

## A Memorial to the 'Good Countess' – The 'Votive Painting Vargemont' by Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff \*

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## Abstract

LOVECKY, Katharina: A Memorial to the 'Good Countess' – The 'Votive Painting Vargemont' by Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff.

One of the most important works by Johann Scheffer Evangelist von Leonhardshoff is his *Votive Painting Vargemont*. In this commemorative picture the artist combines the subject of the seven works of mercy with a bourgeois genre motif to create a memorial to the deceased Sophie von Vargemont. This essay addresses whether the treatment of this subject was traditional. It also looks at the painting in the context of the custom of memorial pictures and sculptures.

Keywords: Johann Scheffer Evangelist von Leonhardshoff, Nazarenes, memorial painting, votive painting

W ith the *Votive Painting Vargemont* Viennese artist Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff, who had joined the Nazarenes in 1815, created a painting, in which he – as Michael Krapf remarks – makes a transition to early bourgeois realism in genre painting.<sup>1</sup> After Sophie Bartholine Friederika Gräfin von Vargemont (née Baronin Domsdorff) passed away on 26 February 1819, her surviving spouse Ludwig Alexander Graf von Vargemont commissioned the artist to create a memorial painting for the family tomb, a sepulchral chapel in the cemetery of St Martin in Mödling in Lower Austria. (Fig. 1)

The memorial painting depicts the deceased in a white dress amidst a group of needy people, to whom corporal works of mercy are being shown. To her right, Sophie Fürstin von Liechtenstein (1776 – 1848), who was a close friend of the deceased, is giving alms to the poor.<sup>2</sup> According to the church chronicles of Mödling, Fürstin took on the responsibility of looking after the grave and overseeing restoration work on the tomb on behalf of the widower's sister Feličité von Persan (née Gräfin von Vargemont) after von Vargemont himself had passed away.<sup>3</sup> The widower's sister also commissioned various donations on the couple's birthdays, name days and the anniversaries of their death. Two putti refer to children of the couple who died young.<sup>4</sup> On the right-hand edge of the painting a dark-haired lady is tending to the bandage of an injured woman. At her feet there are a walking stick, a hat with a St James' shell, and a rosary, all of which are attributes that identify her

<sup>\*</sup>I would like to thank Horst Doležal, who provided me with the valuable source of the church chronicles of Mödling and Isabella Tanzer for the translation of my manuscript.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> KRAPF, Michael. *Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff 1795 – 1822 (exhibition catalogue).* Vienna :

Kommisionsverlag Anton Scholl und Co., 1977, cat. nr. 58, 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ankerberg, 'Denkmahl', 1274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Archive of the parish St. Othmar – Mödling. Protocollum der k.k. Pfarre des landes-fürstlichen Marktes Mödling. 1773 – 1840, vol. II, fol. 284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ankerberg, 'Denkmahl', 1274.



1 Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff, Votive Painting for Sophie von Vargemont, 1819, oil on canvas, 160 x 195 cm, Museum Mödling – Thonetschlössl / Bezirks-Museums-Verein Mödling (photograph provided by: Christoph Fuchs, Vienna)

as a pilgrim. On the left-hand edge the surviving spouse is sitting on the ground, looking up from a book, in which a scene from a crusade is shown on the left page and the following words can be read on the right: 'works of mercy'.<sup>5</sup> The scene's protagonists are all wearing contemporary dress in early German style.

The painting marks a shift from the romanticism that Scheffer had followed under the influence of Friedrich von Overbeck and was now slowly moving away from towards a realistic style of representation. Albert Ilg criticised the subordination of the scenic location by the composition in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Wercke [sic] der Barmherzigkeit"

