

**Marshal Lyautey's Funerals:  
The Afterlife of a French Colonial Hero and the Death of an Empire**

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Most people have one funeral. Marshal Lyautey, sanctified as one of France's colonial heroes, had no fewer than four funeral ceremonies, two soon after his death in 1934, the others almost thirty years later. One took place in Nancy, in his native Lorraine, another in Rabat, capital of the protectorate over which he had ruled; the final two were held in Paris, capital in the interwar of a triumphant empire and in the opening years of the 1960s of a dying one. The eulogies in his memory were delivered in 1934 by Marshall Pétain, and in 1961 by General de Gaulle, comrades-in-arms and divergent political figures who used their orations in an effort to galvanize support for a country facing domestic and international crises of enormous magnitude.

State funerals provide one of the most evident ways in which a country honors "great men": religious and secular ceremonies, eulogies and tributes, and often entombment in a "sacred site" commemorate the life and work of those deemed national heroes. These funerals also offer the occasion for proclamation of national virtues incarnated by the dear departed and for using their death to promote national missions. Private grief becomes secondary to public recollection and the rallying of sentiment in collective enterprises. Memory, history and myth blend when a personage is farewelled as an individual and as symbol of a cause or generation.

France, of course, proves no exception to an international style of commemoration. The *retour des cendres* of Napoleon in 1840 created a focal point for the Bonapartist legend, and his burial in the Hôtel des Invalides marked the site as the most eminent resting place for France's military heroes.<sup>1</sup> As Avner Ben-Amos' authoritative study of state funerals shows, huge public obsequies, none more

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<sup>1</sup> See, most recently, Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London, 2005).

dramatic than that accorded Victor Hugo in 1885 and perhaps none more poignant than the burial of the unknown soldier below the Arc de Triomphe in 1920, have played a significant role in the formation of French national memory.<sup>2</sup> The inhumation of remains of political and cultural heroes in the Panthéon has signified national self-reflection, but also an opportunity for governments to enshrine their versions of national history in this secular cemetery.<sup>3</sup> Ben-Amos demonstrates, as well, how state funerals and “panthéonisation” reveal tensions in public life: between political left and right, clericalism and anti-clericalism, tradition and modernization.

This article examines the funerals of Louis-Hubert-Gonçalve Lyautey, elder statesman of French colonialism, which Ben-Amos also discusses as one of three cases of state funerals of colonialists—the others, those of Admiral Courbet, an officer in Indochina, in 1885, and Paul Bert, a colonial administrator also posted to Indochina, two years later.<sup>4</sup> I would like to look here more closely at the significance of Lyautey’s funerary rites in 1934 and his re-interment in the Invalides in the early 1960s; whereas Ben-Amos’ focus is the tradition of state funerals, I am concerned with the commemoration of a colonial hero and the place of colonialism in France in the 1930s and 1960s. I would like to consider how Lyautey’s funeral ceremonies were “instrumentalized” by public powers, and the ways in which they created and perpetuated central myths about the French empire. These funerals, bracketing an almost thirty-year period, provide a unique lens through which to view the official mind of French colonial policy, the way it metamorphosed and the way it continued to assert certain basic beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

Lyautey was widely regarded as the most prominent colonialist in France when he died at the age of eighty. From across the Channel, the London *Times* saluted the “soldier, empire-builder, and man of letters” who “had served his country long

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<sup>2</sup> Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford, 2000). On more recent state funerals, see Evelyne Cohen and Andrée Rauch, “Le Corps souverain sous la Cinquième République: les funérailles télévisées du Général de Gaulle et de François Mitterrand,” *Vingtième siècle*, No. 88 (October-December 2005): 77-93; and Christian Delporte, “Mise en scène médiatique de la mort de Chaban-Delmas (Novembre 2000),” *Vingtième siècle*, No. 90 (April-June 2006): 141-153.

<sup>3</sup> On colonial figures in the Panthéon, see my *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (London, 2005), 176-180.

<sup>4</sup> Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France*, 225-234, including, on Lyautey, 231-234. The other detailed account is in Arnaud Teyssier, *Lyautey* (Paris, 2004), 421-427. Ben-Amos mentions in an appendix (391-394) the state funerals of other colonial heroes in the Second Empire and Third Republic: Admiral Baudin and Marshal de Saint-Arnaud in 1854, Admiral Bruat in 1855, General Faidherbe in 1889, the explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in 1905, General Gallieni in 1916 and the colonial administrator (and later French president) Paul Doumer in 1932. Jules Ferry, known for the expansionist policies that led to the downfall of his government in the 1880s, was given a state funeral in 1892. Pierre Loti, whose novels about Tahiti, Senegal and other foreign countries contributed much to notions of exoticism and Orientalism, was accorded a state funeral in 1923.

<sup>5</sup> This chapter is an opportunity to correct an error in *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France*, where in writing about Lyautey’s tomb (180-182), I inadvertently conflated the ceremony for the return of his remains in 1961 and their interment in a new sarcophagus in 1963.

and faithfully. To him more than to any other man France owes her great territorial dependency in Northern Africa." An editorial spoke of "a master of colonial warfare and a brilliant administrator, who has been called the last of the long line of such illustrious names as Dupleix, Montcalm, Bugeaud, Faidherbe, and Galliéni." Lyautey had "subordinated the uses of war to the work of peace, and saw conquest only as a method of extending the area of good government and civilization."<sup>6</sup> Few back in France, except anti-colonialists—whose numbers were not insignificant—would have demurred.

