

CAST IRON IN THE SERVICE OF COMMEMORATING THE DEAD IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY - A CONTRIBUTION -

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Since it became possible to cast large-format cast-iron tablets by the open sand casting method as a result of improvements in the field of foundry technology at the end of the 15th century, iron memorial plates are to be found in virtually all centres of iron production and foundry-work in Central Europe. (1)

The early monuments were almost exclusively inscription plates (2), and not until the first part of the 16th century did the funerary relief appear -- albeit in isolated cases -- alongside the inscription. In comparison with contemporary bronze casting, the iron products make a very archaic, if not indeed primitive, impression (3). The cast-iron tablets, produced exclusively for the nobility and their relatives, were initially very much individual products with no exact copies. The multiple use of cast moulds only began to occur to an increased extent in the age of Baroque as the production of memorial plates increased in various iron centres. On the other hand, the cast mould, once used, occasionally became the object of special esteem (4).

The cast-iron sepulchral monument did not, however, remain restricted to the local nobility, the bailiff of the smeltery or the local clergy, but could on occasion serve spiritual and secular princes, especially if iron production and smelting formed an important branch of industry in their territory, as is shown, for instance, by the memorial tablets for the counts of Sayn-Wittgenstein in Berleburg or those for the prince provost of Adelsmannsfelden in the Gnadenkapelle at Schönenberg near Ellwangen (5), to give some examples.

We should here like to recall two particularly well-known examples: the tomb of Johann Moritz of Nassau in Bergenthal near Kleve, cast by Hermann Pithan from Marienborn near Siegen in 1663 as an altar tomb richly decorated with coats of arms (6) -- the wooden model, also assembled as an altar tomb, has been preserved in the crypt in the Lower Castle in Siegen (7) -- and the memorial tablet for Count Friedrich, killed in 1793, in the family chapel in Wolfenburg in Saxony, a casting from Lauchhammer produced in 1802.

At the beginning of the 19th century, cast iron gained an unprecedented importance in the field of memorial and sepulchral art. This development was made possible by the invention of the cupola furnace which permitted casting in crucibles independently of blast furnaces. The iron could now be produced as thin iron sculpture, much finer than previously; even the smallest objects, such as decoration with many openings, could be produced in series in the foundries. The period of fine iron casting began in which a new artistic and aesthetic quality was discovered in cast iron which was soon to gain ideological importance in the age of the Wars of Liberation. The introduction of the Iron Cross (9), the highest award for gallantry, by King Frederick William of Prussia on 6th. March 1813 set the decisive accent for the new, almost auratising estimation of iron, which is further expressed in the saying which came into use at that time "I gave for iron", a reference to the population's preparedness to make sacrifices.

In the subsequent period then, the Iron Cross often appears on the memorial tablets to combatants in the Wars of Liberation or on the cast-iron monuments on the battlefields of the Wars of Freedom. One example of such a tomb is that of the royal foundry manager, Lauer, in the cemetery at the Oranienburg Gate in Berlin (10), a casting from the Berlin Foundry. In accordance with an order of

October 1816 issued by the Prussian king, iron memorials were erected on the battle fields. The first example of this was the so-called Monarch's Hill Memorial near Grossgörschen, cast in the Berlin Foundry in 1817 to a design by Schinkel (11). It was constructed in the form of a monumental Gothic pinnacle, surmounted by an Iron Cross and appeared on the Berlin New Year Plaque for 1817 (12); it was reproduced on several occasions. The Kreuzberg memorial in Berlin (13) which Schinkel designed at the king's command in 1817 -- it was produced between 1818 and 1828 -- represented a monumental version of Neo-Gothic architecture set in the countryside. The 18 m high pinnacle, the peak of which is also topped by an Iron Cross, should be understood as a tabernacle pillar with helmet and the twelve spirits of the battle in classical style bearing the physiognomies of contemporary members of the Prussian royal family, a sort of "mother monument" for similar monuments on the battle field. The first comprehensive discussion of the monument was in the Berlin doctoral thesis by Ulrich Bischoff, completed in 1977, on "Monuments of the Wars of Liberation in Germany, 1813-1815". Less well-known than the Kreuzberg monument is probably the monument to Prince Leopold Victor Friedrich of Hessen-Homburg, who was killed in 1813, and which stands on the village square in Grossgörschen near Leipzig (14). It was commissioned by the Prussian government in 1817 and cast in the Berlin Foundry; it was shown on the Berlin New Year Plaque already for 1817 (15). This prince from the traditionally anti-Napoleonic house of Hessen-Homburg who had early been entrusted with diplomatic tasks and who was killed at that spot, was stylised by his contemporaries as the heroic figure par excellence of the Wars of Liberation.

