

Introduction: ‘Requiem for an Age’?

In the early hours of Wednesday 26 February, 1603, the Empress María of Austria lay dying in the great chamber of her apartments annexed to the Convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid. Among those attending her death bed would have been Thome Luis de Victoria, who had served María as one of her four personal chaplains for fifteen years. Although his official duties in María’s service were concerned with spiritual rather than musical matters, to him fell the task of providing music for the Empress’s exequies held in the chapel of the Descalzas Reales Convent – adjoining her apartments – three weeks after her death. This remarkable music, nowadays commonly referred to simply as ‘the Victoria Requiem’, survives thanks to its appearance in print two years later in a slim commemorative volume entitled *Officium defunctorum*. The dissemination of the book may well have been limited in comparison to that of other collections of Victoria’s works, and the music that it contains seems to have been much less widely known and performed in its day than was the *pro defunctis* polyphony of his Spanish predecessor Morales, but in modern times Victoria’s Requiem has become the most famous Requiem polyphony of its era, and has acquired extraordinary status both within his oeuvre and within the music of that period. As well as being widely viewed as Victoria’s crowning achievement (an accolade which it first received in 1853),¹ it has been assigned much wider iconic significance. It is seen as typifying the characteristics of polyphonic Requiems, and – moreover – the supposedly distinctive traits of Spanish sacred music of the ‘golden age’, or even of Renaissance music *tout court*. A notice for a recent concert performance claimed that ‘for many, it represents what Renaissance polyphony is, what it sounds and feels like, and how expressive it can be’.² The work’s status both draws upon and contributes to the widespread modern perception

¹ Carl Proske wrote: ‘Es ist diess die Krone aller Werke unsers Meisters und gehört zu dem Erhabensten, was jemals für die Kirche geschaffen wurde.’ (‘This is the crown of all the works of our master, and is one of the most sublime ever created for the church.’) *Musica divina*, Annus Primus, I, liii (Regensburg: Pustet, 1853).

² Brochure for the 2017 *International Choral Festival*, SJE Arts, Oxford, advertising a concert performance by the group Tenebrae, directed by Nigel Short.

that Spain had a leading and singular role in the cultivation of the Requiem at that time, a perception which is itself reinforced by notions of a Spanish obsession with death and its rituals. Bruno Turner memorably encapsulated the work's reputation and perceived historical position thus:

It has become revered as well as admired, for it seems to be somehow a Requiem for an Age – the end of Spain's golden century, the end of Renaissance music, the last work, indeed, of Victoria himself.³

This appealingly romanticised view of the piece as valedictory in both individual and epochal terms, the latter encapsulated in the phrase 'a Requiem for an Age', is long-established and enduring.⁴ In viewing the Requiem as marking the end of an era, it is convenient that the dates of the work's creation and publication coincide neatly with the most conventional placing of the Renaissance–Baroque period boundary by music historians. Beyond this, Turner's phrase evokes and accords with the common but much debated notion of 'the decline of Spain' from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, particularly in political, military, economic, and demographic terms,⁵ but also in terms of supposed musical decadence,⁶ and the concept of the *siglo de oro* in our construction of Iberian music history is of course a potent one. The mythology attached to the *Officium defunctorum* – and specifically the view of it as consummative – was strengthened in the early twentieth century by the French hispanophile Henri Collet (1885–1951), who highlighted the fact that Victoria described the work as a 'swan song' in the dedicatory epistle that

³ Bruno Turner, *Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611): Officium defunctorum, Requiem, 1605*, *Mapa Mundi Renaissance Performing Scores, Series A, No. 75* (London: Vanderbeek & Imrie, 1988), 3.

⁴ For example, in the BBC documentary *God's Composer*, the work is described by Simon Russell Beale as 'a requiem not just for his patron but for an age, representative perhaps of the dying embers of Spain's golden era'. This documentary, created to mark the fourth centenary of Victoria's death in 1611, was first broadcast on 2 December that year, and released as a DVD with the same title (Coro CORDVD6).