Scheffer's composition as 'regulated reality'.<sup>6</sup> A look at the regular facial features of the countess, who passed away at the age of 59, one can only agree with him. According to Keith Andrews the painting is almost reminiscent of a Biedermeier genre scene.<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Bachleitner regards resemblance to reality, which in Scheffer's art is hinted at for the first time, as an important stylistic feature of the Viennese Nazarenes.<sup>8</sup> Michael Krapf remarks that this work would have been the first step in a new direction if Scheffer had been granted a longer life.<sup>9</sup> The artist passed away in 1822, only a few years after the work had been completed. According to Krapf the painting's moralising tone was later adopted by Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld in his painting *The Spreading Pine Tree in the Brühl Valley near Mödling*,<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 2) in which a cavalier is shown handing alms to a pilgrim. Krapf notes that the uniform artificial light that we see in Scheffer's painting is here replaced by a new and playful natural light.<sup>11</sup> The above-mentioned authors point out that from a stylistic point of view this work can be seen as a shift from a romantic sensibility to a realistic style of representation. However, there has been no attempt yet to rank this painting within the tradition of memorial and sepulchral arts.



2 Ludwig Ferdinand Schnorr von Carolsfeld, The Spreading Pine Tree in the Brühl Valley near Mödling, 1838, oil on canvas, 66 x 112 cm, Belvedere, Vienna (photograph provided by: © Belvedere Wien)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "[sic] der Barmherzigkeit"gkeit"t"rktes Mödlingff ardshoff rgemont' by ert;i ILG, Albert. Raffaelino. Ein Beitrag zur österreichischen Künstlergeschichte. In Die Dioskuren. Literarisches Jahrbuch des ersten allgemeinen Beamten-Vereines der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, 1874, vol. 4, p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ANDREWS, Keith. Scheffer von Leonhardshoff. In *Romantik und Realismus in Österreich. Gemälde und Zeichnungen aus der Sammlung Georg Schäfer (exhibition catalogue)*. Schweinfurt : b.v, 1968, p. 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> BACHLEITNER, Rudolf. *Die Nazarener*. Munich : Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1976, p. 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> KRAPF 1977, 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no. 3167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>KRAPF 1977, 49.

One specific feature in this work is how the scene is embedded into the landscape. We do not see an idyllic universal landscape, like in Scheffer's masterpiece from 1821 showing the dying Saint Cecilia,<sup>12</sup> but the region to the south of Vienna, albeit an idealised version of it. Landscape functions as a vehicle of meaning. The ruins of the medieval castle Liechtenstein can be seen in the background behind Princess Liechtenstein. In 1808 the castle had been repurchased by her husband Johann I from Prince Poniatowski.<sup>13</sup> Through this image Scheffer is making a reference to the history and significance of the princely Liechtenstein family. The piety column, "Spinnerin am Kreuz", is particularly interesting, as it serves as a reference to piety and the practice of religion.

There is a footpath leading from the castle and a group of people—pilgrims perhaps—are walking along it. The motif of a path that Scheffer uses up in his picture can often also be found in Ferdinand Olivier's landscape drawings. In this regard Michael Krapf mentions "Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen" by Ludwig Tieck, which the artist read evidentially.<sup>14</sup> But in this case the Scheffer is referring to the Via Sacra road leading to Mariazell, along which Mödling is located. The traditional starting point of that pilgrimage is Paulanerkirche auf der Wieden, which is now located in the fourth district of Vienna. From there one can reach Mödling via the afore-mentioned piety column Spinnerin am Kreuz.

In 1833 Eduard Gurk drew the individual stops along the pilgrimage road to Mariazell in a series of watercolours. In the second drawing in the series the main road runs from the right-hand edge into the centre of the picture, where the town centre of Mödling is depicted. (Fig. 3) What is noteworthy in this picture is the little fountain house that is next to the wall with the piety column on the left-hand edge of the painting and borders the cemetery of St Martin. Wolfgang Krug identified the small fountain house as the one that Ludwig Alexander renovated in remembrance of his late wife at the same time that he commissioned her tomb.<sup>15</sup> In one of the two commemorative plaques that were erected on the outside of the house there is a direct reference to the Via Sacra: "To the compatriot who has born the heat of the day, to the tired wanderer, the pious pilgrims to Mariazell, to the abandoned one, who mourns what cannot be replaced/ the good countess Sophie Gräfin von Vargemont, née Baronin von Domsdorf, on 15 May 1819, has dedicated this place of rest, this fountain, this shade. Pray for her and bless her."<sup>16</sup> The date of 15 May refers to the name day of the deceased.<sup>17</sup> The theme of "works of mercy" is re-emphasised by an inscription on the walls of the

