

Glossary

Génovéfains: a community of canons, dedicated to the veneration of Saint Genevieve.

Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780): the architect of the Pantheon and chief representative of the neoclassical style under Louis XVI.

Maroufflé: painting whose canvas is glued to another surface.

Léon Foucault (1819-1868): a physicist who installed his pendulum in the Pantheon in 1851.

Year II: the second year after the foundation of the French Republic in September 1792.

The Enlightenment: term used to describe the 18th century and its philosophers and thinkers who favoured reason and science.

Constituent Assembly: an assembly convened in order to draw up a constitution. That of 1789 led to the end of the Ancien Régime.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 1h30

Guided tours of the nave (in French) all year round.

Guided tours of the upper parts between April and October.

Children's activities.

Disability-friendly tours available.



The "Centre des monuments nationaux" publishes a collection of guides of French monuments available in several languages. These "Éditions du patrimoine" publications are on sale in the bookshop.

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A symbol in the city

Location

This vast project was undertaken to further the political agenda of Louis XV. Situated at the heart of a hotbed of religious dispute, with the Jansenists worshipping at Saint-Médard, the new building was designed to restore the prestige of a divided church. In 1763, Soufflot* drew up plans for a monumental square. A law school was built opposite the church between 1771 and 1783, followed by a school of theology.

Greek purity and Gothic lightness

Symbolic of the architectural renewal and experimental research of the Enlightenment*, Soufflot's* church is a combination of different styles.

He drew from Greek architecture in his use of order, ornamental vocabulary, Corinthian and Tuscan orders, and a centred Greek cruciform plan.

The architect also used the Gothic system of arches, flying buttresses and as light a structure as possible, as can be seen by his desire to reduce the size of the triangular transept crossover supports. The dome is inspired by similar Renaissance structures. Soufflot included 45 clerestory windows to flood the building with natural light. Almost all of these were bricked up during the French Revolution by the architectural theorist Quatremère de Quincy, by order of the Constituent Assembly*, to give the building a more sepulchral feel.

* See the glossary overleaf.

From church to Pantheon

The cult of the Revolution

In search of a fitting resting place for the body of Mirabeau, the Constituent Assembly* passed a decree on April 4 1791 to turn the basilica into a temple to house the ashes of the nation's great men.

During the Revolution, Voltaire (1791), Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Marat (1794) were also honoured in this way. The ashes of Mirabeau and Marat were later removed. Such honours were highly symbolic and changed with the political climate.

Rousseau, "the father of equality", lies opposite Voltaire, his sworn enemy who also opposed the clergy and despots. The Revolution named them both as emblems of the Enlightenment* and saw their works as heralding the arrival of the new regime, brushing over the finer details of their respective concepts of culture and welfare, which were diametrically opposed to each other.

A political instrument of the State

Napoleon I continued to inter the great servants of the State in the crypt. Given the huge public response to the death of Victor Hugo in 1885, only this great basilica seemed fit to be his final resting place.

Since then, successive French Presidents have consented to honour various illustrious citizens here, including politicians, authors, scientists, Resistance fighters and promoters of the values of the Republic and the nation (including André Malraux in 1996 and Alexandre Dumas in 2002).

* See the glossary overleaf.

The Pantheon

english

From Christian basilica to temple of the nation

Christian basilica

Following his conversion to Christianity in 507 AD, King Clovis was the first to build a basilica on this site, destined to house his tomb and that of his queen, Clotilde. Saint Geneviève, who protected Paris from the barbarians, was buried here in 512 AD. Soon afterwards, care of the relics of Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, was entrusted to an order of regular canons, the Génovéfains*.

Soufflot's masterpiece



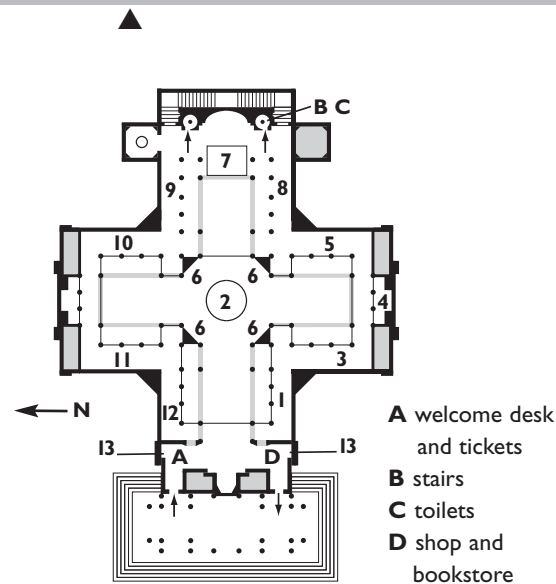
The basilica as it was at the end of the 18th century

In 1744, Louis XV attributed his recovery from serious illness to prayers made to Saint Geneviève, and pledged to dedicate a prestigious church to her name. In 1755, design of the new basilica was entrusted to Soufflot*, an architect whose ambition was to outdo the church of St. Peter in Rome. His associate, Rondelet, completed the building in 1790.

The national Pantheon

In 1791, the monument was turned into the national Pantheon. For two periods during the 19th century, the huge edifice was home to Christian worship before finally being given over to secular use in 1885, with the funeral of Victor Hugo.

