Saving Graves

How to Interpret Gravestone Motifs

These are a few of the many motifs that are found on gravestones along with some of the more commonly held interpretations of their symbolism.

- Acorn As the seed of the oak, the acorn is a symbol of potential. In Norse and Celtic culture, acorns symbolized life, fertility and immortality. Druids ate acorns, believing them to have prophetic qualities, and acorns were sacred to the god Thor whose Tree of Life was the oak. "Acorns and oak leaves form one of the circular 'hex' signs used by the Amish and Mennonite communities of southern Pennsylvania, the various signs believed to bestow favors such as protection or natural abundance"
- Anchor Commonly used in the 18th and 19th centuries to represent hope or the deceased's seafaring profession. Also used, often wrapped in vines, to represent firm Christian faith.
- Angel, Flying Rebirth or Resurrection
- Angel, Trumpeting Resurrection
- Angel, Weeping Grief and Mourning
- Ankh The original meaning of this ancient Egyptian symbol is not known. One possible theory suggests that it combines the male and female symbols of Osiris (the cross) and Isis (the oval) and therefore signifies the union of heaven and earth. It is usually portrayed in ancient Egyptian art in the hands of a diety. As a hieroglyph, it likely encompassed a range of meanings depending on its associated hieroglyphs but all of these expressions centered around the concept of life or life-force. Over time, the ankh certainly came to symbolize life and immortality, the universe, power and life-giving air and water. "Its key like shape also encouraged the belief that it could unlock the gates of death". The Coptic Christians used it as a symbol of life after death. The ankh has been used in magic and today it usually symbolizes peace and truth
- Arches Victory in Death
- **Arrows** Mortality
- Bats Commonly used in 18th century New England to represent the underworld.
- Bird Eternal life
- Bird, Flying Resurrection
- **Books** A pair of Holy Books on Mormon (LDS) headstones indicates the Bible and Book of Mormon
- Books -Three Holy Books on Mormon headstones indicates the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine & Covenants -- all of which are scripture to the LDS Church.
- Bouquets Condolences, grief, sorrow
- Bridge Since antiquity, bridges have symbolized linking; between the earthly and heavenly realms, between the physical and the spiritual, or between life and death. In modern psychoanalytic terms, bridges symbolize the transition from one state of being to another and the opportunity for change. The bridge's near side represents the past, its opposite side the future, and water flowing underneath, the chaos of the unconscious mind.
- Broken Column Loss of Head of Family
- Broken Ring Family Circle Severed
- Buds Morning of Life or Renewal of Life

- Bugles Resurrection and the Military
- **Bunch of Grapes** In Egyptian art it symbolizes the heart, because of the similarity of shape, color and blood-like juice of the grape. Since the heart is vital to life, it therefore symbolizes life itself.
- **Butterfly** Based on its evolution from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly, it represents the soul, transformation and rebirth, the creation of life from apparent death. To the Chinese, the butterfly symbolizes immortality. The Japanese view it as a symbol of fickleness because of its flighty behavior, although a pair of butterflies represents marital happiness and a white butterfly signifies the spirit of the dead. In Christianity, the butterfly is a symbol of resurrection but is sometimes viewed also as symbolic of transience because of its short lifespan, and of vanity.
- Candle In Christianity, candles represent the divine light of Christ and faith. In Catholic funeral rites, candles signify the light of heaven. When lit by worshippers and placed before shrines, candles signify the souls of the departed or a request for illumination by prayer. When on opposite sides of a cross on an altar, the two candles represent the dual nature of Christ, human and divine. Many religions and cultures use the burning candle as a symbol of light, life, spirituality, truth and eternal life.
- Candle being Snuffed Time, mortality
- Cherub Angelic
- **Clock/Watch** Represents the transitory nature of human existence. In psychoanalysis it signifies human emotions. It also can represent new beginnings and opportunities.
- Coat of Arms High social status and family lineage.
- **Coffins** Often carved on 17th and 18th century New England tombstones to signify mortality.
- Corn Ripe Old Age
- **Coffin** Mortality
- Cross Emblem of faith, there are many different types of crosses. The crucifix, a Christian symbol, is a Latin cross with an image of Christ nailed to it and depicts the sacrifice Jesus made for human salvation. The shepherd's cross has a crooked apex and represents both the Christian faith and Jesus' role in guiding people through life and saving lost souls. The Celtic cross was prevalent in Ireland and it looks like a cross with its arms surrounded by a circle. this cross signifies the Christian faith, the circle the power of the sun and eternity, and together they represent the unity of heaven and earth. In pagan times, this cross symbolized fertility and life. A cross whose vertical arm ends in a point is called a crossy fitch. Often used in heraldry, it looks like a cross and sword combined, and signifies one's unshakeable faith in Christianity and willingness to defend it.
- Cross, Celtic In pagan times, this cross, with its axis enclosed by a circle, was a symbol of fertility and life, the cross representing male potency and the circle, female power. Prevalent in Ireland, it is now primarily a Christian symbol signifying the unity of heaven and earth.
- Crossed Swords High-ranking military person
- **Crown** Commonly used on 18th century New England headstones to represent the crown of righteousness.
- **Crucifix** Salvation. This Latin cross with the image of Christ nailed to it is a Christian symbol which shows the sacrifice Jesus made for human's salvation.
- Darts Death, mortality. Sometimes seen on 17th and 18th century New England tombstones.
- Dog Loyalty, Vigilance, Courage. As a symbol of faithfulness, dogs often appear at the feet of women on medieval tomb engravings. In Christianity, the dog guards and guides the flock, and so becomes an allegory of the priest. The dog is also a

