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Dana Moody
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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The Architecture of the Dead: Symbolism in Colon Cemetery, Havana, Cuba

Dana Moody

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to document and define symbolic imagery found within the grounds of the Colon Cemetery in Havana, Cuba. Memorials erected to the dead use symbology to tell stories about the departed, giving us clues to the deceased's values and philosophies, as well as their religion, ethnicity, social memberships, occupations, education, level of wealth, and thoughts on the afterlife (Keister, 2004). Using images of Colon Cemetery from a photographic documentary series, *Havana: Behind the Facade*, architectural and cemetery symbology was grouped into categories, researched for meaning, and sought for interpretations to reveal clues about Cuban culture and beliefs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In general, these symbols revealed that this society believed in religious fervor, an afterlife, and a merciful God. This study serves to guide anyone who wants to interpret cemetery symbology. It opens the door to future studies on specific Cuban families and tombs. Most importantly, it visually preserves the symbology found on architecture and monuments within Colon Cemetery.

Introduction

From the moment Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Cuba, declaring it to be "the most beautiful land human eyes have ever beheld," Cuba's story has been one of great complexity (Codrescu, 2011 p. 11). Havana of the Colonial and Republican periods was considered modern and prosperous, yet mysterious and, at times, perilous (Codrescu, 2011). This produced a society rich with characters of fascinating stories and beguiling folklore. It is the legacies of many of these characters that are preserved on the grounds of Havana's Christopher Columbus Cemetery, most often referred to as the Colon Cemetery.

Throughout history, memorials erected to the dead tell stories about the departed. The architectural shapes, forms, and styles create an impression of the deceased lives and how they were remembered at the time of their burial. When placed into this context, grave markers themselves meet the definition of a symbol: a thing that denotes or represents something else. Upon a closer look, these memorials to the dead often display symbolic elements and motifs, giving us further clues to the deceased's religion, ethnicity, level of wealth, and thoughts on the afterlife (Keister, 2004).

The purpose of this study was to document and interpret symbolic imagery found within the grounds of the Colon Cemetery. Despite the recognized significance of cemetery research to understanding the anthropological narrative of

a culture (Myers & Schultz, 2016), a literature review revealed little published research on the Colon Cemetery, or any cemetery in Cuba, much less a study focused on symbology. Therefore, this research is significant to further create and preserve a picture of the Cuban culture yet to be published; thus, contributing to the overall body of knowledge on Cuban studies.

Method

Visual anthropology through photographic documentation was the research method for this study. During the summers of 2017 and 2018, the author completed two residencies with Unpack Studio, Havana, focusing on architecture. The project, *Havana: Behind the Facade*, produced an extensive photographic documentary series. Because visual anthropology allows for accurate documentation and categorization of details long after the recorded event, its methods were ideal (Collier & Collier, 1986).

For this study, images from *Havana: Behind the Façade* were narrowed down to those taken inside Colon Cemetery. The sample was scoured for architectural and cemetery symbology. All symbols were researched for meaning and grouped into like categories to reveal clues about Cuban culture and beliefs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These categories included 1) flora, 2) angels, saints, and other living beings, 3) mortality, and 4) religious devotion. Photography selected for this study was delimited based on clarity of visual image, not by location within the cemetery, nor by the person being memorialized. Recorded interviews with Irma Bergantinos, employee of Colon Cemetery, were used for additional details. Patterns were sought within the symbology and compared to the overall context to learn about those buried in Colon Cemetery, both collectively and individually. A legend corresponding to an existing map of Colon Cemetery was created to demonstrate the location of each symbol used in this study.

Background

19th-Century Cemeteries

Cemeteries have always been an important thread in the fabric of society (Eggenger, 2010). Great shifts in cultural values can be identified by close inspections of the changing nature of tombs and memorials (Keister, 2014). Serving both the needs of the dead and the living, they are balanced “between the past and future, life and death, material and spiritual, earth and heaven” (pp. 10-11). They offer a permanent reminder of the deceased’s time on earth (Eggenger, 2010).

Up until the Reformation of the 16th century, wealthy Christian patrons of the Western world paid to be buried inside the walls and floors of their church, whereas, others of lesser means were laid to rest in churchyard cemeteries. With the Reformation, church construction slowed and those with money began looking outside the church for suitable memorials for themselves and their families (Keister, 2004). By the 19th century, large cemeteries, known as necropolises, were being designed throughout the Western world. Planned as utopian cities, plots were laid out to give wealthy patrons primary vantages, while those of lower social statuses were relegated to less desirable real estate within the cemetery (Eggenger, 2010; Kronauer, 2017).

Typically, these cemeteries were partially enclosed by walls. This marked the cemetery as consecrated ground and as a community separate from the living (Kronauer, 2017), while also offering some level of protection from animals, thieves, and vandals. Gates acted as both a physical and a symbolic threshold, as they established a clear divider between the living and the dead, the past and the future, and the ordinary and the mysterious. Once inside, like in any city, roads and foot paths were used to allow visitors to travel through the space. Many family plots were further enclosed by fencing to establish the plot's boundaries. These enclosures reflected the romantic view of death as an eternal sleep not to be disturbed by the living (Eggenger, 2010).

With increased wealth and the rise of the middle class, it became fashionable for families to build their plot around a central monument surrounded by individual headstones, establishing the cohesion of the family, even in death. These erected memorials depicted sculpted figures and artefacts dripping in symbolic ornamentation (Eggenger, 2010).

Personal wealth also expanded the practice of building mausoleums, an alternative to the family plot, which served the same function (Keister, 2004), but within an architectural structure that conveyed privacy and permanence (Eggenger, 2010). According to Keister (2004), most mausoleums of this period can be placed into six architectural styles: Egyptian Revival, Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Modern Classicism, including the substyles of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, Pagan, and uniquely funerary architecture (Keister, 2004). They were often accentuated with sculpture, iron work, and stained glass, further conveying its owners high social standing, personal taste, and knowledge of what was fashionable (Eggenger, 2010). Much consideration was taken when selecting architectural styles, imagery, and decorative details to reflect the family's religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as their origin and ethnicity (Eggenger, 2010; Keister, 2004; Kronauer, 2017). Epitaphs and other verbal inscriptions account for part of the process of individualism, but a great deal of it was accomplished through elaborate visual symbols (Keister, 2004).

By the 19th century, these symbols had turned away from a preoccupation with mortality to gentler forms of mourning imagery filled with sentimentality and loss. This included such images as draped urns, weeping willows trees, clasped hands, and floral arrangements. In addition, many symbols, including angels, upward pointing fingers, and heavenly gates, reflected the belief in resurrection and everlasting life. It was also during this period that children's markers began to receive special symbolic motifs such as lambs, doves, and broken flower stems. There was also an influx of imagery to convey the deceased's occupational, social, fraternal, and professional associations (Keister, 2004).

These works of art changed the roll of the cemetery to double as museums. Not only were they meant to be visited by grieving family, but to be a site for leisure, pleasure, and sightseeing. The promotion of the cemetery as a tourism destination can be found in 19th-century travel guides and literature around the world. To this new visitor, the cemetery became a garden of art and a small-scale version of history focusing on notable historic figures and monumental structures (Kronauer, 2017).

Colon Cemetery

History. Colon Cemetery (see Figure 1), named in honor of Christopher Columbus, is often referred to as one of the greatest cemeteries in Latin America, following La Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires (Wyndham & Read, 2011). It is notable, as much for the accounts of its permanent residents, as it is for the stately art and architecture left behind to celebrate their lives (Cities of the Dead: The Cementerio de Cristóbal Colón, 2016). It is an impressive symbol of Cuba's Colonial and Republican past, blended with the present (DTCuba, 2020).



Figure 1. Colon Cemetery, Havana, Cuba (Photograph by Author).

