or the lack of locks and entered freely. People walked on the roofs, stalls were used to access nearby houses and damage property, etc. Next to some churches we find middens and butcher shops, which inspectors ordered to be removed "to another location where it is more convenient and reputable, because it is so close to the church." Furthermore, church fronts were used as shelter for cattle, "With little respect to God Our Lord [...] which means less devotion," and as places for games. In short, parish churches were not places neatly separated from daily secular life. Prohibitions were usually broken. However, inspectors repeated them, as many of the practices constituted sacrilege.

Third, parish churches clearly played a civic role as well. The concejos usually met in the church hall or graveyard and justice was often imparted there. The Chapters of

33 In Luciana, a hole near the entrance of Santa María church was ordered to be closed so that everyone would be forced to enter the church only through the door. Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 28, fol. 264v (1510).

34 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 17, fol. 258r (Aldea del Rey, 1510).

35 At San Bartolomé de Almagro church "lots of youngsters and other people" jumped onto the roof through the windows in the tower. From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6078, n. 1, fol. 35r (1534).

36 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 9, fols. 239r–v (Valdepeñas, 1537).

37 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6110, n. 17, fol. 208r (Alcolea, April 18, 1502).

38 "A otra parte donde esté mas syn yconveniente y onestamente, por estar tan cerca de la yglesia." From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 25, fol. 74r (El Moral, 1502).

39 "Con poco temor de Dios Nuestro Sennor [...] lo qual es poca devoçion." From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 25, fols. 264r and 265r (Alcolea, 1510). Also Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 10 (Torralba, April 20, 1491).

40 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 14, fols. 203r–v (Torralba, February 1510).


42 For example, in El Moral the council would gather at the cemetery of the great church of San Andrés in 1501: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 25, fol. 78r. The council of Pozuelo gathered, with ringing of the bells, at the cemetery of St. John church: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 11, fol. 287r (1510).

43 Mayors sat outside S. Bartolomé church, in the Almagro square, to conduct trials: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, Sección Diplomática, folder 463 P, n. 206 (Almagro, March 1318). Also Madrid, Archivo Histórico
the Order of Calatrava were often celebrated at the churches in their Campo, not only in their main monastery. None of these practices helped the process of redirecting mental attitudes towards a more restrictive identification between church and religious services; they rather legitimated the civic function of churches. On the other hand, it would be anachronistic to perceive the political and religious spheres as separated; all forms of government held the ideal that they were involved in the *consecratio mundi* to God.

Locals even assumed the right to make agreements and decisions regarding churches, even when that went against the king’s commands or inspectors’ views. Parish churches were not perceived as alien places; on the contrary, local residents saw them as their own.

Along the same lines—the social and socializing function of churches—we should not forget the fact that parties were held at churches and that High Mass on feast days was taken as an opportunity for reading out edicts and news after the proclamation of the gospel.

In short, the religious dimension was fully entwined with local public life. It was an instance of community performance, and the parish church was the location *par excellence* for the display of religiosity, not only collective, but also “civic” in nature.

**Churches Designed and Shaped by the People**

Churches were places of socialization. Moreover, the faithful themselves shaped those spaces. In fact, they usually contributed with their own charitable gifts—donated during their lifetime or through a bequest after their death—to provide churches with rugs, fine altar linens, lamp oil, chandeliers, chalices, liturgical ornaments, vestments, and ornaments for the statues, linens for the eucharistic tabernacle, and the like.

The parish churches within the area analyzed here often had roofs, vaults, and balconies in a chronic state of bad repair. Interiors, however, looked more dignified. Precious

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46 In Torralba a royal provision ordered the capital of the parish to be moved to a bigger church but the residents voted for a different location. Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 23, fol. 139r–v (Torralba, January 4, 1539).

47 Residents agreed to demolish the *casa de la audiencia* (courthouse) next to the church to give free passage to processions. Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6080, n. 9, fol. 2bis v (Torralba, October 10, 1549).

