

Grave memorials as cultural heritage in  
western Sweden with focus on the 1800s



# Grave memorials as cultural heritage in western Sweden with focus on the 1800s

A study of materials, society,  
inscribed texts and symbols

Anders Gustavsson



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**Cover**

*Cast-iron crosses dated to the 1800's now placed along the outer wall of the church in Torp. The cross on the left on the back cover is hollow.*

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# Objectives

My starting point is to study grave memorials as cultural expressions of the time in which they were erected. Focus will be placed on changes over time. The period under study extends from the early 1800s, when permanent grave memorials began to be erected at cemeteries in Sweden, and until the 1900's. My analysis has concentrated on the following aspects of the topic:

- *Materials*
- *Social differences*
- *Gender*
- *Age*
- *View on life/afterlife*
- *Protection*
- *Anonymity-collectivity-individuality*

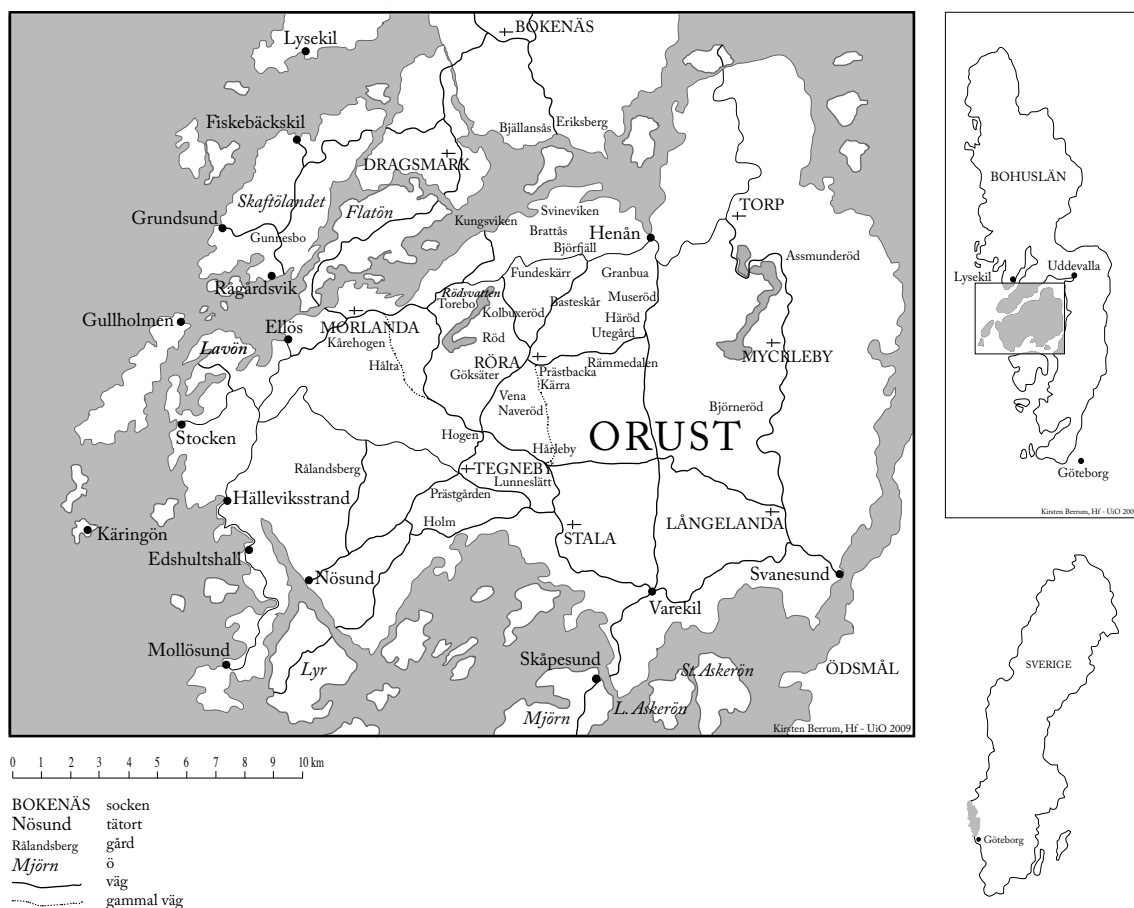
As a result of the analysis of messages on grave memorials, I also address cultural heritage issues: what can or should be selected and defined as being cultural heritage that is valid for our contemporary society and thus should be preserved and made available for posterity?

# Method of data selection

In this study, which addresses issues concerning cultural heritage, I focus on the 1800s, a period prior to the general usage of grave memorials of resistant material. Thus developments during the 1900s will be presented more briefly than those in the 1800s. In an earlier study, I examined the latest development from the 1990s onwards in both Sweden and Norway. This time was characterized by abrupt changes in grave memorials particularly concerning the usage of pictorial symbols (Gustavsson 2011 p. 39ff).

In order to carry out the present study, I found it necessary to select cemeteries which have been studied over a long period of time. Given my experiences of previous ethnological investigations, I chose the island of Orust in Bohuslän, western Sweden<sup>1</sup>, having about 15 000 inhabitants throughout the 1900s and into the 2000s

1. Orust is the third largest island in Sweden measuring 346 square kilometers in area and having a diameter of about 40 kilometers. Orust gained bridge access to the mainland in the 1960's.



1. Map of the island Orust in western Sweden. The map was drawn by Kirsten Berrum, Oslo, Norway.

(picture 1). Thus this is a case study. The island's highest level of population occurred in 1880, when it had 18 129 inhabitants. Family farms dominated the inland districts of the island, while shipping, ship building and fishing were the main activities along the coast, especially in the western sector of Morlanda parish. There was very little migration between Orust and the nearby mainland districts in the 1800s, especially from the farming regions in the inland districts of the island. Considerable emigration to the U.S., on the contrary, took place during the latter part of the 1800s and the early 1900s.

The three coastal towns of Gullholmen, Kåringön and Mollösund that were part of Morlanda established their own cemeteries in the 1790s when they became separate municipal communities. The same is true of Fiskebäckskil and Grundsund on the island of Skaftö. This island was also part of Morlanda parish until 1924 when it



became an independent parish. Kåringön and Grundsund were characterized by fishing population while shipping was more dominant in Fiskebäckskil, Gullholmen and Mollösund. There were few social differences in the agricultural sector of Orust with the exception of the owners of the manor in Morlanda which had belonged to a noble family called Bildt since 1536 ([www.morlandasateri.se](http://www.morlandasateri.se), Thorburn 2014). Farmers in Orust owned small farms (7–12 hectares).

