

METAMORPHOSIS OF A DEATH SYMBOL

The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance

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I

Worldly Power and Food for Worms

The transi tombs built by five important fifteenth-century ecclesiastics will serve as an introduction to the entire genre. These five are the tombs of Cardinal Jean de Lagrange (d. 1402), Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly (d. 1420), Archbishop Henry Chichele (d. 1443, but his tomb was built in 1424), Archbishop Richard Fleming (d. 1431), and Archbishop Johan von Sierck (d. 1456). These particular tombs were selected first, because the inscriptions that originally accompanied the tombs are known, and from these inscriptions it is possible to understand something of the meaning intended by the tombs. These same inscriptions form the focal point for an historical analysis of the concepts that led to the creation of the transi tombs. Second, these tombs were built by some of the most important religious leaders of the time in France, England, and Germany. For that reason these monuments undoubtedly were influential in stimulating the vogue for transi tombs in their respective countries; and third, these five tombs illustrate many of the contradictory impulses so characteristic of the late Middle Ages: a moralistic didacticism, a sense of the dramatic, an obsession with death, a sense of anxiety reflected in the demands for prayers for the dead, and a tremendous pride coupled with humility.

The earliest of these monuments was constructed in S. Martial, Avignon, for Cardinal Jean de Lagrange (d. 1402) according to in-

structions left in his will.[1] Lagrange's tomb was a magnificent wall monument consisting of ten registers containing carvings of various subjects and crowned by an elaborate baldachino (Figs. 3, 5, 6). From the top down, the carvings represented the following subjects: 1) Coronation of the Virgin; 2) Presentation of Christ at the temple; 3) Nativity; 4) Annunciation; 5) seated Virgin and Child; 6) Christ and the twelve apostles; 7) six busts of praying monks; 8) gisant of Lagrange in sacerdotal robes; 9) four coats of arms; 10) the transi of Lagrange. Kneeling representations of Lagrange were included in the first five scenes. Above the transi was the following inscription:

> Spectaculum facti sumus mundo ut majores et minores
> In nobis clare videant ad quem statum redigentur
> Neminem excludendo, cujusvis status sexus vel aetatis
> Ergo miser cur superbis?
> Nam cinis es et in cadaver fetidum
> Cibum et escam vermium ac cinerem
> Sic et nos, reverteris.[2]

Lagrange was a politician who served as Minister of State and Superintendent of Finances for Charles V. He was recompensed for his services by his appointment as Bishop of Amiens, and finally, on December 20, 1375, he was appointed Cardinal. He devoted his long career to the cause of French nationalism. The historian Delachenel believed that Lagrange was instrumental in persuading the French cardinals to break with Urban VI by assuring them of the support of the French king, thus precipitating the Great Schism.[3] Both Lagrange's pride and his hostility to the Pope was apparent in the following incidents. Lagrange did not go to Rome for the election of Urban VI, although he did go afterwards to offer homage to the Pope.

1. The will was written on April 12, 1402, twelve days before his death in Avignon. The complete will is given by François Duchesne, *L'histoire de tous les cardinaux françois de naissance*, Paris, 1660, pp. 467–77 and 620–21.

2. "We have been made a spectacle for the world so that the older and the younger may look clearly upon us, in order that they might see to what state they will be reduced. No one is excluded, regardless of estate, sex, or age. Therefore, miserable one, why are you proud? You are only ash, and you will revert, as we have done to a fetid cadaver, food and tidbits for worms, and ashes." Eugene Müntz, "A travers le Comtat Venaissin: le mausolée du Cardinal de Lagrange à Avignon," *L'ami des monuments*, IV (1890), 94, citing a manuscript in the Bibliothèque d'Avignon, but giving no manuscript number.

3. R. Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V*, Paris, 1903–31, V, p. 414.

However, he had an altercation with the Pope and after a public rebuke, Lagrange replied: "You are now Pope, and I cannot answer you. However, if you were still the little archbishop of Bari, I would say to that little archbishop that he was lying in his teeth."[4] Lagrange defied the Papal Bull against the dismemberment of corpses by requesting, in his will, that his bones be boiled and buried in Amiens, while his flesh and entrails were to be buried under his transi tomb in Avignon.[5] He was also greatly concerned with worldly magnificence and was said to have enriched himself at the expense of the French taxpayers.[6] Lagrange could thus be characterized as an extremely important politician, interested both in worldly goods and in worldly power, who was particularly concerned with asserting the power of the French king and the developing French national church against the Pope.

While Lagrange was essentially a politician, the man who commissioned the second transi tomb to be discussed was basically a scholar and philosopher. After serving as Chancellor of the University of Paris, Pierre d'Ailly was appointed Bishop of Le Puy in 1395. The following year he was appointed Bishop of Cambrai, and finally in 1411 he became cardinal. He died in 1420.[7]

D'Ailly's tomb, constructed in Notre Dame of Cambrai, was a much more modest structure than Lagrange's. Drawings of the tomb, which is no longer extant, indicate that it was originally composed to two distinct parts: a lower section which showed a shrouded figure lying in a coffin-shaped niche, and an upper section consisting of a tall column, on top of which was a small representation of d'Ailly kneeling below the Virgin and Child who are enthroned under an elaborate canopy and flanked by saints (Figs. 11, 12). Above the shrouded figure was the following inscription:

> Eptaphium reuerendi patris domini Petri de Aillyaco
> Theologie doctoris quondam Episcopi Cameracensis

4. Duchesne, *Cardinaux*, p. 648.
5. Müntz, "Lagrange," p. 93.
6. Duchesne, *Cardinaux*, p. 648.
7. For the life of Pierre d'Ailly see Regis Pontvianni, *Un évêque français du XIV siècle, Pierre d'Ailly* (1350–1420), Le Puy, 1896.

Mors rapuit petrum. Petram subiit putre corpus
Sed Petram Xpistum. Spiritus ipse petit.
Quisquis ades precibus fer opem semperque (. . . . .)
[3 syllables lacking]
Quod preter mores omnia morte cadunt
Nam Quid amor regum, quid opes, quid gloria durent.
Hec aderant [. . . . ?] nu(n)c (?) michi. nunc abeunt[?][8]

The first known transi tomb in England was constructed by Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1424, in Canterbury Cathedral as part of his chantry chapel (Fig. 13). The tomb consists of two life-sized figures, both carved in the full round, with one placed directly above the other. The upper figure, the gisant, shows the Archbishop in his ecclesiastical robes, his head supported by angels, and with two monks with open prayer books kneeling at his feet. The lower figure is the nude transi lying on its shroud. Coats of arms decorate the piers that support the upper deck of the tomb structure, and the entire tomb was originally surmounted by a canopy adorned by angels bearing heraldic shields, and supported by two large pilasters decorated with small figures of the apostles. Around the bottom verge of the tomb is the following inscription:

8. "Epitaph of the reverend Father Peter of Ailly/Doctor of theology, one-time Bishop of Cambrai./Death carried off Peter [Petrus=Peter=Rock]. The rotting/body went beneath the rock/But the spirit of itself seeks for the Rock who is Christ./You, whoever are at hand, bring help by means of prayer. . . ./All things fall by means of death except morals./To what extent does the love of kings abide; what wealth, what glory lasts?/Recently I possessed these things, but now they are gone from me [?]." Both the illustration and the inscription of this tomb, which is no longer extant, come from the notebooks of Roger de la Gaignières, *Les dessins d'archéologie*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. 17025, fols. 34–35. The transcription is apparently corrupt.

A prototype for this type of contrast can be found on the tomb slab of a priest called Bruno (d. 1194) at Hildesheim. The scene is more a narrative than a true transi image, for the monks are shown preparing the body for burial while a small soul is being raised in a cloth by two angels. For an illustration see Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology; Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York, 1962, Pl. LXXIII, fig. 134. An Italian example is found on the tomb of Archbishop Simone Saltarelli (d. 1342) in Santa Caterina, Pisa, by Nino Pisano. The lower figure is lying in a death chamber revealed by angels, but above him a small nude figure symbolizing the soul is being lifted heavenward in a cloth by angels. For an illustration see Venturi, *Storia*, IV, Fig. 382.

Pauper eram natus, post Primas hic elevatus
Iam sum prostratus et vermibus esca paratus
Ecce meum tumulum.
Quisquis eris qui transieris rogo memoreris
Tu quod eris mihi consimilis qui post morieris
Omnibus horribilis, pulvis, vermis, caro vilis.[9]

Above the head of the transi is the following inscription:

Etus sanctorum concorditer iste precetur
Ut Deus ipsorum [sic] meritis sibi propitietur.[10]

In addition to these inscriptions and a traditional epitaph listing his titles, the word "Emmanuel" appears once at his feet and twice at the head.

Chichele was one of the most important English statesmen of the first half of the fifteenth century. After being educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, he was awarded a degree in law in 1388. His patron, Bishop Metford of Salisbury, procured a number of minor appointments for the young man including the important post of Chancellor of Salisbury. After Metford's death, Henry IV became Chichele's patron, appointing him ambassador to the courts of Rome and France in 1406. On Chichele's second embassy to Rome, Pope Innocent XII presented him with the See of St. David, and consecrated him bishop in 1408. With the accession of Henry V, Chichele was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, a position he held from 1414 until his death in 1443. Much of Chichele's time was occupied with political activities. He served as ambassador to France in 1410. During Henry's absences in France, Chichele assumed the administration of the kingdom, although he accompanied Henry V on several of the French seiges. Throughout most of his career Chichele was dedicated to resisting the encroachment of the See of Rome both on his own rights and on those of the crown.[11]

9. "I was a pauper born, then to Primate raised/Now I am cut down and ready to be food for worms/Behold my grave./Whoever you may be who passes by, I ask you to remember/You will be like me after you die;/All horrible, dust, worms, vile flesh."

10. "May this gathering of the saints pray in harmony/That God may be propitious toward their[sic] merits."

11. From *The Register of Henry Chichele Archbishop of Canterbury, 1414–1443,*

The tomb of Richard Fleming, Archbishop of York (d. 1431), was constructed as part of his chantry chapel in Lincoln Cathedral, the tomb and its canopy forming one wall of the chantry (Figs. 14, 15). The general structure of the tomb is similar to that of Chichele, with an upper figure of Fleming in ecclesiastical robes contrasted to a lower figure of an emaciated transi. The head of the upper figure is supported by angels; at his feet is a dragon, with shields containing the crucifix head and feet. The following epitaph was originally attached to the tomb:

Isthuc qui graderis paulisper perlege lector:
Sta, speculans, quod eris, in me nunc Vermibus eso:
Qui fueram pridie Juvenis, forma speciosus;
Artes Oxoniae discens Puer ingeniosus;
Juris Divini crescens exinde Magister:
Pape Martini Camerarii honore, Minister;
Hic cum Presulibus in Lyncolne sede locavit,
Et propriis manibus mira Pietate sacravit.
Post Eboracensis tituli fulgore serenus
Sub Glebis densis jaceo; quamvis vir amenus
Mundi pompa, Decor, Applausus, Culmina queque,
Quid sunt ista, Precor, nisi, Somnia stultitieque?
Vultu blanda favent, quorum caro nil nisi fenum
Quid Labor in Logicis? Quid Doctorale cacumen?
Quid dant Delicie? Quid Laus? Quid Opes operantur?
Omnia seviti mortis, velut Umbra, fugantur,
O Mors dira nimis, non parcens Rebus opimis.
Antea Sublimis, per Te, jam Ponor in imis.
Vita brevis vana est; habet unc hec gloria finem,
Fossa cubile manet, quo mortua membra reclinem.
Hinc recolas, qui laude volas & Corpore flores;
Hoc sapias. Quo divinas pro me, precor ores.

Ecce sub hoc Lapide Flemmyng Richardus humatur
Pensa, Plange, vide; sic omnis honor superatur.
Doctor clarus erat; prestans & Episcopus iste
In Deum crediderat, nunc esto salus sua Christe.[12]

edited by Ernst Frazer Jacob, London, 1937, introduction.

12. The epitaph, originally on a tablet attached to the tomb, is no longer extant.

In this epitaph, which seems to come from Fleming's own mouth, he traced his career in detail, praising himself and saying what a fine and worthy man he was. Richard Fleming studied law at Oxford, then served as canon of Lincoln before being appointed Bishop of Lincoln in 1419. In 1424 the Pope appointed him Archbishop of York, the diocese in which he had originally been beneficed. In his younger days Fleming had been in sympathy with the Lollards, but as he grew older he rejected their beliefs and dedicated himself to combatting them.[13]

The first known transi tomb in Germany was erected for Johan von Sierck, Archbishop of Trier, in Trier cathedral shortly after his death in 1456. The structure of this tomb was similar to that of the

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It was, however, recorded by Browne Willis, *Survey of the Cathedrals of Lincoln, Ely, Oxford, and Peterborough*, 3 vols., London, 1727–1730, I, 54–55:

"Reader, whoever comes this way, read for a while:
Stand, seeing in me, who is eaten by worms, what you will be.
I, who was once young and beautiful to look on
Who learned the arts of Oxford, and was a talented boy;
Thereafter growing up to be Master of Canon Law:
Pope Martin honored me by making me his Chamberlain;
Here he placed me with the bishops in the See of Lincoln,
With his own hands he consecrated me with wondrous piety;
Afterwards serene with the splendour of the title of York.
However agreeable a man I was, I lie under the thick clods,
Worldly pomp, honor, recognition, whatever heights there are,
What were they, pray, if not dreams, folly?
They whose flesh is nothing but grass favor us with ingratiating looks[?]
Why work in Logic? of what use is the height of a Doctorate?
What do these delights and praises give us? What use is wealth?
All things are put to flight by cruel death, like shadows.
Oh dire death, not sparing the best of things,
Previously exalted, through you, are now laid among the lowest.
Brief life is vain, such glory has this end.
The couch that remains for me is a ditch where I lay my dead limbs.
From this sight reflect, you who are soaring with glory and
in your bodily flower.
Through this be wise. Whoever understands [?] this,
I beseech you pray for me.

