

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE EMPEROR'S TEARS: GRIEF AND
MOURNING IN THE PROPAGANDA OF
NAPOLEONIC FRANCE

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This thesis explores Napoleon's use of grief and mourning in propaganda. Drawing on military bulletins, published accounts of funerals, and poetry and prose, this thesis examines portrayals of the deaths of Jean Lannes and Géraud-Christophe Michel Duroc in official propaganda, and the responses these portrayals provoked in popular culture and private correspondence. This thesis outlines ways in which Napoleon and his government portrayed and evoked grief and mourning in order to influence public opinion, including depicting Napoleon's grief in order to construct a sympathetic portrait of him, evoking grief within the army as a source of motivation, and using public commemoration of the dead to glorify the empire and provide a model of heroism and devotion for France's soldiers and citizens to emulate.

THE EMPEROR'S TEARS: GRIEF AND MOURNING IN THE PROPAGANDA
OF NAPOLEONIC FRANCE

by

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Introduction

On July 6, 1810—the first anniversary of the French victory over the Austrians at the battle of Wagram—the funeral procession for the imperial marshal Jean Lannes made its way across Paris. This was the last stage of an elaborate public commemoration that Napoleon’s government staged for Lannes, who had died two months before Wagram of wounds suffered during the battle of Aspern-Essling. Honoring Lannes on the anniversary of Wagram, a French victory, rather than Aspern-Essling, Napoleon’s first major defeat, gave the day a celebratory nature. Beginning at the chapel in the military hospital of Les Invalides, where Lannes’s body had rested for three days and where the Bishop of Ghent had just said a funeral mass for him, and terminating at the Pantheon, where he would be buried among France’s most honored dead, the procession included the Empire’s most eminent military and civil officials. Outside the Pantheon, Lannes’s fellow marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout extolled the dead man’s devotion to Napoleon in his eulogy, and held up his courage and loyalty as examples for others to follow. Recapitulating a scene depicted in one of Napoleon’s military bulletins and widely published in French newspapers, in which Napoleon had temporarily abandoned the battle in order to grieve for his wounded friend, Davout commented, “Happy is he who, in dying, could inspire similar regrets and deserve similar tears!”¹

With Lannes’s funeral, more than a year after this battlefield scene ostensibly took place, the French people had a final opportunity to share in Napoleon’s regrets and tears. While Lannes was not the first dead general whom the Napoleonic regime

¹ *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

had publicly honored, the pageantry surrounding his funeral far surpassed previous commemorations. Under Napoleon's direction, the minister of war and the minister of religion arranged ceremonies that encouraged a nationwide outpouring of grief over Lannes's death. At every step, these ceremonies displayed themes of patriotism, loyalty to the Emperor, and the army's importance to the nation. From a procession that escorted Lannes's body from Strasbourg to Paris over the course of more than a month, to a decree ordering solemn services in every imperial department on the day of the Paris funeral, Napoleon and his ministers enacted a series of rituals that evoked grief and mourning in service of glorifying the Emperor and his Empire.

Grief and mourning are two separate but closely related concepts. Writing on modern experiences of grief, the sociologist Lyn H. Lofland defines grief as "a response to the involuntary loss through death of a human being who is viewed as significant by the actor of reference," and draws a crucial distinction between grief and mourning: grief is the felt emotion, mourning is the action or display of emotion.² As Lofland notes, mourning and grief are not necessarily connected: the activities and arrangements that constitute mourning in a particular society can occur separately from actual feelings of grief. Public expressions of grief and mourning need to be read in the context of a particular period's attitudes towards emotional displays—what Peter and Carol Stearns describe as the "emotionological" context.³ Early nineteenth century France was a time of changing standards of emotional expression,

² Lyn H. Lofland, "The Social Shaping of Emotion: The Case of Grief," *Symbolic Interaction* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1985), 172, 173. For more on the distinction between grief and mourning, see John Bowlby, "Processes of Mourning," *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 42 (Jan. 1961), 317-340.

³ See Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (Oct. 1985), 813-36.

as the displays of strong emotion that had characterized public life during the *ancien régime* and the French Revolution were relegated to private, individual life.⁴ However, sentimentality did not disappear entirely from public discourse, as Davout's reference to Napoleon's tears shows. As both Sarah Horowitz and Brian Joseph Martin have argued, strong emotional attachments endured in the army, continuing on from the revolutionary government's attempts to transform it into a more fraternal, egalitarian institution.⁵

This thesis will examine how Napoleon and his government used propaganda to both portray and evoke grief and mourning among France's soldiers and citizens between 1804 and 1814. I will focus on propaganda related to the deaths of two figures in Napoleon's inner circle: Jean Lannes (1769-1809) and Michel Duroc (1772-1813). In the course of this study, I will draw on military bulletins, newspapers, and published accounts of ceremonies, as well as poetry and prose published in response to official accounts, in order to form a larger picture of the effects of the government's uses of grief and mourning in propaganda.

Both Lannes and Duroc were close personal friends of Napoleon in addition to their formal roles in the empire. Lannes, named a marshal at the Empire's inception in 1804 and Duke of Montebello in 1808, was one of Napoleon's most accomplished generals. A companion in arms of the young Bonaparte beginning with the 1796-97 conquest of Italy, he remained close to Napoleon despite being banished to a

⁴ William Reddy, "Sentiment and its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History* 72 (March 2000): 145-48.

⁵ Sarah Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 38; Brian Joseph Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France* (Durham, NH: New Hampshire University Press, 2011), 19-20, 38-39.

diplomatic post in Portugal in 1801 following a financial scandal. One of Napoleon's secretaries described Lannes's insistence on continuing to *tutoyer* Napoleon, in public as well as private, after Napoleon seized power in 1799, a reflection on the closeness of their friendship.⁶ Recovering Napoleon's favor after his return from Portugal, Lannes played a major role in Napoleon's military victories in the campaigns of 1805, 1806-07, and 1809 in central Europe, as well as the Peninsular War in 1808 and early 1809. Wounded by a cannonball in combat against the Austrians on May 22, 1809, he survived the amputation of one of his legs but died of fever nine days later. Writing to Lannes's widow, Napoleon lamented the loss of "the most distinguished general of my armies, my comrade in arms for sixteen years, the one whom I considered my best friend."⁷

As a military man who died of wounds sustained in battle, Duroc's fate bears superficial similarities to Lannes's, but his role in the Empire was much more complex.⁸ Originally an artillery officer, Duroc became Napoleon's aide-de-camp during the first Italian campaign and undertook diplomatic missions to St. Petersburg and Berlin during the Consulate and the first years of the Empire. His main role during the Empire, however, was as Grand Marshal of the Palace, responsible for running the imperial household and ensuring Napoleon's personal safety. His position as one of Napoleon's few confidants also made him a vital mediator between

⁶ Claude-François de Méneval, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Napoléon I^{er}, depuis 1802 jusqu'à 1815* (Paris: Dentu, 1894), 2:440.

⁷ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}, publiée par l'ordre de l'empereur Napoléon III* (Paris: Plon et Dumaine, 1858-70), 15282, 19:72.

⁸ Duroc's full name has proved puzzling for historians. Baptized Géraud-Christophe de Michel du Roc, various works refer to him as Géraud, Michel, Christophe, and even Gérard. As his name appears as Michel Duroc in imperial documents from 1805 onwards—the December 1806 suspension of hostilities with Prussia, for example—that is the nomenclature I use here.

Napoleon and his subordinates. Emmanuel de Las Cases described him as one of the few people who could persuade Napoleon to amend orders given in a fit of temper, having “the secret, perhaps the right” of directing the Emperor’s feelings and opinions; he added that “it was to the private man above all that [Duroc] was devoted, far more than to the monarch.”⁹ Las Cases further argued that Duroc’s untimely death—on May 23, 1813, after being wounded in a skirmish the day before—was a “national calamity” because he would no longer be able to exercise a moderating influence over the Emperor.¹⁰ While this claim may have been hyperbolic, it reflects the strength of Duroc’s personal relationship with Napoleon.

Lannes and Duroc were far from the only members of the imperial elite to meet premature deaths on the battlefield.¹¹ However, the public spectacles surrounding Lannes’s and Duroc’s deaths present a unique opportunity to examine how Napoleon and other imperial officials portrayed and evoked grief and mourning to further political agendas. The two men’s close relationships with Napoleon, along with their key roles in the army and the imperial household, made them the object of public commemorations in Paris and elsewhere. Both their deaths, too, provoked a display of grief from the Emperor himself. The military bulletins published in French newspapers vividly described both Lannes’s and Duroc’s deathbed conversations with Napoleon, portrayals that elicited a range of responses in popular culture. The depictions of Lannes’s and Duroc’s deaths demonstrate the complex relationship

⁹ Emmanuel de Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 1:362.

¹⁰ Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, 1:363.

¹¹ Work on commemorations for French generals and soldiers who died during Napoleon’s rule includes Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 69-89, and Jean-Paul Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire: l’armée au coeur de la France de Napoléon* (Paris: Aubier, 2006), 249-347.

between a sovereign's personal grief and mourning as a political gesture: both the bulletins and cultural responses to them focused as much on Napoleon's reactions to their deaths as the deaths themselves.

While the term "propaganda," in its modern sense of information disseminated in order to further a particular agenda, dates from the early twentieth century, historians have frequently employed this term to describe Napoleon's deliberate efforts to manipulate public opinion in France and across Europe.¹² Robert Holtman argues that Napoleon was "the first modern propagandist," pointing to both his direct addresses to his subjects through newspapers and proclamations and his systematic use of government bureaucracy to produce and disseminate propaganda on a broad scale as evidence for this claim.¹³ Jacques Ellul defines pre-twentieth century propaganda as "the collection of methods used by a power...with a view to obtaining ideological and psychological effects," a purposely broad definition that easily encompasses Napoleon's activities, as well as those of his ministers and representatives under his direction.¹⁴ As Holtman and others have discussed, Napoleon devoted considerable time and resources towards influencing public opinion by means of newspapers and other publications, the arts, and a variety of other devices.

¹² Robert Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), xi. In addition to Holtman, overviews of Napoleonic propaganda include Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), especially 19-28, and Jacques Ellul, *Histoire de la propagande* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 86-92. For a more equivocal discussion of Napoleon's use of propaganda, see Steven Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life* (New York: Scribner, 2004), 316-19.

¹³ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 246.

¹⁴ Ellul, *Histoire de la propagande*, 6.

Napoleon and his collaborators portrayed aspects of both grief and mourning in propaganda, depicting individual grief in printed publications as well as staging mourning displays, such as funerals and church services. In doing so, they built on frameworks established during the French Revolution. Mona Ozouf and Joseph Clarke have both examined the role of official funerals in revolutionary France.¹⁵ Developing in parallel with national festivals—as communal, national events designed to model good citizenship and republican values—public funerals during the French Revolution formed one element of public instruction. Clarke’s work, in particular, highlights how public commemoration of the dead increasingly focused on honoring military casualties over the course of the revolution, a trend that laid the foundation for Napoleon’s glorification of past and present French military heroes.

Beginning under the Consulate, Napoleon and his ministers used these existing frameworks to craft displays of public mourning that reflected glory on the sovereign, the army, and France as a whole. This was most visible in Napoleon’s revival of the Pantheon, which the revolutionary government had established as a burial place for the nation’s illustrious dead in 1791; while the building had been all but abandoned between 1794 and 1806, Napoleon’s government ultimately installed more people in it than any regime before or since. This focus on mourning rites as a means of influencing public opinion appeared, too, in the funeral ceremonies for Lannes in 1810, which were repeated across France’s departments as well as in the capital. In Napoleonic France, public displays and ceremonies—funerary processions,

¹⁵ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); Joseph Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

funeral orations, church services—provided an official, social dimension of mourning for the nation to experience, one that focused heavily on glorifying the army and Napoleon personally.

In addition to public ceremonies, this thesis focuses on printed propaganda, taking Napoleon's military bulletins as a starting point. Generally written or edited by Napoleon himself, these military dispatches were Napoleon's primary means of communication with both his army and his subjects while on campaign. First published in the government's official newspaper, the *Gazette nationale, ou le Moniteur universel* (commonly referred to as the *Moniteur*), they were reprinted in other French newspapers and circulated widely both within and outside France. Notorious even at the time for their factual distortions and inaccuracies—"lying like a bulletin" became an idiom—the bulletins played a major role as a means of both spreading news of the army's proceedings and of shaping public opinion in France and internationally.¹⁶ While broadly focused on describing the French army's military activities, the bulletins often highlighted individual soldiers, whether to valorize the living or honor the dead. Duroc and Lannes's deaths, as described in the pages of the bulletin, fitted into an established convention of vivid descriptions of individual actions in Napoleon's dispatches, a convention constructed to present an idealized vision of war. Michael J. Hughes describes this practice of portraying soldiers' deaths in battle as creating a "myth of the glorious death" that aimed to inspire soldiers to

¹⁶ Two of Napoleon's former secretaries discussed the phrase "lying like a bulletin" in their memoirs, suggesting it was fairly widespread, though the two men take very different stances on the bulletins' relative truthfulness. See Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, ministre d'État* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1829), 4:350, 8:193, and Agathon Fain, *Mémoires du baron Fain, premier secrétaire du cabinet de l'Empereur* (Paris: Plon, 1908), 272.

give their lives for the Emperor and victory.¹⁷ This myth represented a major element in the Napoleon's use of grief and mourning in propaganda, one intended to inspire French soldiers—present and future—to greater exertions.

Beyond publishing the bulletins, French newspapers played a key role in government propaganda. From early in his career, Napoleon paid close attention to newspapers' use in disseminating propaganda, establishing local newspapers during the Italian campaign of 1796-97 to spread news of the army's exploits more widely. The government kept strict control over French newspapers: in 1800, Napoleon pruned the number of daily Paris newspapers from 73 to 13, which he further reduced to four in 1811.¹⁸ The government taxed the remaining newspapers heavily, leaving them dependent on the regime's financial support for survival. The *Moniteur*, the government's official newspaper, was a primary vehicle for propaganda: in addition to printing the military bulletins, it carried articles penned by members of the imperial cabinet and, more rarely, Napoleon himself. As well as printing the bulletins that described Lannes's and Duroc's deaths, the newspaper published the full program of Lannes's funeral ceremonies in 1810, as well as a description of his funeral in Paris written by the minister of war and signed by three members of Napoleon's cabinet.

Gauging public opinion during a period of heavy government censorship is far from a straightforward task. The imperial government's exercise of both preliminary and punitive censorship, as well as financial control over major newspapers, limited reactions to official propaganda. This thesis will examine other publications—including poetry, plays, and pamphlets—that responded to imperial propaganda.

¹⁷ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 85.

¹⁸ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 44.

While the government's censorship means that these works were generally uncritical of Napoleon and the empire, they can nevertheless provide insight on how the Napoleonic propaganda was received and repeated—or not—by people outside the government hierarchy. Which ideas reappeared in other publications, and how the authors employed and presented these ideas, can still give some indication of the impressions that imperial propaganda made on the general public. Published poems, for example, often echoed the bulletins' valorization of dead military heroes but, especially in the later years of the empire, lacked the bellicosity found in bulletins or the *Moniteur*—suggesting that Napoleonic propaganda was failing to make an impact on a country increasingly weary of war.

This thesis is divided into three main sections. Chapter One examines portrayals of Napoleon's grief in the military bulletins from 1805 to 1813. Beginning with a discussion of the bulletins' production and distribution, it explores what depictions of Napoleon's grief sought to accomplish: in particular, what qualities representations of the Emperor's display of grief emphasized and how Napoleon and his ministers intended the nation to see him. This chapter considers three bulletins in particular: two, published in 1809, that reported Lannes's injury and death, and one that described Duroc's death in 1813. Both deaths made a profound emotional impact on Napoleon, and the bulletins passed on his reaction, in edited form, to their audience. Lannes's and Duroc's deaths also occurred in very different contexts—near the height of Napoleon's power in 1809, and at the beginning of the empire's downfall in 1813—and the bulletins' depictions of their deaths, as well as cultural

responses to those depictions, demonstrate changing French attitudes towards Napoleon's wars.

Chapter Two looks at the ways in which imperial propaganda evoked grief within the army as a source of motivation. Drawing on Michael J. Hughes's analysis of Napoleon's development of a "new model of martyrdom," for imperial soldiers, this section explores how imperial propaganda employed grief and mourning to glorify dying in the service of Napoleon and France.¹⁹ As discussed above, Napoleon's military bulletins depicted soldiers' last moments in a manner that emphasized their devotion to the Emperor. This chapter considers how emotional scenes in bulletins affected military morale. Furthermore, it examines the funeral ceremonies for Lannes in Paris in 1810, designed by the minister of war and featuring a heavy military presence, which cast Lannes as a model for French soldiers to imitate. By idealizing both Lannes's military career and his death, speeches given at Lannes's funeral presented dying in the service of the Emperor and the Empire as the highest goal that a soldier could aspire to. This chapter concludes by examining reactions to Lannes's death and funeral in print and on stage, demonstrating how the myth of the glorious death that Hughes defines permeated French culture beyond the army.

Chapter Three concludes by considering official funerals across the French empire. Drawing on the model of national festivals, including public funerals, that developed during the French Revolution, Napoleon's ministers of war and religion designed funerals that involved the entire empire in mourning. This chapter will examine the Napoleonic government's use of public commemoration of the dead,

¹⁹ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 85.

from celebrations of revolutionary and ancien régime generals during the Consulate, through the national funeral ceremonies that accompanied Lannes's interment in the Pantheon in 1810, and Napoleon's planned funeral for Duroc in the last years of the Empire. By causing funeral ceremonies to be celebrated across France's departments, Napoleon and his government attempted to bring the disparate territories under France's control together in shared mourning that glorified him and the empire.

Lannes and Duroc were only two men out of the hundreds of thousands who perished in Napoleon's wars, and as generals, dukes, and personal friends of the Emperor, their lives and deaths were far removed from those of the average imperial citizen. Nevertheless, an examination of how Napoleon and others in the imperial government portrayed and commemorated their deaths in order to evoke specific responses from the public can yield new insight into intersections of grief, propaganda, and public opinion in Napoleonic France.

Chapter One: Private Grief, Public Spectacle: Napoleon's Grief in the Imperial Military Bulletins

On May 30, 1813, the official French government newspaper, the *Moniteur*, published a bulletin detailing the French army's activities between May 19 and May 23, the latest update on Napoleon's current campaign in central Europe. As well as describing the French victory over a combined Russian and Prussian force at the battle of Bautzen on May 20 and 21, the report informed its readers of the death of the general Michel Duroc, Napoleon's grand marshal of the palace, who had died on May 23 after being wounded in a skirmish the day before. Unusually for the bulletin, it included a lengthy description of the final conversation between a grief-stricken Napoleon and the dying man. Writing to the Emperor on the day the bulletin appeared, the archchancellor, Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, praised Napoleon's report of events: "Nothing is clearer than the exposition of [the army's] positions and the account of maneuvers; nothing is more touching than the farewell Y[our] M[a]jesty said to the poor grand marshal, whose loss is so universally felt."²⁰

Soldiers' deaths were hardly an uncommon subject for the bulletins that Napoleon issued throughout his campaigns from 1805 to 1814. Reports of the French army's activities that interspersed engaging scenes and political commentary among their accounts, the bulletins formed a major source of imperial propaganda—one over which Napoleon exercised direct control, usually writing or dictating them himself. The bulletins played an important role in shaping public perceptions of the French army and the Emperor, in France and across Europe. Beyond simply reporting the

²⁰ Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, *Lettres inédites à Napoléon, 1802-1814*, ed. Jean Tulard (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), 2:913.

numbers of French losses—numbers that frequently bore little or no resemblance to the actual number of casualties—the bulletins occasionally shone a spotlight on individual soldiers’ last moments, often purporting that their dying words expressed regret that they could no longer serve Napoleon and France. While the bulletin that announced Duroc’s death fit into this tradition, it was notable, as Cambacérès observed, for also depicting Napoleon’s sorrowful reaction. In this, it resembled a bulletin issued four years earlier that had described Napoleon speaking with the injured marshal Jean Lannes at the battle of Aspern-Essling. Both bulletins, through their portrayal of Napoleon’s grief over a dying friend, provoked an emotional response in their readers in order to influence their opinions of him and his wars.