Colon Cemetery was designed by the Spanish architect Calixto Arellano de Loira y Cardoso, who won a contest in 1869 to design and build a new cemetery in Havana, Cuba. A graduate of Madrid's Royal Academy of Arts of San Fernando, Cardoso's work began in October 1871 and was completed in 1876. Unfortunately, he died before completing the job and became the cemetery's first permanent occupant (Colón Cemetery, 2020; DTCuba, 2020; Wyndham & Read, 2011)

Located in the Vedado neighborhood, visitors enter the cemetery through a triple triumphal arch, known as the *Gate of Peace* (see Figure 2). Crowning this impressive gate is a marble sculpture titled *The Three Theological Virtues – Faith, Hope, and Charity*. This sculpture was created in 1901 by Cuban sculptor, José Villalta Saavedra. Below the sculpture, the gate has two marble reliefs representing the crucifixion of Christ and the resurrection of Lazarus (Baker, n.d.).



Figure 2. Gate of Peace, Colon Cemetery, Havana, Cuba (Photograph by Author).

Once inside, two wide avenues, Cristóbal Colón and Obispo Espada (from north to south) and Fray Jacinto (from east to west), form the shape of a Greek Cross and divide the 140-acre necrópolis into four quarters (Cities of the Dead, 2016; DTCuba, 2020) (see Figure 3). At the center stands the Main Chapel (see Figure 4) inspired by the Il Duomo in Florence, Italy (Colón Cemetery, 2020; Wyndham & Read, 2011). Within the four quarters, a symmetrical grid of streets leads visitors through a succession of small plazas, as if forming neighborhoods. As was the custom of the Victorian cemetery, Loira designed the park according to the social status of its permanent residents, ensuring that, even in death, the dead would remain stratified (Cities of the Dead, 2016). In this way, his design mirrored the city outside the cemetery walls. There are specific sections in Colon Cemetery for the wealthy, the poor, priests, brotherhoods, soldiers, infants, victims of epidemics, pagans, and the condemned, each pigeonholed by their respective economic circumstances, occupations, spiritual beliefs, and social classifications. The wealthy and well-connected competed for prominent spots on main thoroughfares while lesser individuals were relegated to the “suburbs” (Baker, n.d.; Colón Cemetery, 2020; Wyndham & Read, 2011).

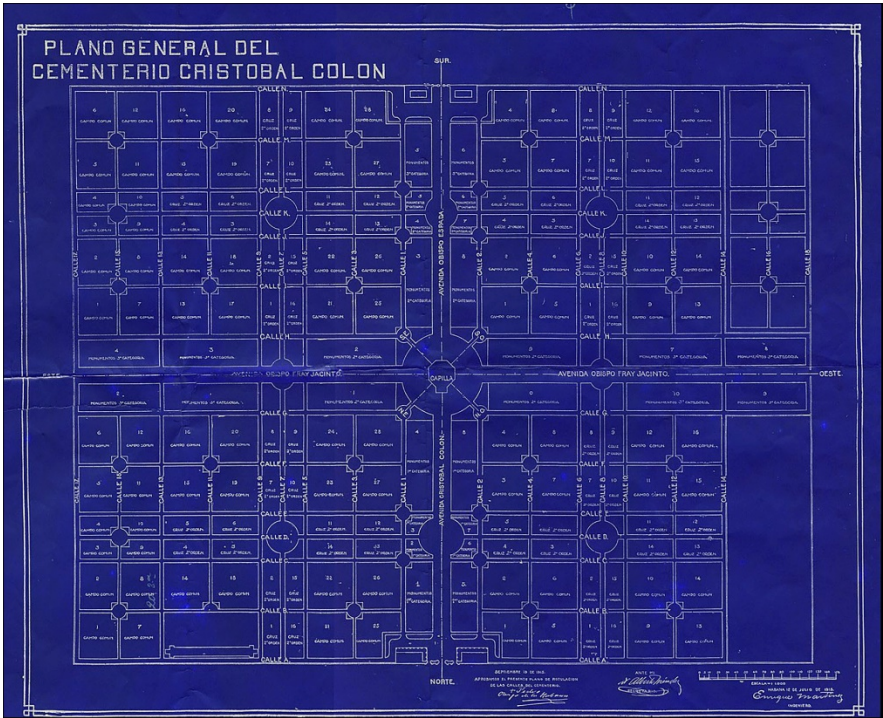


Figure 3. 1915 General Plan of Colon Cemetery, Havana, Cuba (Martinez, 1915).



Figure 4. Main Chapel, Colon Cemetery, Havana, Cuba (Photograph by Author).

Today, Colon Cemetery boasts over 500 mausoleums, chapels, tombs, and family vaults in addition to over 800,000 headstones. There is an array of architectural styles in accord with Keister’s (2004) classifications, including Egyptian Revival (see Figure 5a), Classical Revival (see Figure 5b), Gothic Revival

(see Figure 5c), and Modern Classism (see Figure 5d) (Baker, n.d.; Colón Cemetery, 2020). Sculpture of white Carrara marble, granite, or metals, such as bronze and iron, were commissioned from renowned European masters such as Agustín Querol Subirats, Mariano Benlliure, and Moisés de Huerta y Ayuso from Spain, as well as Raffaello Romanelli, Fese, and Buenoroilami from Italy. In addition, Cuban sculptors, such as Jose Villalta Saavedra, Teodoro Ramos Blanco, Juan José Sicre, and Florencio Gelabert added works reflecting local events and sentiments (Gomez, n.d.).



Figure 5. (From left to right) (a) Egyptian Revival; (b) Classical Revival; (c)Gothic Revival; (d) Modern Classicism – Art Deco (Photographs by Author).

Prominent Citizens. Colon Cemetery is home to founding families of Havana, patriots who parlayed their victories in the War of Independence into becoming statesmen in the new Republic, and prominent businessmen who established Cuba as a player on the world market. A few of these citizens are worth mentioning here, as symbols from their memorials are included in this study. Collectively, this sample characterizes upper-class society in Havana, Cuba in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Jose Miguel Gomez served as President of Cuba 1909-1913. He was well-liked, but his presidency was plagued with corruption. His funeral procession was attended by thousands, resulting in a riot in which one person was killed and many others were injured (Cuba's tribute to a former president, 1921). Legend has it that the door lintel of his tomb (see Figure 6a) is low to force bowed reverence from anyone who enters (*Curiosidades*, n.d.). Other statesmen whose memorials are included in this study are Ricardo Martinez, who served in the Senate and as the Treasurer of Finance at the turn of the 20th century (United States War Department, 1901), Carlos Miguel de Cespedes, who served as the Secretary of Public Works in President Machado's Cabinet (Ross, 2013), Jose Manuel Cortina (see Figure 6b) who was considered one of Cuba's most outstanding orators and diplomats serving on the League of Nations for Cuba in 1927, as well as Cuba's Foreign Minister under both Presidents Gomez and Batista (Jose Manuel Cortina, n.d.) and Severo Moleon y Guerra (see Figure 6c) who served in the House of Representatives from Pino del Rio and who died on the streets of old Havana after a duel with fellow congressman Gen. Sanchez Fuguera (The Munson Steamship Line, 1910).



Figure 6. (From left to right) (a) Tomb of Jose Miguel Gomez (Matteocigars, 2017); (b) Tomb of Jose Manuel Cortina (Matteocigars, 2017); (c) Tomb of Severo Moleon y Guerra (Photographs by Author).