Behold, here under this stone lies buried Richard Fleming.
Ponder, lament, behold; thus is all honor overcome.
Brilliant doctor, he was an excellent bishop.
In God he believed; now, Christ, be his salvation."

[Last line is unmetrical.]

13. The biographical information can be found in George H. Cook, *Medieval Chantries and Chantry Chapels*, London, 1947, pp. 111–12.

English examples, likewise contrasting two life-size recumbent figures. The upper figure, which is still extant shows him in ecclesiastic garb, his hands in prayer, his croisier at his side. Below this representation was originally another which showed von Sierck as a nude transi, but with one important variation from the English: the transi was covered by snakes and frogs. The contrasting images are refered to in a part of the epitaph that was transcribed before its destruction: "Sublimor tumba, Subrodor en Anguibus Umbra" (I am high on the tomb; behold as a shadow I am nibbled by snakes). The remainder of the garbled epitaph refers to his political and ecclesiastical career.[14]

As a young man Johan von Sierck first studied in German universities, then went to Florence where he studied canon law, receiving a certificate on September 9, 1420. In 1427 he was named "*professeur titulaire*" of theology at Trier. He was canon at Trier, and at Saint-Sauveur at Utrecht, and papal chaplain at Rome. He stayed at Rome waiting for a vacancy in the high offices in Germany. When the Archbishop of Trier, Otto of Ziegenhain, died in 1430 Johan's name was suggested as a replacement along with that of Ulrich de Mandersheid, doyen of the chapter of Cologne. Johan was supported by his uncle Gilles who was a member of the Trier chapter as well as by other powerful friends of his family. The two competitors pleaded their cause before Pope Martin V who gave the post to Raban of Helmstadt, an avaricious old man unknown in Trier. Ulrich tried to buy the office, promising Johan 17,000 florins if he gave up, with another 3,000 offered to Raban if he renounced his rights. Ulrich usurped the office, gaining the support of many of the cities, but not Trier, which resisted.

In his fight to gain the archepiscopal seat of Trier, Ulrich de Mandersheid formed a league with the Dukes of Bavaria and Burgundy, the Landgrave of Hesse and others, resulting in a war that be-

14. "Trevir Sirk Jacobus vim Praesul origine passus,/Sublimor tumba, Subrodor en Anguibus Umbra./Hostis compegi, procerum consulta redegi./Clerum Zelavi, discordes Pace beavi./Caesar, apex galle siculum rex rene scis Itale/Palladiis Trebatum nequiit temerarius ausum/Germano, paladiolo labasco sepulcro . . ." The lower figure of the double tomb was destroyed in 1771, and quite possibly the epitaph was destroyed at the same time, for it is no longer extant. The description of the tomb as well as the transcription of the epitaph came from Kristoffe Brouwer, *Antiquitum et analium Treverensium*, Leodis, 1670, II, 289, as cited by Otto Wertheimer, *Nicolaus Gerhaert*, Berlin, 1929, p. 40. The difficulty of the text may be due to errors in the early transcription. Wertheimer includes photographs of the upper figure from the tomb, Pl. 9.

gan in 1433; but the city of Trier still refused to recognize Ulrich. Arnold of Sierck, an important leader of the opposition, became an ally of Raban. When Raban died on April 17, 1439, Johan von Sierck was appointed as Archbishop in his place, for Johan had bought the right of succession to the archbishopric from Raban for the huge sum of 100,000 florins.

Von Sierck, who was especially devoted to the advancement of his family, used his appointment as Archbishop of Trier to further these interests. He was deeply involved in the politics of his time. The relatively obscure political references in von Sierck's epitaph probably refer to his relations with René of Anjou, who was named King of Sicily in 1434, but who was unable to take possession of his realm. The von Sierck family supported René in his dispute with Antoine de Vaudémont over the succession to the Duchy of Lorraine, and Johan was rewarded by being named Chancellor for René as well as "*protonotaire*" of the king of Sicily, receiving revenues from both offices. When René was taken prisoner, Johan took charge of raising his ransom money. He served as intermediary between the Pope and Emperor Sigismund in their discord over the convocation of the Council of Bâle in 1432, and was active in attempts to heal the schism that arose in the church after the death of Eugene IV in 1447.[15]

The brief biographies of Lagrange, d'Ailly, Chichele, Fleming, and von Sierck give some indication of the kind of men who built the early transi tombs. All were men actively engaged in the life of their times, three of them important politicians, the other two more involved with religious struggles. The tombs and the epitaphs of these men stress in varying degrees their political and worldly interests, a certain moralistic didacticism, a concern with traditional religious symbolism, and an anxiety about the fate of their souls. These elements are closely interwoven in each tomb.

All five tombs present the contrast between worldly glory and the degradation of man in death. Two epitaphs question the worth of worldly glory and wealth; two others vividly describe the horrors that await man in the grave: "a fetid cadaver, food for worms." Von Sierck's epitaph, which mentions his body being nibbled by snakes,

15. See J. Florange, *Histoire des Seigneurs et Comtes de Sierck en Lorraine*, Paris, 1895, pp. 79–125.

was so illustrated on his tomb by the lower figure. The upper figure on this tomb, like those on the tombs of Chichele and Fleming, when contrasted to the nude corpse below, seem to illustrate the contrast made in the inscriptions between worldly power and food for worms. Although the meaning of the structure of the tombs and that of the themes presented in the epitaphs are so closely related, the factors involved in the analysis of each are quite distinct: the epitaphs relate to the literary tradition, while the structure of the tombs relates closely to contemporary funeral customs.

The Origin and Development of Macabre Moralism

The general tone of the epitaphs connected with the transi tombs of Lagrange, d'Ailly, Chichele, Fleming, and von Sierck seems to emphasize a type of pessimistic didacticism warning of the transience of worldly life and power. Variations on this general theme can be distinguished: the inevitability of death for all men with the final return of the body to food for worms, dust and ashes; the idea that neither worldly joys nor worldly power will long endure; the sharp contrast between worldly power and the physical decay in death; and finally the question of the significance of worldly power and glory in the face of the inevitability of death. Underlying all these ideas was a denigration of the flesh amounting almost to a hatred of the human body. In general, the inscriptions stressed the futility of human pride, and the image of the corpse was used to subdue that pride.

The contemplation of a representation of a corpse as a means of changing behavior did not begin with the Christians. Such contemplation had been urged by the Egyptians and the Romans, but in those civilizations, the purpose had been to encourage men to enjoy life to the full since death would soon make all enjoyment impossible.[16]

16. Herodotus reported that at banquets given by wealthy persons in Egypt it was the custom for a servant to carry around a wooden image of a corpse or mummy in a sarcophagus, telling each guest to "Eat, drink, and be merry, for when you die you will be like this figure." *Hist.* lib. ii, 78, as cited by J. E. Wessely, *Die Gestalten des Todes und des Teufels in der Darstellenden Kunst*, Leipzig, 1876, p. 7. See "Die alteste Darstellung eines Skelette," *Zeitschrift für Egyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, I (1912), 63. The same view of life and death was expressed in a Greek epitaph written by Julianus Aegyptus for the lyric poet Anacrean of Teos who died in 478: "What oft alive I sung, now dead I cry/Loud from the tomb: 'Drink mortals, ere you die!' " (Translation by Francis Faukes, 1760, in *The Greek Anthology*, Edinburgh, 1874.) This hedonistic

Corpse figures were occasionally used on antique tombs but the mood evoked was most often that of nostalgia.[17] The Arabs used the image of death in both senses: as an encouragement to the enjoyment of life, and as a nostalgic reflection on what was lost.[18]

By contrast the image of death was evoked by Christian moralists in order to deprecate worldly pleasure and achievements rather than to stimulate them as the classical memento mori had been intended to do. The closest antique example of the corpse as memento mori in the medieval sense was found on a cippus in the British Museum dating from the third century A.D., a period when the pessimism reflected in the writings of the early Christian fathers had already permeated the classical world. Within a panel at the bottom of the cippus lay a full-length nude corpse, very similar in type to the medieval transi (Fig. 16). Above the corpse a couplet in Greek asks the passerby if he can tell from the skeleton whether the deceased was Hylas or Thersites, an idea adopted from Lucian's *Dialogues of*

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attitude was illustrated by figures of skeletons and skulls decorating objects such as gems, drinking cups, lamps, or even done in mosaic as part of the dining room decoration. The skeletons were often shown dancing, accompanied by wine jars, or crowned with flowers. All stressed the same message: "Eat, drink, and crown yourself with flowers; see what you will become." Saint Paul referred to this attitude in the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 15:32: "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

17. A cippus in the Naples Museum shows a shrivelled body reclining on rocky ground. The soul, in the shape of a butterfly, escapes from the body, but it is about to be swallowed by a lizard, the emblem of the earth. See J.Fr.M. von Offers, *Ueber ein Grab bei Kumae und die in demselben enthaltenen merkwurdigen Bildewerke, mit Rucksicht auf das Vorkommen von Skeleten under den Antiken*, Berlin, 1831, Pl. 5, fig. 2. Such a tomb, using the butterfly as emblem of the soul, may have inspired Hadrian's verse: "Soul of mine, pretty one, flitting one,/Guest and partner to my clay,/ Whither wilt thou hie way—/Pallid one, rigid one, naked one—/Never to play again, never to play?" Translated by Charles Merival, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, London, 1865, VIII, 255.

18. In one of the tales of Haroun-al-Rashid, the Caliph of Bagdad from 786–809 A.D., Abu'l Kasim shows the Caliph his treasures, amongst which, on a golden throne, the embalmed figure of their first owner was seated. He was accompanied by this inscription: "Whosoever shall see me in the condition I now am in, let him open his eyes; let him reflect that I was once living like himself, and that he will one day die like me. . . . Let him make use of it [the treasure] to acquire friends and to lead an agreeable life; for when the hour appointed for him is come, all these riches will not save him from the common destiny of men." Claude Field, *Tales of the Caliphs*, London, 1909, p. 81. For Saladin's contribution to the tradition see J. M. Ludlow, *The Ages of the Crusades*, Edinburgh, 1896, p. 178.

the Dead. Written in the second century A.D. the work, through the mouths of Diogenes, Charon, Hermes and Menippus, assails man's vanity and love for earthly things. In one episode Hylas, the cynosure of beauty, contends with Thersites, the representative of ugliness, before the philosopher Menippus who decides that between two skulls there is no distinction as to beauty: "Hades is a democracy; one man is as good as another there."[19]

However, even this pessimistic philosophical image lacks the emotional intensity of later Christian forms which were based on the idea that death and corruption are not natural processes, but are the result and punishment for sin. The corollary to this belief is found in the many legends of exhumed bodies of saints discovered to be completely uncorrupted and sweet smelling, undoubtedly reflecting the words of Psalm XVI:10: "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."[20]

With the transformation of death from a natural process to a moral punishment the nostalgic classical "*sic transit gloria mundi*" came to inspire humility in the mighty.[21] Anselm of Canterbury asked, "Of what use are honesty and nobility, for they mean only the death of the soul?"[22] Similar questions were asked by Innocent III and were repeated on certain twelfth-century epitaphs.[23] In the inscriptions attached to their transi tombs both Pierre d'Ailly and Richard Fleming questioned the value of earthly attainments.

The horrors of death were evoked particularly to counter

19. For more information on the cippus see A. H. Smith, *A Catalogue of the Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, British Museum, London, 1904, III, #2391, pp. 363–64.

20. Such discoveries were commonly reported during the Middle Ages from the fourth century, and a good number are related by E. Cobham Brewer in *A Dictionary of Miracles*, Philadelphia, 1885, pp. 372–74.

21. The phrase was repeated at the coronation ceremonies of the Pope and of the German Emperors Sigmund at Nurnburg in 1414 and Friedrich III in 1442. See Wolfgang Stammler, *Frau Welt eine mittelalterliche Allegorie*, Freiburg, 1959, p. 19.

22. Full text in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . .*, [*Series Latina*] Paris, 1844–1904, CLVIII, col. 705.

23. A number of twelfth-century epitaphs using the theme are given in the rolls of the dead. See Leopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des morts du IX au XVe siècle*, Paris, 1866, pp. 191, 242, 258, 260, 297 and 327. These writings used the old *ubi sunt* theme that had originated in Greek poetry. See C. H. Becker, "Ubi Sunt, qui ante nos," in *Kuhn-Festschrift*, 1916, pp. 87–105.

pride, in the writings of men like Herman Contractus von Reichnau (1013–1054),[24] Heinrich von Melk (working c. 1160),[25] Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109),[26] Bernard of Clairvaux (1091–1153),[27] and Innocent III (1161–1216).[28] In an effort to make men consider their salvation and repent eleventh- and twelfth-century moralists vilified man's living body,[29] gave detailed and vivid descriptions of the decay of that body in death,[30] stressed the transience of worldly beauty and power,[31] and the inevitability of death for all men.[32] The use of the image of death to inspire humility can be traced to the Judaic tradition. The writer of *Ecclesiasticus* 10 asked, "Why is earth and ashes proud, for when a man dies, he shall inherit creeping things, beasts and worms?" The image was elaborated by twelfth-century moralists like Bernard of Clairvaux: "Oh food for worms! Oh heap of dust! Oh vanity of dew! Why are you puffed up?"[33] This same question, undoubtedly influenced by these earlier writings, was posed in the inscription that accompanied the transi on the tomb of Cardinal Lagrange:

> Miserable one, what reason have you to be proud?
> Soon you will be as we
> A fetid cadaver, food for worms.