This chapter, after an overview of the military bulletins’ production and distribution, examines three bulletins that depicted Napoleon’s grief. The bulletins of May 23 and June 1, 1809, reported Jean Lannes’s wounding at the battle of Aspern-Essling and subsequent death, and portrayed Napoleon’s reaction in such a way as to demonstrate that he was a benevolent sovereign who cared for the welfare of the soldiers under his command. Moving from 1809, near the height of the Empire, to 1813, when Napoleon’s domination of Europe was crumbling, will show how the bulletins’ portrayal of Napoleon’s grief evolved as the military and political context changed. The bulletin of May 30, 1813, which described Michel Duroc’s wounding and death, used Duroc’s final conversation with Napoleon to present a justification for Napoleon’s continued wars.

Napoleon's Military Bulletins

Napoleon's bulletins were military dispatches, reporting the French army's operations on campaign. The bulletins appeared in two main forms: individual newssheets that were distributed or placarded by local authorities, and articles in the *Moniteur*, the French government's official gazette. Their length varied widely depending on the amount of news to be reported, running from a few paragraphs to several columns of newsprint in the *Moniteur*. The bulletins fit into a long-established tradition of generals publishing accounts of their military exploits. J. David Markham compares them to Caesar's *Commentaries* in his introduction to his English translations of the bulletins, and Joseph J. Mathews identifies a growing trend in the eighteenth century of both generals and diplomats writing dispatches with an eye towards their eventual publication, positioning the bulletins within a larger context of official government newspapers publishing accounts of military engagements.²¹ Though officially a military publication, Napoleon's bulletins circulated far beyond the army itself and served a variety of purposes: affecting the army's morale, giving the French public news of the army's actions, and attempting to influence public opinion—in France and internationally—against France's enemies.²² Towards that end, the bulletins interspersed political commentary with military reportage. An 1805 bulletin, for example, discussed supposed popular dissatisfaction with the imperial Austrian government, alleging that “it is said in Vienna and throughout the provinces of the Austrian monarchy that they're badly governed,” before going on to claim that

²¹ J. David Markham, *Imperial Glory: The Bulletins of Napoleon's Grande Armée, 1805-1814* (London: Greenhill Books, 2003), 2; Joseph J. Mathews, *Reporting the Wars* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 12-13.

²² Markham, *Imperial Glory*, 3.

the British government had manipulated Austria into declaring war on France.²³ With such blatant attempts at political manipulation, the bulletins transcended the scope of military reports in order to heavily editorialize for their audience.

While the bulletins' accounts of military activities consisted largely of dates, numbers, and troop movements, they occasionally included more dramatic scenes, such as a soldier's dying words or Napoleon's conversations with enemy generals. Michael J. Hughes describes the bulletins as "portray[ing] war as a grand romantic adventure" and the Emperor as "a character whose adventures were as compelling as those of any fictional protagonist."²⁴ Even beyond individual scenes, the bulletins maintained a lively style with flashes of humor. A bulletin issued in November 1806 mocked newspaper reports that claimed several French commanders had been killed: after noting that "the people who make up the news" clearly had a particular grudge against French marshals, for "they have killed Marshal Masséna at Naples; they have killed the Grand-duke of Berg and Marshal Soult in Germany," the bulletin concluded, "happily, this has not stopped any of them [the marshals] from being in good health."²⁵ The Austrian diplomat Klemens von Metternich remarked on the bulletins' "style...of familiar conversation," observing that this informal tone helped bring the French government "into daily contact with all classes of society."²⁶ By eschewing a more official style, Napoleon made the bulletins more accessible—and more interesting—to a wide readership in France and across Europe.

²³ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9476, 11:400.

²⁴ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 32, 158.

²⁵ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 11230, 13:518.

²⁶ Klemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich, *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, ed. Richard Klemens Lothar Metternich-Winneburg, trans. Robina Napier (New York: Scribner, 1880), 2:95.

Napoleon wrote or dictated much of the bulletins' contents himself. Agathon Fain, one of Napoleon's secretaries from 1806 onwards, described the typical writing process: Fain and his fellow secretary would give Napoleon the latest reports they had received, including an "account of facts that we were in the habit of preparing for him and in which all the value for the Emperor lay in the reminder of dates and place names. Having glanced at this framework, he would begin to dictate."²⁷ Other members of the imperial cabinet occasionally contributed to writing or editing the bulletins. In December 1805, the foreign minister and the secretary of state met to "decipher and put in order" a draft bulletin that Napoleon had sent them—a task rendered time-consuming by Napoleon's "always difficult to read" handwriting—before sending it on to Paris to be printed in the *Moniteur*.²⁸ Even when Napoleon did not write the bulletins himself, he exercised editorial authority over them: a staff officer, amid the French retreat from Russia in December 1812, recorded in his journal that he had "spent part of the night copying out the 29th bulletin from the draft corrected in His Majesty's own hand."²⁹

The bulletins were Napoleon's most reliable means of communicating with his own troops, a way of stirring the soldiers' emotions and encouraging them to greater exertions by dramatizing their exploits and recognizing individuals' or regiments' achievements.³⁰ The government sent issues of the *Moniteur* that contained the bulletins to the army—providing an officer of the general staff with

²⁷ Fain, *Mémoires du Baron Fain*, 269.

²⁸ Claire de Rémusat, *Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat, 1802-1808* (Paris: Calman Lévy, 1880), 2:223.

²⁹ Boniface de Castellane, *Journal du Maréchal Castellane, 1804-1862* (Paris: Plon, 1895), 1:201.

³⁰ Alan Forrest, *Napoleon's Men: The Soldiers of the Revolution and Empire* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), 71-72.

10,000 copies of the *Moniteur* to be distributed among French troops in September 1805, for instance.³¹ The bulletins emphasized the French army's courage and invincibility. Contrasting the French forces favorably with the Prussians in 1806, for example, Napoleon claimed that the French infantry "has for some time been recognized as the best infantry in the world...The French cavalry, after the experience of the two campaigns and this last battle, has no equal."³² Being named in a bulletin was a high honor for both regiments and individual soldiers: according to one of Napoleon's secretaries, "Nothing so much flattered self-love as being mentioned in a bulletin," which Napoleon took advantage of to inspire his troops to greater exertions.³³ However, others in the army took a more cynical view of the effect the bulletins' motivational effect: one officer recorded his distaste at how generals "sacrificed" the soldiers under their command to "their own desire to see themselves named in the bulletins."³⁴ Both perspectives agreed that the bulletins had a significant influence on soldiers' and officers' actions, suggesting a wide readership among the army.

French soldiers, however, were hardly the only audience Napoleon intended the bulletins to reach. The bulletins were the primary—and sometimes sole—way for the French public to learn what was happening during Napoleon's campaigns, and, as such, they played a vital role as both news source and propaganda. Fain noted that "Napoleon's bulletins were written for Paris and even for Europe," adding that

³¹ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 233n32.

³² *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 11009, 13:357.

³³ Quoted in Mathews, *Reporting the Wars*, 23-24.

³⁴ Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcelin de Marbot, *Mémoires du général Baron de Marbot* (Paris: Plon, 1891), 1:323.

Napoleon always had political considerations in mind when writing them.³⁵ Although the bulletins appeared first in the *Moniteur*, France's other newspapers reprinted them—the minister of the interior rebuked the editor of the *Journal du département de Saône-et-Loire* for publishing excerpts rather than the full bulletin—and local prefects placarded them in town squares.³⁶ The bulletins were read aloud in military camps, schools, and theatres, ensuring that people outside the reading public were still exposed to them.³⁷ Government policy initially dictated that priests should read the bulletins at church services as well; however, Napoleon backtracked on this, writing in 1805 that the policy “gives more importance to the priests than they deserve. It gives them the right to comment and should the news be bad, they will not fail to remark on it.”³⁸ Even without being read in churches, the bulletins received a wide distribution. The poet Alfred de Vigny, born in 1797, described himself as “of that generation born with the [nineteenth] century, who, fed on bulletins, always had a drawn sword before our eyes,” and recollected how his schoolteachers “incessantly read us the Grande Armée's bulletins.”³⁹ As well as pointing to another use of the bulletins—inspiring the next generation of loyal imperial soldiers—Vigny's reminiscences show the bulletins' pervasiveness through life in France under Napoleon.

The bulletins circulated outside France and French-occupied territories as well, eliciting a diverse array of popular and official reactions. British newspapers

³⁵ Fain, *Mémoires du Baron Fain*, 269-70.

³⁶ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 266-67; Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 31.

³⁷ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 138, 155.

³⁸ Quoted in Mathews, *Reporting the Wars*, 27.

³⁹ Quoted in Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 266.

reprinted the bulletins in extracts or in full, relying on them for accounts of what was happening on the continent: the editor William Jerdan recalled that London papers would pay one hundred guineas for smuggled French newspapers that contained recent bulletins from Napoleon's campaigns in central Europe.⁴⁰ Nor were journalists the only ones interested: Jerdan described how secretaries in the Foreign Office would spread out maps on the floor and go over them on hands and knees to find the places that the bulletins mentioned, in order to track the French army's movements.⁴¹ Although the British press availed themselves of the French bulletins for news, they also frequently mocked the boastful language that typified the bulletins, publishing poems and parodies that poked fun at their more blatantly propagandistic elements. An 1812 issue of the *General Evening Post*, for instance, published an "anticipated" bulletin from the end of France's disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, which concluded with a mockery of the bulletins' habitual reassurance that all was well with the army and the Emperor: "The weather is beautiful...the ice refreshingly cool—the hail remarkably soft—the Emperor's health excellent—his condition delightful!"⁴² To many British papers, the bulletins were both a source of information and an object of derision.

On the continent, the bulletins had a more marked impact on foreign policy and public opinion. Whereas bulletins were smuggled into Britain, Napoleon had his military commanders and ambassadors circulate bulletins in central Europe with the

⁴⁰ Joseph J. Mathews, "Napoleon's Military Bulletins," *The Journal of Modern History* 22, no. 2 (June 1950), 141; William Jerdan, *The Autobiography of William Jerdan* (London: Arthur Hall, Vertue & Co, 1852-53), 1:165-66.

⁴¹ Jerdan, *The Autobiography of William Jerdan*, 1:166n.

⁴² *The Spirit of the Public Journals for 1812* (London: James Ridgway, 1813), 369.

express intent of influencing public opinion in France's favor.⁴³ Metternich, serving as ambassador to Prussia in 1805, sent a memorandum titled "On the French Army-Bulletins, and Suggestions for the Issuing of a Newspaper" to his government. In the memorandum, he described how the French bulletins had disseminated falsehoods about the imperial Austrian government throughout Europe, and recommended establishing a newspaper to counteract their influence. He characterized the "daily Bulletins which are published for the French army, and which inundate Germany and the whole of Europe" as "a new invention...designed less to report military facts than to mislead the public as to the spirit and principles of our government and our people."⁴⁴ Metternich suggested that Austria and its allies establish a newspaper in order to stop the French government's "odious pretension...to corrupt the mind of Germany by means of its own public journals."⁴⁵ The Prussian government, too, took note of Napoleon's attempts to interfere with their internal politics via political innuendoes in the bulletins. The French ambassador to Prussia in 1806 recorded that an accusation published in the bulletin of December 10, 1805, that the Prussian foreign minister, Karl August von Hardenberg, was taking bribes from the English, had caused considerable consternation at court.⁴⁶ Hardenberg described the assertions as "insolent and calumnious," complaining that such slander being published in "an official journal" made it harder to ignore.⁴⁷ Both Metternich's and Hardenberg's

⁴³ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 96; Mathews, *Reporting the Wars*, 27.

⁴⁴ Metternich, *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, 2:95.

⁴⁵ Metternich, *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, 2:96.

⁴⁶ Paul Bailleu, *Preussen und Frankreich von 1795 bis 1807: Diplomatische correspondenzen* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1881-87), 2:431-32; *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9556, 11:468. This accusation appeared as France and Prussia were negotiating the Treaty of Schönbrunn, the terms of which included Napoleon's demand that Hardenberg be dismissed from the Prussian cabinet.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Bailleu, *Preussen und Frankreich*, 2:438.

observations demonstrate that the French bulletins were a type of propaganda that European governments had not had to grapple with before, one that commanded unusual attention both inside and outside France.

Soldiers' Deaths in the Bulletins

Beyond the attempts at political manipulation that Metternich and Hardenberg observed, the bulletins also played other propaganda roles. They were an important source of morale for the army, as having one's name mentioned in the bulletin was a high honor, and the bulletins often highlighted individual soldiers' actions and words to make their narratives more engaging.⁴⁸ This practice of naming individual soldiers extended to their deaths as well: in keeping with the bulletins' portrayal of war as glorious, the reports frequently included sentences or paragraphs describing soldiers' valiant deaths, with the dying men often using their last words to lament that they could no longer fight for Napoleon. The bulletin of February 28, 1807, issued shortly after the bloody battle of Eylau, opened with a description of a grenadier captain being carried from the battlefield. The dying captain used his last bit of strength to tell his comrades, "I die content, because we have victory, and because I can die on the field of honor...Tell the Emperor that I have only one regret; it's that, in a few moments, I will no longer be able to serve him or the glory of France."⁴⁹ Such a declaration, with its affirmation of loyalty to both France and Napoleon, was typical of the dying words that the bulletin published. As well as presenting death in battle as a glorious fate, the bulletin closely linked Napoleon and France, presenting the two as twin objects of the army's loyalty.

⁴⁸ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 71.

⁴⁹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 11907, 14:355.

This tradition stretched back to the bulletins Napoleon issued as First Consul while campaigning against Austria in Italy in 1800, including one scene that prefigures the bulletin descriptions of Lannes's and Duroc's deaths. This was the death of Louis Desaix, one of Revolutionary and Consular France's most distinguished generals, at the battle of Marengo in June 1800. Desaix had only recently returned from French-occupied Egypt, and his arrival at Marengo was a key turning point in the battle. The army bulletin published the day after the battle depicted Desaix as eager to fight, repeating more than once to his aides-de-camp that since it had been such a long time since he'd fought a battle in Europe, the bullets no longer recognized him.⁵⁰ According to the bulletin, Desaix's dying words were, "Go tell the First Consul that I die with the regret of not having done enough to live on in posterity."⁵¹ The bulletin purported to depict Napoleon's reaction, as well: "When they came, amid the hottest firing, to tell the First Consul of Desaix's death, he said only: 'Why is it not permitted for me to weep?'"⁵² Napoleon's secretary Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, who claimed that he copied down that section at Napoleon's dictation, derided Desaix's dying words as an invention, though he also remarked that Napoleon was moved nearly to tears by Desaix's death.⁵³ This scene contained elements that would recur in future bulletin descriptions of Napoleon's friends' deaths, showing Napoleon's response as well as the soldier's dying words.

As Napoleon's purported reaction to Desaix's death shows, he attempted to portray himself in the bulletins as a humane ruler grieved by his soldiers' deaths. This

⁵⁰ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 4910, 6:362.

⁵¹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 4910, 6:362.

⁵² *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 4910, 6:362.

⁵³ Bourrienne, *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, 4:127-28.

grief extended to the rank and file as well as high-ranking officers or men he was personally close to. The bulletin of 12 frimaire Year XIV (December 3, 1805), which described the French victory at Austerlitz, included Napoleon's reflections from the night before the battle. After being cheered by the army, the Emperor told his companions that he regretted the prospect of "los[ing] a good number of these brave people": he felt "from the pain that it brings me, that they're truly my children; and, in truth, I've often reproached myself for this sentiment, because in the end it will render me unable to wage war."⁵⁴ Although the bulletins usually presented a romanticized, glorious image of war, this scene qualified that somewhat for the sake of portraying Napoleon as a more benevolent ruler, one well aware of the costs of war and who took a personal interest in the men under his command rather than wasting their lives senselessly.

Lannes's Injury

While Napoleon's bulletins generally presented an optimistic perspective on France's military situation—not a difficult task considering his brilliant successes in the campaigns of 1805 and 1806-07—the campaign of 1809 in central Europe proved more challenging to describe in unambiguously positive terms. The War of the Fifth Coalition, fought between France and Austria in the spring and summer of 1809, included Napoleon's first defeat since the 1790s, and the death of Jean Lannes, a close friend of Napoleon's as well as one of France's most brilliant military

⁵⁴ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9541, 11:449.

commanders, in May.⁵⁵ With Napoleon's attention focused on Spain, where the 1808 French occupation had touched off a war that would last until 1814, Austria, with financial support from the English government, declared war on France in early 1809. The Austrian attack in April caught the French relatively unprepared, especially as much of the French army was still committed in Spain. Napoleon soon turned the tables, winning a series of victories over the Austrians in April and May, and capturing Vienna on May 7. Two weeks later, the French and Austrian forces met in a bloody battle at Aspern-Essling on May 21 and 22; the Austrian army drove the French back from an attempted crossing of the Danube, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides and Napoleon's first major military loss.

The tenth bulletin of the campaign—dated May 23, 1809, at Ebersdorf, a few miles outside of Vienna—gave little indication that the French had suffered a reverse. The bulletin acknowledged that the French losses had been “considerable,” but admitted to only 4,100 dead and wounded; the actual total has been estimated at close to 20,000, comparable to the Austrian losses of around 23,000.⁵⁶ In addition to downplaying the number of casualties, the writer concluded on a bullish and patriotic note, claiming that posterity would view the battle as a fresh monument to “the glory and unshakeable firmness” of the French army.⁵⁷ Nor did the account attach any blame to the French command: the army's forced retreat was due to nature, rather than their opponents, for the bulletin emphasized the unseasonable, unpredictable flooding along the Danube that had destroyed the French army's temporary bridges

⁵⁵ On the War of the Fifth Coalition, see John H. Gill, *Thunder on the Danube: Napoleon's Defeat of the Habsburgs* (London: Frontline Books, 2009), 3 vol.; David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 662-738.

⁵⁶ *Moniteur universel*, May 31, 1809, 2; Gill, *Thunder on the Danube*, 2:304-05.

⁵⁷ *Moniteur universel*, May 31, 1809, 2.

and prevented their advance. In short, the bulletin gave a relatively rosy picture of the French situation, one that understated the setback that the French had suffered.

However, the bulletin had more bad news for its readers: Marshal Jean Lannes had been wounded on May 22, the second day of the battle, and had one of his legs amputated. Much as the bulletin minimized the scale of the French setback, it also reassured its readers that Lannes's injury was survivable. Napoleon clearly thought that news of one of France's best generals being gravely wounded, in combination with the French defeat, would have an adverse effect on public opinion. Writing to one of his allies, the prince of Bavaria, on May 24, he concluded a brief summary of the battle by reassuring the prince that Lannes was out of danger, adding, "I'm very pleased to be able to tell you all this, so that the malicious rumors the enemy is spreading don't disquiet you."⁵⁸ In the aftermath of a defeat, Napoleon had a particular interest in directing how national and international public opinion responded to the battle.

Though the bulletin account noted that Lannes was out of danger, it still presented something similar to a deathbed scene, depicting a conversation between Lannes and Napoleon when Lannes believed he had been mortally wounded. That Napoleon's account gave Lannes a dramatic statement is unsurprising: it echoed dying speeches that previous bulletins had depicted. More striking, however, was the bulletin's portrayal of Napoleon's reaction to the news that Lannes had been wounded. The Emperor was visibly upset when Lannes was carried to him on a stretcher:

⁵⁸ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 15252, 19:42.

In the midst of the concerns of the day, the Emperor gave himself over to the affectionate friendship he had borne for so many years for this brave companion in arms. Some tears ran from his eyes, and, turning to those who surrounded him, “It had to be,” he said, “That today my heart would be struck by such a blow as this, for which I would abandon myself to other considerations than those of my army.” The duke of Montebello [Lannes] had lost consciousness: the Emperor’s presence brought him back to himself; he threw his arms around his neck, saying: “In an hour you’ll have lost him who dies with the glory and conviction of having been and being your best friend.”⁵⁹

As with his supposed declaration in the Austerlitz bulletin four years earlier, Napoleon emphasized the emotional impact of seeing a soldier under his command wounded—the reference to Lannes as one of his companions in arms highlighted the military character of their relationship. Napoleon’s public declaration that Lannes’s injury had taken his mind away from the battle demonstrated a similar sentiment as the one expressed in the Austerlitz bulletin: that his caring for his soldiers impeded his ability to conduct the war. In truth, his sorrow seems to have had little effect on his command of the army: the defeated French successfully retreated across the Danube, losing only three cannon in the process.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this framing cast Napoleon as a reluctant warrior, presenting a humane portrait of a ruler who had, after all, been at war for virtually his entire reign. Other literature of the time, perhaps picking up on the bulletin’s depiction, also portrayed him as similarly reluctant, suggesting that Austria had provoked or manipulated France into war.⁶¹

⁵⁹ *Moniteur universel*, May 31, 1809, 2.