The monument consists of a cross set on a high pedestal which -- even if it does not repeat the exact form -- should here again be regarded as an Iron Cross; it is set under a baldachin borne on four round pillars, decorated with rich hanging tracery and shell-covered gables. We encounter the idea of the Gothic tabernacle pillar, coupled with a modified inset cross, once again in a roughly 6 m high memorial on the old city wall in Hanover, near the Central Railway Station, for the Hanover soldiers who fell in the Battle of Langensalza in 1866, probably a casting from the Königshütte foundry near Bad Lauterberg in the Harz Mountains.

Probably as a result of the institution of the Iron Cross, the cross -- the Christian symbol be it noted -- undergoes a revaluation in the sepulchral field in the first half of the 19th century and, in this connection, increases continuously in importance; this was all the more obvious as the sepulchral cult in the 18th century had for the most part dispensed with it. Eventually, the cast cross became one of the most widely spread type of cemetery monuments of the period, which -- produced in series -- dominated the scene in the cemeteries of the 19th century in the most varied forms. The variety of forms possible is virtually inexhaustible; a more exact allocation of the crosses to particular foundries is only possible in a few instances because of the gaps still existing in research.

Again a few examples as a demonstration for the rest, as I regard my task primarily in the presentation and discussion of architectonic monuments.

Initially a cross in this form, of a frequently occurring type, on a sandstone base appears for the elector of Hessen's master of cavalry, Georg Wilhelm Conrad Schmelz, who died in 1851, in the cemetery in Hofgeismar, probably a casting from the Electorate of Hessen's foundry in Veckerhagen. This is contrasted with a monument, completely in cast iron, for Georg Buderus, mining engineer, who died in 1849, the owner of a smeltery in Hirzenhain in the Vogelsberg district (Hessen); this monument was probably cast in the local foundry.

A knowledge of the model sheets and catalogues of old foundries is, naturally enough, of not inconsiderable importance for dealing with cast-iron upright memorials in cemeteries; to the best of my knowledge, hardly any attempt has been made up to now to evaluate such material. Recently I succeeded in discovering a pattern book from the Ludwigs-hütte foundry near Biedenkopf in the archive of the local museum there, and this has now in the meantime been evaluated. It was compiled about 1860 and in the lithographs pasted in it shows several hundred illustrations of cast-iron products from the foundry from the mid-nineteenth century down to about 1910. Here is an example of the "grave monuments" in a five-fold version from the period about 1860. In the meantime it has been possible to trace definitely the origins of several tombs of previously unknown provenance to this foundry. As an example of this we would take the tomb of a teacher constructed about 1860 in the cemetery in Gmüden/Wohra (Hessen) in the form of a palm, alongside it the lithograph from the model book of the Ludwigs-hütte foundry. The literature (16) which has an illustration of the undated palm tomb in the Siegerländer Museum in Siegen, attributes the grave sign, incorrectly, to the middle of the 18th century, that is 100 years too early.

Here it is intended to present briefly the most important types of cast-iron cemetery monuments. It can be noted that most of the tomb forms which were made in natural stone can also be shown in cast-iron form -- even if they are not always a literally exact copy. Cast iron, on the other hand, also opens possibilities for the creation of elaborately pierced decorative forms, for instance in the field of grave cross production, which would not have been conceivable in stone. Tombs constructed in series could be produced at a more favourable price than similar ones in natural stone. Such monuments thus also became possible for those classes who were not able to afford stone gravestones.

