ABSTRACT

Panthéonizations and Exhumations:
Ceremonial Reburials in Revolutionary France

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During the French Revolution, the Panthéon was created as a national mausoleum to house the remains of the *grands hommes* of France. Alongside the recently deceased heroes of the Revolution, the deputies of the National Assembly selected illustrious figures from French history to be transferred to the Panthéon. Only two of the selected figures were reburied within the monument: Voltaire and Rousseau.

This thesis examines the significance of these ceremonial reburials on the French Revolution. Reburials, although largely ignored in the scholarship of the Revolution, were key to the creation of a modified culture of death which allowed the revolutionaries to move past the Catholic death culture of the *ancien regime*.

Panthéonizations and Exhumations: Ceremonial Reburials in Revolutionary France

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A Thesis

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Master of Arts

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August 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the help of a myriad of people. I would first like to think my advisor, Dr. Joseph Stubenrauch, for letting me take him on excursion to eighteenth-century France. His advice and guidance was invaluable. I would also like to think Drs. Ann McGlashan and Michael Parrish for their academic mentorship. The sections on music and composition could not have been complete without the guidance of Catriona Long, music theorist extraordinaire. I would like to think my family, Lynn, Marilyn, Tane, and Tanner, who kept me going. And finally, to the Baroness Emma Orczy and her Scarlet Pimpernel, who taught me so long ago that history was an adventure just waiting to be told.

To Freddie Juanita Tatum

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

C'est le jour du triomphe et non pas de regrets
Que nos chants d'allégresse
Accompagnent la cendre
Du plus illustre des français.

It is the day of triumph and not of regrets
That our songs of enthusiasm
Accompany the ashes
Of the most illustrious of the French.[1]

The Panthéon was a failure. So declared Mona Ozouf in her essay *The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead*.[2] Residing in the sea of national monuments that is Paris, the Panthéon remains eerily empty as hordes of tourists pass by.[3] The inscription above the entrance, "To great men, the grateful *patrie*," seems to ring hollow through the cavernous interior. Created during the French Revolution to be a place of memory of the "*grands hommes*" of a new and free republic, the Panthéon and its revolutionary origins are now largely forgotten. From its creation in 1791 to the end of the Revolution, fifteen

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. French spelling has been modernized; Marie-Joseph Chénier and François-Joseph Gossec, "Hymne Sur La Translation Du Corps de Voltaire Au Panthéon," accessed February 26, 2016.

[2] Mona Ozouf, "The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead," in *Realms of Memory*, vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 325–48.

[3] The Panthéon frequently ranks low in annual visitation statistics. In a 2007 report released by the Office du Tourisme et des Congrès, the Panthéon only received around 500,000 visitors, while other sites like Notre Dame and Basilique du Sacré-Cœur received over 10,000,000 visitors. In more recent reports by the tourism office, the visitor statistics for the Panthéon are not included. "Fréquentation des 50 premiers sites culturels parisiens en 2007" (Office du Tourisme et des Congrès de Paris, c 2008); "En 2011, la fréquentation des sites culturels parisiens participe de la croissance touristique" (Office du Tourisme et des Congrès de Paris, July 2, 2012).

Frenchmen were Panthéonized by the revolutionary government of France.[4] Of these fifteen, only two remained in the Panthéon at the close of the Revolution: Voltaire and Rousseau. But was the Panthéon truly a failure? Did it not have some lasting effect on the French Revolution or the people who had created it?

The Panthéon was not a failure. Although the structure itself never reached its full potential as a mausoleum of the "great men" of the Revolution, the creation of the Panthéon led to a reshaping of French death culture. In order to fill their new monument with the illustrious dead of France, the revolutionaries of France created a new ceremony of reburial. This ceremony, unhindered by pre-existing religious rituals and unique from a political festival, provided a blank slate on which ideas of death and memory could be redefined. With the growing tensions between the Catholic Church and the Revolution, the revolutionary leaders had recognized the importance of realigning French culture to reflect the ideals of the Revolution rather than those of the Church and the *ancien régime*. Reburials created a means in which to begin this realignment.

This thesis will examine the two Panthéon reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau. These two reburials can been seen as bookends to the Revolution. The first reburial, for Voltaire, occurred shortly after the creation of the Panthéon and the official denouncement of the French Revolution by Pope Pius VI in 1791.[5] The second reburial, for Rousseau, occurred in 1794 after the fall of the radical Jacobin government and the

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[4] I am using the term "Panthéonized" as an adjective to describe those individuals who were placed in the Panthéon by a decree of the National Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, or the National Convention of France. Not all individuals who were Panthéonized gained a physical place in the mausoleum.

[5] This denunciation came in the form of the papal bull, *Quod aliquantum*.

end of the Reign of Terror. Examining these two reburials in detail will provide a means to discern the significance of revolutionary reburials.

Until now, reburials have been largely ignored as having any unique influence on the Revolution. In the scholarship of the Revolution and revolutionary death culture, reburials are always grouped with funerals or with state festivals. In actuality, reburials do not fall within either of these categories, but should rather be considered as a third and separate group. My goal for this thesis is to argue that reburials are a unique category of revolutionary ceremony, and that this category deserves further study by scholars of the French Revolution. This project is only a brief introduction to the rich topic of revolutionary reburials.

Reburial ceremonies were unique not only in their goals, but also in how they were able to accomplish these goals. Revolutionary leaders, both governmental deputies and politically active citizens, were able to use reburials as a means to memorialize the dead, to make political attacks, to emphasize the ideals of the Revolution, and to reshape death rituals and culture. These goals were achieved by the reburial ceremony's unique position between funeral and festival and the absence of pre-existing expectations about what the reburial should include or strive to achieve.

The reburial ceremonies of Voltaire and Rousseau both reveal these unique qualities. As will be explored in later chapters, the reburial of Voltaire and Rousseau were each used as a political tool by the revolutionary government to achieve a number of goals. In the case of Voltaire, reburial became the means in which the National Assembly could attack the Catholic Church, first by denying the exile of the anticlerical philosopher and, more importantly, by intentionally secularizing death. In the case of

Rousseau, reburial became the means in which the National Convention could attempt to unify the Republic after the horrors of the Terror and the destruction of the Jacobin Club. In addition, the reburial of Rousseau reveals the success of the initial attempts to create a secular culture of death.

Through this introductory look into the significant role that reburials played in the French Revolution, I believe that the need for further study will become apparent. Since the 1970s, research on the festivals, memory, and death culture of revolutionary France has been growing. New insights on the Revolution and its significance on world history have been revealed through the close examination of various funerals and festivals. This thesis hopes to begin a new exploration into the importance of reburials.

Historiography

The study of revolutionary reburials falls within two larger genres of French Revolution scholarship. These are the studies of death and death culture and the studies of ceremony and symbol. In the first genre of death and death culture, reburials are typically grouped in with studies of funerals and burial rituals. However, in the second genre of festival and symbol, reburials of Revolution are grouped with studies of festivals. Studies of reburials as distinct from funerals and festivals are almost nonexistent. One historian, Michael Kammen, has written exclusively on reburials, but his work, *Digging up the Dead: A History of Notable American Reburials*, focuses entirely on the United States.[6] Outside of the field of history, some work on reburials has been done in the field of religion, in regards to saint relics, as well as in the fields of

[6] Michael G. Kammen, *Digging up the Dead : A History of Notable American Reburials* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

anthropology and sociology, in regards the relocation of ancient burial sites or mass graves left by genocide.[7] Overall, reburials of the French Revolution – in fact, of Europe as a whole – have been largely ignored as a unique facet of death culture or ceremony.

Despite this lack of scholarship, any examination of reburials must necessarily rely on the scholarship of these two genres. In the study of death and death culture, one must initially look to the work of Philippe Ariès, often considered the father of death scholarship. In his groundbreaking article "*Attitudes devant la vie et devant la mort du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*," Ariès made the observation that there were changes to the fundamental attitudes towards death between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[8] Through this seemingly simple observation, Ariès created an entirely new field of historical study – that of the culture of death. Before his article, historians tended to consider death with a modern mindset. Ariès' work revealed that attitudes toward death were intrinsically tied to the social and political aspects to a particular point in history. Humans approached death based on their understanding of the world around them. Through the deliberate creation of ritual and the inadvertent adoption of superstition, societies created veritable cultures of death that both revealed and expanded other aspects of that societies' culture. In *Attitudes devant la vie* and his other works, Ariès argued that this culture surrounding death evolved alongside changes in political environments, scientific discoveries, social understandings, and religious beliefs.[9] This argument,

[7] Recent scholarship in the fields of anthropology and sociology have included work on the relocation of Native American and Viking burial, as well as the exhumation and reburial of the victims of mass violence in regions of South America.

[8] Philippe Ariès, "Attitudes Devant La Vie et Devant La Mort Du XVIIe Au XIXe Siècle: Quelques Aspects de Leurs Variations," *Population (French Edition)* 4, no. 3 (1949): 463–70.

[9] For additional works by Ariès on the death culture of the West, see: Philippe Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort. I, I,* (Paris: Seuil, 1977); Philippe Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort. 2, 2,* (Paris: Seuil, 1977);

innovative for its time, created a new wave of scholarship that focused specifically on the creation and evolution of death culture. In a similar vein to Ariès, much of this death culture scholarship focuses on the West which, for the purposes of this thesis, we will also focus on.

In relation to the study of reburials, five key works within the scholarship of death culture stand out. In the first of these, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death in Eighteenth Century France*, John McManners explored how death influenced "mental attitudes and social customs," and, in turn, how the Enlightenment influenced attitudes towards death.[10] This work is invaluable for its detailed exploration of pre-Revolutionary death customs. On the topic of reburials, this work is unsurprisingly silent as it concentrates its focus on the years before the creation of the Panthéon. Next, in the *Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration, and Urbanism*, Michel Ragon argues that changing attitudes about death are revealed in the ways a society disposes of or memorializes the corpse.[11] Although Ragon discusses in detail the creation and decoration of the Panthéon, mentions of reburials are noticeably lacking. For Ragon, the Panthéon is only a place of funerals, such as those of Mirabeau and Marat, rather than reburial.

Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, lst Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1982); Philippe Ariès, *Images of Man and Death* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[10] John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death Among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France*, Oxford Paperbacks (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[11] Michel Ragon, *The Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration, and Urbanism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983).

Another significant work is Antoine de Baecque's *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths under the French Revolution*.[12] By exploring the treatment of corpses during the Revolution, De Baecque seeks to "understand the morbid passions that pervaded the society."[13] This work is most significant for its argument that the French Revolution politicized the corpse. Here, for the first time in the scholarship on death, do we see a detailed examination of a reburial – that of Voltaire in 1791. However, De Baecque's work focuses more on the politicized corpse of Voltaire rather than the significance of the ceremony which accompanied the corpse to the Panthéon.

Finally, two key works on French funerals by Avner Ben-Amos and Joseph Clarke also provide significant insight into the study of revolutionary reburials. In *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France 1789-1996*, Ben-Amos argues that state funerals directly influenced changes in the death rituals and memory of modern France.[14] Ben-Amos also makes the argument that the state funeral was not just a "simple rite of passage," but that it belonged instead to "the category of ceremonies of power that constitute an integral part of any political regime."[15] This work is important to the study of reburials, particularly in regards to the reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau. Although reburials are grouped together with other funerals, Ben-Amos does recognize

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[12] Antoine De Baecque, *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths under the French Revolution*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[13] Ibid: 9.

[14] Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[15] Ibid: 3.

that the Panthéon reburials had a significant influence on the Revolution and its death culture.

In *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799*, Clarke examined how the secularization of funerary practices during the Revolution changed the ways in which the French approached death.[16] Clarke argued that drastic changes in the religious aspects of funerals fundamentally affected how the French, particularly the Parisians, approached death. While Clarke provides important insight into the effect of secularization on death culture, his work has two major limitations. First, Clarke does not explain how funerary practices were able to shed the influences of Catholic rituals, or why the shedding of these rituals was significant. Secondly, although the reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau are briefly examined, Clarke considers these only as additional examples of the secular funeral. Separating out these reburials from the normal funerals would allow for an expansion of Clarke's arguments about the effects of secularization on the death culture of France by providing new insights on how and why death rituals became secular.

In the second genre of scholarship related to the study of reburials, that of symbol and ceremony, the work of two historians stands out. First, the research of Lynn Hunt provides key insights into the symbolism and philosophy of revolutionary culture. In *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, Hunt argued that "political meaning was closely woven into … symbolic expressions."[17] In this work, Hunt

[16] Joseph Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799*, Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories 11 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[17] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, 20th Anniversary Edition, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 53.

examines how and why various revolutionary symbols held political significance. By extending Hunt's conclusions on these symbols to reburial ceremonies, one can better understand the political significance of the dress, imagery, and rhetoric of these ceremonies.

Second, the work of Mona Ozouf provides a framework in which to understand reburials as a public spectacle and the influence such a ceremony could have on the observing public. In *Festivals and the French Revolution*, Ozouf argued that festivals revealed what the revolutionaries hoped their Revolution would achieve, rather than what the Revolution had achieved. Festivals, in this sense, reflected the ideals of the revolutionaries instead of the successes of the Revolution. Extending this insight on to reburial ceremonies can lead to new understandings of what sort of death culture the revolutionaries hoped to create.

Each of these works has, in their own way, expanded our understanding of the culture of the French Revolution. By examining reburials through the lens of these works on death, symbol, and ceremony, our understanding can expand even further. Separating out reburials from other funerals and festivals can allow for further development of each of these arguments. In the following chapters, I have used these scholarly writings alongside primary sources to discover how reburials both influenced the Revolution and the death culture of France.

CHAPTER TWO

The Panthéon

"Le voilà! le voilà!"