For this study, I have chosen the cemeteries belonging to the seven churches on the island of Orust (Långelanda, Morlanda including the above-mentioned coastal towns, Myckleby, Röra, Stala, Tegneby and Torp listed alphabetically) with the existing numbers of grave memorials present until our own day. This is the quantitative portion of the survey. However, the objective of this study has a more qualitative than quantitative nature, since I want to indicate trends and developments over time. My study does not concern the production of grave memorials but rather the socio-cultural aspects of their use in different cemeteries. For the purpose of making comparisons, the results of the research in this case study may be tested later in other regions of Sweden and in foreign countries. By means of this case study (cf. Eriksen 2014), I also hope to provide arguments concerning the selection process of items that may become cultural heritage for posterity.

Grave memorials that have been lost cannot be recovered or analyzed because no written records exist. Tomb inventories made by the cemetery authorities of Orust date to the early 2000s (2007-2008). My discussion will not cover the reason why the number of existing grave memorials is greater in some cemeteries than in others, especially in Morlanda. Instead I will concentrate on an analysis of those grave memorials still existing in these cemeteries.

I have photographed all the older grave memorials that may be chosen for preservation as cultural monuments. I have also noted the observations I made of all the grave memorials and their inscriptions in the cemeteries selected. In this way I have been able to observe changes, for instance when the first granite tombstones were erected, when the term “family grave” began to be used and when such usage later stopped, or concerning changes with regard to professional or gender inscriptions.

# Materials

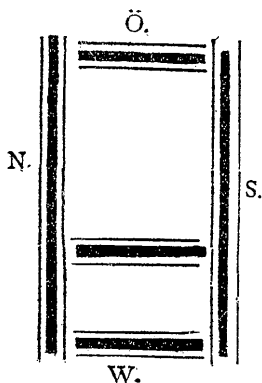
How has the material substance of grave memorials changed over time, namely from wood to limestone, then to cast-iron and later to granite stone?

## Historical background prior to 1800

Grave memorials erected before the 1800s and still visible in the cemeteries under study are absent on Orust. Those preserved lie on the church floor directly above the buried corpses or have been erected along the church wall. Because of health hazards caused to churchgoers by the strong and unpleasant smell, tombs inside the church were forbidden by a parliamentary decision in 1815, preceded by a Royal decree in 1805 (Hagberg 1937 p. 256f, Malmstedt 2002 p. 191f). Gravestones lying on the church floor gradually became badly worn by being trod upon by churchgoers. The text was thus increasingly difficult to interpret. According to a list dated to 1830, there were five gravestones on the floor of Morlanda church. Their texts are now illegible as they have been worn down by human feet. One gravestone was noted as having the following text in 1830: “Here lies the man Tame Jensen Bøker who died in Fiskebäckskil 25 November, 1597. God grant him a glorious resurrection and eternal life. Amen”. Today, it is no longer possible to read this text, but it may be on one of the four illegible stones still remaining on the church floor in Morlanda (Thorburn 2014, p. 114).

## New types of grave memorials since 1815

Prior to 1815, each farm or homestead had its own gravesite in local cemeteries since the late Middle Ages (Nilsson 2004 p. 146f). There was often little space between



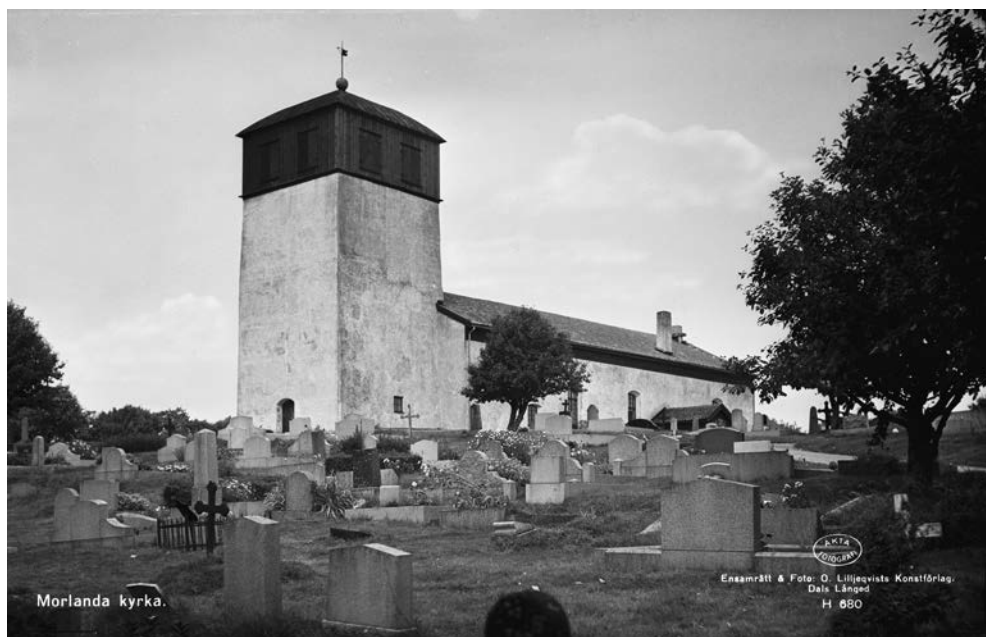
2. Wooden grave memorial drawn by Pehr Kalm in Tanum, Bohuslän in 1742 (Kalm 1977 p. 57).



3. Morlanda church in 1903. Observe the few grave memorials on the cemetery. Note also the growing grass. Bohuslän museum. [Digitaltmuseum.se](http://Digitaltmuseum.se).



4. Morlanda church in 1923. There were still few tomb memorials in the cemetery. Bohuslän museum.



5. *Morlanda church in 1949. An extremely large number of grave memorials have been erected compared with the photos taken in 1903 and 1923. Bohuslän museum.*

the various graves, which made long-lasting grave memorials impossible (Hagberg 1937 p. 247ff, Malmsten 2002 p. 63ff). Simple memorials made of wood were rather common, but they did not last as long as those made of stone or cast-iron did later (Hagberg 1937 p. 478f). Such monuments of wood were noted by the Linnaeus disciple Pehr Kalm, when he visited Tanum in northern Bohuslän in 1742 (picture 2).