companion of the dead on their crossing. Ancient Egyptians and Greeks believed it followed its master into the afterlife. Many cultures believed that dogs were mediators with the realm of the dead: the Egyptian god Anubis who oversees embalming and weighs the heart of the dead is jackal-headed, Cerburus the guardian of the entrance to the Greek underworld is a three-headed dog with a serpent's tail, the dog Garmr guards the Norse underworld. The Celts and Greeks believed dogs possessed healing powers. In some African cultures, the dog is the father of civilization and the bringer of fire. In the eleventh sign of the Chinese zodiac, the dog symbolizes idealism. In Chinese tradition, the dog can signify both catastrophe and protection. Among Jews and Moslems, the dog possesses negative qualities. It is unclean and, when black, signifies the Devil.

- **Door** Passage from one state to another. In Christianity, the door signifies salvation through Christ who said "I am the door." In dream interpretation, a closed door represents a hidden mystery or barrier, an open door liberation or invitation to a new challenge, an inward opening door the need for self-exploration, and an outward opening door represents accessibility to others.
- **Dove** Holy Spirit, Soul Reaching Peace, Spirituality. In Slavic culture, at death the soul turns into a dove. In Visigothic and Romanesque art, it represents souls. In Hinduism, the dove represents the spirit. This bird was sacred to Zeus, to Athena as a symbol of the renewal of life, and to Aphrodite as a symbol of love. To the ancient Egyptians, it signified innocence, and in Islam the dove is the protector of Mohammad. In Christianity, the Holy Ghost of the Trinity is often portrayed as a dove. In China it represents longevity and orderliness while in Japan the dove is associated with the war god Hachiman. In Jewish history the dove was sometimes sacrificed for a mother's purification after childbirth. The dove is sometimes an emblem of Israel.
- **Dove and Olive Branch** Peace. This symbol stems from Judeo-Christian culture and the biblical story of Noah and the great flood. When the dove returned to the ark with an olive branch from the Mount of Olives in its beak, it was a sign of God's forgiveness. It is now a common secular symbol.
- **Dragon** Dramatically different interpretation between Eastern and Western cultures. In the Orient, the dragon protects humans from evil spirits and represents joy, health and fertility. But in Western cultures, the dragon possesses the negative traits of the snake, destruction, danger, depravity, and loss of innocence. In Jewish tradition, mythical beasts like the dragon are messianic creatures.
- **Drapes** Mourning or Mortality
- Eagle Height, The Spiritual, Courage, Victory, Power. With its speedy and high flight, the eagle is an extensively used symbol throughout many time periods and cultures. With the details varying, a common thread in most eagle symbolism is dominating and destroying baser forces, or the victory of higher powers. In Oriental art, it is often shown fighting. In Christian tradition, it carries a serpent in its beak to represent Christ's victory over Satan. In pre-Columbian America it represented the struggle between the spiritual/celestial and the lower world. On the banner of the Roman legion, it represented the victorious Roman Empire. As the king of the birds, it came to symbolize royalty. In many nations, such as the U.S., the eagle is the symbol of sovereignty and nationhood. The eagle also is commonly a messenger. In Christianity and some Native American traditions, the eagle is a messenger between god and man. Also a messenger in Vedic tradition. Often associated with the sun and the day, luminous, positive and active as opposed to the owl, the bird of darkness, death, and night. In ancient Syria, where the eagle symbolized sun worship, it assisted souls to immortality. In Native American cultures, the eagle's feathers symbolized the sun's rays, therefore the Great Spirit. This bird is often associated with thunder and fire.