24. See his version of *De contemptu mundi* published by E. Dummler in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Altertumskunde*, XIII (1867), 385–434.

25. See R. Heinzel, ed., *Heinrich von Melk*, Berlin, 1867, p. 50.

26. See Migne, *Pat. Lat.* CLVIII, col. 705.

27. See Jean Mabillon, ed., *Life and Works of Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux*, trans. Samuel Eales, New York, 1912.

28. Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CCXVII, cols. 735–37.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Similar images are found in the works of Innocent III, Bernard of Clairvaux, Herman Contractus of Reichenau, and Heinrich von Melk cited above. Bernard was particularly vivid when he described man as "nothing but fetid sperm, a sack of dung, food for worms. After man, worms, and after worms, stench and horror." *Ibid.*, CLXXIV, col. 490.

31. The twelfth-century *Hymn on Death* is a good example. It is given in G. Dreves, *Analecta hymnica medii aeve*, XXXIII, Leipzig, 1886, pp. 267–68. The same sentiments were expressed on a number of epitaphs from the Rolls of the Dead. See Delisle, *loc. cit.*

32. This and many of the other ideas cited above were embodied in the *De contemptu mundi* treatises so popular during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For a bibliography of this literature see Istvan Kozáky, *Geschichte des Totentänze*, Budapest, 1944, II, 105ff and 151ff.

33. "O esca vermium! O massa pulveris!/O roris vanitas, cur sic extolleris?" The

The contemplation of tombs as a means to conquer pride that seems to have been an important element in the Lagrange inscription was earlier suggested by Bernard of Clairvaux. According to Bernard, one's pride is humbled when one realizes that the corpse is a future picture of oneself. Bernard told of an episode near the tomb of his parents, relating how he first took note of the ashes and worms, the stench and the general horror of the scene, and then observed: "What I am, they were, and what they are, I will be."[34]

This sense of identification between the living and the dead was one of the key elements in the inscriptions so often attached to transi tombs. Variations of Bernard's words had been used on Roman tombs[35] and in sixth-century Arabian poetry.[36] Similar phrases were used on epitaphs like those of Peter Damiani (d. 1072),[37] and Peter

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quotation is from a *De contemptu mundi* poem attributed to St. Bernard. The full text is given in Kozáky, *Totentänze*, II, pp. 111–12.

34. From *Meditationes pessimae de cognitione humanae conditiones*, Lib. I, cap. 3, cited in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* CLXXIV, col. 487.

35. The *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* gives several examples of inscriptions containing this motif taken from Latin tombs: "Quod fuimus estis, quod sumus vos eritis./Quod tu es ego fui, quod ego sum tu eris./Quod sumus hoc eritis, fuimus quandoque quod estis." Ersila Caetani-Lovatelli, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* . . . Vol. VIII; *Inscriptiones Africae Latinae*, Berlin, 1863–, no. 2885. These inscriptions were not, however, accompanied by the terrifying corpse images so often found on medieval tombs, nor was the passerby entreated to pray for the deceased as was so often the case in the Middle Ages.

36. In oriental poetry the saying was combined with the figures of a king, corpse, and hermit in such a way as to prefigure the later western versions of the legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. In a poem attributed to Moddhadh, King of La Mecque, the words are put in the mouth of a dead figure who uses them to warn the living man. See Hammer Purgstall, *Litterature geschichte der Araber*, Vienna, 1850, I, 96.

In an Arabian poem, dated by Baltrušaitis to about 580 A.D., the poet Adi, passing near a cemetery with Nirman, king of Hira, says to him: "May misfortune be far from you. Do you know what the tombs say? They say: 'We were what you are now, you will be what we are.' " See Baltrušaitis, *Le moyen âge fantastique*, Paris, 1955, p. 237. Liliane Brion-Guerry believes that these poems might have come into Italy through the greco-arab court of Frederik II where currents from many cultures crossed: *Le thème du 'Triomphe de la Morte' dans la peinture italienne*, Paris, 1950, p. 47. Kohler does not believe that the saying came into Europe from the Arab world, but rather that it developed independently in the two areas (Reinhold Kohler, "Der Spruch der Toten an die Lebenden", *Germania*, V, 1860). For Arabic ideas of the transitory nature of life and their relation to Christian preaching literature see C. H. Becker, *Islamstudien* I, Leipzig, 1924, pp. 501–19.

37. The epitaph of Peter Damian (d. 1072) is given in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* CXL, col. 968.

Comester (d. 1179).[38] The theme was developed in didactic literature,[39] becoming particularly popular during the later Middle Ages.[40]

In many of these inscriptions it was the living who spoke about the dead, as did St. Bernard, but in the inscriptions used on the transi tombs it was always the dead who spoke directly to the living. Even this direct address was foreshadowed in the twelfth century by an English homily on death entitled *A Message from the Tomb.*[41] The bones themselves were made to speak, urging the listener to repentance.

The contemplation of a corpse as a means of subduing pride and encouraging good behavior that had been suggested by the twelfth-century moralists was popularized by itinerant preachers of

38. Cited in Paulis Paris, ed., *Histoire littéraire de la France*, Paris, 1869, XIV, p. 14. Van Marle states that the inscription has occurred on western tombs since the ninth century, but cites no early examples (*L'Iconographie de l'art profane*, La Haye, 1934, II, 384). Karl Kunstle has traced the saying in medieval Europe as far back as the eleventh-century (*Die Legende der drei Lebenden und der drei Toten*, Freiburg, 1908, p. 28). It was inscribed in French on a tomb in Auvergne dated 1270: "Tals co tu iest e ieu si fui /Et tu seras tals co ieu sui." cited in Brion-Guerry, *Triomphe*, p. 27. The motto also appeared on a sarcophagus in Las Huelgas, Spain, erroneously thought to be that of Leonor, the daughter of Alfonso VIII, d. 1232. M. Gomez Moreno (*El Panteon real de Las Huelgas de Burgos*, 1946, p. 10).

39. The saying was found in devotional literature such as the *Disciplina clericalis* of Pierre Alphonse written at the beginning of the twelfth century: "Sum quod eris, quod es ipse fui." This work was translated into French in the second third of the thirteenth-century under the title of *Chastiement d'un père à son fils*: "Itel con tu es, itel fui,/Et tel seras come ge sui." Cited in Brion-Guerry, *Triomphe*, p. 46. A fifteenth-century German poem, the "Harte-Bok," uses the saying in connection with a dead father talking to his son. Hamburg Stadtbibliothek, ms. 102c, fol. 76. See Willy Rotzler, *Die Begegnung der drei Lebenden und des drei Toten* . . . Winterthur, 1961, pp. 56–57. A similar English poem called the "Dialogue of the Emperor and his Dead Father" is illustrated in a fifteenth-century manuscript by a double tomb showing the effigy of a king on top with a rotting corpse underneath. London, BM, Add. ms. 37049, fol. 87 recto.

40. H. F. Massman reported numerous examples of the saying in Germany and France, many of them inscribed in churchyards, on charnel houses, or on clocks. See his review "Anzeige von 'Explication de la Danse des Morts de la Chaise-Dieu, etc. par Achilles Jubinal,' Paris, 1841," *Serapeum*, VIII (1947), 137–38. Other examples of the saying are cited by Albert Freybe, *Das Memento Mori* . . . , Gotha, 1909, pp. 152–54; Wessely, Todes, pp. 20–21, and W. F. Storck in *Zeitschrift für Volksunde*, XXI (1911), 53ff, 89ff, 281ff; *Ibid.*, XXII (1912), 293ff.

41. From B. M. Bodlian 343, published in *English Homilies*, A. O. Belfour, ed., Early English Text Society, OS, No. 137, pp. 124–25.

the later Middle Ages, particularly by the Franciscans.[42] A poem by the famous Franciscan, Jacopone da Todi (1230–1306), entitled *On the Contemplation of Death and the Grave to Counter Pride*, clearly demonstrated this moralistic use of the corpse. Jacopone's poem described a man dreaming that he stood before an open grave which contained a gruesome cadaver. The man and the cadaver carried on a dialogue reflecting on the decomposition which must come even to the proud and powerful of this world.[43] A later English Franciscan preacher, John of Grimstone, made the dead speak directly to the listener, using phrases very similar to those engraved on the transi tombs:

> Wat so thu art that gost here by me
> Wtstand and behold and wel be thenk the
> Tht suich as thu art was i wone to be
> And suich as i am now saltu sone be.[44]

The moralistic sermons of itinerant preachers became more pertinent to popular experience with the outbreak of the Black Death in 1349. The old motifs of the transitory quality of human life and the vanity of worldly power were brought home by the myriad bodies of the mighty of the earth who, along with the humble, were struck down by the plague and often left to rot.[45] The outbreak of the

42. One manifestation of the Franciscan use of death as a goad to morality is the fresco in the lower church of Assisi which shows St. Francis and Death, presumably done by the Master of the Assisi vault, possibly a pupil of Giotto. With one hand St. Francis shows his stigmata, while with the other he gestures toward the figure of Death, represented as a crowned skeleton standing in a coffin (illustrated in Baltrušaitis, *Moyen âge*, p. 242 and Fig. 107, who dates it about 1325).

43. For text see Evelyn Underhill, *Jacapone da Todi, a Spiritual Biography*, London, 1919, pp. 268–73.

44. In *Sermon Commonplace Book*, early fifteenth century. Manuscript in Edinburgh, Advocates Library, 18, 7, wl, fol. 87. Cited in G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England . . . 1350–1450*, Cambridge, 1926, p. 344.

45. Johannes Nohl, in his *Chronicle of the Plague Compiled from Contempory Sources*, describes the devastations of the plague and quotes from the people who had witnessed it. One chronicler describes the eleven huge trenches that were dug in Erfurt in 1350 which were only covered after 12,000 corpses had been thrown into them. Nohl's work was originally published in German in 1926, but translated by G. H. Clarks under the title *The Black Death* and published in London in 1961. I quote from the 1961 edition, p. 20.

Black Death has often been cited as the principal reason for the macabre sentiments that were so popular at the end of the Middle Ages. Although the ideas themselves had been present in western religious thought from at least the twelfth century, the great plague of 1349–1350 and the outbreaks that followed it every ten to twenty years throughout the fifteenth century, undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the increasing popularity of images of earthly transience and themes of death. Death became more familiar to everyone. Not only were corpses more commonly seen, but painted representations such as the Dance of Death and the Triumph of Death kept disquieting images ever before men's eyes. The threatening image of death was made even more vivid by the dramatizations of the Dance Macabre which were staged during the late fourteenth and fifteenth century.[46]

Poets like Eustache Deschamps, Pierre Michault, and John Skelton, as well as many anonymous writers, added a poetic urgency to the earlier moralistic themes of the transience and vanity of earthly power and beauty.[47] Innocent III's *De contemptu mundi* was translated

46. There is evidence that during the fifteenth century and perhaps even during the fourteenth, actual pageants were performed representing a combination of dead and living figures. In a Netherlandish poem, "Maugis d'Aigremont," written about 1350, is a passage referring to the Dance of Death done in the cemeteries. G. Huet, "La danse macabre," *Le moyen âge*, Ser. 2, XX (1917–18), 163. A document found in the archives of the church of Caudebec indicates that in 1393 a procession "funèbre" was danced in the church itself (Bibliothèque de Rouen, ms. 2215 Y, 39, fol. 69). A similar pantomime was presented in the cemetary of the Innocents in Paris in 1424 before the Duke of Bedford and Philippe le Bon. E. H. Langlois, *Essai sur les danses des morts*, Rouen, 1851, I, 131, reports that the Dance of Death was enacted in the Innocents in 1422, some say by order of the Duke of Bedford in celebration of his victory. Nohl suggests that these dances may have been related to a type of fifteenth-century preventative medicine: "In France in the fifteenth century the diseases which were supposed to be prowling about as phantoms were to be scared away by the still uglier masks of the dance macabre." Nohl, *Death*, p. 148.