The audience of the *Théâtre de la Nation* watched as the curtain began to rise for the final performance of the revival of Voltaire's *Brutus*. Before the play could begin, a voice called out requesting to speak to the audience. The curtain descended and the Marquis Charles de Villette, the adopted son-and-law and devoted disciple of Voltaire, took his place on the stage and began his speech:[1]

> *Messieurs*, I demand, in the name of the homeland, that Voltaire's coffin be transported to Paris. This transferal will be the last gasp of fanaticism. The great man who etched the character of Brutus would today be the first great defender of the people. … It is up to Romans, to the French like you, to expiate so many outrages; it is up to you to demand that the ashes of Voltaire be deposited in the Basilica of Sainte-Geneviève, opposite of Descartes, which we still searched for even sixteen years after his death.[2]

Six months after this bold declaration, Villette's wish was granted. On the thirteenth anniversary of Voltaire's death, the National Assembly decreed that Voltaire was "worthy to receive the honors awarded to great men" – his remains would be

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[2] *Chronique de Paris. T2 (1790),* November 25, 1790 (Paris: s.n., 1790), Bibliothéque national de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k495021; Villette's mention of "sixteen years after his death" refers to the transferal of Descartes remains from Sweden to France sixteen years after he had died in Stockholm. For an interesting history of the corpse of Descartes, see: Russell Shorto, *Descartes' Bones: A Skeletal History of the Conflict between Faith and Reason* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

transferred to Sainte-Geneviève, the new "Patriotic Catacombs."[3] In preparation for this decree and the subsequent reburial, Villette had already received instructions to oversee the transferal of Voltaire's remains to Paris from the abbey of Sellières, located near the town of Romilly-sur-Seine.[4]

Although the reburial ceremony was to be so majestic that the journalist Prudhomme would compare it to the funerals of past kings, the exhumation of the philosopher's corpse was not lacking in a splendor of its own.[5] The mayor and municipal officers of Romilly, local citizens, two surgeons and four chosen witnesses accompanied the Romilly National Guard to the abbey of Sellières to begin the exhumation process.[6] The ground which covered Voltaire's coffin was torn away with pickaxes to reveal the *grand homme*. As his face was exposed, the sound of a thousand voices cried out in joy.[7] "*Le voilà! le voilà!*," they shouted. "There he is!"[8] As the voices cried out, a scrap of paper flew from the crowd and landed in the open grave. Written on this scrap were the following versus:

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[3] Antoine De Baecque, *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths under the French Revolution*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Routledge, 2003): 45.

[4] In some sources, "Sellières" is spelled "Scellières."

[5] Ibid: 57.

[6] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791 (Paris: s.n., 1790-1793), Bibliothéque nationale de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k49503c. By the time of the exhumation of Voltaire, the abbey de Sellières was no longer a religious abbey as it had been sold to a private owner. It was, however, still referred to by its old name for some time after.

[7] Ibid. Although the mayor of Romilly states in a letter to Villette that there were "a thousand cries of joy," this number of spectators is likely exaggerated.

[8] Ibid. Interestingly, in 1898 when Voltaire's corpse was exhumed once again, the on-looking crowd had a very similar reaction. A *New York Times* article reported that the on-lookers cried "Voilà Voltaire! Voilà Voltaire" as the coffin lid was pulled away to reveal the remains. See: "Voltaire and Rousseau.: Their Tombs in the Pantheon Opened and Their Bones Exposed," *New York Times*, January 8, 1898, sec. Saturday Review of Books and Art.

No, henceforth these places shall not be profane.
They contain your ashes; and this simple tomb,
Consecrated by our chants, honored by your spirit,
Is for us a new temple.[9]

To the delight of the spectators, the face of Voltaire was still recognizable thanks to the care Villette had given to having the corpse embalmed thirteen years previously. In fact, the corpse had been so well preserved that it was decided Voltaire would be given an "open-casket" reburial so that the French people could look upon the body of their national hero as he travelled to his final resting place.[10]

And look they did. As Voltaire's body was transferred first to Romilly, a procession of onlookers gathered along the path of the carriage. The face was left visible, his head adorned with a crown of oak leaves, and his body covered by a linen cloth strewn with flowers. As the mayor of Romilly recalled, women held up their children as the body passed by and made them kiss the cloth.[11] Reaching the church at Romilly at around eight o'clock in the evening, Voltaire's body was exhibited for a few hours more, before the body was temporarily sealed away again in preparation for the final procession to Paris.[12]

The Panthéonization of Voltaire and the reburial ceremony that was to follow this exhumation left a lasting mark on the French Revolution. Although the planning of the ceremony started as the effort of one man to memorialize his mentor, the reburial of

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[9] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791.

[10] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*.

[11] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791; Joseph Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris, et Détails de La Cérémonie Qui Aura Lieu Le 4 Juillet . Arrêtés Par Le Directoire Du Département de Paris, Sur Le Rapport de M. Charron,...*, 1791: 8.

[12] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791.

Voltaire became a political tool used by the revolutionaries to separate their revolution from a French culture intrinsically tied to the Catholic Church. This chapter will examine how the revolutionary government of France, along with the help of Villette and his companions, used the Panthéonization and reburial of Voltaire to pave the way for a new, secular culture of death. First, however, it is necessary to provide some background on the Panthéon, for it was the creation of this building that sparked the need for a state reburial.

The New Sainte-Geneviève: Approuvé à Versailles

The Panthéon was not always a mausoleum, nor was it always a building of the Revolution. When the first stone was laid on September 6, 1764, by Louis XV, the Panthéon was destined to be a new church dedicated to Saint Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris.[13] How, then, did it become the resting place for Voltaire – a French philosopher infamous for his criticism of the Catholic Church? The answer to this question provides a brief introduction to the political and social environment of France leading up to the Panthéon reburials.

In 1744, France was entangled in the War of the Austrian Succession. Louis XV, acting on the traditional duties of the monarchy, traveled to Metz to review his troops stationed there. During the course of the inspection, the king fell deathly ill. However, just as the recovery of the king seemed impossible, Louis XV was restored to health. Attributing this perceived miracle to the patron saint of Paris, the king vowed to build a

[13] Jean-François Decraene, *Dictionnaire des gloires du Panthéon* (Paris: Ed. du Patrimoine, 2014): 112.

new church dedicated to Saint Geneviève to replace the outdated gothic church.[14] This new church would be built in the neoclassic style and would become the new house for the relics of Paris's patron saint.

More than a decade passed before Louis XV's promise became a reality. In 1755, a man by the name of Jacques Germain Soufflot was charged with the project. Taking inspiration from Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, Soufflot presented the king with a plan for a church decorated with columns, Grecian reliefs, and a magnificent dome topped by a statue of the venerated saint. On May 2, 1757, the king approved the plans for the new church, but a number of obstacles, including a lack of funding, stalled construction.[15] Seven years later, Louis XV declared that it was time to place the first stone, and construction began in the September of 1764.[16]

By 1790, sixteen years after Louis XV declared his intention to build a new church, construction of the new Sainte-Geneviève had been completed. Despite Louis XV's vow, the new building was never to receive the relics of Saint Geneviève or see the transfer of the clergy from Old Sainte-Geneviève. France had entered into a period of political turmoil and concern over the new church faded from the minds of Parisians.

That is, except from the mind of the Marquis de Villette. For Villette, the new church represented a fresh opportunity to argue for the transfer of the remains of Voltaire

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[14] Biver, *Le Panthéon à L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 3.

[15] Ibid: 9.; Biver, *Le Panthéon à L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 5. There was a distinct lack of funds for the construction of the new Sainte-Geneviève. At the same time the church was being constructed, a new military school as well as a number of other construction projects were already underway, which left the state coffers dangerously empty. Other problems that Soufflot encountered included problems with the terrain and rumors spread by a rival architect claiming that the planned dome was likely to collapse.

[16] Denis Bocquet, "Panthéon ou église Sainte-Geneviève? Les ambiguïtés d'un monument (1830-1885)" (other, Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 1992): 4; Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 6.

to Paris. Prompted by the private sale of the abbey of Sellières, where Voltaire's remains were buried, Villette approached the Jacobin Club in November of 1790 and demanded its members support the placement of the philosopher's remains in the newly constructed Sainte-Geneviève.

> The body of Voltaire rests [at the abbey of Sellières]; it belongs to the nation. Will you suffer that this precious relic become the property of an individual? Will you suffer that it be sold like state or ecclesiastical property? […] [I]f the English reunited their great men in Westminster, why do we hesitate to place the coffin of Voltaire in the most beautiful of our temples, in the new Sainte-Geneviève, opposite the mausoleum of Descartes, that had also been searched for at Stockholm sixteen years after his death?[17]

Although the idea of a French Westminster Abbey received wide support, other pressing matters of the Revolution meant that Villette's proposition was consistently put aside. This changed on April 2, 1791, when the death of Honoré-Gabriel-Victor Riquetti de Mirabeau, a popular and imposing deputy of the National Assembly, added new pressure for the need of a place to honor the dead of the Revolution.

The day after the death of Mirabeau, representatives from the forty-eight *sections* of Paris sent a demand to the National Assembly to allow the burial of the deputy at the Champ-de-Mars. The National Assembly, while not opposed to honoring Mirabeau through ceremonial burial, worried that the Champ-de-Mars was too closely connected to the monarchy, as Louis XVI had recently visited the place during the Fête de la Fédération.[18] Eager for a solution, the Assembly reacted positively to a suggestion that

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[17] François-Alphonse Aulard, *La Société Des Jacobins : Recueil de Documents Pour L'histoire Du Club Des Jacobins de Paris. Tome 1 / Par F.-A. Aulard*, 1889: 367-369.

[18] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 29.

the new Sainte-Geneviève be transformed into a national mausoleum. One day later, the Assembly decreed the following six articles:

> Article One. – The new building of Sainte-Geneviève will be destined to receive the ashes of the *Grands Hommes* of the era of French Liberty.
>
> Article Two. – The Legislative Body alone will decide to which persons these honors will be rendered.
>
> Article Three. – Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau is judged worthy to receive this honor.
>
> Article Four. – The Legislature cannot award this honor to one of its members who has died. It can only be awarded by the following Legislature.
>
> Article Five. – Exceptions for some *Grands Hommes* who died before the Revolution can be made by the Legislative Body.[19]
>
> Article Six. – The Directory of the Department of Paris will be charged to promptly put the building of Sainte-Geneviève in a state to fill its new purpose and to engrave above the entrance these words: "To the great men, the grateful country."[20]

With this decree, the building Louis XV had intended to be a monument to a revered saint of the Catholic faith became instead a monument to the heroes of a secular Revolution. As one revolutionary newspaper described it, "The temple of religion becomes the temple of the nation."[21]

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[19] An earlier version of the decree, proposed by Claude-Emmanuel de Pastoret, specifically listed Voltaire, Rousseau, and Descartes as examples of such *grands hommes*. See De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 30.

[20] In French, the words carved over the entrance are "*AUX GRANDS HOMMES, LA PATRIE RECONNAISSANTE*"; Copy of the decree printed in: Biver, *Le Panthéon à L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 13-14.

[21] Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, ed., *Le Patriote François : Journal Libre, Impartial et National / Par Une Société de Citoyens, & Dirigé Par J. P. Brissot de Warville*, April 5, 1791 (Paris, 1790): 366.

The Funeral of Mirabeau

The funeral of Mirabeau was, in some sense, the final gasp of the death culture of the *ancien régime*. As we shall explore in the following chapters, the creation of the Panthéon and the reburials that filled its empty tombs began the process of forming a new, revolutionary culture of death. The funeral for Mirabeau, however, still retained the death rituals of old, despite its occurrence after the dedication of the Panthéon. The reasons for this were twofold.[22] First, although tensions between the Catholic Church and the Revolution were high, the revolutionaries would not formally break from the Church until later, after the official denunciation of the Revolution by Pope Pius VI had reached France.[23] This meant that the need for new, non-Catholic rituals was not an immediately pressing need. Mirabeau had died a Catholic, and so burying him as one was acceptable to the revolutionaries.

The second reasons for keeping the traditional death rituals was the rushed nature of the ceremony. Unlike the reburial ceremonies that we will explore, planning time for funerals was limited due to the presence of a decaying corpse. With the funeral of Mirabeau, the governmental deputies also had to contend with the impatient demands of the public to see their beloved deputy properly memorialized. And so, with too little time to prepare a unique ceremony for the first *grand homme* to enter the Panthéon, the architects of the ceremony allowed for the traditional funeral.

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[22] Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 32.

[23] Pope Pius VI issued a papal bull known as the *Quod aliquantum* in March of 1791 denouncing the Revolution and its Civil Constitution of the Clergy. News of this bull reached France within the following months.

In eighteenth-century France, death culture was intrinsically tied with Catholicism and its adopted death rituals.[24] These rituals began in the home of the dying subject and, from the very beginning, included prayer.[25] As death drew near, a member of the clergy would administer the last rites and say prayers in preparation for death. Once death came, women – either family or hired professionals – would come to wash the body and wrap it in a shroud with the face exposed. Candles were lit and a small basin of holy water was laid out so that visitors and family could pay their last respects and sprinkle the holy water onto the corpse. No less than twenty-four hours later, a funeral ceremony was planned.

Once the funeral had been announced and the clergy had been gathered at the home of the deceased, the ceremony would begin. The corpse, prepared for burial, was laid out at the entrance to the house and was lined on both sides by candles. Holy water was sprinkled, torches were lit, and the corpse was hoisted onto the shoulders of the pallbearers to be carried the entire distance to the church. During the procession the corpse was preceded by the exorcist with holy water, the cross-bearer, the clergy in pairs, and finally the officiating priest. The corpse was followed by male relatives and, if present, female relatives. Throughout the procession there was singing, first of the *De*

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[24] Catholicism was both the official and majority religion in France up until the Revolution. Paris, where all of the ceremonies I discuss took place, was overwhelmingly Catholic. For this reason, I have concentrated only on Catholic death rituals. While Protestantism and other non-Christian religions did exist in France, their presence was mostly concentrated in the south-eastern regions of France, a far distance from Paris where the Panthéon funeral and reburial ceremonies occurred.

[25] The following information on death rituals of eighteenth century France largely comes from McManners' work in *Death and the Enlightenment*. While there has been much research on French death culture in Modern France, McManners' work is unique in that it bridges the gap between pre-modern and modern death culture. He work also includes extensive research on regional differences of death culture in France. John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death Among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France*, Oxford Paperbacks (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 270-275.

profundis (Psalm 130), then the *Miserere* and *Exultabunt Domino ossa humiliata* (Psalm 51), and finally the *Requiem aeternam* prayer.