48 See Ladero Quesada, *Las fiestas*. 
and fine fabrics as well as gold and silver were used for the sacred linens and vessels related to the Blessed Sacrament. According to the churches’ inventories, all these had been donated by the faithful. Luxurious liturgical vestments, used to display ostentation, were also donated by the faithful.

The efforts made by men and women from these rural villages to provide their modest parish churches with goods are in fact remarkable. Attending religious celebrations at parish churches gave people the opportunity to see themselves both as individuals and as part of a community through their pious contributions or those of their late relatives.

The Parish Church as Pride of the Local Community

Repeatedly found in the visitation inspections, the instructions related to religion also related to the argument of enhancing the reputation of the village. People understood, for instance, that Corpus Christi confraternities contributed to the service of God, to the veneration of the eucharist, and to the “village honour.” In general, honouring the eucharist translated to honouring the village. The same double intent, village honour and service to God, was rooted in the inspectors’ instructions when they ordered work to be done in churches, to keep them in good repair, to fix a statue, celebrate service in the correct manner, use suitable ornaments, and promote contributions from the people to pay for church expenses.

Parish functions were presented as collective undertakings which promoted village honour. The result was a notion of the parish church as a frame for the identity of the local community. Moreover, services held at parish churches reinforced the political and social hierarchy of the people. The “honoured and old men” (viejos honrrados e anciaños) of the villages and council officials sat in the front seats during mass even if they arrived late. Consequently, village bodies themselves funded churches, as otherwise service to God and village honour were undermined. The village often funded the clergy (which meant some concejos demanded the right to choose the priest) and covered all

49 For examples of donations by women parishioners see Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 18, fol. 274r (Daimiel, 9th March 1493); and Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6076, n. 8, fol. 137v (Manzanares, November 1509). There are numerous examples of women parishioners donating rich linens for the altar service. See for instance three embroidered linens, one with golden thread and another one bordered with silk, recorded in the same inventory, donated by different women, in Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6110, n. 10, fol. 74r (Puertollano, 8th March 1502).

50 “Honra del pueblo.” Thus read the documents referring to the creation of the Corpus Christi cofradía in El Mor. From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 26, fol. 106r (El Mor, June 2, 1497 to January 8, 1502).

51 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 1, fol. 269v (Corral de Caracuel, 2nd December 1537).

52 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 7, fol. 68v–69r (Santa Cruz de Mudela, August 23rd 1537); 6109, n. 38, fol. 181v (Daimiel, June 4th 1495).
the church’s costs out of devotion or because of a command from the military order, with
the order itself having failed in its duty to do it. Residents donated not only goods for the
church; they also paid for maintenance work, and oil and wax for lighting. Provision of
bread and wine was also a private devotion expressed in many wills (“I order that for the
sake of my soul they put bread, wine and wax for two months”); but it was a collect-
ive pious activity. Likewise, sacristans called on the houses of “good people” (las buenas
gentes) to ask for wine and flour.

These practices further contributed to the perception of parish churches as com-
munity places, public spaces, and even as domestic spaces for the people. An expression
of local society, they were seen as shaped by society and also as community shapers, not
only in the religious dimension, but also in the daily and profane sphere.

Religious Life in the Parish

Parish celebrations strengthened local identity. In the general context of religious con-
formity and the scant sacramental life of the average Christian, worship was in the
first place an expression of the community’s religion, but also an example of social co-
existence. This was particularly intense in the Campo de Calatrava, where villages had
only one parish church and no monasteries (except for the main house of the military
order).

Parish Celebrations as Channels for Community Religious Experience

Let us now consider the community value of religious celebrations, despite the increas-
ing individualism of the Late Middle Ages.

Liturgy is distinguished here from devotions, even though the difference was not
entirely clear in the Middle Ages. By liturgy I understand official services of the Church,
namely the mass, the liturgy of the hours (mattins, evensong, etc.), and the sacraments

53 “E mando que lieven por mi anima pan e vino e çera dos meses.” Pedro Roys’ last will and
testament written in Almagro on May 5, 1401. From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección
Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, Sección Diplomática, folder 466, n. 283
(Almagro, October 21, 1401).

