

Gravplats – gravfält. Platser att skapa minnen vid – platser att minnas vid.

Grave-place – grave-field. Places to create memories at – places to remember at.

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ABSTRACT

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A primary aim of this work is to understand why people in different societies during long periods of time returned to certain locations in order to build new grave-monuments and reutilize old ones. To get a clear picture of these questions at issue, it is important to investigate in which types of landscape people established grave-places and which of these sites were developed into grave-fields. This thesis emanates from the investigations of a grave-field and a dwelling site at *Sannarp* in the parish of Årstad near the stream Ätran in central Halland during 1990–1991. The chronology of the different archaeological remains reached from the Late Neolithic to the Migration Period.

The thesis consists of four parts; an archaeological theoretical background, a presentation of a variety of grave-fields, a discussion focused on one particular grave-field and finally a discussion on creating memories and the significance of them in the landscape. I have chosen a contextual archaeological point of view on the archaeological material dealing with people as active agents at the centre of attention. The work is carried out on different room and time scales inspired partly by the historical school of *Annales* and partly by the discussion within the philosophical disciplines concerning the perception of time by man. I would like to underline the word inspiration because this work is not a strict application of such theories based in other disciplines. The aim is to give a picture of the way grave-places in a regional context were created by people in communication with the inherited cultural landscape.

A part of the discussion is inspired by the model of John Chapman concerning the development of cultural landscapes in two different courses running parallel and to a certain extent interacting with each other. One course is characterised by *the vernacular landscape* developed successively and transformed over time. The other course is *the political landscape* formed by the fact that certain places are given a specific significance and are shaped accordingly. Thereby *places as timemarks* came to existence as frames of reference for the obvious transformation of the cultural landscape.

The creation of grave-fields in the regional investigation area of the stream Ätran began during the late Bronze Age; this development was reinforced during the Pre-roman Iron Age and marked a phase of more profound transformation of the cultural landscape. The establishment of grave-fields was a way for influential groups to manifest their position. People claimed an abstract cosmological past by reusing older grave-places. At the same time the own identity was manifested through the construction of new monuments. By constructing new grave-monuments more densely the locations were given a new architectural image.

The significance of grave-places and especially of grave-fields was that they were places where memories were created. Once the grave-places and grave-fields existed; they were places where people came to remember. This refers to the interaction between adoption of and dissociation from inherited structures. The ability of man to perceive time is a condition for memory and identity. The formation and reformation of grave-places and grave-fields were the physical frameworks in the landscape where memories were manifested and where memories were experienced.

Keywords: Grave-place, grave-field, landscape archaeology, time, memory, identity, monument, Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, Halland, Western Sweden