Born in Nancy in 1854, Lyautey considered himself a true son of Lorraine, and he died at his Château de Thorey near the provincial capital. Growing up in a conservative and Catholic milieu in the Second Empire—his mother's family boasted an aristocratic lineage—Lyautey became a soldier in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the cession of Lorraine to victorious Germany. After graduating from Saint-Cyr, he published a provocative article on the social role of the military officer, arguing that the soldier, at home and in the empire, could serve as the model for regeneration of defeated France. Posted as a young officer to Algeria, Lyautey was immediately entranced by the Maghrebin landscape. After a tedious stint back in the metropole, Lyautey went to Tonkin, where he aided Galliéni in the extension of French rule in northern Vietnam and the defeat of the so-called pirates on the Chinese frontier. Lyautey then accompanied Galliéni to Madagascar to take charge of administration of a huge district of the *Grande Île*. Made a general, he was subsequently transferred to Algeria. Lyautey's career peaked when he became first Resident-General of the new French protectorate of Morocco in 1912, a post he held until 1925. Lyautey had an almost religious zeal for Morocco, imposing French government, building a new infrastructure (including redesign of the capital of Rabat), and promoting what he saw as modernization of the country while safeguarding its culture and traditions. In pioneering a supposedly new sort of colonialism, Lyautey professed enormous respect for Islam and Moroccan civilization and even dissuaded Christian evangelization and the settlement of Frenchmen there. During the First World War, Lyautey served briefly (and not very successfully) as Minister of War, then returned to Morocco, his rule in Rabat coming to an end, controversially, in the midst of the Rif wars. Though basically forced into retirement, Lyautey remained the voice of French imperialism. In 1931, he organized the Exposition Coloniale in Paris, virtual consecration of the imperial effort and his last major contribution to France's overseas actions.<sup>7</sup>

Lyautey was a complicated man. He was, at least initially, a royalist in the service of the Republic. A military figure, he prided himself on the successes of his civil administration. Though he affirmed that real life was a life of action, he wrote extensively and evocatively about his experiences, and volumes of his letters from abroad were even published in his lifetime. While a practicing Catholic, he expressed

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<sup>6</sup> *The Times* (London), 28 July 1934; the newspaper also published a tribute by an English officer on 1 August 1934.

<sup>7</sup> Biographies include André Le Révérend, *Lyautey* (Paris, 1983); Hervé de Charette, *Lyautey* (Paris, 1997); and Teyssier, *op. cit.* Lyautey's early colonial activities are covered in Pascal Vernier, *Lyautey avant Lyautey* (Paris, 1997); and his work in Morocco in William A. Hoisington, Jr., *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco* (London: Macmillan, 1995); and Daniel Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc, 1912-1925*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1988). His sexuality is discussed most comprehensively in Christian Gury, *Lyautey-Charlus* (Paris, 1998).

empathy for Islam. He found himself most at home in the desert, he said, but was also a dandy who frequented Parisian salons. The exemplar of soldierly masculinity, Lyautey's homosexuality was an open secret despite his tardy marriage. Though honored with a chestful of medals, made a Marshal of France and elected to the Académie Française, Lyautey probably remained disappointed not to play a more central role in national politics.

Provisions for a state funeral for Lyautey were not surprising as his death was greeted—though not in the Communist press—with almost unanimous tributes.<sup>8</sup> For over half a century, he had participated in France's imperial project, and his career spanned North Africa, the Indian Ocean and Indochina. Lyautey was a celebrity whose lean and mustachioed figure, always dapper in his uniform, was well known because of the colonial exhibition and the fashion in which he had been lionized in newspaper articles, illustrated magazines, biographies and even comic books for young readers. In his last years at Thorey, showing off the treasures of his *salon marocain* and *salon indochinois*, receiving famous visitors and contributing the occasional article to periodicals, Lyautey helped to nourish his legend. The state funeral, according to Arnaud Teyssier, may have also been an attempt to make up for his precipitate recall to France in 1925.<sup>9</sup> Lyautey's will directed that he be buried in Morocco, certainly a testament of affection for his adopted country, though Ben-Amos adds that "his choice also probably implied an implicit rejection of the metropolis, which had given him a cold reception after his humiliating departure from Morocco."<sup>10</sup> This intriguing argument is somewhat belied, however, by the popularity that Lyautey recouped in the decade before his death.

Public mourning began with the ringing of bells at the Thorey parish church to announce Lyautey's death. Outside his chateau, the three flags that flew there—the Tricolor, the banner of Lorraine and that of the Moroccan protectorate—were lowered to half-mast, and Lyautey's body was laid out on his bed surrounded by the Arabic cape that he often wore over his uniform, his sword and marshal's baton, a crucifix and candles, flags and other mementos; two soldiers stood at attention at the headboard. Dignitaries, including the Sultan of Morocco (who happened to be in France), and the French Resident-General in Morocco, soon called to pay their respects and offer condolences to *la Maréchale*. Lyautey's body was then taken to Nancy to lie in state in the fifteenth-century Eglise des Cordeliers in the burial chapel of the Dukes of Lorraine, the placing of his body among the rulers a powerful honor accorded to a native son of the province. Troops of scouts—Lyautey was "chief scout" of France—and of paramilitary organizations, including the extreme right-wing Croix de Feu and Jeunesses Patriotes, mounted a guard of honor while, for three days, citizens filed by the coffin. The body was removed on a gun carriage in a torchlit procession, to the sound of muffled trumpets and dirge-ringing bells, to the Palais du Gouvernement on the grand Place Stanislas. There it lay in state in a secular

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<sup>8</sup> *L'Humanité* referred to the "maréchal fasciste," using his death as an opportunity to criticise French colonial policy. (Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 424.) The left of the Socialist Party and the Communists had strongly opposed the Rif wars fought by Lyautey and Pétain against Abd el-Krim. Lyautey's Exposition coloniale of 1931 prompted Communists, surrealists and others to organise a smaller-scale Exposition anti-coloniale.

<sup>9</sup> Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 422.

<sup>10</sup> Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France*, 233.

and republican venue, the coffin covered with a flag and Lyautey's folded uniform, his marshal's baton and medals displayed near the bier.