⁵ See, for example, John Huxtable Elliott, *Spain and Its World 1500–1700* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), Part IV, 'The Question of Decline', which incorporates various of his essays on the subject dating from 1961 onwards. See also: Henry Kamen, 'The Decline of Spain, A Historical Myth?', *Past and Present* 81 (1978), 24–50, Jonathan Israel's critique of Kamen's view in *Past and Present* 91 (1981), 170–80, Henry Kamen's rejoinder in the same issue, 181–5, and John Lynch, *The Hispanic World in Crisis and Change, 1598–1700* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

⁶ See María Pilar Ramos López, 'The Construction of the Myth of Spanish Renaissance Music as a Golden Age', in Karol Berger, Lubomir Chalupka, and Albert Dunning (eds), *Early Music – Context and Ideas (International Conference in Musicology, Kraków 18–21 September 2003)* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2003), 77–82, at 80.

opens the liminary matter of the printed book of 1605.⁷ In fact, and as discussed in Chapter 3, it seems clear that Victoria simply meant 'swan song' in the sense of 'lament', i.e. that his music was a lament for María, and not that he viewed it as his final work. However, Collet (who – wrongly – thought it likely that Victoria died just three years after the publication of the volume) bound into the concept of swan song both a lament for the age and the last musical testament of the composer, describing the work as follows:

The swan song, the grave Requiem, the serene lament for the whole Spanish faith, gathered in this particular work as in many a page of the dying but immortal musician, who enters into glory at the same hour as his obscure death.⁸

Collet elaborated the swan-song theme by engaging in a lengthy and colourful comparison with Mozart's Requiem, highlighting their similar status as marking the end of their composer's artistic life.⁹ The circumstance that the *Officium defunctorum* was indeed Victoria's last published work has reinforced this view and the sense of pathos associated with swan song, although to presume that Victoria stopped composing with the Requiem would be rash.¹⁰ For example, David Wulstan has written that 'the composer's description of this work as his "swan song" was unhappily apt; it is a Requiem for both an Empress and a composer, and indeed for a style; the New Music of the seventeenth century was to render the polyphony of Victoria and his contemporaries old-fashioned.'¹¹ Perceptions of the work may thus have been coloured by

⁷ The relevant passage in the dedicatory epistle is: 'Nothing seemed to me more suitable than to revise the music that I wrote for the exequies of your Most Serene mother, and publish it as a swan song under the protection of your name.' ('Nihil magis idoneum visum est, quam ut Harmoniam illam, quam in exequias Serenissimæ tuæ Matris composui, recognoscerem, & tanquam Cygneam cantionem, sub tui nominis patrocinio in lucem æderem.') See Appendix 1 for a translation of the entire epistle.

⁸ 'Le chant du cygne, le grave Requiem, la seréine déploration de la foi espagnole tout entière, ramassée dans cette œuvre particulière comme dans mainte page du musicien mourant, mais immortel, et qui entre dans la gloire à l'heure même d'un obscur trépas'; Collet, *Victoria* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1914), 197.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁰ In his liner notes to the famous recording of the *Officium defunctorum* by Westminster Cathedral Choir (Hyperion Records, 1987), Turner remarks that Victoria composed 'less and less after 1600 and nothing, so far as we know, after the publication in 1605 of the great Office of the Dead'. Turner's cautionary phrase 'so far as we know' is crucial, since absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

¹¹ David Wulstan, *Tomás Luis de Victoria: Requiem à 6 (1605)*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford Imprint, 1984), i. In a crowd-funded novela, *Victoria, un réquiem para María*, inspired by the *Officium defunctorum* and the circumstances of its genesis, Juan Diego Ortiz Izquierdo

the notions of 'late style' that are common in writing on the arts (and particularly music) from the later nineteenth century onwards, and which have been applied most famously to the case of Beethoven. Gordon McMullan notes that in accounts of the late style of writers, artists, and composers, one frequently finds that the artist's 'final phase of production, a phase which is associated with the proximity of death, is characterised in one of two modes: either as serene, synthetic, and consummatory, or as irascible, discordant, and recalcitrant'.¹² It is of course the first of these two *topoi* that has attached itself to Victoria's Requiem, while the idea that the work represents the 'last gasp' of a style that was becoming outmoded in the face of the 'new music' resonates with other cases, such as that of Bach.