Upon reaching the church, the corpse was placed in the east end of the nave with the cross-bearer at the head, the celebrant at the feet, and the other clergymen lined up along the sides. A series of prayers, set out in the *Roman Ritual of 1614*, were given, followed by the Lord's Prayer, and finally the requiem mass.[26] Further prayers were recited and the body was sprinkled with holy water before the body was moved to the place of burial. Once lowered into the ground, the grave and corpse were again sprinkled with holy water and additional prayers and recitations of biblical versus were made. Finally, earth was thrown into the grave and close family members were left at the graveside, thus ending the ceremony.

In general, the ceremony for Mirabeau followed this typical funeral structure, although some modifications were made to emphasize that it was a state funeral. The procession, for example, included not only priests, family, and friends, but also members of the King's government, deputies of the National Assembly, the royal army, the constituent bodies, the National Guard, representatives of the Paris Commune, and members of various patriotic and political clubs.[27] Otherwise, the ceremony was typical. A spectator to the ceremony described the event in a letter:

> The convoy left from the [place] of death … at six o'clock in the evening to go to Ste Geneviève; it was preceded, accompanied, and followed by more than six thousand soldiers and National Guardsmen who marched

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[26] Richard Rutherford, *The Death of a Christian: The Rite of Funerals*, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church, v. 7 (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co, 1980): 88-89; 99-100.

[27] At this point in the Revolution, Louis XVI remained the king, but the structure of his government had changed to allow a representative National Assembly; Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 32.

> with torches, their arms lowered …. The coffin was carried by sixteen grenadiers and volunteer riflemen. A funereal music preceded and followed the corpse, but it was so sad and funereal that it made the tears pour, especially as it was mixed with the tolling from the belfry. It seemed as if we were descending with him into the home of the dead.[28]

Along its path through Paris, the procession paused at the church of Saint-Eustache, where a requiem mass was performed. Finally, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the corpse was transferred from the church to its temporary place of burial in the Old Sainte-Geneviève until the final renovations to the Panthéon could be completed.[29]

Les Grands Hommes

With the rededication of Sainte-Geneviève as the Panthéon, the revolutionaries of France had successfully created their desired French Westminster. But, as the corpse of Mirabeau was placed inside the stone walls of the monument, the emptiness of the Panthéon seemed all the more apparent. If the Panthéon was truly to be a place of the memorialization of great men, then it must first contain those great men. In order for this to happen, the revolutionaries had to determine who was worthy of being labeled a *grand homme*.

In *The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead*, Mona Ozouf discusses the obsession that the eighteenth-century French had with honoring great men.[30] Even before the Revolution had begun, the *philosophes* of the salons of France had pondered over the

[28] Nicolas Ruault and Brice Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution: lettres à son frère, 1783-1796*, ed. Anne Vassal (Paris: Librairie académique Perrin, 1976): 229.

[29] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 30-32; Ruault and Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution*: 229-230.

[30] Ozouf, "The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead," *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 3: 325-346.

qualities of *les grands hommes*. As Ozouf explains, a number of key traits were generally agreed upon. First, great men were never alone in their greatness, but instead belonged to a sort of "assembly" in which all great men were recognized and welcomed by one another.[31] Even in the case where two great men found discord with one another on earth – as was the case with Voltaire and Rousseau – the two would welcome one another as equals after death.

Secondly, the great man did not inherit his greatness, but rather earned it on his own merits. In this way, the great man was distinguished from a king, who earned his greatness from his inherited title.[32] Nor did the great man earn his greatness from supernatural powers or from a single achievement. This quality distinguished great men from heroes, whose greatness was instead earned through superhuman feats or military victory. As Ozouf described it, "the great man had not a role, but a life woven of a single cloth."[33]

Thirdly, the great man was an exemplar of virtue.[34] The journalist Jean-Paul Marat, who had his own reservations about the creation of the Panthéon, described the virtuous citizen in his journal *L'Ami du people*. They were:

> the philosopher who enlightened the nation on its rights, the legislator who gives [the nation] good laws, the magistrate who executes [these laws] with integrity, the courageous orator who zealously adopts the defense of the oppressed, the warrior who puts his life at risk to repel the enemy,

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[31] Ibid: 327.

[32] Ibid: 327-328.

[33] Ibid: 328.

[34] Ibid: 330.

> [and] the generous merchant who returns the abundance in times of scarcity.[35]

In addition, great men were not confined to any one nation or time, but transcended normal boundaries. This meant that the great men of the newly formed United States or of ancient Greece could be praised alongside the great men of France.

With the creation of the Panthéon, the revolutionaries were forced to narrow their criteria to fit within the realities of their situation and political agenda. In the decree creating the Panthéon, the deputies had already narrowed down this criteria to include only the great men of the "era of French Liberty" and a select few who had died before the Revolution began.[36] As we will see in the following chapters, deciding on specific names for Panthéonization proved to be a difficult task, despite all the effort that had gone into defining a great man.

A New Ceremony

Aside from deciding who was worthy for Panthéonization, the revolutionaries also had to decide how to celebrate the entrance of great men into their new monument. By 1791, ceremony and symbol had already become an integral feature of revolutionary life. As historians Mona Ozouf and Lynn Hunt discuss in their respective works, French revolutionaries used civic festivals paired with costumes, signs, and specific rhetoric as tools to shape the political and social environment of France. In Paris and other cities across France, festivals celebrating liberty, republicanism, and various political events

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[35] Jean-Paul Marat, "No. 421," *L'Ami Du Peuple, Ou Le Publiciste Parisien : Journal Politique Libre et Impartial*, April 6, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France: 7.

[36] See the text of the decree quoted earlier in this chapter; Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 13-14.

were created by the government to involve the public in the progression of the Revolution.[37] These festivals were supplemented with a myriad of symbols – a statue of Reason, the colors of Paris, costumes of ancient Rome – to express and emphasize revolutionary ideals, political power, and societal goals.[38]

Festivals were not an invention of the Revolution. Catholic festivals celebrating the feast days of saints, marriage, and various religious holidays alongside royal festivities had dominated French cultural life since the Middle Ages. The French Revolution, according to Ozouf, gave the French the opportunity to recreate the festival to express the principles of the Enlightenment.[39] As early as July of 1789, a desire for a new type of festival to celebrate the beginning of a revolution and the unity of the French people was expressed by the same Marquis de Villette that would push for the memorialization of Voltaire.[40]

The first real test of a new revolutionary ceremony came in 1790 with the Festival of the Federation, a festival celebrating the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. According to Hunt, this festival marked a regularization of the revolutionary symbol.[41] Symbols, such as the tricolor cockade which had been created by the enthusiasm of the people, were ceremonially adopted as official signs of the Revolution. By the time the

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[37] For a detailed study of revolutionary festivals and their significance on the French Revolution, see: Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[38] For a detailed study of symbols and their use during the Revolution, see part one of: Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*.

[39] Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*: 8.

[40] Ibid: 33.

[41] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*.

Panthéon was created in 1791, revolutionary ceremony and symbol was still evolving. As the revolutionary government transitioned away from the power of the Catholic *ancien régime*, so too did the ceremonies and symbols shed the influences of this older culture.

As we will explore in the following chapters, the creation of the Panthéon and the decision to include certain *grands hommes* from France's past gave the revolutionaries an opportunity to create an entirely new type of ceremony – a ceremony of reburial. Through the transferal of corpses into their national mausoleum, the French discovered a new way to shape the image of the Revolution by the manipulation of death culture. The following chapters on the reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau will discuss how and why the revolutionaries created a new ceremony of reburial, as well as what significance this unique ceremony had on the Revolution.

CHAPTER THREE

Voltaire

The Reburial of Voltaire

With the creation of the Panthéon came the need to fill the new monument with the *grands hommes* of France. Although Mirabeau was the first person to be placed in the Panthéon, the National Assembly recognized that he was not the first and only great man of France. At the time the Assembly declared Mirabeau worthy of Panthéonization, discussion had already begun on which French heroes of the past were worthy of the same honor. A number of names were suggested by various individuals and political factions. Montesquieu, Buffon, Pascal, Fénelon, and even Louis XII and Henry IV received support from the Assembly members.[1] Among the many suggestions, three names made the top of the list – Voltaire, Rousseau, and Descartes. Of these three, Voltaire and Rousseau won their place in the Panthéon.

Thanks to the persistent efforts of Villette, Voltaire was the first of these past heroes to receive a decree of Panthéonization from the revolutionary government. On May 30, nearly two months after the Assembly had decreed the creation of the Panthéon, Voltaire received the "honors awarded to great men."[2] Plans for a grand reburial

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[1] Eveline G. Bouwers, *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe : Comparing Cultures of Remembrance, C. 1790-1840* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, GBR: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 95.

[2] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 45.

ceremony in July were subsequently made and, in this manner, the transfer of Voltaire's remains became the first Panthéon reburial.[3]

Voltaire was already a household name by the time of the French Revolution.[4] As a philosopher, a poet, a playwright, a social critic, and a participant in the Republic of Letters, Voltaire was influential in shaping French Enlightenment thought of the eighteenth century.[5] What Voltaire gained most notoriety for in his lifetime was his sharp wit and undisguised criticisms of the Catholic Church, which provided him with support from a progressive and growing bourgeois class and increasing opposition from a powerful clergy.[6] By the time of his death in 1778, Voltaire had placed himself so far out of the graces of the Church that his body was refused the right to burial in sanctified ground. His family, finding it impossible to have Voltaire's corpse buried within the city

[3] Although Mirabeau was temporarily buried in the old Sainte-Geneviève while the interior of the Panthéon was remodeled and was subsequently exhumed and reburied into the Panthéon, I consider Voltaire as the first reburial because Mirabeau's original burial was always intended to be temporary. Conversely, Voltaire's original burial in the Abbey de Sellières was considered to be the permanent resting place of the philosopher before the decision to transfer his remains to the Panthéon. Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, ed., *Le Patriote François : Journal Libre, Impartial et National / Par Une Société de Citoyens, & Dirigé Par J. P. Brissot de Warville*, April 5, 1791 (Paris, 1790): 363-367.

[4] Joseph Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799*, Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories 11 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 2.

[5] The Republic of Letters was a network of *philosophes* who spread the ideas and knowledge of the Enlightenment across Europe and beyond through letters. Voltaire was an integral part of this network during his lifetime. An overview of his involvement in this network can be found at the Stanford University Mapping the Republic of Letters Project. See: "Voltaire and the Enlightenment," *Mapping the Republic of Letters*, 2010, http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/casestudies/voltaire.html.

[6] Georges Lefebvre, *La Révolution Française*, Troisième édition, Peuples et Civilisations; Histoire Générale 13 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963): 56.

of Paris, was forced to transfer the body in secret to the abbey of Sellières in Champagne, where the prior of the abbey had agreed to perform the Catholic funeral ritual.[7]

When revolution broke out in Paris a decade after Voltaire's death, his anti-clerical writings had gained new popularity as reform-minded Parisians began pushing back against the power of the Church and the monarchy. Efforts were made to repair the reputation of Voltaire, but progress was slow to come. The clergy continued to express their disapproval of the philosopher, and growing demands to honor Rousseau's contributions to the Revolution often overshadowed efforts to honor Voltaire.[8] As the Revolution continued, it became increasingly obvious to Villette and other admirers of Voltaire that the philosopher would not receive the honors he was due unless something could spark renewed interest.

The first of these "sparks" was the sale of the abbey of Sellières to a private buyer. Using the rhetoric of the Revolution, Villette appealed to the nation and to the idea of public property. Should Voltaire's corpse really be allowed to be sold like ecclesiastical property? Did not all French citizens have a right to own the body of such an illustrious man of their past?[9] Certain that his appeals would win support, Villette gave speeches at political clubs and wrote to the mayor of Paris demanding that the city of Paris reclaim the body of Voltaire.

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[7] Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, Friedrich Melchior Grimm, and Voltaire, *Correspondance Littéraire, Philosophique et Critique. Tome 12 / Par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, Etc. ; Revue Sur Les Textes Originaux... Par Maurice Tourneux*, 1877: 113; De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 41.

[8] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 107-109.

[9] See the previously quoted excerpt of Villette's speech to the Jacobin Club in November of 1790. Aulard, *La Société Des Jacobins*: 367-369; De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 43-45.

Eventually, Villette's efforts paid off. An officer of the municipality, Charron, took it upon himself to petition the National Assembly to allow the transferal of Voltaire's remains. In a letter to the president of the Assembly, Charron shared Villette's opinion that Voltaire should become the property of the nation:

> I have received a letter in which I learned that the Friends of the Constitution of Troyes have claimed possession of [the corpse] and that the General Consul of Romilly, through negotiations, prevented the remains of Voltaire from being divided up. Alarmed by this trend and having no time to ask for a convening of the Municipal Court, I thought that the National Assembly would like to pay the tribute of recognition of which the Nation will carry out[. I am] convinced that the City of Paris, more than any other, has the right to reclaim possession of what remains of this *Grand-Homme*[.] I dare beg of you, *M. le Président*, to ask for a decree which provisionally orders that the corpse of Voltaire will be transported at once to the church of Romilly, and that it will be entrusted to the guard and surveillance of the municipality of that place until it has been ordered otherwise.[10]

Charron's letter met with success. The Assembly, sharing in Charron's alarm, agreed to allow the transferal of Voltaire's remains to the church in Romilly. On March 9, 1791, Charron wrote to Villette to share the good news and to charge him with the task of having the remains transferred.[11] One month later on May 9, under the direction of Villette, the mayor of Romilly oversaw the exhumation and transfer of Voltaire's corpse

[10] According the mayor of Romilly in a letter to Villette, Charron's request for a guard for Voltaire's corpse was no over-cautious. On two separate occasions the guard had to stop persons of mal intent from destroying or stealing the corpse. The mayor ensured Villette that, "They would have to break two thousand arms before they could steal this treasure from us." Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*: 8-10; *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791.