On the morning of the funeral, declared a day of national mourning, a distinguished group formed a cortège to escort the coffin. They included a troop of *spahis*, wearing the North African cloak that formed part of their ceremonial uniform, and the grand vizir of Morocco, described in *L'Illustration* as appearing "un personnage d'Orient romantique dessiné par Eugène Delacroix." Among other mourners were Lyautey's widow and his nephew, the President of the Republic and a former president, ministers, and the Archbishops of Paris and Besançon. The procession passed under Nancy's Arc de Triomphe and on to the cathedral for a requiem mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Strasbourg. Lyautey's remains were then taken back into the Place Stanislas for a civil ceremony. The catafalque was placed under an enormous Tricolour, half lowered onto the bier, next to which flew the Lorraine and Moroccan standards. After the speeches, colonial and metropolitan troops filed past, with a fly-over by a hundred airplanes, before Lyautey's body was returned to the cathedral for its temporary burial.<sup>11</sup>

Lyautey's funeral was carefully choreographed to allude constantly to his Lorraine, French and colonial links, to observe the proper protocol for such an eminent figure, to show the panache and power of the military and to maintain a certain distance between church and state. In Philippe Martin's words, "Les funérailles prenaient donc une dimension politique essentielle."<sup>12</sup> The *mise en scène* conformed to the usual funerary rites, but particularly noteworthy was the constant presence of *spahis*, Legionnaires and Moroccan soldiers, emphasizing not only the role of the colonial military in France, but in the case of the Moroccans, summoning the colonized to pay respects to the colonizer.

The eulogy at the civil ceremony was delivered by Philippe Pétain, Minister of War. Relations between Lyautey and Pétain had not been cordial; Lyautey bitterly resented Pétain's having been dispatched from Paris to quell Abd el-Krim's rebellion in the Rif mountains and had resigned as Resident-General largely because of the intervention.<sup>13</sup> Pétain had no great friendship for his colorful, debonair and outspoken fellow marshal, and his elegy lacks real warmth. Pétain cast his remarks in terms of the achievements of "la Grande France" and "la grandeur de notre pays." He characterized Lyautey as "un des prestigieux artisans" of the French empire and retraced his career in a straightforward manner. An occasional phrase—about

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<sup>11</sup> Details from *L'Illustration*, No. 4771, 11 August 1934, 489-491. A detailed description of the funeral in Nancy, as well as a portfolio of photographs, are contained in Philippe Martin, "La pompe funèbre d'un Maréchal," *Annales de l'Est*, 54, Numéro special (2004): 199-213.

<sup>12</sup> Martin, 206.

<sup>13</sup> Lyautey favored using small military units to subdue rebels group-by-group, maintaining a conciliatory approach to the local population. Pétain, sent on a tour of inspection from Paris, drew up a different plan of attack, without Lyautey's knowledge, and reportedly boasted that "there is not enough room for both Lyautey and me in Morocco." After convincing a new prime minister in Paris of the efficacy of his plan, he returned to Morocco with fresh troops (earlier denied to Lyautey) and began a massive assault on rebels with artillery attacks and destruction of Moroccans' crops and houses. Lyautey objected to these strategies and resented Pétain's usurpation of his authority, and so resigned, pleading ill health. Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Nature and Forms of the Social Environment* (Chicago, 1995), 316-317.

Lyautey's "expression pittoresque," of his being an "animal d'action," the "hantise romantique" of an "âme bouillonnante," his "boutades parfois troublantes"—seemed to underline the traits of a personality at odds with convention. Pétain went out of his way to emphasize the "parfait accord" of Lyautey in his own mission to Morocco, a view which must have made Lyautey turn in his coffin. With quotations from Lyautey, Pétain paid tribute to his vision of the role of the officer, his accomplishments in extending France's international domain and the particular policies he advanced. Pétain's oration continued with a warning about the need for action and unity, and a curious criticism of ideology:

Dans le monde moderne qui cherche anxieusement sa voie, la France a plus besoin de travail, de conscience, d'abnégation que d'idées. Les idées trop souvent divisent tandis que l'effort unit.... Sur la tombe de ce grand Français, je souhaite que l'union devienne la loi de notre peuple. A l'heure où celui-ci a tant besoin de quiétude et d'entente pour panser ses plaies et préparer l'avenir, je souhaite qu'une seule âme domine toutes les autres comme elle a dominé Lyautey, l'âme de la France.

He concluded that although Lyautey was first and foremost a "grand colonial," he remained always attentive to the interests of his country, and now, in particular, France needed military readiness:

Dans le domaine militaire en particulier il suivait passionnément l'évolution de notre organisation et proclamait la nécessité de maintenir au plus haut degré de puissance les forces vives de cette armée qui reste la meilleure sauvegarde de nos destins.<sup>14</sup>

Pétain spoke as a soldier to emphasize and defend the role of the army, both in the past and in the years to come. The year 1934 had brought great upheaval to France that extended to its colonies—just as the government claimed in 1934 that "pacification" of Morocco had finally been achieved, a *comité d'action* formed to demand abolition of the protectorate. More pressing problems arose at home in Europe. Hitler had been in power for a year, rattling sabers across the Rhine; the same editions of newspapers that reported Lyautey's death also announced the death of the German president, von Hindenburg, whose disappearance removed the last obstacle to the consolidation of Nazi power. Meanwhile, the Depression had begun to wreak its impact in France. The political ideas of which Pétain professed suspicion divided public life with the increasing force of the Communists on the left ranged against an ultra-nationalist and racialist right. Just a few months before Lyautey's death, in February 1934, demonstrations erupted in Paris when Jean Chiappe, the prefect of police, who was considered favorable to the radical right, was replaced. (He was sent to Morocco as Resident-General.) Forty thousand protestors from the nationalist right took to the streets, and police fired on the demonstration; seventeen were killed and almost 1500 injured. Prime Minister Daladier was forced to resign. Further demonstrations brought out Communists, and two others were killed, while a general strike gripped France, which seemed on the verge of either a *coup d'état* or civil war.<sup>15</sup> Lyautey's funeral also occurred on the anniversary of the French declaration of

<sup>14</sup> Philippe Pétain, "Lyautey," in *Actes et écrits*, ed. Jacques Isorni (Paris, 1974), 216-223.

<sup>15</sup> See, in general, Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York,

war in 1914, a reminder of past sacrifices and the obligation to present-day vigilance. Worries about depopulation, military preparedness, resolve to assert France's European and international position and violent domestic strife troubled the country. Lyautey seemed a figure around whom Frenchmen—or at least those of a more conservative persuasion—could rally. His nationalistic and militaristic sense of duty provided an appropriate standard for compatriots to follow, though the Communists' refusal to fall in with the celebration of Lyautey's life was a reminder of the dissension that marked public life.