Several local businessmen are also worth mentioning, as symbols from their memorials have also been included in this study. Jose Sarra, pharmacist to the Spanish royal family under King Alfonso XII, is noted for having owned the largest drugstore in Latin America, located in Havana (Jose Sarra, de magnate inmobiliario a magnate farmaceutico en Cuba, 2019). Others include Narciso Gelats y Duvall, founder and president of Banco Gelats (see Figure 7a), Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez (see Figure 7b), best remembered for the charitable work of his family (Santa Cruz, 1940), and Jose F. Matta, director of the Havana School of Architecture, and known as a great admirer of Egyptian design. His death inspired his students to erect a memorial in the form of an Egyptian temple to hold his remains (See Figure 5a) (*Curiosidades*, n.d.). It is also worth mentioning Juan Pedro Boro and Catalina Lasa (see Figure 7d), though they are remembered less for business dealings and more for their scandalous, yet enduring love affair. Catalina was said to have been one of the most beautiful women in Havana society. From the moment they met, they could not be parted, even though they were married with families, making them outcast in Cuban society. They were eventually given an annulment by the Pope and allowed to marry, but only had a few years together before her death. Their love was said to be the purest form of love, but it came with a curse (Coyula, 2013).

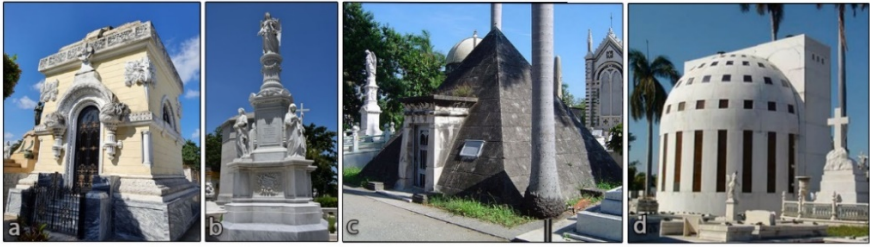


Figure 7. (From left to right) (a) Tomb of Narciso Gelats y Duvall; (b) Monument of Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez (Photographs by Author); (c) Tomb of Jose F. Matta (Moro, 2003); (d) Tomb of Juan Pedro Baro and Catalina Lasa (Catalina Lasa: Home and Mausoleum, 2014).

Civic Monuments. Seamlessly blended into the cemetery's landscape are civic, commemorative monuments, once reserved for public spaces such as parks and plazas. These monuments reflect historical events and national values unique to the city of Havana. They serve to remind visitors that, despite differences, there are common ideals amongst all Cubans. Two of these monuments are described here to give context to the use of their symbols in this study.

The most famous civic monument in Colon Cemetery is the Pantheon of Firefighters, also known as the Firefighters Monument (see Figure 8a). The elaborate, 75-foot tall memorial was erected to the memory of 28 victims of a fire that broke out near the Isasi Y Compania Hardware Store on May 17, 1890. The owner stood by as firefighters entered the flames without warning them that the building contained smuggled arms and ammunition, resulting in an explosion and their deaths. As the nation grieved, the marble monument, designed by architect Julio Zapata and created by Spanish sculptor, Agustin Querol, was erected. All four sides of the base contain medallions carved in the image of each firefighter. The four corners are guarded by figures representing *Sorrow*, *Selflessness*, *Heroism*, and *Martyrdom*. The monument is topped by an angel representing *Justice* cradling the lifeless body of a firefighter as she points to heaven pleading to God for their justice (Leek, 2018; *Monumento de los bomberos*, n.d.; Norton, 1900).

Also, of great importance is the Memorial to the Medical Students. On November 25, 1871, medical students of the University of Havana were accused of desecrating the grave of Gonzalo Castañón in the Espada Cemetery, as the coffin was found scratched. The entire first-year class of 42 students was arrested. Eight students were executed, and the remaining were imprisoned. Twenty years later, it was learned that the scratches on the coffin had been made by masons who were repairing the tomb (Bergantinos, 2009; Norton, 1900). This knowledge filled the people of Cuba with outrage (Bergantinos, 2009). This is reflected in the monument erected to their memory (see Figure 8b). Made of Carrara marble, the obelisk shaft is flanked by *Justice* on the left, with her eyes uncovered, holding a broken sword and unbalanced scales and by *History* on the right, who is pointing to the central figure of *Innocence* coming out of the darkness bearing a scroll declaring *Truth*. Cuban sculptor José Vilalta Saavedra successfully conveys the triumph of truth over injustice (Bergantinos, 2009; Norton, 1900).

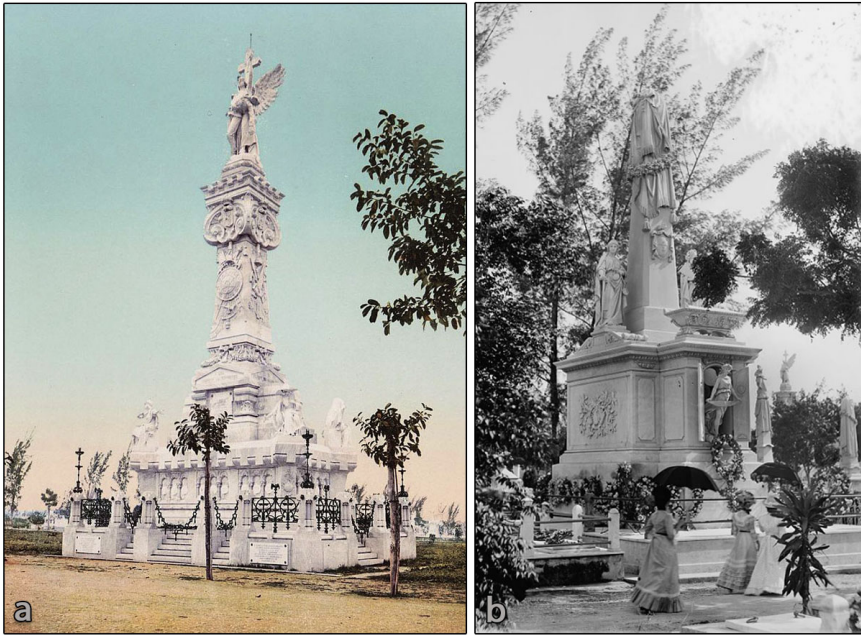


Figure 8. (From left to right) (a) Pantheon of Firefighters (Library of Congress, n.d.); (b) Memorial to Medical Students (Detroit Photographic Company (0987).jpg., 2009).

In addition to these examples of prominent citizens and civic memorials, there are many unique sites not represented in this study, but failure to mention them is to remove cultural flavor needed to fully appreciate Colon Cemetery. These include memorials dedicated to specific organizations, to baseball players, a chess champion, an avid domino player, a loyal dog, and a remarkable number of poets, filmmakers, and musicians (Colon Cemetery, 2020). Included here is the most visited site at Colon Cemetery, that of Señora Amelia Goyri, better known as *La Milagrosa - The Miraculous* (see Figure 9) created by Cuban sculptor José Vilalta y Saavedra (*Curiosidades*, n.d.). Señora Goyri died in childbirth in May 1901. Legend has it that her baby was buried at her feet, but when the grave was later exhumed, the baby was found in her arms, both bodies perfectly preserved. The grave attracts thousands of visitors every year seeking healing or a blessing (Colon Cemetery, 2020).

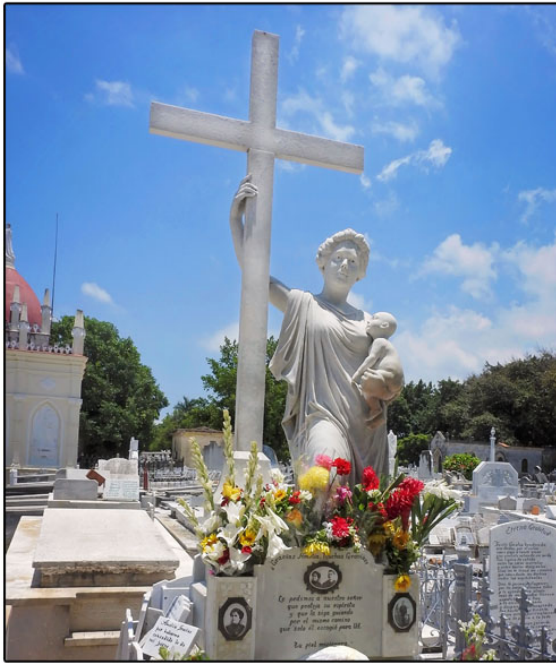


Figure 9. La Milagrosa - The Miraculous (Photograph by Frank Hellwig).

