

of the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

NEWSLETTER



Five Russian painters in Rome and the State Tretyakov Gallery

Several Russian painters who lived and died in Rome are represented in the collections of the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, the outstanding museum of Russian art. Below we identify five painters and their monuments in the Cemetery, in texts kindly supplied by members of the Gallery's curatorial staff.

Karl Pavlovich Bryullov

The imposing monument to the great Russian painter Karl Pavlovich Bryullov (1799-1852) is immediately visible from the entrance-gate (Zone V.3.18). Bryullov arrived in Italy in 1822 as an award-holder from the Society for the Encouragement of Artists in Saint Petersburg. In his studio in Rome he worked from 1831-1833 on the painting that made his reputation, *The Last Day of Pompeii* (see photo page 2). In the same period, he produced the painting *Horsewoman*, also known as *The Rider*.

monument which he entrusted to one of his students, M.A. Shchurupov (1815-1901), an architect and sculptor who was in the city as an award-holder from the Imperial Academy of Arts. Karl Bryullov's nephew, Nikolai Fyodorovich Bryullov (1826-1885), who was studying in Italy, supervised its installation.

The monument recalls the classic 'altar' form of a stele with pediment. In the front central niche is a bust of the painter, a copy of one now in the State Russian Museum by the sculptor I.P. Vitali (1794-1855). At the sides of the frieze in the tympanum, the rivers Neva and Tiber are represented in allegorical form, denoting the places of birth and death of Bryullov. Between them is a mourning scene with figures of the Academy of Fine Arts and Painting and the boy-pupil, symbol of eternal art. The whole monument is rich in relief decoration. On its reverse, in the tympanum a laurel wreath encloses a brush, palette and compasses, attributes of the painter, while below is an enlarged copy of the gold medal (see photo), with its inscription of 'Praiseworthy', that was awarded to successful students at the Imperial Academy of Arts.

Contributed by Natalia Aleksandrovna Kalugina,
Senior Researcher, The State Tretyakov Gallery



The monument to Bryullov,
restored in 2009



The reverse side of the monument

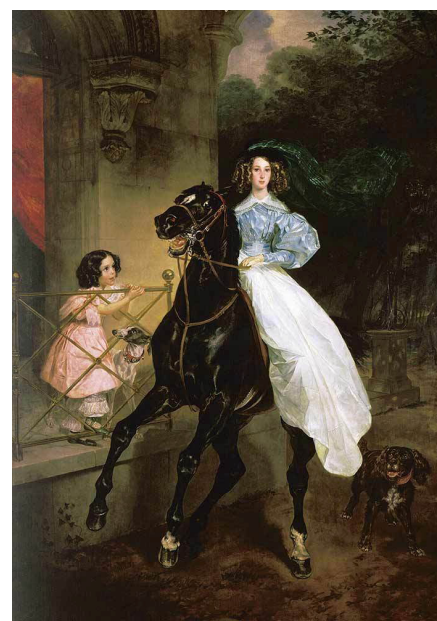


A detail of the frieze relief



The gold medal of the
Imperial Academy of Arts

Returning to Saint Petersburg in 1835, he directed the history class of the Academy of Fine Arts, painted a number of portraits and in 1843-1847 made numerous sketches for murals on the ceilings and walls of St. Isaac's Cathedral. Suffering from heart disease, in 1849 he went to the island of Madeira for his health but a year later moved to Italy. He died on 23 June 1852 at Manziana, a village near Bracciano north of Rome, leaving instructions in his will to be buried in the Cemetery. His architect brother, Alexander Pavlovich Bryullov, designed the



Horsewoman, 1832
(State Tretyakov Gallery)

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Last Day of Pompeii on display at the State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg (photo: author)



Plaque commemorating Bryullov in Via di S. Claudio, Rome

The Editor adds:

The Scottish historical painter David Scott (1806-1849) was a neighbour of Bryullov's studio in Via di San Claudio (just off Piazza di San Silvestro). In his diary he described visiting the studio just as the painter was putting the finishing touches to *Last Day of Pompeii*. On 3 January 1833 the painting was nearly finished, on the whole 'one of the best of that class of pictures I have seen'. Another day, he found the artist

trying to relax by playing the piano and singing melancholy airs. By July the many artists in Rome were flocking through the studio to the last room, the 'sanctum', in which the artist was explaining to visitors the finished work. Some of his fellow-artists had reservations about it but, overall, it received a rapturous reception in Europe, giving Bryullov an international reputation.



