

of the
Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

NEWSLETTER



The grave of Goethe and the Bertel Thorvaldsen medallion(s)

Many visitors, especially Germans, head directly for the grave of the son of Germany's most famous poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. On their way there, in the same row, they pass the grave of another German, the painter Heinrich Reinhold, who died of tuberculosis in 1825 aged 36 (Zone 1.14.5). The two young Germans share the distinction of having inset into their headstones a portrait-medallion designed by the great Danish sculptor, Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844).



Ditlev Blunck, *Danish artists at the Osteria La Gensola in Rome*, 1837, oil on canvas, Thorvaldsens Museum. Thorvaldsen sits at the near right in a Trastevere trattoria still in operation today.

The medallions that you see today are bronze copies installed in 1961. The director of the Cemetery, Marcello Piermattei, had been concerned at the deterioration of Reinhold's medallion and of the monument to the painter Hans von Marées (Zone 2.4.20). He proposed to replace both medallions with bronze copies and to have von Marées's headstone repaired. The German government, through its Ambassador in Rome, Eduard G. Bossecker, met the costs.



Heinrich Reinhold, 1825, plaster, Thorvaldsens Museum



August von Goethe, 1831, marble (photo: Julian Kliemann, 2012)

But what happened to the precious original marbles? Piermattei suggested to the head of the German Academy in Rome, Prof. Herbert Gericke, that the marbles (and the moulds used to produce the bronze copies) might be sent to a museum of Thorvaldsen's works, or the Academy itself should preserve them. Photos of the time show that it was indeed

Reinhold's medallion that was in poor condition. The marble portrait of Goethe was much better preserved and went to the residence of the German ambassador in Rome. There it is still on view in an external, roofed patio. Our deeply missed colleague, Julian Kliemann (see below, In Memoriam) saw it there a few years ago.

The Reinhold marble relief has never been located. It was already missing in 1977 when an exhibition on Thorvaldsen held in Cologne requested its loan. The German Embassy in Rome provided a plaster copy and also lent the marble portrait medallion of Goethe. Fortunately, the excellent Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen preserves the sculptor's original plaster models for both medallions. Built to house the collections that he had donated to his native city, the museum also became his burial place, Thorvaldsen being viewed, rather like Goethe in his own country, as a national hero.

Instead of dying back home at the age of 75, Thorvaldsen, who lived in Rome for 40 years, came near to being buried rather earlier in our own cemetery. Bjarne Jørnæs, in his absorbing biography, recounts how in 1823 Thorvaldsen was accidentally shot by his



Photo: N. Stanley-Price

The Von Marées monument (by Arthur Volkmann, 1888)

landlady's young son. His fellow-artists held a banquet to celebrate his escape from death. But one of them, Heinrich Reinhold, died only two years later; and in 1830 August Goethe, who was due to sit to Thorvaldsen for a portrait, died twelve days after arriving in

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Rome. Thorvaldsen attended his funeral, sharing the carriage of the Hanoverian diplomat, August Kestner.

Back in Germany, Goethe's father sent instructions to Kestner about the inscription for the headstone. The simple epitaph to "The son of Goethe, dying before his father" has puzzled visitors ever since. But it was Thorvaldsen himself who volunteered to sculpt the portrait-medallion, for which he used a death mask and a portrait drawing.

Goethe's grave was one of many that once had an iron railing around it (see photo). Thirty years before the marble medallion was substituted, Piermattei was able to assure the same Professor Gericke that it was washed twice a year and the railings re-painted annually. The cypress trees have always framed the headstone – until last year. The one on the right died suddenly and, for safety reasons, had to be felled. But the grave survives to commemorate August and, through its inscription, also his father who had declared during his Italian Journey that, should he die in Rome, this is where he wished to be buried.



Grave of August von Goethe, with marble medallion, undated (Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome)



Cypress trees flanking the grave

Nicholas Stanley-Price

Main sources: Cemetery records; Bjarne Jørnæs, *The sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen* (Thorvaldsen Museum, 2011); and www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk. With thanks to Ulrike al-Khamis.