Challenges. Sadly, the story of Colon Cemetery cannot be told without mention of its notorious problem with overcrowding, resulting from over a million internments. Simply, there are more bodies than space. All burial sites are leased and must be renewed continually to remain in place. If a lease lapses, the remains are disinterred to make room for others. In the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, the bones were disposed in an open bone yard, as seen in postcards from the 1890s (see figure 10). Today, there is an effort to box up remains to be stored, but there are numerous reports of remains being dumped into mass graves (Patowary, 2018). In communist Cuba, the average Cuban family cannot afford to keep their loved ones interred. In addition, some plots and mausoleums are resold on the Cuban black market as a means of survival. A tomb in good condition can fetch up to \$2,000 (USD), which is equivalent to eight years of salary in Cuba. While some of these sales are legitimate, many are fraudulent on tombs that appear to be abandoned (Tombstone tourism: Cementerio de Cristobal Colon, Havana, 2017).



Figure 10. The Bone Yard (Patowary, 2018).

In addition, many chapels and mausoleums on side paths are poorly maintained and, at times, empty of their former inhabitants (Cities of the Dead, 2016). In parallel with the city of Havana, there is a general lack of materials and financing for basic maintenance, but local family members tend to keep burial plots and tombs tidy. But numerous mausoleums and plots have no one to sustain basic upkeep, as the descendants fled Cuba due to the 1959 Revolution. Some exiled families have connections in Havana to help with small tasks, such as placing flowers on a tomb, whereas others have sent large sums of money to protect their ancestors' resting place from being disturbed, or to make small repairs. Unfortunately, most family tombs of Cuban exiles suffer major neglect and vandalism. There is no indication that the government wishes Colon Cemetery to be in such a state, but with very little money and materials available for repairs, restoration priority is given to the main grand avenues and the sites of national heroes (Nyka-Niliunas, 2005).

These challenges symbolize the importance of documenting all aspects of Colon Cemetery before it is too late. With the deterioration of monuments, the lack of materials and funding for sustainable preservation, and the loss of original ownerships, these invaluable pieces of architecture, art, and social culture are endangered.

Results

The purpose of this study was to document and interpret symbolic imagery found within the grounds of Colon Cemetery. Symbols are often mystifying, especially to modern generations with different values. Meanings change and evolve with generations (Keister, 2004) and locations. For this reason, the following findings serve as a guide for those attempting to interpret the symbolic imagery in Colon Cemetery.

Symbolism through Flora

Different forms of flora are used on memorials throughout Colon Cemetery, each having a unique message to share. It is common to find seed pods and buds on memorials for children and youth to indicate that life ended before it began (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Wilted flowers, as well as broken or drooping stems, symbolize the fragility of youth. A severed stem symbolizes a life cut short, whereas fully bloomed flowers represents a person who was in the full bloom of life at the time of their death. This usually meant that the deceased was in their twenties (Snider, 2017). When flora is presented in a garland or wreath, it tells the viewer that there was victory over death through eternal memory and immortality (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017). The following is a limited selection of specific examples of flora found in Colon Cemetery and their meanings:

Acanthus leaf. The acanthus leaf has been a popular architectural motif since ancient civilizations. Its common use as a decorative motif makes it easily overlooked (Snider, 2017). When found in cemetery memorials, it symbolizes the prickly journey from life to death (Keister, 2014), and one of possible suffering (Norman & Kneale, 2020), yet one with a final triumph of eternal life (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020). Figure 11a is an example of an acanthus leaf found on the Firefighter's Monument. Placed into this context, it is understandable that the people of Havana would want everyone to remember that these men faced a hard death with suffering.

Bellflower. Bellflower, which gets its name from its shape, is a symbol for constant gratitude (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powers-Douglas, 2016). Figure 11b was documented on the monument of the Lauderman family, indicating the family's constant gratitude to God, even when facing death.

Dogwood. Dogwood is a symbol of Christianity. In addition, it further signifies the divine sacrifice of Christ and the triumph of the resurrection and eternal life (Powers-Douglas, 2016). Figure 11c is an example of dogwood found at the feet of Christ on the monument dedicated to the Del Valle family. Beside the flowers is an inscription that translates to "*I am the resurrection and the life.*"

Easter lily. The Easter lily is a symbol of purity, innocence, and chastity. In a cemetery it conveys the soul's ability to cast off earthly things and return to the state of purity and innocence in the afterlife (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 11d was found on the Francisco B. Del Calvo plot showing St. Anthony of Padua who is holding baby Jesus along with an Easter lily to signify Christ's purity and innocence (Snider, 2017).



Figure 11. (From left to right) (a) Acanthus Leaf; (b) Bellflower; (c) Dogwood; (d) Easter Lily (Photographs by Author).

Ivy. Ivy leaves have several meanings, but they fall into two broad categories: immortality and attachment. First, being an evergreen, ivy remains green in the harshest conditions, thus symbolizing immortality, fidelity, and rebirth (Keister, 2004; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). Secondly, because of its nature to cling to things (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020), ivy symbolizes everlasting love, eternal friendship, undying affection, and remembrance (Keister, 2004; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). Finally, the three-pointed leaves also make ivy a symbol for the Trinity (Keister, 2004). Figure 12a demonstrates a garland of ivy found on the Jose Galan y Alonso monument. In this example, the ivy is a symbol that the deceased are remembered with undying affection by the living.

Laurel. When used in cemetery art, laurel leaves symbolize eternal life, victory, and chastity. Its connection to immortality comes from the fact that its leaves are slow to decay. Its link to victory relates to the ancient Roman tradition of using laurel leaves to crown triumphant winners. Its connection to chastity, also comes from the ancient Romans, as it was the botanical attribute to the vestal virgins (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 12b shows a garland of laurel wrapping around a figured medallion on the monument erected to the memory of Congressman Severo Moleon y Guerra by the people of Cuba in 1910. The symbol indicates eternal life for the departed.

Lotus. The lotus flower gets its meaning from the fact that it opens with the sunrise and closes with the sunset (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). In Egyptian mythology, the lotus symbolizes creation, rebirth, and mortality (Keister, 2004). Christian symbolism further connects it with the resurrection and the afterlife (Snider, 2017). Figure 12c illustrates a lotus flower found on the gate to the Egyptian Revival tomb of Jose F. Mata, signifying that the deceased believed in life after death.

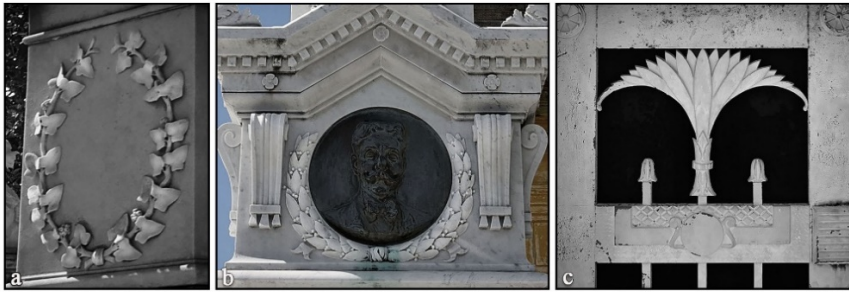


Figure 12. (From left to right) (a) Garland of Ivy; (b) Garland of Laurel Leaves; (c) Lotus Flower (Photographs by Author).

