



NEWSLETTER

Sculptors in the Cemetery: their legacy continues...

Story's *Angel of Grief* in reproduction

The sculpture of *The Angel of Grief Weeping over the Dismantled Altar of Life* is the most popular one for visitors. The inscription on its base records that it was William Wetmore Story's last work, one that in his profound grief he designed to surmount the tomb of his wife Emelyn (1820-1894). He himself was laid to rest there 18 months later. As for the angel, art historians debate the Florentine quattrocento influences on Story's neoclassical style. But, whatever its inspiration, from the moment that Henry James first saw it in Story's studio the sculpture has elicited widespread admiration.

cemeteries, most of them in the United States. The one at Stanford University in California is commonly, but incorrectly, said to have been erected in memory of the victims of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. In 1900 Jane Lathrop Stanford had chosen the design from a photo for her brother's memorial. She had an exact replica made by the Bernieri brothers in Tuscany from a single block of Carrara marble. Weighing some seven tons, it was transported with some difficulty to Stanford where it was installed under a domed canopy resting on six columns. The canopy collapsed during the 1906 earthquake, damaging the sculpture which was then restored but without the canopy. (See Rita Jamison, *The many sorrows of an angel. Sandstone and Tile*, Summer 1994, available online).

Another sculptor who has faced the difficulty of replicating the *Angel of Grief* is Douglas Stephens who carved the Rémillard tomb (2003) in



Photo: N. Stanley-Price

The *Angel of Grief* in Rome

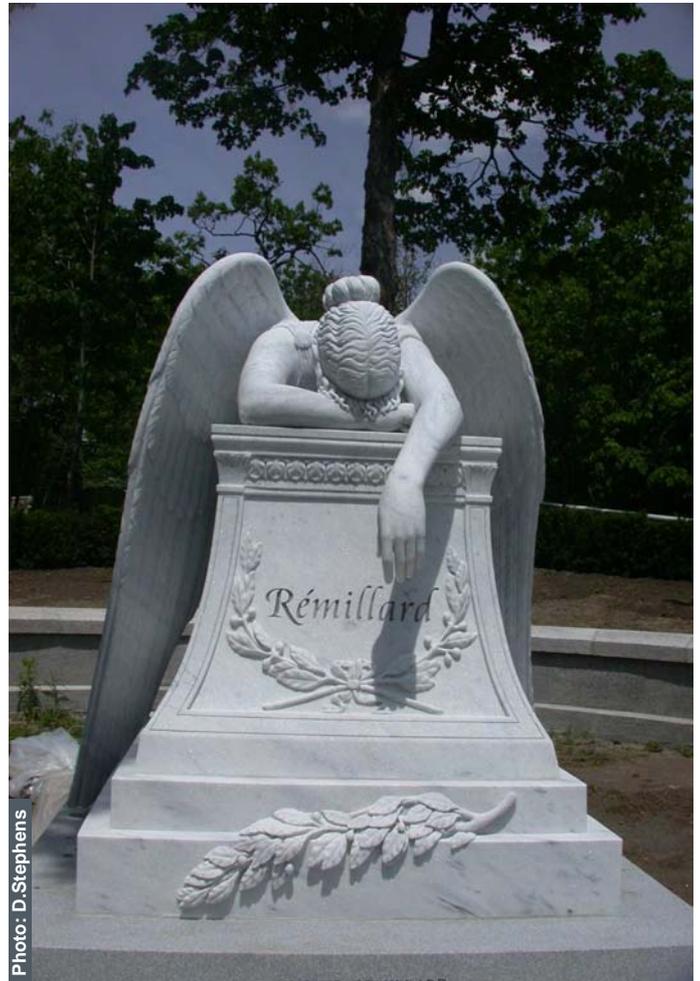


Photo: D. Stephens

The copy in Montreal



The copy in Stanford

It has been widely copied for other tombs and in quite different contexts. Its image appears on the album covers of bands such as the Finnish metal band Nightwish (*Once*, 1994); the Greek death metal band Odes of Ecstasy (*Embossed dreams in four acts*, 1998) and the EP (1998) made by Evanescence from Arkansas, USA. The bands' music reflects gothic rock influences and many younger visitors to the *Angel of Grief* arrive dressed in goth style.

There are more than a dozen copies of the sculpture in other

Montreal's Côte des Neiges cemetery. Based on hundreds of photos and detailed measurements taken of the original in Rome, the replica is one-and-a-half times larger and carved from a dolomitic marble from Georgia, chosen for its low water-absorption properties. The difficulty of reproducing, even with modern equipment, Story's intricate detail of the angel's almost-hidden face was one reason why he carved the replica in five separate pieces. (For his fascinating account of the project, see <http://cemeteryrome.it/history/reading.html>).