Turning back to the memorial to a combatant in the Wars of Liberation shown at the beginning, it is intended here to show some further examples of tombs for the military which could also be shown in stone finish. What has been selected is the type of altar tomb with trophies mounted on top, generally consisting of a helmet, shield and occasionally also weapons. Firstly we shall present a very early monument to Colonel Michael Lodewig von Diezelsky (d. 1799) in the Invaliden cemetery in Scharnhorststrasse in Berlin (17) in stone finish, alongside its measurements and two corresponding cast-iron tombs of the same type, the tomb of the royal lieutenant-general, Otto Carl Lorenz von Pirch, in the cemetery at the Oranienburg Gate in Berlin (19) as also -- to represent a modified type -- the tomb for Major-General Schilling in Oslo (20). Finally, a further example from Nassau: the tomb of the mining manager of the Duchy of Nassau, Ernst Menzler (d. 1842), in Diez, surmounted with a decorated helmet, a shield with the divided description "Waterloo", an oakleaf chaplet, hour-glass and a miner's lamp. We encounter the obelisk in Fichte's tomb in the cemetery at the Oranienburg Gate (21), it being decorated with his bust relief (22); it is approximately 4 m high and is possibly based on a design by Schinkel. Schinkel, by the way, also designed an iron obelisk for Kutuzov, the Russian field marshal, who was killed in Benzlau during the campaign in Silesia. The rectangular grave pillar is related to the grave obelisk and is here represented by two Swedish examples, the Ellefsen tomb in Drobak (23), probably from the mid-nineteenth century, and on the right that for Nicolai B. Aall in Ostre Porsgrunn from the period around 1806 (24). We encounter the polygonal pillar occasionally as a Neo-Gothic grave memorial form: here the tomb for the surgeon major-general, Dr. Wilhelm von Wiebel (d. 1847), in the Invaliden

cemetery in Scharnhorststrasse (25), a Berlin casting. It is intended to again show two Swedish examples of the grave pillar type, the tomb for Mauritz Hausen, who died in 1844 in Kongsberg (26) and a further roughly contemporary memorial in Kongsberg (27). This is compared with a quite simple stone grave pillar in Karlshofen (Hessen) from the beginning of the 19th century. The combination of pillar and column, a common form of tomb from the period of Classicism in the stone version, can be represented here by one example which was dedicated to the memory of Andreas Roseng in Hurum, who died in 1847 (28). The altar tomb surmounted with vases and urns is also one of the favourite types of tomb in Classicism. Examples of this are the tombs of General Otto von Diericke (d. 1819), in the old Schöneberg Church graveyard in Berlin (29), a casting from the royal foundry and a slightly later tomb in the cemetery in Hofgeismar (North Hessen) in sandstone can be presented by way of comparison.

Two further examples from Berlin give an impression of the wealth of detail on the same type of tomb; the tomb of Ludwig Devrient (d. 1832) in the graveyard of the French parish in Chausseestrasse (30) and that of Johann Matthias Magnus (d. 1821) in the cemetery at the Oranienburg gate (31). Finally a further example from Hessen: the tomb of the commissioner of mines of the counts of Solms-Laubach, Johann Wilhelm Buderus (d. 1806), probably a casting from the Friedrichshütte foundry near Laubach in the Vogelsberg district.

An example for an urn tomb is that of an unknown person in the cemetery of the French parish in Berlin (32), alongside it a drawing of the conditions (33). In the graveyard in Berleburg is an engraved cast-iron urn on a sandstone base honouring the memory of Ottilie Hein (d. 1843) and in the chamfered top section it shows two bas-relief butterflies. It is seldom possible to determine the artistic origin of cast-iron tomb as it is here. It is the tomb of Martin August Freund, who died in 1840, 1.85 m high all told, which his brother, Hermann Ernst Freund, Professor at the Academy in Copenhagen, produced and is in the cemetery of the Dorotheenstadt parish in Berlin (34).

