

that, in the recent past, had actually been left en route in Brazil by the circumnavigator Amerigo Vespucci.

It was all evoked in the M-Museum Leuven by a sweeping and generously displayed variety of artefacts and works of art. There were scientific instruments of the greatest complexity and beauty; maps, some of them on a vast scale, such as Pierre Desceliers's *World Map* of 1550 (cat. 55), a precious loan from the British Library; globes, including a key celestial globe by Gerard Mercator (cat. 63) made in Leuven in 1551 (his astrolabe of c1545 also made in Leuven is cat. 71); paintings, notably portraits of Erasmus and Peter Gillis (cat. 13A, 13B) by Quinten Matsys, alongside what are probably studio replicas of both (cat. 14A, 14B), and a truly great portrait by the same artist of an unknown scholar (cat. 16, c1522–27). There were also sculptures, with a stunning *Adam and Eve* by Conrad Meit (c1530–35, cat. 31); drawings, including a breathtaking Albrecht Dürer of a humanist, perhaps Sebastian Brant (1520–21, cat. 17); prints; tapestries; and much, much more.

This astonishingly diverse material held together convincingly, and connections, for example, between the portraits that contain depictions of scientific instruments and the instrument themselves were cleverly established, and so Jan Gossaert's *Portrait of a girl with an Armillary Sphere (Princess Dorothea of Denmark)* (Pl 2) quietly presided in the background over a spectacular display of four outstanding armillary spheres by Gualterus Arsenius and Adriaan Descrolières (cat. 65, 66, 68 and 67, respectively) in a characteristically spacious and effective arrangement.

Most unusually, and very rewarding to see, there was a series of sacred 'enclosed gardens' of a type peculiar to Mechelen (aka Malines, but see Louvain above), 'Besloten Hofjes' (Pl 3). These astonishing creations, recently restored from benign neglect (there is an excellent account of their restoration in the catalogue), are assemblages of wood, silk, parchment, glass, semi-precious stones, crystal, sequins and metal thread, the whole composition stuffed throughout with holy relics and dotted with polychrome sculptures, all set around a central Crucifix or Madonna. In two of the examples on view, the main composition was flanked by enclosing painted wings, forming a triptych. Their presence was justified in this wide-ranging show as an example of the exploitation of art 'for getting as close as possible to some utopian paradise'. In complementary contrast, there were portrayals of the 'Garden of Earthly Delights', which included secular 'enclosed gardens', one of them, a *Gathering of the Antwerp Archery Guilds* by the Master of Frankfurt (1493, cat. 24), a painting that has proved almost as resistant to interpretation as *Utopia*. Like that book, this intensely detailed picture is highly evocative, but of what, precisely, remains elusive.

There was an accompanying exhibition, 'Utopia and More', in the University Library, an intriguing building rebuilt – Flemish Gothic without and Art Deco within – after the destruction of the old library and its books in the First World War. It included, of course, books, in this city of printing, but original letters too, from More's humanist friends to each other, including some in his own hand. Nearby was a portrait reliquary with a bit of More's neck on view within the frame and, adjoining it, a rather naïve but unsettling painting of his execution. After that, it was almost a relief to conclude with an entertaining exploration, in film and book, of the often horrific reality of the implementation of utopian dreams, not least in Orwell's *1984*.

'At the foot of the Pyramid.

300 years of the cemetery for foreigners in Rome'