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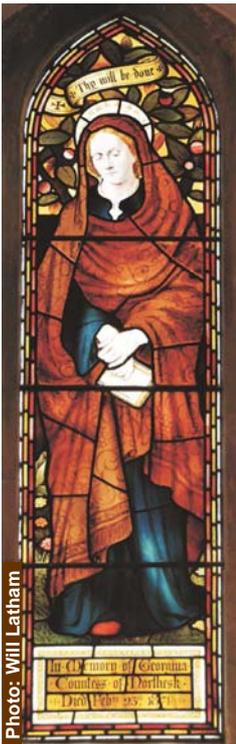
A sculpture by John Deare goes public

There are several stories as to how the sculptor John Deare (1759-1798) met his early death in Rome. A popular one holds that he caught a chill after sleeping on a marble slab that he had purchased, in the hope of being inspired how to carve it. What is certain is that he was buried in the Protestant Cemetery; but, sad to say, we do not know where his grave was. His extraordinarily virtuoso carving of neoclassical reliefs was recently in the news when the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired his *Caesar invading Britain* (1796), originally a commission from his American friend and patron, John Penn. Most of Deare's work is held in private collections but deserves to be better known.



John Deare, *Caesar invading Britain*, 1796
(Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Van Gogh and the Countess



Window in memory of Georgina, Countess of Northesk, by Cottier and Co., ca.1876

One of the inscriptions on her tomb, "Be not afraid only believe" finds its echo in the "Fear not, only believe" inscribed on the stained-glass window dedicated to her daughter Mina in the Owslebury church where she is buried. Thus the Earl, in choosing the quotations, created a link between his wife and daughter's widely separated places of burial. (See *The Burlington Magazine* CLIII (2011)).

The design of stained glass windows was one of the many talents of Frederic Crowninshield. The following note is contributed by Gertrude Wilmers who, with Julie L. Sloan, is the author of the monograph *Frederic Crowninshield: a Renaissance Man in the Gilded Age*, University of Massachusetts Press (2010).

Nicholas Stanley-Price

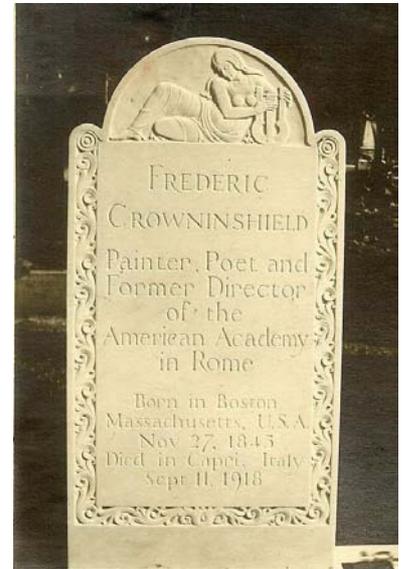


Frederic Crowninshield and the early work of Paul Manship

Last summer a restoration of the headstone on the grave of Frederic Crowninshield (Zona 3.3.6.3) brought to light its inscription and low relief sculpture, obscured by years of urban grime.

In his own day, Frederic Crowninshield (1845-1918) enjoyed a reputation in the arts in a number of areas. Like his contemporaries Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge, he devoted much of his energy to designing murals and stained glass windows, but he was also a painter in oil and watercolour, a teacher, writer, and lecturer, a prolific poet who published several volumes of verse, and an arts administrator. His book *Mural Painting* (1886) was the definitive study on the subject for many years.

Italy was Crowninshield's beloved "seconda patria," and he spent considerable time there, including the years 1909-1911 when he served as director of the American Academy in Rome. After his death in Capri, his widow, Helen Fairbanks Crowninshield, turned to the American sculptor Paul Manship (1885-1966) to design his tombstone. Originally from Minnesota, Manship studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and The Art Students League before winning a fellowship to the American Academy in Rome during the time of Crowninshield's directorship. Although his later work is primarily associated with the Art Deco movement, during his student years in Europe Manship became fascinated with archaic art and classical subjects.



Headstone on the grave of Frederic Crowninshield when first erected



Frederic Crowninshield, *St. Peter's from the Palatine*, 1911, watercolour, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Crowninshield soon recognised the young sculptor's promise, writing to a friend, "Manship is going to be a success ... his work is praised by some of the big fellows here." After Crowninshield's resignation from the Academy, Manship designed a bronze medallion that was presented to the artist and his wife on behalf of the fellows. It depicts a winged female figure in profile holding two doves, perhaps a



Paul Manship, *Bronze medallion dedicated to the Crowninshields*, 1911, private collection

reference to the Crowninshields' conjugal happiness, and a small boy blowing the trumpet of fame. The plaque was exhibited at the Architectural League of New York in 1913, and published later that year in the *Century Magazine* [85, no. 6 (April 1913), 869-71]. In 1914, Manship designed the *Heracliscus Fountain* for the Academy's new location on the Janiculum. According to the artist, the youth-

Academy director, assisted Manship by sketching scale drawings of the tomb relief and blocking out the letterings for the inscription. Manship surrounded this inscription with a vine-like design and placed a classically-inspired recumbent female figure, clothed in diaphanous drapery and holding a lyre, in the arch at the top. Musicians with lyres often accompanied recitations of poetry in Ancient Greece; thus Manship's figure is perhaps an allusion to Crowninshield's work in this genre.