Königs v. Ungarn Ferdinand dem Fünften. Graz : Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstallt, 1996, p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no. 2244.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> TELESKO, Werner. *Kulturraum Österreich. Die Identität der Regionen in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna : Böhlau Verlag, 2008, p. 422.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> KRAPF 1977, 160-161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> KRUG, Wolfgang. Markt Mödling. In GURK, Eduard. *Mahlerische Reise von Wien nach Maria Zell in Steyermark.* Dargestellt in drey Tagesreisen und nach der Natur aufgenommen im Jahre 1833 in Begleitung Sr. Majestät des jüngern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>"Dem Landmann, der des Tages Hitze getragen, / dem müden Wanderer / den frommen Pilgern nach Maria = Zell; / dem Verlassenen, der hier das Unersetzliche beweint / widmete /diesen Ruheplatz, diese Quelle, diese Schatten / die gute Gräfin / Sophie Grafin [sic] v. Vargemont geb. Baronin / von Domsdorf / Den 15ten Mai 1819 / Betet für sie, und segnet sie." Ankerberg, 'Denkmahl', 1274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Archive of the parish St. Othmar – Mödling. Protocollum der k.k. Pfarre des landes-fürstlichen Marktes Mödling, 1773 – 1840, vol. II, fol. 283.



3 Eduard Gurk, Market Town Mödling, 1833, watercolor, 32,4 x 42,5 cm (paper), Landesmuseum Niederösterreich, St. Pölten (photograph provided by: © Landessammlungen Niederösterreich, photographer: Christoph Fuchs, Vienna)

fountain house done in black oil paint<sup>18</sup> and referring again to Scheffer's painting in the sepulchral chapel. The inscription is an excerpt from the epistle of Paul to the Galatians (6:7 and 10): "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately not much is known about the deceased depicted in the painting and the person who commissioned the work. According to the register of deaths of the parish, "Unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten", Sophie von Vargemont died in Vienna at the age of 59 from lung cancer.<sup>20</sup> She was generally known as a charitable, 'good countess', hence the reference to "works of mercy".<sup>21</sup>

In the background on the left there is a tomb with the inscription "F D S / Duchess/ of/ Würtemberg [sic] / HRH".<sup>22</sup> The tomb of the Duchess of Württemberg may be interpreted as a 'Memento mori' or it may refer to the work of mercy 'bury the dead'. But it also refers to the fact that the deceased temporarily lived in Mömpelgard (Montbéliard), which became French territory in 1793, and she was

<sup>19</sup> "Was der Mensch säet, / das wird er auch ernten / weil wir nun gelegen Zeit haben, / so lasset uns Jedermann Gutes thun."
<sup>20</sup> Archive of the parisch Schotten – Vienna, Unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten, register of deaths (1813-1832), tom. 17, fol. 102.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Archive of the parish St. Othmar – Mödling. Protocollum der k.k. Pfarre des landes-fs-frre des landes- fürstlichen Marktes Mödling, 1773 – 1840, vol. II, fol. 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ankerberg, 'Denkmahl', 1274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "F D S / HERZOGIN / VON / WÜRTEMBERG / KÖN: HOH:"

a court lady in the court of Duchess Friederike Dorothea Sophia von Württemberg (née Brandenburg-Schwedt, 1736 – 1798), who was the mother of Tsarina Maria Feodorowna (1759-1828). According to the memoirs of Baron Friedrich von Maucler it was there that she met her later spouse.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Heinrich Graf zu Stolberg-Wernigerode in his recollections of the Congress of Vienna wrote that Sophie von Vargemont followed the Duchess of Württemberg to Russia where she married Ludwig Alexander.<sup>24</sup> But since the Duchess never travelled to Russia, he may have meant that Sophie followed Maria Feodorowna to Russia.<sup>25</sup>

According to the chronicles of the church in Mödling, Ludwig Alexander von Vargemont emigrated from Paris in 1789.<sup>26</sup> The register of deaths of the parish, "Unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten", identifies him as the imperial Russian ambassador and chamberlain.<sup>27</sup> The couple lived together in Vienna. They are mentioned in several reports on events organised in connection with the Congress of Vienna 1814/15.<sup>28</sup> For example, the *Journal für Kunst, Luxus und Mode* reported that Ludwig Alexander took part in a tableaux-vivant-performance at the court on 22 December 1814. He is also considered to have been the author of the troubadour scenes that were staged that same evening.<sup>29</sup> Ludwig Alexander passed away on 8 March 1821 at the age of 65, just two years after his wife's death.<sup>30</sup> He was buried next to his spouse.