47. See Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres Complètes*, le Marquis de Queux de Sainte Hilaire, ed., Paris, 1818–1903, II, 121–23; Pierre Michault, *Le pas de la mort*, Jules Petit, ed., Bruxelles, 1869; John Skelton, "Lament on the Soul of Edward IV" in Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, Oxford, 1939, pp. 250–53. The poignant contrast between the beautiful body of woman and its hideousness after death was often used in poems during the latter part of the fifteenth century. It was included in the *Grand danse macabre des hommes et des femmes* published by Guiot Marchand in Paris after 1485: "Quoi sont vos corps, je vous demande,/Femmes jolies, tant bien parées,/Ils sont, pour certains la viande/Qu'un jour sera aux vers donnée./Des vers sera donc devorée/Vostre char, qui est fresche et tendre;/Ja, il n'en demourra goullée,/Vos vers après deviendront cendre." Joan Evans, *Art in Medieval France, 987–1498*, London,

into vernacular languages;[48] while old moralistic themes like the *Visio Philberti* (or *Debate between the Body and the Soul*) were developed,[49] and new ones were added. A listing of a few of the titles of such works indicates the poetic elaboration of the macabre in the later Middle Ages: *Il faut toujours penser à la Mort, Le pas de la Mort, Le roi mort, Vigiles des morts, Complainte de l'âme damnée, Die Vision von der Verganglichkeit des schönen Korpers, Omnibus horrori sum, Exitus ostendit, Vado mori, Speculum humanae conditionis, Man Begins and Ends in Wretchedness, Vanitas vanitatum, Mirror of Morality, Three Lessons to Make Ready for Death, Against Death is no Defence, Devouring Death Makes all Unbold, Beware the Pains of Purgatory, The Pricke of Conscience, The Signs of Death, The Grave, Doctrinals of Death.*

The horrors of the plague inspired religious morality poems such as the English *Disputacioun Betwyx the Body and Wormes*, whose relationship to the plague was stated in the opening lines: "In the ceson of huge mortality/Of sondre disseses with yet pestilence. . . ." This poem is of importance in the history of the transi images for it was illustrated with a picture of a double tomb of the type used in England showing a recumbent gisant figure of a woman on the top level and her rotting corpse being devoured by worms on the lower (Fig. 10). The prologue to the poem related this corpse directly to the reader:

> Take hede unto my fygure here abowne
> And se how sumtyme I was fressche and gay

1946, p. 270. Such laments for lost beauty were part of the pessimistic attitude so fashionable among many late fifteenth-century French poets. Other expressions of this pessimistic attitude were found in the work of Jean de Meung: "Tantost com li homs haist, il commence á morir." *Testament*, cited by Italo Siciliano, *François Villon et les thèmes poétiques du moyen âge*, Paris, 1934, p. 229. Pierre de Nesson, in *Vigilles des Morts*, put the idea even more dramatically: "Chaque heure qui passe nous nous approchons de notre cadavre." *Oeuvres*, A. Piaget and E. Droz, eds., Paris, 1925, p. 84. For further examples of French death poetry see L. Larmand, *Les poètes de la Mort*, Paris, 1910.

48. Eustache Deschamps translated Innocent III's *De contemptu mundi* into French in 1383, subsequently using many of Innocent's images in his own poems.

49. See Theodor Baliouchkof "Le débat de l'âme et du corps," *Romania*, XX (1891), 29, and M. Morris, *An Old English Miscellany*, 1872, pp. 147ff. The "Visio Philberti," as well as an entire collection of German death poems is included in ms. 49 in the Wellcome Medical Library, London.

Now turned to wormes mete and corrupcoun
Bot fowle erth and stynkyng slyme and clay
Attende perfore to this disputacion written here
And writte it wysely in thi herte fre
At therat sum wisdom thou may lere
To se what thou art and here aftyr sal be
When thou leste wenes, venit mors te superare
When thi grate grenes, bonum est mortis meditari.[50]

The poem contained the old warnings against worldly pride and the joy of the flesh; the body of the once beautiful woman in her solitary struggle with the worms was used to make the reader think on death and amend his own life. The image of a beautiful woman attacked by worms was used for similar purposes by other fifteenth-century writers.[51]

The descriptions of death given by preachers became ever more vivid, as in this example by an English monk who exhorted his listeners to:

> Go to the buryeles of thy fader and moder; and suche shalte thou be, be he never so fayr, never so kunnynge, never so strong, never so gay, never so lygt. Loke also what fruyt cometh of a man at alle yssues of his body, as at nose, ette mouthe, at eyzen, and atte alle the other yssues of the body, and of the pryvey membres, and he schall have mater to lowe his herte.[52]

All the humiliations suffered by the dead body were described with the intention of subduing the pride of the beholder:

> If we would but consider well how quickly we shall be placed beneath the feet not only of men, friend and foe alike, but of dogs, and the beasts of the field—where he who now rears

50. London, BM, Add. ms. 37049, fols. 33ff. It is dated ca. 1435/40. The full text of the poem is published in *Archives für deutsche Studien der neueren Sprachen*, Karl Brunner, ed., CLXVII, 1935, 30–35.

51. See the anonymous poem published by Guillaume Letard, in *Confession generale sur les dix commandemens de la loy. . .*, Toulouse, 1550, pp. 207–208.

52. From London, BM, Harley 2398, fol. 11. Cited by Owst, *Preaching*, p. 341.

> and possesses mighty palaces shall have a hall whose roof touches his nose—he who can hardly decide which robe he wishes to wear, shall have a garment of earth and worms—he who now, taking offence at a word, fights the offender, then if he have a sword in his hand, could not defend himself from the vilest beats, even the worms—we should find little reason for pride. . . . Sic transit gloria mundi![53]

Of particular importance for the transi tomb was a sermon preached by the fourteenth-century German monk at Reginsburg in which he contrasted the splendor of life with the "horrible image of death, with diverse worms, with toads on the head and snakes in the eyes, ears, and nose." He went on to describe a banderole held by this dead figure on which were inscribed the following words:

> Quid [sic] ego sum, tu statim eris:
> Quid ergo superbis de tua pulchritudine,
> Divitiis et potentiis: Pulvis et Cinis.[54]

This sermon gives almost an exact description of the type of image which appeared on so many later transi tombs, and the inscription itself echoed similar sentiments. Not only is it extremely close to the one engraved on the transi tomb of Cardinal Lagrange, but it is also closely related to the sentiments expressed by the dead nobles in the popular legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. It is possible that the monk was either describing an actual statue he had seen but which no longer survives, or he was dramatizing one of the figures used in the Legend. Whatever the cause, the image illustrates that there was indeed a very close relationship between certain ideas as expressed in sermons, in poetry, and in funerary sculpture.

The tombs of the fifteenth-century ecclesiastics examined in this chapter clearly owed a great deal to the moralistic tradition which used the dead body to illustrate the downfall of earthly glory. The

53. From *Summa Predicantium Mors*, given by Owst, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

54. "What I am, you will be:/Why be proud of your beauty,/Wisdom, and power? [All's] dust and ash." Anton E. Schönback, "Mitteilungen aus altdeutschen Handschriften," *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophischen-Historischen Klasse der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, CLVI (1908), 23.

epitaphs of all these men speculated, as did the moralists for so many years before them, on the value of worldly attainments, since all must end in the grave as food for worms.

Dramatization of Imagery

Although themes of the transience and vanity of earthly power had been used on certain twelfth-century epitaphs, these inscriptions were not illustrated with images, as were similar inscriptions on transi tombs. Figures were used on these later tombs for a number of reasons. The first is, of course, the fact that tomb imagery was a great deal more common on late medieval tombs than on those of the twelfth century. Even more significant, however, was the dramatization of the tomb that was implicit in the transi image. The interest in dramatic illustration can, in part, be traced to the influence of the liturgical dramas which became increasingly popular from the thirteenth century on.[55] The dramatic intensity of liturgical dramas of all sorts, originally intended to illustrate the words of preachers, stimulated both a greater realism and greater dramatization of sculptural imagery. The interest in vivid and dramatic visual images of all sorts became increasingly important in the later Middle Ages.

The actual dramatization of sepulchral imagery developed in fourteenth-century Italy. One example was the Italian motif of the "death chamber," a small room veiled by curtains which were pulled back by angels revealing the image of the deceased within. Other tombs were dramatized by means of the kneeling representation of the deceased being presented to the Virgin by a patron saint.[56] Such images, known as priants, were used in both Italy and France.[57] An-

55. For the relation of sculpture to medieval drama see the writings of Emile Mâle, particularly *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, Paris, 1922.

56. Both these characteristics are evident in the monuments of Cardinal di Braye (d. 1282) in San Domenico, Orvieto by Arnolfo di Cambio, and that of Cardinal Petroni (d. 1314) in the Duomo, Siena, by Tino di Camaino. See Venturi, *Storia*, IV, Figs. 67 and 190.

57. One of the earliest in the French series of priant figures was that of Isabella of Aragon (d. 1271), the wife of Philip III of France. On her tomb, which is in Cosenze, Italy, she is shown kneeling at the feet of the Virgin, her hands folded in prayer. The face is deformed on one side, perhaps referring to a mask taken after her death which was reputedly caused by a fall from a horse. Another early kneeling figure was that

other popular form of tomb dramatization was the presentation of scenes from the life of the deceased.[58] This growing fourteenth-century interest in the dramatization of the tomb combined with the macabre moralistic themes of the earlier period and with the late medieval interest in vivid realism to produce the striking image of the transi on funerary monuments.

The Tomb of Cardinal Lagrange and the Legend of the Three Quick

The complex interplay of tomb, literary tradition, and visual image can be seen in the relationship of Cardinal Lagrange's tomb to the legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. The literary and pictorial versions of this legend presented in popular form many of the ideas expressed in the writings and sermons discussed above.

The Legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead was first formulated as a poem which presented its message of the vanity of worldly things and the need to make amendment for sin by means of a confrontation and dialogue between living and dead figures. Although drawing on older ideas, the specific dramatic form of the poem apparently originated in northern France in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.[59] One of the early French versions contained the basic form of the legend in which three young men are confronted by three cadavers. The first cadaver relates that he was once rich, young, and handsome, warning the youths that he was like they are, and they will someday be like him: "Tel seres vos et come ore estes fumes ia." The second cadaver recalls that death is the great vanquisher who seizes all, nobles and common people alike. He speaks of death

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of Countess Mahaut at Maubuisson which was in place in 1323, six years before her death. She is represented on her tomb offering a little church, thus combining priant and donor. Mâle, *L'art religieux*, p. 466. Kneeling figures on tombs were quite rare in the fourteenth century and were still the exception in the fifteenth.

58. Such scenes were used on the tombs of the Neapolitan royalty in Santa Chiara, Naples. See Venturi, *Storia*, IV, Figs. 200–223. Important events from their lives were shown on the tombs of the German archbishops in Mainz cathedral: Archbishop Siegfried II of Eppstein (d. 1249), Archbishop Peter von Aspelt (d. 1320), and Archbishop John of Nassau (d. 1419). These tombs are illustrated in Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, Figs. 213–15.

59. Glixelli identified four early versions from northern France, and dated them all from the late thirteenth into the early fourteenth centuries. See Stephen Glixelli, *Les cinq poèmes des Trois Morts et des Trois Vifs*, Paris, 1914, pp. 4, 18, 20.

as a mirror held up before men by God. The third corpse exhorts the youths to penitence. All three urge the living to dedicate themselves to good works in order to gain salvation:

> Vous serez comme nous sommes
> d'avance mirez-vous en nous
> puissance, honneur, richesse ne sont rien
> a l'heure de la mort
> il n'y a que les bonnes oeuvres qui comptent.[60]

The popularity of the poem and hence, its widespread influence, is attested by the fact that several other early versions existed in French as well as one in Latin. Later translations were made into many European languages.[61]

The transi and the epitaph on the tomb of Cardinal Lagrange seem to be an abbreviation of the legend which combined elements extracted from several of the literary and pictorial variants of the poem. Most of the literary versions had combined the observation that death strikes all men with an invitation to everyone to view the corpse as the symbol of the final end of all worldly glory. The extremely popular image of the corpse as a mirror reflecting the future state of the living was also common to most of the literary variants.[62]

60. "You will be as we are/Behold yourselves betimes in us/Power, honor, riches are nothing/At the hour of death/Only good works count." From Baudouin de Condé's version of the poem used in the Psalter of Marie of Brabant in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, ms. 3142, fol. 311v.

61. For the various versions see Anatole de Montaiglon, *The Celebrated Hans Holbein's Alphabet of Death . . .*, Paris, 1856; Brion-Guerry, *Triomphe*, p. 39, and Rotzler, *Drei Lebenden*, pp. 49–50.

62. Mirrors as images of mortality were popular with medieval and Renaissance poets and preachers. The preacher Oliver Maillard recited in one of his sermons the story of a woman of fashion of Vendome who had asked her confessor to buy her a beautiful mirror in Paris. He brought back the skull of what had been the most beautiful woman of that city. Cited in A. Samouillan, *Oliver Maillard, sa predication et son temps*, Toulouse-Paris, 1891, p. 127. In the poem "Miroir des dames et demoiselles et l'exemple de tout sexe féminine" the poet puts these words into the mouth of a skeleton seated on its open coffin: "Mirez vous cy et regardes ma face./Hélas! pensez se vous estes bien belles/Comment la mort toute beauté efface!/Je fus jadis tant belle et tant plaisante/Que de beauté j'estoy l'exemplaire . . ." From a manuscript in Paris, BN fr. 147, fol. 5 recto. The image of the corpse as a mirror of the living had been used by fourteenth-century English preachers as an object lesson: "The syght of corses and wepying, that makyth a

Certain references used by Lagrange seem, however to have come from different versions of the poem. The direct address of the living by the dead (though most often in the form "I was like you and you will be like me") was found in the French versions of the poem. It was not used in the Latin version which was structured as a moralizing sermon rather than a dramatic dialogue.[63] However, the single corpse used on Lagrange's tomb is more closely related to this Latin version which described only one corpse than it is to the French versions which all referred to three.

Perhaps the most important sources for the specific forms, both literary and pictorial, used on Lagrange's monument are the Italian painted versions of the theme. The recumbent posture of the corpse on Lagrange's tomb was found in the Italian pictorial versions (Fig. 9),[64] but not in the French, where the figures are always shown standing (Fig. 7).[65] The specific question posed on Lagrange's epitaph —"Miserable one, what reason have you to be proud?"—was not found in either the French or Latin variants of the poem. This question did appear, however, in the inscriptions on the Italian frescos,

man to thenke on his death, that ys the chefe helpe to put away synne. . . . Gode men, as ye alle see, here is a myrroure to us alle; a corse browth to the chyrch. God have mercy on hym . . . for all we shul dyon, and we wyte not how sone."—*Festiall*, edited by Early English Text Society, p. 64 and p. 294.