- **Eye of God** Judeo-Christian symbol that includes an eye with a tent below it and a three-link chain underneath. Often shown in a triangle, the eye signifies God, the all-seeing, at the center of the Trinity. The tent is the house of God, its flaps open to show inner truth. The chain represents both the Trinity and the link that binds the faithful to God.
- Father Time Mortality
- Flowers Condolences, grief, sorrow
- Flower, Severed Stem Shortened life
- Flying Birds Flight of the Soul
- Fruit Various fruits possess their own symbolic meaning but fruit in general signifies abundance. Also, since it contains seeds, it represents life, potential, immortality.
- Garlands Victory in death
- **Gateway** Carries much of the same symbolism as the door but the destination is less personal. It represents entrance to greater areas, the mystical, heaven or hell, spiritual palace. A series of gateways can represent the stages of enlightenment. In dream interpretation, the gateway invites self-exploration. It is a symbol of initiation, passing through the gateway into a new state of being.
- Gourds In 17th and 18th century New England, the birth and death of earthly matters
- **Grapes and Grapevines** Grapes signify sacrifice, since they are used in the making of wine, which, in Christianity represents Christ's blood and his sacrifice. They can also connote life and immortality. From the Old Testament, among the Jews, the grapevine signifies peace and abundance.
- **Hammer** This tool, used in building and shaping, represents the power of creation.
- Hand This is a very expressive symbol that takes on different meanings depending on its positioning in relation to the body and arrangement of the fingers. The raised hand symbolizes voice and song, placed on the chest it represents the wisdom of the sage, on the neck it depicts sacrifice, covering the eyes it signifies clairvoyance at the moment of death. Two hands joined typically signify union. A common hand placement on Jewish tombstones is the two open hands, thumbs touching, with index and middle finger spread away from the ring and pinkie fingers. This gesture, raised above the head, is used by priests to bring God's glory through the hands' openings and to the congregation. In Egyptian hieroglyphics, pre-Columbian America and as an amulet in Islamic cultures, the open hand represents a human task and magnetic force. The hand, with its five fingers, takes on the meaning of the number five, i.e., love, health and humanity.
- Hand of God Chopping Sudden Death
- **Hand with Finger Pointing** Gone Home, Look to God, Direction. The pointing finger represents direction, whether physical, spiritual or psychological.
- Handshakes Carry a variety of meanings including, greeting, goodbye, friendship, solidarity, unity and agreement, and the doubling of power achieved through partnership. The right hand is the life-force or hand of power. An eye associated with a hand symbolizes clairvoyant action.
- Harp Harmony with the universe and ascent to higher things, a bridge between heaven and earth. In Judaism, the harp is a symbol of David, conqueror of Goliath and king of Israel. David's harp playing relieved King Saul's depression and when he became king, the midnight wind playing on a harp that overhung his bed called him to study the Torah.
- Hearts Soul in Bliss or Love of Christ
- Hooped Snake In 18th and 19th century New England, this symbol meant eternity.
- Horns The Resurrection