Colonialists championed the empire, recently put on dramatic display in the 1931 fair in the Bois de Vincennes, as a source of might in these troubling times. Businessmen affected by economic crisis fell back on colonial markets. In case of military confrontation, the *force noire* used during the First World War might again need to supplement metropolitan troops.<sup>16</sup> The overseas empire, covering 11 million square kilometers and counting 100 million citizens and subjects, gave France resources, men and leverage, or so it was hoped.<sup>17</sup> The explicit and implicit sentiments of *salut par l'empire*, of national unity and of readiness to respond to challenges at home and abroad found an apt forum in Lyautey's obsequies.

Lyautey's coffin remained in the Nancy cathedral until October 1935, when it was sent off for Morocco with due ceremony. In Marseille, after a *veillée* in a waterfront church and full military honors at dockside, the coffin was loaded onto the cruiser *Dupleix*—the name consciously recalling another French imperial hero, a general in eighteenth-century India—escorted by the *Foch*, the choice of which was said to recall the Great War and the role of colonial contingents.<sup>18</sup> Along the journey to North Africa, Italian, British and Spanish ships saluted the maritime cortège. The panoply of the colonial state was deployed on the ships' arrival in Morocco. According to *The Times*:

Tolling bells and a salute of guns greeted the cruiser *Dupleix* carrying the ashes [*sic*] of Marshal Lyautey.... A squadron of aeroplanes droned overhead and the flags on all the ships in the port and public buildings were flown at half-mast. Mme Lyautey and the Resident-General waited on the quay in Casablanca, flanked by a company of Zouaves, a detachment of Fusiliers Marins, and a mechanized machine-gun squadron. The urn [*sic*] was placed on a gun-carriage and driven slowly to the cathedral, where it was set on a catafalque together with the Marshal's baton and his decorations.

Then outside the Rabat city hall, in the newly named Place du Maréchal Lyautey, the Navy Minister, the Grand Vizier of the Sultan of Morocco and other dignitaries paid tribute. The coffin travelled on a special train to Rabat, where—still in *The Times*' account—"a huge crowd of Europeans and natives followed the funeral procession,"

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<sup>16</sup> *La Force noire* was the title of a 1910 book by General Mangin advocating the use of colonial troops if war broke out in Europe.

<sup>17</sup> See Martin Thomas, *The French Empire between the Wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society* (Manchester, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> François Piétri, "Le Retour de Lyautey," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15 May 1961): 193-197.

with 15,000 Moroccan troopers lining the streets for another service, complete with military ritual and eulogies in the presence of the sultan and French authorities.

Lyautey had selected for his grave a place called Chella, site of Roman and Arabic archaeological vestiges. Some Moroccans, however, did not want him buried in their country at all, seeing in it a sign of future annexation of Morocco by France. The sultan and his advisers were unenthusiastic, and an anti-colonial group in Morocco, in collaboration with Moroccan intellectuals in Paris, circulated a petition against Lyautey's burial in Rabat, though couching their opposition, perhaps prudently, in terms of reticence at the organization of a major Catholic ceremony in an Islamic country.<sup>19</sup> The choice of the exact burial site also was a subject of concern; the local pasha indeed refused to sell the land. Therefore, it was decided to inter Lyautey's remains at a safer location in the garden of the Residency that Lyautey had erected on a hillside overlooking Rabat.<sup>20</sup> The mausoleum, an Arabic-styled square *koubba* covered in green tiles that Lyautey had commissioned, recalled a pavilion in the Moroccan section of the 1931 colonial exhibition. The inscription noted that Lyautey had

décédé dans la religion catholique dont il reçut en pleine foi les derniers sacrements profondément respectueux des traditions ancestrales et de la religion musulmane gardée et pratiquée par les habitants du Maghreb auprès desquels il a voulu reposer en cette terre qu'il a tant aimée.

The words seemingly reconciled Christianity and Islam, Europe and North Africa. (According to one writer, local women sometimes took the burial place for the nearby grave of a local Muslim saint and left ex-votos at the site.<sup>21</sup>)

Twenty-two years after Lyautey's death, the protectorate of Morocco regained its independence in the midst of the worsening crisis in Algeria. Memorials to colonial heroes in former colonial outposts seemed increasingly less appropriate and welcome reminders of past domination, especially with widespread support in Morocco for Algerian independence. Both Moroccan and French authorities feared the desecration of Lyautey's tomb by sympathizers with the Algerian nationalists,<sup>22</sup> and a decision was made—it is unclear exactly when and whether at French or Moroccan instigation—to repatriate Lyautey's remains.

The return of the marshal's remains in 1961, though it occurred before the French withdrawal from Algeria, is emblematic of the end of the empire. Many French residents left Morocco when it regained independence in 1956. They, like the million *pieds-noirs* later "repatriated" from Algeria, were forced to leave their families' tombs in North Africa. *Rapatriés* today still express bitterness about the

<sup>19</sup> Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 422.

<sup>20</sup> Jules Borély, *Le Tombeau de Lyautey* (n.p., 1957).

<sup>21</sup> Colonial Morocco boasted various monuments to Lyautey, such as a large equestrian statue in the Place Lyautey in Casablanca, decorated with bas-reliefs showing his exploits. It was moved to grounds inside the French consulate there in 1955. See Jean-Luc Pierre, *Casablanca et la France. Mémoires croisées, XIXème – XXème siècles* (Casablanca, 2002), 104-113.