[11] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 45; Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*.

to the Romilly church. There it would remain, sealed away in a coffin, until a second decree allowing a transferal to Paris could be made.[12]

The second spark was the death of the National Assembly deputy, Mirabeau, and the subsequent public demands for his commemoration. As historian Joseph Clarke notes in his work *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, Mirabeau's death came at a time when the commemoration of the dead was undergoing rapid change. The commemorative culture of the *ancien régime*, which had been grounded in religious ritual, had come to be at odds with a new secular and republican culture of commemoration.[13] By the time of Mirabeau's death in April of 1791, this problematic clash of cultures had hardly been resolved. The French, left with "several centuries of masses, festivals and funerals, rites [… and] the martyrdom of saints," found themselves in need of a new republican form of commemoration which could memorialize the great men of the French Republic without echoing their Catholic past.[14]

The initial reaction of the revolutionaries was to look backwards. Not to their own monarchic past, but to the ancient societies of Rome and Greece which had already captured the imagination of Enlightenment France. Far from being steeped in religious ritual, the ceremonies of ancient times centered on a civic spirit.[15] The individual could be commemorated not for his own power and authority, but for his contributions towards his fellow man. Here, then, was a way for the National Assembly to answer the demands

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[12] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791.

[13] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 12-13.

[14] Ibid: 47.

[15] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1991): 5-6.

of the public to commemorate Mirabeau while keeping with the spirit of the Revolution. Rushed into decision by the mourning public and the vocal deputies who agreed that Mirabeau must be honored, the National Assembly passed a decree creating a new French Panthéon, reminiscent of the Pantheon of Rome.[16]

With the official creation of the Panthéon, there were new grounds to demand a second, and final transferal of Voltaire's remains. But it was not until the third, and final spark that Voltaire would finally gain the recognition that Villette hoped for this. This last spark was the publication of *Quod aliquantum*, a papal bull issued by Pope Pius VI in which he denounced the French Revolution and the ecclesiastical reforms taking place in France.[17] As Clarke argued, this publication was what finally convinced the deputies of the Assembly to panthéonize Voltaire. Faced with the failure to find compromise with Catholic Church, the Assembly embraced the anti-clerical Voltaire as the standard-bearer for their cause.[18] One deputy even went so far as to claim that Voltaire had predicted the Revolution and should therefore be one the first honored by Panthéonization.[19] On May 30, 1791, the thirteenth anniversary of Voltaire's death, the following decree was passed:

> The National Assembly […] decrees that Marie-François
> Arouet Voltaire is worthy to receive the honors awarded to

[16] It is, in a sense, ironic that the name "Panthéon" was chosen for the destination of great men. Although the revolutionaries wished to separate the commemoration of great men from Catholic religion and ritual, the Roman Pantheon itself had been adopted as a Catholic Church honoring the Virgin Mary and Christian martyrs by Pope Boniface IV in 609. Bouwers, *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe*; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*.

[17] *Quod aliquantum* was a papal bull issued by Pope Pius VI on March 10, 1791 in response the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, a law which placed the Catholic clergy in France under the control of the French government. News of the papal bull did not reach France immediately, but by May it had been published in France.

[18] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 106-107.

[19] This claim of Voltaire as prophet to the Revolution resulted in a heated debate among the deputies, but the majority supported the call for Panthéonization. Ibid: 107.

> great men: that consequently his remains will be transferred from the abbey of Sellières to the church of Romilly, and then to that of Sainte-Geneviève, in Paris.[20]

Although the decree passed, it did not find unanimous support. Certain deputies had reservations about honoring Voltaire with reburial into the new Panthéon. Some, like Brugnon, argued that Montesquieu or Mably would be a better choice for Panthéonization.[21] Nevertheless, plans for Voltaire's transferal to Paris moved forward.

This decree of Panthéonization and the subsequent reburial ceremony marked a major turning point in the Revolution. By choosing to transfer Voltaire's previously exiled remains to Paris, the revolutionary government had adopted a new method of shaping and manipulating the image of their Revolution. With the Panthéonization of Voltaire, reburial had become a new political tool, one which varied significantly from the more traditional state funeral. Because funerals occurred so close to the death of subject, moving past the emotional and psychological aspects of grief and mourning was not feasible. Funerals, then, could only be used to achieve a particular goal if that goal could incorporated the feelings and reactions of the mourning public. Because of this limitation, the most common use of funerals as a political tool was to transform the grief of the participants into anger against an enemy. This enemy could be physical or spiritual depending on what goal the government or political leaders had in mind. In times of war or international tension, the funerals of military officers would emphasize the foreign

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[20] Although the decree suggests otherwise, Voltaire's remains had already been removed from the abbey of Sellières and been placed in the church at Romilly. The release of the decree was delayed in order to match the anniversary of Voltaire's death, which Charron had requested in his previously mentioned letter to the president of the National Assembly. Translation from: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 45.

[21] Montesquieu and Gabriel de Mably were French philosophers of the Enlightenment era. Montesquieu was well-known for his work on political theory, while Mably had been praised for his work on equality and his criticisms of private property. Ibid.

enemy. In times of civil war or civil unrest, a political faction would be blamed as the cause of the grief and suffering present at the funeral ceremony. And in times of religious turmoil, the enemy might be the Jesuits, the Jansenists, or a spiritual evil of greed, vice, or lack of faith.

Reburials, in comparison, had fewer limitations. While funerals typically occurred shortly after the death of its subject, reburials occurred years, or even decades later, allowing a unique separation from those emotional and psychological aspects associated with death. Any political goal by the state which planned and executed the reburial was not constrained by the presence of grief in the participants. Besides the family and close friends of the deceased – if any were still living – those who came to observe the ceremony often came out of curiosity or respect, rather than to mourn a perceived loss. This unique environment left the ceremony architects with the freedom to mix the symbols and rhetoric of death with a tone of joy and celebration that would be unmanageable without this separation of time between death and ceremony.

This difference between the political funeral and the political reburial can be seen in the comparison of the ceremonies for Mirabeau and Voltaire. The funeral ceremony for Mirabeau, which occurred only two days after the popular deputy had died, was one of tears. One observer, Nicolas Ruault, described the depressing tone in a letter to his brother:

> A funeral band preceded and followed the corpse, but it was so sad [a] funeral that it made tears fall, especially when the music was mixed with the tolling of the belfry. Sizeable groups of musicians, filling the gaps between the drums, played mournful and most sensitive airs that moved

> all hearts to sadness. It seemed as if we were about to go down with the coffin to the land of the dead.[22]

The funeral ceremony for Mirabeau emphasized the loss of a national figure who could not be replaced. As Ruault observed, the ceremony was designed to express the sentiment that without the deputies of the new revolutionary government, the Revolution and all the French who yearned for liberty were doomed to the grave themselves.

In contrast, Voltaire's reburial ceremony had an air of optimism rarely present in funerals of the time. Distanced by a period of thirteen years, the reburial ceremony was one of celebration, not loss. Recalling the music performed during the event, Villette described how "the sadness of funeral regrets gave way to the joy of immortality."[23] Voltaire was an eternal hero who could lead the French citizens to liberty.

What became even more important to the revolutionaries than the distance of a reburial from death, however, was the distance of reburial from religion – particularly Catholicism. As discussed previously, by the time of Mirabeau's death and the creation of the Panthéon, revolutionary France was in a desperate struggle to resolve the differences between the anti-clerical leanings of the Revolution and the ingrained Catholic death rituals. From the music, liturgy, and dress of the funeral and burial ceremonies, to the spiritual emphasis on a life after death, creating a new republican culture of death meant first replacing this older culture. The creation of a reburial ceremony helped to ease this transition. Because reburials were relatively uncommon,

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[22] Nicolas Ruault and Brice Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution: lettres à son frère, 1783-1796*, ed. Anne Vassal (Paris: Librairie académique Perrin, 1976): 228-230; Translation from: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 31.

[23] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 11, 1791; Translated in: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 54.

there was no specific Catholic ritual in place for such an event, allowing the revolutionaries a unique blank canvas with which to work.[24] In the case of the ceremony for Voltaire's reburial, three major changes were made. The first, and most obvious difference to the participants and onlookers was the joyous tone.

Since the adoption of the *Roman Ritual* liturgy in 1614, Catholic funeral services tended to emphasize the plight of the soul in purgatory.[25] This concern over the "poor souls" and of the need to apply for the release of the souls naturally created an environment of anxiety and melancholy. However, in the case of Voltaire's reburial, concern over mortal sin and purgatory was pushed aside to allow for a celebration of the *grand homme* and of the nation which claimed him. Evidence of this intentional difference in tone from a funeral can be found in the plans of the reburial ceremony and in the music composed for the occasion. The participants of the ceremonial parade to the Panthéon, far from instilling a feeling of depression and loss in the onlookers, gave off a sense of great triumph. Men, women, and children dressed in white or in the "costumes of the ancients" held aloft laurel wreaths and numerous symbols of the Revolution, and

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[24] Reburials in the eighteenth century and earlier were most commonly associated with the remains of saints. Other reburials, such as those of soldiers or expatriates, typically made use the traditional Catholic funeral rituals. Even today there is no specific reinternment ceremony in Catholicism. For example, the reburial of King Richard III into Leicester Cathedral in 2015 involved the typical Requiem Mass performed at a first time burial.; Simon Caldwell, "King Richard III Is Reburied at Leicester Cathedral," *Catholic Herald*, March 27, 2015, http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/03/27/richard-iii-is-reburied-at-leicester-cathedral/; Agency, "Richard III Reburial: Everything You Need to Know About Leicester Cathedral Service," *The Telegraph*, March 20, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/archaeology/11474297/Richard-III-reburial-Everything-you-need-to-know-about-Leicester-Cathedral-service.html.

[25] The *Roman Ritual* of 1614 was the accepted manual for funeral liturgy for the Catholic Church up until the adoption of the *Rite of Funerals* in 1964. Certain variations to the *Roman Ritual* were adopted in "Neo-Gallican" dioceses of France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which included a "concern for a biblical emphasis and a reserve about unchristian pomp.": Richard Rutherford, *The Death of a Christian: The Rite of Funerals*, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church, v. 7 (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co, 1980): 88-89; 99-100.

various objects recalling the life of Voltaire.[26] One of these objects was a large statue of the philosopher, seated and smiling, by the artist Houdon. Villette, who was largely responsible for the planning of the procession, chose this smiling statue over another famous work by Pigalle, which emphasized the frailty of Voltaire's physical body in old age.[27] Visually, the reburial ceremony encouraged celebration rather than despair.

The joyous tone could also be found in the aural aspects of the reburial ceremony as well. The music composed for and performed at the reburial of Voltaire added to the sense of celebration and played a key role in moving past the traditional Catholic funeral. François-Joseph Gossec, commissioned to compose the music for the procession, shared in the revolutionaries' desire to reshape French death culture. Gossec was not unfamiliar with traditional music of death ceremonies. In 1760 he had composed the *Grande messe des morts,* a celebrated Requiem Mass.[28] This work, like other compositions in its genre, made use of Catholic liturgy to provide "a sort of illusion" in which the music erases the image of the physical destruction of the body by death in order to emphasize the spiritual resurrection.[29] By 1790, however, Gossec had begun to break away from the traditional model of death music. For the festival in honor of the soldiers who had died in the Nancy

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[26] *Ordre Du Cortege Pour La Translation Des Manes de Voltaire Le Lundi 11 Juillet 1791 : [Estampe] / [Non Identifié]*, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France; Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*; De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*.

[27] Jean le Rond d'Alembert and Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville both described the statue by Pigalle as looking like a skeleton : De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 51-52; Louis Hardouin Prosper Tarbé and Jean Baptiste Pigalle, *La Vie et les œuvres de J. B. Pigalle* (Paris, 1859): 176.

[28] Here I use "Requiem Mass" in reference to the genre of music performed at a Catholic death mass. These works generally include a number of pieces composed to correspond with the texts of the death mass. Gossec's work includes twenty-four pieces: Gossec, François Joseph, *Grande Messe Des Morts,* RH 501, 1760; Jean-Louis Jam, "Les Musiques Liturgiques de La Mort," in *La Révolution et La Mort* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1991): 188.

[29] Jam, "Les Musiques Liturgiques de La Mort": 187.

Mutiny, Gossec had composed a *Marche lugubre* which emphasized, rather than erased, the physical destruction of the dead. Through the use of a disarticulated melody, drums, and gong, Gossec's piece prompted one listener to compare it to "the silence of the tomb."[30]

For Voltaire's reburial ceremony the following year, Gossec took an opposite approach, further modifying the genre of death music. In stark contrast to his *Marche lugubre,* the two pieces he composed for the reburial ceremony were distinctly joyous. The first, *"Peuple, éveille-toi,"* made use of a poem written by Voltaire for the libretto of the opera *Samson*.[31] "People, awake! Break your chains!" it demanded.[32] With a fast tempo, a rhythm alluding to a military march, and an ascending melody, Gossec gave new life to Voltaire's inspiring words:

> *L'hiver détruit les fleurs et la verdure*
> *Mais du flambeau du jour*
> *La féconde clarté ranime la nature*
> *Et lui rend sa beauté*
> *L'affreux esclavage flétrit le courage*
> *Mais la liberté mais la liberté*
> *Relevé sa grandeur et nourrit sa fierté*
> *Liberté*
>
> The winter destroys the flowers and the greenery.
> But from the torch of the day,
> The fertile clarity revives nature,
> And to it gives its beauty.
> The dreadful enslavement withers courage,
> But liberty lifts its grandeur and nourishes its pride.

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[30] Ibid: 189.

[31] A modern recording of this piece can be found on track 3 of *"Les grands hymnes révolutionnaire*," compiled by Radio France: *Les grands hymnes révolutionnaires* (France: Musifrance, 1990).

[32] "Peuple, éveille-toi" translates to "People, Awake!": François-Joseph (1734-1829) Compositeur Gossec, "Choeur Patriotique Exécuté À La Translation de Voltaire Au Panthéon Français En 1791. Paroles de Voltaire.... N° 1," 1794.