54 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de
Calatrava, 6079, n. 1, fol. 105r (Argamasilla, November 6, 1537); 6079, n. 26, fols. 416r–v (February
6, 1539).

55 On conformism and reformism in the passage from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age see
Etienne Delaruelle, Edmond-Rene Labande, Paul Ourliac, “La crisis conciliar. La vida religiosa del
pueblo cristiano,” in Historia de la Iglesia, ed. Agustín Fliche and Vincent Martin, 26 vols. (Valencia,
1977), 16:13–38. García de Cortázar speaks of “sacramental drought, floods of devotion” (sequía
sacramental e inundación devocional) in Historia religiosa del Occidente medieval, 462–81.

56 The faithful attended the main house of the Order of Calatrava only occasionally, to celebrate
Easter and certain feasts of the Virgin, when the devout were granted indulgences. See Raquel
Torres, “La influencia devocional de la Orden de Calatrava en la religiosidad de su señorío durante

in accordance with official formulas. Conversely, devotions imply extra-liturgical, non-compulsory religious practices including the veneration of saints, the Virgin, and God, such as blessings, processions, pilgrimages, particular acts of devotion, etc. These practices were often rooted in pre-Christian times and were more free and emotional in nature and were usually associated with propitiatory aims to deliver protection or healing. Many scholars see liturgy as a hierarchical expression constrained to the predetermined ritual while devotions are seen as a spontaneous manifestation of people’s faith that go beyond the official sphere. However, current research advises against a total opposition between cultivated and popular religiosity in the Middle Ages. Indeed, numerous examples of permeability between both spheres, between liturgy and the popular piety of the people, are documented and it has also been shown that most of the clergy shared the religious notions of ordinary Christians. Although extra-liturgical devotions were more emotional, the argument advanced here is that liturgical services also became a common space of faith.

Acts of Devotion

Religious anthropology has amply demonstrated the socializing role of devotional activities associated with popular piety at shrines within villages or outside them, but also those in parish churches. If we want to understand popular religiosity, we can see religious festivities as multi-dimensional: a spiritual dimension of course, but recreational, superstitious, civic, and community dimensions too. Profane and sacred elements were intertwined. Thus, Corpus Christi was the medieval civic feast par...
excellence. Eucharistic devotion, which grew towards the end of the Middle Ages, showed its collective nature in the eucharistic processions to carry the viaticum for the sick and in the confraternities of the Holy Sacrament. The worship of saints, sometimes decided by vote on the concejo, represented a shared heritage of sacredness, and thus contributed to the symbolic construction of a community. Likewise, processions were used by the local authorities to sacralize and define the rural territory adjacent to the villages and to promote a sense of inclusiveness. Shrines in the countryside consecrated places amidst a pagan nature. Equally, confraternities were frameworks for religious cohesion. My study counts one hundred and fifteen confraternities in the Campo de Calatrava, many of them associated with a shrine or the parish church. They organized both public religious and recreational celebrations, and their own private feasts, to honour their patron on their patron’s feast day. Confraternities generated festividades en el Occidente peninsular (siglos XIII–XVI),” in Fiestas y litúrgia / Fêtes et liturgie, ed. Carmelo Lisón Tolosana and Didier Ozanam (Madrid, 1988), 35–51. There are also multiple examples in José Sánchez Herrero, Las diócesis del Reino de León, siglos XIV y XV (León, 1978); see also José Sánchez Herrero, “La religiosidad popular en la baja Edad Media andaluza,” in Homenaje a Alfonso Trujillo. Historia, Lengua, Literatura, Geografía y Filosofía, 2 vols. (Tenerife, 1982), 2:279–331; José Sánchez Herrero, “El mundo festivo-religioso cristiano en el occidente español de la Baja Edad Media,” in El mundo festivo en España y América, ed. Antonio Garrido Aranda (Córdoba, 2005), 17–54; José Sánchez Herrero and María del Carmen Álvarez Márquez, “Fiestas y devociones en la catedral de Sevilla a través de las concesiones medievales de indulgencias,” Revista Española de Derecho Canónico, 46, no. 126 (1989): 129–78; Carlos Álvarez Santaló, Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, María Jesús Buxó Rey, and Salvador Rodríguez Becerra, eds., La religiosidad popular (Barcelona, 1989).