- **Hourglass** Mortality. The swiftness of time. Because it must be turned upside down for the sand to run out, it also represents the cycle of life and death, and heaven and earth. In Christianity, it personifies temperance.
- Hourglass with Wings of Time Time Flying; Short Life
- **Imps** Mortality
- Iris Light and Hope. With its pointed leaves, it's often called the sword Lilly and is associated with the sorrow of the Virgin Mary. To the Chinese, this flower represents affection, grace and beauty.
- Ivy Immortality, Friendship, Faithfulness. Because it is an evergreen that clings while climbing, it signifies the need for protection. Since it grows quickly, it also symbolizes regeneration, sensuality and revelry. The Greco-Roman god Dionysus, or Bacchus, had an ivy cup and wore a crown of ivy leaves.
- Key Mystery, Opening and Closing, Solution to a Problem. Its dual symbolism can mean liberation and the ability to unlock secrets, or incarceration. It can represent the threshold of the unconscious or a task to be performed and the means of carrying it out. In Catholicism, the key is a papal emblem, the key to the gates of heaven. In Greek mythology, Hecate holds the key to hell. In Judaism the key of God controls birth and death. In Japan the key represents happiness. A dove and a key symbolize the spirit opening the gates of heaven. The Roman god Janus, keeper of the doorway, looking both forward and backward, is associated with two keys that are sometimes placed over a heart. Especially in ceremonies for the dead, ancient Egyptian gods are sometimes depicted holding the ankh from the top as if it were a key, possibly the key that opens immortality.
- Labarum This symbol is also known as the Monogram of Christ, Constantine's Cross, the Chrismon, the Christogram and the Chi-Rho. Since the Roman emperor Constantine I used this symbol on his shield, overcame his enemy in battle, and consequently converted to Christianity, the labarum has been a symbol of Christianity. In pre-Christian Greece it signified a good omen. It also represented the Chaldean sky god.
- Lamb Purity, Innocence, Gentleness, Sacrifice. In Christianity it represents the sacrificial crucifixion of Christ for the sins of the world.
- Laurel Leaves/Wreath Victory. The laurel wreath was first worn by the ancient Romans in parades after triumph in battle where it was viewed as a prize and a sign of divine blessing. With the Pythian Games in ancient Greece, the laurel wreath became an emblem of victory. The laurel is an evergreen thought to have purifying powers that could result in immortality. The laurel wreath is often still used as a mark of distinction for those who have excelled in their pursuits.
- Lily or Lily of Valley Light, Purity, Perfection, Mercy and Majesty. In Greco-Roman mythology this flower was sacred to Hera and Artemis. In Byzantium and early France, it was a royal emblem (the fleur-de-lys is sometimes considered a stylized Lilly). Primarily the Lilly has Christian associations, usually attached to the Virgin Mary where it signifies chastity. When Christ is shown as the judge of the world with a Lilly in his mouth, the flower represents mercy. a Lilly and a sword signify guilt and innocence.
- **Lion** Valor, Strength, Courage, Pride, Wisdom, Protection, Majesty, an ancient symbol of the sun.
- Lotus Purity, Resurrection, Evolution, Potential. Commonly used in ancient Egypt and in Hinduism, the flower is sacred in Buddhism. "It symbolizes the creation of life from the slime of the primordial waters. The closed lotus represents potential. Depending on the number of petals, the lotus' symbolism changes, shaped by the symbolism of the number. With eight petals, it represents cosmic harmony, with 1,000 petals it means spiritual revelation. The lotus is the emblem of India and Egypt.

- Masonic Compass and Set-square Freemasons combine religious and construction and architectural forms in their symbols. Viewing God as the architect and builder of the universe, Freemasonry intends to build the temple of humanity through self-improvement with stone-masonry work. The compass, used in geometric calculations, symbolizes creation and the spirit. The set-square draws perfect right angles, so represents uprightness and lawfulness. The compass and the square measure things, so they symbolize judgement. They also represent geometry, and the union of the sky (the compass's circle) and the earth (the square). The letter "G" in this symbol represents God, geometry and geomancy. Compasses and a mason's square also were the emblems of the Chinese emperor Fu Hsi.
- **Menorah** Jewish symbol of divine wisdom. The seven branches of the candle represent the seven days of creation; the sun, moon and planets; the seven heavens; and the seven stars of Ursa Major.
- Morning Glory Beginning of Life
- Oak Leaves & Acorn Maturity, Ripe Old Age
- Open Book / Bible Deceased Teacher, Minister, etc.
- Palm Tree/Branch The palm has a variety of sacred and secular associations. In the Kabbalah, it symbolizes the righteous man and was an emblem of Judea after the Exodus. One of the four plants paraded on the Sukkot to celebrate God's bounty, it represents the Jew who studies the Torah but does not obey the commandments. Other interpretations include the spine that bends before God, and God. In Christianity, it signifies righteousness, resurrection, and martyrdom based on Christ's entry into Jerusalem where palm branches were laid in his path. In the Middle Ages, a palm leaf was a badge of pilgrimage to the Holy Land and people wearing it were called 'palmers.' Because of its height and radiating leaves, it was an early fertility and sun symbol. The Babylonians considered it a divine tree because of its association with the sun. In many early Middle Eastern civilizations the palm was a Tree of Life; the Phoenician god Baal-Tamar was the lord of the palm and the palm was the emblem of the goddesses Astarte and Ishtar. In ancient Rome, victors were presented with palm branches and the palm took on victory as its meaning in ancient Rome, Egypt and Greece. The palm has also signified fame and peace. In contemporary, secular culture it represents tropical delights
- Picks Mortality. Commonly used in 17th and 18th century New England.
- Pine Cone Immortality and Fertility The ancient Greeks and Assyrians viewed the pine cone "as a symbol of masculinity because of its phallic shape. It formed the apex of the thyrsus staff, which represented both fertility and immortality". As the emblem of Artemis, it represented feminine purity. It was also the emblem of the Roman goddess Venus (Aphrodite). In Christianity, the pine cone forms the crown of the Tree of Life. Because of its swirling form, it is associated with "dynamic generative and cosmic power."
- Poppy Sleep
- **Portals** Passageway to eternal journey
- **Pyramid** Symbol of ancient and modern Egypt, it represents the power of the kings and creation. Among the ancient Egyptians, Aztecs, Mayans and Mesopotamians, pyramids represented the cosmic mountain. In esoteric thought, it represents the world axis and enlightenment. The pyramid is a synthesis of different forms: the base is a square representing earth, the apex is the beginning and finishing point of all things, and the sloping, triangle sides that link the apex to its base represent fire, divine revelation and the threefold principle of creation, thereby symbolizing all of creation.
- **Rising Sun** Resurrection, Immortality.