Liberty![33]

This piece, sung during a pause in the procession in front of the *Théâtre de la Nation*, reminded the listeners not only of the wisdom Voltaire had left them, but also of his connections to the Revolution.[34]

The second piece, *Hymne à Voltaire*, shared a similar celebratory tone. Paired to lyrics written by Marie-Joseph Chénier, the *Hymne à Voltaire* told the story of Voltaire's life, death, and his symbolic resurrection by Panthéonization. Gossec starts the piece in a major mode, encouraging the listeners to take Chénier's opening lyrics to heart:

> *Ce ne sont plus des pleurs qu'il est temps de répandre*
> *C'est le jour du triomphe et non pas de regrets*
> *Que nos chants d'allégresse*
> *Accompagnent la cendre*
> *Du plus illustre des français.*
>
> It is no longer the time to shed tears
> It is the day of triumph and not of regrets
> That our songs of enthusiasm accompany the ashes
> Of the most illustrious of the French[35]

The piece then transitions into the minor as Chénier offers the story of Voltaire's death and exile:

> *Jadis par les tyrans cette cendre exilée*
> *Au milieu des sanglots fuyait loin de nos yeux*

[33] Ibid.

[34] Exactly when this piece was sung during the procession of Voltaire's body to the Panthéon is uncertain. Various accounts of the procession report that the piece was performed at the former site of the Bastille, at Villette's house, or outside of the National Theater. This last option is the most likely as the lyrics were taken from the text of an opera, *Samson*, which Voltaire had contributed to. It is likely, then, that the coordinators of the ceremony selected the national theater as a setting for this particular piece of music.: *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 12, 1791: 782; "Du Mercredi 13 Juillet 1791," *L'Ami Du Roi, Des Français, de L'ordre et Sur-Tout de La Vérité / Par M. Montjoye, Fondateur & Rédacteur de Ce Journal, Depuis Le 1er Juin 1790*, July 13, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France: 775-776; Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*.

[35] Marie-Joseph Chénier and François-Joseph Gossec, "Hymne Sur La Translation Du Corps de Voltaire Au Panthéon," accessed February 26, 2016.

Long ago these ashes were exiled by the tyrants
Amidst the sobs which fled from our eyes[36]

Ultimately, the music returns to the major mode as the lyrics express the "rebirth" of Voltaire:

Mais par un peuple libre aujourd'hui rappelée,
Elle vient consacrer ces lieux […]
Il renaît parmi nous grand, chéri, respecté

But [these ashes] are today recalled by a free people
They come to consecrate these places […]
He is reborn among our great, our cherished, our respected[37]

The listener is left with a sense of triumph as the music leads one from sadness at the earlier death and exile of Voltaire, to joy at his symbolic resurrection of the philosopher into the Panthéon of the *grands hommes*.[38]

Overall, the reburial ceremony was unquestionably intended to be a celebration of Voltaire and of the French citizens who claimed him as their own. From the smiling statue by Houdon chosen to represent the philosopher in life to the music which instilled a sense of joy in those who came to observe the ceremony, the reburial of Voltaire openly pushed back against the traditional Catholic death rituals which emphasized grief and mourning.

The second major change was the emphasis of the ceremony on worldly, rather than spiritual matters. As mentioned, Catholic funerals of the eighteenth century were concerned most with the destination of the soul. Prayers for forgiveness, emphasis on the

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Jam, "Les Musiques Liturgiques de La Mort": 190.

giving of indulgences, and calls for mercy from God filled the typical funeral ceremony. In contrast, the reburial ceremony of Voltaire was firmly rooted in the physical world. This is most apparent in the way the ceremony was planned around the presence of the exposed corpse.

The very nature of the reburial ceremony required that Voltaire's corpse be present. The placement of the corpse in the center of the procession, guarded on both sides by artists, deputies, and military guard was expected. What was unique about the arrangement was the intentional exposure of the corpse. Voltaire had been dead and buried for thirteen years before his transferal to Paris. The corpse, though skillfully embalmed, showed the signs of age. Natural decay had taken its toll on the torso and limbs, and pieces of the corpse had been scavenged as revolutionary relics.[39] Despite this, the face of Voltaire was in surprisingly good condition and was readily recognizable. "It will be a beautiful ceremony," wrote Ruault after the exhumation, the same witness who had described the depressing tone of Mirabeau's funeral. "[T]he features are recognizable after thirteen years in the tomb […]."[40] Taking advantage of this good fortune, the architects of the ceremony devised a plan to use the exposed corpse as symbol of Voltaire's worldly triumph in the face of his religious exile.[41]

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[39] One report of the exhumation of Voltaire lists the absence of one foot. The heart of the philosopher had been removed during embalming at the request of Villette and was kept in the rooms where Voltaire had died. Other pieces of the corpse were also removed during the embalming process or after the exhumation, including two bones from the remaining foot, two teeth, and possibly even the philosopher's brain: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 45-46; *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, May 14, 1791.

[40] Ruault and Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution*, 238-239; Translated in: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 46.

[41] There is some debate among historians over whether the body was exposed during the procession to the Panthéon or whether it was just a carved effigy on top of the chariot, as proposed by Ben-Amos. Evidence suggests that it was, in fact, the corpse that lay on top of the chariot. First, while there are records of the creation of the elaborate chariot and sarcophagus by David, there is no mention of a carved

An elaborate chariot and stone sarcophagus was designed by the artist David to carry the corpse on its ceremonial path to the Panthéon. The corpse itself was laid out on a stone slab in the form of an antique bed atop the sarcophagus in which the body would eventually be placed. The torso and limbs of the corpse were carefully covered with linen, but the face of Voltaire remained exposed while a figure symbolizing Eternity held a crown of stars over the head. The chariot, stacked with sarcophagus, bed, and corpse reached a height of nearly twenty feet and produced a great rumbling sound as twelve white horses pulled it along the streets of Paris.[42] This grand monument not only impressed upon the onlookers a sense of awe, but also allowed a glimpse of the philosopher over the great crowds. Here was Voltaire, exiled by the tyrannous Catholic Church, but still very much present. Here was Voltaire, an eternal presence despite the efforts of those who opposed the Revolution and its heroes.

In addition to the corpse, the emphasis on worldly matters was further expressed by the parading of the symbols of Voltaire's accomplishments. The processional party was designed to underscore the eternal presence of Voltaire in the present, physical world and of his contributions to the Revolution currently underway. Instead of the religious

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effigy. Second, the corpse was undoubtedly exposed during the transfer from the abbey to Romilly, and reports of the event clearly state that the body was only *temporarily* sealed away. Also, the excitement shown over the preservation of Voltaire's features and on the possibilities of displaying the face to the public suggest that the corpse was likely displayed. Finally, displaying a corpse was not all-together unusual in the eighteenth century. Traditional funeral services often left the corpse exposed during the procession to the church, although the practice was becoming "old-fashioned" by the time of the Revolution. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*.

[42] Louis Lafitte, *Char Triomphal Pour La Translation Des Cendres de Voltaire Au Panthéon*, 1793, Bibliothèque nationale de France; Claude Nicolas Malapeau, Simon-Charles Miger, and Jean Jacques Lagrenée, *Translation de Voltaire Au Panthéon Français : Le Corps de Marie François Arouet de Voltaire Sera Transféré et Déposé Dans L'église Paroissiale de Romilly...*, 1795, Bibliothèque nationale de France; *Ordre Du Cortege Pour La Translation Des Manes de Voltaire Le Lundi 11 Juillet 1791*; *Sercophage Qui a Transporté Les Manes de Voltaire Au Panthéon Le 11 Juillet 1791*, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France; De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 49-50.

emblems present in the traditional Catholic funeral, various objects relating to the life of Voltaire were held aloft by men, women, and children who were dressed in costumes of the ancients. One group of Frenchmen carried the complete works of Voltaire, donated for the occasion by the playwright Beaumarchais. Other groups carried aloft symbols of the theater in tribute to Voltaire's contributions. Young students of the colleges made up one group of the procession, symbolizing Voltaire's influences on academia.[43] The chariot was decorated with various symbols recalling the life of the philosopher it carried. Theatrical masks, a lyre, garlands of laurels, and a blue drapery covered in gold stars decorated the sarcophagus and excerpts from Voltaire's *Brutus* which alluded to the Revolution were engraved along its sides: "Mortals are equal; it is not birth, but virtue alone that makes the difference," and "God, give us death rather than slavery."[44] Even the music, particularly the piece composed around Voltaire's own words, paid tribute to the philosopher's eternal influence on nation. "People, awake! Break your chains!"[45]

The emphasis of the physical world was also expressed in the path of the procession. The route to the Panthéon was carefully planned by Villette and Charron to highlight the mark Voltaire had left on the city of Paris.[46] The procession, made up of

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[43] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 11, 1791; Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*: 25-29; *Ordre Du Cortege Pour La Translation Des Manes de Voltaire Le Lundi 11 Juillet 1791*.

[44] Cited and translated in: De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 49-50.

[45] Gossec, "Choeur Patriotique Exécuté À La Translation de Voltaire Au Panthéon Français En 1791. Paroles de Voltaire.... N° 1."

[46] The following information on the reburial procession comes from three main sources. The first, the *Chronique de Paris*, includes the most detailed account of the ceremony. This account was likely written by Villette, or by his guidance. The second source, by Charron, includes a detailed account of the plan for the procession. This account is useful in that it gives details on costumes and on the placement of Voltaire's corpse into the Panthéon. The third source, an article from *L'ami du roi*, offers a counter piece to Villette's account, which likely exaggerates on the impact of the ceremony on the spectators. *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 11-14, 1791; Charron, *Translation de Voltaire À Paris*; "Du Mercredi 13 Juillet 1791."

hundreds of soldiers, artists, musicians, philosophers, deputies, and students formed at the *boulevard Saint-Antoine* on the morning of July 11. At eight o'clock, the procession began its path in the direction of the *Opèra* where a bust of Voltaire had previously been erected in his honor. Here the procession paused for the first of four times throughout the day. The pause at the *Opèra* had two main purposes. By starting at a place where Voltaire was already honored, it emphasized from the very beginning of the procession the eternal presence of Voltaire. This was not just another "great man" that the revolutionary government had chosen to honor, this was a *grand homme* of France and of French culture. When the procession arrived, the bust had already been ornamented with garlands and medallions, and a group began to sing hymns in celebration. Villette later remarked on this first pause as "lyrical proof" that Voltaire was "universal writer."[47]

The second purpose was less overt, but politically significant. The bust of Voltaire, which the procession had paused to admire, had been placed to honor the philosopher's contributions to the opera *Samson*. This opera, which Voltaire had collaborated with the French composer Jean-Phillippe Rameau to create, had been banned on religious grounds.[48] Thus, the choosing of this site as the first pause in the reburial procession was yet another strike on the religious institution that had exiled Voltaire and had renounced the Revolution.

The next pause in the procession occurred in front of Villette's house, where the philosopher had died. The emphasis this pause gave to the eternal presence of Voltaire

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[47] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 12, 1791.

[48] Alan S. Curtis, "Jean-Philippe Rameau," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed June 16, 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Philippe-Rameau#ref96849.

was blatant – it was here that Voltaire's heart, removed during the embalming process, was kept. For the purpose of the ceremony, a small amphitheater had been created with stands for the spectators. The crowds were so great, however, that people spilled out on to the quai, aptly named *Voltaire*, and farther out to the *Pont-Royal* and the *Pont-Neuf*.[49] The spectacle to be observed was carefully orchestrated. Madame de Villette, the adoptive daughter of Voltaire, and her own daughter stood waiting to greet the Houdon statue, symbolizing the living Voltaire. When the statue reached its place in front of the amphitheater, the woman moved forward to place a civic crown on its head.[50] Then, bringing her daughter close to the statue, she dedicated her "to reason, to philosophy, and to liberty."[51]

The meaning behind the action was clear. Although Voltaire had died, and had done so in the very house the procession had paused at, his spirit remained alive. For generations to come, the spirit of Voltaire would inspire the people of France to embrace reason and liberty. The location of this dedication held further significance. Just across the Seine River, in the Tuileries Palace, was the king of France, who, had he looked out his window towards the *Pont Royal*, might have seen the corpse of Voltaire raised on its chariot. While the revolutionaries rejoiced in their hero of liberty outside, Louis XVI remained under house arrest after his attempted flight to Varennes three weeks earlier.

[49] The quai had recently been renamed by Villette. Accounts from anti-revolutionary newspapers, such as the *L'ami du roi* still referred to the quai by its older name, *le quai des Théatins*. Ultimately Villette's name won, and today the quai is known as the *quai Voltaire*. *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*; De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*; "Du Mercredi 13 Juillet 1791."

[50] A civic crown is a garland, typically made of oak leaves, in the shape of a crown. These were associated with the ancient romans, which the revolutionaries often tried to emulate.

[51] *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 12, 1791.

The third pause of the procession occurred outside the theater of the *Ancienne Comédie*. Similar to the pause at the *Opèra*, this stop again emphasized the theatrical accomplishments of Voltaire. Near the columns of the theater, the actors had made the inscription, "He created *Irène* at eighty-three years of age," praising Voltaire's lifelong contributions to the arts.[52] It was here that the actors of the theater performed "*Peuple, éveille-toi*," once again recalling the censored lyrics of *Samson*.

The final stop of the procession was outside the Panthéon itself. Unfortunately, by this point in the ceremony, the weather had taken a bad turn. Rain mixed with the slow, three-mile march had chased away most of crowds. Villette was, apparently, not discouraged by the cancellation of the final rituals. In his recounting of the ceremony printed the following day, Villette spoke only of the success of the reburial ceremony. It had expressed, he claimed, "the triumph of reason, the defeat of fanaticism, the pure love for the *patrie*, and the resolution to sacrifice everything for liberty."[53] While Villette might seem a biased spokesman, it is important to note that even the royalist newspaper, *L'Ami du roi*, spoke begrudgingly of the impressiveness of the ceremony.[54] Overall, the procession was successful in emphasizing the eternal presence of Voltaire. The philosopher's earlier exile by the Catholic Church had, in the mind of the revolutionaries, been erased.