Headstones had they not, but instead had the peasants nailed a few boards to shape as this figure, which were laid on the graves. On top of them were written the names of the buried, man or woman, the month and day of the death, and the cause of the death, wishing the buried a joyful resurrection, mentioning their age and the year when they died. The scripture was in Swedish with Latin letters. On pages and under the boards were stones, either loose or bricked up, whereupon these boards rested (Kalm 1977 p. 57).

These squares of wood lay on the ground, but the cemeteries had also erected wooden crosses.

The number of grave memorials increased in the 1800s, but they were still few compared with the 1900s. This difference is clearly evident when comparing photos of the cemetery in Morlanda in 1903 and 1923 with a photo taken in 1949 (picture 3–5).



6. Abundant grass growing between the graves on Röra cemetery in the early 1940s. In the background the house built in 1855 by the farmer and diary writer Jakob Jons-son (see below). Photo privately owned.

Cemeteries were used as pastures during the 1800s, and the grass was sold at auction (Hagberg 1937 p. 469, Malmstedt 2002 p. 65, Gustavsson 2011 p. 27f). Even well into the 1900s, there was tall grass in the cemeteries (picture 6).

In the 1800s, the old custom reaching back to the Middle Ages (Alexandersson 2014 p. 49ff) allowing each farm or homestead to have its own gravesite was gradually abandoned. A new type of burial, known as “lap funeral”, was introduced alongside the older one: the deceased were buried in a chronological sequence, without connection to their families (Hagberg 1937 p. 250ff). In this way you could avoid digging among unmouldered corpses and separate bones (Bringéus 1953). As a result, the husband and wife could come to lie at different locations until the family graves at the end of the 1800s began to be common on graves with cast-iron fences and granite stones (see section Gender). They could be purchased by those who could afford them (Bringéus 1977 p. 185ff, Theorell and Wästberg 2001 p. 13ff, Malmstedt 2002 p. 192). Lap funeral required that cemeteries were divided into different blocks and that gravesites were numbered.

The new type of grave memorials that emerged in the early 1800s consisted of limestone tombstones with a rounded or pointed top. Their breadth differed sig-





7. A broad and pointed limestone gravestone commemorating the peasant and shipbuilder Olof Jacobsson who died in 1846 and his wife Christina Larsdotter dead in 1871, with a radiant half-sun symbol on its top. This stone is steadily anchored in the base. Photography unless otherwise indicated: Anders Gustavsson.

nificantly from broad to narrow stones (see section Social differences). The oldest gravestone of this type is dated to 1809. Most of the stones were erected in the mid-1800s (picture 7) and they ceased to appear by the last two decades of the 1800s.

On Orust, limestone gravestones are mostly found in Morlanda cemetery, which covers the agricultural countryside as well as the maritime and fishing area. 54 of the totally 74 stones on Orust can be found in Morlanda. This parish also holds a special position because of the fact that the earliest stones can be found there, namely four from the 1820s, two from the 1830s, sixteen from the 1840s (the peak year was in 1846 with five stones), five from the 1850s, nine from the 1860s, seven from the the 1870s, four from the 1880s and four from the 1890s<sup>2</sup>. In addition, there are three stones that are unreadable due to moss. The period of time is also widespread reaching from the oldest stone in 1820 to the latest in 1897. Outside Morlanda the oldest stones are dated to 1809 in Stala, 1847 in Torp and 1850 in Röra and the latest from 1891 at Tegneby cemetery<sup>3</sup>.

By the mid-1800s *cast-iron graves* began to be erected. Their external form, but not inscriptions on them, have been inventoried by the ethnologist Ritwa Herjulf-

2. The calculation is based on the first year of death if there are multiple names on the stone. This can constitute a source of error since it is impossible to judge if a memorial was erected after the first or second death of spouses.
3. The number of limestone gravestones in the different cemeteries are: Stala 2 from 1887, Myckleby 1 from 1868, Torp 2 from 1847–1866, Långelanda 3 from 1874–1887, Röra 3 from 1850–1857, Tegneby 7 from 1865–1891 and Morlanda 54 from 1820–1897.



8. A cast-iron gable-shaped monument on Morlanda cemetery commemorating the farmer Simon Andersson and his wife Christina Hinrikdotter (1821–1883) with a cross and two angels on its top.

dotter in the provinces of Dalsland and Gotland and in the city of Gothenburg in Sweden (Herjulfsdotter 2013). There are three types of such tombstones: simple crosses, three-leaf clover-shaped crosses and hollow crosses with specific patterns. Even broad gable outcrops were possible where there was more space for inscriptions (picture 8). Gradually, some of these cast-iron graves had fences built around them<sup>4</sup>.

An especially large number of cast-iron crosses have been preserved in Morlanda cemetery. All in all, there are 82 such tombstones on Orust, of which 50 are in Morlanda cemeteries<sup>5</sup>. The earliest cross was erected to commemorate the vicar Beckman in Morlanda in 1848, while the next case in Morlanda is from 1868. In Myckleby the first grave is also for a clergyman, a dean Johan Andersson in 1849. The next example in Myckleby is not dated until 1872. Immediately following the two priests in Morlanda and Myckleby in 1848 and 1849, there is a peasant's grave from 1855 in Röra and subsequently in 1858 and 1860 in the same parish. The last cast-iron crosses outside Morlanda are from 1888 while Morlanda's last cross is dated to the year 1898.

4. Together with cast-iron tombstones, iron-crosses were erected in some ironworks areas in Sweden, but they have not been found in my research area. The ethnologist Christian Aarsrud carried out an ethnological study of iron crosses as a form of folk art (Aarsrud 1982).
5. Stala has 2 cast-iron crosses, Långelanda 3, Tegneby 5, Myckleby 6, Röra 8, 5 of which lie along the church wall, Torp 8, all lying along the wall of the church, Morlanda 50, Kåringön 4, Gullholmen 1, Grundsund 2 and Fiskebäckskil 6. The death years for these crosses are in Morlanda 1848–1898, Myckleby 1849–1875, Röra 1855–1878, Tegneby 1860–1888, Stala 1862–1867, Långelanda 1865–1872, Torp 1867–1874, Kåringön 1860–1883, Grundsund 1867 and Fiskebäckskil 1866–1894.