Casa di Goethe, Rome

23 September–13 November 2016

Nicholas Stanley-Price, Mary K McGuigan  
and John F McHuigan Jr

*At the foot of the Pyramid.*

*300 years of the cemetery for foreigners in Rome*

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*Jonathan Yarker*



There are few more dramatic settings for a burial ground than that of the Non-Catholic Cemetery at Rome (Cimitero Acattolico), located at the foot of the 1st-century Roman tomb of Gaius Cestius, which takes the unusual form of a pyramid, outside the Aurelian walls to the south of the city. It is a setting that has proved consistently appealing to artists and it is a selection of these views which are the subject of a fascinating and highly focused exhibition at the Casa di Goethe, curated by Nicholas Stanley-Price. The exhibition charts the physical evolution of the cemetery from the appearance of the first permanent monument in 1765, through its most famous graves – those of the poets Shelley and Keats (Pl 1) – to the mid-20th century. The accompanying exhibition catalogue, edited by Stanley-Price and containing entries by a number of other scholars, places the cemetery in far wider context, raising important questions about the cultural impact and political power of the communities of resident northern Europeans who made Rome their home.

In Rome the cemetery is colloquially, if inaccurately, known as the Cimitero degli Inglesi. It is an understandable misconception, as it is most famous for its British graves and, as Stanley-Price establishes was created in around 1716 thanks to the agitation of British Protestant, or more precisely Scottish, members of the Stuart court in exile. The first burials were not commemorated with physical markers and it was not until 1765 that a monument was permitted to be erected. The first room of the exhibition examines the early evolution of the cemetery and the first exhibit, an exquisite watercolour by Jakob Philipp Hackert, signed and dated 1777, shows the earliest monuments commemorating the Hanoverian traveller Baron Georg Anton Friedrich von Werpup and the equerry to the margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Wolf Carl Friedrich von Reitzenstein. Stanley-Price shows how Hackert almost certainly knew Reitzenstein, through Catherine the Great's agent, Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein, and he persuasively suggests that this careful view was intended as a commemoration of Reitzenstein. The drawing sets up a number of tropes which re-appeared throughout the exhibition. First, the genre of the commemorative landscape: the idea that artists were moved, or commissioned, to depict views of specific monuments as a form of extra-memorialisation; secondly, the idea of the cemetery as romantic

1 *The Grave of Keats* by Walter Crane (1845–1915), 1873.  
Watercolour and bodycolour, 24.3 x 34.1 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

2 *Roman Elegy* by Jacques Sablet (1749–1803), 1791.  
Oil on canvas, 62 x 74 cm. Brest métropole, Musée des beaux-arts

Grand Tour site in itself. The first room contained the greatest depiction of the cemetery in this vein, Jacques Sablet's *Roman Elegy* of 1791 from the musée des beaux-arts, Brest (Pl 2). This dramatic landscape shows the cemetery in the midst of a storm, with two figures posed amongst the monuments; the embodiment of men of feeling ruminating on the transience of life.

The second section of the exhibition contained a series of fascinating depictions of burials at the cemetery. An anonymous view of the nocturnal funeral of Jonas Åkerstrom, a Swedish artist who died in 1795, shows a shadowy crowd of mourners standing around an open grave at the foot of the pyramid, partially illuminated by flares. A number of accounts survive from 18th-century Grand Tourists of internments at the pyramid, and perhaps the most familiar is Thomas Jones's description of the funeral of the watercolourist William Pars and his 'wife', who was in fact the wife of the miniaturist John Smart.<sup>1</sup> James Northcote was also present at the burial of 'Mrs Pars' and wrote an evocative account to his brother:

I was last night with all the English to attend the funeral of the wife of an English painter we went in Coaches about Eleven at night as private as possible and as fast, that the common people might not know it for fear of impertinence Insults or riot from them... The husband as is the English custom gave gloves to all who went and large wax torches to light at the grave and Mr Banks the sculpture read the funeral service and after we all return'd in peace.<sup>2</sup>

The exhibition was meticulous about explaining the evolving topography of the cemetery. The slow accretion of monuments, the sarcophagus of the Russian Guilelmus Grote, the over-sized column of William Sidney Bowles, the modest monument designed by Giovanni Battista Piranesi for his friend, the young Scottish Grand Tourist Kames MacDonald, are all described as they appear in views of the cemetery.