Scheffer's painting is a special case within the tradition of commemorative and burial culture of the first half of the 19th century. Most sepulchral chapels were equipped with sculptures instead of paintings owing to the durability of sculpture. According to Albert Ilg, the original tomb was already in poor condition just 60 years after it was built. In his unpublished monograph Scheffer wrote: 'The utterly plain little house nestling in the corner of the church yard wall hardly offered enough room for two people. Scheffer's picture was hanging on the wall. When I saw it at the end of the seventies it was in a bad state. The tomb and the picture had been neglected, the house was being used as a depot by the undertaker.'<sup>31</sup> In 1878 the bodies of the couple were exhumed and reburied in the newly built neo-Romanesque chapel of Mayor Joseph Schöffel in the new cemetery in Mödling. There the painting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> SAUER, Paul. Im Dienst des Fürstenhauses und des Landes Württemberg. Die Lebenserinnerungen der Freiherren Friedrich und Eugen von Maucler (1735 – 1816). Stuttgart : Kohlhammer Verlag, 1985, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> STOLBERG WERNIGERODE, Heinrich zu. Tagebuch über meinen Aufenthalt in Wien zur Zeit des Congresses vom 9.

September 1814 bis zum April 1815. (ed. by Doris Derdey). Halle an der Saale, Stekovics, 2004, p. 79-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Im Glanz der Zaren. Die Romanows, Württemberg und Europa (exhibition catalogue). Stuttgart : Landesmuseum Württemberg, 2013, p. 135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Archive of the parish St. Othmar – Mödling. Protocollum der k.k. Pfarre des landes- fürstlichen Marktes Mödling-f013, p. 1773 – 1840, vol. II, fol. 277.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Archive of the parisch Schotten – Vienna, *Unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten*, register of deaths (1813-1832), tom. 17, fol. 132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> STOLBERG WERNIGERODE 2004, 79-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode, January 1815, p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Archive of the parisch Schotten – Vienna, *Unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten*, register of deaths (1813 – 1832), tom. 17, fol. 132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> "Ein völlig schmuckloses Häuschen schmiegte es sich in die Ecke zwischen den Kirchhofmauern und bot in jenem kaum zwei Personen Raum zum Stehen. An seiner Wand war Scheffer's Bild aufgehängt. Ich sah es zu Ende der Siebzigerjahre in übler Umgebung. Grab und Bild waren vernachlässigt, das Häuschen als Depot für den Todtengräber in Verwendung." In ILG, Albert. Scheffer von Leonhardshoff (unpublished manuscript). Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (Vienna City Library), collection of manuscripts, inventary number 11840, fol. 44.

was attached to the wall above the altar. Today it is part of the collection of the municipal museum of Mödling (Museum Mödling – Thonetschlössl / Bezirks-Museums-Verein Mödling).

Scheffer's signature on the lower right-hand edge of the painting, "Ritter von Scheffer fecit / aus Danckbarkeit [sic] 1819",<sup>32</sup> suggests that a personal attachment existed between the artist and the family of the deceased. Unfortunately, it is impossible to find any reference in the artist's notes to the circumstances in which he received the commission. In Scheffer's sketch book from 1820/21 there are only some notes about the birthday, name day, and anniversary of the death of the deceased, and there are some notes about the size of the sepulchral chapel in the 'Neapolitan sketchbook'; both sketchbooks are in the Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.<sup>33</sup>

What is striking in Scheffer's work is its rootedness in the here and now. As mentioned above, Keith Andrews compared the painting to a Biedermeier genre scene.