9. A renovated cast-iron fence in Mollösund surrounding the family grave commemorating the sea captain Johannes Olsson the elder born in 1812 and dead in 1874. His son, the sea captain Carl Oscar Olsson (1852–1908), was commemorated with an individual plaque mounted on the left side of the fence. Gravel has been laid inside the fence. As it is a “family grave”, the wives are not mentioned.

Morlanda is the only cemetery with cast-iron crosses having no inscriptions. No fewer than 26 of the 50 crosses lack any text at all and never seem to have had any. According to oral tradition, some people wished to have a permanent grave memorial but could not afford to pay for the inscription which constituted an additional charge. The authenticity of such narratives cannot be verified but is supported by the fact that they are passed on to later generations within the family. These deceased people have been and remain anonymous in the cemetery.

On Orust there are 29 graves with *cast-iron fences*. Usually, such graves are more lavish. The entire grave area is surrounded by a fence with a gate for the care of the grave (picture 9). The number of these cast-iron fences is as follows: Stala 0, Röra 1, Torp 1, Långelanda 1, Myckleby 3, Tegneby 4 and Morlanda 19. As with other grave types Morlanda is thus overrepresented. The death years for the first iron fences are slightly later than those of the cast-iron crosses, namely from the late 1850s instead





10. An undated wooden cross commemorating two sisters with the surname Andersson from the place Sollid in Morlanda.

of the late 1840s. In Myckleby the death years are 1858 and 1860 for two farmers. The next-earliest is the grave over the dean Sjöstedt in Tegneby in 1859. Morlanda's earliest cast-iron fence is dated to 1874 but at the same time, it may be noted that 9 of the 29 grave memorials in Orust lack dates. The latest evidence in Röra is dated to the year 1902 (a merchant) and in Gullholmen dated to 1914 (a sea captain)

The limestone and cast-iron gravestones disappeared at the end of the 1800s. However, occasional *wooden crosses* were set up during the 1900s. Their total number on Orust is 18, including 11 in Morlanda. The number in the parishes is: Myckleby 0, Röra 1, Tegneby 1, Långelanda 1, Stala 2, Torp 2 and Morlanda 11. In addition, three crosses have been preserved in the church attic in Gullholmen (see picture 51). The death years are 1838 and in two cases 1866. They are provided with texts that are clearly legible even if the outer shape is partially defective as they previously stood outside in the churchyard. I have not found any other memorials of wood that could be traced back to the 1800s. Two of the crosses in Morlanda cemetery are dated to 1910 and 1929. The latest example in Röra is dated to 1962 and in Torp still later, namely to 1998 and 1999. Three wooden crosses have no names, and a few have no year but only initial letters such as "JAJ" in Morlanda. The inscription "EBBE" also in Morlanda may indicate a child. Some of these wooden crosses have been painted or stained (picture 10).

During the 1900s, *granite monuments* dominated, but they began to appear in the late 1800s. My study area in Bohuslän is famous for its granite stone industry dated



11. The first granite gravestone in Röra commemorating the farmer Gustaf Andersson and his wife Johanna, who both died in 1871. They were childless. Photo taken in 2008 before the stone was cleaned in 2013.



12. A black granite gravestone in Tegneby with frames marking the farmer Lars Olsson's (1824–1896) family grave. His wife Helena, who died in 1906, is not mentioned. A cross on top of the stone. This original frame was protected by descendants in 2011 when the cemetery authorities removed other frames from this cemetery.

to the 1870s and lasting well into the 1900s. Stone industry in Bohuslän had its golden age from 1890 to 1914 (Danielsson and Norheim 2003 p. 18ff). The first granite gravestones on Orust appeared in the 1870s (Gustavsson 2011 p. 29). The oldest one, dated to 1872, is found at Röra cemetery (picture 11, cf. picture 25). It is mentioned by the farmer Jakob Jonsson, who kept a diary from 1866 to 1879 and described it as “a costly memorial stone of granite” (*Jakob Jonssons dagbok* 1991 p. 271) commemorating a wealthy farmer and his wife. The next granite stone in Röra is dated to 1875. The oldest granite stone in Långelanda is dated to 1873 and in Myckleby to 1874. During the 1880s and 1890s, granite headstones became more common and were predominant during the 1900s.

Simultaneously with the arrival of granite monuments, *frames* of granite around the gravesite appeared (picture 12). Earlier in the 1800s, only iron fences marked the burial site's length and width. Pehr Kalm's evidence from Tanum in 1742 shows that frames of wood may have existed before the period during which limestone tombstones were used (see picture 2).

## Social differences

How are social differences indicated?

The grave memorials consisting of stones that had been laid on the church floor since the Middle Ages came from the better-off social strata that could pay for their burial sites (Nilsson 2004 p. 147). In Bro parish north of Orust the admiral Strömstierna asked to have his grave placed below his pew. At a bishop's inspection in the parish in 1728, the decision was: "As His Honor the Admiral's donation to the church was so sizable, it was agreed and granted by all those parishioners present" (Bergstrand 1937).

On Orust grave slabs placed inside the church commemorate priests, a few skip-pers and the noble family Bildt who owned Morlanda manor since 1536 and the manor Kåröd in Myckleby parish since 1633. The Bildt family owned the medieval church in Morlanda, and between 1648 and 1921 had the right to appoint the vicar and also to receive the church tithes from the parishioners for maintenance of the church (Oedman 1746 p. 192, Holmberg 1867 p. 280, [www.morlandasateri.se](http://www.morlandasateri.se), Thorburn 2014 p. 70, 79 and 110f).

After the placement of graves inside the church was forbidden in 1815, the manor owner Abraham Gustaf Bildt (1747–1828) (picture 13) had a stone wall with a separate gate erected to surround the tomb area for the Bildt family in the northeast corner of the cemetery. He was buried there in 1828. This tomb area still exists and is used by Bildt relatives (picture 14).



13. Abraham Gustaf Bildt (1747–1828), the owner of Morlanda manor ([www.morlandasateri.se](http://www.morlandasateri.se), Thorburn 2014, p. 80f).