The third major change between reburials and the traditional funeral was the structure of the ceremony. While this difference might seem arbitrary on the surface, the

[52] The inscription refers to the tragedy, *Irène*, which Voltaire wrote when he was eighty-three years old. This work was performed on numerous occasions at this particular theater.; Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "Du Mercredi 13 Juillet 1791."

change in structure was the key to creating a new revolutionary death culture. The Catholic death rituals were a deeply ingrained part of French culture that had been present for centuries. Thus, breaking any part of the typical pattern of these death rituals was an intentional rejection of this facet of French culture. The reburial ceremony of Voltaire was bound to have some differences as the death of the subject had occurred so long before, but it is significant that the plans for the ceremony did not incorporate many of the familiar rituals of death.

If one were to recall the traditional rituals explored in the previous chapter, it is would have been apparent from the outset of the ceremony that the reburial of Voltaire diverged from these accepted death ritual in a number of key ways. First, the corpse was taken away from a religious environment, the abbey of Sellières, and processed to a secular site, the Panthéon. The ceremony did include a stop at the house where Voltaire had died, but it was the statue, not the corpse, that played a part in the dedication ceremony. The corpse, though present within the processional group, was separated from the statue by at least three large groups of students, men of letters, and the *grands corps* of instrumental and vocal musicians, which meant that it rested on the *Pont-Neuf* during this pause of the procession.[55]

The most obvious departure from the typical death rituals would have been the lack of prayers and biblical recitations. There were no clergy holding the cross aloft or sprinkling holy water on the corpse; there was no singing of the *De profundis* or the *Miserere*. Instead the lyrics of operas, verses of poetry, and lines from plays filled the air. Calls for mercy from God were replaced by demands for liberty and reason. Overall,

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[55] De Baecque, *Glory and Terror*: 54; *Chronique de Paris. T3 (1790-1791)*, July 12, 1791.

the reburial ceremony of Voltaire was not so much an "act of faith in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy," as Clarke argued, but a conscious rejection of a death culture rooted in Catholicism.[56]

A New Culture of Death

It is impossible to know for sure the motives of the Marquis de Villette as he stood on the stage of the *Théâtre de la Nation* and made his demands for the reburial of Voltaire's remains. Whether his words spoke of a true desire to memorialize his mentor, or whether he yearned for personal fame, his actions left a significant mark on the French Revolution. The Panthéonization and reburial of Voltaire gave the revolutionaries of France a means to reform a central part of French culture – the culture of death – around the secular, enlightenment-minded ideals of their Revolution.

The reburial of Voltaire provided this means through the unusual nature of its goal. The reburial was not a typical festival, as the presence of a corpse mandated certain cultural rituals. The reburial was also not a traditional funeral, as Voltaire had been long dead by the time of transferal. This left the ceremony in a sort of limbo state, giving the architects a way to merge the growing revolutionary culture with an integral part of French culture still intrinsically tied with the Catholic *ancien regime*. The reburial of Voltaire opened the way for a revolutionary culture of death.

[56] Neither the planned order of the procession reported by Charron or the recount of the procession by Villette mention the inclusion of the constitutional clergy.; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 115.

CHAPTER FOUR

Rousseau

Voltaire's Bookend

With Voltaire dead, buried, and reburied, it is natural to ask whether the reburial ceremony actually made a difference. The notion that the reburials could be used as an entrance for a new culture of death might be intriguing, but did this new culture of death persist, or did the following funerals and reburials revert to the comfort of the past? One way to being answering this question is to examine a ceremony, similar to the reburial of Voltaire, which occurred at the end of the Revolution – a bookend pair of sorts. By asking what changed, what stayed the same, and why these differences or similarities occurred, it is possible to discover whether the reburial of Voltaire made any lasting marks on the death culture of France. Fortuitously, one such ceremony exists: the reburial of Rousseau.

Although Jean-Jacques Rousseau was Panthéonized by decree shortly after the reburial of Voltaire, the actual reburial ceremony to place the remains into the Panthéon did not occur for another three years. By the time the ceremony did take place, the political environment of France was strikingly different than it had been in 1791. In the years between the reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau, the king of France had been deposed and then beheaded, a constitution had been adopted and then suspended, and a Reign of Terror had begun and then collapsed. Despite these volatile changes, the French government still found reason to complete the transfer of Rousseau's remains into the

Panthéon, even though Rousseau had been a hero of the earlier, more radical factions of the Revolution.

Rousseau, like Voltaire, had died before the Revolution had taken its hold on France. Like Voltaire, Rousseau had been adopted as a "prophet of revolution."[1] He had gained this reputation from his writings on political and social reform which called for concrete solutions in vague enough terms that revolutionaries of many political spectrums could claim him as their own "spiritual guide."[2] The arguments Rousseau made in his *Social Contract* on the rights of man and the need for a contractual relationship between a government and its people were immediately adopted into the rhetoric of the Revolution. The authors of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, a founding symbol of the Revolution, implicitly included Rousseau's work by reasserting that men are born free and that the protection of the rights of man is the responsibility of the government and of society which must hold its government accountable.[3]

In addition to his revolutionary political treatises, Rousseau was also a literary celebrity. Just as Voltaire had reached a popular audience with his plays, Rousseau had reached the wider public through novels. Through the publication of *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, Rousseau spread his convictions about human relationships, fluidity of class structures, and emotion to a vast audience. In *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, historian Lynn Hunt argues that it was largely thanks to the popularity of *Julie* and other

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[1] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, 20th Anniversary Edition, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 51.

[2] Ibid: 2.

[3] Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*, trans. R. R. Palmer, Bicentennial ed, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989): 171; For the translated text of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, see: Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York, NY: Norton, 2008): 220-223.

similar emotional novels that Rousseau's later works on the rights of man could be understood and accepted by such a large audience.[4]

With all of Rousseau's accomplishments and his popularity both among the public and political theorists, it is no wonder that his name was one of the first to be considered for Panthéonization in April of 1791. During the debates of the National Assembly over the creation of the Panthéon and who would be considered worthy of Panthéonization, the proposed decree lists Rousseau by name.[5] Despite all this, the remains of Rousseau were not transferred to the Panthéon until October of 1794.

The Panthéonization of Rousseau

When the Assembly passed the decree creating the Panthéon, all names but that of Mirabeau were removed from the text. Debates over who was worthy of Panthéonization stalled inclusion of more Frenchmen into the monument. As discussed in the previous chapter, the deputies disagreed over which great figures from French history should be included first. Those who supported the Panthéonization of Rousseau had to compete against the deputies who called for the inclusion of Voltaire, Descartes, or Montesquieu before Rousseau. Eventually, as we have already seen, Voltaire won the honors of being the first *grand homme* to be buried in the Panthéon, thanks to the work of Villette and tensions with the Catholic Church.

Voltaire's victory was only a temporary defeat for the supporters of Rousseau. Within only a few weeks of the reburial ceremony for Voltaire, a deputation of the

[4] Hunt basis this observation on the argument that novels like *Julie* created a sense of empathy that extended beyond traditional social boundaries. See chapter one: Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*.

[5] Antoine De Baecque, *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths under the French Revolution*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Routledge, 2003): 29-30.

electors of Paris and another of the inhabitants of Montmorency presented the National Assembly with a petition bearing more than three hundred signatures which demanded that Rousseau receive the "honors owed to great men."[6] The petition sparked an immediate debate among the deputies over whether the philosopher should receive Panthéonization. The main counter-argument revolved around the government's right to the body of its citizens. The historian Joseph Clarke dismisses these arguments as a method of stalling the issue by deputies who did not wish to see Rousseau Panthéonized.[7] But these counter-arguments expressed a larger on-going debate in France on who had authority over the corpse.

The central issue in question was whether or not the National Assembly had the right to remove Rousseau's corpse from its current resting place in the garden of Ermenonville. This garden had been created by the Marquis de Girardin under the influence of Rousseau's writings on ordered nature. It had been here that Rousseau had retreated for the last weeks of his life. When the philosopher died, Girardin arranged for a tomb to be built for him on a small island covered in poplar trees so that he could remain in the garden he had so loved.[8] The concern, then, was that by removing the philosopher's remains, the last wishes of Rousseau would be violated. Furthermore, the

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[6] Joseph Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799*, Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories 11 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 123; An account of the deputations petition is cited in: Marie Louise Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*, 1re éd (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1982): 16-17.

[7] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 123.

[8] Michel Ragon, *The Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration, and Urbanism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983): 209-211.

garden was private property, prompting one deputy, Charles de Lameth, to argue that removing the remains would violate the property rights of Girardin.[9]

The question over who had the right to Rousseau's corpse was not entirely unique. In the previous decades, various parties in France had struggled with questions of authority over the dead. The issue had grown out of concerns over the sanitary conditions of the urban cemeteries of Paris and the efforts to move these cemeteries out of the city. Complaints about cemetery sanitation had begun as early as the seventeenth century and by 1737 the Parliament of Paris had called for the first investigation of the cemeteries. This inquiry initially led nowhere, but when complaints continued, a second investigation was organized in 1763.[10]

The result of this further examination led to the Decree of the Parliament of Paris of March 12, 1763. In the opening lines, the concerns about sanitation are clearly stated:

> In the majority of the large parishes, especially those located in the center of town, complaints are made daily about the infection that is spread in their environs by the cemeteries of these parishes, especially when the heat off the summer increases the exhalations. It is said that at this time of year the putrefaction is so great that those foods most necessary to life cannot be kept for a few hours in neighboring houses without becoming spoiled. This situation is caused either by the nature of the soil, which is too rich to consume the bodies, or by the inadequacy of the area to accommodate the annual rate of burial.[11]

The decree called for the creation of a number of large cemeteries outside of Paris which would be shared among the parishes. After a funeral ceremony, corpses were to be

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[9] Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 16-17; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 123.

[10] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, lst Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1982): 479; 483.

[11] Quoted and translated in: Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*: 483-484.

buried in the churchyard, as was tradition, but would subsequently be removed by hearses and taken to the common grave of the associated parish. The proposed plan did not receive complete support. Many parishioners were not keen on having their dead removed from their parish church and some clergy were resistant to allowing the transferal of remains.[12]

The opposition to the decree meant that its provisions were only adopted in certain parishes, while other churchyard cemeteries continued to act as permanent gravesites. However, an edict of Louis XVI halted this practice: "Cemeteries which […] might pollute the air will be removed as far as circumstances permit."[13] Despite protestations by the parishioners, the removal of the cemeteries began promptly in 1780. Tens of thousands of corpses were exhumed from the Parisian cemeteries and more than a thousand cartloads of bones were transported into old stone quarries, creating what is known today as the Catacombs of Paris.[14]

Thus, the removal of Rousseau's corpse from the private cemetery of Ermenonville was a matter that ran deeper than offending the Marquis de Girardin. The National Assembly had to decide whether or not they would follow in the footsteps of the king and demand certain rights over the location of a corpse. Eventually, the deputies came to a compromise. It was agreed that Girardin should be consulted on the transferal of the remains, but that there was nothing to prevent the Assembly from passing a decree

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[12] Ibid: 484-486; Ragon, *The Space of Death*: 201.

[13] Quoted and translated in: Ragon, *The Space of Death*.

[14] Five cemeteries were removed from 1780 to 1784. These were the cemeteries of Saints-Innocents, Saint-Roche, Saint-Eustache, Île Saint-Louis, and Saint-Sulpice. In the nineteenth centuries, additional cemeteries were removed for city planning purposes. Ibid: 201, 261; Colin Jones, *Paris: Biography of a City*, 1st American ed (New York: Viking, 2005): 253-255.

allowing for the transfer.[15] And so, at the end of August 1791, a decree was passed declaring that Rousseau was worthy of the honors of Panthéonization, but the corpse remained at the garden of Ermenonville.[16]

In the days following the official decree of Panthéonization, the radical journalist, Jean-Paul Marat, published a couple of vitriolic articles on the subject in his journal *L'Ami du peuple*. In one of these publications, Marat called on Girardin to keep his hold on the remains of the philosopher:

> It is you, Girardin, that the weak Rousseau charged with the task of collecting his mortal remains. By depositing [his remains] in your hands, he believed that he placed them under the sacred guard of friendship. Should you suffer … that they be transported from the peaceful grove of Hermenonville…?[17]

However, as time passed, the transferal of Rousseau's remains slowly faded from the interest of the revolutionaries. Other events of the Revolution, such as the massacre on the Champ de Mars, won the attention of the deputies and the journalists.[18] It would be nearly three years before another attempt at transferring the remains of Rousseau to the Panthéon occurred.

This next attempt came in April of 1794 during the midst of the period of the Revolution known as the Reign of Terror. In October of the previous year, the National

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[15] Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 17.

[16] D. Higgins, "Rousseau and the Pantheon. The Background and Implications of the Ceremony of 20 Vendémiaire Year III," *The Modern Language Review* 50, no. 3 (1955): 274; Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 47; Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 17.

[17] Jean-Paul Marat, "No. 543," *L'Ami Du Peuple*, September 2, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France: 7-8.

[18] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 123.

Convention formally suspended the constitution that they had recently adopted and a period of violence and rampant dechristianization followed. Churches were desecrated, cemeteries destroyed, and religious orders were terrorized by militant groups of *sans-culottes* in a supposed effort to root out counter-revolution and the conspiracy of the Catholic Church. At first the National Convention tolerated these acts of vandalism, but eventually they recognized dechristianization as being detrimental to the Revolution. Resources which could have been used to enforce political and economic policies of the government were instead being wasted on disruptive *sans-culottes*.[19] In an attempt to recall order among the people, a plan was devised to counter atheism with a religion of the revolution.

The second decree of Panthéonization for Rousseau came in this spirit of anti-dechristianization. In book 4 of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau outlined the various types of religion and argued that the existence of religion was necessary for a healthy state. These ideas on a "civil religion" inspired a new interest in the corpse of the philosopher. By celebrating the transfer of the remains into the Panthéon, the National Convention could offer to the people a counter-example to atheism. Deist Rousseau could become the new example of the *grand homme*.[20]

Thus, on April 14, 1794, the Convention passed a second declaration of Panthéonization. The transferal of the corpse, however, was once again delayed due to a number of colliding factors. First, Rousseau was not the only corpse waiting to be placed into the Panthéon. Marat was also awaiting his turn. The National Convention had

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[19] David Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007): 240-241.

[20] Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 47-48.