⁶⁰ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 516.

⁶¹ An 1809 sermon celebrating the French victory at Wagram compared Napoleon to Caesar after Pharsalus and claimed that his enemies had pushed him into war despite his repeated peace overtures, while a published poem about the campaign suggested that Austria had brought defeat upon itself by provoking France into war. Pierre de Joux, *Second discours sur la guerre, ou Te Deum d’Enzersdorf et de Wagram* (Nantes: Brun, 1809), 6; N. Laurenceau, *Ode sur la campagne de 1809* (Paris: Le Normant, 1809), 5.

The 1800 bulletin depicting Desaix's death had shown Napoleon asking why he was not permitted to weep; here he wept freely, and his tears became a major feature in descriptions of Lannes's death. William Reddy has discussed the turn in French sentimentalism beginning under the Directory and continuing through the Napoleonic era, in which the vivid displays of strong emotion that were so common during the French Revolution were relegated to private life.⁶² The bulletin's publication, however, made Napoleon's grief over Lannes's injury an extremely public display of sentiment, one that other contemporary writers—often directly quoting from its account—portrayed as a sign of Napoleon's sincere friendship and dismay over the deaths that the war had caused. An anonymous 1811 poem on the Austrian campaign described Napoleon's "tears of friendship," and presented a stylized version of Lannes's death in which he died in Napoleon's arms.⁶³ According to a sermon that the Swiss pastor Pierre de Joux gave at Nantes in celebration of the French victory at Wagram, Napoleon's tears

attested to the whole world that your heart is sensitive, that you know how to love; that you are not solely a hero, that you are a man; and that, however warlike you may be, humanity has no less of an influence over your soul.⁶⁴

This last reference, in particular, tallied closely with the bulletin's depiction of Napoleon as grievously affected by the toll of war—the bulletin had clearly influenced Joux, whose sermon included two quotations from its description of Lannes's conversation with Napoleon.

⁶² Reddy, "Sentimentalism and Its Erasure," 145.

⁶³ Anonymous, *La Campagne d'Autriche, poëme* (Paris: Le Normant and Delaunay, 1811), 43. The author added in a footnote, "No elegy could surpass these tears in making known the qualities of the hero who had caused them to be shed," suggesting that such a response from the Emperor was the highest honor that Lannes could have received.

⁶⁴ Joux, *Second discours sur la guerre*, 15.

In his eulogy at Lannes's official funeral in Paris in 1810, Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout quoted directly from the bulletin, referencing both Napoleon's tears and his taking time away from the battle to mourn. Declaring that "Happy is he who, in dying, could inspire similar regrets and deserve similar tears!", Davout suggested that Napoleon's grief was the ultimate reward for Lannes's devotion.⁶⁵ Brian Joseph Martin argues that Davout's speech, given at a public funeral and reprinted in France's newspapers, turned Napoleon's private grief into a public spectacle.⁶⁶ While this is a reasonable assessment, it can be expanded: Napoleon's personal grief had been a public spectacle from the moment the bulletin was published. By dramatizing his own grief in the bulletins, Napoleon blurred the line between private and public displays of grief.

Lannes's Death

In contrast to the dramatic scene that the tenth bulletin had depicted, the fourteenth bulletin (June 1, 1809), which informed its readers of Lannes's death, was much more subdued. Rather than the highly emotional conversation of the tenth bulletin, it simply reported that Lannes had died at five in the morning on the previous day and that Napoleon had given orders for his body to be embalmed and taken to France. It concluded by reminding its readers that Lannes's death was a loss not only to Napoleon but also to all of France: "Thus perished one of the most distinguished soldiers that France had...The Emperor was extremely affected by this loss which will be felt by every Frenchman."⁶⁷ The bulletin noted that Napoleon had

⁶⁵ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

⁶⁶ Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 46.

⁶⁷ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 15287, 19:66.

sent for “one of the most well-known doctors in Europe,” and that “all the help of the art” had proved useless.⁶⁸ It thereby reassured its readers that Napoleon, as a good friend and caring sovereign, had left no avenue unexplored in order to save Lannes. As with his abandonment of the battle described in the tenth bulletin, the text clearly demonstrated to the reader that he cared deeply for his faithful subjects.

The bulletin noticeably differed from the previous description of Lannes’s and Napoleon’s conversation, merely remarking that Napoleon had spent an hour with him shortly before his death. Rather than portray another dramatic dying declaration, the bulletin drew a respectful veil over the scene. This ambiguity, however, resulted in conflicting accounts of what Napoleon and Lannes said to each other, as later writers used Lannes’s last conversation with Napoleon as a means of criticizing the Emperor. Louis Constant, Napoleon’s valet, described the dying man rebuking Napoleon in his memoirs: “You’re making a grave mistake, and even though it’s cost you your best friend, you won’t put it right: your ambition is insatiable, it will be the end of you.”⁶⁹ In Constant’s telling, Lannes went on to describe Napoleon’s wasteful sacrifice of the men who had served him best, leaving him surrounded by flatterers who would not dare to stand up to him, and concluded, “Hurry and finish this war; it’s everyone’s wish. You won’t be more powerful for it, but you could be more loved.”⁷⁰ Spoken on a deathbed, these words had a ring of prophecy to them—benefitted by hindsight, as Constant wrote his memoirs years after Napoleon’s

⁶⁸ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 15287, 19:66.

⁶⁹ Louis Constant Wairy, *Mémoires de Constant, premier valet de chambre de l’empereur, sur la view privée de Napoléon, sa famille et sa cour* (Paris: Garnier, 1894), 3:129. Throughout the conversation, Lannes addressed Napoleon with the familiar “tu”.

⁷⁰ Constant, *Mémoires de Constant*, 3:129.

downfall. Far from the devoted dying Lannes or the benevolent sovereign seen in the tenth bulletin, this was a sharp indictment of Napoleon's wars.

Lannes's former aide-de-camp, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcellin de Marbot, attacked Constant's version in his own memoirs, deriding malicious writers who claimed that Lannes had reproached Napoleon while dying.⁷¹ Although he did not mention Constant by name, he specifically labeled the claim that Lannes had told Napoleon to give up war as ill intentioned, suggesting that any criticism of Napoleon's bellicosity should be considered an attack on his legacy. Marbot was far from a disinterested commentator: Napoleon had left him a legacy in his will instructing him to continue writing "in defense of the glory of the French armies, and to confound their calumniators."⁷² His defense of Napoleon should be read with this in mind. However, it serves to further emphasize how Lannes's death became a referendum on Napoleon himself in various memoirs, with disagreements over his dying words reflecting radically different interpretations of Napoleon's reign.

Duroc's Death

Napoleon narrated the remainder of the 1809 campaign against Austria through his bulletins, and issued them, though at less frequent intervals, throughout France's ill-fated invasion of Russia in 1812. As the remnants of the French force made a bitter retreat through the Russian winter, one of his last acts before leaving the army to return to France was to produce the twenty-ninth bulletin of that campaign, which

⁷¹ Marbot, *Mémoires du général Baron de Marbot*, 2:203.

⁷² "Testament de Napoléon," in Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, 2:1806. Napoleon had expressed admiration of Marbot's 1820 work *Remarques critiques sur l'ouvrage de M. le lieutenant-général Rogiat, intitulé: Considérations sur l'art de la guerre*.

admitted the disaster that the French army had experienced.⁷³ This final bulletin “threw all of France into consternation,” according to the minister of posts, all the more so as the country “had grown so accustomed to triumphs.”⁷⁴ Returning to Paris in December 1812, Napoleon faced not only the consequences of the Russian disaster, which had decimated the army, but also the aftermath from Claude-François Malet’s attempted coup in October 1812, which had exposed serious flaws in the regime’s chain of command despite being foiled.⁷⁵ The spring of 1813 brought continued political and military challenges: Russia and Prussia pressed their advantage against the still-recovering French army, precipitating another war in central Europe.⁷⁶ At the same time, France’s sole major ally, Austria, moved towards a position of neutrality, thought not yet outright hostility. The renewed war increased popular discontent in France, which had been at war almost constantly for the past two decades: a year earlier, a Polish officer in the French army had observed “for the first time, some unequivocal signs of discontent [in Alsace and Lorraine]. People were growing tired of the continual passage of troops.”⁷⁷ With his control of Europe in tatters and calls for peace growing increasingly vocal among both the French public and members of his own government, Napoleon faced an unprecedentedly difficult military and political position in the spring of 1813.

⁷³ A. Roberts, *Napoleon*, 629-30.

⁷⁴ Antoine Marie Chamans de Lavalette, *Mémoires et souvenirs de comte Lavalette* (Paris: H. Fournier, 1831), 2:71.

⁷⁵ Munro Price, *Napoleon: The End of Glory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26-27. Price argues that the Malet coup attempt revealed two major flaws in the imperial power structure: that the empire still relied on Napoleon personally rather than his dynasty, and that the imperial Senate—nominally a tame institution that existed to rubber-stamp Napoleon’s decrees—had real political power.

⁷⁶ On the War of the Sixth Coalition, see Price, *Napoleon*, 52-153; Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 865-941.

⁷⁷ Heinrich von Brandt, *In the Legions of Napoleon: The Memoirs of a Polish Officer in Spain and Russia, 1808-1813*, ed./trans. Jonathan North (London: Greenhill Books, 1999), 186.

In the opening months of the 1813 campaign, Napoleon suffered a personal loss when Michel Duroc, the grand marshal of the palace and one of his closest friends, was mortally wounded in a minor skirmish in late May. Several members of the army or the imperial household described Duroc's death as an "irreparable loss" for Napoleon, a verdict that reflected the loss of both a personal friend and a trusted advisor.⁷⁸ As had been the case with Lannes's injury four years earlier, Napoleon's bulletin dramatized his conversation with his wounded friend. The bulletin account of Duroc's death reflected the unstable political and military situation, using Duroc's last conversation with the grieving Emperor to present Napoleon as a ruler who still inspired devotion in his servants and who retained a sound justification for his continued wars.

Napoleon's bulletins from the 1813 campaign broke with past practice regarding how they were printed in the *Moniteur*, reflecting a change in how they reached the newspaper. Rather than sending his reports of the campaign to the secretary of state, as he had in the past, Napoleon addressed them to the empress Marie Louise, who handed them on to the archchancellor to have printed in the *Moniteur*.⁷⁹ The newspaper prefaced each bulletin with a short introduction noting that Marie Louise, Napoleon's regent in Paris while he was away on campaign, had passed the information on: the *Moniteur* of May 9, for example, introduced the

⁷⁸ See, for example, Georges Mouton, *Lettres d'un lion: correspondance de Georges Mouton, comte de Lobau (1812-1815)*, ed. Emmanuel de Waresquiel (Paris: Nouveau Monde/Fondation Napoléon, 2005), 128; Guillaume Peyrusse, *Lettres inédites du Baron Guillaume Peyrusse écrites à son frère André pendant les campagnes de l'Empire de 1809 à 1814*, ed. Léon-Gabriel Pélissier (Paris: Perrin, 1894), 134; and note 104 below. Napoleon used the phrasing himself in a letter to Marie Louise on May 24.

⁷⁹ Cambacérès's letter to Napoleon on May 9, 1813, for instance, acknowledged that Marie Louise had ordered him to "have placed in today's *Moniteur* the 1st text, reserve the 3rd for publication tomorrow, and to have article 2 placed in the smaller journals; this just as Y[our] M[ajesty] prescribed". Cambacérès, *Lettres inédites à Napoléon*, 2:890-91.

bulletin by writing, “H.M. the Empress-Queen and Regent has received the following news of the army.”⁸⁰ While it is not clear whether the decision to include this preface came from the newspaper or the government, the preface emphasized the regent’s role as a conduit of Napoleon’s authority. Marie-Louise had not served as regent during Napoleon’s absence in 1812; her elevation to that role in 1813 served the dual purpose of trying to keep Austria neutral by reminding Francis I that his daughter was on the throne of France, and clarifying the order of succession, which had proved unstable during Malet’s coup attempt the previous year.⁸¹

The news that Marie Louise communicated to the *Moniteur*’s readers on May 30, 1813, included a lengthy paragraph on Duroc’s death, devoting a striking amount of space to a single event among the five days that the bulletin covered. Beginning by mentioning two other generals who had been wounded, as well as an estimate of the total French casualties, the paragraph first provided a general overview of the circumstances in the bulletin’s usual reporting style. Late in the day on May 22, a cannonball had struck a group of officers including Duroc, General François Joseph Kirgener, and Marshal Édouard Mortier, killing Kirgener and tearing open Duroc’s stomach.⁸² Perhaps wanting to give the enemy as little credit as possible, the bulletin emphasized that it had been a peculiarly unlucky shot: the cannonball was “one of the

⁸⁰ *Moniteur universel*, May 9, 1813.

⁸¹ Price, *Napoleon*, 48, 26. When informed of Malet’s coup attempt, which had involved claiming that the emperor had been killed in Russia, Napoleon expressed displeasure that no one in the government had thought to proclaim his young son as his successor.

⁸² Observers at the time commented on the coincidence of Lannes and Duroc having been fatally wounded on the same day: the French officer Hubert Perrin, writing to his aunt the next day, remarked that Duroc’s injury seemed almost like fate, for “on the same day, four years ago, the Duke of Montebello was carried off by a cannonball in the same way”. Mouton, *Lettres d’un lion*, 128.

enemy's last" and the group had been "a sufficient distance" from the front lines.⁸³

After noting that Kirgener had died on the spot, the account continued, "the Duke of Friuli [Duroc] immediately felt that he was mortally wounded; he breathed his last twelve hours later."⁸⁴

After reporting Duroc's death, the bulletin then moved backwards in time slightly to present Napoleon's last conversation with Duroc. Rather than a few lines of dying words, as previous bulletins had published, it portrayed a full conversation:

As soon as the posts were placed and the army had bivouacked, the Emperor went to see the duke of Friuli. He found him fully aware and demonstrating the greatest composure. The duke gripped the Emperor's hand, which he brought to his lips. "My whole life," he said, "has been devoted to your service, and my only regret is that it could have been of further use to you!" "Duroc," the Emperor said, "there is another life! It's there that you'll wait for me, and where we'll find each other again one day!" "Yes, Sire; but that will be in 30 years, when you have triumphed over your enemies and fulfilled all the hopes of our country... I lived an honest life; I have nothing to be ashamed of. I leave behind a daughter: your Majesty will be a father to her." The Emperor, squeezing the grand marshal's right hand, remained a quarter of an hour with his head pressed against his left hand in the deepest silence. The grand marshal broke the silence first. "Ah, Sire! Go! This sight pains you!" The Emperor, leaning on the duke of Dalmatia and the grand equerry, left the duke of Friuli without being able to say anything besides these words, "Farewell then, my friend!" His Majesty returned to his tent, and did not receive anyone for the entire night.⁸⁵

After this scene, the bulletin resumed an account of the army's movements, beginning with the next day. Officers and soldiers who were present for Duroc's death remarked on Napoleon's grief in their letters and memoirs, and it shows through in the bulletin

⁸³ *Moniteur universel*, May 30, 1813, 2.

⁸⁴ *Moniteur universel*, May 30, 1813, 2. Twelve hours appears to have been a significant adjustment on the bulletin's author's part: Duroc's death certificate gave his time of death as ten o'clock at night on May 23, whereas the bulletin's twelve hours would have put it at seven o'clock that morning. The death certificate is reproduced in Jean de la Tour, *Duroc: duc de Frioul, grand maréchal du Palais impérial (1772-1813)* (Paris: Chapelot, 1913), 310n.

⁸⁵ *Moniteur universel*, May 30, 1813, 2.

scene as well. This did not, however, prevent him and his collaborators from putting his own reaction to Duroc's death to use in the bulletin as propaganda. According to the bulletin, even when grieving a dying friend Napoleon's first attention was to the army: he ensured that the army was in order and settled in its bivouacs before going to visit Duroc.⁸⁶ The army's needs came before personal considerations—a striking contrast to the bulletin's depiction of Lannes's wounding, which emphasized that Napoleon's grief temporarily took his mind off the ongoing battle, and a rather misleading account of the events of May 22. Although the battle was over, Napoleon uncharacteristically called a halt to the pursuit of the enemy rather than press his advantage, a conclusion of which the bulletin made no mention.⁸⁷

The bulletin's initial emphasis on Napoleon's responsibility, however, did not continue through the whole scene. The bulletin account ended with Napoleon returning to his tent and not seeing anyone else for the remainder of the night—including, implicitly, anyone to whom he might have needed to give orders. In the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Emmanuel de Las Cases described Napoleon's companions' recollections of that evening: "Nevertheless there were essential measures that had to be taken for the next day; someone ventured to ask him where the Guard's battery should be placed. *Everything tomorrow*, was the Emperor's response."⁸⁸ While the bulletin's version did not go so far as to depict Napoleon refusing to give necessary orders, it still gestured at how he isolated himself to grieve

⁸⁶ Pierre Branda, "La mort de Duroc, grand maréchal du palais: 'Adieu l'ami!'", *Revue de Souvenir Napoléonien* 6 (2013), 42.

⁸⁷ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 897.

⁸⁸ Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, 1:362. Emphasis in the original. Las Cases continued, "At that recollection, the Emperor, with an apparent effort, abruptly began to talk of other things".

for his friend, and admitted at least tacitly that his personal grief interfered with his official responsibilities.

The divide between Napoleon's personal grief and how he portrayed his own grief in official accounts appears again in the section of the bulletin scene that described Napoleon's departure from Duroc's bedside. Pierre Branda points out that it would hardly have been appropriate for Napoleon to take the initiative to leave his suffering friend; instead, the bulletin's author had Duroc tell Napoleon to leave, once again demonstrating his devotion by having a greater care for his sovereign's emotional pain than his own physical suffering.⁸⁹ The officers who witnessed Napoleon's conversation with Duroc suggested that Napoleon stayed for only a few minutes because he could not bear the sight of his dying friend: General Georges Mouton's aide-de-camp Hubert Perrin wrote to his aunt on May 23 that "the Emperor couldn't stay longer than four or five minutes. That scene would have broken the hardest of hearts."⁹⁰ Rather than the caring sovereign's solicitude for a servant and friend that the bulletin portrayed, those accounts suggested that Napoleon simply could not bear to watch his friend suffer. One of Napoleon's first official gestures regarding Duroc's death was to change his presence at Duroc's deathbed in the historical record: he gave orders for a monument on the site where Duroc had died, with the inscription "Here, General Duroc, Duke of Friuli, Grand Marshal of the Palace of Emperor Napoleon, struck by a cannonball, died in the arms of his emperor and friend."⁹¹ Even more so than the bulletin, this inscription gave an edited version of what had happened: Napoleon was not present when Duroc died. The monument

⁸⁹ Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 43.

⁹⁰ Mouton, *Lettres d'un lion*, 128.

⁹¹ La Tour, *Duroc*, 311.

proclaimed a more official version of Napoleon's grief, leaving a formal record that diverged from the events.

The bulletin's major propaganda effort, however, came not with its description of Napoleon's actions, but rather Duroc's dying words. The *mise en scène* emphasized Duroc's clear-headedness and stoicism even in the grip of horrible suffering; at the same time, it showed him demonstrating complete devotion to Napoleon. Throughout his speech, he defined his entire existence in terms of his usefulness to the Emperor—most obviously with his declaration that his only regret about dying was that he would no longer be able to serve Napoleon, but also in his claim that he had nothing with which to reproach himself, which suggested that he had no need to repent of anything he had done in Napoleon's service. As seen with the grenadier captain whose death appeared in the bulletin of February 28, 1807, soldiers proclaiming with their dying breath that they only regretted no longer being able to serve their emperor or their country were a recurring theme in the military bulletins' descriptions of battles. Branda suggests, similarly, that Duroc confiding his daughter to Napoleon's care was a proof of his absolute trust in the Emperor.⁹² One could add that it showed Napoleon as a paternal, benevolent ruler. The whole scene presented Napoleon as a trustworthy leader who inspired unshakeable devotion from his followers.

Perhaps the most significant part of Duroc's deathbed speech, in terms of its use as propaganda to reinforce Napoleon's authority as ruler and military leader, was his exhortation for Napoleon to defeat his enemies and fulfill France's hopes. The latter phrase made no mention of what those hopes would be, but implicitly aligned

⁹² Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 43.