14. *The separate Bildt burial plot in Morlanda cemetery established in the early 1800s on the initiative of the manor owner Abraham Gustaf Bildt. Photo: Kristina Gustavsson.*

The first gravestones in Orust churchyards dating to the early 1800s belong to the upper strata of society, such as the burial site of the Bildt family. These strata included county bailiffs who exerted considerable legal powers and whose life-style strongly differed from that of peasant population. One example of such gravestones is a tall *limestone tombstone* in Stala cemetery on the grave of the county bailiff J. Eiserman born in 1748 and died in 1809. This is the oldest surviving grave memorial on Orust cemeteries (picture 15). On the front of the stone there is an inscription describing the deceased's virtues during life (see below). Because of this long text there was no more space on the front of the stone. On the back, however, you can find the names of the wife, Mary Elizabeth Eiserman born Almgren (1768–1837) and the daughter Anna Eiserman born in 1808 and dead in 1889. The county bailiff Carl Erik Hellberg, who died in 1862 in Stala was given a tall limestone gravestone similar to that of the county bailiff Johan Fred. Hellberg who died in Långelanda in 1866 and got a marble stone.

The second oldest limestone tombstone in Orust can be seen in the Bildt cemetery; it was erected over the grave of a married woman whose maiden name was Bildt and who died in 1820 at the age of 41 (picture 16). Later too, limestone tombstones dominated on burial sites of the higher social strata. In Morlanda, there are limestone tombstones on the graves of three members of parliament who died in 1822 (see picture 34), 1845 and 1867. Johannes Nilsson's headstone in 1867 stated that he "attended five Parliaments from 1850 to 1863".



15. A tall limestone gravestone commemorating the county bailiff J. Eiserman from Stala born in 1748 and deceased in 1809.



16. A rounded limestone gravestone commemorating a wife whose maiden name was Bildt. She died in 1820 at 41 years of age and was buried in the Bildt burial plot.

With times occupations such as seafaring and ship building became lucrative (Ne.se Bondese glation), and skippers and ship builders joined the strata of the well-to-do people. The first evidence of this is a limestone gravestone found in Morlanda dated to 1833 and erected over the grave of a skipper's wife.

By the mid-1800s, a new profession appeared in rural areas, namely that of merchants. In 1846, it had become legal to open small shops in rural areas if these were situated at least thirty kilometres away from a city (Ejdestam 1943 p. 97). In 1864, this restriction was removed and tradesmen accumulated a good financial standing. In Morlanda, there are limestone tombstones over the graves of the first merchants dated to 1849 and 1859.

This also includes the horizontal stone commemorating the successful fishery merchant Anders Falk, who died childless in 1853 at the age of eighty-eight leaving a fortune (picture 17). This became the basis for the Falk donation given to Morlanda congregation. It still exists and distributes financial resources to the needy (Rehnberg 1997). Two earlier examples of shopkeepers in the fishing industry, titled "salteri-



17. A horizontal gravestone commemorating the fishmonger Anders Falk who died in 1853 in Morlanda.



18. A narrow limestone gravestone with a rounded top commemorating the pastor Johan David Hylander in Morlanda who died in 1847 at the age of 59. This is a very early example of the use of a cross above a clergyman's grave.

idkare”, consist of a limestone tombstone for Anders Arvidsson born in 1781 in the province of Dalsland and dead in 1833 and the wooden cross preserved in the Gullholmen church attic for Anders Jonasson who was born in 1803 and died in 1838.

Limestone tombstones were also erected on the graves of clergymen. The first example is that of a chapel preacher Carlberg on the island of Kärिंगön who died in 1842, then a curate named Hylander in Morlanda in 1847 (picture 18), and a pastor named Rosander in 1873. These priests of lower rank were given narrow stones which differed significantly from the broad stones commemorating the members of the aforementioned wealthy social strata. The smaller stones had round tops while those on the broad ones were pointed.

Since the area of Orust was mainly taken up by family farms during the 1800s, determining when farmers' names started appearing on limestone tombstones can be of interest. The first such tombstone on a peasant's grave is dated to 1828 in Morlanda. It is a much narrower stone than the other two dated to the 1820s, those at the





19. A cast-iron cross outside the church wall in Kåringön commemorating the sea captain M. Larsson who was born in 1817 and died in 1860. It has a star on its top and a winged angel at its foot. Light rays radiate out from the center of the cross where the cross arms meet. The cross is corroded by rust and needs preservation.

Bildt family gravesite and over the parliamentary member Andreas Jönsson. It is similar to the narrow limestones of the aforementioned priests of lower rank in Morlanda. A third of the 54 limestone tombstones in Morlanda indicate farmers' graves. Their title is not "farmer" ("bonde" in Swedish) but "hemmansägare" which means *yeoman*, emphasizing the fact that the deceased owned his own land regardless of its size in contrast to crofters. In the other Orust cemeteries the first evidences of use of the farmer title date to 1850 and 1857 and are found in Röra. Of the eighteen limestone tombstones outside Morlanda, nine were erected over farmers. There are few other professions noted here except for a county bailiff in Myckleby in 1868 (see picture 45) and an organist in Tegneby 1885.

As for the 82 *cast-iron crosses* from the mid-1800s, the earliest were erected to commemorate priests: a vicar in Morlanda in 1848 and a dean in Myckleby in 1849. An early cast-iron cross was erected over a sea captain from Kåringön born in 1817 and dead in 1860 (picture 19). At Fiskebäckskil three of a total of six cast-iron crosses were erected over sea captains. The other three crosses have no profession indicated. A member of parliament was buried in Röra in 1867 (see picture 36) and a sea captain in Långelanda in 1872. It should also be noted that only 5 of the 50 crosses in Morlanda cemetery indicate profession. The occupational category in Orust with the highest number of profession is ten farmers.