63 Ladero Quesada, Las fiestas, 50–58, and the bibliography concerning the feast of Corpus Christi on 184–87. This feast has been studied in depth from an anthropological viewpoint (Caro Baroja) and from the point of view of the evolution of the political, social, and ideological aspects of the procession (Rafael Narbona Vizcaíno). There are plenty of studies on many medieval Castilian and Aragonese villages. This approach often goes beyond the medieval period, as it became a paradigmatic Baroque feast.

64 Miri Rubin, The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture (Cambridge, 1991).

65 Christian, Jr., Religiosidad local, 39–91 (chap. 2).


68 García, “Territorialidad y construcción,” 95–100.

69 Vauchez, Lieux sacrés.

social networks parallel to or overlapping with parish links. They were clear examples of the collective nature of medieval religiosity.\textsuperscript{71}

**Liturgical Services**

It might seem that official liturgical services would not have the same inclusive function as devotions had. However, the sources I have examined do not show such an official or static picture,\textsuperscript{72} particularly since liturgy was living and was characterized by local variants until the liturgy of the Roman Church became globally standardized after Trent in Pius V’s Roman Missal (1570).\textsuperscript{73} Some scholars object to the conventional notion that people experienced the mass in complete ignorance,\textsuperscript{74} emphasizing the creative capacity of popular religion and its contributions to the official service.\textsuperscript{75} This argument sees liturgical acts as a channel for popular and community religious experience. This was obvious in the sacraments, during baptisms, weddings, and extreme unction (the last rites), when the carrying of the viaticum became a colourful procession accompanied by confraternity members\textsuperscript{76} and an occasion for gaining indulgences.\textsuperscript{77} Even confessions, albeit not very frequently practised, were performed collectively during the period of Lent,\textsuperscript{78} and many laymen attended the Liturgy of the Hours.\textsuperscript{79}

To get a flavour of a church service we should remember that the mass was perceived as multi-part and optional; it was not seen as imperative to attend from the beginning.\textsuperscript{80}

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\textsuperscript{73} Torres, “Liturgia y espiritualidad.”

\textsuperscript{74} Martin, Mentalités Médiévales, 249–50, quotes the studies by Juan Delumeau on the Florentine region in the fourteenth century.

\textsuperscript{75} González Novalín, “Infiltraciones de la devoción,” 259–85; González Novalín, “Misas supersticiosas,” 1–40; García y García, “Religiosidad popular y festividades,” 38–45; Rapp, Histoire du Christianisme, 259.

\textsuperscript{76} Raquel Torres, Formas de organización y práctica religiosa en Castilla–La Nueva. Siglos XIII–XVI (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005), 1538ff.

\textsuperscript{77} According to José Sánchez Herrero, in Andalusia on returning to the church the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament took place. See Sánchez Herrero, “La religiosidad popular,” 314.


\textsuperscript{79} For example: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 19, fol. 352r (Granátula, 1510).

\textsuperscript{80} Inspectors repeatedly criticized this practice. Torres, “Liturgia y espiritualidad,” 1101–2.
but only as from elevation rite. It was seen as a succession of evocations of the Passion and was identified with an epiphany of God, who descended to the altar for the consecration of bread and wine. The elevation of the consecrated species was a time for “seeing God” and to hope to receive beneficial effects. Gloomier theological aspects of the mass such as sacrifice, penance, and the Last Supper still remained, but people attended these ceremonies with the hope of coming into contact with the sacred. Besides, even though the faithful rarely partook in communion, certain rites, such as kissing the pax or the distribution of consecrated bread, acted as substitutes for actual communion.

People most likely captured the essential meaning of the great liturgical seasons (Lent, Easter, Christmas, and the feasts of major saints) through the help of liturgical dramatization and altar ornamentation, clerical robes, and images. Moreover, the mass was dramatic in itself, with highly anticipated moments like the consecration and elevation of the sacred species, enhanced by the ringing of bells.