This sentiment is more fully developed in a fifteenth-century German poem illustrated by a woodcut showing a mummy-like figure of Death entwined by a snake and standing in the jaws of hell: "Diser spiegel ist gemain/Reich arm gross und klein /Edel gepurt jung und alt/Werdend all also gestalt./Hie leut der herr bey dem knecht/ Reich und arm nun gond herbey/Unschawent wer der Herr oder knecht sey." Inscription given in Weber, *Aspects*, p. 269, with illustration p. 432 Fig. 40.

In the double portrait of Hans Burkmair and his wife in the Vienna Museum, painted by Laux Furtnagel in 1529, the wife holds up a mirror in which are reflected two skulls. On the border of the mirror is inscribed "Erken dich selbs" ("Know Thyself"). Above the heads of the painter and his wife a faded inscription says that such was their form, but in the mirror was only that: "Sollche Gestalt unser baider was, Im spiegel aber nix dan das." Thus the magic mirror reflects their post-mortem portraits, their true portraits. For illustration see A. M. Cetto, "Die Basler Holbein-Tafel mit den zwei Schädeln," *Zeitshrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, XVIII (1958), pl. 68.

63. For the Latin text see Rotzler, *Drei Lebenden*, pp. 64–67.

64. See *Ibid.*, pp. 126–63, Figs. 11–12.

65. Standing figures were used in the early French illustrations of the legend in manuscripts such as that in the Psalter of Marie of Brabant, Paris, Arsenal 3142, fol. 311 verso. Emile Mâle lists a number of French frescos of the legend of the Three Quick, all of which utilized the standing scheme *L'art religieux*, pp. 386–88).

usually in association with the hermit Macarius.[66] The most important of these were the frescos at Subiaco[67] (Fig. 9) and Santa Maria di Vezzolano (Fig. 8), the one at Vezzolano reading:

> Quid superbitus miseri?
> Pensate quod sumus
> Pensate quod estis
> Hic eritis, quod minime vitare potestis.[68]

In addition to the inscription, there are other particularly significant similarities between Lagrange's tomb and the fresco at Vezzolano, which was executed in 1354. Although painted rather than carved, the work at Vezzolano was similarly part of a funerary foundation, intended to decorate the family tomb of the Castelnuovo. Like the tomb of Cardinal Lagrange, the fresco at Vezzolano was a tall wall monument divided into a series of registers. At Vezzolano the top register contained a representation of Christ in glory, while in

66. This association of monk and corpse may have had its origin in Byzantium, for the two appear in conjunction in two eleventh or twelfth-century manuscripts of the *Paradise Songs* or *Climax* of Johannes Climaxus. The manuscripts, which tell of the ascetic road to Paradise, contain a number of representations of corpses. Perhaps the most significant shows an old man standing before an open sarcophagus in which four corpses lie, accompanied by a Greek inscription "Concerning the memory of death." This observation and contemplation of death was to teach the hermit the transitory nature of all earthly things. It is this same message that is stressed by the hermit as he appears in western works. See Adele Reuter, *Beitrage zur einer Ikonographie des Todes*, Dissertation, Leipzig, 1913, pp. 50–52.

In the early stories the monk Macarius is associated with the dead figures, but he does not play the active part he assumes in the later versions of the Three Quick and Three Dead. In European literature Saint Macarius, the monk, was considered as a representative of the ascetic life, and he was usually shown actively exhorting three youths to penitence and the life of renunciation. He is shown in this capacity in a number of fourteenth-century Italian manuscripts, one example of which is the *Laudi spirituali*, Florence BN cod. II 1, 122, fol. 134 r.; see Rotzler, *Drei Lebenden*, Fig. 13. The hermit also appeared in the French *Heures de Jean du Pres*, dated about 1450. See Baltrušaitis, *Moyen âge*, p. 260, note 30.

67. The full inscription is given by Rotzler, *Drei Lebenden*, p. 155.

68. "Why are you proud wretched ones?/Think what we are/Think what you are/Here you will be, a thing which you can no way avoid." The inscription, which is extant in the right part of the painting, is cited by Brion-Guerry, *Triomphe*, pp. 166–67. The fresco, which shows the influence of French miniatures, is dated by Raimond Van Marle to the end of the thirteenth century in *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, La Haye, 1923–36, I, 551.

the panel below a kneeling representation of the deceased was being presented to the Virgin of the Nativity by a standing angel. The next register contained an illustration of the legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. At the very bottom was the isolated figure of a single corpse lying in a coffin. Lagrange's tomb, originally an extremely elaborate structure, was divided into ten registers (Fig. 3).[69] As at Vezzolano, Christ was represented in the top register; however, on Lagrange's tomb he was shown crowning the Virgin. Both fresco and tomb contained illustrations of the Nativity, in each case with the kneeling donor being presented to the Virgin. However, instead of the single representation of the kneeling donor shown at Vezzolano, Lagrange's kneeling effigy was shown in no fewer than five holy scenes, each time being recommended by an angel or saint. The two lowest registers contained respectively a recumbent effigy of the Cardinal in his ecclesiastical vestments and a recumbent nude transi (Fig. 6). The similarities between the Vezzolano fresco and Lagrange's tomb are striking, and since Lagrange's political activities frequently took him to Italy, it seems quite possible that he was familiar with the fresco. Lagrange seems to have retained the literary references to the legend of the Three Quick from Vezzolano but omitted the figures themselves, utilizing only a single corpse similar to the one at the very bottom of the fresco.

The source of the iconography of the tomb of Cardinal Lagrange has been considered in such detail because, although it was not the first to use a transi image, this tomb was the first to contain both the image and an epitaph which apparently stressed the contemplation of the dead body as a means of subduing pride.

The tomb of this powerful French cardinal may well have served not only as the inspiration for those later French tombs which combined the representation of the legend of the Three Quick with a funerary foundation,[70] but may also have served as the prototype for the group of fifteenth-century ecclesiastical tombs which appar-

69. The original structure of the tomb is known from a seventeenth-century drawing reportedly in the Barbarini Library in Rome.

70. Cardinal Lagrange's use of the legend may have influenced Jean de Berry to use the fully developed theme on a funerary monument which he erected in the cemetery of the Innocents of Paris in 1408. See Antoine Le Roux de Lincy, *Paris et ses historiens*, Paris, 1867, pp. 256ff.

ently used the corpse as a symbol of the nemesis of worldly glory. Lagrange's tomb was built shortly after 1402 in Avignon, an extremely important religious center in the early fifteenth century. Henry Chichele, later to become Archbishop of Canterbury and to erect the first transi tomb in England, may possibly have seen Lagrange's tomb as he passed through Avignon on his way to Italy in 1407 and 1409.[71]

While Lagrange's tomb was a multistoried wall monument decorated with many figures, the sculpture on Chichele's tomb, built in 1424, was restricted to two recumbent representations of the deceased (Fig. 13). The entire iconographical statement of the tomb was less complex, for the double representation contrasting the figure of the Archbishop in his ecclesiastical robes to the dead body below seems to illustrate the contrast stated in the epitaph between worldly power and the degradation of man in death. Since the structure of Chichele's tomb, rather than that of Lagrange, was the type adopted for many later transi monuments, it is important to consider the possible origins of this structural form as well as the meaning that the structure itself was intended to convey.

The Origin of the Structure of Double Transi Tombs

Several examples of dual funerary effigies creating a type of double tomb predate the transi tombs, but for a variety of reasons, none can be considered decisive influences in the development of English double tombs.[72] It is possible that Chichele may have been influ-

71. Chichele sent to the court of Rome in the early months of 1407 as the representative of the King of England. He went to Italy again in January of 1409 as one of the delegates to the Council of Pisa. It seems probable that on at least one of these trips he would have visited the important court of Avignon and seen the tomb under construction. Jacob, *Register*, I, xxvi, xxx.

72. In discussing the genesis of the double tombs, Johannes Neuber cites the tomb of Philip and Ulrich, Counts of Werd (d. 1332 and 1334 respectively), in the Wilhelmskirche Strasbourg in *Ludwig Juppe von Marburg*, Marburg, 1915, p. 33; for illustration see Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, Fig. 208. The effigies, however, represented two specific individuals, not one as was the practice on transi tombs. André Michel believed that the double presentation was of French origin, *Histoire de l'art*, V:1, 104. The earliest French example is the tomb of Jean de Montmirail (d. 1219) in the Abbey of Longpont. The two recumbent effigies on this tomb represented the same person. Unlike the transi tombs these effigies did not contrast him dead and alive, but rather one represented the deceased as a knight while the other showed him as a monk. The man so

enced by the representations of the deceased on Lagrange's tomb, but on that tomb there were multiple representations of the deceased, and not just two, as on Chichele's. Furthermore the transi on Lagrange's tomb was merely a bas-relief while Chichele's was carved in the full round. Undoubtedly Lagrange's tomb was influential in the formation of Chichele's ideas, but the particular type of structure utilized by Chichele most likely had a different origin. The double images used in the English transi tombs apparently derived from a particular detail of the English funerary ritual: the use of an effigy to represent the deceased during the actual funeral ceremony. This effigy, usually of wood, was made to resemble the deceased as closely as possible, being dressed in his clothes, and often having bits of his own hair attached to strengthen the illusion. The effigy was placed either on top of the coffin containing the corpse, or on a wooden framework above the coffin. The first effigy was used at the funeral of Edward II in 1327,[73]

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represented had in all probability ordered his knightly effigy before he took religious orders and later added the other to indicate his new status. The tomb, done between 1220–30, is no longer extant, but was recorded by Roger de Gaignières in his notebooks in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Éstampes, Pe le, fol. 92. It is illustrated is s'Jacob, *Symbolism*, Pl. XVIIa. Or the tomb of Enrico Scrovengi in the Arena chapel in Padua (d. 1305) the deceased was represented as both dead and alive, but while one effigy was recumbent, the other was standing. The dead effigy cannot truly be considered a transi since Scrovengi was represented in his regular garments rather than nude as were the transis. While the idea of two full-sized representations of the deceased was present in this tomb, it cannot be considered a direct forerunner of the English transi tombs for the structure was entirely different. For illustration see Venturi, *Storia*, IV, Figs. 145, 178.

73. On top of the king's coffin was placed a wooden effigy dressed in coronation garments, and with a gilded copper crown upon his head. St. John Hope lists the clothes which were apparently used to adorn the wooden image, since after the funeral they were returned to the officers of the great wardrobe who had issued them for the funeral. See St. John Hope, "On the Funeral Effigies of the Kings and Queens of England," *Archaeologia*, LX:2, 1907, p. 531; and Stuart Moore, "Documents relating to the Death and Burial of King Edward II," in *Archaeologia*, L:1 (1886), 215–26. This is the earliest English effigy for which evidence is undeniable, although St. John Hope conjectured that one had been used at the funeral of Henry III in 1272, a position also held by James Wall, *The Tombs of the Kings of England*, London, 1891, pp. 248–49. It is denied by Ralph Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*, Geneva, 1960, p. 81. Earlier effigies are mentioned by s'Jacob, *Symbolism*, p. 59, but it is doubtful if these were real effigies reproducing the bodily features of the deceased. s'Jacob, herself, says that the so-called effigy of Jean de Polignac of 1300 is doubtful, but she apparently believes that one was made for Louis of Orleans, or at least was intended. In his will dated 1403, four years before his death, Louis expressed the wish to be exposed in Celestine's garb,

and after that became a customary feature of English royal funerals.[74]

Effigies were apparently also used at the funerals of certain English clerics, among them Archbishop Chichele. An old manuscript account of Chichele's death, which occurred at Lambeth on April 15, 1443, related how his body was taken from there to Canterbury accompanied by torch bearers and two hundred gentlemen on horseback, together with their retinues. The bishop's personal banner and the banner of his bishopric were carried by men on horseback. The coffin, carried on a bier, was surmounted by Chichele's effigy dressed in full pontifical costume. Since Chichele built his tomb before his death, it follows that the tomb cannot have been based on what actually took place at his funeral, but Chichele himself could have been influenced by the ceremonials of his predecessors.[75]

The use of an effigy of the deceased seems to have been customary at the funerals of fifteenth-century English bishops. It was apparently considered a great honor since effigies were not used for members of the lower clergy. On an elaborate drawing of the obsequies of Abbot Islip which illustrated his coffin surmounted by an effigy, a notation was made that he was the only abbot to achieve the high honor of an effigy at his funeral.[76]

In his important study, *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz developed the theory that the double representation of the deceased at the funeral—the actual corpse and the effigy—symbolized two distinct aspects of the man: the dignities of the royal or ecclesiastical office he held, and the mortality of the man who was the incumbent of that office. In the use of effigies in funeral ceremonies

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but "si son corps ne pouvait se garder sans trop puyer" his "representation" should be brought into the church. From Pierre Legrand d'Aussy, *Des sépultures nationales et particulièrement de celles des Rois de France*, Paris, 1824, p. 159. This "representation" could easily have been of the cloth variety mentioned in connection with the "representation" of Grafen von Eu. See below footnote Ch. II, no. 61.

74. Effigies were not, however, used at the funerals of Richard II in 1400, Henry IV in 1413, Edward V in 1483, nor Richard III in 1485, due to the circumstances surrounding their deaths. Giesey, *Ceremony*, pp. 83–85.