Now to the stele tomb. Two fine examples of this type have survived in Sweden: of which two steles for two members of the Sporck family in Halden (d. 1810 and 1832) (35) and the tomb of Andreas Christian Wright in Styroll, who died in 1816 (36), will be presented here. Among the first cast-iron steles is that of the monument by Ludwig Widmann for the Prussian lieutenant-general, von Brauritsch (d. 1827) in the military cemetery in Kleine Rosenthaler Strasse (37), a Berlin iron casting. Alongside this appears a board-like flat stele for the lawyer J.W. Müller from the middle of the nineteenth century in the cemetery in Hofgeismar (North Hessen), probably a casting from the Electorate of Hessen's Veckerhagen foundry. An illustration in the Gleiwitzer Preis Courant from 1847, presenting six different types of tomb being offered for sale by the Gleiwitz foundry (38), may serve here as a representative example. The foundries in Berlin, Lauchhammer and Sayn probably offered a similar programme. Here too there is a dearth of research in the archives.

Finally, it is proposed to present the tabernacle pillar as a type of tomb. An excellent example in this connection is the 4.50 m high tomb for General Carl Leopold von Koeckeritz (d. 1821), which was produced under Schinkel's influence and is in the Invaliden cemetery in Scharnhorststrasse in Berlin (39). Alongside this a slightly later tabernacle tomb constructed in sandstone in the cemetery in Coburg. Among the most important creations in small cast-iron architecture from the first half of the 19th century is the monument designed by Friedrich Schinkel for Queen Luise of Prussia in the market square in the town of Gransee in Brandenburg (40). It was produced in 1811 and rises on the spot where the coffin of the deceased queen

stood in the night from the 25th. to 26th. Juli 1810 while being taken from Hohenzieritz to Charlottenburg. Previously the monument was on show at the exhibition by the Royal Iron Foundry in 1811, of which the engraving conveys an impression to us (41). Two cast-iron tombs, which have unjustifiably hardly been noted up to now, are in the Mortuarium of the cathedral in Eichstätt, probably castings from the fiscal foundry at Obereichstätt. One memorial, approximately 4.20 m high and constructed on 50 mm thick iron sheet, was dedicated to the memory of the dean of the cathedral and vicar-general, Dr. Euchar von Adam (d. 1830). Above a stepped base rises an inscribed panel framed with pilasters, subdivided in the upper section by blind lancet windows and rounded off by a crocket mounted ogee arch.

The other tomb of the aedicule epitaph type is to the honour of the memory of the suffragan bishop of Eichstätt, Felix Count Stubenberg (d. 1828). The total height of the monument, which is also constructed of thin cast plates, is approximately 5 m. From a low sandstone base the monument rises in a three part structure, whereby the three roughly equally large parts are separated from one another by cornices, the lower part contains the German memorial text, the centre one the coat of arms in colour, the upper one, which is surmounted by a pinnacled gable with finials at the sides and a cross at the top, displays a rich Gothic blank tracing, like the upper part of neighbouring monument, with an open quatrefoil.

In the field of the construction of crypts and mausoleums, cast iron only plays a subordinate role, being employed particularly for doors and lattice-work. An exception in this respect is the mausoleum erected shortly after 1816, perhaps to the design of Johann Claudius von Lassaulx, in the former castle park of Dierdorf in the district of Neuwied (42). This structure, which is one of the first monuments in the "Old German" style in the Rhineland (according to the Dehio handbook), contains a number of superb tombs from the Middle Ages and the early modern period, which were placed on exhibition in the sense of a romantic cult of ancestors. Of particular importance for our study is the use of cast-iron elements, which were probably produced in the Sayn foundry. They are employed in the window frames and the Gothic tracery, the wings of the doors and, in particular, for the tracery of the portal tympanon.

