The Old English Cemetery of Livorno: From Its Foundation to 1900 – Summary

The Old English Cemetery of Livorno was founded in 1644 following a bequest by the English merchant Daniel Oxenbridge, who left funds to purchase a burial ground for the English Protestant community in the city. At the time, Livorno hosted a growing English mercantile presence, many of whom were Protestants living in a predominantly Catholic environment. The cemetery marked an important step in establishing the community's religious and social identity.

Its creation occurred within a complex political and religious context shaped by the English Civil War and ongoing tensions between Protestant and Catholic authorities. Although initially tolerated by the Tuscan government, the cemetery operated under informal permissions and restrictions, particularly regarding enclosure walls, which could not be too high in order to prevent unauthorized religious ceremonies.

During the eighteenth century, the cemetery became a central institution for the English community, supported by donations and managed alongside the British Factory. The long ministry of Reverend Thomas Hall (1783–1824) strengthened ties among Protestant groups and helped preserve the cemetery through periods of political upheaval, including the Napoleonic occupation.

In the nineteenth century, urban expansion and new sanitary laws led to the cemetery's closure in 1839, as burials were prohibited within the city walls. A new English cemetery was established outside Livorno. Over time, economic decline and the reduction of British governmental support weakened the local English community. By 1900, although the cemetery remained an important historical site, documentation about the British presence in Livorno became increasingly scarce.

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