- Rope Eternity, Binding and Connection. In Egyptian hieroglyphics, a knotted cord signifies a man's name, a symbol of an individual's existence. In Vedic teaching, the silver cord "expresses the sacred, inner path which binds the outer consciousness of man (his intellect) with his spiritual essence"
- Rosebud Morning of Life or Renewal of Life
- **Roses** Brevity of earthly existence, Completion, Achievement, Perfection. Meanings vary depending on the color, shape and number of petals. For example, the blue rose symbolizes the impossible, the golden rose the pinnacle of achievement, an eight petal rose regeneration.
- **Scales** Justice, Balance. Originating in Chaldea as the mystic symbol of justice, it represents the equivalence of guilt and punishment. From the zodiacal archetype of Libra it represents immanent justice, the idea that guilt automatically unleashes the forces that bring self-destruction and punishment.
- **Scarab** An ancient Egyptian emblem symbolizing the renewal of life. When shown with falcon's wings it represents transcendence and protection.
- Shattered Urn Someone Old
- Sheaf of Wheat Ripe for Harvest, Divine Harvest, Time
- Shell The Human Journey Through Life, Birth, Life, Resurrection, Love, Good Luck. The shell's hard casing protects life, the pearl inside, and its aquatic nature associates it with the feminine, lunar, and virginity. Both the Hindu goddess Lakshmi and the Greco-Roman goddess Aphrodite were carried ashore on a scallop shell. In medieval Christianity the scallop shell was the emblem of St. James, the patron of pilgrims, so the shell came to symbolize a pilgrimage. The scallop shell is also associated with the guardian angel Raphael, and the Virgin Mary. In later Christianity, it symbolized resurrection and baptism. In Buddhism and Hinduism the conch shell's call awakens the faithful from ignorance. The conch also is a sign of victory over samsara, or suffering existence, in Buddhism. In Chinese Buddhism, the conch shell can signify a prosperous journey, and in Islam it represents the hearing of the divine word.
- **Ships** Hope or Seafaring profession
- **Shovels** Mortality
- **Skeleton** The personification of death.
- **Skull** Mortality. Because it is what survives of the living once the body is destroyed, it is also used to represent life and thought, especially in alchemy, where it is the receptacle used in transmutation processes. In Christianity, a skull wearing a crown of thorns means eternal damnation.
- Stag Life, Wisdom, Regeneration and Growth, Virility. Because its antlers resemble branches, the stag has been associated with the Tree of Life and because of the way it renews its antlers, it's been used as a symbol of regeneration. In the West during the Middle Ages, the stag was often shown with a crucifix between its horns where, in Christianity, it represents purity and solitude and was the enemy of Satan, the serpent. The Celts believed the stag led souls through the darkness. The stag also was associated with warriors and hunting in Celtic culture and in Greco-Roman mythology where it was an animal sacred to Artemis. In Buddhism, the golden stag represents knowledge. The Chinese regard it as a symbol of virility and happiness.
- Star The Spirit, Divine Presence, Enlightenment, Wisdom, Human Aspiration. Represents light struggling against darkness. The Babylonian goddess Ishtar's emblem was an eight-pointed star and females such as Astarte, Isis, and the Virgin Mary are often pictured with a crown of stars. Stars are sometimes believed to be the souls of the dead with comets being seen as foretellers of doom and a sign of the anger of the sun god. Stars often take on additional meaning depending on their color, shape, number of points and arrangement. The most common, the five pointed star, comes from Egyptian hieroglyphics where it meant "rising upwards toward the