<sup>22</sup> According to Henry Bordeaux, "Le gouvernement français avait revendiqué ses cendres avant que des fanatiques marocains ne violassent la sépulture de Rabat," "Le retour des cendres du Maréchal Lyautey aux Invalides," *Ecrits de Paris*, May 1961, 23-27 (quotation from p. 27).



inability to visit their ancestors' graves—the cult of the dead was particularly strong in colonial Algeria—and worry about the lack of upkeep of Christian cemeteries in the post-colonial Maghreb. The French precluded possible problems about the gravesite of their colonial hero by taking Lyautey's remains back to France. The significance was not lost at the time on old colonials. André Rebeyrend's commemorative speech at the Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer (the former Académie Coloniale) referred to “la décision de faire du rénovateur du Maroc et de son épouse des rapatriés comme tant d'autres en ce moment” and to the stakes that it represented. He continued:

Au Maroc, dans son mausolée, Lyautey aurait fini par n'être plus qu'un souvenir estompé par la succession des ans. Peut-être même y aurait-il couru des dangers qu'il est préférable de ne pas évoquer ici. Aux Invalides est sa vraie place, aux côtés de ses pairs en gloire militaire, même si son modèle préféré n'était pas l'Empereur. Autant que celui-ci, il a droit de cité dans ce haut-lieu national, lui, ce monarchiste, ce Prince lorrain, qui du Tonkin au Maroc, en passant par Madagascar et le Sud algérien, avait tant contribué à donner un Empire à la France.<sup>23</sup>

Despite some local desire that Lyautey be interred in Lorraine, he would indeed be buried in the military temple of the Invalides,<sup>24</sup> a hardly unintentional recognition of his status, but also a general acknowledgement of the contribution of the rapidly disappearing empire (and of the beleaguered military) to French history. Teyssier convincingly asserts, however, that the repatriation constituted something of an insult, an admission of the impossibility of maintaining Lyautey's grave in Morocco, in direct opposition to his desire for burial there. This explains precisely why the state was anxious that the ceremonies in France not be seen as a denigration of Lyautey or his work. Teyssier nevertheless judges, too harshly, that “le ‘retour des cendres’ de Lyautey ... a les allures d'un échec, ou d'une punition, car il s'inscrit dans un contexte qui est tout sauf grandiose.”<sup>25</sup>

In the occurrence, Lyautey's reburial turned into one of the last great colonial ceremonies of commemoration as France moved uncertainly towards resolution of the Algerian tragedy—in January, a referendum in France and Algeria had overwhelmingly approved self-determination for *Algérie française*. On 7 April, exploratory talks with the Algerian nationalists began in Évian. However, on 21 April, four generals—Raoul Salan, Maurice Challe, André Zeller and Edmond Jouhaud—attempted a putsch in Algiers, a military mutiny that sought to preserve French rule by taking over the government and fighting to the bitter end against both the Algerian *indépendantistes* and the peace-makers in Paris. On 24 April, de Gaulle assumed emergency powers, and two days later the rebellion was quelled.

Lyautey's remains were disinterred—with exquisite if unplanned irony—right in the midst of the rebellion, on 22 April 1961, and sent by a special train to Casablanca, then placed on the *Colbert* for the journey to France—“Pour la deuxième fois, il quitte sa terre au Maroc,” said *Paris-Match*, alluding to Lyautey's departure in

<sup>23</sup> *Actes de l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* (Paris), séance du 21 avril 1961, 192.

<sup>24</sup> The remains of *la Maréchale*, which had joined those of her husband in Morocco, were reburied at Thorey.

<sup>25</sup> Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 425.

1925. In Paris, however, the schedule for the funeral of the great colonial had to be altered because of the attempted putsch in Algiers. Indeed newspapers that reported on the return of Lyautey's remains were dominated by the sequels to the Algiers putsch and the announcement of the official opening of the Évian negotiations.<sup>26</sup>

With a measure of stability restored by early May, Lyautey's remains were supposed to travel to Paris by rail from Toulon, but there was another hitch. Because of a train strike they had to be flown to a military base near the capital on 9 May. At the Place de l'Étoile, the Minister of the Armies and other dignitaries then gathered round as Legionnaires placed the casket on a flag-draped catafalque under the Arc de Triomphe, lying in state there a signal honor given to only a few famous Frenchmen.<sup>27</sup> Moroccan *spahis* formed a torch-lit honor guard until midnight. The next morning, a gun carriage conveyed the coffin down the Champs-Élysées and across the Seine to the courtyard of the Invalides. It halted in front of a modest tribune from which President de Gaulle delivered an oration. There followed a colorful twenty-minute military parade with *spahis* and *tirailleurs marocains* in Arabic capes, Legionnaires wearing white *képis* and students from Saint-Cyr in trademark cassowary-plumed hats and red trousers. At the conclusion, de Gaulle accompanied the coffin inside the Invalides to the sound of Chopin and Berlioz for a blessing by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris before its interment in the crypt.

The repatriation of Lyautey's remains gave de Gaulle an opportunity to comment, at least implicitly, on the Algerian crisis. Two days beforehand, de Gaulle, speaking on the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, had referred to the "odious" putsch in Algiers, which he downplayed as just an "incident." He vaunted the loyalty of the administration and the military to the French state, and declared the need to solve the Algerian "problem" so that France could concentrate on its own development and modernization.<sup>28</sup> Now he saluted a man exemplary for his loyalty and obedience and a true upholder of the Republic. De Gaulle was also able to pay tribute to the practitioner of a modernizing, forward-looking colonialism. De Gaulle went even further, however, in transforming Lyautey from colonizer into an avatar of decolonization.

De Gaulle's relatively brief speech in memory of Lyautey at the Invalides was masterly—I differ with Arnaud Teyssier, who says that in reading the text "on est frappé par l'embarras qu'il trahit. Ce n'est pas un grand discours. Le général semble

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<sup>26</sup> Other articles included reports of the space voyage of Alan Shepard, the crash of an airplane flying from Brazzaville to Paris that killed sixty-nine, and the deaths of Gary Cooper and Marcel Jouhandeau. *Le Figaro*, in its editions of 10 and 11 May 1961, reported in detail on the ceremonies for the entombment of Lyautey's remains, along with several articles about his work; more succinctly, *Le Monde*, on 11 and 12 May 1961, also covered the ceremonies. *L'Humanité*, by contrast, seems to have passed it over in silence, headlining publication of a new book by Henri Alleg (who had revealed French use of torture in Algeria) and pro-peace demonstrations in Algiers, as well as the imminent opening of the PCF congress.

<sup>27</sup> These included Victor Hugo in 1885 and recently deceased military figures: Marshals Foch in 1929, Joffre in 1931, Leclerc in 1947 and de Lattre de Tassigny in 1952. Gilbert Mercier, *Lyautey, le prince lorrain* (Laxou, 1994), 99.