Panthéonized Marat the previous summer after he was famously stabbed in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday and labeled a martyr for the Revolution. The Panthéonization of Marat, however, had come with a stipulation. Before the body of Marat could be placed into the Panthéon, the corpse of Mirabeau – now considered to be a traitor to the Revolution – had to be removed.[21] A magnificent funeral ceremony was planned, but the deputies ran out of time to prepare the Panthéon before the summer heat of July wreaked havoc on the corpse, and so Marat was temporarily buried in the garden of the Cordeliers Club.[22]

The second factor delaying the transferal of Rousseau's remains was the celebration of the Festival of the Supreme Being. Maximilien Robespierre, the great revolutionary orator and leader of the Jacobin faction, had shown increasing concern over dechristianization. While the National Convention had hoped that a grand reburial ceremony of the Rousseau might help curb the violent atheism, Robespierre had a different plan in mind. On May 7, 1794, he proposed a decree calling for the French to recognize the "existence of the Supreme Being and the immorality of the soul," and a festival to "remind men of the Deity."[23] The subsequent planning and execution of the Festival of the Supreme Being resulted in further delays in the transfer of Rousseau's remains and, once again, the reburial ceremony was postponed indefinitely.

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[21] Société des amis de la Constitution, "No. 46," *Journal de La Montagne*, July 16, 1793, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[22] For a description of the planning and execution of the funeral ceremony of Marat, see: Lise Andriès and Jean-Claude Bonnet, eds., *La Mort de Marat* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986); Guillaume Mazeau, *Le Bain de L'histoire: Charlotte Corday et L'attentat Contre Marat, 1793-2009 / Guillaume Mazeau ; Préface de Jean-Clément Martin*, La Chose Publique (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2009).

[23] This proposed decree is quoted and translated in: George Rudé, ed., *Robespierre* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967): 72.

Exhumation and Triumph

> The air was calm, the sky pure; a long purple veil concealed from the horizon the rays of the setting sun. A cool wind gently rustled the leaves.[24]

So was the setting in which the corpse of Rousseau was finally exhumed from the garden at Ermenonville on October 8, 1794. A member of the executive commission of the Committee of Public Instruction described the departure from the garden:

> The walk was silent, and one could only hear the sound of the rustling of the tree branches, which seemed to caress the coffin of the one who they had seen peacefully meditate or exercise charity under their shade. On the trunk of a willow tree which overlooked the Isle of the Poplars was attached the charming "Romance of the Willow" of Jean-Jacques[25]; the musicians played [this piece] many times, and the melancholic sentiments which inspired the place, the choice of the tune … filled the soul of all the spectators to the point of removing all means to express themselves.[26]

The exhumation was a ceremony in itself, just as it had been with the exhumation of Voltaire. After years of delays and setbacks, the corpse of Rousseau was finally *en route* to its new resting place in the Panthéon.[27]

The decision to complete the reburial of Rousseau was based on careful political planning. Three months earlier, an event known as the Thermidorian Reaction drastically changed the makeup of the revolutionary government. Overnight, the radical Jacobin

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[24] Quoted from the writings of Louis-Sebastien Mercier in: Biver, *Le Panthéon À L'époque Révolutionnaire*: 80-81.

[25] Romance of the Willow, or *La romance du Saule*, was a piece composed by Rousseau.

[26] Quoted in: Jean Roussel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau En France Après La Révolution, 1795-1830*, Publications de La Sorbonne. N.S. Recherches, 5 (Paris: A. Colin, 1972): 11.

[27] The earlier debates on the property rights of Girardin are missing in this later year of the Revolution. Despite Girardin's continued protests at the removal of Rousseau's corpse, the government declares the corpse to be "*propriété nationale*" and approves the transferal of the remains to Paris: Pierre Serna, "Politiques de Rousseau et politiques de Robespierre : faux semblants et vrais miroirs déformés," *La Révolution française*, no. 9 (November 17, 2015): 2.

Club lost political control through the execution of their leaders, and the Revolution came under the direction of more moderate political groups. In an attempt to regain control of their Revolution while keeping the respect of the French people, the National Convention decided to use the Panthéon to their advantage. Thus, the transfer of the remains of Marat and Rousseau were planned and scheduled.

The transfer of Marat into the Panthéon occurred first on September 21, 1794. Marat had already received a grand funeral the previous summer of 1793, an event which allows us to take a brief detour to discover how a state funeral of the Revolution compared to the funerals of the *ancien régime* and the early revolutionary funeral of Mirabeau. The funeral for Marat was designed and directed by the artist Jacques-David with the help of the surgeon Louis Deschamps, and the composer Gossec.[28] Together, this team created a magnificent ceremony that, unlike the revolutionary reburials, emphasized loss and the negative aspects of death. On July 15, two days after the assassination of Marat, the journalist's corpse was prepared for display at the Cordeliers Club.[29] The corpse was placed on a roman-style bed, covered by a sheet in such a way that the knife wound was visible, emphasizing the harm that the assassin had inflicted as well as the sacrifice this martyr had made for the Revolution. Surrounding the corpse were draperies in *tricolore* and Marat's shirt, stained in blood, was displayed nearby.

[28] The following description of the funeral of Marat comes from the following primary and secondary sources: Société des amis de la Constitution, "No. 46," *Journal de la Montagne*, July 17, 1793; Société des amis de la Constitution, "No. 47," *Journal de la Montagne*, July 18, 1793; Andriès and Bonnet, *La Mort de Marat*: 61–78; Mazeau, *Le Bain L'histoire*: 140–43; Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1990): 742–44; Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 41–43; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 180; 184.

[29] The Cordeliers Club was a political group that took its name from the Cordeliers convent which the club had adopted as its meeting place.

The bed was strewn with flowers and a crown of oak leaves, in tribute to ancient republicans, rested on Marat's head.

David had intended to display the corpse in this way for three days, but the heat of summer forced the artist to change his plans. The following day, David informed the Assembly that "due to the putrefaction of the corpse," the burial would take place that evening.[30] At six o'clock, deputies of the *sections* of Paris joined representatives from various societies and musicians to form a funeral procession. The corpse, still on its roman bed, was then led around the city of Paris so that the public could see their dead martyr and mourn his loss. The procession then ended in the same place where it had begun, at the Cordeliers Club, where the body was then entered in the garden, under a tree.

In contrast to this funeral, the ceremony that accompanied Marat's remains to the Panthéon a year later resembled more a political festival than a ceremony of death. As was stipulated in the original decision to place Marat in the Panthéon, the ceremony included the removal of Mirabeau's remains, taken out by a side door as Marat entered by the main entrance.[31] This celebration of a martyr of the Terror seems unexpected in the light of the political realignment, but as Clarke aptly explains, "No régime can sustain itself solely on the settling of old scores."[32] The ceremony for Marat, then, was a sign of goodwill by the National Convention in a period of confusion.

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[30] Société des amis de la Constitution, "No. 47": 267.

[31] Société des amis de la Constitution, "No. 46"; Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 48-49.

[32] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 227.

The reburial ceremony of Rousseau held a different purpose for the Convention. With the reburial of Rousseau, the Convention hoped to realign the Revolution with the principles that had originally begun the revolt against the *ancien regime*. With the horrors of the Terror still present in the minds of the French, it was essential that the government find a way to express the ideals of the "true" Revolution – the Revolution of 1789, rather than the Revolution of Terror. The reburial of Rousseau became the solution to this problem.

Rousseau had long been accepted as father of the French Revolution. Although the members of the Jacobin Club had been the ones to most often sing his praises, revolutionaries across the political spectrum had praised Rousseau's political writings and ideas. Thanks to this wide acceptance, the Convention could use this ceremony to reassert the core principles of the Revolution with little fear of offending one political group or another.

A Second Reburial

With Rousseau exhumed and awaiting entrance into the Panthéon, it is time to turn our gaze back to the reburial of Voltaire. Three tumultuous years of violence, confusion, and political upheaval had overtaken France since the corpse of Voltaire joined that of Mirabeau in the Panthéon. More than two thousand French men and women had been guillotined in Paris alone, and the carnage of the foreign wars sparked by the Revolution had brought the death toll even higher. With all of these changes, did the reburial of Voltaire prove to have any lasting effect on French death culture?

The reburial ceremony of Rousseau was remarkably similar to that of its predecessor in tone and content. Like the reburial of Voltaire, the ceremony for

Rousseau was unabashedly joyous. Here again was a ceremony of triumph, not of loss. Men, women, and children, dressed in the costumes of the ancients, paraded through Paris holding bouquets of carnations, roses, ears of wheat, and poplar branches while musicians played selections from Rousseau's one-act opera, *Le Devin du Village*.[33] Early in the procession, the crowds of spectators joined in singing the *Hymne à Rousseau*, a piece written by the same musical duo that had composed the *Hymne à Voltaire* three years earlier. The *Hymne à Rousseau* provided a more carefree impression than the earlier piece had. Unlike the hymn composed for Voltaire, which dipped in and out of the minor mode to express the exile of the philosopher, the hymn for Rousseau remained in the major mode throughout.[34]

The lyrics by Chénier matched the cheerful tone of the music. Each verse was sung by a different group of citizens: first "the elderly and the mothers of the family," followed by "the representatives of the People," then "the children," next "the Genevans," and in closing "the young men."[35] The lyrics themselves called on Rousseau as a mentor and guide. The mothers requested guidance for the children:

> Enlighten our sons and our daughters
> Form their young hearts to virtue,
> And return happiness to our families
> By the love of the law and traditions.[36]

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[33] Pierre-Gabriel Berthault and Abraham Girardet, *Apothéose de J.J. Rousseau. Translation Au Panthéon : Le 11 Octobre 1794, Ou 20 Vendemiaire an 3.eme de La République*, Engraving, 1802, Bibliothèque nationale de France; Roussel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau En France Après La Révolution, 1795-1830*: 12; Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 50.

[34] Marie-Joseph Chénier, "Hymne À Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Par M. J. Chénier.... Chanté Au Panthéon Le 20 Vendémiaire an 3e de La République" (Magasin à l'usage des fêtes nationales, 1794), Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[35] The group of Genevans were in reference to Rousseau's Geneva origins. For the ceremony, it was likely that French citizens posing as Genevans sung this particularly verse; Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

For the children, Rousseau was a protector:

> From those whom you defended
> Receive the grateful voices:
> Rousseau was the friend of childhood;
> He is cherished by the children.[37]

This celebratory hymn added to the tone of the reburial ceremony. The forlorn sounds of the *De profundis* and the *Miserere* of the Catholic funerals would have been out of place in this procession of the corpse.

For the spectators, the ceremony for Rousseau was more a festival than a funeral. Compared to the more recent ceremonies for Marat, the reburial of Rousseau was noticeably lighthearted. The funeral and transferal ceremonies of Marat had been overshadowed by the violence and political conflict that had surrounded the radical journalist. The removal of the corpse of Mirabeau during the transferal ceremony had only added to the ever-present feelings of tension among the French. In contrast, Rousseau's ceremony expressed a general unanimity among the citizens.[38] An account of the ceremony in the newspaper *Courrier républicain* makes note of this unity:

> One did not hear the riotous screams which, in other festivals, had provoked the fury of the parties and scenes of carnage and blood.[39]

No one political group was praised over another. Instead, Rousseau was praised as the guide of all people who yearned for freedom and virtue.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 50.

[39] Quoted in: Higgins, "Rousseau and the Pantheon. The Background and Implications of the Ceremony of 20 Vendémiaire Year III": 277.

The reburial of Voltaire had pushed aside the melancholy of death in order to celebrate the life of a man who had inspired the French to "break their chains." Here again, the architects of the ceremony for Rousseau chose to replace the despair of death with the triumph of their revolutionary forefather. Joy had once again triumphed over melancholy death culture of old.

The ceremony for Rousseau also resembled that of Voltaire's in its general structure.[40] A parade of artists, musicians, governmental representatives, military battalions, and citizens dressed in costumes of ancient Rome processed through Paris, holding aloft symbols of the Revolution and the written works of Rousseau. The presence of the corpse was balanced with a statue depicting the philosopher in life. Songs praising the benevolence of Rousseau were sung as spectators lined the path to the Panthéon. There was no pause at a church or priests to lead the corpse in prayer, no crosses held aloft or biblical passages read. All in all, the reburial of Rousseau appeared to be a mirror of the reburial of Voltaire.

Yet, a number of key differences appear on closer inspection – differences that harkened back to the traditional funerals of pre-Revolutionary France. First, although the reburial ceremony was entirely secular in execution, the order of the ceremony recalled the traditional death rituals of eighteenth century France. In chapter two, these death rituals were explained in detail, but a short summary here will provide a point of comparison. The rituals began at the home of the dying subject. Once the person had

[40] For a description of the reburial ceremony of Rousseau, see the following sources: Berthault and Girardet, *Apothéose de J.J. Rousseau. Translation Au Panthéon*; Chénier, "Hymne À Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Par M. J. Chénier.... Chanté Au Panthéon Le 20 Vendémiaire an 3e de La République"; Roussel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau En France Après La Révolution, 1795-1830*: 11-20; Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 49-50; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*: 227-232; Ragon, *The Space of Death*: 225; Higgins, "Rousseau and the Pantheon. The Background and Implications of the Ceremony of 20 Vendémiaire Year III."

passed away, the body was washed and left to rest in the house so that family and friends could come and pay their respects. During the night, a guard was placed over the body until the following day when the funeral could begin. Members of the clergy were called to the house, prayers were made, and a procession of the body traveled to the parish church. After a prayers and the giving of a requiem mass, the body was moved to the cemetery and placed in its respective grave.

Though slightly modified to fit the secular themes of the Revolution, the reburial procession of Rousseau followed the old structure. The ceremony for Rousseau began in the Tuileries garden which had been decorated to look as if it was the garden at Ermenonville, where the philosopher had spent his final weeks of life.[41] A dozen poplars, twenty feet in height, had been placed around an ornamental pond to represent the famous *Île des Peupliers*, and the recently exhumed coffin lay guarded among these trees overnight so that the people of France could come and pay their respects.[42] The following day the procession formed at this recreated home of Rousseau and, standing in place of the clergy, the president of the National Convention stood to give an opening speech. Next, the procession began their journey to the Panthéon, a distance of less than two miles. Instead of pausing at a church, as would be expected for a funeral, the procession paused outside of the Panthéon at a small park where an artificial ruin had been made out of the Corinthian columns of a chapel that had been destroyed earlier in

[41] By the time of Rousseau's reburial, the Tuileries had been renamed the "Palais National."