Fyodor Andreyevich Bronnikov

F.A. Bronnikov (1827-1902) was a history painter, drawing on ancient and medieval subjects, and professor of history painting at the Imperial Academy of Arts. Born in Shadrinsk, a small town in the Urals in Perm Governorate, he was educated at the Imperial Academy of Arts from 1845 till 1853 and then until 1860 he had a graduate stipend which allowed him to live in Germany and France. But Italy especially attracted him and in 1861 he settled in Rome on Via Vittoria while making occasional visits home. He achieved a certain fame in Italian intellectual society, and married Maria Carmela Bedini from Loreto.



The gravestone of the Bronnikovs



The Cursed Field. Place of execution in ancient Rome. Crucified slaves, 1878
(The State Tretyakov Gallery)

In addition to history painting, he produced portraits of leading Italians and also landscapes and genre scenes.

Bronnikov's work in mural painting can be seen in the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Paris, the Russian Embassy's church in Copenhagen and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. His work is found in European museums and in private collections but most of the work he produced in Rome, as well as forty thousand roubles to establish an art school, he bequeathed to his native city of Shadrinsk.

Bronnikov's powerful painting *The Cursed Field* (1878) depicts the brutal repression of slaves who had revolted against their patrician owners. Crucifixion was their fate, as with the thousands of slaves who were put to death following the suppression of Spartacus's revolt in 71 BC. The artist has shown the T-shaped crosses from which the slaves were hung, a woman distraught with grief in the foreground, the executioners filing away on the left with their job done, a pyre to the right, and the dog, the circling birds and the approaching storm all contributing to the oppressive, energetic power of the scene.

The gravestone (at Zone 1.5.12) to Fyodor and Maria Bronnikov (who died seven years after her husband) bears bas-relief portraits of the couple, artist unknown.

Contributed by Svetlana Kapryrina, researcher, The State Tretyakov Gallery

Ivan Grigorievich Davydov

I.G. Davydov (1826-1856) was a landscape painter born in Moscow into a merchant family. From 1843 to 1848, he studied at the Moscow School of Painting and Sculpture under K.I. Rabus and in 1850 enrolled at the Imperial Academy of Arts where he studied under Professor M.N. Vorobiev (1787-1855). In 1853, he received a large gold medal for the painting *View on the island of Valaam* and the right to an award allowing him to continue his studies abroad. In Geneva he took lessons from the landscape painter Alexandre Calame and in 1854 he arrived in Rome.



I.A. Kabanov, *Portrait of I.G. Davydov*
(State Tretyakov Gallery)



The environs of Rome, 1856 (State Tretyakov Gallery)

He travelled outside the city, painting views of Albano and Nemi but he soon fell ill with a fever and then with tuberculosis, dying in 1856 at the age of 30. His artist friend I.A. Kabanov wrote to Davydov's father with details of his death (quoted in N.A. Ramazanov's *Materials for the History of Art in Russia*, 1863). 'He was constantly confident of a good outcome of his illness and was going to Switzerland next spring for a better cure, but instead went to Monte Testaccio, where our brothers are buried.' Many artists, not only Russian, attended his funeral (his grave is at Zone 1.2.6). The portrait of him by Kabanov, painted between 1854 and 1856, is in the State Tretyakov Gallery. Davydov left a portfolio with one hundred and seventeen sketches and more than ten oil paintings.

Contributed by Natalia Aleksandrovna Kalugina, Senior Researcher, The State Tretyakov Gallery



The inseparable brothers Pavel (1849-1904) and Alexander Svedomsky (1848-1911)

The brothers, born in Saint Petersburg only nine months apart, grew up on the family estate in the Perm governorate. Both studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dusseldorf and then with Eduard Gebgardta and Mihaly Munkácsy in Munich. In 1875 they moved to Rome, occupying a large studio in Via Margutta, but the 'migrant birds', as they were known, would return every summer to spend time on the estate in Russia. Their paintings enjoyed great popularity in their homeland – P.M. Tretyakov acquired several for his own collection (now in the State Tretyakov Gallery). Others are found in museums in Omsk, Tomsk, Kazan, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Pereslavl-Zalessky, Kirov, Kiev, Gorlovka, Sarapul, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm and others.



The Svedomsky brothers in their studio

Pavel and Alexander Svedomsky are representatives of late academism. Pavel is best known for his monumental canvases on subjects from the history of ancient Greece and Rome, genre paintings and portraits. Equally significant was his participation in the decoration of St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev, where he painted six large paintings dedicated to the last days of the earthly life of Christ and also the cathedral's ceilings. In the late 1880s, he painted subjects from the history of the Great French Revolution. His brother Alexander also helped with the paintings in the Kiev cathedral. He produced portraits and genre paintings, but mainly landscapes. After his brother's death, he retired from artistic activity.