* See the glossary overleaf.



Main floor

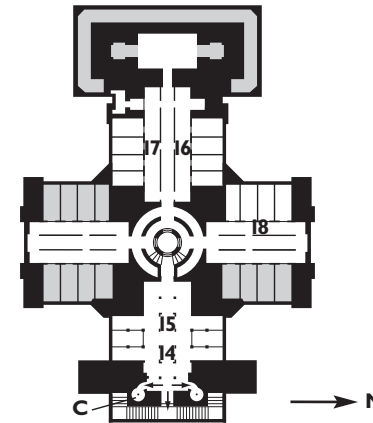
From the entrance to the nave onwards, the huge central space is emphasised by the rows of Corinthian-style columns along each side aisle. At the intersection of the four arms of the symmetrical ground plan, the transept crossing is delineated by thick pillars supporting the weight of the dome.

From 1874 onwards, paintings on canvas marouflé* were added on walls whose windows had been bricked up in 1792-93. The director of Fine Arts, the Marquis of Chennevières, commissioned a cycle of paintings by the most famous artists of the day, dedicated to the history of Saint Geneviève and the epic story of the beginnings of both Christianity and the monarchy in France. The work of artists such as Puvis de Chavannes and Jean-Paul Laurens can be seen, added during one of the periods when the building was again being used as a church.

- 1 *The childhood of Saint Geneviève*, the patron saint of Paris.
- 2 *Foucault's pendulum** demonstrating the rotation of the earth, was first installed in the

monument in 1851. It was removed prior to the future Napoleon III returning the monument to religious use, and then replaced by Camille Flammarion during the government's anti-clerical drive on the eve of the law separating Church and State, passed in 1905. It is illustrative of how scientific knowledge started to become more accessible to the wider public. The current ball dates from 1995.

- 3 *Charlemagne*, initiator of the first parish schools, crowned in Rome in 800 AD.
 - 4 *The miracles of Saint Geneviève* show the procession organized in 1496 to ward off the rains which were flooding the city, and the healings attributed to the saint's relics during an epidemic in 1130.
 - 5 *The Baptism of Clovis* commemorates the conversion to Christianity of the founder of the first basilica.
 - 6 *Sculptures* from the early 20th century depict subjects including the French Revolution, at the base of the pillars supporting the dome.
 - 7 *The National Convention* by Sicard (1921-1924) shows Marianne surrounded by members of parliament and soldiers from the year II*.
 - 8 *The death of Saint Geneviève* and the burial of her remains alongside those of Clovis marks a transition to the crypt.
- Staircase **B** leads down to the crypt, the final resting place of various great men and women.
- 9 *Saint Geneviève* brought supplies to Paris when it was besieged by Attila's Huns.
 - 10 11 *Joan of Arc and Saint Louis, King of France* are the other famous Christian heroes from the history of France who lie here.
 - 12 *Attila's march and Saint Geneviève comforting Parisians*.
 - 13 *The life of Saint Denis*, missionary to Gaul and first Bishop of Paris.



The crypt

- 14 *The heart of Leon Gambetta*, 1838-1882 (in the urn opposite the glass door). The Third Republic had it moved here on 11 November 1920 in homage to its founder.
- 15 *Vestibule*. In the first section of the crypt, the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau can be seen opposite each other. A statue of Voltaire by Houdon stands before his tomb, while Rousseau's is shaped like a rustic temple, recalling his theories on nature. Both these philosophers are considered to be symbols of the Enlightenment*. *Soufflot's tomb** was added in 1829.
- 16 *West arm, on the right*. The 41 great dignitaries of the Empire lie in the first vaults on the other side of the rotunda. They were buried from 1806 onwards by order of the Emperor; they include Portalis and Tronchet, who wrote the Civil Code.
- 17 *West arm, on the left*. *Victor Schoelcher* was buried on the centenary of the abolition of slavery next to *Jean Jaurès*, the father of French socialism, assassinated in 1914, and *Félix Éboué*, the first overseas French resistance fighter.

Victor Hugo and *Émile Zola*. These two writers are famous for their support for Republican ideals and their fight for fundamental freedoms. In 2002, the ashes of *Alexandre Dumas*, the great popular author, were laid to rest in this vault. The remains of other famous people moved here to commemorate the centenary of the Revolution lie in front of the grave of *Maréchal Lannes*.

- 18 *North arm*. *Jean Moulin*, a French Resistance hero and *André Malraux*, author and Culture Minister, lie next to *Jean Monnet*, a founder of the European Community and *René Cassin*, a spiritual father and main author of the Universal Declaration of human rights adopted by the UN in 1948. In the next vault lie the remains of those buried here on the occasion of the bicentenary of the Revolution, and further along, *Pierre and Marie Curie*, Nobel Laureates in physics for their work on radium.

Upper areas

The external colonnade at the base of the dome offers sweeping views over Paris. Access, by guided tour only, is possible from April to October.

The western facade

Access to the Pantheon is via a monumental peristyle, inspired by the Pantheon of Agrippa in Rome. The current pediment, the fourth since the construction of the building, was created in 1837 by David d'Angers, depicting "The fatherland bestowing its rewards". Images of Voltaire and Rousseau appear in the pediment, seated on the left.

* See the glossary overleaf.