[42] Roussel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau En France Après La Révolution, 1795-1830*: 12.

the Revolution.[43] Here the crowds were once again met by the president of the Convention:

> [Rousseau's] life will be an era in the splendors of virtue, and this day, these honors, this apotheosis, the cooperation of a whole people, this triumphal ceremony, all indicate that the National Convention desires to pay the debt of the French and the gratitude of mankind together to the philosopher of nature.[44]

With the closing of the speech, Rousseau's remains were carried into the Panthéon, their new grave, and the crowds dispersed.

In addition to this funeral-like structure, the reburial of Rousseau also differed from its predecessor in regards to the presence of death. For the reburial of Voltaire, the revolutionaries intentionally deemphasized death. This was both in attempt to deny the exile of the philosopher by the Catholic Church as well as to create a joyful environment in which to celebrate the triumph of Voltaire. For this later reburial ceremony, the death of Rousseau was not hidden. The corpse of the philosopher remained in its coffin throughout its three day journey from Ermenonville to the Panthéon. This was not, as Villette had hoped for Voltaire, a ceremony of resurrection.

Even the hymn written for the occasion of the ceremony openly acknowledged Rousseau as having passed from the physical world. In the chorus, sung in unison by all of the symbolic groups, the lyrics refer to the philosopher's presence in the tomb:

> *O ROUSSEAU modèle des sages*
> *Bienfaiteur de l'humanité*
> *D'un Peuple fier et libre*

[43] Ragon, *The Space of Death*: 225.

[44] Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, *Discours prononcé par le Président de la Convention nationale [Cambacérès], lors de la translation des cendres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau au Panthéon, le 20 vendémiaire de l'an troisième de la République...* (Paris: l'Imprimerie nationale, 1794): 3.

Accepte les hommages et du fond du tombeau
Soutiens l'Egalité

O ROUSSEAU, model of the sages
Benefactor of the humanity of a proud and free people
Accept the tributes
And from the bottom of the tomb
Support Equality[45]

The architects of this ceremony were seemingly unconcerned that the presence of death might harm the triumphal tone of the ceremony. Rather than deny death, as had been the case for the "eternal" Voltaire, the spectators of the reburial were encouraged to embrace reality and think of Rousseau as, in the words of the Convention president, "an angel of liberty."[46] In this sense, the reburial of Rousseau became a sort of second funeral for the philosopher.

Finally, the reburial ceremony for Rousseau diverged from the earlier reburial in regards to the lack of hostility shown towards religion. While the ceremony was intentionally secular, it was not designed to act as an attack on the Catholic Church.[47] By 1794, the Revolution had resolutely severed its connections with the Church and the revolutionary leaders no longer needed to assert this separation to the citizens. The violent dechristianization of the previous year had left a lasting mark on Paris and numerous other cities throughout France. The fabricated ruin outside the Panthéon which had been created from the pieces of a destroyed church was reminder enough of why no priests or prayers accompanied Rousseau to his new grave.

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[45] Chénier, "Hymne À Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Par M. J. Chénier.... Chanté Au Panthéon Le 20 Vendémiaire an 3e de La République."

[46] Cambacérès, *Discours prononcé par le Président de la Convention nationale [Cambacérès], lors de la translation des cendres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau au Panthéon, le 20 vendémiaire de l'an troisième de la République...*: 2.

[47] Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*: 47-48.

The Legacy of Voltaire

The comparison of the reburials of Rousseau and Voltaire reveals not only the lasting significance that the reburial of Voltaire had on the French Revolution, but also the success of the revolutionaries attempt to create a new death culture that could move past the influences of the Catholic Church and the *ancien regime*. Despite the differences between the two reburials, the ceremony for Rousseau was ultimately just an improved version of the first Panthéon reburial in 1791. When the revolutionaries had Panthéonized Voltaire, they had hoped to create a unique ceremony that did not need to rely on the rituals of a religion which had rejected the Revolution. By blatantly secularizing the reburial, Villette and the National Assembly had created an environment in which the formation of a new culture of death was possible. The reburial ceremony of Rousseau is clear evidence of this new death culture.

The fact that the reburial of Rousseau was able to recall the structure of pre-Revolutionary death rituals while at the same time remaining entirely secular speaks to the successful manipulation of a death rituals to fit the needs of the Revolution. The ceremony architects of 1794 were able to create a ceremony in which the presence of death was fully embraced without the inclusion of religious death rituals while simultaneously creating an environment of unity among the spectators – a feat which would have been impossible in 1791. The absence of religion in this final Panthéon reburial was expected and accepted by the observers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

It has already been proven that the examination of festivals and funerals can lead to new insights on the French Revolution. In *Festivals and the French Revolution*, Mona Ozouf concluded that festivals reveal more about what the revolutionaries hoped to achieve, than what they actually achieved.[1] In *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, Joseph Clarke argued that a closer examination of how the French commemorated their dead reveals how the politics of the Revolution had infiltrated the culture surrounding death and memory.[2] These works, along with numerous others, have advanced our understanding of the origins of the Revolution as well as its influence on the more recent past. What is missing, however, is the examination of reburials.

In this thesis, I have hoped to create a case for the continued study of reburials and their significance on the Revolution. Before now, reburial ceremonies, like that of Voltaire and Rousseau, were incorrectly grouped with ordinary funerals or other festivals. This grouping has caused reburials to often be ignored or misunderstood. By rescuing the reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau from these larger works on funerals and festivals, I hope to have shown the unique nature of the reburial ceremony. These reburials achieved success in areas that would have proven impossible with other types of ceremonies.

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[1] Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*.

[2] Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*.

By bridging the gap between the melancholy funeral and the celebratory festival, the ceremonial reburials of revolutionary France were able to create an environment in which deeply engrained culture and ritual could begin to be reshaped and realigned. The reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau, and the significance that they reveal, are only an introductory glance at where the study of these reburials could lead. With these two reburials alone we begin see how this type of ceremony had a unique impact on the Revolution.

The reburial of Voltaire was the first ceremony of its type. Although there were standard Catholic rituals for funerals, and even for the transferal of saints' corpses, there were no guidelines for a ceremonial reburial of citizen. This left the planners with a blank slate on which to create a new ceremony. Reacting to the tensions between the Revolution and the Catholic Church, the architects of the ceremony designed a reburial in which religion was overtly rejected. They succeeded in this through the structure, tone, and content of the ceremony. First, the planners intentionally excluded the traditional death rituals associated with death. The corpse was not attended to by priests or symbols of Catholic faith. No prayers were made for the soul of Voltaire and the biblical references so common in funeral liturgy were entirely absent. Second, the tone of the ceremony was intentionally joyous, despite the presence of the corpse and the surviving family. This was achieved mainly through the music composed for the occasion, whose melody and uplifting lyrics assured the observers it was a "day of triumph and not of regrets."[3] Finally, the ceremony rejected Catholicism through the deliberate denial of Voltaire's exile. By processing the exposed corpse to the places of Voltaire's triumphs in

[3] *Hymne Sur La Translation Du Corps de Voltaire Au Panthéon*, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

life, the architects showed that though the Church may try to exile Voltaire's soul from their spiritual world, they could never erase his influence from the physical world.

Ultimately, the revolutionaries were successful in creating a ceremony of death that rejected religion. This success paved the way for future ceremonies of death, both reburials and funerals, to reject traditional death rituals steeped in religion. The reburial ceremony of Voltaire created a template from which future ceremonies could base their structure.

The reburial of Rousseau was significant for three reasons. First, this reburial forced the revolutionaries to consider what rights the government had over dead bodies. In the previous decades, this issue had received increased attention when Louis XVI had begun the removal of the cemeteries of Paris. When Rousseau was considered for Panthéonization, the Convention deputies had to determine whether their new republican government had the right to claim the body of the philosopher of the protests of the Marquis de Girardin. Eventually, the deputies did declare Rousseau's body to be national property.

The second significance of the Rousseau reburial was its use to try and reunite the French after the fall of the Jacobins and the end of the Reign of Terror. After the Thermidorian Reaction, the revolutionary leaders needed a way to assure the people that the Revolution would continue and that it would be realigned with the original principles set out in the early years of the revolt. By creating a ceremony around the popular philosopher who was openly acknowledged by many different political groups as father of the Revolution, the National Convention used reburial as a way to unify the people.

Finally, Rousseau's reburial is also significant in that it reveals the lasting affect that the original reburial of Voltaire had on revolutionary death culture. While concrete conclusions on the transformation of French death culture cannot be drawn from only two reburials, the examination of the similarities and differences between the two reburials shows that further comparisons to other reburials and revolutionary funerals could reveal patterns in the formation of death culture that originate from the reburial of Voltaire.

As I have attempted to show through the examination of these two ceremonies, reburials had a unique effect on the French Revolution apart from other funeral and festival ceremonies. Studying reburials as a unique type of ceremony helps to further our understanding of the French Revolution, the revolutionaries themselves, and the lasting impact the Revolution had on the history of our world. The previous chapters on the Panthéon reburial are only a brief example of what further research on the significance of reburials could reveal.

Other topics that might be explored in the future are the reburials of Mirabeau, Marat, and Lepelletier, who were expelled from the Panthéon late in the Revolution, the reburials of corpses removed from the cemeteries in Paris, or the comparison of these reburials against contemporary funerals. In addition, further research could be made into the existence of reburials outside of France during the eighteenth century, or similarities between revolutionary reburials and the modern reburials of Victor Hugo, Louis Braille, and other reinterred figures.

The reburials of Voltaire and Rousseau held two completely different purposes. While Voltaire had been Panthéonized to show the strength of Revolution in the face of threats from the Catholic Church, the Panthéonization of Rousseau came as an effort to

unify the French after a period of violent dechristianization. Both of these reburials reveal how the revolutionaries were able to use reburials as a political tool to shape their desired image of Revolution the manipulation of death rituals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX - A

Hymne à Voltaire

Ce ne sont plus des pleurs qu'il est temps de répandre[1]
C'est le jour du triomphe et non pas de regrets
Que nos chants d'allégresse
Accompagnent la cendre
Du plus illustre des français.

Jadis par les tyrans cette cendre exilée
Au milieu des sanglots fuyait loin de nos yeux ;
Mais par un peuple libre aujourd'hui rappelée,
Elle vient consacrer ces lieux.

Salut, mortel divin, bienfaiteur de la terre,
Nos murs privés de toi vont te reconquérir ;
C'est à nous qu'appartient tout ce qui fut Voltaire
Nos murs t'on vu naître et mourir.

Ton souffle créateur nous fit ce que nous sommes ;
Reçois le libre encens de la France à genoux ;
Sois désormais le Dieu du Temple des grands hommes,
Toi qui les a surpassés tous.

Le flambeau vigilant de la raison sublime
Sur des Prêtres menteurs éclaira les mortels ;
Fléau de ces Tyrans, tu découvris l'abyme
Qu'ils creusaient au pied des Autels.

Tes tragiques pinceaux, des Demi-dieux de Tibre
On su ressusciter les antiques vertus ;
Et la France a conçu le besoin d'être libre
Aux fiers accents des deux Brutus.

Sur cent tons différents ta Lyre enchanteresse
Fidèle à la raison, comme à l'humanité,
Aux mensonges brillants inventés par la Grèce
Unit la simple Vérité.

[1] Lyrics transcribed from the score – the spelling has been modernized; Marie-Joseph Chénier, *Hymne Sur La Translation Du Corps de Voltaire Au Panthéon*, 1791, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Citoyens, coures tous au-devant de Voltaire
Il renaît parmi nous grand, chéri, respecté,
Comme à son dernier jour ne prêchant à la terre
Que Dieu seul est la Liberté.

APPENDIX – B

Hymne à Rousseau

Les Vieillards et les Mères de Famille[1]
Toi qui d'Émile et de Sophie
Dessinas les traits ingénus qui de la Nature avilie
Rétablis les droits méconnus
Éclaire nos fils et nos filles
Forme aux vertus leurs jeunes cœurs,
Et rends heureuses nos familles
Par l'amour des lois et des mœurs

Refrain en Chœur
O ROUSSEAU modèle des sages
Bienfaiteur de l'humanité
D'un Peuple fier et libre
Accepte les hommages et du fond du tombeau
Soutiens l'Egalité

Les Représentants du Peuple
Ta main, de la terre captive
Brisant les fers longtemps sacrés, de sa liberté primitive
Trouva les titres égarés.
Le Peuple s'armant de la foudre
Et de ce contrat solennel,
Sur les débris des Rois en poudre
A posé son trône éternel.

CHŒUR

Les Enfants
Tu délivras tous les esclaves;
Tu flétris tous les oppresseurs:
Par toi, sans chagrins, sans entrâves,
Nos premiers jours ont des douceurs.
De ceux dont tu pris la défense
Reçois les vœux reconnaissants:
Rousseau fut l'ami de l'enfance;

[1] Lyrics transcribed from the score – the spelling has been modernized; Marie-Joseph Chénier, "Hymne À Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Par M. J. Chénier.... Chanté Au Panthéon Le 20 Vendémiaire an 3e de La République," Magasin à l'usage des fêtes nationales, 1794. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Il est chéri par les enfants.

CHŒUR

Les Genevois
Tu vois, près de ta cendre auguste,
Tes amis, tes concitoyens;
Philosophe sensible et juste,
Nos oppresseurs furent les tiens;
Et, dans ta seconde patrie,
Genève, ta mère chérie,
Chante son fils, le bon rousseau.

CHŒUR

Les Jeunes Gens
Combats toujours la tyrannie
Que fait trembler ton souvenir:
La mort n'atteint pas ton génie;
Ce flambeau luit pour l'avenir.
Ses clartés pures et fécondes
On ranime la terre en deuil;
Et la France, au nom des deux mondes,
Répand des fleurs sur ton cercueil.

CHŒUR

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