<sup>28</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages. Avec le renouveau. Mai 1958-juillet 1962*, t. 5 (Paris, 1970), 310-314.

contempler le cercueil avec gêne.”<sup>29</sup> De Gaulle chose his words carefully to evoke Lyautey as someone from whom France could still learn:

Dans un monde où tout change, la flamme qui l’animait est vivante, l’exemple qu’il donna reste bon, la leçon qu’il a léguée demeure féconde. Vingt-sept années après sa mort, années qui virent se transformer de fond en comble toutes les données de son époque, voici qu’il nous apparaît comme un maître d’à présent.

De Gaulle characterised Lyautey as a “grand romantique de la pensée et de l’action,” and thus a man for all times, he said, because of his human qualities, his devotion to duty and his desire to benefit all those with whom he came into contact. De Gaulle enumerated the principles of Lyautey’s colonial actions, an apologia for imperialism *à la française*:

Coloniser c’est—je le cite—”l’action constructive et bienfaisante au profit et avec l’aide des populations intéressées”, “leur progrès social, moral, économique”, “le souci de les comprendre”, “le devoir de respecter leurs moeurs et leurs traditions”, qui l’inspiraient et qu’il prescrivait.

Politically, Lyautey had not participated in the “abaissement” of Morocco, but in the “consolidation d’un État souverain ainsi qu’au développement d’une élite et d’un peuple pour les aider à devenir capable de porter, un jour, les responsabilités de l’indépendance et de la civilisation.” (One might note, in passing, the rather unreconstructed use of the word “civilization.”) De Gaulle then arrived at the crux of his eulogy: not only was Lyautey the paragon of the best intentions and accomplishments of French colonization, but he was a herald of self-determination. The president let Lyautey again speak for himself, quoting from one of his reports:

Il faut regarder bien en face la situation du monde et spécialement la situation du monde musulman et ne pas se laisser devancer par les événements. Ce n’est pas en vain qu’ont été lancées à travers le monde les formules du droit des peuples à disposer d’eux-mêmes et les idées d’émancipation et d’évolution dans le sens révolutionnaire. Il faut bien se garder de croire que les Marocains échappent ou échapperont longtemps à ce mouvement général.

De Gaulle spoke of Lyautey as a precursor of decolonization, quoting from another report he wrote in 1920:

Il est à prévoir, et je le crois comme une vérité historique, que dans un temps plus ou moins lointain l’Afrique du Nord, évoluée, vivante de sa vie autonome, se détachera de la métropole. Il faut qu’à ce moment-là—et ce doit être le but suprême de notre politique—cette séparation se fasse sans douleur et que les Africains continuent toujours à se tourner vers la France.

Such were noble objectives, and France, de Gaulle so much as said, had now accomplished them, so that the countries which had been under its control—though he

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<sup>29</sup> Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 425-426.

did not mention Algeria—could become independent. The president’s concluding line was “En vérité, le Maréchal Lyautey n’a pas fini de servir la France!”<sup>30</sup>

In subtle and eloquent language, de Gaulle thus found in Lyautey, on the very day that the date for the opening of the Évian negotiations was announced, a mandate for the independence of Algeria. As a *Figaro* journalist remarked, de Gaulle placed himself along the path laid down by Lyautey and cast himself as a disciple of the marshal whose memory he celebrated. Gérard Bauer heralded the “image de généreux courage, de conquête libérale et de véritable grandeur” of Lyautey, now incarnated in de Gaulle.<sup>31</sup> Lyautey, the patron saint of colonialism, had also become the patron saint of decolonization.

One of de Gaulle’s key accomplishments—or detractors might say, cleverest sleights-of-hand—was to transform himself from a great defender of the French empire, ruling out even the idea of colonial self-government at the Brazzaville Conference of 1944, into the great emancipator of the French colonies and the man who resolved the Algerian crisis less than twenty years later. Lyautey, too, was transformed by de Gaulle’s good offices from colonizer to proto-decolonizer. Lyautey had indeed implied that French colonies might someday become independent, though that eventuality was hardly the basis for his actions or the obvious endpoint of his programs. Choosing from Lyautey’s copious writings the quotations that spoke about self-determination and “separation” of colonies and metropole was a stroke of genius by de Gaulle. In the aftermath of the 1961 putsch, the repatriation of Lyautey’s remains gave de Gaulle a golden opportunity to portray decolonization as the logical conclusion, already foreshadowed by Lyautey, of colonialism. Moreover, the life and work of Lyautey, still championed as the best representative of progressive imperialism, could serve in a last-ditch effort to rehabilitate an imperial project dissolving in the midst of disaster and near civil war in North Africa and at home.

Only two and a half months after the Invalides ceremony, Tunisians forced France into a precipitate withdrawal from Bizerte, a military base kept when Tunisia became independent in 1956; the fighting caused the death of thirty Frenchmen and a thousand Tunisians. In Algeria, *jusqu’au-boutistes* refused to accept the coming French withdrawal from that country, and the terrorist pro-colonialist Organisation Armée Secrète exported their campaign to France, trying to assassinate de Gaulle at Pont-sur-Seine on 8 September 1961. On 17 October, a peaceful demonstration against the OAS was organised in Paris, with many Algerians breaking the curfew imposed on them to take part. The police reacted violently, and several dozens of Algerian demonstrators died in the French capital.<sup>32</sup> The move towards Algerian independence nevertheless continued. By early 1962, with independence secured, a million *pieds-noirs* and tens of thousands of *harkis* fled the former French outpost where 30,000 French soldiers and several hundred thousand Algerians had lost their lives in eight years of warfare. The *rapatriés*, hardly welcomed in France, brought with them resentment at their exile, grief at the loss of lands and livelihoods and anger at a government that many accused of having abandoned *Algérie française*. France was left with the painful wounds of the war, the recrimination of *pieds-noirs* and a

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-317.

<sup>31</sup> *Le Figaro*, 11 May 1961.