It is only in the inscription attached to the wall of the chapel and quoting from the Book of Revelation (14:13) that the connection between the afterlife and the theme of mercy is made clear: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."<sup>34</sup>



**4** Alexander Colin, Monument to Philippine Welser (full and detail), 1580/81, marble, Court Church, Innsbruck (photograph provided by: Burghauptmannschaft Österreich)

In the memorial arts, however, there is a certain tradition of addressing the theme of the seven works of mercy as a way of characterising the deceased person: As early as 1580/81 the theme of the works of mercy was used to pay homage to Philippine Welser and to depict her virtues.<sup>35</sup> (Fig. 4) On her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> "Ritter von Scheffer painted this out of gratitude in 1819"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Kupferstichkabinett (Graphic Collection), inventary number 8141, Bl. 16 and inventary number 8142, Bl. 14 recto. Reproduced and transcripted In REITER Cornelia, *Wie im wachen Traume, Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, Ölskizzen der deutschen und österreichischen Romantik. Bestandskatalog des Kupferstichkabinetts der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien.* Salzburg : Verlag Anton Pustet, 2006, catalogue number 864, 992.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "Selig sind die Todten, die in dem Herrn starben; / Von nun spricht der Geist / Sollen sie von ihren Arbeiten ruhen / Denn ihre Werke folgen ihm nach." Archive of the parish St. Othmar – Mödling. Protocollum der k.k. Pfarre des landesfürstlichen Marktes Mödling d. 1773 – 1840, vol. II., fol. 279.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> BÜHREN, Ralf van. Die Werke der Barmherzigkeit in der Kunst des 12. – 18. Jahrhunderts. Zum Wandel eines Bildmotivs vor dem Hintergrund neuzeitlicher Rhetorikrezeption, Hildesheim : Olms Verlag, 1998, p. 119.



5 Antonio Canova, Monument to Archduchess Marie Christine (detail), 1798-1805, Augustine Church, Vienna (photograph provided by: Karl Pani, Universität Wien, Kunsthistorisches Institut)

tomb, which is set in the wall of the court church in Innsbruck, there is a relief depicting the caritas motif. On the left-hand edge of the relief we see the personification of virtue in the shape of a mother, who together with two children is handing out loaves of bread to a kneeling beggar. The Flemish sculptor Alexander Colin created this relief for the deceased, who had been the wife of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tirol since 1557.

The tomb Antonio Canova created for Archduchess Marie Christine in the Augustinian Church in Vienna (1798-1805) shows a female figure leading a frail man and a small child who is almost hidden. (Fig. 5) During the creation process the latter is described alternately as a "Pietà", a "Carità", or a "Bontà".<sup>36</sup>

The historian Joseph von Hormayr mentions a memorial by Leopold Kiesling for Fanny von Arnstein, who had passed away in 1818. He describes it as '[...] made from white Tyrolian marble, with a granite base, three steps and a pedestal, the mourning caritas, on the urn of the immortalized, a semi-erect portrait'.<sup>37</sup>

So we can say that caritas depictions used to characterise the deceased are part of the regular canon of sepulchral arts. Compared to the above-mentioned tombs, however, Scheffer did not use the personification of Caritas to represent the theme of charity. The deceased herself is the key actor. What is also unusual about the painting is that Sophie von Vargemont is not portrayed as dead, but is depicted as a benefactress in the midst of her family and friends.

Sophie's husband appears to be pondering the content of the book on his lap rather than the loss of his spouse. His position in the picture changed during the process of creating the painting: one sketch in the Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna shows that Ludwig Alexander von Vargemont, together with another male person, was originally supposed to be portrayed as part of the group and standing next to his wife. (Fig. 6) These findings show that Scheffer's painting differs from the figural sepulchral iconography of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which an important role was played by the act of bidding farewell to the deceased and by the grief of the surviving dependents. Philippe Ariès wrote about this understanding of death in his study "Images of man and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> SCHEMPER SPARHOLZ, Ingeborg. Antonio Canova (1757-1822). Grabdenkmal der Erzherzogin Marie Christine. In FRODL, Gerbert (ed.) *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Österreich. 19. Jahrhundert*, Munich : Prestel, 2002, p. 468-469. <sup>37</sup> "…aus weißem Tyroler-Marmor, die Basis von Granit, drey Stufen und Sockel, die trauernde Wohltätigkeit, an der Urne der Verewigten halb erhabenes Bildnis,…" (Joseph von Hormayr, Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats und Kriegskunst, 12/38 and 39, 1821, 134 [mistake of paging, actually p. 155]).