Napoleon's aspirations with France's. As Branda has argued, this part of the scene established a moral imperative for Napoleon's bellicosity, with the result that halting the war now would be a waste of Duroc's death.⁹³ Instead, by carrying on the war and defeating France's opponents, Napoleon would justify his friend's confidence in him. The "sacred words of the dying man," in Branda's phrasing, reinforced Napoleon's moral authority for waging war.⁹⁴ This was crucial at a moment when the French people were eager for peace—the announcement of a temporary armistice in early June was met with "universal joy," according to one French prefect.⁹⁵ Similarly, the fact that Duroc was on his deathbed gave his prediction that Napoleon would rule for another thirty years the sound of a dying prophecy, much as Lannes's prediction of Napoleon's downfall in Constant's memoirs had also appeared prophetic. This dying prediction suggested that, however grim the military situation might appear, Napoleon's ultimate victory was inevitable.

How much did the bulletin's depiction correspond with what Napoleon and Duroc actually said to each other while Duroc was dying? Philip Dwyer claims that the conversation was "entirely fabricated"; Branda asserts that the bulletin's readers witnessed a scene that expressed numerous genre tropes, an analysis that highlights the scene's constructed nature.⁹⁶ However, letters from people who witnessed Duroc's final conversation with Napoleon suggest that the bulletin was not merely made up out of whole cloth. Perrin described a heart-rending scene in his letter to his aunt: "'My dear Duroc,' [Napoleon] said, bathing [Duroc's] hands in tears, 'you have

⁹³ Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 43.

⁹⁴ Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 43.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Price, *Napoleon*, 94.

⁹⁶ Philip Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor: Napoleon in Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 447; Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 42.

to leave us, but we'll find each other again in another life'. His Majesty sobbed. 'Sire,' the grand marshal said, 'go, leave me, this is causing you too much pain.'"⁹⁷ August-Eugène de Varennes, one of Duroc's secretaries, wrote an anguished letter to his colleague in Paris, in which he related the conversation he had observed. In response to Napoleon asking Duroc whether he had anything to say to him, the dying man replied, preternaturally calm for someone who had been disemboweled, "No, Sire, my accounts are in order. I've never done wrong to anyone; I die an honest man, a faithful subject. I have only one regret, it's that I'll no longer be able to serve your Majesty."⁹⁸ Both letters are partially congruent with the bulletin, suggesting that it contained a kernel of accuracy despite its manipulation of the facts. However, the bulletin's strict factual accuracy—or lack thereof—perhaps matters less than how its readers reacted to it.

Bulletin Receptions

Throughout the spring of 1813, Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout, with the French army in Saxony, exchanged letters with his wife Aimée, who had remained behind in Paris. The Davouts were friends with Duroc and his wife, who were part of the same circle within the imperial elite. In late May and early June, the news of Duroc's death—and, specifically, the *Moniteur's* version of it—occupied a substantial part of their correspondence. Anne Vincent-Buffault has discussed the phenomenon of people crying while reading together in the eighteenth century, and

⁹⁷ Mouton, *Lettres d'un lion*, 127-28.

⁹⁸ August-Eugène de Varennes to Emmanuel Sigismond Viollet Le Duc, May 26, 1813, Français 12142, Département des manuscrits, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

here the Davouts' tears united them even when in different countries.⁹⁹ Their letters provide contrasting examples of the ways in which people interpreted the bulletin's account of Duroc's death and Napoleon's grief.

Writing to her husband on May 30, the day the *Moniteur* containing the account of Duroc's death appeared, Aimée Davout admitted that she had not entirely recovered from the effect of reading the news in the paper, adding, "The account of his last moments can only add to the keen regrets [Duroc's death] inspires. The Emperor's religious notions and the wish the grand marshal made on the moment of expiring are the most touching thing I can imagine."¹⁰⁰ Her reference to Napoleon's "religious notions" suggests she was particularly struck by Napoleon telling Duroc that they would meet again in another world, a line that gave other readers pause as well.¹⁰¹ However, Aimée followed this statement by expressing a fervent hope for peace. She was sure that Napoleon "wishes an end to the successes that cost him such devoted men... his victories can only add to his previously expressed wishes to reestablish the peace."¹⁰² Far from justifying a continuation of the war, the account of Duroc's death only increased her desire to see an end to the fighting that had caused so many deaths.

Louis-Nicolas replied to her letter six days later, with a response that showed that the bulletin had also made a profound emotional impact on him, but had led him

⁹⁹ Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France*, trans. Teresa Bridgeman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Adélaïde Louise d'Eckmühl Blocqueville, *Le Maréchal Davout, prince d'Eckmühl, raconté par les siens et par lui-même* (Paris: Didier, 1880), 3:327.

¹⁰¹ The prelate Jean-Baptiste L'Écuy, giving the sermon for the feast of Saint Napoleon in Paris on August 15, 1813, referenced Napoleon's "consoling belief in another life"; the printed version of his sermon added a footnote with the line from the bulletin. Jean-Baptiste L'Écuy, *Discours pour les fêtes réunies de l'anniversaire du rétablissement du culte catholique en France, de l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge, et de Saint Napoléon* (Paris: Desray, 1813), 20.

¹⁰² Quoted in Blocqueville, *Le Maréchal Davout*, 3:328.

to a very different conclusion. He told his wife that he had read the scene that appeared in the *Moniteur* and that it had made him “shed tears like a child.”¹⁰³ Although Louis-Nicolas had received news of Duroc’s death from other sources as well, his letters show that the *Moniteur*’s account had a particularly strong influence.¹⁰⁴ Where Aimée had focused on the need for peace, Louis-Nicolas speculated on what Duroc’s loss would mean for Napoleon: his death was “irreparable for the Emperor.”¹⁰⁵ This echoed the sentiment Duroc supposedly expressed in the bulletin’s account, defining him in terms of his usefulness to the Emperor. Writing again the next day, Louis-Nicolas prefaced an eloquent homage to Duroc’s qualities by admitting that he had just reread the *Moniteur*—clearly the scene had lost none of its emotional impact. Although he discussed his personal grief as well, he told Aimée that it was “above all my devotion to the Emperor that causes me these regrets.”¹⁰⁶ Louis-Nicolas’s sentiment underlined the extent to which Napoleon was the center around which the entire empire revolved: by his own account, even his grief at the loss of a friend paled in comparison to his grief at the Emperor’s loss of a useful servant.

Although the bulletin’s emotional scene stirred a sentimental response in readers such as the Davouts, other contemporaries, both in the same circles and elsewhere, criticized it on the grounds that it had been constructed to provoke exactly

¹⁰³ Quoted in Blocqueville, *Le Maréchal Davout*, 3:329.

¹⁰⁴ Davout’s correspondence with Napoleon’s chief of staff Louis-Alexandre Berthier includes a letter dated two days before the bulletin appeared in the *Moniteur*, in which he agreed with Berthier’s description of Duroc’s death as an “irreparable loss” for Napoleon. *Correspondance du Maréchal Davout, prince d’Eckmühl, ses commandements, son ministère, 1801-1815*, ed. Charles de Mazade (Paris: Plon, 1885), 4:129.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Blocqueville, *Le Maréchal Davout*, 3:329.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Blocqueville, *Le Maréchal Davout*, 3:329.

that sort of emotional response, and that the scene it depicted was wholly or partially invented. Ernst Otto Innocenz von Odeleben, a Saxon officer who served with the French army in 1813, called Duroc's words too sentimental to be anything other than apocryphal, and specifically pointed out "Duroc, there is another life, it's there that we'll see each other again!" and "I have nothing to be ashamed of" as lines that Napoleon had added for their effect on both the army and the general public.¹⁰⁷ Laure Junot, duchess of Abrantès and one of Duroc's friends, suggested that Duroc's speech demonstrated a perhaps unrealistic level of eloquence for someone who was dying in agony.¹⁰⁸ Even if he could have spoken, she continued, "Perhaps he said something entirely different to what he has been made to say"; she compared his dying words to Lannes's, who, in her opinion, "didn't say a word of what was in the *Moniteur*."¹⁰⁹ Her comparison to Lannes is significant, acknowledging that Napoleon and his collaborators had used their deaths for similar propaganda purposes and suggesting that readers had doubted the veracity of Lannes's last words as well. While both Odeleben's and Abrantès's accounts should be read with the knowledge that they were written years or decades removed from the events they were describing, no longer constrained by the imperial regime's press censorship, they point to an awareness of Napoleon's attempts at manipulating the public's emotions through the bulletins.

¹⁰⁷ Ernst Otto Innocenz von Odeleben, *Rélation circonstanciée de la campagne de 1813 en Saxe*, translated into French by Aubert de Vitry (Paris: Plancher, 1817), 104, 104n1. De Vitry's translation phrased these sentences slightly differently than the original in the bulletin.

¹⁰⁸ Laure Junot d'Abrantès, *Mémoires de madame la duchesse d'Abrantès souvenirs historiques sur Napoléon, la révolution, le directoire, le consulat, l'empire et la restauration* (Paris: Garnier, 1893), 16:183. On the other hand, Varennes and Duroc's friend Charles-Nicolas Fabvier both recounted reasonably coherent conversations with the dying man in their letters, and remarked on his astonishing composure. See Varennes to Le Duc, May 26, 1813, and Antonin Debidour, *Le général Fabvier: sa vie militaire et politique* (Paris: Plon, 1904), 64.

¹⁰⁹ Abrantès, *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, 16:184.

Leaving aside the circles of imperial high society, a pair of poems published in the summer of 1813 demonstrate the effect that the bulletin account of Duroc's death produced on popular perceptions of Napoleon and the war. The *Mercure de France*, a weekly literary journal, carried a poem titled "Chant Ossianique, sur la mort des ducs d'Istrie et de Frioul" by a V. Le Duc in its issue of July 17, 1813. Explicitly in the style of the poet Ossian, known to be a favorite of Napoleon's, the poem's title referenced Duroc's death as well as another recent high-profile death: Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessières, the duke of Istria, who had been killed at the battle of Lützen in early May. Le Duc's poem depicted an unnamed, recently dead hero's arrival in Valhalla. An old companion in arms welcomed the newcomer, but questioned why he was so sad when he had met such a glorious fate. The dead man responded that his sorrow was not for the life he'd lost—he had died in the service of the greatest of heroes, which had been his highest aspiration—but rather that his death had separated him from his sovereign. He elaborated: "Away from him what future/Could now offer me charms?/My death made his tears flow/And I can no longer serve him!/O my hero! You who wept for me/What else could I regret besides you?"¹¹⁰ The parallels to the bulletin's depiction of Duroc's dying words are clear, and Le Duc further dramatized the dead man's devotion by showing him willing to give up a glorious afterlife if it would reunite him with his master. The poem also echoed the cultural response to Napoleon's tears for Lannes, presenting the Emperor's tears as the highest reward the dead man could aspire to.

Nor was Le Duc's poem the only one in the *Mercure de France* to take up themes inspired by the bulletin: a shorter poem published a month later made even

¹¹⁰ *Mercure de France*, July 17, 1813, 99.

more overt reference to the bulletin when depicting Duroc's death. Titled "Les derniers paroles du duc de Frioul," the poem reproduced Duroc's and Napoleon's final conversation from Duroc's point of view. After paraphrasing the bulletin dialogue for the first few lines, the poem then veered off into a looser recapitulation that saw Duroc confide a dying prophecy to Napoleon. The poet reminded the readers that "the future, unveiled, appears to the dying," suggesting that readers did indeed interpret Duroc's dying words in the bulletin as prophetic.¹¹¹ In the poem, Duroc told Napoleon, "The olive will be born from my ashes/You will survive me by fifty years/And the century, filled with your brilliant feats/Will be placed above even the century of Alexander."¹¹² Strikingly, the poem presented Duroc's death as a catalyst for peace—the polar opposite of the bulletin, in which Duroc had predicted that Napoleon would vanquish all his enemies. Although the references to Alexander and to Napoleon's glorious feats reminded the poem's readers of Napoleon's military victories, it nevertheless implied that Duroc's death should help bring the war to a swift end.

Napoleon had used Duroc's dying words to justify his continued wars, but readers from Aimée Davout to the pseudonymous author of "Les derniers paroles du duc de Frioul" interpreted the grand marshal's death as another sign of how necessary it was for Napoleon to make peace. As Munro Price has argued, by mid-1813 the French people were weary of wars that had stretched on for twenty years, and were willing to settle for peace on relatively unfavorable terms if it meant a lasting end to

¹¹¹ *Mercure de France*, August 7, 1813, 245.

¹¹² *Mercure de France*, August 7, 1813, 245.

the fighting.¹¹³ The prospect of peace raised by an armistice during the summer of 1813 only increased this general wish. Barely a month after “Les derniers paroles du duc de Frioul” appeared in the *Mercure de France*, the prefect of the Nord department wrote to the minister of the interior that “Among all classes there is an emphatic wish for the peace that the extension of the armistice has led us to expect.”¹¹⁴ In contrast, Napoleon sharply rebuked his minister of police in June for “bor[ing] me continually about the necessity of peace,” adding that he refused to “make a dishonorable peace or one that would see us at war again in six months.”¹¹⁵ The “hopes of our country” that Duroc had supposedly foreseen Napoleon fulfilling had sharply diverged from Napoleon’s own hopes by the summer of 1813: Napoleon’s insistence on continuing the war was an increasingly unpopular course of action. Robert Holtman has argued that Napoleon failed to adapt his propaganda to appeal specifically to the groups he was trying to influence, reducing its effectiveness.¹¹⁶ With the bulletin’s account of Duroc’s death, Napoleon’s propaganda efforts seem to have failed more generally, seriously misreading the public’s willingness to tolerate continued war.

Conclusions

Hughes describes Napoleon as the bulletins’ main protagonist, a phrasing that shows both Napoleon’s centrality to their accounts and how they transcended simple

¹¹³ Price, *Napoleon*, 94.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Price, *Napoleon*, 110. The armistice in question had initially suspended hostilities between France and its coalition of opponents from early June to late July 1813, and was later extended through mid-August.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in A. Roberts, *Napoleon*, 656.

¹¹⁶ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 245.

military reportage to create riveting narratives.¹¹⁷ In a similar vein, Napoleon's former secretary Bourrienne suggested that Napoleon had gotten the idea of making heroes speak at the moment of their death from Homer.¹¹⁸ The bulletins' dramatic accounts of soldiers' dying moments provided a venue for Napoleon to inculcate certain values in both the army and the French public, depicting his soldiers as devoted to both France and their Emperor, and constructing a portrait of himself as a benevolent and dutiful ruler. The bulletins—whether written by Napoleon or revised according to his specifications—made a public spectacle of his private emotions when faced with his wounded friends, displaying his grief for the bulletins' audience in order to influence public opinion in his favor.

The bulletins' description of the deaths of Jean Lannes and Michel Duroc, four years apart, demonstrate both Napoleon's use of grief in propaganda, and how this usage evolved. The two bulletins that described Lannes's wounding and death saw Napoleon and his staff depict himself as a humane ruler, one for whom war's losses were a great personal cost. By the time of Duroc's death four years later, an increasingly unstable political and military situation changed the ways in which Napoleon employed depictions of grief in the service of propaganda. Instead, Duroc's dying devotion and Napoleon's grief reminded the bulletin's readers of the importance of loyalty to the Emperor and the necessity of continuing the war. While that bulletin had an undeniable emotional impact on its readers, its depiction of Duroc's death elicited a desire for peace, rather than continued war, among those who responded to it.

¹¹⁷ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, 150, 158.

¹¹⁸ Bourrienne, *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, 9:207.

Chapter Two: “To Honor Heroes is to Multiply Them”: Mourning, Heroism, and Military Morale

A visitor to the chapel of Les Invalides, the hospital for military veterans in Paris, in the first week of July 1810 would have found the chapel heavily furnished with mourning decorations celebrating the dead Marshal Lannes, whose coffin rested in the chapel before being moved to the Pantheon on July 6. Prominent among the chapel’s decorations, which highlighted Lannes’s military service, was an inscription that read, “He [Lannes] will be the model and the hope of warriors. To honor heroes is to multiply them.”¹¹⁹ Such an inscription reflected another of the Napoleonic regime’s uses of mourning as propaganda: a means of valorizing dead heroes to serve as inspiration to France’s soldiers and citizens.

Grief and mourning were one element in a larger set of influences on military morale. The military historian John A. Lynn defines morale as the “complex culmination of an army’s attitudes and opinions,” noting that these attitudes and opinions derive both from society as a whole and from the army’s culture specifically.¹²⁰ Napoleon viewed morale as a crucial element of warfare, claiming that in war “morale counts for three quarters [of an advantage], the balance of material force only makes up the remaining quarter.”¹²¹ This chapter will examine two ways in which Napoleonic propaganda employed mourning to influence military morale

¹¹⁹ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello, maréchal de l’Empire, présidés par S.A.S. le Prince Archichancelier de l’Empire, duc de Parme, dans l’église des Invalides, le VI juillet MDCCCX, anniversaire de la bataille de Wagram* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1810), 15.

¹²⁰ John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 23.

¹²¹ Quoted in Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 26. For more on French military morale during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, see Lynn, “Toward an Army of Honor: The Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815,” *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1989), 152-173; Forrest, *Napoleon’s Men*, 100-10, 185-90; Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, 1-17.

during the period from 1804 to 1814. First, grief and mourning depicted in imperial propaganda fit into a larger pattern of emotional bonds within the French army, bonds that stemmed from the revolutionary government's encouragement of fraternal attachment among the troops. The Napoleonic army built on this foundation, with Napoleon using his proclamations and bulletins to make a point of his affection for his soldiers, including his grief at their deaths. Grief, too, played a role in attachments between soldiers of the rank and file, a mark of the fraternal cohesion that the Revolution had initially encouraged. Secondly, imperial propaganda, whether published accounts of battles or ceremonies for dead soldiers, glorified deaths in the service of the Emperor and victory. The rhetoric surrounding the funeral of Jean Lannes, who as a marshal of the Empire represented the pinnacle of achievement that a French soldier could aspire to, encouraged other soldiers to emulate him in both life and death. By casting soldiers who died in battle as heroes worthy of imitation, Napoleon and other members of the government evoked grief and mourning in the army in order to inspire soldiers to give their own lives for the Emperor and for France.

Fraternity, Mourning, and Morale

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars saw successive governments place an increased emphasis on cohesion within the army, transforming social relationships from the monarchy's aristocratic model to a more egalitarian one. In the revolutionary armies, this stemmed from the republican ideal of fraternity, which

created bonds based on selflessness and mutual support and affection.¹²² Fraternity derived from the intense sentimentalism of the era, reflecting the idea that love was the essential tie that bound society together.¹²³ An adjunct to the minister of war wrote in a 1793 circular that “our camps...ought to be composed only of brothers,” emphasizing fraternity’s ideal role in the armies of the Revolution.¹²⁴ Outside of the realm of rhetoric, this push for a more fraternal, egalitarian army led to an overhaul of how promotion occurred in the army, with new regulations stipulating that two-thirds of the candidates for vacant officer positions should be selected by voting among the lower ranks, a requirement that forced candidates to earn the esteem of their comrades as well as their superiors and fostered greater cohesion within units.¹²⁵ The more egalitarian armies of the French Revolution, with their emphasis on fraternity, allowed for closer connections between soldiers, a legacy that endured even as the military grew increasingly professionalized over the second half of the 1790s.¹²⁶

This fraternal, emotional model of connection endured through the transition from Republic to Empire. While Napoleonic France in general retreated from the extreme sentimentalism that had characterized public life during the Revolution, relegating displays of emotion and sensitivity to the private realm, the army remained an institution that relied on mutual affection and strong displays of emotion.¹²⁷ The military bulletins that Napoleon wrote or edited encouraged this, depicting dramatic

¹²² Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 173.

¹²³ Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France*, 30.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 173.

¹²⁵ Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 35.

¹²⁶ Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 19; Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, 41.

¹²⁷ Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France*, 38. For a discussion of sentiment’s removal from public life during the Napoleonic era, see William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 199-208.

scenes calculated to stimulate readers' emotions and dramatizing his own friendships with Lannes and Duroc, among others. The army's emphasis on fraternal and egalitarian connections led to closer attachments both between soldiers of similar ranks and between men and officers: the grenadier Jean-Roch Coignet, for example, recalled "walk[ing] arm-in-arm" with his captain, "as if I were his equal."¹²⁸ These fraternal attachments promoted mutual affection and encouraged soldiers to give their lives for their comrades in arms.