The classical beauty of an artist's monument: Lawrence Macdonald

Located in the Zona Prima (1.7.42) is the only known public monument dedicated to the memory of Lawrence Macdonald (1799-1878), a Scottish sculptor much acclaimed during his lifetime. The beautiful marble piece adopts the form of an ancient classical Greek stele. It contains an inset medallion relief of Carrara marble, depicting a profile portrait of Macdonald which is signed by his son, Alexander. Below, there are twelve lines of incised and leaded laudatory inscriptions. Crowning the composition in the tympanum, between two corner acroteria, a representation of three of the sculptor's tools forms a triangle over a serpent eating its own tail. This particular image (*ouroboros*) represents the eternal circle of life, as well as immortality and rejuvenation, suggesting that the art of Macdonald would be an eternal legacy. Two laurel branches under it signify the earthly glory achieved through his artwork.



Photo: N. Stanley-Price



Photo: N. Stanley-Price



Female bust, 1840 (author's collection)

Recent conservation work has revealed the colours of the three different materials (Bardiglio and Carrara marbles and travertine), and the way they come together harmoniously, showing the high technical and aesthetical standards applied in this work of art.

This was a project I followed with great enthusiasm. It was my tribute to the memory of one of the great sculptors of the 19th century, who ennobled and magnified the supreme expression of the human being; but also my way of giving him thanks for the daily pleasure of contemplating the smiling beauty that presides over our dining-room (a female bust in

Carrara marble sculpted by Macdonald in Rome in 1840).

Macdonald was entirely a self-made man from a humble family, leaving his birthplace in Scotland for Rome. With great ambition to perfect his art, he remained there for nearly fifty years, becoming professor of the Academy of St. Luke, a founder-member of the British Academy of Arts, working for royalty and European nobility, and making busts of foreign visitors to Rome. His best-known work stands in the centre of the sculpture gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London: the exquisite statue of Emily Georgiana, Countess of Winchilsea and Nottingham, made in Rome in 1850 and originally conceived for St. Mary's Church in Eastwell, Kent.

Both this statue and the bust in our collection are extremely representative, because they have all the identifying marks of his romantic but very realistic approach to the classical canons, a fusion of tradition and modernity, with a constant obsession for the detail of the human body at its various ages. May this brief note arouse greater interest among the general public and art historians in the person of Lawrence Macdonald and the importance of his work.

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Contributed by Sandro Campos Matos in Portugal, who in 2014 made possible the restoration of the Macdonald monument by Il Laboratorio s.a.s.

The editor adds: The American journalist and critic, Margaret Fuller, visited Macdonald's studio in Rome: "There I found a complete gallery of the aristocracy of England; for each lord and lady who visits Rome considers it a part of the ceremony to sit to him for a bust. And what a fine race! how worthy the marble! what heads of orators, statesmen, gentlemen! of women chaste, grave, resolute, and tender!" But she felt that, in real life, the sitters looked much less well, rather cold and formal.

In the studio Lawrence had the help of his brother John ("Jock", who was also buried in the Cemetery in 1867). They were part of a group of British artists who usually met in the evenings for dinner together – John Gibson, the sculptor, his brother Ben who was his assistant, and painters such as their fellow Welshman, Penry Williams, another Scot, James Anderson, and the landscape painter Thomas Dessoulavy. Jock Macdonald had not enjoyed the same education that his brother had, had a strong Scots accent, and was often ridiculed for his naiveté and his mis-pronunciations (e.g. 'adequates' for 'acqueducts'). But he was a humble man, content to keep the studio clean and pay the men, thereby



Monument to Emily Georgiana, Lady Winchilsea, 1850
(Victoria and Albert Museum)

contributing to his brother's fame, both in Rome and in their native Scotland.