6 Johann Evangelist Scheffer von Leonhardshoff, "Works of Mercy". Sketch for the Votive Painting for Sophie von Vargemont, 1819, pen and pencil on paper, 21,1 x 25,1 cm, Kupferstichkabinett (Graphic Collection) of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (photogr aph provided by: © Akademie der bildenden Künste, Kupferstichkabinett, Vienna)

death": "In the nineteenth century, death, [...], did not mean one's own fearful and uncertain death, stealing up unawares, but the death that carried off loved ones: the death of others"<sup>38</sup>

Within the sepulchral arts Scheffer's painting is far ahead of his time. In 1827 an unknown sculptor created a funerary monument for Stephan Andreas Mükisch, a physician specialising in paediatrics and homeopathy who is buried in the cemetery in Hietzing in Vienna.<sup>39</sup> (Fig. 7)

The symbol of the Aesculapian snake in the pediment of the monument is a reference to the medical profession. The relief depicts a physician in a neoclassical antique style. It also shows three women who are turning to him for help, and some children, whose presence may refer to the fact that he was a paediatrician. The inscription reads:

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> "La mort du XIXe siècle, [...], n'est plus celle qu'on redoute pour soi, qui vous prend en traître, mais celle qui vous enlève ceux que vous aimez: la mort de l'autre." In ARIÉS, Philippe. Images de l'homme devant la mort. Paris : Seuil, 1983, p.243.
<sup>39</sup> SMETANA, Alexandra. Grabdenkmäler des Wiener Klassizismus. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Sepulkralkultur zwischen 1788 und 1840. Vienna : Diplomarbeit Universität Wien, 2008, p. 184-186.



7 Unknown sculptor, Monument to Stephan Andreas Mükisch, 1827, calcareous sandstone (photograph provided by the author).

"To the active physician, the noble-minded man / and kind-hearted friend / a monument / from his friends."<sup>40</sup> The bourgeois momentum, which Scheffer's picture also alludes to, is more apparent in this monument. The deceased is portrayed in the act of performing his profession and is being honoured for his work, which served the well-being of society. The reference to death and the focus on the afterlife, which in Scheffer's painting are still being hinted at through the quotation from the Book of Revelations, are completely absent here.

Scenes dedicated to the earthly achievements of the deceased became more and more common in the sepulchral statuary art of the wealthy bourgeoisie in the second half of the 19th century. An example is the monumental triptych of the Mautner-Markhof family (1889 – 1895) in the Central Cemetery in Vienna.<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 8) The iconographic focus of the monu-ment is on the foundation of a home for the elderly, an orphanage and a paediatric hospital.

In a nutshell Scheffer used a genre-motif for his memorial image of Sophie von Vargemont. It was

created at a time when the sepulchral arts were at the start of a process of increasing secularisation. The life's work of the deceased was still equated with having lived a Christian way of life. The Countess is rewarded for her charitable character in the afterlife, as the Book of Revelation promises. However, that idea was not directly formulated in the picture itself; an accompanying inscription in the sepulchral chapel was required to make the message clear. –

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> "DEM THAETIGEN ARZTE DEM EDELGESINNTEN MANNE / UND BIEDERHERZIGEN FREUNDE / EIN DENKMAHL / VON SEINEN FREUNDEN".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> KITLISCHKA, Walter. *Grabkult & Grabskulptur in Wien und Niederösterreich*. St. Pölten : Verlag NÖ Pressehaus, 1987, p. 119-121; REITER, Cornelia. Carl Kundmann (1838 – 1919). Grabmal Mautner-Markhof. In FRODL 2002, 536-537.



8 Carl Kundmann, Monument to the Family Mautner Markhof (detail), 1889-1895, Carrara marble and Grisignano stone, measurements of the lunette: 86 x 138 cm, measurements of the middle relief: 200 x 128 cm, relief on the left and on the right side each: 200 x 91 cm, Central Cemetry, Vienna (photograph provided by the author)

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