However, in contrast to such emphasis on the Requiem as an end-point (Wulstan goes on to describe it as 'a fitting monument to the "Golden Age"', a phrase anticipating Turner's 'a Requiem for an Age'), others have proposed a different special status for Victoria's Requiem, pointing in the other direction historically, by claiming that it constituted a model for later works in the genre within the Iberian Peninsula, and thus emphasising the continuation of the polyphonic Requiem tradition well beyond Victoria's.¹³ As mentioned above, a third strand in descriptions of the music of the *Officium defunctorum* – beyond the emphases on its consummative position or its influence – is to see the piece as exemplary of some of the principal traits of 'Spanishness' in music of the era. Many accounts repeat (often in reverential terms, as Turner notes) the ubiquitous

develops the myth by imagining Victoria's thoughts as he conceives (some years before María's death) the setting of the Matins lesson *Tædet animam meam* which forms part of the *Officium defunctorum*: 'Surge en mi cabeza la música para esta lectura, dará comienzo a mi última obra . . . Aquí, retirado en el convento, escribiré estas tranquilas notas dando forma a un nuevo Réquiem. Un oficio de difuntos para mí, para mi música. Para una música y un tiempo que muere y que tendrá ya escrito su fin.' ('The music for this lesson arises in my mind, which will open my final work . . . Here, secluded in the convent, I shall write these tranquil notes giving form to a new Requiem. An Office of the Dead for me, for my music. For a music and an age that is dying and which will already have written its ending.') (p. 18).

¹² Gordon McMullan, 'Introduction', in Gordon McMullan and Sam Smiles (eds), *Late Style and its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.

¹³ See Noel O'Regan, 'Historia de dos ciudades: Victoria como mediador musical entre Roma y Madrid', in Alfonso de Vicente and Pilar Tomás (eds), *Tomás Luis de Victoria y la cultura musical en la España de Felipe III* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica and Machado Libros, 2012), 279–300, at 299: 'su *Officium defunctorum* de 1605 . . . proporcionó un modelo para las futuras misas de réquiem en la Península' ('his *Officium defunctorum* of 1605 . . . provided a model for future Requiem Masses in the Peninsula'). Peter Phillips has argued in particular for its influence in Portugal: 'It seems that this great work became a model for all the later Portuguese versions, so powerful that every significant composer in the country felt drawn into reinterpreting its possibilities for himself.' Booklet notes to the CD recording *Duarte Lôbo: Requiem*, The Tallis Scholars, directed by Peter Phillips (Gimell, 1992), 2.

view that its defining quality is the commingling of passionate intensity and dignified serenity, the latter also being one common marker of 'late style'. Such a combination of expressivity and austerity, the avoidance of musical artifice or elaboration for its own sake, and a powerful religiosity free from all secular influence, became established in modern writing as defining characteristics of Spanish music.¹⁴ Furthermore, as explored in Chapter 4, Iberian *Requiem* polyphony has come to be associated particularly strongly with stylistic sobriety and simplicity. A major role in promoting such a vision of distinct traits in Spanish Golden-Age music was played by Collet, who promulgated the concept of 'Spanish musical mysticism' which constitutes another enduring and prominent element of writing about Iberian polyphony in general and Victoria's music in particular.¹⁵ Higiní Anglès expressed the view thus, epitomising the way in which such concepts and qualities were valorised within Spanish musicology:

Like the mystical writers and painters of Spanish humanism, [Victoria] was able to harmonise artistic severity with loving emotion. The secret of this aesthetic achievement lies in the dramatic mysticism with which he infused his works.¹⁶

¹⁴ This historiographical phenomenon has been subjected to considerable analysis and critique in recent musicological writings. See Emilio Ros-Fábregas, 'Cristóbal de Morales: A Problem of Musical Mysticism and National Identity in the Historiography of the Renaissance', in Owen Rees and Bernadette Nelson (eds), *Cristóbal de Morales: Sources, Influences, Reception* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 215–34; see also Pilar Ramos López, 'The Construction of the Myth of Spanish Renaissance Music'.

