



MAY 1, 2010

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OF INTEREST:

- Flag conveys victory, self-assertion, thought or ideal
- Sword conveys conveys authority, destruction of the physical, and knighthood
- Helmet conveys courage, lofty thoughts, and salvation
- Cat conveys ease

## SYMBOLS OF EUROPEAN DAY

We have one of those great calendars that gives all the holidays throughout the world. One holiday that intrigues me for May is European Day. Actually, there are two dates for European Day: May 5 and May 9. The first date is the founding of the Council of Europe on May 5, 1949 to celebrate peace and unity in Europe. It became an official holiday in 1965. The other date marks the official announcement of the European Union approved in 2008.

Two symbols are related to this union. One is the Flag of Europe and consists of a circle of twelve golden stars on a blue background. It is most commonly associated with the European Union, formerly the European Communities, which adopted the flag in the 1980s. However, it was first adopted by the Council of Europe, which created it in 1955.

The European anthem is based on the prelude to "The Ode to



Joy", 4th movement of Ludwig Van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Due to the large number of languages in Europe, it is an instrumental version only with the original German lyrics having no official status. The anthem was announced on January 9, 1972.



## CEMETERY MONUMENTAL, MILAN

Since we are concentrating on European Day, I thought it would be fun to look at grave-stones' symbols that seem universal throughout Europe. Let's begin in Milan, Italy.

A fish conveys wisdom, freedom, faith, the soul, baptism and Christ.

Grapes convey fertility, sacrifice, the Eucharist (especially when shown with wheat or bread.)

Ship conveys transcendence, wisdom, and safety.

Wheat conveys prosperity, wisdom and the bounty of earth.



## FALLEN HEROES (DYING GAUL)

Since Memorial Day falls in May as well—May 30, we will look at the fallen hero and how he is portrayed in art. Probably the most famous sculpture showing the fallen hero is the Dying Gaul (a Roman copy based on a Hellenistic sculpture probably done between 230-220 BC) now housed at the Capitoline Museum in Rome, Italy.

The soldier is shown in the last few moments of life here

on earth with sword thrown to his side (conveys authority, destruction of the physical, knighthood, liberty, purification, strength, the administration of justice, the Crusades, and the Word.) This sculpture of the Dying Gaul depicts a dying Celt. At some point, the sculpture may have been painted. The base was added later. He is shown as a Gallic warrior with a Gallic hairstyle and moustache.



## FALLEN HEROES (KNIGHT AT MONUMENTAL CEMETERY)

One of the most romantic fallen heroes is that of the knight associated with King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable. If you are familiar with the legend of King Arthur, you know that he came up with the idea of having the knights sit around a round table so everyone is equal at the table. Notice that the knight, also at Monumental Cemetery, has his sword on his chest and as seen above, the sword conveys authority, destruction of the physical, knighthood, liberty, purification,

strength, the administration of justice, the Crusades, and the Word. If you are also familiar with King Arthur, you know the story of Ex Caliber, the sword that only King Arthur was able to pull out of the rock and become king. King Arthur's identity has always been hotly debated. One school of thought concludes that he is based on a Romano-British leader who fought against the invading Anglo-Saxons sometime in the late 5th Century.



## FALLEN HEROES (SOLDIER AT MONUMENTAL CEMETERY)

Not all depiction of the fallen hero is as romantic of the two above. This portrayal to the right is that of a dying man showing the effects of war on his body. Notice that his ribs are showing and the moment portrayed by the sculptor is that of the soldier's last breath.

The rocks at the top of the sculpture convey his life was built on a firm foundation.

The helmet conveys courage, lofty thoughts, salvation, protection of the soul from assaults of passions and desires, wisdom and an attribute of a soldier. It is also appropriate that the helmet is lying away from the head of the soldier and not protecting him any longer.

The lamp of the foot of the grave, which is kept lit by the family, conveys intelligence, learning, the Word of God,

immortality, guidance, light, goodness, vigilance, purity, and love.