The faithful took part in the ritual in their own way and were involved in different ways, five of which I can mention. First, through pastoral instruction: the faithful en masse attended sermons at the church on solemn feast days. Second, male children and teenagers participated as altar servers. Third, through the stimulation of all the senses and emotions: lights, bells, incensing of the altar and of books, requesting alms for popular causes, the physical movement of those presiding at the altar, dressed in chasubles.


Josef Andreas Jungmann, El Sacrificio de la Misa. Tratado histórico-litúrgico (Madrid, 1953), 165–66. These allegories of the mass were familiar during the Late Middle Ages, the scholastics notwithstanding. José Sánchez Herrero systematizes the allegories and symbols of the mass collected in Castilian authors: Sánchez Herrero, Las diócesis del Reino, 285. The famous bishop of Granada, Fray Hernando de Talavera, reproduced them in explaining the mass: Hernando de Talavera, “Tractado de lo que significan las cerimonias de la misa y de lo que en cada una se deve pensar y pedir a nuestro Señor,” in Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, XVI. Escritores místicos españoles, ed. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (Madrid, 1911), 79–93.

On their individual protective and healing effects, see Jungmann, El Sacrificio de la Misa, 171nn97–103). See the power of chalices and similar objects to avert collective dangers in Rapp, Histoire du Christianisme, 298–99.

A wooden or metallic object with images that was kissed during the rite of peace at mass.

By way of example: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección ÓRDenes Militares, Consejo de Ordenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6109, n. 40, fol. 216v (Piedrabuena, 1495); 6075, n. 33, fol. 370r (Miguelturra, 1502); 6075, n. 9, fol. 181r (Daimiel, 1491); 6109, n. 37, fol. 131v (Manzanares, 1495); 6075, n. 3, fol. 33r (Santa Cruz de Mudela, 1491); 6109, n. 41, fol. 233r (Agudo, 1495); 6075, n. 20, fol. 323v (Torralba, 1493); 6109, n. 39, fol. 190v (Pozuelo, 1495); 6110, n. 10, fol. 75v (Puertollano, 1502).

They brought their own seats, and were encouraged to use the choir, which was normally forbidden to them: Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección ÓRDenes Militares, Consejo de Ordenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6078, no. 1, fol. 36v (Almagro, August 14, 1534).
and dalmatics, singing and organ music, the spraying of holy water, and so on. Fourth, by repeated formulas and acclamations such as Amen, Alleluia, Deo gratias, Dominus vobiscum, Pax vobis, all of which highlighted the key moments of the mass. Lastly, the scenography of what we may call "dressed churches": simple churches ornamented with all sorts of fabrics, images on the altarpieces, chasubles, painted walls, and canopies over the altar adorned with textual messages. Statues of the saints, especially the Virgin and Child, dressed in vestments and jewellery were the focus of attention as well. In churches in the Campo de Calatrava, a dark fabric was hung behind the altar to offer better contrast to the view of the sacred host elevated by the priest (a habit also documented in French and English churches by J. A. Jungmann) and incense, lights, and bells enhanced the experience as well. In brief, the idea was to create an atmosphere of sacred realism in which Christians felt the divine, bringing the whole community together.

Religious Services as a Social Act

The High Mass was clearly a time for social meeting at the parish church. Sometimes people heard mass in shrines or hospitals, forbidden by the inspectors, confessionalists, and synods, which shows that the mass was not seen as a private or limited affair; but had a community theological dimension. This festive act of worship normally gathered together all local residents, reproducing the local social and political hierarchies. It was an opportunity for men and women to mingle, which was forbidden in Calatravan villages; women were supposed to sit at the back and men at the front, though sometimes they would change places or would sit facing each other by the side of the

87 The parish churches in the Campo de Calatrava were rural and modest, but still usually had an organ and a wide variety of music books. Raquel Torres, “Bibliotecas de parroquias rurales y religiosidad popular en Castilla al final de la Edad Media,” in Modelos culturales y normas sociales al final de la Edad Media, ed. Francisco Ruiz Gómez and Patrick Boucheron (Cuenca, 2009), 429–93.