A brief history of the de Wouytch (Vuich) family

We publish this note by Count Dimitri Wouytch who writes that several visitors to the Cemetery have contacted him with questions. He mentions that 'de Wouytch' has been the official spelling of the family's name used for generations outside Russia although today the family occasionally drops the 'de'. 'Vuich' is used today outside Russia by some genealogical researchers, probably as an easy phonetic adaptation of the Cyrillic spelling Вуич.



Emmanuel Ivanovich Wouytch

The Wouytch family is descended from an ancient Serbian noble clan which served the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa in the Kingdom of Hungary in the early 18th century. Manoilo Vuich (de Wouytch) (1711-1771), a lieutenant in the Austro-Hungarian army, was authorized to migrate to Russia along with members of his family. On 6 November 1752 he arrived in Kiev and swore allegiance to the Empress Elizabeth of Russia. He served in the Illyrian Hussar Regiment, attaining the rank of captain, and was granted lands in the Ekaterinoslav Province which his descendants maintained until the Russian revolution of the 20th century.

The large estate called Manuilovka, which is in the area around the present town of Zorinsk in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, belonged to him at the end of the 18th century. The present-day local railway station is still named Manuilovka, and was built in 1878 during the construction of the Debaltsevo-Luhansk railway. A typical Russian railway station of the 19th century, it was built, according to family legend, at the initiative of the estate's landlord of the time, Emmanuel Ivanovich Wouytch (1849-1930) at the start of coal exploitation on the estate. A great-great-

grandson of Manoilo Vuich, he was a senator, privy councillor, steward of the Imperial Court of Russia, prosecutor in the Russian judicial system and head of the Russian police department (1905-1906), and actively involved in containing the spread of revolutionary activities.

The son of Emmanuel Ivanovich was Nicolas Emmanuilovich Wouytch (1897-1976) who, together with his wife Olga de Dobrovolsky, found eternal repose along with many other fellow Russians in the Cemetery (Zone 3.4.5.7). Nicolas Wouytch, upon graduating in 1916 from the Imperial Corps of Pages, the prestigious military academy of Imperial Russia, was commissioned as an officer in Her Imperial Majesty's Life-Guards Lancer Regiment, thus joining the Russian Army at the front line. A veteran of WWI and the Russian Civil War, he was decorated with the Imperial Order of Saint Anna for bravery during combat actions against the Germans and reached the rank of captain in the White Army. An émigré after the revolution, in 1924 he swore allegiance to the *de jure* Emperor of Russia, Kyrill Vladimirovich, and further served his son, Grand Duke Vladimir Kyrillovich, as Head of the Imperial Chancellery until his death. In recognition of his services, in 1976 he was granted the hereditary title of Count of the Russian Empire and bestowed with the highest Imperial Russian knightly order of Saint Andrew the Apostle the First-Called.

A beloved husband and father, Nicolas Wouytch excelled in his private life as well, struggling throughout to ensure a decent livelihood for his family after losing everything due to the tragic revolutionary events in Russia. As an international civil servant, first with the League of Nations, then with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, and finally with the European Community, he retired at the end of his working life with the well-deserved rank of Honorary Director at the European Court of Justice.

Olga Nikolaevna de Dobrovolsky, his beloved wife, was the daughter of Nikolai Alexandrovich Dobrovolsky, the last Minister of Justice of the Russian Empire, murdered by the Bolsheviks in November 1918, and Princess Olga Dimitrievna Drutzkoi-Sokolinsky, a descendant of one of the most ancient Russian aristocratic families going back to the 9th century (see *Newsletter* 9). Olga Nikolaevna died in Rome at the age of 44, during WWII, on the eve of the liberation of the city by the Allied Forces in June 1944.