¹⁵ Henri Collet, *Le mysticisme musical espagnol au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1913), and Victoria. Recent historiographical and critical studies of the concept of 'Spanish musical mysticism' include Maria Pilar Ramos López, 'Mysticism as a Key Concept of Spanish Early Music Historiography', in *Early Music: Context and Ideas II (International Conference in Musicology, Kraków)* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2008), 69–82, and Tess Knighton, "'Through a Glass Darkly": Music and Mysticism in Golden Age Spain', in Hilaire Kallendorf (ed.), *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 411–36, at 431–6. The application of the concept of 'mysticism' to the six-voice Requiem is exemplified by Peter Phillips's description of the work, which also typifies the enduring emphasis on the 'Spanish' approach observable there: 'Its mystical intensity of expression, achieved by the simplest musical means, obviously sets it apart from contemporary English and Italian music, and has led to comparisons of it with the equally intense religious paintings of Velazquez and El Greco. There is no doubt that this masterpiece conveys much of the highly individual Spanish view of religion and death.' Booklet notes accompanying the CD recording *Victoria Requiem*, The Tallis Scholars, directed by Peter Phillips (Gimell, 1987), 2.

¹⁶ Higiní Anglès, 'Latin Church Music on the Continent – 3: Spain and Portugal', in Gerald Abraham (ed.), *The New Oxford History of Music*, 10 vols (Oxford University Press, 1954–1990), IV, 372–418, at 400.

Reflecting such an ideology, emphasis on the significance of Victoria being a priest is ubiquitous in accounts of his musical approach,¹⁷ as are the fact that he apparently composed no secular music and the association between his native Ávila and the most famous of the Spanish mystics, St Teresa.

And yet – despite its status as a ‘masterwork’, the power and pathos of the stories that surround it, the unusual richness of the information concerning its genesis, the special historical and aesthetic stature which it has been given (including as a paragon of the Spanish qualities just described), and the frequency with which it is performed and recorded¹⁸ – Victoria’s *Officium defunctorum* has formed the subject of surprisingly little detailed critical writing or contextual study. Furthermore, an attempt to fill this gap and to comprehend the work better through contextual comparison faces a much larger challenge: the paucity of wide-ranging studies of the polyphonic Requiem Mass and other genres of polyphony *pro defunctis* in the relevant period. In particular, the enormous repertory of Requiem Masses by Italian composers from the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has largely escaped attention, with a consequent distorting effect on our generic understanding, encouraging the modern perception that the Iberian *pro defunctis* repertory was especially prominent and significant in this period.¹⁹ This perception also chimes with – and has perhaps been bolstered by – widely held and frequently voiced beliefs that the fascination with death was unusually strong in early-modern

¹⁷ Another comment by Anglès typifies this strand in writings about Victoria: ‘Combining the vocations of priest and musician, Victoria created an art of incomparable spirituality . . . He had no other aim than to sing of the Cross and the mysteries of the Redemption, using means uncontaminated by profane art.’ Anglès, ‘Latin Church Music on the Continent’, 399.

¹⁸ There have been at least thirty-two commercial recordings since the 1950s, nearly half of them released after the turn of the millennium.

