

# ANGELS



W A T E R H O U S E S Y M B O L I S M N E W S L E T T E R # 6 6

## SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Angel conveys spiritual influences acting upon the earth
- Butterfly conveys the soul, freedom, unconscious attraction towards light
- Lyre conveys the relationship between heaven and earth
- Gates convey opportunity, the feminine principle and death

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## Mourning angel

In honor of the Christmas season, I am spotlighting angels I met on my trip to Malta, Venice and Rome.

One of the interesting places to view Angels is the Campo Cestio Cemetery in Rome. This is most famous because it is where Keats and Shelley are buried.

The angel to the right is by William Wetmore Story and is actually buried here as well. Story was a very well known American ex-patriot sculptor who is probably best known for his Medea sculptor which now resides at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The angel conveys spiritual influences acting upon the earth and messenger of God (several examples include Gabriel, Michael and Raphael); saintliness; sweetness; belief;

gaiety; striving for perfection; a good reputation; dignity; inspiration; and a purified existence.

Also, angels include many different attributes but those attributes are not always consistent. Some examples of attributes include angel with book is a cherub, an angel with candle is a Seraph, an angel with crown is a Dominion, an angel with red roses a Virtue.

In Christian art the nativity scene usually includes angels and they are usually singing to the glory of God with the Wise Men and shepherds watching.



## Another example of mourning angel

Another example of the mourning angel is to the right at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY. Notice that in this case the angel is mourning over a rectangular base while the one above is mourning over an alter like object. The wreath, seen to the right,

is used in many Christmas activities and conveys eternity, celebration, mourning, victory, valor, resurrection, and memory.

In Christmas activities, it is represented as the advent wreath made out of evergreens representing everlasting life.



Photo by John Thomas Grant

## Boy angel

Another image that you see in many Victorian cemeteries is the Greek Boy Angel.

When you see angels dressed in Greek classical robes it conveys mourning or grief. The Greeks were one of the first civilizations who believed in cremation and put the ashes of cremation in an urn. They would pour some type of expensive olive oil or some other type of oil and the idea was to anoint the soul.

Notice the wilted rose in his hand which conveys passage of time. The rose also conveys completion, perfection, the heart, God, the beloved, paradise, messianic hope, Christ, beauty, and the Virgin Mary.

Above the rose is the butterfly which conveys the soul, freedom, unconscious attraction towards light (God), life, rebirth, joy, conjugal bliss and the psyche.



Angel in Rome

## Another boy angel

All human knowledge is an analogue for seeing, experiencing, but mostly for going.

Seamus O'Banion

Another angel found at the non-Catholic cemetery in Rome, Italy.

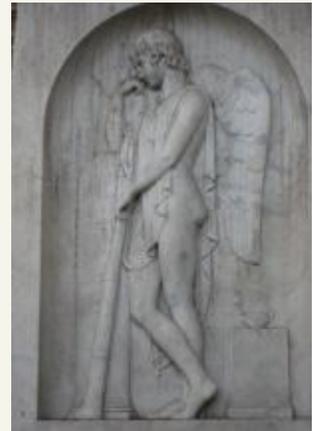
Notice the angle is holding a down turn torch which conveys the person's life being extinguished here on earth.

Notice the pedestal behind the angel which conveys the meeting of the first Christians the day after Sunday.

The lantern on top of the pedestal

conveys intelligence, learning, the word of God, immortality, guidance, light, goodness, vigilance, purity, love, piety, charity, beauty, self-sacrifice and the personification of night.

Notice the difference in stance between the two angels. The angel at the top contemplates the symbolism of the rose and butterfly while the one to the right looks bored by the symbols around him.



## Going to heaven

In Victorian cemeteries, you usually see the image of angels taking the soul to heaven. This one, also in the non-Catholic cemetery in Rome shows an angel pointing towards heaven and gently grasping the woman in his arms and sweeping her off to heaven. Bot the angel and the woman are dressed in

long flowing robes which convey mourning or grief. Also notice that the woman is standing on a small rock which is perched in the ocean and the waves which conveys the rocky turbulent part of life which is now over because the person's soul is going to heaven.

Usually when you see boy angels in Victorian cemeteries, they are looking at the object they are taking care of, they are looking out into space and seem bored with the whole situation, or they are looking up into heaven. In this case, the angel is intently looking at the woman who he will take to heaven.



