

Classical and baroque tombs

FROM SAINT NICOLAS DU CHARDONNET (5TH) TO SAINT ROCH (1ST)

Funerary monuments, which were placed in the churches of Paris during the Ancien Régime, were dismantled during the Revolution. Their bronze decorative elements were melted down for the requirements of the military campaigns. Any figures which escaped vandalism, were transported to the warehouse at the Petits Augustins. Its guardian, Alexandre Lenoir, organised the Museum of French Monuments there in 1795. The monuments were put back together, completed and sometimes reinvented to create a historic, artistic chronology for educational purposes.

Under the Restoration, the Petits Augustins was given to the School of Fine Arts and Alexandre Lenoir's museum closed its doors. A Royal decree stated that monuments had to be returned to their families of origin and religious sculptures to the churches.

The Churches of Saint Eustache, Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and Saint-Germain des Prés saw the return of some of their former monuments. Hyppolite Godde (1781 – 1869), a City of Paris architect, devoted himself to reinstalling them, attempting to recreate them exactly as they had been. Thanks to the demands of the second parish priest Marduel and the sculptor Deseine, Saint-Roch Church was given back monuments formerly located throughout the parish. The sculptures were arranged carelessly and their installation evokes that of a lapidary museum.

Thanks to the descriptions in former guides, prints and the iconography collection of Roger de Gaignières (1644 – 1715), we can still imagine the original appearance of these now incomplete monuments.

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(5th)

Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet Church, Saint Charles Boromée chapel
Jean Collignon, died in 1702

Funerary monument of Julienne Le Bé (died in 1668)

The tomb of Julienne Le Bé, the mother of Charles Lebrun, was commissioned from the sculptor Jean Collignon.

The painter's mother appears on Judgment Day, leaving the tomb and begging for salvation, while above her an angel blows his trumpet and indicates the heavens. It was Lebrun who designed the composition, which is full of dramatic intensity and in which the figure of the mother appears both fearful and full of hope. A recent restoration discovered a mural representing a sky framed by a cave opening, underneath an old coat of distemper. Next to it, against the wall at the back of the chapel, is the tomb of the painter and his wife, created by the sculptor Antoine Coysevox.

Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet, Saint François de Sales chapel

Jean-Baptiste Tuby (1635 - 1700)

Funerary monument of Jérôme Bignon (1589 – 1656)

The son of a lawyer and a lawyer himself, Jérôme Bignon distinguished himself at the age of ten by publishing the work *Chorographie ou histoire de la Terre sainte* (Chorography, or History of the Holy Land). He later became a State councillor and then master of the King's library.

The monument was commissioned from the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Tuby between 1667 and 1685. Old descriptions teach us that the scholar's bust was surrounded by four seated allegorical figures.

Godde's installation was inspired by Lenoir's arrangement of the Museum of French Monuments. All that remain of the original monument are the figures of Justice and Abundance and the bust. Following its restoration in 1818, Abundance was given a mirror and turned into the figure of Prudence.



(6th) Saint Sulpice, Saint Jean-Baptiste chapel

Michelangelo (1705 – 1764)

Mausoleum of Jean-Baptiste Languet de Gergy (1675 – 1750)

The mausoleum of Abbot Languet de Gergy revives the tradition of the Roman Baroque monuments of Bernini. The Abbot was parish priest of Saint Sulpice from 1714 to 1741 and promoted the construction of the new church by organising among other things lotteries to finance the project.

The monument, which was completed in 1757, was created by Michelangelo. It represents "the eagerness of Immortality to raise a funerary cloth covering the face of the former Abbot", while Death, thunderstruck, is overwhelmed. The Abbot, turned towards the high altar, seems to be offering himself to God.

The figure of Immortality was once holding a large bronze parchment showing a plan of the church and a golden ring, the symbol of inalterability and continuity. Further down, two putti represented Abundance and Charity.



(6th)

Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Saint François-Xavier chapel

Gaspard (1624 – 1681)

Balthazar Marsy (1628 – 1674)

Monument of the heart of John Casimir of Poland (1609 – 1672)

John Casimir Vasa was King of Poland from 1648 to 1668 and found refuge in France after his abdication.

Louis XIV appointed him Abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés monastery in 1669 and he died in 1672. Following his wishes, his heart was then placed in Saint Germain des Prés as a testimony to his commitment to the Abbey, while his remains were taken to Krakow.

The tomb, designed by Charles Lebrun, was sculpted by the brothers Gaspard and Balthazar Marsy in 1675 – 1676.

The king, kneeling and wearing an ecclesiastical habit, is holding out his crown and sceptre towards the high altar as an offering. Two slaves framed the sarcophagus, although they have since disappeared.

The bronze bas-relief, representing the Battle of Beresteczko (1651) was created by the lay brother Jean-Thibaut.

Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Sainte Marguerite Chapel

François Girardon (1628 – 1715)

Monuments to the hearts of Olivier (died in 1644) and Louis de Castellan (1632 – 1669)

Olivier de Castellan and his son Louis were both soldiers who fought for the French crown. The former died outside Tarragona in 1644 and the latter during a battle against the Turks in Candia in 1669. The monument to their hearts was commissioned to the sculptor François Girardon in 1678.

It originally consisted of a sarcophagus above trophies of Syrian and Roman arms, evoking the places where the two men died. Around a white marble column were two allegorical figures representing Fidelity and Piety. The image of the dead men is reduced to two medallion portraits held by the two Allegories. Under the Ancien Régime, two grimacing stucco skeletons held curtains on either side of an archway, giving the work a theatrical atmosphere.