Photo: N. Stanley-Price

Paul Manship, *Heracliscus fountain*, 1914-15, American Academy in Rome

ful figure of Hercules strangling a serpent represented Youth triumphing over Adversity.

Gorham Phillips Stevens (1876-1963), a member of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, and successor of Crowninshield as

Gertrude Wilmers



HOW OTHERS SEE THE CEMETERY

Vernon Lee (1856-1935)



John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Vernon Lee*, 1881 (Tate Collection, London)

"I was right, I think, when I wrote the other day that it would be easier for us to face the thought of danger, death, change, here in Rome than elsewhere. K. told me she felt it when we met at the Cemetery at her poor old aunt's grave. To die here might seem, one would think, more like re-entering into the world's outer existence, returning, as Epictetus has it, where one is wanted. The cypresses of the graveyard, there under the city walls, among the ruins, do not seem to unite folk

with the terrible unity Death, so much as with the everlasting life of the centuries." (March 4, 1893)

Violet Paget or, as she was known after 1875, Vernon Lee, was a prolific English critic, essayist, historian, travel and fiction writer, who also wrote in French, German, and Italian (in fact, her first book was written in French and published when she was all of fourteen years old). Born in France, she grew up in Rome between the ages of twelve and seventeen and spent most of her life in Italy. Known today primarily for her "fantastic" fiction (which, in reality, makes up a very small part of her oeuvre) and her writing on aesthetics, in her time Lee was admired for her numerous writings on the culture, history and landscape of her adopted homeland and, in particular, her constantly evolving concept of the *genius loci* or "spirit of place".

The Genius Loci, like all worthy divinities, is of the substance of our heart and mind, a spiritual reality. And as for visible embodiment, why that is the place itself, or the country; and the features and speech are the lie of the land, pitch of the streets, sound of bells or of weirs. (Genius Loci (1899), Introduction)

This, she suggests, has the power of "turning a locality from a geographical expression into something of one's very own". On her decision to adopt a male pseudonym, she wrote "no one reads a woman's writing on art, history or aesthetics with anything but mitigated contempt". This did not stop her from producing, in a career that spanned the period between late-Victorianism and early modernism, over forty major works and establishing herself, in the words of an early biographer, as "a literary craftsman and polemicist of undoubted importance in her day" alongside such contemporaries and heavyweights as Henry James, Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds and Edith Wharton.

The excerpt is from a collection of "leaves from a diary" written between 1895 and 1905 and published as *The Spirit of Rome* (1906). The "K." in the excerpt refers to Lee's longtime friend and companion, Clementina (Kit) Anstruther-Thomson, whose aunt is indeed buried in the cemetery (see below).

Alexander Booth

Note added by the editor. The "poor old aunt's grave" can be identified with some detective work in the Cemetery's databases. Since "K" was Kit Anstruther-Thomson and since her mother had no siblings, the only candidate is her father's sister, the Jean St.Clair Thomson whom the Graves Database records in grave 1586, with 28 February 1893 as the date of death. If her bereaved niece and Vernon Lee visited this grave on March 4 (see above), only five days later, the grave marker was probably not yet in place. Once erected, it stood adjacent to the tomb of another Scot, the author R.M. Ballantyne (Zona 2.15.8) who died the following year. But at some point after compilation of the database in 1984-86, her plot was re-used and the stone moved to a plot in Zone 1 (1.7.54). This is where it stands today and where the Burials Database records her grave (under "Thomson Hanstrutter"). So it is reassuring that our records, uneven as they are, can identify the "poor old aunt" but sad that her original grave no longer exists.

WHO THEY WERE...

Maria Chernysheva (1849-1919) and her relatives

The noble family name of Chernyshev is inscribed in the pages of Russian history, thanks particularly to three important people who bore that name. The first of them, the Count and Field-Marshal Zakhar Grigorievich Chernyshev (1722-84), conquered Berlin in 1760 during the Seven Years' War, fighting against the Prussian army led by Frederick the Great. The second was his grandson of the same name, Zakhar Grigorievich Chernyshev (1796-1862), who is remembered for having taken part, together with members of noble families and officers of the imperial army, in the Decembrist revolution of December 1825 that aimed to overthrow the absolute power of the Tsar. The insurrection was put down and the insurgents arrested. Punishment was severe, with five being hanged and more than 100 exiled



Elisabeth-Louise Vigée le Brun (1755-1842), *Portrait of Grigory Chernyshev with a mask in his hand*, 1793 (Hermitage, St. Petersburg).