The 29 *cast-iron fences* are found on the burial sites of people with higher social positions, which is a more status-specific feature than the cast-iron crosses. The oldest example refers to a dean in Tegneby in 1859. In Mollösund a cast-iron fence was erected over the sea captain Johannes Olsson the elder, who died in 1874 (see picture 9). As in Mollösund, the majority of the five cast-iron fences in Gullholmen and Fiskebäckskil were erected for sea captains who were the most wealthy persons. By contrast, in Kåringön which like Grundsund primarily had a fishing population, there are no cast-iron fences but two cast-iron crosses over sea captains. Some fishermen in Kåringön and Grundsund were given granite memorials in later years starting in the early 1900s. In many cases this concerned a family grave where no mention was made of the years of birth and death. Fishermen who were often poorer than active seafarers, were not given cast-iron fences in Mollösund, Gullholmen or Fiskebäckskil nor any other visible grave memorials in the 1800s. In Tegneby fences were built around the graves of two merchants, as well as one in Röra and one in Fiskebäckskil. In Morlanda the first-known fence commemorates a curate who died in 1880. Two sea captains in Morlanda were given iron fences in 1885 and in 1908. In addition, four farmers' graves from various parts of Orust, whose years of death ranged from 1860 to 1883, also received fences. 11 of the 29 cast-iron fences do not indicate a professional designation.

When *granite tombstones* began to appear in the late 1800s, social status was shown through the height of the stone and also by the design of newly added grave frames. Even today some high and broad tombstones stand out in the older sections of the cemeteries. This practice ceased in the 1920s (picture 20) when the height of tombstones in Sweden was regulated to be lower and narrower and thus more uniform in every part of the cemetery (*Svensk författningssamling* 1923 no. 201). It was not until the new Funeral Regulation of 1990 that relatives again were able to choose the size of a grave memorial (*Svensk författningssamling* 1990 no. 1144). In Morlanda there are 18 tall stones dated to the 1920s, but later all memorials became lower. In other parishes in Orust the newest tall granite stones also date to the 1920s, as in Tegneby where there are two stones dated to 1929. This new situation removed any possibility for marking a social position. It then became more important to emphasize social status by the inscription of a professional title. The lowest social layers did not indicate professions. For example, one cannot find any crofters. The lower social strata are thus harder to track (cf. above on wooden crosses).

*Wooden crosses* dated to the 1900s have no references to professional titles. It is possible, however, to find entries in the church registers testifying to their belonging to the lower social strata if the deceased are named. The names of August (1839–1914) and Maja (1837–1928) Andersson from Gullixeröd in Morlanda relate to a couple married in 1864. They had six children. The husband was born on a farm



20. One of the last tall granite grave-stones in Mollösund inscribed with the words “family grave” commemorating Constance, who died in 1922 and was the wife of the sea captain C. O. Olsson. Note that the name of the wife including the years of her birth and death was inscribed on a family grave in the 1920s. The daughter Maria, who died in 1931, was also buried here. A member of the third generation, Torbjörn Gustafsson (1936–1951), received a horizontal stone lying in front of the tall black granite stone.



21. A wooden cross commemorating the couple August and Maja Andersson from Morlanda. Photo: Kristina Gustavsson.

in Gullixeröd but became an orphan shortly after his birth. His family lived on the farm until 1883 when it was forced to be sold. Then they had to live in a small cottage. In order to get firewood, August had to break stumps. He and his household could barely make a living (picture 21) (Holmqvist 2007).

Inscribed professional designations gradually became more rare and later disappeared completely. They had a renaissance in a new shape when inscriptions began to be replaced by pictorial symbols starting in the 1990s, as I have analyzed in a previous study (Gustavsson 2003). Professional qualifications which previously were inscribed with letters, have been increasingly replaced by pictorial symbols after the adoption of the new Swedish Funeral Regulation in 1990. This could be an ear of corn for a farmer or an elk for hunters (picture 22).



22. A farmer in Tegneby received two spikes of corn and his black stallion on his granite gravestone plus a gold-painted cross in 1999.

## Gender

How was the status of women expressed on grave memorials and did it change over time?

The woman's surname

In the 1800s, women's names were inscribed on all grave memorials whether or not they were married as was shown in Pehr Kalm's observations in Bohuslän in 1742 (see above). They always bore their father's first name with the affix *-daughter* even after they were married. The woman's original identity before marriage was thus preserved after death. This applies to limestone gravestones and to cast-iron tombstones. This practice was also continued on the early granite tombstones of the late 1800s. The last examples of women's names consisting of the father's first name plus the affix *-daughter* are dated to about 1900<sup>6</sup>. Until the surname regulation of 1901, almost any surnames could be adopted in Sweden. The new regulation stated that those who had no family name would use their father's name with the affix *-son* (*Svensk författningssamling* 1901 no. 125, [www.ne.se](http://www.ne.se) Personal names, *Nordisk kultur* VII 1947, Malmsten 2000). It is thus clear that this innovation using the affix *-son* led to the rapid disappearance of the woman's own background identity on the inscriptions of grave memorials. Instead she adopted her husband's identity and this became the accepted usage in the 1900s.

The epithet preceding the woman's first name was the word *wife*, or *widow* in some cases in the coastal resorts in Morlanda. In a brief transitional phase around 1900, both the father's first name plus the affix *-daughter* and the husband's surname with the affix *-son* was used. This was the case in Myckleby in the 1890s and in Morlanda until 1916. A tall granite stone was erected in Röra to commemorate the farmer Abraham Johansson (1828–1907) and his wife Malena Johansson (1833–1908) *née* Olsdaughter.

One exception from the mentioning of wives' names occurred during the late 1800s and early 1900s when the word *family grave* appeared on many of the cast-iron fence graves and granite stones, but not on cast-iron crosses or limestone grave-

6. Torp 1847 limestone, Långelanda 1902 granite, Tegneby 1904 granite, Myckleby 1909 granite, Stala 1913 granite, Röra 1914 granite, Mollösund 1915 granite, Morlanda 1916 granite. There are very few evidences that a deceased woman had the last name ending in *-son* before the year 1901 and these examples are descended only from the coastal towns Mollösund and Gullholmen (see picture 51).



stones. On these collective family grave memorials, the husband's name was the only one mentioned, while women and children were anonymised. The family grave concept, which never became universally prevailing, not only placed the family in the center of social life, but also marked a strong patriarchal trend in society since the husband's first name and family name were always inscribed over such graves. The time period of these family tombs cannot always be determined because the husband's birth and death years in several cases are not mentioned. The earliest dated examples of the term family grave are from the early 1870s (see picture 9, 1874). It is not clear why the concept family grave arose at exactly that time. There were no central regulations concerning that.