The monument (Zone 1.2.9) raised to the younger brother Pavel bears a bronze portrait bust of him. In 1902 Nikolai Georgievich Schleifer (1864-1940), had made a plaster bust of Pavel which he exhibited the following year at the Imperial Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg. Schleifer was a diplomat, chamberlain of the Highest Court and member of the Council of State and also a professional sculptor. On Pavel's death two years later, the bust was cast in bronze for his tomb, retaining the



P. Svedomsky, *Medusa*, 1882
(State Tretyakov Gallery)



The Svedomsky monument in the Cemetery

plaster's original inscription of 'Rome 1902'. In 1906 Schleifer presented the plaster bust to the Russian Museum of Emperor Alexander III (now the State Russian Museum). On his own family tomb which is very near that of the Svedomskys (Zone 1.2.13) stands a fine head-and-shoulders bust in bronze of him, its creator not yet identified.

Pavel's elegant monument was designed for a single bust, so when his elder brother Alexander died a few years later, he was commemorated with a bronze bas-relief portrait medallion inserted in the pedestal (see photo).

It is inscribed '1883' and was therefore done from life, but the signature is not yet deciphered.

Contributed by Elena Nikolskaya, Curator of sculpture, The State Tretyakov Gallery

The editor adds a note about Alexander's wife:

As Nesterov remembered (*Vospominaniya*, Moscow, 1985), the brothers Alexander Alexandrovich and Pavel Alexandrovich Svedomsky were as indivisible as the Goncourt brothers. Even if they painted different subjects, it was difficult to distinguish their paintings. One never talked of them in the singular; even when speaking of one of them, one said 'the Svedomskys'. When the elderly Alexander decided to marry a young Russian traveller passing through Rome, the news quickly spread to Russia that 'the Svedomskys have got married'. And when the two of them appeared in public with the young wife, it was difficult to understand which brother was the husband. (Text by Antonella D'Amelia, 2009).

The 'young Russian traveller' was Anna Nikolaevna Kutukova, a Tatar singer and pianist. After Alexander's death, she and their daughter Anna (born in 1898) returned to Russia but, following the Revolution, they escaped via the Crimea back to Italy, settling eventually in San Remo.

NEWS FROM THE CEMETERY

Visit of the President of Ireland

In September we were honoured with a visit from Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland. In Rome for a meeting of the 'Arraiolos Group' of EU Presidents, President Higgins inserted the visit into his busy schedule so as to see the graves of Antonio Gramsci and John Keats. He declared himself delighted with the Cemetery and with how green it was.



President Higgins at Gramsci's grave

All Saints' Day weekend 2021

Despite coinciding with the G20 meeting and the closure to traffic of a large area nearby, the All Saints' Day weekend saw many visitors at the graves of family members and friends. It also brought us yet more favourable publicity. A well-informed article by Elena Allewa (*Il Messaggero*, 1 November) focussed, unusually, on the variety of trees and plants in our garden, and the RAI 3 television programme Geo 'Su questa terra' on 2 November featured the actor Antonio Cederna visiting

selected tombs and reciting poetry. Both items reflected the excellent work done by the gardeners of Il Trattore.

Which graves did Vilhelm Lundström visit in 1899?

On All Saints' Day in 1899, the Swedish philologist Vilhelm Lundström was determined to put a flower on the graves of all Danes, Finns, Norwegians and Swedes in the cemetery. He bought an enormous bunch of roses and dahlias at Campo de' Fiori and hailed a carriage to hurry him down to Testaccio (see *Newsletter* 14). He wandered through the silent cemetery, placing a flower on each grave that he found since, he wrote, 'in that far place there are so many forgotten tombs of so many forgotten compatriots.'

Lundström mentions two graves only, one of a Finnish girl who 'had seen twenty-one summers', and that of 'a man who was perhaps destined to become the greatest philologist in his country'. That philologist was Carl Engelbrekt Sandström (1845-1888), a brilliant young scholar at Uppsala where Lundström was a student (he moved later as professor to Gothenburg). The National Archives in Uppsala holds a copy of his Roman death certificate, giving his address in Rome (Via San Basilio, 8) but not any cause of death (his grave is at Zone 1.4.50).

The only candidate for the 'Finnish girl' on whose grave Lundström left his reddest rose is Nanna Wendelburg (1856-1876), a nineteen-year-old Swede (her simple grave is at Zone 2.11.25). Born to Albert and Laura (née Henius), she was one of those whom Lundström feared had been 'forgotten' as he distributed his flowers on All Saints' Day. Fortunately, both are named in our records.

Nicholas Stanley-Price, with information kindly supplied by Barbro Norbelie in Uppsala and Bo Lundin

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

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(last entrance 4.30pm)

Sunday & Public Holidays: 9.00am - 1.00pm
(last entrance 12.30pm)

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of the Friends of the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

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