89 Testimonies in the inventories are numerous. For instance: "A rod of blue linen with a green cross, which is used when the body of Christ is raised" (una vara de lienzo azul con una cruz verde el cual se pone de que alcan el Corpus Christi) at San Andrés church in El Moral. From Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 16, fol. 213r (El Moral, February 1493).

90 Jungmann documented only isolated cases in Spain. Jungmann, El Sacrificio de la Misa, 879n44. But in the Campo de Calatrava, it was observed in the last decade of the fifteenth century and the first three of the sixteenth.

91 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6078, n. 1, fol. 41r–v (Almagro, 1534). This prohibition without doubt was due to the fact that the Catholic Church wanted to establish parishes as territorial and economic units within overall territorial structures of the diocese, but it was also connected to the ideal of keeping the local ecclesiastical body united in main weekly community celebration.

92 For example, Sínodo de Alcalá de 1480, published by José Sánchez Herrero, Concilios provinciales y sínodos toledanos. Concilios provinciales y sínodos toledanos de los siglos XIV y XV. La religiosidad cristiana del clero y pueblo (Sevilla, 1976), 320.

93 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6110, n. 12, fol. 101v (Villamayor, March, 19, 1502).
altar. In some places they would mix, behaviour which was seen as “very dishonest” (muy desonesto), caused “gossip and scandal” (murmuraciones y escandalos), and resulted in fines. The service was an opportunity for secular coexistence and the clergy joined in.

This sense of liturgical service as social event, in which sacrality was pervaded by not particularly devout elements, and where clergy and laymen coexisted in a quasi-domestic space, is evident in gestures, postures, attitudes, and customs that were criticized by inspectors. During church services people would approach the altar, sit in the choir, wander around the church, and many people would sit where they disturbed the Liturgy of the Hours. Moreover, priests had to be ordered not to carry out their functions during religious ceremonies down amongst the people and not to come down and collect the offerings from the faithful, which included women, nor handle money, as they would later lay their hands on the Body of Christ. Clergy and laymen both shared a sense of the service as a moment of co-existence, but as one of failure to fully perceive the sacredness of liturgical acts.

The Parish Church as a Community of the Living and the Dead

A parish function that clearly contributed to enhancing the sense of community was the holding of funerals. The attitudes, practices, and the discourse about death during the Middle Ages have been widely studied. International symposia and recent

94 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6078, n. 1, fol. 35v (Almagro, 1534).

95 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 1, fols. 22v–23r (Fuencaliente, 1537).

96 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6109, n. 35, fol. 63r (Bolaños, May 14, 1495).

97 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 1, fol. 267r–v (Corral de Caracuel, 1537).

98 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 19, fol. 352r (Granátula, 1510).

99 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 3, fols. 113v and 116v (Aldea del Rey, October 15, 1537); 6079, n. 7, fol. 70r (Santa Cruz de Mudela, August 23, 1537); 6079, n. 9, fol. 242r (Valdepeñas, September 6, 1537).

100 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6079, n. 7, fol. 70r–v (Santa Cruz de Mudela, 1537).


102 Emilio Mitre states that “few reflections would better define the Church in the Middle Ages than as a community of the living and the dead” (pocas reflexiones definirían mejor la Iglesia en la Edad Media como comunidad de vivos y muertos). Cited from Emilio Mitre Fernández, Fantasmas de la sociedad medieval. Enfermedad, Peste, Muerte (Valladolid, 2004), 145.

103 See Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “Historia de la Iglesia de España medieval,” in La historia de la Iglesia en España y el mundo hispano, ed. José Andrés Gallego (Murcia, 2001), 121–90 and the bibliography collected by Fernández Conde, La religiosidad medieval. More specifically: Máximo
papers, as well as monographs and collective studies, underscore the fact that death acted as an “element of integration” for the social group, which gathered together to celebrate funeral services, devotional practices, and secular activities. Funeral ceremonies and rites became social events. As has already been shown, cemeteries were themselves spaces for coexistence. All this, and the existence of numerous graves inside churches (in a hierarchical order arranged by proximity to the altar), contributed to integrating the dead into the local community.

