

*Exile, Refuge and Commemoration: Rev B. Patras Zula's Thermopylae Garden at Kilwarlin Moravian Church*

This paper examines Zula's Hollow at Kilwarlin Moravian Church, Co. Down, as a rare nineteenth-century "battle garden" in which the exiled Greek chieftain-turned-Moravian minister, Rev Basil Patras Zula, re-inscribed the topography of Thermopylae into an Ulster ecclesial landscape. It argues that the so-called Thermopylae Garden should be read simultaneously as (a) a historically informed but selective reconstruction of the 480 BCE battlefield, (b) a therapeutic and identity-forming act of migrant memory, and (c) a didactic Moravian pleasure garden articulating themes already present in Zula's preaching, such as divine protection, sacrifice, mission, and the healing of the nations.

Drawing on Rachael Garrett's detailed historical research, as well as archaeological, hydrogeological, and landscape analysis, the paper first reconstructs the garden's mid-nineteenth-century form and function. Zula's Hollow lies more than a metre below the surrounding ground level and integrates earthworks, a central ornamental pond with fountain (the "Aegean Sea"), a system of mounds and ridges, flowerbeds (some in the shapes of Greek letters), and the foundations of a summerhouse, all framed by steep bounding slopes. These features can be securely dated to Zula's ministry (c. 1839/41) and are documented in contemporary obituary, will, and estate materials, including Ann Zula's 1853 bequest to maintain the parts of the garden "known... by the names of the Carouli and Thermopyly" and the jette d'eau."

The paper then evaluates the history of interpretation that has treated the garden as a literal plan of the battle of Thermopylae. From late nineteenth-century newspaper accounts and J. W. Carey's illustration through mid-twentieth-century readings by W. I., Bishop J. H. Foy, James Stevens Curl and W. B. Stanford, specific garden features were aligned with Mt Oeta, Mt Callidromos, the Malian Gulf, the hot springs, the Phocian Wall, and Ephialtes' flanking path. Garrett's more recent work demonstrates both the strength and limits of these analogies: while the southern complex of earthworks plausibly encodes the pass, its "gates," and a representation of the Anopaia Path, other identifications are topographically strained or contradicted by the practical water-engineering logics of the site.

In dialogue with Jo Day's biographical and cultural study of Zula, the paper situates the garden within broader histories of Moravian mission, Irish "battle gardens," and Romantic philhellenism. Zula's journeyed from Roumeli chieftain in the Greek War of Independence, possibly present at Missolonghi, to a Moravian minister in County Down. This trajectory renders Thermopylae a potent symbol through which to explore honour, loss, and distance from a homeland moving toward independence. Day's suggestion that the project may have offered work during agricultural distress and functioned as a "protective" landscape is set alongside evidence for Zula's classical literacy and access to Herodotus and modern topographical debates.

Finally, the paper explores the semantic and affective density of "Karouli," the term applied in nineteenth-century documents to one part of the garden. Recent research indicates that Karouli may have been a local term associated with the Callidromos range and, separately, with Mavro Oros (Karaoli) in Epirus, near probable Zula family origins. This opens the possibility that a single mound simultaneously represents Mt Oeta/Callidromos and a mountain of Zula's own

homeland, thus fusing classical Greek memory, revolutionary biography, and Moravian pastoral identity in one composite landscape gesture.

By reading Zula's Hollow through material, textual, and homiletical sources, the paper advances an interpretation of the garden as a complex site of diasporic theology and memory and can be seen as a three-dimensional sermon on mission, refuge, and divine shielding, inscribed into the fabric of a small Irish Moravian congregation.