75. From British Museum Egerton ms. 2642, fol. 194: "Note of the Burieng of a Bishop in Old Tyme used," cited in E. F. Jacob, "Chichele and Canterbury," *Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke*, Oxford, 1948, p. 388.

76. From the Islip Roll in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, published in *Vestusta Monumenta*, IV, 16–20. See A. P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials in Westminster Abbey*, London, 1882, pp. 335–36.

Kantorowicz saw a concrete representation of the dual doctrine of the medieval jurists: "Tenens dignitatem est corruptibilis, Dignitas tamen semper est, non moritur" (The incumbent of a Dignity may decay, but the Dignity itself is nonetheless forever, it does not die).[77] The fact that the use of effigies in funeral ceremonies was reserved for royalty and high ecclesiastics seems to support Kantorowicz' theory so far as the meaning of the effigies in the ceremonials is concerned.

Kantorowicz suggested that the double images used on the tombs were based on the use of effigies at funerals. In order to understand the exact nature of the relationship between effigies and double structure, it is important to determine whether the men who used effigies at their funerals also had double figures on their tombs, and whether the double images were ever used by men who had not used the effigies. In the early fifteenth century, double tombs were built by men belonging to the upper clergy, men who were entitled to the use of an effigy at their funerals.[78] During this period single representations of the deceased were used by men of the lower clergy, who, as noted above, did not usually enjoy the honor of effigies at their funerals.[79] Thus it is possible that during the early fifteenth century, the use of double tombs as well as effigies at funerals was reserved for the upper clergy. However, during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, double images appeared on the tombs of several members of the lower clergy.[80] Furthermore, the tombs of three sixteenth-century bishops contained only the transi without the upper figure, the transis being accompanied by the mitre and croisier that formerly had served as the symbols of office on the upper figures.[81] There seems to have been no correlation at all between secular double tombs and effigies. Effigies were used at royal funerals, but no double tombs were ever constructed for members of the English royalty, al-

77. Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, Princeton, 1957, pp. 435–36.

78. Double tombs were built for the following high English churchmen: Archbishop Chichele (1424–25) Canterbury; Archbishop Fleming (d. 1430) Lincoln; Bishop Beckington (1450–51) Wells; and Bishop Alcock, Ely.

79. Single transi images were used on the tombs of Canon Haxey (d. 1425) York and John Barret (d. 1463) Bury St. Edmonds.

80. Double images were used on the tombs of the secular canon Robert Johnson (d. 1527) Derby; and Dean Thomas Heywood (d. 1492) Lichfield.

81. Single transi images were used on the tombs of Bishop Fox (d. 1528) Winchester; Bishop Gardiner (d. 1555) Winchester; and Bishop Bush (d. 1558) Bristol.

though one was planned but never executed.[82] Three double tombs were, however, built for members of the lesser nobility who, in all probability, did not employ effigies at their funerals.[83] Thus it is clear that there was not always a necessary connection between the use of the effigy at the funeral and the construction of a double tomb. However, there apparently was a definite relationship between the effigies used at the funerals of the early fifteenth-century English archbishops and the construction of double tombs for these same men. It is possible that the initial impetus for this type of tomb structure came from the use of effigies in the funeral ceremony, but that later the double structure itself became fashionable apart from any connection with the funerary ritual.

Double tombs of the English type, showing both figures in a recumbent position, were adopted on the continent, primarily in the Germanic countries.[84] The first known continental example was the

82. Edward IV planned a double tomb with a "figure of death." See his will as given by S. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, or *Illustrations of English History*, London, 1831, pp. 366ff.

83. Double tombs were used for the following members of the nobility: John Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel (d. 1435) Arundel; John Golafre (d. 1442) Fyfield, Berkshire; and Alice, Duchess of Suffolk (d. 1475) Ewelme. In the careful description of the elaborate funeral procession of Richard, Duke of York, (d. 1466) and father of Edward IV, no mention is made of an effigy. Descriptions were given in a manuscript from Herald's College, I ii, p. 187, and in another in the British Museum, Harley 48, fol. 139. Both are cited by Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*, London, 1786–1796, II, pp. cxliv–cxlvii. For another manuscript description of the full funeral ceremonial of the nobility which makes no mention of an effigy, see "The Manner of burieng great Persons of Ancient Tymes," from a manuscript in the possession of Sir William Dolben, cited in *Archaeologia*, I (1779), 348–50.

84. The English double structure was used on the tombs of Archbishop Johan von Sierck (d. 1456) Trier; Markgraf Friedrich IV, Bishop of Utrecht (d. 1517), Baden-Baden; Landgraf Wilhelm II of Hesse (d. 1506), Marburg; and on the tombs of Marguerite of Austria (d. 1531), and Philibert le Beau (d. 1506), Brou.

It is possible that the English style of double tombs came to the Germanic countries by way of the Netherlands. Nicholas Gerhart, who carved the transi tomb of Bishop von Sierck in 1462, was from Leyden. Also from the Netherlands was the artist Jean de Bruxelles who in 1516 furnished Marguerite of Austria with designs for her tomb and that of her late husband Philibert le Beau, to be built at Brou. The contract refers to "sépultures modernes," possibly indicating that the fashion had only recently been imported from England. Cited Mâle, *L'art religieux*, p. 472. Mâle believes that the double tombs first appeared in the early years of the sixteenth century, like Neuber, ignoring the English prototypes. Neuber states that this type of double representation was first done in Germany by Ludwig Juppe, for his tomb of Landgraf Wilhelm was begun one year before that of Markgraf Friedrich in Baden-Baden. Apparently he was not familiar

tomb of Archbishop Johan von Sierck (d. 1456), in Trier Cathedral. This tomb, like the English examples, contrasted an upper image of the Archbishop in ecclesiastical robes with the nude transi below, but in this case the transi was being eaten by snakes and frogs.[85] The epitaph attached to this tomb literally described the structure, for it contrasted the image lifted above to the lower one, "the shadow nibbled by snakes below." The peculiarity of the snakes on the image will be discussed later. The structure of this double tomb and its general significance, however, seems closely related to that of the English prototypes.

Memento Mori Significance versus Traditional Tomb Symbolism

The study of the sources of the epitaphs and the structure of the tombs of these powerful fifteenth-century churchmen indicates that an important part of the statement of the tombs was the contrast between worldly position and the degradation of man in death. The images seem to echo the words of Innocent III: "He who just now sat glorious on his throne, now lies in his tomb, looked down upon. Who just now was decorated with gleaming gold, now lies naked in the tomb. The man who just now dined upon delights in his living room, is now being dined on by worms in his grave."[86] If this is the

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with the tomb of Bishop von Sierck in Trier, nor did he mention the English tombs. He believed that the lower section with its open arcade containing a figure came from France, (again ignoring the English prototypes). He does say that Ludwig Juppe had spent much time in the Netherlands, and speculates that the idea had its roots there, (*Ludwig Juppe*, p. 36).

It seems possible that the Netherlands could have served as the intermediary between England and the rest of the continent for this particular style of sepulchral monument, although no known fifteenth-century examples of double tombs are extant there. A tomb belonging to one of the Dukes of Croy at the Celestins of Heverle is of the English type with the knight above and a cadaver below, but unlike the English examples, the lower figure is accompanied by worms. Gough dates the tomb about 1570 (*Monuments*, I, p. cxi). The tomb of Reynout III von Brederode in Vianen, North Netherlands, is related to the English and German recumbent types, but it dates from the middle of the sixteenth century, and both the upper and lower figures are portrayed as corpses.

85. The lower figure is no longer extant and was probably lost when the tomb was moved from its original site in front of the main altar. It was noted in this position in 1670 by Brouwer, *Antiquitum* II, p. 289. In the nineteenth century the top plaque was in a side chapel, and it is not known at what date the tomb was moved.

86. *De contemptu mundi*, Lib. III, cap. I, given in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* CCXVII, cols. 735–737.

only aspect of these tombs that is analyzed, then they can be considered merely as memento mori for the living. It was only on this level that the tombs have been interpreted, for the most part. But was this their only statement? In order to have a fuller understanding of the meaning and function of the transi tombs the entire statement of the tomb must be considered in relation to other memento mori objects, and to the traditional function of a medieval tomb.

Memento mori objects (i.e. skulls or skeleton inscribed with words of wisdom recalling death as a goad to morality) did not enjoy great popularity until the middle of the fifteenth century. Since the transi tombs under discussion date, for the most part, from the early fifteenth century, they cannot be considered as mere derivitives of these memento mori objects. Rather, both the objects and the tombs developed from a common source. This source, the moralistic writings and sermons of the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, has been considered above. Though based on this common source, the purpose of the inscriptions on the tombs often differed from that of the inscriptions on the memento mori objects. Both memento mori and transi inscriptions contained observations on the mortality of man, and often both used the same device for appealing directly to the spectator: the words "I was like you, and you will be like me." In the memento mori inscriptions these words were followed by admonitory phrases such as "Do good to all while you can,"[87] or "Only good works will count," and so forth.[88] Such admonitions were not found in the inscriptions on early transi tombs. The most pronounced moralizing was done in the epitaph of Pierre d'Ailly, the most religiously oriented of the fifteenth-century prelates considered in this study. As d'Ailly was meditating on the transience of worldly things he said, "All things fall by means of death except morals," stressing the need for good behavior. But even d'Ailly used the references to human mortality to request prayers. This latter emphasis is even stronger on the epitaph of Richard Fleming.

87. See *De contemptu mundi*, attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux. The text is given in full by Kozáky, *Totentänze*, II, 111–12.

88. From the Legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 3142, fol. 311 v.).

After first telling what an important man Fleming was, his epitaph went on to give a long dissertation on the vanity of human life and glory. It did not then set forth advice to everyone to behave morally, as would have been done in a memento mori inscription, but said rather "whoever understands this [i.e., the vanity of human glory], I beseech you, pray for me." Thus the observations on morality found in the inscriptions on the transi tombs were not always altogether disinterested. These inscriptions were clearly intended to relate as much to the salvation of the dead as to the edification of the living. For this reason the transi tombs cannot be considered simply as traditional memento mori. It must also be remembered that the didactic inscriptions were only one element in the rather complex statements of these tombs.

The meaning of the double tombs of the English bishops was particularly complex. As discussed above, the double structure derived from the use of funerary effigies, with the upper figure, according to Kantorowicz, representing the Dignitas of the office, and the transi symbolizing the mortality of its human incumbent. If this were true the didactic memento mori element would be of great significance in the entire statement of the tomb. The inscriptions on Chichele's and Fleming's tombs seem to support Kantorowicz suggestion that the transi represents the mortality of a specific individual. The message of these inscriptions emphasized the mortality of even the highest among men, who, like all men, must ultimately die and decay. The inscriptions did not, however, indicate what the upper figures were specifically intended to signify. These figures depicted the deceased in their robes of office, mitres on their heads, croziers in their hands (Figs. 13, 15). The upper figure on Fleming's tomb makes reference to his ecclesiastical duty by means of his hand making the gesture of blessing. From this evidence, the upper figures might be considered as representations of the Dignitas of office. However, certain other motifs add an extremely important dimension to the figures. The most important element is the angels that support the heads of these figures. Angels traditionally accompanied the transfigured dead in eternity, and they did not appear with representations of living individuals (except the Virgin and a few saints). The hands of Chichele's gisant,

like those of the majority of gisant figures on the fifteenth-century English transi tombs, were folded in prayer.[89] Praying hands were an important aspect of the gisant on the tomb of Johan von Sierck. Such praying hands were associated with the transfigured soul rather than with representations of the living man engaged in his episcopal or other earthly duties.[90] The concern with prayers said on behalf of the deceased is apparent, both from the inscription on Chichele's tomb asking for the intercession of the saints and from the little figures of the monks praying at the feet of his gisant. The religious element was further strengthened by the inscription "Emmanuel" that appeared at both the head and feet of the transi on Chichele's tomb. This name, repeated three times, evoked Christ as Redeemer. A reference to Christ's victory over death was implicit in the shields containing representations of the crucifix that were placed at the head and feet of Fleming's transi. While the transi symbolizes the mortality of man's earthly body, references to the resurrection of that body as a result of Christ's victory over death are also symbolized in the tomb. The importance of prayers for the soul are present in the request for such prayers in Fleming's epitaph, and the two monks praying at the foot of Chichele's gisant. The upper figures on both tombs combine the symbolism of the Dignitas that never dies with that of the individual soul which lives forever in heaven. The double image contrasting the immortal Dignitas with the mortality of the human incumbent of office was combined with moralistic observations on human mortality, and these elements were then superimposed on a traditional tomb concept which expressed hope for the salvation of the soul. The old religious function of the tomb was not replaced by the new concepts, but rather was only enriched by them.

The tomb of Archbishop Johan von Sierck, like the English examples, combined the symbols of office with the praying soul and the representation of man's mortality.

89. John Fitzalan (d. 1435), Arundel; Archbishop Chichele (1424–25), Canterbury; Alice, Duchess of Suffolk (d. 1475), Ewelme; Dean Thomas Heywood (d. 1492), Lichfield; and Hugh Asheton (d. 1522), Cambridge.

90. For representations of German bishops engaged in their earthly activities see the series in Mainz cathedral: Archbishop Siegfried II of Eppstein (d. 1249); Archbishop Peter von Aspelt (d. 1320); and Archbishop John of Nassau (d. 1419). The tombs are illustrated in Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, Figs. 213–15.