He was the first Count Chernyshev, a general in the service of Peter the Great.

to Siberia, including Chernyshev. Finally in 1846 he received permission to go abroad and he moved to Rome with his wife Catherine Alekseevna (1819-78). Both died there and were buried in the Cemetery. His wife's tomb can be seen in Zona 1.10.37, near to where the Count's own grave used to be. But in 1998 his remains were transferred to the ossuary in the Zona Seconda and his gravestone affixed to the wall adjacent to the Director's office where it is visible today.

From another branch of the lineage descended Alexander Ivanovich Chernyshev (1785/86-1857). He had a brilliant career: he was Russian military agent in Paris, fought valiantly against the Grand Army of Napoleon and was named 'General' and 'Noble Prince'. Subsequently

he became Minister of War (1835-1852) and then President of the Council of State of Imperial Russia (1848-1856), only to fall from grace when held partly responsible for Russia's defeat in the Crimea (1853-56). He had married Elizabeth Nikolaevna Zotova (1809-72) with whom he had a son who died young and three daughters.

Of Maria who was the youngest of the daughters, the Director of the Historical Museum of Lytkarino near Moscow, Nadezhda Golubeva, writes: "The 'Noble Princess' Maria Aleksandrovna Chernysheva was born in St Petersburg, according to the records, on 5/17 June 1849, and so the date on her tombstone (1847) must be wrong. She had an excellent education in her father's house, the Chernyshev Palace, which still exists. Their salon was considered one of the most prestigious in the Russian capital and the mother raised and kept her daughters as grand princesses. As an adult Maria was named 'Lady of the Imperial Court' and in 1912 was one of the Dames Lesser Cross of the Imperial Order of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr, in celebration of the centenary of the war against Napoleon. Maria never married. She inherited, very probably from her mother, the Palazzo Chernyshev in Rome at Via Palestro 71 and the estate at Lytkarino. Loving the Roman climate, she willingly spent time at the palazzo in Rome but during the summer moved to her estate in Russia, where it appears she provided generous help to the local peasants. After the dramatic events following the first World War and the Russian revolution, she could no longer return to Lytkarino. She died in Rome on 26 November 1919 and is buried in the Cemetery [Zona 3.3.2.8], together with her 'always faithful servant', Darja Tichonovna Koltunova, who had died five years earlier. In the palace on the Lytkarino estate there is now installed the Historical Museum, opened in 1976", concludes its Director, noting however that there is little information about the Princess.

As for the palazzo at Via Palestro 17, Princess Maria had made a will in 1897, leaving it to the Orthodox church of San Nicola in Rome, a bequest only realised in 1932 due to bureaucratic red-tape.

Almost at the same time that she did, Princess Maria's brother-in-law's brother, Viktor Bariatinski, moved to Rome with his family. His three daughters stayed in the Eternal City: the princesses Maria (1859-1942), Leonilla (1862-1947) who married Prince Andrej Golitsyn, and Olga (1865-1932). Maria and Olga were noted painters: Olga took part in the 'Exhibition of Russian artists and enthusiasts resident in Rome' that was organised in 1917 in the reading-room of the Biblioteca Gogol in Via delle Colonnate 27, and which featured avant-garde painters such as Michail Larionov and Natalja Gonciarova. Maria founded in Rome the 'Circle for motivation of young Russian painters', thanks to the support of the Russian representative to the Vatican, Serghej Sazonov. All three sisters lie in the same tomb in the Cemetery (Zona 3.3.4.18).

Contributed by Gamer Bautdinov, journalist and writer resident in Moscow

Note added by the editor: yet another member of this large family is recorded in the Parte Antica, namely Anna Aleksandrovna Chernysheva (usually anglicised to Chernysheva; 1740-1794). Gamer Bautdinov informs us that she was the grandmother of the Decembrist revolutionary mentioned above, and that her children transferred her remains to St. Petersburg soon after her death in Rome. The tomb in the Parte Antica is therefore a cenotaph.

HOW TO BECOME A FRIEND

This Newsletter is made possible by the contributions of the Friends of the Cemetery.

The Friends also help fund the care of the trees in the cemetery and the restoration of tombs. Please can you help us by becoming a Friend? You can find a membership form at:

www.cemeteryrome.it

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of the Friends of the Non-Catholic
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ROME, 2012

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Disponibile anche in versione italiana
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