¹⁹ The current foci of scholarly interest on Requiems are apparent, for example, in the first volume of Pieter Bergé and David Burn (eds), *The Book of Requiems* (Leuven University Press, forthcoming), which represents much the most ambitious study of this genre to date. Of the twenty-eight works that the volume covers, only one – Palestrina’s five-voice Requiem – is by an Italian, and it should be noted that this setting is atypical of both Italian and international practice in this genre. Of the twenty-five other Masses considered in detail in the volume, thirteen are by Northerners, eleven by Spanish or Portuguese composers, and the remaining one by a Northerner who made his career in Spain. The volume is ordered chronologically, and it is particularly striking that in its second half Iberian works are dominant: from the chapter on Guerrero’s Requiem onwards, no fewer than nine of the fourteen works covered are Iberian. The perception that the Iberian Requiem repertory was particularly prominent is exemplified by Fabrice Fitch’s comments that ‘the polyphonic requiem flourished with a particular intensity on the Iberian peninsula’ and that ‘It was in Spain and Portugal that the tradition of *stile antico* requiem settings had the greatest longevity, its ramifications extending well into the [seventeenth] century (as with Victoria’s setting).’ *Grove Music Online*, ‘Requiem Mass’, 2: ‘Polyphonic Settings to 1600’, last accessed 30 July 2015.

Spain.²⁰ In fact, the surviving repertory of polyphonic Requiem Masses attributed to Iberian composers and dating before about 1650 is very much smaller than that from the same period attributed to Italians. The prominence of Italian composers in the repertory of Requiems written between 1570 and the end of the century was signalled by Harold Luce in his doctoral dissertation of 1958.²¹ However, this repertory and the early-seventeenth-century examples of Italian Requiems have in general attracted little scholarly attention since then, in part (one suspects) because such Masses have been of less interest than motets and music for Vespers in more 'modern' styles.²² The degree to which the Italian Requiems of the early seventeenth century have tended to constitute a hidden repertory is exemplified by the following comment in Jerome Roche's *North Italian Church Music in the Age of Monteverdi*:

To judge from the many masterly settings of the Requiem Mass written during the Renaissance that are well known to us, we might be surprised to find that very few were published in northern Italy in the early seventeenth century. Arcangelo Borsaro issued a set of Requiem music for double choir in 1608, and Olindio Bartolini's 1633 Masses included a Requiem which may have been written for special circumstances. It is likely that simple plainsong or older polyphonic settings

²⁰ That Spanish society displayed a distinctively powerful preoccupation with death is emphasised in, for example, Bartolomé Bennassar, *L'Homme Espagnol: Attitudes et mentalités du XVIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1975), Chapter 9, trans. Benjamin Keen as *The Spanish Character: Attitudes and Mentalities from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), and such a view is accepted in Carlos M. N. Eire's influential *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). Eire sets out his belief in this particularity of Spanish culture in both his Prologue and Epilogue; for example, in explaining his choice of scope for his study of the history of death, he states that 'I settled on Spain, the staunchest defender of the Catholic faith in the sixteenth century, because I had read enough Spanish devotional literature to know that heaven, hell, and purgatory were as much a part of that nation's topography as Madrid, Gibraltar, and the Pyrenees . . . I also suspected that this apparent fascination with death and the hereafter drew upon the collective psychology of the nation.' (6–7). There may be a danger of an exaggerated exceptionalism when dealing with this aspect of Spanish early-modern culture (perhaps reminiscent of the long history of the stereotyping of Spain by other European cultures), and there is a need to test the consensus through further comparison with other Catholic areas of Europe (as Eire acknowledges on p. 529). Some useful contextualisation in this regard (for example, through juxtaposition with the situation in France) is attempted by Fernando Martínez Gil in *Muerte y sociedad en la España de los Austrias* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000).

²¹ Harold Luce, 'The Requiem Mass from its Plainsong Beginnings to 1600', unpublished PhD thesis, The Florida State University (1958).

²² Antonio Chemotti has recently cast fresh light on the extent and nature of the Italian repertory of polyphony *pro mortuis* in 'Polyphonic Music pro mortuis in Italy (1550–1650): Context and Intertext', unpublished PhD thesis, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich (2017).

were considered more fitting for obsequies, so that there was no demand for settings in the new style.²³

One could easily conclude from Roche's statement that just two Requiem Masses appeared from north-Italian presses in the early seventeenth century. In truth, more than forty Requiems by Italian composers were included in the output of such presses between 1600 and 1630 alone. If we take the period of a century from 1550 to 1650, at least eighty Requiems by Italians were published in Northern Italy, whereas the total number of such Masses (in print and manuscript) attributed to Iberian composers active before about 1650 is only about half this. The relatively greater scholarly attention given to the Iberian repertory than to the Italian is reflected in – and is in part a reflection of – the fact that almost all of those Iberian Requiem Masses that reached print at the time are available in modern editions (and many in separate performing editions), whereas a tiny proportion of the much larger Italian printed repertory of Requiems is thus visible. It is a commonplace, and frequently true, that Iberian early-modern repertories languish in obscurity in terms of scholarship, editing, and performance, in comparison to repertories from Italy and northern Europe, but in this case the situation is reversed.