This model of fraternal and emotional connection extended from the very top of the chain of command. As the previous chapter has shown, Napoleon and his secretaries and ministers used the bulletins to portray the Emperor as a caring leader concerned for the fate of the soldiers under his command. In both the bulletins and his proclamations to the army, Napoleon made frequent reference to the affection that existed between him and the men he led, and depicted himself as a soldier like them, despite his crown. His proclamations to the army were peppered with references to their affection for him, reminding his soldiers of their "love for the country and for me" and assuring them that he "carr[ied] in my heart...the love you show me every day."¹²⁹ By repeatedly stressing that a close bond existed between himself and his soldiers, Napoleon fostered a spirit of cohesion among the army and strengthened their loyalty to him personally. In the bulletins, too, Napoleon portrayed himself as a soldier experiencing the same hardships as his troops: in a bulletin published early in the 1805 campaign, he described how a captured Austrian officer was "astonished to see the Emperor of the French soaked, covered in mud, wearier than the army's

¹²⁸ Quoted in Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 81.

¹²⁹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9381, 11:324; 11093, 13:420.

lowest drummer boy.”¹³⁰ The pointed contrast between Napoleon’s title and his appearance in this description emphasized to the troops that despite his throne, Napoleon was still a soldier who shared in their privations and exertions.

Napoleon’s repeated assurances to the army of his affection had a marked effect: French soldiers expressed confidence that Napoleon loved them and saw himself as one of their own. A soldier writing home to his uncle in 1807 described how when Napoleon visited his company, “It seemed his very presence warmed us, and repeated shouts of ‘Vive l’Empereur!’ must have convinced him how much he is cherished”; he added that although Napoleon only had time to speak to the company’s officers, if any of the soldiers had wanted to say anything to him they knew they could “approach him with confidence, certain of a warm welcome.”¹³¹ Elzéar Blaze, a soldier of the Imperial Guard, contrasted Napoleon’s attention to individual soldiers favorably with previous French rulers, claiming that Louis XIV had cared more for noble birth than for bravery, while Napoleon’s opinion was the opposite.¹³² While army’s affection for Napoleon was hardly universal, it was generals and staff officers, rather than common soldiers, who expressed the most disaffection as Napoleon’s endless wars dragged on.¹³³ Believing that Napoleon cared for them had a stirring effect on soldiers’ morale, persuading them that they fought for a ruler with whom they shared a personal connection and who had their best interests at heart.

¹³⁰ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9392, 11:334.

¹³¹ Quoted in Forrest, *Napoleon’s Men*, 103.

¹³² Elzéar Blaze, *La Vie militaire sous l’Empire* (Brussels: Société Typographique Belge, 1837), 1:188

¹³³ Gilbert Bodinier, “Le courage, l’honneur et la gloire vus par les officiers et les soldats de l’armée du Premier Empire,” in *Napoléon, Stendhal et les romantiques: l’armée, la guerre, la gloire: actes du colloque, Musée de l’armée, 16-17 novembre 2001*, ed. Michel Arrous (Saint-Pierre-du Mont: Eurédit, 2002), 213.

This emotional bond that connected the army extended through grief and mourning as well. The officer Jean-Jacques Germain Pelet described in his memoirs how Napoleon's conversation with a wounded Lannes on the battlefield of Aspern-Essling profoundly affected the men who witnessed it, himself included. Comparing the emotions provoked by their conversation to a larger grief at the battle's toll, Pelet wrote that "In any circumstances, the spectacle would have been harrowing; we were even more strongly affected, at the end of a battle that had cost the army so many brave men."¹³⁴ In Pelet's view, Napoleon's grief for Lannes mirrored his comrades' grief for the others who had fallen in battle. The Emperor's valet Louis Constant, too, offered a dramatic account of how Napoleon and Lannes's conversation affected the wounded soldiers nearby, who, "hearing His Majesty speak in this way, tried to raise themselves on their elbows, and began to cry *Vive l'empereur!*"¹³⁵ Other soldiers also depicted their grief for close comrades in their own recollections and memoirs. The sergeant François Bourgogne wrote his memoirs out of a desire to "recall the memory of...the soldiers, my fellow citizens, who shared this campaign with me," and movingly described deaths of several of his fellow soldiers during the 1812 invasion of Russia.¹³⁶ Preserving his former companions' memory in his memoirs gave Bourgogne a means of honoring and mourning their loss.

This fraternal and emotional connection also received attention from outside the army, as civilians suggested that Lannes's death provided a catalyzing force for the army and that the French defeat of the Austrians at the battle of Wagram a little

¹³⁴ Jean-Jacques Germain Pelet, *Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809 en Allemagne* (Paris: Roret, 1825), 3:335.

¹³⁵ Constant, *Mémoires de Constant*, 127. Emphasis in the original.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 98-9.

over a month later demonstrated the army taking vengeance for his loss. Laurenceau's 1809 poem *Ode on the Campaign of 1809* depicted Lannes's death as something that the army must avenge: "Montebello, who animated them/Fell struck by a mortal blow./Veterans of the Grand Armée...His blood stains your honor/His blood demands vengeance from you.../Which will not wait for long."¹³⁷ Similarly, the Huguenot pastor Pierre de Joux delivered a bellicose sermon in celebration of the French victory at Wagram that "expiated the dire and glorious loss of Montebello."¹³⁸ Quoting from the bulletin that described the battle of Aspern-Essling, Joux painted a vivid picture for his audience of Lannes's spirit accompanying and animating the army, and described Wagram as "the day of reprisal...where the avenger of Montebello rendered the same to his enemies!!!"¹³⁹ Neither Laurenceau's poem nor Joux's sermon aimed at the army as a primary audience; instead, these two works show a civilian perspective on military morale, suggesting that from the outside, at least, grief over the loss of a beloved comrade appeared as a major source of motivation for the army. Both depictions also alluded to the bonds between Lannes and the rest of the army, whether Laurenceau's appeal to the army's veterans or Joux's depiction of Lannes's spirit accompanying the army, again reinforcing the links between grief, fraternity, and military motivation.

Heroic Deaths in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Propaganda

Beyond drawing on fraternal connections, Napoleonic propaganda also employed mourning to affect soldiers' morale through public celebrations of men

¹³⁷ Laurenceau, *Ode sur la campagne de 1809*, 6.

¹³⁸ Joux, *Second discours sur la guerre*, 30.

¹³⁹ Joux, *Second discours sur la guerre*, 15-16, 25-6, 19.

who died heroically in battle. These commemorations, whether through acknowledgement in the bulletins or through public funerals, cast soldiers who had died serving Napoleon as models for their comrades to imitate. Michael J. Hughes argues that this “myth of the glorious death” produced a “new model of martyrdom” that became a crucial component of military morale under Napoleon.¹⁴⁰ This myth, propounded through Napoleonic propaganda, portrayed being wounded or dying for three causes—the Emperor, victory, and the soldier’s comrades—as a glorious fate.¹⁴¹ Such a death emphasized responsibility as much as courage: what the soldiers died for was as important as how they died.¹⁴² The bulletins’ writers made use of this, depicting soldiers using their last breath to proclaim that they only regretted dying because it meant that they could no longer fight for their Emperor. These declarations emphasized both the soldiers’ bravery—meeting death with no reservations—and their devotion to Napoleon. By underscoring the importance of dying for these particular causes, Napoleonic propaganda encouraged soldiers to give their lives for France and the Emperor in exchange for eternal glory.

In emphasizing the importance of dying for a particular cause, the Napoleonic regime tapped into an existing narrative that had begun during the French Revolution: the revolutionary government’s glorification of deaths in the service of the country. Revolutionary ceremonies and festivals featured soldiers swearing oaths to die defending the country, and citizens valorized the soldiers’ commitments to giving

¹⁴⁰ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, 85. Hughes’s term consciously echoes John A. Lynn’s concept of the “myth of the patriotic death” in revolutionary France. See Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 173-6.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, 85.

¹⁴² Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 174.

their lives for France.¹⁴³ Rhetoric of the time depicted being wounded or dying to protect France as patriotic martyrdom. An observer wrote in December 1793 that he had seen soldiers “who had been shot in the arm or in the thigh, forget their wounds and cry out ‘Vive la République’ all along the road. These are the republicans that I love.”¹⁴⁴ As well as demonstrating both the soldiers’ commitment to the Republic and how observers’ romanticized the soldiers’ sacrifices, this description has obvious resonances with later bulletin descriptions of wounded soldiers professing their devotion to the Emperor. Napoleonic propaganda shared a similar rhetoric of martyrdom, but applied it to deaths that served Napoleon specifically rather than the country as a whole.

As revolutionary France’s wars continued through the mid 1790s, government propaganda increasingly emphasized this model of patriotic martyrdom. From 1793 onwards, France’s war dead became a recurring theme in political discourse: the National Convention made frequent plans for memorials to honor soldiers who had died defending the *patrie*, though funding for these monuments seldom materialized.¹⁴⁵ A more successful commemoration—one with an overtly pedagogical purpose—was the journal *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques des Républicains Français*, a government-sponsored publication that appeared in five issues between December 1793 and August 1794.¹⁴⁶ A collection of anecdotes that depicted dramatic acts of heroism by individual French citizens, the journal received

¹⁴³ Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 174-5.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic*, 175-6.

¹⁴⁵ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 246.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Clarke, “‘Valour Knows Neither Age Nor Sex’: The *Recueil des Actions Héroïques* and the Representation of Courage in Revolutionary France,” *War in History* 20, no. 1 (2013), 51. The first issue was titled *Annales du Civisme et de la Vertu*; the journal was renamed *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques des Républicains Français* in February 1794.

an enormous print run—100,000 copies of its first issue, 150,000 each of its next four—and was distributed for free in schools, towns, and military camps.¹⁴⁷ Presenting the first issue to the National Convention, its editor, the deputy Léonard Bourdon, described the work as intended to be read “in popular assemblies, the days of the *décadi*, and in public schools, as it must have the merits desirable in simple books.”¹⁴⁸ According to Bourdon, the publication’s mission was overtly instructional, aimed at “presenting to France’s youth a picture of their fathers’ and contemporaries’ virtues; to excite and maintain the sensibility so natural at that age.”¹⁴⁹ By vividly depicting stories that illustrated courage, patriotism, and virtue, the *Recueil*’s authors attempted to inculcate similar values in the nation’s youth.

The *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques*’s format was simple: a journal between ten and thirty pages containing a series of anecdotes in which ordinary Frenchmen demonstrated republican virtues. The journal’s stories, which initially featured both civilian and military heroes but focused more on military stories in later issues, aimed at shaping conventions of what a good Republican death should look like.¹⁵⁰ The fourth issue included mention of “Pierre Albine, aged 22, who when attacked by three Austrians killed the first with a single shot, fended off the second with his bayonet and, struck a mortal blow by the third, expired pronouncing the sweet name of the *patrie*.”¹⁵¹ Albine was only one of many such exemplars: the

¹⁴⁷ Clarke, “‘Valour Knows Neither Age Nor Sex’”, 51. Clarke notes that few Revolutionary publications sold more than 5,000 copies.

¹⁴⁸ *Recueil des actions héroïques et civiques des républicains français*, no. 1, 10 nivôse an II [December 30, 1793], 1. The *décadi* was the day of rest in the French republican calendar’s ten-day week.

¹⁴⁹ *Recueil des actions héroïques et civiques*, no. 1, 10 nivôse an II, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Clarke, “‘Valour Knows Neither Age Nor Sex’”, 53, 70.

¹⁵¹ *Recueil des actions héroïques et civiques*, no. 4, 18 pluviôse an II [February 6, 1794], 17-18.

Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques was filled with patriots who cried out for the Republic when wounded or dying. This devotion to the *patrie* also presented a source of consolation to those who were mourning relatives who had died serving France: a song at the end of the third issue portrayed a mother who wept over her son's grave but took comfort from the knowledge that he "died for the Country.../I am a republican as well as a mother/Liberty will repay me for his blood/and console me in my misery."¹⁵² While his death was a source of pain, the manner in which he died—courageously defending the country—consoled his mourning mother, who found resolve in her own devotion to liberty. As its editor remarked, the journal aimed at exciting its readers' sensibilities: its dramatic tales of sacrifice for the good of France gave its readers a model of the virtues they should adhere to as good republican citizens.

The *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques*'s anecdotes played a strikingly similar role to the stories of individual soldiers in the imperial military bulletins, with the former valorizing death in the service of the Republic, and the latter death in the service of the Empire and its ruler. Soldiers declaring their devotion to Napoleon on their deathbeds replaced soldiers who used their last breath to express their love of France and liberty. As Chapter One has shown, the bulletins frequently showcased soldiers' deaths, emphasizing their loyalty to France and Napoleon in their final moments. While Napoleon and his collaborators' depictions of his own reaction to these deaths helped foster an image of him as a compassionate sovereign, the descriptions also helped create an idealized model of heroic deaths in battle. The story of Pierre Albine's death served a similar purpose to an anecdote in the bulletin of 16

¹⁵² *Recueil des actions héroïques et civiques*, no. 3, 17 germinal an II [April 6, 1794], n.p.

frimaire Year XIV (December 7, 1805), in which a general wounded at the battle of Austerlitz told the Emperor that “I will die in an hour; I do not regret losing my life, for I’ve participated in a victory that will assure you a happy reign. When you think of the brave men who were devoted to you, remember me.”¹⁵³ Each regime’s propaganda portrayed them as having died in service to a larger cause, Albine for his country and General Valhubert for Napoleon’s glory. By emphasizing soldiers’ courage, stoicism, and devotion to their comrades, their country, and their Emperor, the bulletins gave Napoleon’s soldiers a model of how—and, more importantly, why—to die.

As Napoleon’s wars continued, this message grew increasingly unequivocal. Napoleon’s bulletin of May 8, 1813, which discussed a French marshal’s death at the battle of Lützen a week earlier, was explicit about what constituted an exemplary death. According to the description of the battle published in the *Moniteur*, Jean-Baptiste Bessières’s death—struck by a cannonball while reconnoitering at the beginning of the battle—was “most worthy of envy” and was so quick that it “must have been entirely painless.”¹⁵⁴ The bulletin extolled Bessières’s virtues: he had been “brave and just...commendable as much for his military decisiveness, his great experience with the cavalry, as for his civil qualities and his attachment to the Emperor.”¹⁵⁵ By giving his audience, soldiers included, an idealized portrait of the dead marshal, Napoleon instructed them on the most important qualities a soldier of the Empire could have: bravery, military aptitude, and devotion to the Emperor. Four months later, when speculating on the fate of General Dominique Vandamme, who

¹⁵³ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9550, 11:463.

¹⁵⁴ *Moniteur universel*, May 8, 1813, 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Moniteur universel*, May 8, 1813, 2.

had gone missing after losing a battle to the Prussians, Napoleon commented that Vandamme had almost certainly “died on the field of honor, a death worthy of every brave man’s envy.”¹⁵⁶ By telling the bulletin’s readers that Bessières’s and Vandamme’s deaths were something to be wished for, he reinforced the myth of the glorious death, depicting dying in battle for him as something for soldiers to aspire to.

The myth’s frequent depiction in the bulletins affected how soldiers conceptualized the injuries and losses they suffered. Napoleon’s earliest bulletins had a marked effect on his soldiers’ morale, as the soldiers began to believe in the heroism that the bulletins and proclamations depicted.¹⁵⁷ Hughes argues that the scenes recounted in various soldiers’ memoirs of wounded soldiers expressing their continued devotion to the Emperor—declarations he describes as sounding like they had been lifted directly from the bulletins—shows that they had internalized the myth of a glorious death.¹⁵⁸ Lannes’s own words on being wounded at Aspern-Essling echoed similar sentiments, expressing a wish to live provided he could still be useful to Napoleon. In his memoirs, Pelet described the wounded man telling Napoleon, in a voice shaking with pain, “I want to live...if I can serve you further...as well as our France...but I believe that in an hour...you’ll have lost...him who was your best friend.”¹⁵⁹ Lannes’s words suggest that this sentiment was not confined solely to Napoleon’s publications, but rather a belief to which some of his soldiers truly adhered.

¹⁵⁶ *Moniteur universel*, September 8, 1813, 2. Vandamme, who survived the battle, had been taken prisoner; he lived until 1830.

¹⁵⁷ Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799*, 59.

¹⁵⁸ Hughes, *Forging Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, 203.

¹⁵⁹ Pelet, *Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809 en Allemagne*, 3:335. The ellipses are in Pelet’s text.

Public Commemoration and Inspiration at Lannes's Funeral

Lannes's funeral ceremonies in Paris in July 1810 provide an excellent example of how the Napoleonic regime presented the myth of the glorious death to a public audience. While I will discuss Lannes's funeral procession and interment in the Pantheon in greater detail in Chapter Three, the ceremonies surrounding his body's display in the chapel of Les Invalides before being moved to the Pantheon offer a close look at how the Napoleonic government used mourning as an influence on military morale. Henri Clarke, the minister of war, drew up plans for Lannes's funeral ceremonies on Napoleon's orders, and the government architect François-Jacques Delannoy designed the decorations in the chapel of Les Invalides.¹⁶⁰ The official ceremony combined mourning and valorization to create a vision of Lannes's heroism that both soldiers and youth who would become soldiers should strive to live up to.

Lannes's body arrived in Paris on July 2, 1810, escorted by a military procession composed of soldiers from the corps he had commanded. His coffin rested in the chapel at Les Invalides for four days before his funeral on July 6. During these four days, the chapel was open to the public for four hours each afternoon.¹⁶¹ Anyone viewing the marshal's coffin entered a chapel draped in black and elaborately decorated with trappings of military glory, including enemy flags from the battles Lannes had fought in and inscriptions celebrating his heroism and exemplary military

¹⁶⁰ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 16189, 20:165; Emile Bellier de la Chavignerie and Louis Auvray, "Delannoy (François-Jean), architecte," in *Dictionnaire général des artistes de l'école française depuis l'origine des arts du dessin jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 1 (Paris: Renouard, 1882), 386.

¹⁶¹ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 6.

service.¹⁶² In addition to referencing his many wounds and the rewards that Napoleon had bestowed on him, these inscriptions quoted Napoleon's words from the bulletin of May 23, 1809—"It had to be that today my heart would be struck by such a blow as this, for which I would abandon myself to other considerations than that of my army."¹⁶³ A frieze placed outside the chapel's entrance read, "He will be the model and the hope of warriors. To honor heroes is to multiply them."¹⁶⁴ Such a statement provides a concise summary of the Napoleonic regime's use of mourning to affect military morale: public mourning and commemoration cast Lannes as a model for France's soldiers to emulate.

Lannes's career presented a particularly striking example for other soldiers to look up to. A dyer's apprentice who volunteered to join the revolutionary army in 1792, he benefited from the army's new egalitarian organization when his companions in arms elected him to be their second lieutenant despite his lack of previous military experience.¹⁶⁵ From there, Lannes rose rapidly through the ranks: he was promoted to general less than four years later, and named a marshal on the empire's foundation in 1804. Historians have described him as the archetypal Revolutionary soldier, suggesting his career lent a certain amount of credence to the maxim that every Napoleonic soldier carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack.¹⁶⁶ Delannoy took advantage of Lannes's status as the consummate soldier in his decoration designs: inscriptions on the chapel's columns retraced Lannes's career

¹⁶² *Gazette de France*, July 3, 1810, 3-4.

¹⁶³ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 19.

¹⁶⁴ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 15.

¹⁶⁵ Margaret Scott Chrisawn, *The Emperor's Friend: Marshal Jean Lannes* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), xi-xii.

¹⁶⁶ Forrest, *Napoleon's Men*, 17.

from his time as a volunteer in the Army of the Eastern Pyrenees up to his death.¹⁶⁷ If Lannes's brilliant history was something that French soldiers could hope to imitate, the decorations at Les Invalides made it clear that his death was something that they should strive to imitate as well.

However, Lannes's death required a certain amount of revision to be suitably inspirational to the chapel's visitors. An inscription in the chapel proclaimed that he "died gloriously on the field of Essling, XXII May MDCCCIX."¹⁶⁸ Lannes died not on May 22 at Essling, but nine days later as a result of infection after one of his wounded legs was amputated. Two other inscriptions referred to his being "mortally wounded at the battle of Essling," a looser phrasing, but the first inscription was entirely incorrect.¹⁶⁹ Nor was the chapel the only place where the altered date appeared: medallions struck by the government mint to commemorate Lannes's interment in the Pantheon also gave the date of his death as May 22.¹⁷⁰ This suggests that the changed date in the inscriptions in Les Invalides was not Delannoy's initiative, but rather part of a more concerted effort to amend the historical record. Presenting Lannes's fate as a swift and triumphant death on the field of battle rather than a lingering agony following a terrible injury, this alteration offered a cleaner, more idealized version of a heroic fate.