Finally, we shall deal briefly with cast-iron grave fences as an independent production of sepulchral art in the first half of the nineteenth century. The variety of forms of cast-iron grave fences is just as rich as that of the cast-iron grave crosses and consists of uniform railing and post elements; even here it is often very difficult to show the connection with any foundry. In the old town cemetery (Luther cemetery) in Kassel, the tomb constructed by A. Kraus for Julius Wilhelm Albert, Count of Reichenbech-Lessowitz (d. 1822) is surrounded by a very fine lattice-work fence in Gothic form (43) which is supported on polygonal posts at the corners. Walter Henschel produced the bronze angel figures which surmount the posts. In the ogee arches of the lattice work, richly composed decorative forms alternate, namely owl, wreath, five-pointed star and cherub's head. In the base area is richly decorated ivy foliage, all in all a very delicate work which was, perhaps, produced in the Henschel factory in Kassel.

Now for two less extravagant examples from Alsfeld Cemetery from the mid-nineteenth century, alongside it the fencing on the Buderus family grave in Hirzenhain (Upper Hessen), also from the middle of the 19th. century.

It would be a rewarding task to deal with this material, which has, by the way, suffered considerable losses as a result of cemetery clearances in order thus to obtain an impression of the extraordinary

variety of these cast-iron works.

In conclusion, I should like to present what is, to the best of my knowledge, one of the most impressive enclosures around a family grave. It is the fencing on the Isenburg grave in Wächtersbach (Main-Kinzig District). The high railings in very richly decorated Neo-Gothic forms with a magnificent gateway were probably produced in the second quarter of the 19th. century in a foundry in the Vogelsberg district, perhaps in the family's own foundry in Neuenschmitt. Just like most of the rest of the material presented today, this cultural monument has also not yet been mentioned in art-topographical literature up to now.

The sepulchral monuments presented here, which have had to be presented here as a roughly systematic collection of material on account of their variety and the fact that they are virtually unknown, are not part of architectural history in the stricter sense, but as the ideal type of small architecture they do demand closer attention than they have enjoyed up to now. Apart from the problems touched upon, theoretical considerations in particular gain new facets, for example on the nature of the spread and popularisation of Neo-Gothic architecture. However, before this can be done, a comprehensive list of the preserved material must be compiled in order to have available a certain base for research.

Notes

- 1) Albrecht Kippenberger Artikel "Eisenguß" im Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte, Bd. IV, Stuttgart 1958, Sp.1124 f.
- 2) s.Kippenberger, op.cit. u. ders., Die Kunst der Ofenplatten, Düsseldorf 1928, P. 5.
Helmut Odenhausen, Grabkreuze aus Eisen und Stahl, Tübingen 1962, P. 17 (Grabplatten an der Oberen Burg in Siegen, A.16.Jh.).
- 3) s.z.B. zwei Grabplatten im Schloß in Arolsen für eine Gräfin Katharine von Waldeck und Graf Philipp von Waldeck (+ 1524), Abb. in Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler, Kreis der Twiste, Kassel 1938, Taf.49, Abb. 1 u. 3.
- 4) Gerhard Seib, Model und Guß - Zur Wertschätzung der Gußmodel für Grabmäler. In: Studien zum künstlerischen Eisenguß. Festschrift für Albrecht Kippenberger zum 19. Dezember 1970, hrsg. von Gerhard Seib, Marburg 1970, P. 177-181 u. Abb. 135-137. Ders., Zwei gegossene Epitaphien in Marburg und ihre Model - Kleinwäch an der Werra. Erneute Belege für Wertschätzung von Gußvorlagen durch Überraschenden Fund. In: Hessische Heimat, Bd.25, 1975, H.4, P.108-113.
- 5) Bernhard Hildebrand, Wappenkunst in Eisen - Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Eisenkunstgusses in den Schwäbischen Hüttenwerken in Wasseralfingen. In: Studien zum künstlerischen Eisenguß. Festschrift für Albrecht Kippenberger zum 19. Dezember 1970, hrsg. von Gerhard Seib, Marburg, 1970, P.165-176, Abb. 131-134.
- 6) Abb. in Richard Klapheck, Des Fürsten Joh.Mor.v.Nassau Gartenstadt Kleve - Ihre künstlerische Auswirkung, Berlin-Potsdam-Münster-Düsseldorf. Düsseldorf 1936, P.31.
- 7) Alfred Lucky u. Hermann Wunderlich, Die Fürstengruft zu Siegen 2.A. 1956, P.14.
G.Seib, op.cit., Anm. 4, p.179 f.
- 8) Abb. in Albrecht Kippenberger, Der künstlerische Eisenguß, Marburg 1952, P.6.
Kurt Degen, Skulpturen aus Eisen - Betrachtungen zum Eisenkunstguß in Lauchhammer. In: Studien zum künstlerischen Eisenguß. Fest-