(1st) Saint Eustache, Saint Louis de Gonzague chapel

Antoine Coysevox (1640 – 1720)

Jean-Baptiste Tuby (1635 – 1700)

Funerary monument of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619 – 1683)

Colbert's funerary monument, like those of Richelieu and Mazarin, is of a size and importance befitting a major State dignitary.

It was originally located under an archway leading to the Chapel of the Virgin. Le Brun designed the composition and the sculptors Coysevox and Tuby created it together in 1685. The former created the praying figure and the figure of Fidelity and the latter created Abundance and an angel presenting the dead man with a book of prayers, which was destroyed during the Revolution.

The majestic praying figure is wearing the large cape of the Order of the Holy Spirit. Fidelity is turned towards him with an expression full of regret, while Abundance is looking towards the sun as a sign of renunciation.



(1st) Saint-Roch, Saint-Etienne Chapel

Pierre Mazeline (1632 – 1708)

Simon Hurltelle (1648 – 1724)

Funerary monument of Charles de Crequy (1624 – 1687)

The monument of Charles de Crequy, governor of Paris, was commissioned by his widow in 1688 for the Capuchin Church.

It was designed by Charles LeBrun and sculpted by Pierre Mazeline, assisted by Simon Hurltelle. The dead man is wearing the ducal cloak and the chains of the Orders of Saint Michel and the Holy Spirit. With a gesture, he is asking God for mercy, while near him the City of Paris is seated on the bow of a ship, weeping. On either side of the sarcophagus are two matching allegorical figures, Religion and Liberality. These two statues were sent to the Dome at Les Invalides in 1803, where they can still be found.

Saint Roch, Chapel of Monuments

Guillaume Coustou the Elder (1677 – 1746)

Funerary monument of Cardinal Dubois (1656 – 1723)

The son of an apothecary from Brive la Gaillarde, Guillaume Dubois embraced an ecclesiastical career and became a private tutor. In this capacity, he entered the home of the Duke of Orléans and dispensed his teachings to the Duke of Chartres. His pupil, who became the Regent of France, appointed him a Minister in 1715. He was clever and cunning, but remained famous for his depraved morals. He was made a Cardinal in 1721.

The Praying Figure, created by Guillaume Coustou the Elder in 1725, was placed on a marble sarcophagus, in front of a pyramid topped with an urn from which Cyprus branches were cascading. The Cardinal's pose was a traditional one in funerary sculpture, but the prelate's face showed a vivacity and intelligence which made the figure a masterpiece of portrait art.

Saint Roch, Chapel of Monuments

Nicolas Renard (1654 – c. 1720)

Cenotaph of Henri de Lorraine, Count of Harcourt (1601 – 1666) and Alphonse Louis de Lorraine, Knight of Harcourt (1644 – 1689)

The monument to Henri de Lorraine, Count of Harcourt, was sculpted by the sculptor Nicolas Renard from Nancy in 1695. It was originally located in the Church of the Feuillants and represents Time defeated by Immortality, with the latter holding in her hand a medallion showing an effigy of the dead man. The Count of Harcourt was nicknamed Cadet la Perle. He was the youngest (Cadet) in his family and wore a pearl (perle) in his ear, although this fashion had disappeared after the reign of Henri III.

The figure of Time is holding a book on which passages from the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiastes can be read. To the right, a putto is holding a portrait of the Count's son, a Knight of Malta.

This group was originally placed in front of a large pyramid topped with an eagle. Immortality's wings have disappeared, as has the bronze bas-relief showing Victory presenting Henri de Lorraine to Religion, which served as a bedrock for the group.

Saint Roch, Saint Nicolas Chapel

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne II (1704 – 1778)

Funerary monument of Pierre Mignard (1612 – 1695)

The funerary monument of Pierre Mignard was commissioned by his daughter, the Countess Feuquière to the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne II in 1735. It was completed in 1744 and previously adorned the Church of Jacobins, which was destroyed under the Directoire.

The Countess, kneeling and at prayer, was placed near the bust of her father at the foot of a large obelisk. Two geniuses of the arts accompany her, while in the upper part, the figure of Time is rising into the air supporting a large funeral hanging. All that remain of this monument are the magnificent bust by Desjardins and the statue of the weeping Countess. In the 19th century the latter was installed in the Chapel of Calvary converted into a Madeleine at the foot of the cross.

Funerary monument of Jean-Baptiste Colbert



Funerary monument of Julienne Le Bé



Funerary monument of Jérôme Bignon



Mausoleum of Jean-Baptiste Languet de Gergy



Due to the provisions of the Concordat signed in 1801 between France and the Holy See, which ratified the Revolutionary seizures of the clergy's possessions and transferred the property of the parish churches and their offices to the communes, the City of Paris currently owns around one hundred religious buildings, including a large number of Catholic churches.

The Concordat regime, which remained in force until the 1905 law separating Church and State, proved to be advantageous for religious buildings belonging to the commune. Making the works of art confiscated during the Revolution available to the clergy, combined with an active policy of commissioning decors and constructing new buildings, made the churches of Paris an artistic series of buildings of exceptional wealth covering the major periods of French art, from the Classical era to the modern period.

The Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Paris is currently responsible for conserving this considerable heritage. It is in charge of its inventory, maintenance and promotion as well as the restoration work necessary to conserve the buildings which house it.