The decorations in Les Invalides were not the only element of Lannes's funeral ceremonies to overtly frame Lannes's life and death as a source of inspiration.

¹⁶⁷ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 16-7.

¹⁶⁸ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, n.p.

¹⁶⁹ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 17, 19.

¹⁷⁰ J.C. Laskey, *A Description of the Series of Medals Struck at the National Medal Mint By Order of Napoleon Bonaparte, Commemorating the Most Remarkable Battles and Events During His Dynasty* (London: H.R. Young, 1818), 193.

Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout's eulogy for Lannes at the Pantheon explicitly positioned Lannes as a model for France's soldiers to imitate. Charged with delivering a speech expressing the army's regrets over Lannes's death, Davout emphasized the dead marshal's courage and devotion to Napoleon, and reminded his audience that these were ideals to live up to.¹⁷¹ The *Moniteur* reprinted Davout's speech in full as part of a detailed description of Lannes's funeral, ensuring that it reached an audience far beyond the funeral's attendees. Lannes's funeral procession included a wide variety of troops—light and line infantry, horse and foot artillery, cavalry, sappers and miners, and members of the general staff—and Davout emphasized the army's affection for Lannes and sorrow over his loss as well as spelling out how they could imitate him.¹⁷² The marshal's "military career, [and] his devotion" would give "an example to those who follow him into a career in the military, and to those youths, the hope of the country, who are impatient to embark on such a career, to follow in his footsteps and one day merit similar honors."¹⁷³ In Davout's view, Lannes would serve as inspiration not only to France's current soldiers, but to the next generation as well. Davout reminded the assembled troops, "soldiers of every weapon and every rank, who represent the French army here," that "the most beautiful elegy that can be made for he who is no more, is to take him for a model"—a framing that fused mourning and emulation, presenting one as motivation for the other.¹⁷⁴ Davout concluded his speech by once more evoking the myth of the glorious death: "We will follow the example that the duke of Montebello left us... We

¹⁷¹ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

¹⁷² *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 7-8.

¹⁷³ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

¹⁷⁴ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

will always be prepared to shed, like him, the last drop of our blood for the service and the glory of our great and well-beloved Emperor.”¹⁷⁵ Speaking for the army as a whole, Davout stressed that dying for Napoleon was a laudable goal.

Death and Immortality in Print and On Stage

The two years following Lannes’s death saw a series of printed works that emphasized his heroism to the reading public. Published in the wake of Lannes’s funeral, these works drew on both the bulletins’ account of Lannes’s wounding and death as well as the descriptions of Lannes’s funeral published in French newspapers. In addition to reiterating Lannes’s heroism and military valor, these works presented the nation’s grief as a just reward for heroism, and suggested that dying gloriously on the battlefield would make a soldier immortal in French history and memory.

The playwright and author René Perin’s biography of Lannes, *Vie militaire de J. Lannes*, offered its readers an idealized portrait of a hero of France. Perin’s book, originally published in 1809, appeared in a second edition in the summer of 1810, less than a month after Lannes’s funeral.¹⁷⁶ As the title makes clear, Perin’s book focused on Lannes’s military career to the exclusion of other details—dealing with his three years as the French ambassador to Portugal in a single sentence, for example—and ultimately served as much as a history of the past fifteen years of French military victories as a biography of one military commander in particular. Perin’s Lannes was a daring hero, “always to be found in the first rank of perils and glory,” and a faithful subordinate devoted to his emperor, with whom he had a “tender and chivalrous

¹⁷⁵ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

¹⁷⁶ The first edition was published in late 1809. The second edition—revised to include a description of Lannes’s funeral—was not dated, but an advertisement for it appeared in the Paris newspaper *Gazette de France* on July 26, 1810.

friendship.”¹⁷⁷ Describing Lannes’s death, Perin wrote that “France will lose a hero, the Emperor a friend; a virtuous spouse will weep for an adored husband; children will regret a loving father...the duke of Montebello dies...to live on forever!!!”¹⁷⁸ This dramatic conclusion emphasized a recurring feature in works that discussed Lannes’s death: the idea that dying heroically in battle won him immortal fame and glory. Perin quoted from the bulletins’ description of Lannes’s injury and death, and ended the book by reproducing the funeral program that had been printed in Paris newspapers in February 1810.¹⁷⁹ The rhetoric of glory surrounding deaths in battle and faithful service to the Emperor, common features of both the bulletins and Lannes’s funeral ceremonies, left its mark on Perin’s work in creating a perhaps larger-than-life portrait of an ideal French hero.

A short play performed in Paris in the summer of 1810 dramatized Lannes’s death and funeral to link death in battle with eternal glory. Written by Jean-Baptiste Augustin Hapdé, whose works included several patriotic dramas and who also worked as a military hospital administrator, *L’Apothéose du duc de Montebello* vividly depicted the myth of the glorious death.¹⁸⁰ The play was a brief tableau: the published script runs to a mere eight pages. Advertisements for the tableau first appeared in Paris newspapers the day before Lannes’s body was transferred to the Pantheon, suggesting that the funeral ceremonies, which Parisian newspapers had discussed extensively for the previous month, had provided Hapdé with a source of

¹⁷⁷ René Perin, *Vie militaire de J. Lannes, maréchal de l’Empire, duc de Montebello, colonel-général des Suisses*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Delaunay, n.d.), 44, 251n.

¹⁷⁸ Perin, *Vie militaire de J. Lannes*, 251.

¹⁷⁹ Perin, *Vie militaire de J. Lannes*, 250, 251; *Moniteur universel*, February 10, 1810, 1; *Gazette de France*, February 11, 1810, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Paul Mironneau and Gérard Lahouati, *Figures de l’histoire de France dans le théâtre au tournant des Lumières, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007), 194.

inspiration; according to a printed edition of the play, the first performance took place the day after the ceremonies at the Pantheon.¹⁸¹ Hapdé's tableau staged a striking spectacle of military glory, including a host of dead French and classical heroes—the Revolutionary generals Desaix, Kléber, and Joubert, as well as Achilles, Theseus, and Leonidas—which positioned Lannes in a lineage of Frenchmen who had died for their country as well as in a larger tradition of classical heroism. The tableau began on a mournful note, with a funeral procession that featured two French citizens shedding tears for the dead hero and proclaiming that all France was in mourning. Hapdé emphasized that eternal glory was Lannes's "just reward" for his virtues: the shade of a dead hero told Lannes that "Through your bravery and loyalty/Victory's brilliant chariot/Today leads you to immortality," and Immortality personified escorted him to the Elysian Fields.¹⁸² The two virtues that Hapdé's script highlighted were, of course, major features of the propaganda surrounding Lannes's death and funeral. By combining mourning and exaltation, Hapdé's play offered a potent image of the rewards awaiting those who demonstrated the two virtues, meriting both the country's regrets and an afterlife of eternal glory.

A poem published a year after Lannes's funeral offered a more complicated look at the connection between mourning and glory. Joseph Lingay, private secretary to a departmental prefect, included a poem on Lannes's death in a poetry collection he published in honor of the birth of Napoleon's son in 1811. One of a series of works

¹⁸¹ *Moniteur universel*, July 5, 1810, 4; Jean-Baptiste Augustin Hapdé, *L'Apothéose du duc de Montebello, tableaux à Grand Spectacle; précédés d'une pompe funèbre, mêlée des chants* (Paris: Barba, 1810), n.p. Advertisements for the play's performances at the Jeux Gymniques theater appeared in the *Moniteur*, the *Journal de l'Empire*, and the *Gazette de France* in July, August, and September 1810.

¹⁸² Hapdé, *L'Apothéose du duc de Montebello*, 8.

that included poems celebrating Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise of Austria and the birth of his son, Lingay's poem on Lannes hailed Napoleon as a ruler who "united the virtues of a Hero with those of a citizen" and lavishly praised Lannes's military feats.¹⁸³ Lingay presented glory as a contrast to mourning, asking, "Does one die when one conquers at Essling, at Arcola?" and claiming that "glory renounces sorrow/...Yes, the death of a great man is an apotheosis!"¹⁸⁴ Mourning Lannes's death was beside the point, Lingay suggested. His deeds and his death had won him eternal renown, so that he would live on in France's memory and history—he may as well have never died at all. Lingay's poem offered a different perspective on the links between mourning and heroism, moving away from the connection expressed in government propaganda and towards a model that eschewed mourning in order to focus on heroism's place in the nation's memory.

Conclusions

Napoleonic propaganda played on the emotional connections that the revolutionary army's model of fraternity had developed and that the imperial army continued to cultivate in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Napoleon's repeated references to his soldiers' love and affection for him in his proclamations to the army both reassured them that he cared about them in return and encouraged them to form similar bonds with each other. These emotional connections extended to grief as well, as both bulletins and official ceremonies evoked grief and mourning for dead soldiers for the purpose of military motivation. Jean-Paul Bertaud argues that despite

¹⁸³ J. Lingay, "Chant de gloire en l'honneur du maréchal duc de Montebello," in *Hommage d'un français à Sa Majesté le roi de Rome* (Paris: Dentu, 1811), 38.

¹⁸⁴ Lingay, "Chant de gloire en l'honneur du maréchal duc de Montebello," 36, 37.

the presence of imperial civil officials, Lannes's funeral was a "soldiers' affair," demonstrating to all of France Napoleon's close relationship with the army.¹⁸⁵ This military mourning was illustrated not only by the decorations and processions at Lannes's funeral, but also by Davout's speech, which referenced Napoleon's tears for his wounded comrade in arms, and invoked Lannes's sacrifice as something every soldier in the army should be ready to imitate.

Indeed, Davout's speech succinctly captured two major ways in which the Napoleonic government employed grief and mourning to affect military morale. As well as touching on the emotional bonds within the army, as demonstrated by Napoleon weeping for his fallen comrade, Davout presented Lannes as a model for France's soldiers—present and future—to imitate. Expressing a sentiment that could have been taken straight from the pages of a bulletin, Davout's declaration that France's soldiers "will always be prepared to shed...the last drop of our blood for the service and the glory of our great and well-beloved Emperor" perfectly illustrated the myth of the glorious death that played a crucial role in Napoleonic propaganda.¹⁸⁶ The myth resonated through popular culture as well, showing that it reached an audience outside the army. Responding to Lannes's death and the elaborate funeral that the government staged for him, poems, plays, and biographies depicted his death as something worthy of eternal glory—even when, as in the case of Lingay's 1811 poem, the author argued that his heroic death precluded any need for mourning. The myth of the glorious death often featured soldiers lamenting that they could no longer be useful to Napoleon. However, this was not strictly accurate: while their deaths

¹⁸⁵ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 342.

¹⁸⁶ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2.

meant they could no longer be of use to him on the battlefield, their examples proved to be of further use to Napoleon and his government when attempting to inspire the next generation of French soldiers.

Chapter 3: This Imposing Ceremony: Public Funerals from the French Revolution to the End of Empire

At six in the morning on May 22, 1810—the anniversary of the first day of the battle of Aspern-Essling—cathedral bells and thirteen cannon shots woke the inhabitants of Strasbourg, announcing the beginning of what would be a day of civic mourning ceremonies. Two hours later, the town’s “public, administrative, and judiciary functionaries, as well as generals, officers of the general staff...and all the Catholic clergy” accompanied the mortal remains of Jean Lannes and Louis-Vincent-Joseph Le Blond de Saint-Hilaire from the city hall, where the two embalmed bodies had rested for months, to the cathedral.¹⁸⁷ After a mass and funeral music including Mozart’s *Requiem* at the cathedral, which was draped in black and decorated with laurel crowns and the dead men’s coats of arms, an immense funeral procession escorted the two men’s coffins from the city.¹⁸⁸

The funeral service in Strasbourg was the first step of a procession that lasted more than a month: the cortège arrived in Paris on July 2, having held funeral services in all the cities in which it stopped on the route. In Paris, Lannes’s and Saint-Hilaire’s coffins were displayed in the chapel of Les Invalides for four days before being transferred to the Pantheon. This funeral ceremony was the most elaborate example of Napoleon’s commemorations of dead military figures, a series that spanned ceremonies for the revolutionary and ancien régime generals during the Consulate, through Lannes’s and Saint-Hilaire’s national funeral in 1810, to the planned but never completed ceremonies for Michel Duroc in 1813. These commemorations

¹⁸⁷ *Moniteur universel*, May 28, 1810, 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Moniteur universel*, May 28, 1810, 2.

combined a multitude of influences—most apparently with customs established during the French Revolution, which used national festivals for pedagogical purposes. The Pantheon, where Lannes and Saint-Hilaire would be interred after the lengthy processing, was another institution established during the French Revolution that Napoleon turned to a new purpose during the Empire. Intended to honor the country's great men when established by the National Assembly in 1791, Napoleon's criteria for admission to the Pantheon were rather different: it was to be the tomb of "senators, grand officers of the Legion of Honor, and those generals and other public servants who have served the state well."¹⁸⁹ Napoleonic public funerals also featured religious rites, facilitated by France's official rapprochement with the Catholic Church through the Concordat of 1801, despite Napoleon's annexation of the Papal States and subsequent excommunication. Official commemorations for the dead during the Empire, much like other festivals of the period, combined displays of religious, civil, and military authority.

This chapter explores public funerals for dead generals during the Napoleonic era. Beginning with an overview of their genealogy in the festivals of the French Revolution, it examines commemorations during the first year of the Consulate, Lannes's funeral in 1810, and the planned but never completed ceremonies for Duroc in 1813. In doing so, it will show how public funerals served an educational purpose during the empire, bringing disparate territories together in shared mourning for French heroes and celebration of the empire.

¹⁸⁹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9797, 12:34.

Public Funerals and Revolutionary Festivals

Public mourning for France's heroes during the French Revolution formed one component of a larger system of revolutionary festivals and public celebrations. Mona Ozouf argues that festivals during the Revolution served a pedagogical purpose, providing an educational and moralizing experience for the French people through regular, public gatherings.¹⁹⁰ Festivals commemorated a broad range of subjects, from the Festival of the Federation in 1790, which celebrated the fall of the Bastille the previous year, to festivities that celebrated such abstract concepts as agriculture or youth. By calling the nation's citizens together, festivals fostered a sense of fraternity: the National Assembly emphasized the importance of events taking place simultaneously across the country in order to create a feeling of political and moral unanimity. The government's instructions regarding the first Festival of the Federation—celebrated on July 14, 1790, in Paris and the provinces—stressed that men of the National Guard should take an oath at noon, “at the same moment in every part of the empire.”¹⁹¹ Such simultaneity rendered the festival both sacred and fraternal, letting the participants feel that they were part of a larger community of Frenchmen.¹⁹² Discussing the process of imagining a nation, Benedict Anderson describes the nation as a “deep, horizontal comradeship,” in which people envisioned themselves as part of a larger whole despite never meeting most of their fellow citizens.¹⁹³ The revolutionary festivals, which stressed the simultaneous, fraternal

¹⁹⁰ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 197-203.

¹⁹¹ Quoted in Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 50.

¹⁹² Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 50.

¹⁹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7.

nature of the events, helped construct the new French nation, forging a social bond that evoked national belonging.

Despite the National Convention's efforts to suppress official religious celebrations, revolutionary festivals retained links to a religious genealogy. In the Revolution's first years, festivals contained elements of syncretism, especially in the provinces—with citizens celebrating marriages and baptisms during the Festival of the Federation, for instance.¹⁹⁴ Even after the ban on “external manifestations of worship,” some festivals retained a religious element: communes marked the French capture of Toulon in 1793 with a *Te Deum*.¹⁹⁵ Robespierre's Festival of the Supreme Being in June 1794 drew on trappings of Catholicism well as antiquity for its deist celebration.¹⁹⁶ The government's dechristianization efforts also affected traditional commemorations for the dead: with visible religious displays forbidden—a ban that continued even after churches began to reopen in 1795—Christian funerals proved an impossibility for ordinary citizens.¹⁹⁷ Processions for the dead remained a feature of mourning ceremonies, maintaining a link between religious rite and social event.¹⁹⁸ Despite the revolutionary government's push for dechristianization, the complex relationship between mourning, religion, and official rites would continue through the Revolution.

¹⁹⁴ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 262-63, 51.

¹⁹⁵ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 262-63.

¹⁹⁶ David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3, 166-67.

¹⁹⁷ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 281. The Convention also banned churches from ringing their bells, a ban that continued under the Directory with punishments including imprisonment and deportation.

¹⁹⁸ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 263.

The Revolutionary government's most visible use of public mourning to demonstrate patriotic values to the nation came with the National Assembly's establishment of the Pantheon in April 1791. Following the death of the revolutionary orator the comte de Mirabeau, the National Assembly's decree appropriated the Church of Saint Genevieve as a place to honor France's "great men," as part of an effort to create what David A. Bell calls a "canon of exemplary republican citizens."¹⁹⁹ A crowd that according to some estimates reached 400,000 turned out to watch Mirabeau's funeral procession bear his body to the Church of Saint Genevieve on April 4, 1791; the writer and deputy Charles-Élie de Ferrières described the funeral as a "national triumph."²⁰⁰ The Pantheon soon became a source of controversy over what constituted a great man and how the Pantheon should best commemorate them: from December 1792 onwards, every proposal to place someone in the Pantheon was accompanied by a parallel proposal to remove someone else.²⁰¹ As the deputy Louis-Sébastien Mercier noted during the May 1796 debate over whether René Descartes deserved a place in its vaults, "immortality is not secure in the Pantheon."²⁰² Ultimately, the Directory chose to ignore the Pantheon as a space for commemoration; no one was buried there between 1794 and 1806.²⁰³ While the Pantheon had initially presented an opportunity for the nation to come together to mourn the death of a patriot, as Mirabeau's funeral procession had demonstrated, the

¹⁹⁹ Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, 126.

²⁰⁰ Quoted in Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 94.

²⁰¹ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 233-43; Mona Ozouf, "The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 341.

²⁰² Quoted in Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 235.

²⁰³ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 243.

conflicting political narratives it presented proved too difficult for successive governments to reconcile into a unified canon of great men.

Despite the Pantheon's short-term failure as a site of remembrance, public funerals proved to be an enduring feature of revolutionary commemoration of the dead. A more tragedy-focused subset of revolutionary festivals, funerals too brought citizens together for a common purpose and offered an opportunity for moral and civic instruction. Between 1790 and 1791, France celebrated four other festivals in addition to Mirabeau's interment in the Pantheon. Two were festivals of the Federation (July 14), while the other two commemorated the dead: a memorial for national guardsmen who had died repressing a mutinous regiment at Nancy, and Voltaire's reburial in the Pantheon.²⁰⁴ Ozouf argues that funerary festivals outline the Revolution's phases; Joseph Clarke, similarly, suggests that public funerals were perhaps the sole constant type of festival in revolutionary culture, as the festivals that commemorated political events prove short-lived in the Revolution's volatile atmosphere.²⁰⁵ Moving away from mourning political figures to mourning military figures reflected changes in the nation's government. Under the Directory, state funerals—and commemoration of the dead more generally—grew increasingly militarized as the government relied more and more heavily on the army's support to stay in power.²⁰⁶ The state funerals for the generals Hoche and Joubert appealed to patriotic sentiment and military strength to reinforce the Directory's faltering

²⁰⁴ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 61.

²⁰⁵ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 82; Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 3.

²⁰⁶ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 244.

authority.²⁰⁷ Following in the Directory's footsteps, Napoleon, too, would stage funerals for Revolutionary generals during the Consulate, using the commemorations to construct a political narrative that justified his hold on power.

Commemoration and the Consulate

On September 23, 1800, less than a year into the Consulate, the new government staged a commemoration for three dead generals as part of the Festival of the Republic. The ceremony for these generals occurred at First Consul Bonaparte's behest, allowing him to construct a political narrative that positioned himself as the country's legitimate ruler despite having seized power in a coup d'état. Adding these commemorations to the Festival of the Republic—celebrated on the first day of the republican calendar's new year to mark the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the French Republic in 1792—linked past and present military accomplishments with the new government, a fitting association for a regime led by a man defined by his military successes and who had just successfully concluded a war with Austria. The First Consul also took care to keep himself in the spotlight, laying the first stone of a planned monument himself during the ceremony.²⁰⁸

The ceremonies at the Festival of the Republic commemorated two generals of the French Revolution, both former companions-in-arms of General Bonaparte, who had died on the same day—June 14, 1800—in very different locations. Louis Desaix had been killed during the battle of Marengo in northern Italy, where his eleventh-hour arrival helped Bonaparte conclusively defeat the Austrian army and consolidate France's hold over Italy. Within hours of Desaix's death, an Egyptian

²⁰⁷ Clarke, *Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France*, 265.