Contributed by Count Dimitri Wouytch, son of Nicolas Wouytch, in Australia

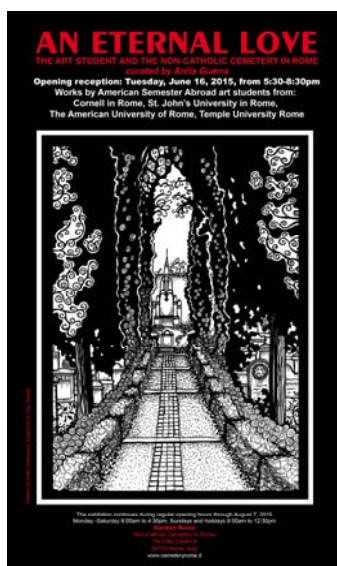
NEWS FROM THE CEMETERY

In Memoriam: Julian Kliemann (1949-2015)

The sudden death in early July of Julian Kliemann came as a great shock to all who knew him. Julian was a well-known art historian who had held distinguished research positions at centres such as the Villa I Tatti in Florence while also teaching at the universities of Heidelberg and Münster. But it was for his association with the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome that he was best known, holding a research position there since 1993. He specialised in Italian Renaissance painting, publishing extensively on a wide range of topics. He had recently retired from the institute but had many projects lined up for his retirement, including co-curating next year's exhibition about the Cemetery (see the previous *Newsletter*). He had been a valued member of our Advisory Committee almost since its foundation in 2006. We already miss his wise advice, modestly delivered but gently insistent that the Cemetery is designated for foreigners in Rome. It is entirely appropriate that he himself has been laid to rest there, always to be remembered.

Art exhibition in the Garden Room

Art students from four 'semester abroad' programmes in Rome showed work inspired by the Cemetery in our renovated Garden Room (16 June – 7 August). The exhibition, curated by Anita Guerra of Temple University Rome and Amanda Thursfield, included works in different media: watercolour, drawing, print, collage and digital photography. The Garden Room remained open during cemetery opening-hours, giving many visitors a chance to see these intriguing works. Our thanks to the artists and to the Rome programmes of Temple University, Cornell, St. John's University and the American University in Rome for this colourful exhibition.



Shelley the Snake: an evening of readings

In June a large audience in the chapel enjoyed an evening of readings from Shelley, Byron and Trelawny in a programme devised by Mark Irvine. Under the title "Shelley the snake, Trelawny our pirate, and baby Byron", the readings brought out the friendships but also the tensions among the members of the so-called Pisan circle in 1822. A cast of seven, including well-known figures of the English stage in Rome such as Michael Fitzpatrick and Shelagh Stuchbery, kept the audience enthralled. The event was organised as a fundraiser for the Cemetery.

Erratum

In Newsletter 31, printed version, the second line of the caption to the Thomas Cole painting was accidentally omitted: "oil on canvas, OL.1981.17. © The Olana Partnership. www.olana.org"

HOW OTHERS SEE THE CEMETERY:

A bird's eye-view

Earlier this year we had dying branches removed from two very old cypress trees near Shelley's grave. Stefano Raiano of the gardening firm Alberando did the work, using the tree climbing techniques that he has used on several trees in the Cemetery. He took this photo of the Zona Vecchia from a tree-top near the Aurelian wall. The Anderson tomb is visible top left, while the Visitors' Centre is behind the trees top right. With photos such as this, who needs a drone?



New book about the Cemetery well received

The new book about the Cemetery, published last year, has proved quite popular and is providing a steady, small income for the Cemetery. One of the published reviews is by Professor James Stevens Curl, a noted architectural historian and authority on cemeteries and funerary monuments. He called it "delightfully illustrated..., packed with fascinating information, and handsomely produced". For extracts from his and other reviews, see <http://www.cemeteryrome.it/Stanley-PriceBook.html>



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

THE NON-CATHOLIC CEMETERY IN ROME

via Caio Cestio, 6, 00153, Roma

Director: Amanda Thursfield

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm
(last entrance 4.30pm)
Sunday & Public Holidays: 9.00am - 1.00pm
(last entrance 12.30pm)

Tel 06.5741900, Fax 06.5741320
mail@cemeteryrome.it

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Nicholas Stanley-Price, EDITOR
Anka Serbu, GRAPHIC DESIGN
Grafica Di Marcotullio, PRINTER
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Contact: nstanleyprice@tiscali.it
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