It was not until the 1920s that women again became visible through the use of their first names and, in some cases, with the addition of the husband's surname. This took place immediately after women's legal right to vote was adopted in Sweden in 1921 (Stiernquist 1996). During a transition period in the 1920s (see picture 20), the word family grave was retained, but later this word disappeared. In Morlanda the farmer Hilmer Olsson died in 1919, and his wife Amanda in 1925. Her name and the years of her birth and death were mentioned in addition to the words *family grave* at the bottom of the stone. From the 1930s and on, very few family graves have been



23. *Three generations in the same family grave in Mollösund. Axel Bergström's name is placed on top despite the fact that his wife, Charlotta Maria Bergström, died in 1914 and thus much earlier than he did in 1949. A photo showing both of them is attached uppermost. The second generation commemorated lower down on the stone consists of their son Arvid Bergström (1904–1986) and his wife Oda (1911–2009). A second son, Carl (1900–1928), is also commemorated here. A member of the third generation, Sten Bergström (1931–1995), is commemorated with a horizontal stone lying in front of the raised black granite gravestone. Photos on grave-stones were very rare in the early 1900s and still are so in Orust.*

erected. Women's and children's identities were then completely restored on grave-stone inscriptions. The concept family grave thus existed for only a short period between the 1870s and the 1920s.

One way to continue longer use of a family tomb on a tall stone is by having future generations of the family also buried in the same grave. The following generations are then named further down on the stone. When there is no more space on the stone, a flat slab for urn graves is placed in front of the erected stone (see pictures 20 and 23 Mollösund). Such grave memorials with multiple generations in the same tomb have become more and more common, which shows affinity between generations in a concrete manner.

During the 1900s, it was extremely rare to inscribe the wife's maiden name. On the whole of Orust there is merely a handful of such tombstones and never with the affix *-son* (see picture 40). Marriage meant a change of identity for the wife.

### Single women

When the lap funeral was introduced in the 1800s, married women could be given their own grave, separate from the husband's, or their names could be written uppermost on the tombstone; these could be on limestone tombstones and cast-iron crosses<sup>7</sup>. If the husband died after his wife, his name was either written lower down on the stone, or he was given a separate grave.

Here are some examples of these practices. In Torp there is a three-leaf clover-shaped cross for a wife who died in 1870 without her husband being mentioned. The farmer's wife Johanna Larsdaughter from the farm Haga in Stala was born in 1806 and died in 1867. She was given a cast-iron cross topped by a star (picture 24). When her husband Samuel Johansson, also born in 1806, died in 1874, he was given a small granite headstone located a bit away from his wife's cast-iron cross (picture 25). The wife Anna Britta Andreasdaughter, who was born in 1809 and died in 1865 in Tegneby, had a limestone erected to her memory. Three years later in 1868, her husband Anders Persson (born in 1807) died and his name was inscribed under his wife's name (picture 26). The same applies to the grave of Maria Johansdotter who died in 1868 in Morlanda while her husband Olof Johansson survived until 1898 and had his name inscribed near the bottom of the limestone gravestone. In Fiskebäckskil two separate limestone gravestones have been placed side by side, one for the wife deceased in 1827 at the age of 60, and one for the husband who died in 1843 at the age of 75 (picture 27). These gravestones represent an equality of the sexes that did not continue

7. 2 of 8 cast-iron crosses in Torp have only the name of a wife, the corresponding number in Röra is 1 of 8 and in Tegneby 1 of 5. The distribution is about the same in the case of limestone tombstones. 2 of 7 such stones in Tegneby and 1 of 2 in Gullholmen refer to single women.



24. The wife Johanna Larsdaughter, who was born in 1806, was buried in Stala cemetery in 1867 and was commemorated with a cast-iron cross having a star on its top. Rays of light beam from the center of the cross. The cross is corroded by rust.



25. Johanna Larsdaughter's husband Samuel Johansson from the farm Haga in Stala died in 1874. He received a narrow granite stone located a bit away from his wife's cast-iron cross (picture 24). There is a star on the top of the stone like the top of the memorial over the wife. This is an early example of a granite gravestone (cf. picture 11).

on into the 1900s. The husband's name was then always placed on the top or to the left and the wife's under or to the right, even though she died earlier (see picture 23). This custom demonstrates that the husband's superiority also continued after death. This situation lasted until the end of the 1900s when it began to be abandoned (Gustavsson 2003 p. 74ff).

Moreover, some tomb memorials in the 1800s only mention a male name in adulthood. Then you cannot know if the man was married or single. Thanks the epithet wife, however, it is possible to see if women were single or married. In coastal villages the epithet *widow* is sometimes inscribed before the woman's name (picture 28), meaning that the spouse had died at sea while fishing or in shipping and was not buried in the local cemetery.

The type of grave with the highest proportion of single women's names applies to wooden crosses where 7 out of 18 on Orust during the 1900s mention single





26. The wife Anna Britta Andreasdaughter (1809–1865) in Tegneby was commemorated with a rounded limestone gravestone. When her husband the farmer Anders Persson died in 1868, his name was written below his wife's name. This limestone gravestone is a very early example of one with a black cross on its top instead of a radiant sun (cf. picture 18).



27. Two separate limestone gravestones standing side-by-side in Fiskebäckskil. The stone to the right commemorates the wife Maria Brita (1767–1827) and the one to the left commemorates the husband Lars Andersson (1768–1843). A text from the 1819 hymnal is inscribed on the wife's stone.

women, while only two wooden crosses have been erected over single males. At least some of these women have indeed been unmarried as is the case with two sisters in Morlanda (see picture 10).

However, considerable time elapsed before women's professional titles appeared on the tombstones. A very early example is the gravestone over the single woman Maria Johansson who died in Torp in 1900, twenty-five years old. Her title was *ironing woman*. However, on Orust hardly any women's professional titles have been found until recently. A midwife who died in 1973 in Tegneby at the age of 75, got her professional title inscribed on the gravestone alongside that of her husband's professional title (picture 29). In Morlanda the title *nurse* can be found on the gravestone over a woman who was born in 1948 and died in 2005. The few examples showing women's titles relate to feminine occupations in health care and education.