Oak leaves. Oak leaves have many meanings, but most evolve around the power and strength achieved through patience, endurance, and faith (Keister, 2004; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). Combined, these elements make the oak a symbol of powerful Christian beliefs (Keister, 2004). Figure 13, taken from the Firefighters Monument, shows a festoon of oak leaves on the left, as well as oak leaves in the background on the right.

Olive branch. The most common meaning of the olive branch is that of peace (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). This also signifies the additional meanings of fruitfulness, victory, strength, and purification (Keister, 2004). In addition, the ancient Greeks believed that olive branches warded off evil spirits (Snider, 2017). Figure 13 also shows olive leaves opposite the oak leaves, specifically in the festoon on the right and the background on the left. Together, this motif represents strength in the faith that there is victory over death for these firefighters, while also warding off evil spirits.



Figure 13. Oak and Olive leaves. (Photograph by Author).

Palm branch. The palm was used by the Romans to symbolize victory (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Snider, 2017). Christians adapted this to further mean victory over death with a reward of eternal peace (Keister, 2004; Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017). When placed in the hand of a saint, it symbolizes martyrdom (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 14a shows a royal orb in front of

a palm branch. This example, found on the Firefighters Monument, conveys to the viewer that the firemen who lost their lives were martyrs.

Poppy. The poppy is directly linked with sleep (Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017); thus, implying that death is an eternal sleep (Norman & Kneale, 2020). Figure 14b shows poppy flowers found on the Monument of Banker, Narciso Gelats Duvall, while Figure 14c shows a garland of poppy seeds found on the Firefighters Monument. The flowers represent death in the bloom of life; whereas the seeds represent the firefighters, killed in their youth, before their lives reach full bloom (I. Bergantinos, personal communication, May 15, 2020).



Figure 14. (From left to right) (a) Palm Branch; (b) Poppy Flowers; (c) Garland of Poppy seeds (Photographs by Author).

Roses. In general, roses represent perfection and are shown without thorns (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 15a shows festoons of roses found on the shaft of the Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez Monument, indicating the family's belief in the perfection of God's plan. More unique to Havana, Juan Pedro Baro had a rose with pinkish-yellow petals grafted and named for Catalina Lasa as a symbol of his undying love. Upon her death, he built her an art deco chapel, designed by Rene Lalique, using this rose motif on the doors (see Figure 15b) and windows. As the sun's rays poured into the chapel windows, it is said that roses are project throughout the interior, surrounded her with this symbol in her death (*Curiosidades*, n.d.).



Figure 15. (From left to right) (a) Festoon of Roses (b) Catalina Lasa Rose (Photographs by Author).

Symbolism through Angels, Saints, and Other Living Beings

Figures in the forms of angels, saints, and other living beings are found throughout Colon Cemetery. The closer one looks at these figures, the more the viewer understands the message being communicated. For instance, a figure with arms reaching out is pleading for God's mercy and forgiveness (Snider, 2017); a hand pointing upward indicates that the deceased has gone to heaven (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017), whereas, a hand pointing down symbolizes that the person died unexpectedly (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Snider, 2017), in which case God is reaching down for the soul (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powell, 2019). Flowing, loose hair indicates an act of penance (Snider, 2017). The following is a limited selection of specific examples of angels, saints, and other living beings found in Colon Cemetery along with their meanings:

Angels. Angels are God's messengers to the living. There are many angels of the generic variety in Colon Cemetery, but some clues may tell us their purpose. A weeping angel, like the one on the Malpica family monument (see Figure 16a), symbolizes grief and sorrow of an untimely death (Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). An angel holding a wreath (see Figure 16b), as seen on the Pantheon of Prelates, lets the viewer know that the deceased will not be forgotten. When an angel rests its hand upon its chest (see Figure 16c), as seen at the family mausoleum of Jose Manuel Cortina, it is symbolic for the divine wisdom of God. A guardian angel may also be placed at a tomb for protection (Powell, 2019) like the one seen in Figure 16d guarding the entrance of the tomb built for the Aspuru Family. It is important to note that images taken of this mausoleum after 2015 show the family name replaced with that of the Alfonso Family.



Figure 16. (From left to right) (a) Weeping Angel; (b) Angel Holding Garland; (c) Angel Touching her Chest; (d) Guardian Angel (Photographs by Author and Frank Hellwig).

At times the angels in Colon Cemetery reveal clues telling us who they are. For instance, the angel *Gabriel*, found on the Pedro Holasco Abreu y Jimenez monument (see Figure 17a), carries a horn to announce the return of Christ. The angel found on the Monument of past Cuban president (1909–1913), Jose Miguel Gomez (see Figure 17b), is an archangel and might be that of *Michael*, who is always seen with his sword (Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). The angel found on top of the Firefighters Monument (see Figure 17c) represents *Justice*, as evidenced by her blindfold.



Figure 17. (From left to right) (a) Gabriel; (b) Michael; (c) Justice (Photographs by Author).

Bat. Bats are rare symbols, historically known to represent the mysterious workings of the underworld (Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017). In Colon Cemetery, they surround the Firefighters Monument (see Figure 18a) representing the betrayal which led to the firefighters' deaths (I. Bergantinos, personal communication, May 15, 2020).

Cherubs. Cherubs, commonly found on the headstones of children (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020), symbolize innocence (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Snider, 2017). The example in Figure 18b was found on the monument dedicated to the family of Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez, whose family is renowned for their charitable works.



Figure 18. (From left to right) (a) Bat; (b) Cherub (Photographs by Author).

Faith. *Faith* is depicted as a woman leaning on a cross, sometimes holding a chalice or candle (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 19a shows *Faith* standing on the right side of the monument, holding a cross and a chalice. This example was found on the monument dedicated to the family of Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez.

Hope. *Hope* is represented as a woman with an anchor at her side. Anchors have long been a symbol of hope in the Christian faith (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Also found in Figure 19a, *Hope* is represented left of the monument with her foot on the anchor. Not shown with *Hope* and *Faith* are two additional figures on the backside of the monument representing *Eternity* and the *Holy Spirit* (I. Bergantinos, personal communication, May 21, 2020).

Hands, clasped. Clasped hands are typically a symbol for eternal love or eternal friendship (*Cemetery symbolism*, n.d.). Look closely at the sleeves to determine the gender of the two people clasping hands. If one is male and the other female, the couple is married and the handshake is a final earthly farewell (Keister, 2004; Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017), or the deceased guiding their spouse to heaven (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powers-Douglas, 2016). If both hands are male, the clasped hands symbolize a fraternal brotherhood (Snider, 2017). If the fingers of one hand is limp while the other has a firm grip, the motif symbolizes God or loved ones welcoming the new soul to heaven (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). The example in Figure 19b, found on the Luisa Vicente Hernandez monument, appears to be a limp female hand on the left and a gripping male hand on the right. The epitaph “my unforgettable” implies that her husband is alive at her death; therefore, the male hand is that of God guiding her to heaven (Powers-Douglas, 2016).



Figure 19. (From left to right) (a) Hope and Faith; (b) Clasped Hands (Photographs by Author).

Pelican. An ancient legend stated that a mother pelican would wound itself to feed its young from its own flesh and blood. This story came to symbolize self-sacrifice. Christians use the pelican to represent Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powers-Douglas, 2016; Snider, 2017). The example in Figure 20 shows a nun with a mother pelican and her two babies. The sculpture, referred to as *Selflessness*, is found on the Firefighters Monument (I. Bergantinos, personal communication, July 11, 2017). It is used to demonstrate the selflessness of the firefighters who gave their lives in duty to their community.



Figure 20. Pelican (Photographs by Author).

Symbolism of Mortality

Symbols of mortality were used on tombs and monuments to remind the living that life is fleeting, and death comes to us all. They were also used to further convey to the living that death is not a bad thing because there is victory in joining God in the Kingdom of Heaven (Keister, 2004). The following is a limited selection of specific examples of symbols of mortality found in Colon Cemetery:

Arch. An arch is used to symbolize the entrance to heaven (Norman & Kneale, 2020) and to express to those living that the deceased has found victory in death (Powers-Douglas, 2016). Figure 21a demonstrates a Roman arch on the cupola of the Entenza family tomb.

