

<p>Gustave Courbet, <i>A Burial at Ornans,</i> 1849-50, oil on canvas, 315 x 660 cm (124 x 260")</p>	<p>initial analysis</p> <p>Behind the scene the cliffs and valley of Ornans.</p>	<p>Courbet factored the painting in the attic of his family home in Ornans.</p>
<p>In the left hand section mainly a group of officials carrying out the requirements for a Christian burial.</p>	<p>In the central section a group of men, two women behind them. Some of the men have been identified. In the front row they include the Justice of Peace in a top hat, the mayor of Ornans, a pawnbroker who holds a handkerchief, a prominent miller and a lawyer. Behind them Courbet's father in a top hat and to his left Courbet's friend Buchon. The two in the foreground are dressed in 1793 revolutionary costumes. One of them gestures as if in speech, perhaps paying homage to the deceased. At his feet a human skull bone. All of the others are in black formal dress. In the centre foreground the edges of the burial pit and a gravedigger, identified as Antoine Joseph Cassard, son of a shoemaker, his jacket and woollen hat are on the ground. Some have found similarity to the posture of one of the members of the Militia in Bartholomeus van der Heist's 1643 painting of the Officers and Other Members of the Militia led by Bicker, in Amsterdam, where Courbet saw it.</p>	<p>Attendees at the burial are arriving from the left and then moving in a row to the right that then turns to the left towards the grave. This is a compositional shift from the first drawing which shows the funeral in a horizontal row in the conventional manner, from right to left.</p>
<p>At the left top the portrait of Courbet's grandfather, deceased in the previous year. The group consists of four coffin bearers and five sacristans dressed in white, one a cross-bearer, he looks out at the viewer. The long pole carrying the crucifix includes a gold bowl. Two young altar boys in the foreground, one carrying a vase of holy water, the other carrying a candle and candle stick holder looking up at one of the bearers. The preacher dressed mainly in black with a white trim reading from the breviary. Two beadles in red torques.</p>	<p>No one has yet found evidence of who the deceased was. It may have been Courbet's sister Clarisse who died aged 15.</p> <p>The mortuary sheet has a cross composed of two bones that many identify as a signifier for Freemasonry. In the lower part of the cloth are images of tears. These can be seen in medieval pictures such as in the woodcut of the Funeral of Marlborough.</p> 	<p>In the right hand section a group of women, a young child, and a dog. Some of the women have been identified; in the foreground, on the left Courbet's mother, then Courbet's three sisters, and then a cousin looking after a younger cousin.</p>