- point of origin" and formed part of words such as "to bring up," "to educate," "the teacher".
- Star of David Symbol of Judaism and the State of Israel. This star, comprised of an overlapping upright and an inverted triangle, is associated with David because he carried a hexagrammic shield against Goliath. The interlocking triangles represent the union of opposites. The Kabbalists believed this emblem had protective power and magical properties. It is also called the Creator's Star with each point representing the days of the week and the hexagram representing the Sabbath.
- Stars & Stripes Around Eagle Eternal Vigilance, Liberty
- Steps A common symbol used around the world, steps generally mean Ascension, Stages or Levels. The number of steps brings the meaning of numbers into the interpretation as does the symbolism of any objects that surround or are a part of the steps. In Romanesque art, steps represent the relationship between worlds. In many religions steps, or a ladder, are seen as the path to god. For alchemists of the Middle Ages, steps were associated with the transmutation process.
- **Swallow** Hope, Fertility, Renewal of Life, Resurrection Like most birds, it also represents light. In ancient Egypt, it symbolized motherhood. In ancient Greece and Rome, it was a bad omen to kill a swallow because it held the spirits of dead children. In Swedish legend, a swallow was present at Christ's crucifixion, where it called for consolation. In China, it represents daring, danger, and a good change in fortune and in Japan it can mean unfaithfulness and maternal care. In Islam, the swallow makes an annual pilgrimage to Mecca and so is revered. In African cultures it represents purity. These birds are often symbols of illumination and good luck.
- Thistles Traditional Scottish symbol connoting remembrance.
- **Tombs** Mortality
- **Torch** Turned upside down, it represents death. Right side up, it symbolizes life and the regenerative power of fire. It has been used in initiation and fertility rites in many cultures and was the emblem, in Greek mythology, of Eros and Aphrodite, symbolizing the flame of love. In Christianity, the torch represents purification through God's illuminating the spirit, and Christ as the Light of the World. Associated with one of the seven deadly sins, it represents anger. The torch is also seen as an emblem of places of learning and signifies truth and intelligence.
- Tree Stump w/lvy Head of Family; Immortality
- Trees Life
- Triangle In the Christian tradition, the triangle represents Faith, Hope and Charity, and the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The symbolism of this shape is always associated with its three sides, signifying a variety of triads such as birth, life and death; heaven, earth and human; mind, body and soul; body, soul and spirit; and father, mother and child. In ancient Egypt, the triangle combined will, intelligence, and love to represent man's soul. The ancient Egyptians and the Mayans built stepped pyramids with temples at the top to represent the cosmic mountain. In magic and alchemy, the pyramid with its apex pointing upward represents fire or masculinity and when inverted, represents water or femininity. These two triangles combined signify the unity of the elements in alchemy and, in Judaism's Star of David they stand for the union of opposites. The pyramid can also represent aspiration, the struggle to climb to the top and achieve one's earthly ambition or heavenly ascent.
- Trumpeters Heralds of the Resurrection
- Urn with Blaze Undying Friendship
- Urn with Wreath or Crepe Mourning
- **Willows** Presented in a variety of styles, this symbol is of German origin and usually represents sorrow.
- Winged Effigies Flight of the Soul

- Winged Sun Disk This is an ancient Egyptian symbol which represents the journey
 of the sun. Ra was the creator of the world, ancestor of the pharaohs and god of the
 sun (symbolized by the solar disk) and skies (symbolized by the wings). The winged
 sun disk symbolizes the life-giving power of the sun and the spiritual attributes of the
 heavens.
- Wreaths Victory in Death.
- Yew Leaves Eternal Life
- **Yin-Yang Circle** The symbol comes from Taoism and Confucianism and represents harmony and balance. It denotes the two existential and controlling forces of the universe, the yin, the negative and passive feminine power depicted in black and on the left side of the circle, and the yang, the positive and active masculine power depicted in white on the right side of the circle. Yin represents the soul, wetness, cold, darkness, the moon, the Earth and sustenance. Yang represents the spirit, light, heat, dryness, day, the sun, heaven, creation and dominance. The yin before the yang signifies primeval darkness before creation. The small circle of the opposite color contained within both the yin and the yang represents the seed of the other and therefore their interdependence. The sigmoid line dividing the yin and yang means dynamism and the two are contained within a circle of revolution and unity.

Information obtained from: Saving Graves: How to Interpret Gravestone Motifs

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