The bouquet of dead flowers in the vase convey death and mourning. The vase conveys the womb.

Notice that the soldier is lying on top of a cross which conveys his sacrifice of his life for his country.



## PELICAN

This particular pelican is found in Pere Lachaise, Paris. Actually, pelicans are seen many times in Paris historic cemeteries.

An aquatic bird, the pelican conveys loneliness, melancholy, parental love and sacrifice, gregariousness, and greed.

The pelican is connected to the sacrifice of Christ and his symbols are the Eucharist and resurrection because the pelican mother will supposedly feed her own young with

her blood if she cannot find food and water for them.



## DOG

Carved dogs on gravestones are seen in European historic cemeteries. This particular one made out of bronze is in Mount Passy Cemetery near the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

The dog conveys loyalty, vigilance, flattery, and obedience.

The reason dogs are portrayed in historic cemeteries is because they are there protecting and waiting for their masters who have died. For those who are connected with Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, you will have the

opportunity to hear Deborah Marshall of the Atlanta Humane Society talk about *Dog Days of Oakland: An Historic "Tail"* on June 12 at 5:30 pm. She shares the story of how the oldest private charitable organization in Atlanta was created in 1873 and through a rich history, evolved to its current mission of preventing neglect, abuse, cruelty and exploitation of animals. This lecture will take place outdoors. Your well-behaved dogs on a leash are welcome. For Historic Oakland Foundation non-members the cost is \$15. Reservations are necessary. Space is limited. RSVP to [mwoodlan@oaklandcemetery.com](mailto:mwoodlan@oaklandcemetery.com).



## CATS

As many of you know, we meet friends in historic cemeteries. We met these two feline friends at Montmartre Cemetery in Paris. The place we have seen the most cats is the wonderful Protestant Cemetery in Rome, Italy. Both Keats and Shelley are buried there. People feed them so they are very friendly and will become your friends for your

stay in the cemetery if you feed them.

The cat conveys domesticity, ease, laziness, the self-indulgence and cleanliness. The number two conveys the duality of all things, positive and negative, day and night, counter-balanced forces, reflection, counterpoise, nature, shadow, disintegration, an ominous sign, and diversity.



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S Y M B O L I S M : A U N I V E R S A L L A N G U A G E

## CHRIS PRINCE'S RESEARCH ON GRAVE MOUNDS

For a few years, I have been studying the grave mounds that are primarily seen throughout the south. Now that my life is shifting to New England, I will see if they are up there as well.

If you are familiar with Oakland Cemetery, you know that we have two of the bottoms of the grave mounds (one near Tweet the Mockingbird and the other near Jasper Newton Smith.)

Chris sent me many patents of these he found on the Ancestry website and I have included a drawing and one grave mound he saw in Newberry, SC at Bush River Baptist Church Cemetery.

Like gravestones carved out of marble and granite, the grave mounds can be very simple or they can be very complex.

The whole idea of grave coverings goes back to the beginning of civilization. To protect the burial from animals digging them up, rocks were put on the grave. The grave mounds are just an evolution of this type of burial.

The interesting thing about this particular grave mound is that it is very complex. Unfortunately, during World War II, much of the iron work in cemeteries was taken away in melted into bullets. That is probably what happened to the tops at Oakland.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalog: "No good in a bed, but fine against a wall." -- Eleanor Roosevelt

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



Spring in Atlanta has been beautiful as ever. A tree's blooms that have been magnificent this year is the Dogwood. If you haven't had a chance to get out to Oakland Cemetery and experience spring, I suggest that you do—the garden is magnificent.

For any of you who are interested in doing my symbolism tour for spring, the next one is May 1 at 6:30 pm. I look forward to seeing you all out there.

I leave Atlanta with sadness but I will be back and my sacred Oakland will always be very special.

Take care,

Richard Waterhouse