The statement on the tomb of Pierre d'Ailly was not so complex as the others, being based essentially on the contrast between the body and the soul. The shrouded corpse illustrated the "rotting body" mentioned in the epitaph, while the small figure of the Cardinal kneeling beneath the Virgin and Child represented the soul (Figs. 11–12). D'Ailly sought both prayers for his soul by means of the inscription, and the intercession of the Virgin and the saints, symbolized by the figures at the top of the tomb.

The inscription on the tomb of Cardinal Lagrange which stressed the contemplation of the dead body as a means of subduing pride was, as we have seen closely related to the general medieval tradition of macabre moralism and specifically to the legend of the Three Quick and the Three Dead. However, far from being nothing more than a memento mori intended for the edification of the living as the Legend had been, the statement on Lagrange's tomb was much more complicated. Lagrange's concern for the salvation of his soul is strikingly apparent in this monument. The interest in prayers for the soul is indicated by the representations of the monks in the lower section. The desire for intercessors to speak on his behalf is apparent from the fact that the kneeling representation of the Cardinal was included in five holy scenes, in each instance recommended by an angel or saint. Both the anxiety and the pride implicit in this magnificent monument will be discussed more fully in the next section.

From the study of the tombs of these fifteenth-century ecclesiastics it is clear that the general background of the transi images is based in the moralistic literary tradition that had been formulated in the eleventh and twelfth-centuries and had been popularized as a result of the Black Plague. Specific influences had come from such contemporary themes as the legend of the Three Quick, and from contemporary funerary practice. Although these various factors had a significant impact on certain aspects of the tombs (i.e., inscriptions and transis) the entire meaning of the tombs was in no way limited by them. These tombs were not merely, memento mori, and although they contained a strong element of didacticism, the tombs still fulfilled the traditional function of a medieval tomb: that of expressing hope for the salvation of the soul of the deceased.

III

Tombs that Teach

An important part of the statement of the transi tombs of the five fifteenth-century ecclesiastics—Lagrange, d'Ailly, Chichele, Fleming, and von Sierck—was the warning that men must die and become food for worms. But this, as we have seen was only one part of the total statement of the tombs. The didactic element of these early transi tombs was closely linked with another, and more important function, the expression of hope for the salvation of the deceased. These two elements—didactic morality and the expression of hope for salvation—were present in most other transi tombs as well, and in varying proportions. In the majority of tombs, the requests for prayers or expressions of humility were of utmost importance, but in a few tombs the didactic element predominated. The transi figures had been introduced to serve a function relating to the salvation of the deceased. Under the impact of the popularization of memento mori imagery of all types in the late fifteenth century, the function of the tomb was reinterpreted. This change was most apparent in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Germany where transi tombs were used primarily for the edification of the living.

Memento mori objects combined images of death with moralistic advice, and were intended to inspire humility and virtuous action in the living. Objects such as statuettes of skeletons,[1] ivory skulls

1. The museum of the city of Basel has several small corpse figures, as does the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, has a carving of a skeleton in a shroud, back-to-back with a scantily draped woman. See A. Maskell, *Ivories*, London, 1905.

worn as jewelry,[2] and medallions with skulls[3] became quite popular. One of the most interesting casts the skeleton as a moralistic preacher actively urging a young woman to repent. He kneels below the nude maiden, holding aloft a crucifix (Fig. 36).[4] These and other memento mori objects,[5] along with paintings of the Dance of Death and the Triumph of Death, grew out of the same tradition of moralistic literature as did the transi tombs. The purpose of such objects is clear from Erasmus's explanation of a medal struck for him in 1519 which contained an image of the god Terminus, symbol of the end of all things:

> He who looks upon Death as the boundry of life and keeps the ultimate end of life in view may well take Terminus as his emblem, for he refuses to place his temporal welfare higher than his eternal one.[6]

2. Small ivory skulls were often worn as jewelry, and were intended to remind the wearer that death will come soon and he should behave accordingly. These skulls, dating primarily from the sixteenth-century, usually depict the head or bust of a living figure on one side and a skull on the other. On one of these the face is eaten by worms and in the mouth of the skull is a toad. The ivories were often pierced for suspension.

3. For two medals portraying skulls by Niccolo Fiorentino see G.F. Hill, *Select Italian Medals of the Renaissance in the British Museum*, London, 1915 Nos. 1033 and 1059, and H. W. Janson, "The Putto and the Death's Head," *Art Bulletin*, XIX (1937), 428.

4. It is dated c. 1530 and is quite possibly French. See R. Berliner, *Die Elfenbeinsbildwerke des bayer Nationalmuseums*, Augsburg, 1926, Pl. 35, and text pp. 26–27.

5. Chimneys were even used for this purpose. One, at Sommeville in Normandy, was carved with the portrait of the first proprietor on one side and a skull on the other accompanied by this inscription: "Il faut mourir, J'attends l'heure de la mort. 1533." A skull with dried bones was carved on another at Fey together with this inscription: "Pensez à la mort/Mourir convient/peu en souvient/souvent avient/Ce chiminée fit faire Robert Beuvry, pour Dieu, pour les trespassés, 1503." A chimney at the museum of Dole was carved with the inscription "Hodi mihi, cras tibi," ("Today me, Tomorrow you"). Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, Paris, 1922, note 246. For a similar inscription from St. Gites, Herts., see Pettigrew, *Chronicles of the Tombs*, London, 1888, p. 63. Moralistic messages concerning death were even carried on pottery jugs. One such jug, in Cologne dated about 1500, shows a woman standing beside a mummy-like corpse. From them came banderoles with the following inscriptions: "Ich bin frisch und wol getan und lebe lange sunder wan." "Ach du armer sack von erden, was ich bin, das mustu werden." Theodor Prüfer, *Der Totentanz in der Mariankirche zu Berlin*, Berlin, 1876, p. 10.

6. For a full discussion of this emblem and the changing meanings which Erasmus himself attached to it see the article by Edgar Wind, "Aenigma Termini," *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes*, I, (1937/38), 66–68. An illustration of the medal can be seen in Weber, *Aspects of Death in Art*, 2nd ed., London, 1914, p. 489, Fig. 51.

A similar memento mori inscription was painted above the skull on the reverse of the portrait of Jehan Carondelet by Mabuse: "Facile contemnit omnia qui se semper cogitat morturum. Hieronimus, 1517" (Whoever reflects on his coming death easily despises all things. Jehan, 1517).[7] This inscription was based on the advice given by Thomas à Kempis in his popular *Imitation of Christ* to always keep the hour of death before one's eyes and to daily prepare for it.[8] Portraits with skulls on the back symbolizing the future state of the sitter were not uncommon in the early sixteenth century,[9] and were doubtless intended to serve as very personal memento mori for the individuals who commissioned them. These portraits, done during the lifetime of the sitters, were kept by them and were not intended as funerary monuments.

A number of transi tombs were also constructed before death, and were apparently intended, like these portraits, to serve as memento mori for the men who built them. By reminding these men of their own inevitable deaths the tombs encouraged them to act so as to avoid damnation. An example of this type is the transi tomb of Bishop Schonberg (d. 1516) in Naumberg. The inscription implies that the tomb had been built before the bishop's death, and had been intended to serve as an object of contemplation:

7. The diptych is now in the Louvre. On the left interior wing is a portrait bust of the donor, Jehan Carondelet, shown in prayer. On the right wing is a bust of the Madonna and Child, accompanied by an inscription begging the Madonna to intercede with her son: "Mediatrix nostra que es post deum spes sola tuo filio me representa." One wing of the exterior contains Carondelet's coat of arms and his motto while the other wing shows a niche containing a skull. The skull is perhaps meant as a future portrait of the donor, and serves as an object of contemplation, a reminder of his own coming death. Thus the portrait with the skull on the back serves as a very personal memento mori. See Cetto, "Die Baseler Holbein-Tafel . . ." pp. 182–86, Pl. 66 and Figs. 4–6.

8. Book I, Ch. 23.

9. The earliest known example of a skull used on an exterior panel of an altarpiece, the Braque triptych by Roger van der Weyden, was apparently intended to serve as both memento mori for the living and memorial for the dead. See Cetto, *op. cit.*, for discussion. Skulls were represented on a sixteenth-century Dutch portrait in the Haarlem Museum, cited by Van Marle, *L'Iconographie de l'art profane*, La Haye, 1932, II, 367; and on the back of the diptych of Gerard Pilgrim and Anna Strauss in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne. The panel with two skulls set in a window niche, in the Basle Museum and attributed to Hans or Ambrosius Holbein, may have been begun as the back panel for a double portrait.

Sola homines faciu[n]t acta ut post fata supersint;
Ante Diem faciu[n]t fati homine[m] acta mori
Incitor hi[n]c [sic] lapide ad b[e]n[e] agendu[m] atque
obitu[m] mi
Dona paravi obitus ante obitu[m] ne obeam.[10]

Bishop Richard Fox (d. 1528) was known to have come every day for his meditations into the chantry chapel he had built for himself in Winchester Cathedral, a chapel which contained his transi image.[11] Unlike the earlier transi tombs of Chichele and Fleming, Fox's tomb contained only the transi which was accompanied by the symbols of office, the mitre and croisier; it had neither the upper figure accompanied by the symbolic angels nor the requests for prayers of the earlier tombs. The single transi figure on Fox's tomb was thus much closer to typical memento mori images than the earlier tombs. The transi image, showing the end of earthly power, was probably intended by Fox to serve as a personal memento mori in much the same fashion as did the skull on Carondelet's portrait. What more effective reminder one's inevitable death than one's own tomb?[12]

Other tombs combined an emphasis on teaching with hope for salvation. The tombs were engraved with long moralizing poems containing observations on human glory and immortality. Perhaps the most interesting of these didactic tombs was that erected by René of Anjou (d. 1480) for himself and his first wife, Isabelle of Lorraine, in St. Maurice of Angers. Above the traditional gisants of René and

10. "Deeds alone make men survive after death./Deeds make a man die before the day of his death./Hence I am urged by this stone to spend life well, and before death/I have prepared for myself the gifts of death that I may not die before death." I give Creeny's transcription and translation. Details of the second couplet, however, are uncertain (W.F. Creeny, *A Book of Facsimiles of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe*, London, 1884, pp. 60–61). For the German practice of preparing tombs before death to serve as memento mori, see A. Freybe, *Memento Mori*, Gotha, 1909, pp. 47ff.

11. Biver and Howard, "Chantry Chapels," p. 315.

12. A sixteenth-century work on emblems gives the following custom from the coronation of a Byzantine emperor: "Isodorus reporteth also that at Constantinople there was a custome to put the Emperor in mind of his departure hence. The first day he was crowned a certaine Mason should bring unto him three or foure sorts of stones, saying unto him these words: 'Oh, noble Caesar, puissant King,/Choose thou here presently,/Of which stones shall thy grave be made,/Wherein thou once shalt be.' " M. Claudius Paradin, *The Heroicall Devices of MC. Paradin . . .*, English translation by P.T., London, 1591, p. 318.

Isabelle was a painting depicting a crowned skeleton seated on a throne (Fig. 33). The skeleton, known as the "*roi mort*," was enveloped in a royal mantle, but at its feet lay the orb and the scepter, the now-useless symbols of royalty. Beneath the painting was the following inscription:

> Regia Sceptra suis [?] Rutilis Fulgencia Thronis
> Dum Quondam Recolis Pressa et Nunc Pulvere Cernis,
> Marcescunt Flores Mundi Laudes et Honores
> Gloria Fama Lebis [?] Pomparum Fastus Inanis
> Una Parit Reges et Vulgus Terra Potentes,
> Quod Dedit Haec Repetit, Mortalia Cuncta Recondit
> Mors Dominis Servos et Turpibus Equat Honestos
> Unus Erunt Tumulus Rex Pastor Inhersque Peritus.[13]

In the tomb of René of Anjou this clear memento mori statement has been added to what would otherwise be a traditional funerary foundation. Not only were the gisants of the traditional type, but the foundation also included a second representation of René, this time accompanied by his second wife, Jeanne of Laval, St. Michael, and Mary Magdalene, kneeling at the base of a crucifix.[14] The painting of the "roi mort" is, of course, the most striking element in the entire foundation, and is unique in sepulchral representation, but it, like the transis of the fifteenth-century ecclesiastics already examined, was only one element in the total statement of the funerary foundation which was clearly related to René's expression of hope for salvation.

It has been suggested that the "roi mort" on René's tomb was

13. "Whereas once upon a time you honored [?] the royal scepters/Shining on their bright thrones, you now see them subdued by dust./The flowers of this world wither; so do praises, honors,/Glory, fame, ... [?], the empty arrogance of pomp./One and the same earth gives both to mighty kings and to the crowd;/She reclaims what she gave; she hides away all mortal things./Death makes slaves equal to lords, and noble to base./King, shepherd, dull, clever, will be (in) one tomb." The inscription was taken from the following anonymous article: "Le tombeau du roi René à la cathédrale d'Angers," *Réunion des sociétés savantes des beaux arts des départements*, XV (1891), 135. Unfortunately no source is given, but it was apparently transcribed before the tomb was demolished in 1793. Gaignières gives two slightly different versions of the painting: Pe 1 fol. 6 and Pe 2 fol. 15. See L. de Farcy, *Le tombeau du Roi René*, 1845, II, clii.