Book. Books have multiple meanings when found in a cemetery. Any book can symbolize the Bible or signify that the deceased was a priest, nun, or teacher. Furthermore, a closed book symbolizes a completed life. An open book, in turn could symbolize a life cut short, before reaching the last page. An open book with writing could also symbolize that the deceased has entered into the *Book of Life* (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). The example shown in Figure 21b, an open book with writing, is from the memorial of pharmacist Jose F. Sarra.



Figure 21. (From left to right) (a) Arch; (b) Open Book (Photographs by Author).

Chain. A chain symbolizes truth. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that a chain bound the soul to the body and that broken links symbolized a release of the spirit from the body (Powers-Douglas, 2016). Figure 22a is located around the Firefighters Monument and indicates that the truth of betrayal is known to all.

Coffin. A coffin symbolizes death (Snider, 2017). In the image shown in Figure 22b, the coffin is dripping with numerous rich embellishments including acanthus leaves, garlands of laurel, a festoon of flowers, a fringed, draping mantle, and a central cartouche. It is found on the monument dedicated to the family of the Count of Mortera, Ramon de Herrera and San Cibrian.

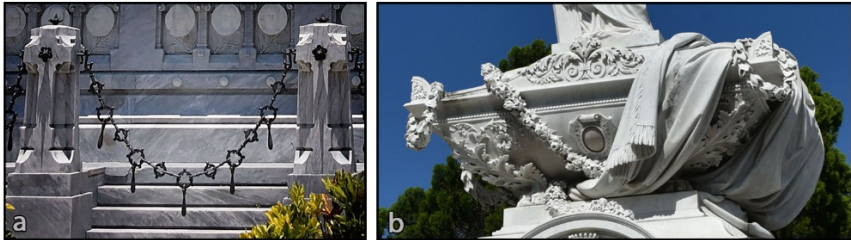


Figure 22. (From left to right) (a) Chain; (b) Draped Coffin (Photographs by Author).

Column, broken. In a cemetery, a person's life might be represented by a column (Norman & Kneale, 2020). If the column is broken, it is a symbol of a life cut short (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017), as represented in Figure 23a on a monument to the Centuron family. The garland over the column further signifies victory over death (Norman & Kneale, 2020).

Draped veil. A veil, sometimes referred to as a mantle, symbolizes the deceased passage from one world to another. It is meant to both conceal and protect the dead (Keister, 2004). When it has fringe on the edges, it symbolizes the veil between life and death. No fringe indicated that earthly garments have been cast aside (Snider, 2017). Figure 23b shows the monument dedicated to Congressman Severo Moleon

y Guerra depicting a fringed veil draping over an obelisk held in place by a garland of flowers, further indicating protections on death's journey and victory in eternal life.

Flame. Flames found in cemeteries represent eternal life and eternal vigilance (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). The example shown in Figure 23c is found on the wall surrounding the Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez monument indicating the family religious fervor.



Figure 23. (From left to right) (a) Broken Column; (b) Draped Obelisk; (c) Flaming Urn (Photographs by Author).

Globe, winged. Originally an Egyptian symbol of protection representing the sun god *Ra* with vulture wings (Norman & Kneale, 2020; Snider, 2017), the winged globe symbolizes the life-giving power of the sun and the spirituality of the heavens (Powers-Douglas, 2016). In Figure 24a a Victorian version of this symbol is located on the coffin carved onto the monument dedicated to the family of pharmacist Jose F. Sarra, indicating protections on the journey to heaven.

Hourglass, winged. An hourglass reminds the living that our time on earth is limited (Snider, 2017). The wings are a further reminder that time is passing rapidly and will run out on each of us (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020). Figure 24b shows an example of a winged hourglass located on the gates of the Firefighters Monument.

Obelisk. In historic cemeteries one often finds an obelisk occupying the center of a family plot where it represents the family's connection to God. In addition, obelisk symbolizes power and strength. The pointed tip represents a ray of sunlight connecting heaven to those on earth. Figure 24c demonstrates an obelisk, covered with a draping mantle and a crown of flowers, located on the Monument of the Medical Students.

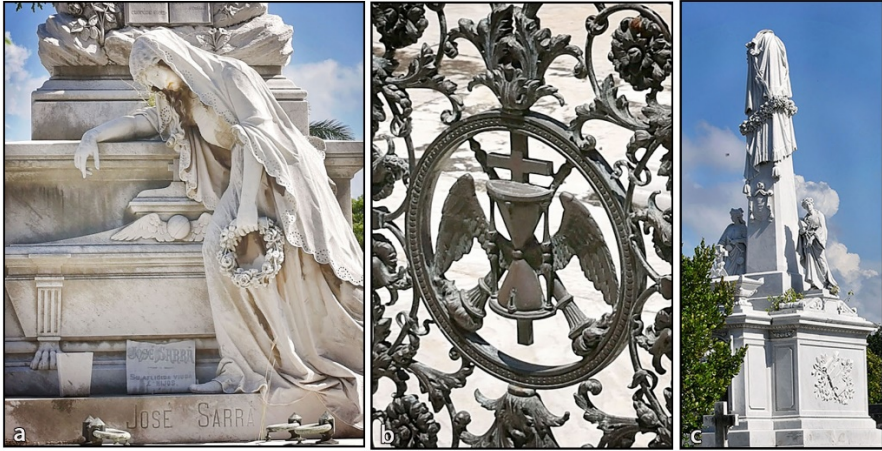


Figure 24. (From left to right) (a) Winged Globe; (b) Winged Hourglass; (c) Draped Obelisk (Photographs by Author).

Scythe. A scythe is a tool used to harvest a plant in the prime of its life. As cemetery art, it conveys *Death* as the harvester of souls and reminds the living to expect and prepare for it (Cemetery Symbolism, n.d.). In Figure 25a, a scythe is located as a part of a trophy carved into a panel on the Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez monument, along with a Latin cross, a book, and foliage.

Teardrops. Teardrops symbolize grief. Figure 25b shows examples of teardrops hanging from a chain located around the Firefighters Monument. They represent the grief experienced by all of Havana for those who lost their lives in the line of duty (Leek, 2018).

Torch, inverted. The symbol of the inverted torch is a direct reference to death. Most examples show the flame still burning to indicate that the soul continues to burn in the next realm. The inverted torch with no flame simply implies that life has been extinguished (Keister, 2004; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). Figure 25c, found on the fence around the Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez monument, has a flame that continues to burn.



Figure 25. (From left to right) (a) Trophy with Scythe Motif; (b) Tear Drops; (c) Inverted Torch (Photographs by Author).

Urn. Urns are a common symbol reminding the living that our bodies turn to ash and dust with death, but the soul ascends to heaven. Urns are commonly found with other symbols such as garlands, flames, and draped fabric (Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017). The urn in Figure 26a sits atop a draped obelisk and has a flame burning from it indicating that the soul continues to burn for God, though the body is gone.

Wings. Wings symbolize the Holy Spirit (Snider, 2017) and the soul's ascent to heaven (Keister, 2004). Figure 26b, found on the Firefighters Monument, shows wings flanking the Spanish Coat of Arms. It is another reminder that the souls of the firefighters, who were Spanish colonial subjects, have ascended to heaven.