<sup>32</sup> Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford, 2006).

long-lasting and broadly-based refusal to come to terms either with that war or with its colonial record in general.<sup>33</sup>

Two years after repatriation of Lyautey's remains and a year after the French flag had been lowered over Algeria, a final ceremony was held in memory of Lyautey. This accompanied the transfer of his remains from the crypt of the Invalides, where they had been placed in 1961, to a sarcophagus opposite the tomb of Marshal Foch in the "dome," along the gallery above the tomb of Napoleon. (When it was decided to accord Lyautey such a prominent spot is unknown.<sup>34</sup>) In the hierarchy of burials, the gallery overlooking Napoleon's giant sarcophagus takes pride of place with a monument to Vauban (containing his heart), the tomb of Joseph Bonaparte, and that of Foch (buried there in 1929). The gesture joined the hero of the First Empire to the hero of the overseas empire, and the hero of the First World War to the fighter of colonial wars. Since Lyautey's military career was almost entirely a colonial one, giving him a place in the "dome" constituted an acknowledgement of the place of colonialism in French history. It also signaled the positive role of the colonial military forces, corps that sometimes had been thought of as staffed by adventurers and outsiders rather than more "serious" soldiers. It provided recognition to an army hemorrhaged and defeated in Indochina and Algeria. Perhaps it was meant as a consolation, too, to defenders of empire—diehard colonialists, *anciens combattants* and *rapatriés*—who felt rejected and demeaned in newly post-colonial France. Lyautey's tomb thus represented a monument to a defunct empire.

On 22 March 1963, a religious ceremony for this definitive entombment of Lyautey's remains took place in Saint-Louis des Invalides, attended by members of Lyautey's family and former members of his staff, ministers, the Count of Paris (the Legitimist pretender), Marshal Juin (the only surviving French marshal) and several generals, *académiciens* and seventeen ambassadors—including those of Morocco, Madagascar, Lebanon and Vietnam. President de Gaulle was represented at the service, though he did not attend, perhaps a signal that colonial affairs were no longer the order of the day. On each side of the flag-draped coffin stood a line of *saint-cyriens* and *spahis* as a requiem mass was celebrated by a Jesuit chaplain to music by Czerny, Nibelle and Bach. The chaplain of the Invalides, in his homily, noted that Lyautey would lie alongside other great men of France's military past. Furthermore, he celebrated Lyautey as a hero for both colonizers and colonized.

Par sa présence, il rappellera aux hommes qui viendront se recueillir dans la chapelle où il va être déposé, l'oeuvre extérieure de la France, et les anciens "d'outre-mer" et tous ceux qui y ont perdu un être cher se retrouveront chez eux.

Lyautey's tomb, Canon Thorel predicted, would become a *lieu de mémoire* for colonials and colonialists, including veterans of overseas service, as well as a reminder of France's colonial history for future pilgrims:

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<sup>33</sup> See Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli: La Mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris, 1991); and Benjamin Stora and Mohammed Harbi, eds., *La Guerre d'Algérie: 1954-2004, la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> The Musée de l'Armée at the Hôtel des Invalides and the Service historique de l'Armée at the Château de Vincennes have both told me that they have no records concerning his reburial.

Si la France est encore ce qu'elle est, si tant de vocations sont nées dans la gratuité et le désintéressement pour faire rayonner la grandeur de notre civilisation, porter aux peuples d'Asie et d'Afrique le meilleur de nous-mêmes, les aider à saisir leur personnalité, *les aimer* [*sic*] et leur permettre de prendre le départ, de se retrouver et de s'unir, c'est parce que nous avons eu la chance, parce que ces peuples ont eu la grâce, d'avoir un Lyautey et son équipe. Sa mémoire sera toujours vénérée et respectée.<sup>35</sup>

As trumpets sounded, eight men from the Foreign Legion shouldered Lyautey's coffin and in their traditional slow march carried it to the bronze sarcophagus designed by Albert Laprade, who had been Lyautey's chief urban planner in Morocco and architect of the Musée colonial built in Paris for the 1931 exhibition.<sup>36</sup> On one side was engraved in gold a quotation from Lyautey, repeated in an Arabic translation on the other side. The phrase revealed unbounded pride, although in the original it sounded somewhat less self-satisfied.<sup>37</sup> In its abridged form, it encapsulates the colonialists' vision of the French colonial leader: "Être de ceux auxquels les hommes croient, dans les yeux desquels des milliers d'yeux cherchent l'ordre, à la voix desquels des routes s'ouvrent, des pays se peuplent, des villes surgissent." To the sound of a drum-roll and the last post, the Legionnaires laid Lyautey to rest.<sup>38</sup> The eulogy for Lyautey formed an epitaph for empire, and the colonies were grandiosely entombed with Lyautey.

The chaplain's oration in 1963 echoes de Gaulle's speech in 1961, but by now the empire had moved from current events into history, and the echoes can just be heard, too, of debates on the French retreat from empire. The French were summoned to accept a decolonization no longer in progress but a *fait accompli*, to mourn the loss of comrades in colonial wars and compatriots who pioneered colonization, and also to grieve for the loss of empire itself. Here can be heard in stronger tones an attempt to rescue imperialism from its detractors, to voice a defense for the actions of colonials—many of whom remained angrily unreconciled to the "abandonment" of empire.

These two last ceremonies—the reception of Lyautey's remains at the Invalides in the midst of the ultimate crisis of French decolonization and then the transfer of his remains to the grand tomb in the "dome"—mark the final installments in Lyautey's posthumous peregrinations. Yet Lyautey would continue to represent "a certain idea" of France overseas and to be so recalled, for instance, in a monument placed outside the Ecole Militaire in 1984, a statue erected behind the Eglise des Cordeliers in Nancy a decade later, and a monument unveiled in Carnoux-en-Provence, a town in the Midi constructed *de novo* as a refuge for *rapatriés* from

<sup>35</sup> Paul Mousset, "Ce 22 mars, aux Invalides, Lyautey," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15 April 1963): 590-594, from which my account is taken.

<sup>36</sup> The building constructed for the Musée colonial, which later became the Musée national des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, now houses the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted from one of his letters written in Vietnam, the full sentence read "J'ai cru que peut-être j'allais être un de ceux auxquels les hommes croient, dans les yeux desquels des milliers d'yeux cherchent l'ordre, à la voix et à la plume duquel les routes s'ouvrent, des pays se repeuplent, des villes surgissent. Je me suis bercé de tout cela." (Quoted in Teyssier, *Lyautey*, 427.)