Awareness of the huge Italian Requiem repertory has the potential significantly to influence our understanding of practices and regional conventions within the genre of the polyphonic Requiem, and in particular to assess the current scholarly emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Iberian tradition. While thorough and comprehensive study of the Italian works is an enormous undertaking which is beyond the scope of this book, a large number of these settings – as well as of the Northern and Iberian repertories of Requiems – is here considered as part of the attempt to apprehend more fully the approach taken by Victoria in the *Officium defunctorum* and how that approach relates to particular regional practices. In the process, I consider afresh in Chapter 4 to what extent and in what ways Iberian traditions in the composition of Requiems were distinctive, addressing such matters as chant-use and the tendency to employ different mensurations for particular movements, and challenging the idea that stylistic austerity should be viewed as a general distinguishing mark of Iberian Requiems.²⁴

²³ Jerome Roche, *North Italian Church Music in the Age of Monteverdi* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 39–40.

²⁴ The most detailed modern study to date of Iberian polyphony *pro mortuis* is Grayson Wagstaff, 'Music for the Dead: Polyphonic Settings of the *Officium* and *Missa Pro Defunctis* by Spanish and Latin American Composers before 1630', unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Texas at Austin (1995). Wagstaff there presents his view of well defined, firmly established, and

Chapter 4 also contextualises the music of the *Officium defunctorum* within Victoria's output, a process that allows the identification of 'signature' elements and approaches that characterise the work and render it distinctive within that output.²⁵ Most prominent amongst the small-scale signature devices is a particular contrapuntal module which – it transpires – Victoria introduced only in his later career and which he used in a far more concentrated fashion in the *Officium defunctorum* than anywhere else. Victoria's employment of this and other compositional devices and strategies examined in Chapter 4 (including tonal manipulation and juxtaposition, and particular structural ploys) encourages a reading of the *Officium defunctorum* as a coherent and internally integrated compositional project, and their identification helps to explain why the *Officium defunctorum* seems to occupy a powerfully individual sound-world. Polyphonic Requiems generally lack some of the main generators of unification found in cyclic Mass Ordinaries (including use of the same pre-existing material in each 'movement', and consistency of modal representation and tonal type between movements). Nevertheless, it will be argued that Victoria deploys multiple means of drawing together the music that he wrote for María's exequies. Furthermore, these centripetal tendencies apply in various ways to the items in the *Officium defunctorum* beyond the polyphonic Mass itself: the motet *Versa est in luctum*, the responsory *Libera me Domine*, and the Matins lesson *Tædet animam meam*. As will be shown, the degree to which Victoria integrates (for example) his *pro defunctis* motet and responsory setting with the accompanying music for Mass was unusual.

Another type of contextualisation is pursued in Chapter 3, which examines the *Officium defunctorum* of 1605 as a material artefact in the context of music publishing in the period, and in so doing calls attention to its exceptional – perhaps, indeed, unique – nature in both Iberian and international terms: a slender printed book containing one polyphonic Requiem and which memorialises a particular person (here, the composer's employer) and their exequies, highlighting the occasion of the music's genesis. Victoria's publication project – which provides us with a remarkably uncommon opportunity to place surviving *pro defunctis* polyphony within its original context – thus belongs in some sense within the same sphere as the festival books commemorating major dynastic

distinctive Spanish traditions of how to compose a Requiem, and argues that the music of Victoria's *Officium defunctorum* stands somewhat apart from these.