In 1822 the old cemetery – the area immediately adjacent to the pyramid of Cestius – was closed and a new plot was created. This new space, running parallel to Via Marmorata, was twice extended and finally enclosed with substantial walls. It was this 'New Cemetery' that formed the focus of the next section of the exhibition. In the newly archeologically conscious 19th century, the area around the pyramid was excavated, creating a *fossa* (or ditch) around the old cemetery, something shown in a fascinating engraving by Agostino Penna dated 1830. A range of views of the new cemetery by German, Italian, American and Danish artists, as well as British, neatly demonstrate the ways in which it became a standard Roman view in the 19th century.

The final section of the exhibition explored depictions of specific tombs, both real and imagined. It began appropriately with a drawing by Goethe for whom, as Claudia Nordhoff points out in the catalogue, 'the *topos* of the grave in Arcadia... was synonymous with Italy'. The romance of Goethe's imagined tomb, in a grove overlooking the pyramid, anticipates later 19th-century depictions of the graves of Keats and Shelley. A wonderful drawing by the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel from Berlin shows a design for a monument based on an elongated Roman *tomba* with an inscription in gothic script, while Richard Cooper Junior's characteristic ink drawing poignantly records the small monument of the Scottish painter Jacob More. Cooper had been one of More's executors and was presumably partly responsible for erecting the grave marker, based on a Roman cinerary chest, decorated with urn and patera.

The late-19th-century interest in Keats and Shelley was neatly explored in a series of paintings by the American artist John Linton Chapman and the British painters Walter Crane, William Bell Scott and George Howard. Crane had been commissioned to paint the



tombs for Howard, whose own watercolour of Keat's grave is included in the exhibition. The pair of oils by Scott are particularly impressive, rendering the two monuments with a pre-Raphaelite intensity. The final painting in the exhibition was a grand work by Edvard Munch from 1927 depicting the obelisk erected to commemorate his uncle, the great Norwegian historian Peder Andreas Munch, who had died in the city in 1863.

The inclusion of the bold painting by Munch pushes the scope of the exhibition well into the 20th century and underscores the internationalism of the exhibits. Throughout the show, works by northern European and American artists hung next to works by Italian artists. This in turn points to the internationalism of the cemetery itself. It is a striking aspect of the exhibition's narrative how many of the monuments were designed by artists of different nationalities. For example, the column erected to William Sidney Bowles was erected in 1808 by the German architect Karl Müller after a design conceived by two of the era's most influential neoclassical sculptors, the Dane Bertel Thorvaldsen and German Christian Daniel Rauch. It is material evidence of Rome's status as an artistic melting-pot even in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars.

Focused exhibitions such as this, built on encyclopaedic local knowledge and careful archival research can be highly rewarding. But there are always drawbacks to such an approach. I think, in this case, the strict adherence to showing views that explicitly depicted the cemetery was a little limiting. It meant, for example, that Giovanni Battista Piranesi's iconic view of the pyramid from the *Vedute di Roma* was excluded, although we know from many northern European artists and writers, including Goethe himself, that Rome's monuments were anticipated in the famous printed views they had access to before they set out for Italy.<sup>3</sup> But this is a minor quibble, and the exhibition offered important new evidence about the foreign communities in Rome and fresh insight into the relationship between these communities and Rome itself. The beautifully produced catalogue is an important addition to the literature of the Grand Tour.

The catalogue is available via the website  
<http://www.cemeteryrome.it/2016Celebration/catalogue.html>

1 Paul Oppé, ed, 'Memoirs of Thomas Jones', *Walpole Society*, XXXII (1946–1948), p73.

2 London, Royal Academy Library, NOR/43, James Northcote to Samuel Northcote, Rome 9 June 1778.

3 Victor Plathe Tschudi, 'Recollecting Prints: Remembrance and Reproduction in Goethe's *Italian Journey*', in Victor Plathe Tschudi and Turid Karlsen Seim, *From Site to Sight: The Transformation of Place in Art and Literature*, Rome 2013, pp139–63.