- schrift für Albrecht Kippenberger zum 19. Dezember 1970, hrsg. von Gerhard Seib, Marburg 1970, P.251 f. u. Abb. 181.
Ottofried Neubecker, Artikel "Eisernes Kreuz" im Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte, Bd. IV, Stuttgart 1958, Sp.1164-1167.
- 9) Ulrich Bischoff, Denkmäler der Befreiungskriege in Deutschland 1813-1815, Diss. Berlin 1977, P. 67 ff. (Exkurs.: Das Eisernes Kreuz).
 - 10) Abb. in Hermann Schmitz, Berliner Eisenkunstguß, München o J. (1917), P. 26, Abb. 31.
 - 11) Abb. in Max Eschner, Leipziger Denkmäler, Denksteine und Gedenktafeln mit 83 Bildern, Leipzig 1910, P. 52 f.
 - 12) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit. Taf. 3.
 - 13) Abb. u.a. in Kippenberger, op.cit., Abb. 45, oder Paul Ortwein Rave, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, o.O.u.o.J., Abb. 5.
Letzte Würdigung in Bischoff, op.cit., P. 72 ff.
 - 14) Abb. in Eschner, op.cit., P.54 f.
 - 15) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., Taf. 3.
 - 16) Odenhausen, op.cit., P. 38.
 - 17) Abb. in Wolfgang Schütz/Klaus Mackowsky, Das Alt-Berliner Grabmal von 1750 bis 1850, Berlin 1917, Abb. 4.
 - 18) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 4.
 - 19) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., P. 26, Abb. 32.
 - 20) Abb. in Arne Nygard-Nilssen, Norsk Jernskulptur, Bd. 2, Oslo 1944, P. 159.
 - 21) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., P. 24, Abb. 27.
 - 22) u.Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 50; abb. in Schütz/Makowsky, op.cit., Abb. 50 a.
 - 23) Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 158.
 - 24) Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 162.
 - 25) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 59.
 - 26) Abb. in Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 168.
 - 27) Abb. in Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 169.
 - 28) Abb. in Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 169.
 - 29) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit. Abb. 49.
 - 30) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 57.
 - 31) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., P. 26, Abb. 30.
 - 32) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 51 (2).
 - 33) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 51 (1).
 - 34) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 55 u. 55 a.
 - 35) Abb. in Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 164.
 - 36) Abb. in Nygard-Nilssen, op.cit., P. 166.
 - 37) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., P. 27, Abb. 34 u. Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit. Abb. 54.
 - 38) Abb. in Erwin Heintze, Gleiwitzer Eisenkunstguß, Breslau 1928, P.92.
 - 39) Abb. in Schütz/Mackowsky, op.cit., Abb. 53.
 - 40) Abb. in Paul Ortwein Rave, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, op.cit., Abb.4.
 - 41) Abb. in Schmitz, op.cit., P.19, Abb. 19.
 - 42) Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler Krs. Neuwied, Düsseldorf 1940, P. 91 f.
 - 43) In Dehio-Hb.Hessen (Ausgabe 1966), P. 453 wird das Gitter irrtümlich als Bronzegitter bezeichnet; s. Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler Cassel Stadt, Text 2. Bd., Cassel 1923, P. 823.