²⁰⁸ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 5086, 6:453.

student assassinated Jean-Baptiste Kléber, whom Bonaparte had left in command of the French forces occupying Egypt when he returned to France in the fall of 1799, in Cairo. The two Republican generals had unlikely company during the festival: the day also commemorated a hero of the monarchical past, the marshal Henri de la Tour d’Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne. Turenne had served both Louis XIII and Louis XIV, and his name was a byword for French military glory; reburying him in the military hospital at Les Invalides represented a level of reconciliation with the ancien régime, a reconciliation specifically framed in terms of honoring historical military glory.²⁰⁹ The *Moniteur* of September 23 noted that an “immense crowd” attended the festival, and described the poignant sight of “the veterans escorting the body of Turenne, the companions of Desaix and Kléber weeping over their tomb...Who could remain unmoved by a similar spectacle?”²¹⁰ In combination with Desaix and Kléber, Turenne represented an opportunity for Bonaparte’s new regime to establish its continuity with past regimes, doing so by celebrating military valor.

While Bonaparte had originally planned a commemoration for Desaix alone, the news of Kléber’s death caused him to change his plans, instead ordering a combined ceremony and monument for both generals.²¹¹ While the extraordinary coincidence of their deaths within hours of each other may have contributed to Bonaparte’s decision to honor Desaix and Kléber with the same ceremony, doing so

²⁰⁹ John R. Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon’s Grande Armée* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 5, 165; Bernard Gainot, “Les mots et les cendres: l’héroïsme au début du Consulat,” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 324 (2001), 137-38.

²¹⁰ *Moniteur*, September 23, 1800, 2.

²¹¹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 4938, 6:382; 5086, 6:453; Annie Jourdan, “Bonaparte et Desaix, une amitié inscrite dans la pierre des monuments?,” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 324 (2004), 5. In 1802, Bonaparte decided that the monument would be dedicated to Desaix alone, ostensibly because the artist was having difficulty reconciling the very different locations of their deaths into a unified work.

²¹¹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 5086, 6:453.

also served a more pointed political purpose. Commemorating Desaix and Kléber together emphasized their role as subordinates to Bonaparte in the French army, presenting them primarily in terms of having served together under his command in Egypt, rather than their individual exploits.²¹² The scenery at the Festival of the Republic further accentuated this point: Vivant Denon designed an Egyptian monument for the Place des Victoires, including the two generals' busts inside the structure.²¹³ Portraying Desaix and Kléber as Bonaparte's faithful lieutenants obscured Kléber's disagreements with the future First Consul—he had sent the Directory a fierce denunciation of Bonaparte after being abandoned in Egypt—but served an even greater political purpose in Desaix's case. Following news of Desaix's death at Marengo, the French Tribunate paid elaborate homage to his virtues and services to France, in language that not only held him up as a hero but also downplayed Bonaparte's role in the battle.²¹⁴ Bonaparte prioritized positioning Marengo as his own victory, relying on the political capital that such a success would bring to his still-young government: he took great pains over the official account of the battle, making his chief-of-staff revise it three times.²¹⁵ By positioning Desaix as a loyal follower, Bonaparte could cast himself as the victor of Marengo—and, by extension, the savior of France's control over Italy—a role that he could use to justify his position as France's leader and protector.

This ceremony, too, marked the beginning of Bonaparte's employment of interments and reburials of famous figures to create a narrative favorable to him. In

²¹² Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 336.

²¹³ Jourdan, "Bonaparte et Desaix," 9n9.

²¹⁴ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 336; Jourdan, "Bonaparte et Desaix," 1-2.

²¹⁵ A. Roberts, *Napoleon*, 268.

this, he drew on precedents established during the French Revolution, most obviously with the burials and reburials of famous Frenchmen in the Pantheon in the early 1790s. The First Consul transformed Les Invalides into a site of military commemoration, with Turenne the first of several ancien régime and revolutionary heroes to be reburied there.²¹⁶ Desaix, meanwhile, was buried in the Saint Bernard Pass, where the French army had crossed into Italy in 1800, making his tomb a symbol of France's continued control of much of the Italian peninsula.²¹⁷ After the establishment of the empire, Napoleon would revive the Pantheon as a place of interment for France's distinguished dead. Addressing the Legislative Corps in March 1806, he informed them that the Pantheon would be the "witness of the sovereign's recognition and posterity's tributes" towards those who had "rendered exceptional services to the state."²¹⁸ Focusing on military and administrative services to the Napoleonic regime, as well as membership in the institutions with which it rewarded good service—the imperial senate and the Legion of Honor—Napoleon's idea of the Pantheon used entombment there as an honor to encourage loyalty to the state. While still nominally preserving the Revolutionary government's original conception of the Pantheon as a resting place recognizing the country's great men, Napoleon put it to use glorifying those who had served his regime specifically, foremost among them the marshal Jean Lannes in 1810.

²¹⁶ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 326.

²¹⁷ Gainot, "Les mots et les cendres," 138. Kléber, not having a symbolic function to fulfill, was less fortunate: on Napoleon's orders, his body remained at the Château d'If off the French coast, and he was not buried in France until 1818.

²¹⁸ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 9929, 12:146.

A Funeral for the Grand Empire

Jean Lannes's funeral in July 1810 took place at the apogee of the Napoleonic Empire.²¹⁹ Having defeated Austria yet again the previous year, Napoleon directly or indirectly ruled a vast swathe of Europe, and had allied himself with the continent's oldest monarchy by marrying the Austrian emperor's daughter Marie Louise. However, this power rested on unstable foundations. The ill-advised French invasion of Spain in 1808 had devolved into an increasingly savage war of attrition and dragged on without either side gaining the upper hand. At the same time, the Continental System frayed France's relationship with Russia and caused tension even within the empire: Napoleon deposed his brother Louis from the throne of Holland in early July 1810 for failing to adequately enforce the imperial embargo on trade with Britain. Furthermore, France's annexation of the Papal States in 1809 had resulted in Pope Pius VII excommunicating Napoleon, seriously damaging his relationship with the Catholic Church. Lannes's funeral, therefore, served as much as a reassertion of Napoleon's political and military power as a commemoration of Lannes alone.²²⁰

Although he initially ordered the funeral ceremonies, Napoleon largely left their development in the hands of his cabinet. Henri Clarke, the minister of war, composed the funeral program and made the arrangements for executing it along with the minister of religion, Felix-Julien Bigot de Préameneu, while the minister of the

²¹⁹ The funeral ceremonies were not for Lannes alone: they honored General Saint-Hilaire—who had died five days after Lannes, also of wounds suffered at Aspern-Essling—as well. Saint-Hilaire's coffin accompanied Lannes's in the funeral procession, and he was interred in the Pantheon on the same day. Nonetheless, the official printed publicity focused almost entirely on Lannes: the funeral program referred only to the "Funeral honors for the duke of Montebello," and the *Moniteur's* three-page description of the ceremonies that took place in Paris on July 6 mentioned Saint-Hilaire just twice.

²²⁰ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 339.

interior wrote the eulogy that would be delivered at Lannes's funeral mass.²²¹ Such a process appears to have been typical of how the imperial government organized national festivals, with Napoleon taking a more or less involved role while various cabinet ministers arranged the details.²²² Clarke submitted the program to Napoleon for approval in late January or early February 1810, and it appeared in the *Moniteur* on February 10.²²³ The general Louis-François Lejeune recalled reading the program in the *Moniteur* in his memoirs, noting that the ceremony "needed to be worthy of the great Empire which [Lannes's] noble services had contributed to founding, and the day of the ceremony had to be a day of public mourning."²²⁴ Lejeune's memoir highlights the funeral's propagandistic aspects, particularly the intention to involve the entire empire in a display of national mourning—an angle that, in Lejeune's opinion, was highly successful.

The Emperor's one intervention in the funeral planning was to change the dates of the six-week procession from Strasbourg to Paris. Reviewing Clarke's proposed funeral program, Napoleon ordered that the procession leave Strasbourg, where Lannes's body had rested since the end of the previous summer, on May 22, one year after the beginning of the battle of Aspern-Essling, and arrive in Paris on July 6, the anniversary of the battle of Wagram.²²⁵ The procession ultimately arrived in Paris on July 2, and Lannes's obsequies took place on the battle's anniversary. By

²²¹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 16171, 20:144; *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 12; Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 341.

²²² Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 108-09.

²²³ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 16226, 20:193; *Moniteur universel*, February 10, 1810, 1-2.

²²⁴ Louis-François Lejeune, *Souvenirs d'un officier de l'empire* (Toulouse: Viguier, 1851), 2:60.

²²⁵ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 16226, 20:193; *Moniteur*, May 27, 1810, 2. These were not the only significant dates with which Lannes's funeral ceremonies aligned: the *Moniteur* published a full account of the Paris funeral not the next day but eight days later on July 14, a former national holiday in its own right.

commemorating the marshal on the anniversary of a battle that had taken place more than a month after his death, Napoleon elided a celebration of Lannes specifically with a more general celebration of the empire's military might, focusing on France's victory at Wagram rather than its defeat at Aspern-Essling.²²⁶ Lejeune found the ceremony a more than sufficient distraction from the problems on the empire's periphery, reflecting that "At the height of [the funeral's] splendor...we were very far indeed from foreseeing that in a few years Napoleon would die in exile."²²⁷ While this was easy for Lejeune to say with hindsight, it points to how the funeral served as a reinforcement of the empire's stability.

After a funeral mass in Strasbourg, the carriage bearing Lannes's coffin left the city accompanied by two detachments of cavalry, the marshal's family, an assortment of clergy, and Saint-Hilaire's coffin. In the cities that the melancholy cortège stopped in over the next six weeks—Lunéville, Nancy, Toul, and Châlons, among others—it received a formal welcome from local military, religious, and civil functionaries. Lannes's coffin rested in the city's main church, surrounded by a guard of honor and with a local priest keeping vigil, until the procession moved on.²²⁸ Involving military, civil, and religious authorities in the procession's reception at each locale, Clarke's program ensured that the procession would attract a high amount of notice in the cities it passed through. The *Moniteur* kept citizens throughout the empire updated on the procession's progress: the paper published an item on the cortège's arrival in a particular city at least once a week between late May and early July, often twice.

²²⁶ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 339-40.

²²⁷ Lejeune, *Souvenirs d'un officier de l'empire*, 2:105.

²²⁸ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 5.

On July 6, Paris celebrated Lannes's funeral and interment in the Pantheon with tremendous pomp. Lejeune, who attended, recalled that "throughout the day, the cannon at Les Invalides thundered almost as they had at Essling."²²⁹ Clarke, who wrote the official account published in the *Moniteur* a week later, reported that the lengthy procession's "succession of military force, religion, the dead man, the mourners, and the monarch's grandeur, reflected in kind by the princes, ministers, and first magistrates of the Empire" made a great impression on the spectators.²³⁰ It was a markedly military procession: according to Clarke's program, the military cortège "must offer an image of the army" and be composed of as many different elements of the service as possible.²³¹ His instructions devoted considerably more space to its composition than to that of the religious cortège. Taking place on the anniversary of the French victory at Wagram, the procession reflected military power as the foundation of the empire.

On Napoleon's orders, departments across the French empire held funeral services for Lannes in parallel with the one occurring in Paris. Clarke's funeral program had stipulated that every department should hold a mass in its main church as well as at larger military barracks, attended by the department's civil and military authorities along with detachments from the army, gendarmerie, and national

²²⁹ Lejeune, *Souvenirs d'un officier de l'empire*, 2:104-05.

²³⁰ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 2. Amid the crowd of imperial dignitaries who attended Lannes's funeral in Paris, there was one notable absence: Napoleon himself. Lannes's biographers have put forward various theories for the Emperor's nonattendance, from speculating that the ceremony would have upset the empress by reminding her that her new husband had been at war with her father less than a year ago, to suggesting that Napoleon did not want to make his sorrow over his friend's death a public spectacle again. See Chrisawn, *The Emperor's Friend*, 248, and Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship*, 280n20.

²³¹ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 7.

guard.²³² To further align these ceremonies with the one taking place in Paris, the priest would read an extract from the funeral oration that the canon Jacques Raillon had delivered in Paris, giving the highlights of Lannes's military career.²³³ While all these services took place on July 6, the *Moniteur* carried details of the departmental ceremonies throughout July and into August—noting on July 12, for example, that a cardinal had celebrated Lannes's funeral mass in Rouen and that in Bruges, “all the pomp that the locale could afford” commemorated “the hero for whom the wishes and prayers of an immense people were lifted all at once across the Empire.”²³⁴ A poem on Lannes's funeral published in the *Mercure de France* spoke of the “long veils of crepe that darkened France,” illustrating how widespread the funeral celebrations were.²³⁵ Far from being confined to Paris, Lannes's funeral involved a broad swathe of the empire's subjects in a shared rite of mourning.

Celebrated on the same day all across the empire, Lannes's funeral served as a national festival. Adapted from the festivals celebrated during the French Revolution, local and national festivals served as a key element of Napoleonic propaganda during both the Consulate and the Empire, combining pageantry and amusements with military and patriotic rhetoric.²³⁶ Napoleon made conspicuous changes to France's national holidays.²³⁷ During the Consulate, he reduced the five that had been

²³² *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 11.

²³³ *Honneurs funèbres rendus au duc de Montebello*, 12.

²³⁴ *Moniteur universel*, July 12, 1810, 3.

²³⁵ *Mercure de France*, July 7, 1810, 6.

²³⁶ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 106-08; Rémi Dalisson, “Les Politiques de la fête nationale pendant la période napoléonienne: Propagande, césarisme et contrôle social en France, 1799-1814,” *Revue de l'Institut Napoléon* 195 (2007), 19-20.

²³⁷ On national and religious holidays in Napoleonic France, see Noah Shusterman, “*Une loi de l'église et de l'état*: Napoleon and the Central Administration of Religious Life, 1800-1815,” *French History* 21, no. 3 (2007), 313-30, and Vincent Petit, “Saint Napoléon, un saint pour la nation: contribution à l'imaginaire politique français,” *Napoleonica. La Revue* 23 (2015), 59-127.

celebrated under the Directory to two—the Festival of Federation on July 14 and the Festival of the Republic on 1 vendémiaire (September 21)—both of which fell into disuse under the Empire. In 1806, he introduced two others: the feast of Saint Napoleon on August 15 and a celebration of both his 1804 coronation and the 1805 French victory at the battle of Austerlitz on December 2. Both August 15 and December 2 included a mass as well as a civil ceremony. Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, Bigot de Préameneu's predecessor as minister of religion, explained in 1806 the importance of including religious elements in civil festivals: "Civil ceremonies and celebrations are nothing if they do not attach themselves to religious ceremonies and celebrations... It gives these ceremonies that imposing gravity and that touching character which commands attention and respect."²³⁸ Religious ceremonies would form a central part of Napoleonic festivals, granting them an additional level of authority as well as a further educational element.

This religious element was made possible by Concordat of 1801, signed during the Consulate, which reestablished the Catholic Church in France. While France had no official state religion, Napoleon recognized the Church's value as an institution of social control, conceptualizing bishops as prefects and asserting that society depended on a "code of morality" that was "unacceptable without religion."²³⁹ Napoleon employed religious iconography to help legitimate his rule: his coronation, in particular, positioned him in continuity with France's previous Catholic monarchs,

²³⁸ Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, *Discours, rapports et travaux inédits sur le Concordat de 1801* (Paris: Joubert, 1845), 554.

²³⁹ Quoted in William Roberts, "Napoleon, the Concordat of 1801, and its Consequences," in *Controversial Concordats: The Vatican's Relations With Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler*, ed. Frank Coppa (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 54-55.

gesturing at the divine right of kings.²⁴⁰ The Concordat gave the Consulate and the Empire a legitimacy that France's republican governments had lacked. As with Portalis's argument that religious rites would lend an "imposing gravity" to secular ceremonies, the Church offered the Empire a veneer of respectability as well as a means of social influence.

However, Napoleon's relationship with the Holy See had markedly deteriorated by the time Lannes's funeral took place. The initial goodwill in Paris and Rome prompted by the Concordat of 1801 soured during disputes over temporal sovereignty in Italy. After Pius VII refused to halt trade between the Papal States and Britain, Napoleon annexed the Papal States to the French Empire in May 1809. The pope promptly excommunicated the Emperor, who responded by having him arrested the day before the battle of Wagram. Subsequently, Napoleon fully embraced Gallicanism, positioning himself at the head of a French Church independent of Rome's authority.²⁴¹ Nor was this the end of his troubles with the Church: thirteen cardinals refused to attend his marriage to Marie Louise of Austria in April 1810, maintaining that his previous marriage was still valid, and were consequently arrested as well.²⁴²

Scarcely a year after Pius VII's arrest, Lannes's funeral mass provided a demonstration of Napoleon's authority over the Gallican church, being heavily attended by French clergy despite the emperor's excommunication. Lannes himself

²⁴⁰ Jacques-Olivier Boudon, "Les fondements religieux du pouvoir impérial," in *Voies nouvelles pour l'histoire du Premier Empire: Territoires, pouvoirs, identités*, ed. Natalie Petiteau (Paris: La Boutique de l'Histoire, 2003), 206.

²⁴¹ Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes: Les religions en Europe à l'aube du XIX^e siècle, 1800-1815* (Paris: Fayard, 2002). Electronic edition without page numbers.

²⁴² Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes*.

had hardly been a model Catholic: outspokenly anticlerical, when presented to Pius VI in French-occupied Rome in 1797 he had shaken the pope's hand rather than kneel to kiss his ring.²⁴³ Nevertheless, the *Moniteur* described the “altar surrounded by Their Eminences the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops who had been invited to the ceremony, and the clergy of Paris.”²⁴⁴ The assembled clergy presented a reminder of Napoleon's power over the French church despite his excommunication. However, the religious ceremony did not go smoothly everywhere: in Poitiers, the city's civil authorities waited awkwardly after the mass for the priest to read the eulogy, only for another clergyman to inform them that the ceremony was over. While the curtailed ceremony appears to have been an innocent misunderstanding—the diocese's vicar general had sent the text of the funeral oration to other communes under his jurisdiction as instructed, but failed to keep a copy for use in Poitiers—the mishap raised the specter of political insubordination on the part of the priests.²⁴⁵

Sidestepping Napoleon's conflict with the Church, the eulogies at Lannes's funerals invoked divine support for the Emperor. This was not an unusual topic for sermons during the Empire: following the conclusion of the Concordat of 1801, French priests frequently portrayed Napoleon as the savior of religion in France, and the imperial catechism established in 1806 stated outright that God had placed Napoleon on the throne.²⁴⁶ At the funeral mass in Paris, Jacques Raillon called on the

²⁴³ Chrisawn, *The Emperor's Friend*, 32, 33.

²⁴⁴ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 1.

²⁴⁵ Pierre Lefranc, “La cérémonie funèbre du Duc de Montebello à Poitiers (Juillet 1810),” *Revue de l'Institut Napoléon* 114 (1970), 84. The local prefect resolved the incident by having the eulogy printed in two issues of the department's newspaper, a solution that met with Bigot de Préameneu's approval.

²⁴⁶ Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 227-34; Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, 140-42.

“God of armies, terrible God” in his eulogy, which the minister of the interior had written.²⁴⁷ Raillon asked God to maintain the “peace that France had given to Austria” and preserve a “nation that has always been dear to you,” suggesting a particularly close relationship between God and the French nation.²⁴⁸ The Flemish priest Martin-Jean de Bast, giving a sermon at Lannes’s funeral ceremony in Ghent, acknowledged the contradictions inherent in glorifying war from the pulpit, asking whether it was right to “spread out so many cruel and profane images of battles and victories” in the presence of the Sacred Host.²⁴⁹ However, he answered his own question at once, calling upon the “Lord of armies” who was the source of “our Sovereigns’ glory, the state’s security, our rights’ justice.”²⁵⁰ Bast linked military victory, divine support, and the state, giving a perfect example of the three strands of authority that Napoleonic festivals invoked. Concluding his sermon, Bast declared that God would reward “what the Christian warrior has done for the throne and the state.”²⁵¹ At a time of sharp conflict between the Emperor and the Holy See, declaring that God would reward faithful service to the empire helped establish to Bast’s listeners that Napoleon still had divine support for his actions, despite having been excommunicated.

While festivals during the empire drew on customs that had developed during the French Revolution—specifically, a national, simultaneous festival that modeled good patriotic behavior—they turned these customs towards a cult of Napoleon as the

²⁴⁷ *Journal de Paris*, July 8, 1810, 5; Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*, 341.