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Morocco (and, later, Algeria). Lyautey, in statuary, street names and other commemorations—including a website<sup>39</sup>—remains the most monumentalized of all French colonialists.

What do Lyautey's funerals tell us about French history? They show, of course, the important role of ceremony and commemoration in modern France, of the "sites of memory" that tombs exemplify and of the "memory work" of remembering and sometimes forgetting (but also misremembering) historical figures and events.

Furthermore, Lyautey's funerals illustrate some interesting links between Pétain and de Gaulle. Rudolph Binion has written about the ambivalence of de Gaulle towards his former mentor and evoked the eerie parallels between Pétain's assumption of power in 1940 and de Gaulle's takeover in 1958. Psychohistorically, 1958 was a traumatic reliving of 1940 with "de Gaulle as Pétain."<sup>40</sup> There are also some parallels between 1934 and 1961, as the only two French military officers to serve as heads of state in the twentieth century (although, in the case of Pétain, before he did so) were called on to deliver a eulogy for a fellow military hero. The riots of February 1934 and the attempted putsch of April 1961 convulsed France, and both Pétain and de Gaulle summoned the country to rally round the Republic. The military, at least a loyal military, would regenerate France in times of trouble. Decolonization, for de Gaulle, represented a realistic response to changing conditions—he remarked that because it served French interest therefore it was French policy—in a pragmatism of the sort that replaced the entrenched ideologies against which Pétain had warned his countrymen. In 1934 *salut par l'empire* pointed the way forward for France; in 1940, the *ralliement* of French colonies—outposts such as the territories of Oceania, and Chad under Governor Félix Éboué—provided the first beachheads for the Free French reconquest of the homeland, and colonial troops played a significant role in the liberation of the metropole. The *force noire* of colonial soldiers had been used by Pétain in the First World War and by de Gaulle in the Second World War, but de Gaulle now implemented the nuclear *force de frappe* as a substitute for the empire in order to maintain France's international position. Grandeur might have different foundations, but the pursuit of Gallic glory, for Lyautey, Pétain and de Gaulle, remained a national vocation.

From the perspective of colonial history, Lyautey's funerals tell us about the ways that colonialism could be used not just as a part of France's national "mission statement," but also to explain, to justify and to legitimize national endeavors. Pétain in 1934, in the midst of a growing international crisis, used colonialism to call for the defense of France (or his version of true France) from its enemies, both on the looming battlefields and in the domestic arena. In 1961, de Gaulle called once again for national unity and demanded the obedience of France's military to presidential authority and the policies of the head of state. Lyautey, with his vision of *mise en valeur* of the colonies, was recruited to give support to de Gaulle's own program of post-colonial development and economic and social modernization, just as he had been conjured to promote the government's policies in the 1930s.

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<sup>39</sup> The website (<http://www.lyautey.mosaiqueinformatique.fr/>), speaking for the Association Nationale Maréchal Lyautey, mounts a spirited defence of Lyautey's memory, for instance, in criticising the transformation of the old Musée colonial into a museum of immigration: "Lyautey nous interpelle: Pourquoi avez-vous laissé profaner ce Palais et les symboles de la grandeur de la France?"

<sup>40</sup> Rudolph Binion, "De Gaulle as Pétain," *Clio's Psyche* 12:2 (2005), 1, 56-66.

Finally, the funerals illustrate the creation and perpetuation of a particular view of colonialism. In speaking of the way in which Lyautey's 1961 entombment was used to defuse resistance to decolonization, Ben-Amos cogently states, "Lyautey's body left France when the colonial empire was at its apogee. It came back when the empire was being dismantled."<sup>41</sup> Yet despite the dramatic sea-change from the 1930s to the 1960s to which de Gaulle referred, the official view of the colonial mission remained little changed. Lyautey in the 1930s but also in the 1960s (and even beyond) embodied the acceptable face of colonialism, the wise and valorous creator of empire who respected local cultures, worked hand-in-hand with indigenous authorities, undertook development projects and contributed to national well-being. Even in 1934, Pétain said relatively little in his eulogy for Lyautey about conquest and war, and nothing (not surprisingly) about land despoliation, economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement or cultural alienation. Three decades later, Lyautey's reputation was even more secure, though he had now become the stuff of legend. The actual import of his activities in Algeria, Tonkin, Madagascar and Morocco was not critically scrutinized, either in the speeches at his funerals or in reports in the press, despite the unraveling of empire across the Mediterranean. With de Gaulle's oratorical spin, Lyautey could actually be seen as the defender of self-determination and the prophet of emancipation, and decolonization became the logical endpoint of colonialism. Neither Pétain nor de Gaulle (or Canon Thorel in 1963) dared question, let alone debate, the ideological and cultural assumptions on which colonialism rested. The right to empire was a given, and colonialism kept a heroic and noble reputation. Though de Gaulle spoke as head of state asserting his political authority, and Thorel as a chaplain whose words more obviously reflect the grievances of *rapatriés* and *anciens combattants*, their views do not clash with each other or with those of Pétain decades before. The basic suppositions of colonialism remained unchallenged. The myth of empire incarnated by Lyautey—a *mission civilisatrice* undertaken for the greater good of France and the lands over which it ruled—survived even amidst the ruins of empire. It would be another generation after the inhumation of Lyautey in the Invalides before France would begin (and then only with reluctance) the exhumation of a colonial past that now refuses to lie at rest.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France*, 234.

<sup>42</sup> A certain change of approach in the "burial politics" of colonial figures can be discerned with the *panthéonisation* of the Revolutionary anti-slavery campaigner Abbé Grégoire in 1989 and the unveiling in the Panthéon of a plaque to the black anti-slavery activist Louis Delgrès in 1998. (See Laurent Dubois, "Haunting Delgrès," *Radical History Review*, No. 78 (2000): 166-177.) On the death of the poet and political leader Aimé Césaire in 2008, there were suggestions that he be entombed in the Panthéon, but his family insisted that he be buried in his native Martinique.