The joining of the living and the dead was likely to have been very intense, in terms of the omnipresence of the hereafter in people’s minds, particularly from the twelfth century, when a belief in purgatory as an actual location became widespread. There is much evidence for this belief in purgatory as a place for souls prior to their accession into heaven: first, clauses in wills that relate to eternal salvation and contained requests for masses for the soul, often a series like the treintanarios, a cycle of thirty masses celebrated on thirty consecutive days. Second, we see good deeds undertaken during one’s life to try and win a place in Heaven: pilgrimages, crusades, alms for the poor and for religious houses, and so on. Third, we see attempts to shorten the period of suffering in purgatory: partial or plenary indulgences, confraternities’ focus on funding and providing funerals, the founding of chaplaincies, and masses for souls in purgatory.

Prayers for souls in purgatory took on a civic function. By the end of the Middle Ages a new institution developed in all the villages of the Campo de Calatrava, the “Patronage of the Souls in Purgatory” (Patronazgo de las Ánimas del Purgatorio). It was a collective


For the area analyzed here see Torres, Religiosidad popular.
chaplaincy funded by the congregation, which gave alms anonymously to pay for a chap-
lain to say masses periodically, depending on the amount of money collected.\textsuperscript{109} This
ensured solidarity between the living and the dead. It was a community vehicle to pray
for the local dead and aimed at reducing the suffering of souls, for them to get “fresh-
ness, relief” (refrigerio),\textsuperscript{110} and to speed their entry into heaven. Strikingly enough,
this \textit{patronazgo} was the active responsibility of the \textit{concejos}: guaranteeing continuing
prayers for the souls of the dead of the village was now part of the “public services”
managed by the local government, and it included both the living and the dead.

\textbf{Conclusions}

We have examined whether or not the sense of the sacred was a factor that contrib-
uted to the shaping of local community identity, and the answer is affirmative. However,
what is meant here is a “domesticated sacred,” since the perception of holiness did not
necessarily imply some reverent and distant respect of something mysterious. On the
contrary, the sacred seemed to have been conceived based on a logic linked to cause and
effect, as we have just seen with practices aimed to reduce one’s term in purgatory.

Our analysis of the sources also confirms that the relationship between parish and
local community was reciprocal in nature. That is, the parish and its material and sym-
bolic elements promoted a sense of belonging in the community; parishes were a socio-
religious framework for coexistence. However, the church’s rites were also shaped by the
people. The parish projected a socializing function, while the laity contributed as a com-
munity to shaping parish life, and they did so to a greater extent than is generally thought.

On the other hand, religious aspects were part of the “public services” that local
authorities were supposed to regulate, which is in line with what is termed medieval
“civic religion,”\textsuperscript{111} and a shared collective identity that was shaped by the practice of faith.
Among various factors in socialization, prayers for dead relatives funded by the people,
organized by the \textit{concejo}, and channelled through the parish church, are examples of the
dynamics of inclusion and exclusion typical of Christian identity, which became real in
each village under the authority of a \textit{concejo}.

In conclusion, I would assert that the parameters of Christian life of the people from
the area examined here do not differ greatly from those in the rest of Castille, or indeed
the medieval Western world in general at the end of the Middle Ages. Therefore, this
case study could serve as a model for other rural areas.

\textsuperscript{109} For example in Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de
Órdenes, Orden de Calatrava, 6075, n. 27, fol. 151v (Daimiel, January 24, 1502).

\textsuperscript{110} Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Órdenes Militares, Consejo de Órdenes, Orden
de Calatrava, 6075, n. 30, fols. 193v–194r (Malagón, February 1, 1502) among many other cases.

\textsuperscript{111} André Vauchez, ed., \textit{La religion civique à l’époque médiéval et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam)}
(Rome, 1995).