²⁴⁸ *Journal de Paris*, July 8, 1810, 5.

²⁴⁹ Martin-Jean de Bast, “Oraison funèbre du duc de Montebello, prononcée le 6 juillet 1810,” in *Recueil de quelques discours prononcés dans la cathédrale de Gand, en 1810 et 1811, par M.J. de Bast* (Ghent: A.B. Stéven, n.d.), 16.

²⁵⁰ Bast, “Oraison funèbre du duc de Montebello,” 16-17.

²⁵¹ Bast, “Oraison funèbre du duc de Montebello,” 20.

nation's savior. This cult was most apparent in the feast of Saint Napoleon, instituted in 1806 and celebrated annually on August 15, for which Portalis had found a historically dubious Catholic saint to serve as a transparent justification for religious veneration of the Emperor. Though far removed from Revolutionary festivals' overt pedagogical uses, imperial festivals still provided an educational element, instructing participants in what good citizenship in the empire should look like.²⁵² Lannes's funeral was no different, offering a vision of rewards for exceptional service to the empire: the archchancellor, who officiated, spoke of the "remarkable honors with which the greatest of monarchs recompenses brilliant services."²⁵³ The festivals instructed their observers, whether attending the ceremonies or reading reports of them in the papers, on Napoleon's personal importance to the nation.

The empire that celebrated these festivals spanned a much greater area than it had on its inception in 1804. On the eve of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, the French empire consisted of one hundred thirty departments—a huge expansion from the original eighty-three, and stretching from the Pyrenees to portions of the Italian peninsula and the Baltic coast. As with the revolutionary festivals, which had employed simultaneity to create a sense of belonging, Clarke's program emphasized the importance of the funerals all taking place at the same time—though with the ultimate goal of glorifying Napoleon and the empire. Simultaneity formed a part of imperial festival planning: Portalis, when designing the feast of Saint Napoleon four years earlier, had commented that the festival "must be [a feast day] for the whole

²⁵² Dalisson, "Les politiques de la fête nationale," 12.

²⁵³ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 3.

empire.”²⁵⁴ Bast, in his sermon in Ghent, referred to the “funeral orations that are being pronounced throughout the Empire,” emphasizing the place of the city—which had been under French rule since 1794—in a larger whole that stretched across most of western Europe.²⁵⁵ The *Moniteur* of August 1 gave its readers details of the ceremony that had taken place in Rome, noting that the bishops who presided over the service at the Pantheon did so “in a manner so as to prove to the Emperor the zeal of the pastors and the faithful, as well as their share in the regrets that the hero inspired in his country.”²⁵⁶ Newspapers allowed people in disparate corners of the same country to conceptualize connections between them, and the *Moniteur*’s mentions of ceremonies from Rouen to Bruges to Genoa and Rome encouraged its readers to make such connections.²⁵⁷ By instructing such geographically diverse territories to celebrate the same festivals and mourn the same heroes, the government prompted them to visualize themselves as part of a cohesive country.

Combining religious, military, and civil ceremonies, Lannes’s funeral and interment in the Pantheon acted as a national festival and represented the ultimate reward for exceptional service to the French Empire. In doing so, the festivities devoted as much time to celebrating the Emperor as it did to commemorating his faithful marshal. Clarke described Lannes’s funeral ceremonies as “the final triumph of a warrior judged worthy of such honors by the greatest of captains” in his report for the *Moniteur*, positioning Napoleon as the arbiter of recognition and rewards.²⁵⁸ Amid the first cracks in the empire’s edifice, the funeral offered a reassurance of

²⁵⁴ Portalis, *Discours, rapports et travaux inédits*, 556.

²⁵⁵ Bast, “Oraison funèbre du duc de Montebello,” 18.

²⁵⁶ *Moniteur universel*, August 1, 1810, 3.

²⁵⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 77.

²⁵⁸ *Moniteur universel*, July 14, 1810, 3.

Napoleon's power, vividly demonstrating the empire's military might. Lejeune reflected on the outpouring of "national gratitude [to Napoleon], so exaggerated in that time of glory," that accompanied Lannes's funeral, adding that in his view, "all of [Napoleon's] thoughts aimed at building for us a brilliant future."²⁵⁹ The funeral ceremonies that Clarke and Bigot de Préameneu constructed, employing techniques used in other Napoleonic and revolutionary festivals, ultimately served as a celebration of Napoleon and the empire.

Funerals in the Twilight of Empire

Lannes's funeral, elaborate as it was, proved to be one of the last times that Napoleonic France witnessed public mourning on such a scale.²⁶⁰ Despite the foreign and domestic tribulations that dogged the Empire in 1810, Lannes's funeral took place at a moment when Napoleon was at the height of his political and military power, and served as a vivid demonstration of both. Three years after Lannes's interment in the Pantheon, however, the Empire was in disarray: Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia ended in disaster, resulting in the loss of hundreds of thousands of French and allied troops and causing Prussia and, eventually, Austria to join a coalition opposed to France. At war with most of Europe once again in spring 1813, Napoleon lost another friend—Michel Duroc, the grand marshal of the palace—in the opening months of the campaign. His attempts to organize public commemorations for Duroc, however, were doomed to failure.

²⁵⁹ Lejeune, *Souvenirs d'un officier de l'empire*, 2:105.

²⁶⁰ The *Gazette de France*, reporting on a curé's funeral in August 1815, noted that it was the first time that the Paris clergy had turned out for a funeral ceremony in the capital since the funerals for Lannes and the former papal legate Cardinal Caprara in July 1810.

As the news of Duroc's death reached France in late May and early June, individual departments held funeral ceremonies for him, demonstrating public mourning on a local scale. The *Moniteur* reported on a religious service at Fulda in the grand duchy of Frankfurt on June 4, in which the speaker's description of Duroc's "virtues and exploits...greatly moved his audience," and at Phalsbourg in the department of Moselle on July 6.²⁶¹ Both departments recognized the loss of a notable imperial official, perhaps prompted by the bulletin announcing his death, which devoted a considerable amount of space to his dying conversation with the Emperor. In Duroc's native department of Meurthe, according to the *Journal de Paris*, the news of his death "caused the greatest sensation...loved and respected by all who knew him, generous, faithful to his prince and his country, he is the object of universal regrets."²⁶² The department's capital, Nancy, held a funeral service officiated by the city's bishop on July 15. According to the *Moniteur*, the ceremony took place "with the greatest pomp": the department's civil and military officials attended, and their presence, as well as the "immense gathering of people," demonstrated the "sorrow and universal regret that the duke of Friuli's death caused."²⁶³ Describing Duroc as a model imperial citizen and the object of unanimous regret, these ceremonies rewarded his loyal service to the Emperor and to France.

While there was an element of official commemoration to these obsequies—as can be seen from the civil and military authorities' presence in Nancy, and the *Moniteur's* note that the military commandant in Fulda had "caused [the ceremony] to be celebrated"—they were far removed from an organized, national ceremony such as

²⁶¹ *Moniteur universel*, June 28, 1813, 1; July 14, 1813, 3.

²⁶² *Journal de Paris*, June 23, 1813, 1.

²⁶³ *Moniteur universel*, July 22, 1813, 2.

Lannes's funeral had been.²⁶⁴ Although Napoleon began to plan a public funeral for Duroc, the deteriorating military and political situation in 1813 prevented him from completing the arrangements. Napoleon intended that Duroc's funeral take place in concert with a funeral for the marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessières, who had been killed in battle only a few weeks before Duroc—the loss of two valuable supporters in quick succession serving as a microcosm of Napoleon's tribulations in spring 1813. Writing to Marie-Louise on June 4, Napoleon told her to have the archchancellor, Cambacérès, and the minister of war, Clarke, appoint “our young and finest orators” to give funeral orations for Duroc and Bessières, stipulating that the speeches should be completed within two months.²⁶⁵ Departing from past practice for public funerals, in which a member of the clergy delivered the eulogy, he suggested that she speak to Louis-Marcellin de Fontanes, the grand master of the University of Paris, to identify potential speakers. Writing to Cambacérès, a few weeks later, Napoleon was more blunt: after confirming the two speakers that Fontanes selected, he added, “There's no need for priests.”²⁶⁶ The lack of religious speakers perhaps reflected the continuing difficult relationship between Napoleon and the Holy See: Pius VII remained a French prisoner, and although he and Napoleon had concluded a new Concordat in late January 1813, Pius repudiated the agreement shortly afterwards.²⁶⁷ Napoleon's relations with the Church, in short, were hardly better than where they had been in 1810.

²⁶⁴ *Moniteur universel*, June 28, 1813, 1.

²⁶⁵ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 20086, 25:360.

²⁶⁶ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 20165, 25:414.

²⁶⁷ W. Roberts, “Napoleon, the Concordat of 1801, and its Consequences,” 53.

Despite Napoleon's appointment of the two speakers, the planned ceremonies never took place. Napoleon continued making preparations into early July, informing Cambacérès on July 6 that "the two men of letters who have to give the elegy for the duke of Istria [Bessières] and the duke of Friuli will deliver it in my presence, in a solemn ceremony that will be ordered for this purpose."²⁶⁸ However, France's grave military position demanded his undivided attention. The arrangements that Napoleon made regarding details for Duroc's and Bessières's funerals took place during a temporary armistice that lasted until mid-August.²⁶⁹ Although the political and military situation remained extremely fraught, the pause in hostilities may have afforded more opportunity to focus on organizing a ceremonial event. Once the armistice ended, the war soon became a fight for the empire's survival; Napoleon's letter of July 6 is the last reference to the planned funerals in his correspondence. A military escort brought Duroc's body to Paris, but arrived without a mention in the capital's papers—a striking contrast with Lannes's meticulously planned and heavily advertised funeral procession three years earlier, and one that emphasizes how much France's situation had changed since 1810.²⁷⁰ Lannes's funeral offered a powerful spectacle reaffirming the empire's magnificence and the army's strength at a time when Napoleon's misadventure in Spain and his foreign policy clashes with Russia and the Papal States had dented it; in 1813, with the empire and the army struggling

²⁶⁸ *Correspondance générale* (Paris: Fayard, 2004-18), 35240, 14:89.

²⁶⁹ A. Roberts, *Napoleon*, 654, 659. Napoleon's first letter to Marie-Louise regarding speakers for the two funerals was dated June 4, the same day the armistice went into effect.

²⁷⁰ Varennes to Le Duc, May 26, 1813. The *Journal de l'Empire* noted on June 15 that Duroc's coffin had arrived in Mainz six days earlier and was resting in the cathedral until it could be taken somewhere else. None of the Empire's major newspapers referred to it again after that date.

to recover from the disaster of 1812, the resources for such a show of propaganda were needed elsewhere.

If the summer of 1813 was hardly an auspicious time to plan or stage a funeral, the later months of the year were even less so. Napoleon's defeat at the battle of Leipzig in October 1813 broke his control of Europe east of the Rhine and forced him to retreat into France to regroup. In the spring of 1814, a coalition of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian forces invaded northeastern France, while a combined British and Spanish army crossed the Pyrenees in the southwest. Napoleon abdicated in April, and by early May had been exiled to the island of Elba. Throughout 1813 and 1814, Duroc's mortal remains rested undisturbed in a chapel in Les Invalides, along with those of Bessières and a general who had died during the retreat from Russia in 1812. All three were moved to a vault beneath the church later in 1814, during the Bourbon Restoration.²⁷¹ Napoleon's other attempt at an official commemoration for Duroc was no more successful: he had ordered in May 1813 that a monument be set up in the village where Duroc had died, but later in the year Russian troops seized the money that he had left with the local priest to fund the construction, and the monument was never built.²⁷² From Desaix's and Kléber's funeral during the Consulate to Lannes's at the height of the Empire, Napoleon and his ministers often employed public mourning to construct a politically favorable narrative. In 1813, at a time when Napoleon badly needed to win back French public opinion, he had no opportunity to stage a ceremony of a similar nature. While he continued to manipulate

²⁷¹ *Journal de Paris*, October 11, 1814, 2.

²⁷² Branda, "La mort de Duroc," 44.

public opinion through his bulletins, putting public ceremonies to use as propaganda proved an elusive task.

Conclusions

Napoleonic propaganda's use of public mourning for political ends had direct antecedents in public funerals during the French Revolution, which in both the early 1790s and under the Directory had evoked national mourning in the service of fraternity and patriotism. Napoleon took advantage, too, of the National Assembly's establishment of the Pantheon, restoring it from an unfinished site to make it a final reward for the regime's most dedicated servants. While providing the motivating force behind the commemorations, Napoleon was less directly involved in shaping national ceremonies, instead giving general directions for cabinet members like Clarke, Portalis, and Bigot de Préameneu to develop.

The funeral ceremonies with which the French Empire mourned Jean Lannes in 1810 marked the culmination of Napoleon's celebration of dead military heroes. His funeral drew on the fraternal, national model of festivals developed during the French Revolution, as well as the military funerals that took place during the Revolution and the Directory. It complied, too, with the empire's own model of national festivals, bringing together military, religious, and civil authority in order to glorify Napoleon and the empire. The nation-wide funeral services linked the territories under Napoleon's control, uniting cities as disparate as Ghent, Rome, and Paris in mourning for a French hero. At a time when Napoleon and the Holy See were in sharp conflict, Raillon's government-scripted funeral oration provided reassurance that the Emperor could still count on divine support. Lannes's interment in the

Pantheon—again drawing on institutions established during the French Revolution—represented a highly visible reward for good service to the regime, valorizing the marshal's military exploits and devotion to the Emperor.

If Lannes's ceremonies were a culmination of the empire, Duroc's were emblematic of its downfall. France's unstable military situation meant that the minister of war could hardly be spared to make arrangements as he had in 1810, while the tentative preparations in Napoleon's correspondence suggest that his conflict with the Church affected his plans as well. Instead, departmental funeral services demonstrated public mourning on a smaller scale, with no national direction. While the Napoleonic government employed mourning rituals to great effect with Lannes's funeral, the empire's dire political and military circumstances in the second half of 1813 precluded making similar propagandistic use of a commemoration for Duroc.

Conclusion

Rounding up a parcel of news from the other side of the Atlantic in August 1813, a Philadelphia newspaper paraphrased in ironic fashion the bulletin that described Duroc's death. "The briny interview between Duroc and the Emperor has no parallel," the writer declared, "except in the Battle of Esling [*sic*], where Lasnes [*sic*] was mortally wounded—and it would be admitted into the official account of no other government than that of France."²⁷³ Its inclusion, the writer concluded, showed that "the Parisians must experience every sensation."²⁷⁴ The article's supercilious tone was rather milder than that taken by the British press—at least three London papers had set that particular bulletin in verse, with the *Star* declaring that poetry was a more fitting medium for its theatrical contents than plain prose.²⁷⁵ However, the Philadelphia paper's mockery also reveals a genuine point about the bulletins' function as propaganda. That Napoleon's bulletins were far from typical government publications was hardly a new observation: Metternich had noted much the same thing almost a decade earlier. The Philadelphian columnist, however, identified a specific element that made the bulletins remarkable among government gazettes: their vivid depictions of Napoleon's emotional state, and how they employed this to affect their French audience, which form an illustrative example of the French government's use of grief and mourning in propaganda.

Grief and mourning, displayed both in print and through public ceremonies, formed one element of Bonaparte's propaganda efforts from when he first seized

²⁷³ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, August 4, 1813.

²⁷⁴ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, August 4, 1813.

²⁷⁵ *Star* (London), June 10, 1813, 4; *Sun* (London), June 12, 1813, 1; *The Spirit of the Public Journals for 1813* (London: James Ridgway, 1814), 150-54.

power in 1799. Placing the revolutionary and monarchical pasts on equal footing in his commemorations for the dead generals Desaix, Kléber, and Turenne in September 1800, he took the first steps towards establishing a canon of military heroes that stretched from the seventeenth century to his own era. In addition to using these commemorations to bolster his own political power and construct a narrative of himself as the savior of France and Italy, Bonaparte also employed military bulletins to make an emotional impact on France's soldiers and civilians. His account of the battle of Marengo had ascribed to Desaix the dying words "Go tell the First Consul that I die with the regret of not having done enough to live on in posterity."²⁷⁶ Bonaparte made himself the arbiter of how posterity remembered Desaix and Kléber, commemorating them in a fashion that supported his still tenuous grip on power in France by portraying them as his loyal lieutenants.

Desaix's supposed dying words in the report from Marengo prefigured what would become a standard trope of the imperial bulletins, albeit one that also had antecedents in revolutionary propaganda. Usually written or dictated by Napoleon himself, the bulletins dramatized soldiers' deaths, constructing a myth that valorized dying in battle for the glory of Napoleon and France as the highest ideal a soldier could aspire to. The bulletins also portrayed Napoleon as grieved by his soldiers' deaths, showing him referring to them as his children and suggesting that his pain at losing brave men would ultimately render him unable to continue waging war. Together with humanizing the Emperor to his subjects, these portrayals also strengthened the emotional bonds between the Emperor and his soldiers. While Napoleon repeatedly referred to his love for the troops under his command in his

²⁷⁶ *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}*, 4910, 6:362.

bulletins and proclamations, his grief for their deaths served as a parallel demonstration of this.

Outside the realm of printed propaganda, Napoleon reestablished the Pantheon as a place of honored burial. Where the revolutionary government had tried and failed to create a canon of the country's great men, Napoleon instead strove to commemorate those military men and civil servants who had served the imperial state well. His government would ultimately bury or rebury more than three dozen people in the Pantheon between 1806 and 1814, with rhetoric that positioned interment in the Pantheon as a reward for exceptional service to the Empire.

Jean Lannes's death in 1809 provides a striking exhibition of how Napoleon and his ministers employed grief and mourning to affect public opinion, as well as how France's population responded to these efforts. While witnesses agreed that Napoleon was deeply affected by the injury and subsequent death of one of his oldest friends, that did not prevent him from giving the events a dramatic depiction in the bulletin. The tears that Napoleon shed for Lannes became a frequent feature of poetry and prose involving the marshal's death, and contributed to shaping favorable opinions of the Emperor. From the Huguenot pastor who declared that Napoleon's tears proved that he was capable of humanity even in the midst of warfare, to Davout's eulogy that presented Napoleon's tears as the ultimate reward for faithful military service, the bulletin account made itself felt in cultural representations.

Beyond its depiction in print, Lannes's death also occasioned a magnificent funeral that was scarcely out of French newspapers between later May and the end of July in 1810. While Napoleon himself was less involved, neither supervising the

festivities directly nor attending them, and instead leaving their direction to the ministers of war and religion. Fitting into the framework of national festivals that Napoleon and his ministers, most notably Portalis, had adapted from the French Revolution's fraternal, educational festivals, Lannes's funeral and interment in the Pantheon brought the entire empire together in mourning and set an example for both the army and the nation of what devotion to the Emperor should look like, and what rewards for that could be. Lannes's funeral, and the rhetoric surrounding it, made a profound impression on France's citizens, as can be seen from the plays and poems published after his funeral that depicted him as having won immortality through his deeds—and death—on the battlefield.

Lannes's funeral took place at the zenith of the Napoleonic empire. In the years that followed, as Napoleon's control of Europe eroded and he faced increasing domestic discontent, portrayals of grief and mourning in imperial propaganda shifted. This was most visible with Michel Duroc's death in 1813. In portraying Duroc's deathbed conversation with Napoleon, the bulletin depicted him as unshakably devoted to Napoleon even while in the grip of intense suffering, and confident in Napoleon's future success even as the French army struggled to recover from the disastrous invasion of Russia. While this bulletin still made an emotional impact on some of its readers—as the Davouts' correspondence shows—its justification of continuing war was less successful, gaining little traction with a French public increasingly in favor of peace at any price. This bulletin proved to be the only significant use of Duroc's death in imperial propaganda, as his planned funeral fell by the wayside during the empire's collapse.

Lannes's and Duroc's cases offer only two examples of death's depiction in imperial propaganda. However, as this thesis has attempted to illustrate, their cases are revelatory of the ways in which Napoleon and his ministers portrayed and evoked grief and mourning through propaganda, and how the French public responded. Bourrienne, Napoleon's former secretary, wrote that Napoleon wanted to "render his grief grandiose" when writing the bulletin account of Duroc's death, adding that the bulletin was clearly designed as much for future readers as it was for contemporary audiences.²⁷⁷ Though expressed with Bourrienne's usual cynicism, his point illustrates a larger propagandistic motive, showing Napoleon using grief to influence not only public opinion at the time, but also posterity.

²⁷⁷ Bourrienne, *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, 9:206.

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