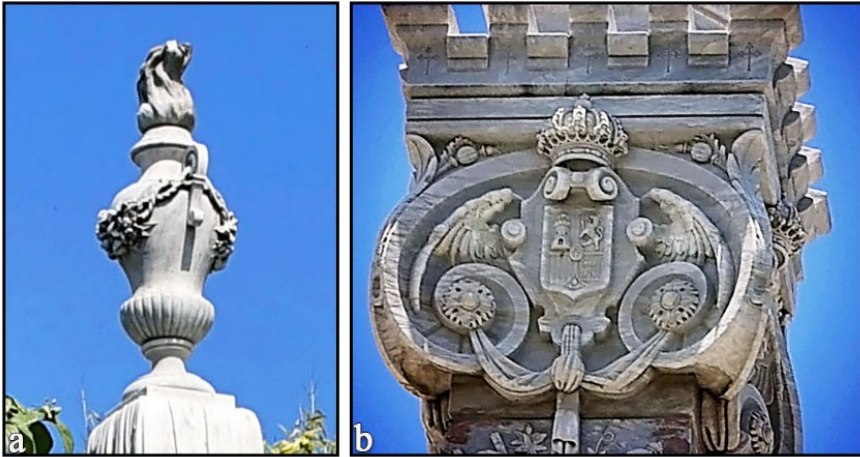


Figure 26. (From left to right) (a) Flaming Urn; (b) Wings (Photographs by Author).

Symbolism of Religious Devotion

Most symbols in a cemetery are connected to religious meaning, even when they have secular or pagan origins, but some symbols are overwhelmingly religion specific. Catholicism is directly reflected in the documented symbols of religious devotion. The following is a limited selection of examples of symbolism of religious devotion found in the Colon Cemetery:

Anchor. While anchors sometimes appear on the graves of sailors, more frequently in the Christian faith, the anchor is a symbol of hope and steadfastness (Cemetery Symbolism, n.d.; Keister, 2004; Norman & Kneale, 2020; Powell, 2019). It was also believed to have been a secret symbol for persecuted Christians (Powell, 2019; Snider, 2017), as the top of the anchor forms a cross. Figure 27a shows an anchor tied to a rustic cross on the monument dedicated to the family of pharmacist Jose F. Sarra, indicating the deceased's unwavering hope and faith.

Chalice. The chalice is one of the most powerful symbols in Christianity as it symbolizes the human heart's yearning to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Keister, 2004). The example shown in Figure 27b shows a chalice held by *Faith*, located on the monument dedicated to the family of Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez.



Figure 27. (From left to right) (a) Anchor; (b) Chalice (Photographs by Author).

Cross. Crosses in cemeteries come in many different variations (Snider, 2017) but there are three distinct forms that all others evolve from: the Greek Cross, the Latin Cross, and the Celtic Cross (Keister, 2004). Meanings and additional variations of crosses found in Colon Cemetery are as follows:

Greek Cross. Shaped like a plus sign, the Greek Cross symbolizes the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire (Snider, 2017). Figure 28a shows a Greek Cross carved onto the monument erected in honor of Congressman Severo Moleon y Guerra.

Latin Cross. Shaped like the letter T, the Latin Cross symbolizes Christ as the risen savior (Snider, 2017). Figure 28b demonstrates a finial in the shape of a Latin Cross on top of the Entenza family mausoleum.

Botonee Cross. Shaped like a Latin Cross with trefoils on the ends of the arms, the Botonee Cross symbolizes the Holy Trinity (Snider, 2017). Figure 28c is an example of an elaborate Botonee Cross in honor of D. Leopoldo de Sola y Iradi.

Glory Cross. Depicted with rays radiating from the center, the Glory Cross symbolizes God's glory (Snider, 2017). A Glory cross can be seen on the art deco gate of the Carlos Miguel y Cespedes tomb (see Figure 28d).

Ionic Cross. Shaped like a Latin Cross with the arms flare out (Snider, 2017), the Ionic Cross symbolizes salvation, love, and glory (Symbols on headstones and their meanings, 2020). Figure 28e demonstrates an Ionic Cross with carved flora dedicated to Salvador Guedes.



Figure 28. (From left to right) (a) Greek Cross; (b) Latin Cross; (c) Botonee Cross; (d) Glory Cross; (e) Ionic Cross (Photographs by Author).

Heart. The heart depicts love and devotion (Snider, 2017). Two variations of the heart were found in the Colon Cemetery:

Flaming Heart. The flaming heart conveys that the departed soul continues to burn with devotion and religious zeal in their eternal life (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 29a shows a heart topped with a flame at the center of a glory cross located on the gate of the Carlos Miguel y Cespedes tomb.

Sacred Heart with Rays of God's Glory. The sacred heart resembles a flaming heart with thorns. It is a Catholic symbol representing the suffering of Christ (Whittington, 2017). The flame in this symbol conveys that the departed soul continues to burn with religious zeal. The thorns are a reminder that Christ died for their sins. The rays emanating from the center symbolize God's glory (Keister, 2004; Snider, 2017). Figure 29b shows the sacred heart with rays of God's glory on the chest of a sculpture of Christ.

Lazarus. Images of St. Lazarus depict an old man on crutches dressed in rags with sores covering his legs, often surrounded by a pack of stray dogs. This symbol is an example of Catholic beliefs mixed with Afro-Cuban Santeria. It symbolizes humility, misery, and sorrow (Cribeiro, 2014). Figure 29c is found on the headstone of Ibrahim Ferrer, known internationally for his work with the Buena Vista Social Club.



Figure 29. (From left to right) (a) Flaming Heart; (b) Sacred Heart with Rays of God's Glory; (c) Lazarus (Photographs by Author and Frank Hellwig).

Mary. Mary is depicted many ways in cemetery art. The two most common shows her holding baby Jesus to symbolize her role as the *Mother of Christ*, and cradling Christ's body after being removed from the cross depicting her as the *Mother of Sorrows* (Snider, 2017). Figure 30a, found on the monument honoring the family of Ricardo Martinez, not only shows Mary holding Christ as a baby, but leading three sailors in a boat from the stormy seas. In this allegory, Mary is known as *Our Lady of Charity* and the Patron Saint of Cuba (Bucuvalas, Bulger, & Kennedy, 1994). To Cubans it symbolizes hope and salvation in the face of misfortune (Walker, 2020). Figure 30b, found on the Miguel Gonzalez de Mendoza y Pedrosa monument, is an example of sculpture representing Mary holding the dead body of Christ, inspired by original work of Michelangelo Buonarroti entitled *Pietà* "The Pity."



Figure 30. (From left to right) (a) Mary, Mother of Christ; (b) Mary, Mother of Sorrows (Photographs by Frank Hellwig).

Quatrefoil. A quatrefoil is an ornamental design of four lobes. When used in cemetery art, it symbolizes the four apostles (Norman & Kneale, 2020). Figure 31a shows a Gothic Revival mausoleum using the quatrefoil as both ornamentation and as the opening in the center of a bas-relief rose window. The use of this symbol indicates the deceased faith.

Sun. The sun shown as rising symbolizes the resurrection in the afterlife. The sun depicted as setting represents death. In addition, the sun shining brightly reminds the living of everlasting life (Cemetery Symbolism, n.d.). Figure 31b shows the sun shining brightly on the gate into the Ledon family burial plot.

Trefoil. A trefoil is an ornamental design of three lobes. Each lobe symbolizes each part of the trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Figure 31c shows an opening shaped like a trefoil on the Gothic Revival memorial of the Del Calvo family. The use of this symbol indicates the deceased faith.



Figure 31. (From left to right) (a) Quatrefoil; (b) Sun; (c) Trefoil (Photographs by Author).

Discussion

Using visual anthropology through photographic documentation, this study preserves a glimpse into the mindset of Cuban culture through symbology found in Colon Cemetery. Patterns within these meanings revealed clues that convey who the deceased were and what they believed in collectively, and in some cases individually.

Constructed under Spanish rule, Colon Cemetery's symbology exudes religious fervor encouraged by the Catholic Church and present in the religious practices of Havana up to 1961. Catholic symbols and allegories prevail throughout the cemetery, reinforcing the ethical and religious beliefs rooted in the psychology of the deceased and their loved ones. Themes such as angels, saints, and the crucifixion capture a perfection only found in the afterlife (Gomez, n.d.). Through these symbols, we know that this society was highly influenced by its Spanish origins and grounded in Catholicism. This religious fervor conveys a belief in an afterlife, as well as a merciful God.

