

Memorialisation in Norrtälje, Mariehamn and Pargas: 1881-1939

Notes on data collected for *'The Åland Islands Question': a New Perspective? A comparative study of three burial grounds on Åland, in Finland and in Sweden*, an MA dissertation submitted by Lara Band for the degree of Master of Arts, Historical Archaeology; School of Archaeology and Ancient History; University of Leicester 2011

Methodology

The burial grounds in Mariehamn, Norrtälje and Pargas were chosen partly for their accessibility but also because the towns share some similarities; they are the head towns in their immediate regions, all are Swedish speaking and all have seafaring connections. Because of their geographical relationship it is not unlikely that they had some contact in the past; certainly in the 1950s and 1960s there were boat connections in both directions from Mariehamn. The period 1881-1939 was chosen; this represents the first six decades of Mariehamn's cemetery and was felt to provide a suitable time frame around the 1921 League of Nations agreement on the Autonomy of Åland, though Norrtälje's cemetery was not in use until 1884.

For Mariehamn and Pargas all memorials with commemorations dating between 1881 and 1939 were recorded. Memorials which also had dates outside this period were excluded to keep the data within a manageable size for the time frame; this was also a way of excluding later memorials with back-commemorations some of which were obviously later but some much harder to define. In Norrtälje names and dates for those buried in a plot often do not appear on the memorials so the cemetery staff provided a list of the plots and names of people buried between 1884 and 1939 taken from the parish burial register and a map. Because there were 435 grave plots for this period a 25% sample from each section of the cemetery was decided on. Potential memorials for recording were marked on a map and then an area by area assessment made, discarding memorials which actually carried a later date or those that had surnames but not initials matching the list; some that were not on the list but were inscribed with dates inside the date range were chosen for recording.

The section numbers referred to in this study are those used by the cemetery management. I used the gravestone recording form of the Council for Scottish Archaeology (CSA 2010) and took a digital picture taken on each memorial.

For the dating of memorials attention was paid to identifying the primary inscriptions taking into account qualitative details including the shape of letters, their depth and spacing. If no difference could be found the latest date on the memorial was used, with an awareness that the memorial may not have been erected in the same year as the last person's death. For Norrtälje, memorials with no dates almost without exception carry only one name, the list was referred to and burial date of that individual was taken as the date for the memorial. Digital photographs were taken of each memorial and when arranging these into decades later any memorials that seemed wrongly placed in a particular decade were reassessed, though this occurred infrequently.

The database columns

Grave plot

The official grave plot number, taken from markers within in the grave plots and from plans supplied by the custodians of the cemeteries. For Pargas, the prefix PAR a and PAR b denotes memorials that had been moved during the re-organisation of the cemetery in the 1930s and now lie close to the church.

Surname

Surname of the commemorated. For Mariehamn and Pargas this has been taken from the memorial. For Norrtälje the parish burial record has been referred to where there are only initials on the memorial.

First name/initials

First name or initials of the commemorated.

Name as inscribed

The name as it appears on the grave marker. / denotes a new line. // denotes the surname appearing once above or below the first names of those commemorated, when there is more than one person commemorated.

Others interred in the grave

In the case of the family graves in Norrtälje cemetery an extra column has been added with the names, date

of death and age at death of those interred in the same grave plot, as recorded in cemetery burial records.

Gender

Gender of the person/people commemorated on the grave marker, based on their name, on other references on the memorial (e.g. 'son') and on research. For Norrtälje, the parish burial register was also referred to.

Probable erection date

Probable erection date based on the latest date of death in the primary inscription event (see Inscription event below).

Age

Calculated from birth and death dates on the memorial

Number commemorated

Number of people commemorated on the memorial

Inscription event

E.g., the primary inscription event is the first inscription added and is used to date the memorial. This is not always the earliest date of death on the memorial: see Mytum, H. 2002. *The Dating of graveyard memorials: evidence from the stones* Post Medieval Archaeology 36: 1-38. Mytum notes that decoration can be inscribed on a blank which is inscribed and erected with a commemoration many years later. None like this were detected in the study so the 'primary inscription event' always relates to a commemoration inscription.

Position of name

As inscribed on the memorial.

Additional personal information

As inscribed on the memorial, such as where the person was from or their maiden name etc.

Date of death

As inscribed on the memorial. For memorials in Norrtälje where there is no date of death, this has been taken from the date of death in the cemetery records.

Occupation/role

As inscribed on the memorial.

Introductory text

As inscribed on the memorial, such as 'Har vilar' (Here lies).

Epitaph

As inscribed on the memorial

Dedication

As inscribed on the memorial, noting who erected the memorial or who looks after it.

Stone mason/maker

As inscribed on the memorial

Plot size

Single, double etc

Memorial shape

Based on the code system in Mytum, H. 2000. *Recording and Analysing Graveyards*. York: Council for British Archaeology. Drawings of the shapes are not reproduced here, but can be seen in the photographs.

Kerb type

As memorial shape, above.

Number of components

Total number of pieces that the memorial is made up of (including kerbs and pedestals).

Orientation

Orientation of the memorial's main face

For Pargas, memorials with the prefix PAR a and PAR b denote those that were moved during the re-organisation of the cemetery in the 1930s and so are no longer in their original position.

Height

(cm)

Width

(cm)

Area

The area of face in cm² (height x width)

Depth (cm)

Thickness of the memorial

Primary material

Type of stone, etc

Primary material colour

Colour of the memorial

Primary finish

I.e., whether the memorial is polished, smooth, painted etc.

Secondary finish

if different from the primary finish

Lettering technique

Inscribed, relief etc.

Lettering treatment

If any used

Introductory, Occupation/role, Name, Date, Epitaph, Dedication[...] font

The font used for the inscription on the memorial. Signature means that the inscription was in cursive script but looked like it was meant to represent the person's signature

Primary, secondary and tertiary symbol

The main non textual symbol, whether inscribed, relief or sculpture. Although the cross of a cross shaped stone could be considered the primary symbol, this is included in memorial shape instead.