²⁵ In this connection, one should observe that the commonplace view that the *Officium defunctorum* is based in significant part on his earlier four-voice Requiem is erroneous.

ceremonies, and specifically the *libros de exequias* and published sermons that recorded the deaths and exequies of the senior Spanish Habsburgs.

These *libros de exequias* are considered in Chapter 2, within an account and study of the local context within which Victoria's Requiem originated and was first performed: the death, burial, and exequies of María of Austria. In placing these specific events and ceremonies – and Victoria's provision of music for them – within the relevant contexts of Spanish Habsburg exequial traditions and practices, attention is paid to what *libros de exequias* can tell us about the role, nature, and manner of performance of the music embedded within such complexes of ceremony, rhetoric, written texts, and iconographical art. The chapter draws on hitherto overlooked sources and reinterprets those already known in order to construct as vivid as possible a narrative of María's death and burial, and of the ceremonies at the Descalzas for which Victoria prepared the music of the *Officium defunctorum*. The oft-repeated modern view that this music was written not for María's household exequies at the Descalzas but for the later ceremonies organised by the Jesuit College in Madrid is shown to be untenable, but the references to music in the contemporary published description of these Jesuit exequies are also scrutinised. Among the materials upon which the account of events at the Descalzas is constructed is the wealth of correspondence between María's lord high steward Juan de Borja and the Duke of Lerma at the royal court, revealing the frenzied process of determining whether María would be buried at the Descalzas or in the royal mausoleum at El Escorial, and the subsequent hurried organisation by her household (including Victoria) of the exequies which were held some seventeen days later within the convent chapel.

María's household at the Descalzas is scrutinised in broader terms in Chapter 1 as a context for Victoria's service as chaplain and musician. Although his appointment as one of María's chaplains in 1587 was a religious rather than a musical one, and although the Empress's household apparently included no *capilla de música*, it seems that Victoria also acted unofficially as *maestro de capilla* of the royal chapel maintained at the convent. His music performed there in the presence of María and other members of the family could acquire strongly dynastic significance, the most clear-cut example of which is represented by the Requiem itself. Victoria's move to Madrid naturally facilitated his cultivation of Habsburg patronage, including that of the royal court, and this was manifest not least in the series of publications leading up to the *Officium defunctorum*.

As explored in Chapter 3, Victoria himself disseminated copies of the *Officium defunctorum* in Spain and beyond. Although the Requiem seems to have achieved very limited purchase within institutional repertoires in the seventeenth century, it was thanks to one or more of the copies that Victoria sent to Rome that in the 1700s the work came to the attention of Roman church musicians and collectors with interests in older polyphonic repertoires, and thence within the purview of the internationally famous Padre Martini in Bologna. Chapter 5 traces this renewed knowledge of the work in Italy, before considering various stages in the growth of its extraordinary modern reputation from the late eighteenth century onwards: its treatment in the general music histories of John Hawkins and Charles Burney; the publishing and liturgical performance of the work within the context of the German Cecilian movement in the 1860s and 70s, and the elevated veneration of the work in these circles, reflecting its encapsulation of the principal values of the movement; widening knowledge of the Requiem – including in England – through the medium of the editions by Franz Xaver Haberl and Charles Bordes; the problematic 'authoritative' edition by Felip Pedrell published as part of the *opera omnia*, and its enduring influence upon modern performing editions and hence on performances and recordings; and finally the choice of the work for use at the funeral of Manuel de Falla in 1947, and the political/nationalist overtones of that choice.

The remarkable popularity of the Requiem in the current century – with new recordings appearing at the rate of about one a year, and a multitude of concert performances – carries an element of the ironic: its appeal as primarily a concert or recorded work divorced from its religious and liturgical context draws substantially on the degree to which it is perceived to carry an aura of profound sacredness and solemn liturgy, and to evoke the mysticism of Victoria and of Spain's 'golden century'. In the epilogue to this book I consider briefly such aspects of the work's reception since the 1980s. More perhaps than any other Requiem Mass in the five hundred years of the genre, Victoria's Requiem has come to be viewed and prized as both epitome and acme.