On some level, the symbology found in Colon Cemetery is reflective of the religious fervor found in any Victorian Catholic cemetery, though there are hints of Santeria beliefs, a religion practiced by Afro-Cubans, if one looks close enough. This is evidenced at the grave of Ibrahim Ferrer which depicts the image of *Lazarus*, known as *Bablu-Aye* to those who practice Santeria. It is a perfect example of how the two Cuban religions bled together into one belief. Unfortunately, these examples are sparse within this study because the practice of Santeria was not popular in the Spanish upper class who were the ones that could afford elaborate monuments covered in symbology.

Even with the emphasis on Catholic symbols throughout Colon Cemetery, we see a shift in cultural values with the integration of pagan symbology. The cross and angels are replaced by an obelisk, truncated column, or pyramid. Even though these symbols, originated from ancient pagan symbols found in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, they have evolved to assimilate with the prevailing Christian beliefs and have been given Christian meanings. An example is the *Winged Globe* found on the monument dedicated to the family of pharmacist Jose F. Sarra. It originally symbolized protection from the sun god *Ra*, but we see the meaning evolved to convey the power of the Christian God from the heavens.

Historically, Cubans are known for being a superstitious culture full of legends and folklore. Many symbols documented in Colon Cemetery reinforce this, whether it is a hand to guide the deceased to heaven, like found on the monument to Luisa Vicente Hernandez, the use of a draped veil meant to protect the deceased on their journey, as seen over the coffin-shaped monument of the Count of Mortera, Ramon de Herrera and San Cibrian, or the use of olive branches to ward off evil spirits, as seen on the on the Fireman's Memorial. Unique to Cuba is the legend of Cuba's patron saint, lovingly referred to as *Cachita*. In this legend, a figurine of the Virgin Mary rescued three Cuban sailors from the stormy seas (Bucuvalas, Bulger, & Kennedy, 1994). As seen on the monument to the family of Ricardo Martinez, *Cachita* is present to give hope and guide the deceased through the potentially turbulent journey from the living to the dead. There is also evidence within the cemetery of popular legends and myths evolving into new forms of worship and ritual. The most prominent example of this can be found in the grave of *La Milagrosa*, who is said to have healing powers. Believers knock three times on the tombstone with a brass ring before asking a favor. When departing, it is important to never turn your back on the tomb (Baker, n.d.).

Transcending love and devotion are also evidenced through symbolism found in Colon Cemetery, whether we consider the pyramid tomb built for Jose F. Mata by his dedicated students or the representation of a woman weeping over the monument to Josa F. Sarra. But no tomb exhibits dedicated love more than the one built by Juan Pedro Baro for his love Catalina Lasa. Their love story is a legend in Cuba and is exhibited in this Art Deco tomb which replicates the Catalina Lasa rose motif to surround Catalina in death. In addition, it is said that Baro was buried in an upright position to watch over her body (*Curiosidades*, n.d.).

National events deemed unjust bring Cubans together to both mourn and remember. This is evidenced in the national memorials found within Colon Cemetery. These monuments reflect the historical events and national values unique to the city of Havana. This is especially evidenced in both the Pantheon of Firefighters and the Monument to the Medicine Students. Both drip with symbology reflecting both Christian and pagan iconography to recant the story of betrayal and innocence. Their stories and the sentiments behind them make them unique symbols to Havana. In addition, we see in the Pantheon of Firefighters the integration of the Bat symbol to represent betrayal. Though used to symbolize darkness and the underworld historically, this specific interpretation appears unique to this memorial.

Today, there is evidence of history rewriting itself under the Castro administration, as monuments to early Cubans, especially those whose families are in exile, deteriorate and are vandalized, while emphasis is place on the country's new national heroes. There is also evidence in Colon Cemetery of the desperation and poverty found in Cuban society, as family tombs and those of exiled Cubans are sold for survival. Vandalism and robbery are not uncommon. At the time of this photographic documentary, the tomb of Juan Pedro Baro and Catalina Lasa had just been desecrated (see Figure 32) in search of jewels rumored to have been buried with Catalina.



Figure 32. Desecrated Tomb of Catalina Lasa (Photograph by Author).

Conclusion

At first glance, documentation in symbolism inside the Colon Cemetery looks reminiscent of other Victorian cemeteries around the world. A closer look reveals clues to the story of Cuba ... of its Spanish Colonial past, its War of Independence heroes turned statesmen to guide the country into a republic, a stratified class of citizens where the wealthy remain memorialized in stone, historical events that enraged the country and brought everyone together, love stories that transcend time and death, popular architectural trends that parallel the city of Havana, superstitions, revolution, poverty, desperation, and national pride. It is all there, if one takes time to look past the surface.

This study serves a guide to anyone who wants to interpret symbology found within this city of the dead, Colon Cemetery. It opens the door to future studies on specific families and tombs. Most importantly, it visually preserves the symbology found on architecture and monuments within Colon Cemetery. A map of Colon Cemetery published by *Habana Radio* (see Figure 33) shows the cemetery broken into coordinates (Alfonso, 2019). All images of symbolism used in this study were placed into a table (see Table 1) to correspond with this map for those wishing to experience the symbolism of Colon Cemetery for themselves. Each entry in the legend tells the name of the memorial where it was found and the section of the cemetery where it is located.

Like the dichotomy of the city it serves, for every memorial in Colon Cemetery that is carefully tended, another is in danger of complete loss. This risk intensifies the need to study and record this priceless anthology and to build awareness to prevent further archeological losses.

Angel of Protection	Aspuru family	NE 4Z1
Angel, Gabriel	Pedro Holasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Angel, Michael	Jose Miguel Gomez	NO 8Z1
Angel, Justice	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Bat	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Cherub	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Faith	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Hope	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Hands, Clasped	Luisa Vicente Hernandez	NE 13C2
Pelican	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Symbols of Death		
Symbol	Memorial	Location
Arch	Entenza family	NE Plaza
Book	Jose Sarra	NE 12C2
Chain	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Coffin	Condes de Mortera- Ramon de Herrera and San Cibrian	NE 1Z1
Column, Broken	Centuron family	NE 26CC
Draped Veil	Severo Moleon y Guerra	NE1Z1
Flame	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Globe, Winged	Jose F. Sarra	NE 12C2
Hourglass, Winged	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Obelisk, Draped	Monument to Medical Students	NE 13C2
Scythe	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Tear Drops	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Torch, Inverted	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Urn	Unknown	NE Plaza
Wings	Pantheon of Firefighters	NO 8Z1
Symbols of Religious Devotion		
Symbol	Memorial	Location
Anchor	Jose F. Sarra	NE 12C2
Chalice	Pedro Nolasco Abreu y Jimenez	NO 5Z1
Cross, Greek	Severo Moleon y Guerra	NE1Z1
Cross, Latin	Entenza family	NE Plaza
Cross, Botonee	D. Leopoldo de Sola y Iradi	NE 4Z1
Cross, Glory	Carlos Miguel y Cespedes	NO 8Z1
Cross, Ionic	Salvador Guedes	NE 1Z1
Heart, Flaming	Carlos Miguel y Cespedes	NO 8Z1
Heart, Sacred	Unknown	NE 1Z1
Lazarus	Ibrahim Ferrer	NO 8Z1
Mary, Mother of Christ	Ricardo Martinez	SO
Mary, Mother of Sorrows	Miguel Gonzales. de Mendoza y Pedrosa	NO 7Z1
Quatrefoil	Unknown	NE 4Z1
Sun	Godinez Ledon family	SE
Trefoil	Del Calvo family	NO 5Z1

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