14. Mâle, *L'art religieux*, p. 378, gives the inconographic program of the chapel.

intended as a parody on the tomb figure of his ancestor, Robert the Wise of Anjou (d. 1343) in Santa Chiara, Naples.[15] In one of the four depictions of the king included on the tomb, Robert was shown enthroned in majesty in much the same position as René's *roi mort*.[16] Two fifteenth-century manuscripts offer further evidence that perhaps a parody was intended. In one of the miniatures in a book of hours in London, René himself was identified with the *roi mort*, for René's arms were prominently displayed by a similar figure (Fig. 34). The crowned corpse, its belly slit open, was shown at half-length in the pose traditionally used by Christ as the Man of Sorrows. One hand pointed to his chest, while the other held a scroll with the inscription "*Memento homo*" (Remember you are a man).[17] In another French book of hours from the second half of the fifteenth century a cadaver was identified with representations of Christ as King. He was depicted sitting on the edge of an open sarcophagus, half wrapped in a shroud and accompanied by the insignia of royal power: a crown on his head, a dart like the royal scepter in his left hand, and in his right a skull corresponding to the globe held by the Christ-King (Fig. 35). The inscription below carried out this parallel: "*Regem cui omnia vivu[n]t, venite adoremus*" (King of all that lives, come let us adore him).[18] There is a sense of parody in all these images which was quite rare in the Middle Ages, but reflected very well the spirit of the ill-fated poet-king, René of Anjou.

The moralistic poems engraved on other transi tombs combined admonitions to the beholder to consider his eternal salvation with requests for prayers for the deceased. An example is the epitaph attached to the transi tomb of Claude Bouton (d. 1556) in Notre Dame au Sablon, Brussels, which was clearly aimed at the spectator, beginning "Oh you lords who so love possessions, office, honor,

15. This suggestion was made by s'Jacob (*Idealism and Realism: A Study of Sepulchral Symbolism*, Leyden, 1954, p. 51) and Panofsky, (*Tomb Sculpture*, New York, 1964 pp. 65 and 86). For illustrations of Robert's tomb see Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, Figs. 398–99.

16. This tomb was known to René because of his expedition to Naples from 1438 to 1442, and his own tomb was begun eight years after his return.

17. Egerton 1070, fol. 55. Grete Ring, in *A Century of French Painting 1400–1500*, London, 1949, p. 19, dates it about 1436.

18. Paris BN lat. 1160, fol. 151 recto. It was placed at the beginning of the Office of the Dead.

authority, power . . . ." It went on to tell them to repent and make amends while there was still time. In the final verse, as in so many of the inscriptions on transi tombs, an identification was made between the spectators and the deceased imploring prayers.[19] The element of self-interest in many of these so-called memento mori inscriptions was strong. A similar kind of moralism combined with requests for prayers and the hope of pardon was engraved above the transi image on the tomb plaque of Jean de la Port (d. 1442) in the Cemetery of the Innocents in Paris.[20] One of the most interesting ex-

19. "O vous seigneurs qui aymez tant chevance/Office, honneur, authorité, puissance,/Grant renomée et grant avancement,/Mirez vous cy et ayez cognoissance/Que v̄re fin de jour en jour s'advance./Lheur on ne scet où sera, ne coment,/Las notez bien que p̄o tout parement,/Nemporterez gung linceul seulement./Sept pieds de terra aurez en souffisance,/Pense c̄hn à son gouvernement,/Car biens et maulx trouverons vrayement,/Et sera mis en bien juste balance.

Regardez cy nos figure et semblance,/O curieux tout pleins de'outrecuidance,/Bien cler miroir avez présentement/Hélas que vault grant orgueil et bonbance,/Riches habits, maisons et grant finance./Tout faut laissez et prendre finement,/Mais quoy si bref que tout le plus souvent/On n'a pas temps de bien souffisament,/Recourre à Dieu par bonne repentance./Ce temps qu'avez pour v̄re ammendement,/Et tous voz faitz; voz ditz et pensement/Seront pesez à moult just Balance./

"Je fuz en court veez me resemblance/Aiant honneurs et estats sans doubtance,/Et des meilleurs plus que souffisament/Si j'ay mal fait, las! Je suis en souffrance,/Je prye à Dieu m'en donner pénitence,/En purgatoire sans plus de grans tourments,/Et tous vous autres priez dévotement/Qu'a vous et moy il face alegement./De tout pardone et bonne délivrance./Et qu'à la fin pour nous mesmement/Puissions aller à ce grant jugement/Sans qu'il nous poise à si juste balance."

The text from the tomb was supplied by Abbé P. Dierinck, Curé of Notre Dame au Sablon, Brussels, to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

20. Jean de la Port's epitaph was made up of ten pairs of lines, each sharing the same final word:

Bonnes gens vous deves
Qu'on doit son temps bien dis > penser

Car la mort home ne de
Tesmoing maistre Jehan de la > port

Examinateur par le
Ou chastellet et sans des > foy

Lun des eschevins en sa
de Paris sans dautruy en > . . . [vie]

Lequel en terre cy
Oist come la mort Be > dev̄at

Et laissa ce mond hy
mil CCCC quarante > deux

amples of this type was that used with the transi of John Baret (d. 1463) in St. Mary's, Bury St. Edmunds:

He that wil sadly beholde one with his ie
May se hys owyn merour and learne for to die

Wrapped in a schete, as a ful rewli wretche
No more of my minde to me ward wil streche
From erthe I kam and on to erthe i am browht
This is my nature: for of erthe I was wrought.
Thus erthe on to erthe tendeth to knet
So endeth ech creature; doeth John Baret
Wherefore ye pepil in waye of charitie
With your goode prayers I praye ye helpe me
For such as I am: right so shelle ye al be.
Now God on my sowle: have merci and pitie.[21]

The brass of Ralph Hamsterly (d. 1518) in Oddington, England contained the image of a worm-eaten transi (Fig. 37) and the following inscription:

Vermib[us]hic donor
Et sic ostendere conor
Q[uo]d sicut hic ponor
Ponitur o[mn]is honor[22]

En novembre neuvième
Si priez dieu que sans le > jour

De ses pechiez pardon luy
Et le puisse veoir en > face

La sus en son glorieux
Ou il domine vit et > Regne

Et qu'il nous vueille si bien
Qu'en la fin nous y puist con > duire
Amen.

(From Guilhermy, *Inscriptions de la France* . . . Paris, 1873–1883, I, p. 682.)

21. Cited by Pettigrew, *Chronicles*, p. 48.

22. "I here to worms become a prey/Try by this picture thus to say/That as I lie here out of sight/So too must pass all earthly might."

The figure was accompanied by a request for prayers, and Hamsterly's overwhelming concern for prayers for his soul is indicated by the fact that he laid down during his lifetime no fewer than four commemorative brasses, all in different places, and all requesting prayers for his soul.

On a few tombs the moralistic exhortations were unaccompanied by the common requests for prayers or protestations of humility. An English example of this type was the inscription engraved on the late fifteenth-century transi tomb of an unknown individual in Harrowden: "*Provideant cuncti sic transit gloria mundi*" (Let all see that thus passes the glory of the world).[23] The tomb of John Bonwell, Prior of Norwich (d. 1488) although not strictly a transi tomb, was decorated with skulls of various types, and seems to have been intended essentially as a memento mori for the living:

> O tu qui transis, Vir, aut Mulier puer an sis
> Respice Picturas, apices Lege, cerne Figuras
> Et, memor esto tui: sic bene disce mori.[24]

Bonwell's exhortation to look at the tomb and learn how to die was a reflection of the popular handbook which gave instructions on how to die, the *Ars Moriendi*. The German transi of Peter Niderwirt (d. 1522) in Eggenfelden (Fig. 43) was accompanied by an inscription which was based on a fifteenth-century German version of the book: "O Mensch gedanck deiner lessten zeit, so hindelt du ebighlichen nimer" (O man, think on your last hour, and comport yourself so as to gain eternity). The opening line of the German *Ars Moriendi* was as follows: "Gedennckh in all deiner werckenn dein lectze zeit

23. Cited by Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*, London, 1786–1796, II, p. 377.

24. "O, you who pass, whether man, woman, or child/Behold this picture, read the letters, look at the figures/And be mindful of yourself: thus learn well how to die." Cited by Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, London, 1631, p. 796. Several other English transis were accompanied by didactic inscriptions, among them that above the transi monument in Exeter: "Ista Figura Docet Nos Omnes Premeditari/Qualiter ipsa Nocet mors quando venit Dominari" (This figure makes us all consider/How death harms when it comes to master us). The inscription is given by Weever, *Monuments*, p. 103. In the Leversedge Chapel in Frome Church, Somersetshire, an emaciated corpse was accompanied by an inscription urging the passerby to "Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth." Cited in Gough, *Monuments*, II, cxviii.

so wirstu nymer ewigleich sundenn."[25] The emphasis on deeds and advice to the living was found in the inscription on the transi tomb (Fig. 41) of Bernhard Beham (d. 1507) in Hall: "Fac bene dum vivis; sequitur sua fama sepultos" (Do well while you are alive; those buried are followed by their own reputations).

Tombs which emphasized advice to the living above concern for the dead were more popular by far in Germany than elsewhere.[26] The tombs which contained inscriptions which were exclusively didactic date primarily from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and thus were a later variation of the transi tomb rather than a source for them.

The transi figures on the didactic German tombs were almost invariably accompanied by reptiles of various kinds. (Figs. 39–43). The literary and pictorial precedents for the use of such beasts with corpse figures was discussed in connection with the transi of François de la Sarra. The meaning of the reptiles, however, was very different on the Sarra tomb than on the later German examples. The very careful placement of the frogs, snakes, and scallop shells on the transi of François de la Sarra suggests that they had a particular iconographical significance. The reptiles on later German transi figures, however, had no special pattern of placement: occasionally placed on the genitals, more often in the abdominal cavity, but for the most part distributed at random over the figure and ground. The scallop shell, the symbol of eternal life, was not used on any other German transi tomb that has come to my attention.[27] It is possible that the fully developed statement of confession, repentance and salvation symbolized by frogs, snakes and shells on the Sarra tomb was not understood by later sculptors who omitted the shells and interpreted the snakes and frogs merely as the inevitable accompaniment of bodily decay or as

25. From manuscript no. 71, Stadtsbibliothek, Munich. Cited by O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well, The Development of the Ars Moriendi*, New York, 1942, p. 75.

26. Examples are the Gemainer tomb (d. 1482) Straubing; Baumgartner (d. 1493) Kufstein; Bunau (d. 1505) Naumburg; Beham (d. 1507) Hall in Tyrol; Schonberg (d. 1516) Naumburg; Friedrich (d. 1517) Baden-Baden; and Niderwirt (d. 1522) Eggenfelden.

27. Such a shell was, however, used as a canopy above the head of the French transi of Jeanne de Bourbon (d. 1521) now in the Louvre; and above the niches of the praying monks on the sides of the sarcophagus of Jean de Beauveau (d. 1479), originally in the cathedral of Angers, but no longer extant.

an expression of man's basically evil nature. The snakes and frogs on the later German transis, often joined by other loathsome creatures such as snails and lizards merely served to further enhance the horror felt in the presence of death and decay, thus making the spectator more vulnerable to the moralist's admonition to good behavior. The significance of the snakes and frogs changed from the powerful symbols found on the tomb of François de la Sarra to mere embellishments of popular moralistic themes on the later German tombs.

This emphasis on didacticism in Germany was undoubtedly the result of the developing ideas which matured in the German Reformation. The need to express one's humility on one's deathbed or tomb was to be negated by the Protestant doctrine of predestination, for when salvation was determined at the beginning of time it could not be affected by such actions. With the abolishment of the concept of purgatory there would be no need for the prayers for the deceased so ardently requested on other transi tombs.

Only one extant German transi tomb bears an inscription requesting prayers.[28] It is possible that tombs bearing the didactic memento mori type of inscriptions were left intact by the Protestants while others bearing requests for prayers were completely destroyed. Possibly the idea of forestalling such destruction motivated the sixteenth-century Catholic lord of La Sarraz to wall up the transi of his ancestor, in the process destroying the inscriptions that originally accompanied the tomb.[29]

28. The single exception is the inscription on the tomb of Cardinal Peter von Schaumberg in Augsburg Cathedral which asked for prayers for the soul of the deceased and assured the spectator that God would thank him for such prayers: "Pater von Schaumberg heiss auch ich/Got herze erbarme dich uber mich/Geborn aus dem lande zu Franken/Wer fur mein seel bit wolle Got Deanken." The tomb was erected during Schaumberg's lifetime, as is evidenced by the contemporary chronicler Berkhard Zink, who reported that the tomb was begun in 1467, two years before the Cardinal's death. W. Josephi, *Die gotische Steinplastik Augsburgs*, Munich, (Dissertation), 1902, pp. 65–66.

29. This is indicated by a very old painting discovered at the Chateau of La Sarraz in 1963. The painting was taken to Lausanne to be cleaned, but after it was photographed it fell apart. The photograph is now in the possession of Mlle. Braissant, Chateau of La Sarraz, Vaud, Switzerland. In the painting the central portion with the transi completely walled up, and on this wall appear the arms of Michel de la Sarra, the sixteenth-century Lord of La Sarraz, whose arms also appear above a gateway in the chateau. Only the knights, which now stand at either side of the tomb, were visible in the painting.

After the Protestant Reformation in the 1520s Germans continued to use dead figures as memento mori objects,[30] but no new transi tombs were carved because of the general Protestant prohibition against elaborate tombs.

The examples discussed here indicate that the number of transi tombs whose principal purpose was the edification of the living unmixed with intense concern for one's own salvation constituted but a relatively small proportion of the total number of transi tombs that were erected, and the meaning of these few tombs should not be generalized to include the others.

30. See Freybe, *Memento Mori*, pp. 86–97.