## Another passage to heaven in campo cestio

Once again, the two figures are dressed in Greek robes (conveys mourning and grief). The man to the left holds a lyre which conveys the relationship between heaven and earth, the harmonious union of cosmic forces, poetry, song, concord, and emblem of conjugal love. It is the attribute of Apollo, Mercury, Orpheus, and Erato.

On the other hand, he holds a wreath which conveys eternity, celebration, mourning, victory, valor, resurrection,

memory. He actually holds a laurel wreath which conveys distinction in literature and music. He also holds a cornucopia which conveys abundance, fruitfulness, liberality, the bounty of God, and thanksgiving.

At the top is an acanthus leaf which conveys heavenly gardens, heaven, immortality, and the love art.

The angel to the right holds an hour glass which conveys the transiency of life, time, inversion, evanescence, creation and destruction.



For every man  
the world is as  
fresh as it was at  
the first day,  
and as full of  
untold novelties  
for him who has  
the eyes to see  
them.

Thomas Huxley

## Angel with knife

Notice the very Art Nouveau style angel in Camp Cestio. Notice that he holding a knife in one hand. At the top is the trefoil which conveys the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost).

Notice the mosaic gold five-pointed stars around the angel. Stars convey the spirit, the forces of the spirit struggling against the forces of evil, destiny, supremacy in a particular area.

Notice, again, the knife in the angel's hand which conveys death, sacrifice, the instinctive forces in nature, a base, secret weapon, the inversion of the sword. It is also known as the sacrificial knife and is the attribute of Abraham, and the Archangel Zadkiel. He is the archangel of freedom, benevolence, mercy, and the Patron Angel of all who forgive.

The chalice conveys sacrifice, suffering, redemption, the Eucharist, and wisdom. Tears convey sorrow, grief, weakness and ecstasy of joy.



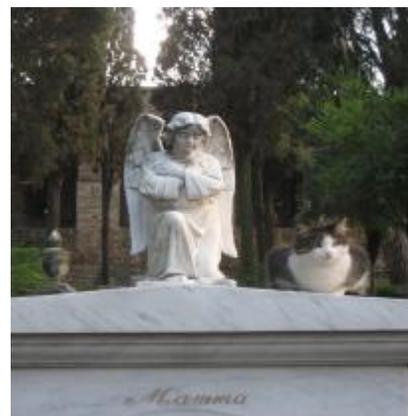
## Angel and cat

This picture to the right is in honor of Rosalind Hillhouse because she has cared for, nurtured and find homes for many wild cats on the back of her property in Georgia.

An angel with crossed arms conveys repentance and resurrection.

The Campo Cestio in Rome has a wonderful program where they adapt and take care of

stray cats in the cemetery—what a great place for them to live. You can actually give a donation for the care of the cats and the flyer you can pick up explains that “a very generous woman, Matilde Talli, came to the rescue (of the cats). For years now, she has personally financed the feeding, neutering, and medical treatment of all the cats in the cemetery and the Pyramid area. Many of the abandoned cats have even found homes.”



**What are your ideas  
for future newsletters?**



**WATERHOUSE  
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The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document symbols locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.



**NOTES FROM THE EDITOR**

This picture was taken at the Venice Biennale in the Gardini area of the contemporary art exhibition. You can see that I am surrounded by colorful symbols!

I took over 200 pictures and I am sure that other images will appear in other newsletters.

Take care - Richard Waterhouse

**A n o t h e r m y s t e r y s y m b o l**

Anne Shelton, Cemetery Preservation Coordinator of the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas sent me the following photo to the right. Anne explained that "someone here mentioned the Aztec Club, but those member would only be male. This is the marker of a woman, born 1879 died 1912." Do you have any ideas what are the symbols as a whole?

On the gravestone, we see AZTEC, a five pointed star with D & F in it and gates.

A five pointed star conveys Epiphany, the manifested nature of God, and the Virgin Mary. The star itself conveys the spirit, the forces of the evil spirit strug-

gling against the forces of evil, destiny, supremacy in a particular area, disintegration, immortality, the soul, guidance (especially spiritual), hope, purity, constancy, and vigilance.

Gates convey opportunity, the feminine principle, death, departure from this world, entrance into heaven or hell, a dividing barrier, power, fortification, justice, mercy, praise and salvation.

Closed gates convey restraint, expulsion, war, misery, inhospitality, and emblem of the Virgin Mary. Open gates convey hospitality and peace.

I look forward to receiving your thoughts on what these symbols mean.