28. The widow Kristina Johansson in Fiskebäckskil died in 1921 at the age of 82. Her three children inscribed on the stone were born in 1871, 1876 and 1881 and died before their mother. The husband had been lost at sea many years earlier and had no gravesite on the cemetery.



29. The midwife Ebba Persson (1898–1973) was given her professional title on the gravestone in Tegneby just like her husband Axel Persson (1891–1965), who was a telephone operator. A radiant star on the gravestone's top is reminiscent of similar decorations in the 1800s.

## Age, with focus on children and young people

Although child mortality was extensive in earlier times, most grave memorials were erected to commemorate adults of middle age (40-60 years) and older. In this section, I want to pay special attention to grave memorials commemorating children up to 15 years of age and young people aged 15-25.

### Children

Before the epithet *family grave* appeared in the late 1800s, the family was indicated by the husband's and wife's names on grave memorials. The names of deceased children could be added at the bottom of some limestone gravestones but rarely on cast-iron crosses where there was less space to write on. On the tombstones the number of the deceased's descendants could occasionally be inscribed in the 1800s. This clearly shows the importance of having many children. The gravestone of the vicar Pehr Sahlgren, who died in Myckleby in 1714 (see picture 43), mentions that he and his wife (who died in 1704) had ten children, six sons and four daughters, all of whom



30. A rounded limestone gravestone in Fiskebäckskil with a radiant sun on its top commemorating the farmer Johannes Larsson, who was born in 1802 and died in 1860. His first wife was Anna Christina Olsdaughter (1808–1839). His second wife was Johanna Olsdaughter, who was born in 1819. The year of her death is not legible. The two marriages were "blessed" with 14 children.

died before their father, and now rested in the same burial ground under the church floor as their parents.

On a tall, wide limestone tombstone in Morlanda cemetery commemorating Olof Hansson (1763–1847), without occupational title, and his wife Inger Nilsson (1759–1830), there is the phrase “they are missed and mourned by children (without number), 28 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren”. A farmer Johannes Larsson (1802–1860) in the island of Skaftö was married twice. On his limestone tombstone in the cemetery in Fiskebäckskil the inscription reads that he and his two wives were “blessed with 14 children who now are living” (picture 30).

There is one limestone tombstone commemorating three dead children on Orust, a number of cast-iron crosses and one single iron fence. One limestone tombstone in Käringön was erected to commemorate three young siblings deceased in 1834, 1835 and 1848. In the 1800s, regular funerals were organized for children while a memorial was held for stillbirths. The farmer Jakob Jonsson in Röra wrote in his diary on March 17, 1872 that the third stillborn child was buried in Röra that year (Gustavsson 2011 p. 21f). Yet, no child’s grave dated to the 1800s has been preserved at this cemetery.

Grave memorials for children are much smaller in width and height than those of adults. The size symbolizes children’s age and the shortness of their lives. In Tegneby cemetery there are two small cast-iron crosses next to each other on the graves of two brothers with the surname Augustsson. Simon died six years old ten days before the newborn Elis died fifteen days old in 1888 (picture 31). The brothers were



31. In the foreground a very small cast-iron cross on a stone base commemorating the newborn boy Eli Augustsson from Tegneby. He died of diphtheria only fifteen days old on 1 August 1888. In the background stands another small cast-iron cross commemorating his brother Simon who also died of diphtheria on 21 July 1888, when he was six years old. A star decorates the top of both crosses.





32. A low and narrow granite gravestone with narrow frames over the little girl, Paulina from Gullholmen, who died in 1914 of paralysis of the heart at the age of five. Her father was a sea-man.

sons of a smallfarmer and died of diphtheria. A single very small cast-iron fence can be found in Morlanda with no name or birth and death dates.

Children's gravestones with a small frame continued well into the 1900s (picture 32). Children's graves usually have no epithets. To ensure that it really does concern a child, researchers/viewers must compare the birth and death years. However, the text of a cast-iron grave in Morlanda mentions the age of the deceased child but not the year of death: "Gustav Andersen from Hälleviksstrand lies here. He died at the age of 25 months". Some children who died in the 1800s were not given their own grave memorials, but had their names and the dates of their birth and death inscribed at the bottom of their parents' grave memorial.

### Young people

Grave memorials commemorating young unmarried people between the ages of 15 and 25 are rare in the 1800s. The older the deceased were, the greater was the chance of receiving a lasting grave memorial. This shows respect for the elderly, but can also reflect differences in economic conditions required to afford a lasting memorial. The adjective *young man* appears on a cast-iron cross in Torp cemetery. It concerns a young man who died in 1869, 17 years old (picture 33). A fifteen-year-old girl who died in Morlanda in 1888, received a cast-iron cross with the epithet "farmer's daughter" before her name. Two single brothers, Bernhard and Johannes Torberntsson, 23 and 29 year old from the island of Flatön in Morlanda, who died on the same day 28



33. *The youth Hans Axelin Johansson from Torp died in 1869 when he was 17 years old. He received a three-leaf-clover-shaped and gold-painted cast-iron cross decorated with several stars. An angel with wings decorates the foot of the cross.*

October 1852, got a common limestone gravestone. They were sailors and died by drowning (Brattö 2001 p. 113). Shipping was very important on this island starting in the early 1800s (Brattö 2001 p. 98ff). When cholera raged extensively on Gullholmen in the late summer and autumn of 1866 (Hansson 1983), Carl Johan Andersson, who was 17 years old, died on the same day, September 4, as his mother, the widow Inger Johansson. They received a common wooden cross inscribed with the birth and death data (see picture 51). During the 1900s, the number of grave memorials over youths rose significantly (Gustavsson 2011).

## View on life/afterlife

Much can be learnt about the view of life and afterlife at the time when the grave memorials were erected by studying their inscriptions and pictorial symbols. What is related about the deceased's earthly life and what can be revealed about the belief in an existence after death? How are body and soul related? Positive and negative views about death may oppose each other as corruption and darkness versus resurrection and joy do.

### Inscribed texts

Texts are either inscribed in their entirety on the tomb or as references to other texts, mainly to the Bible or hymn book. The inscription on the oldest gravestone in Orust commemorates the county bailiff J. Eiserman in Stala, who died in 1809 (see picture 15); it relates to the deceased's lifetime and his merits, not to his after-death existence: "In testimony to his virtue as an honest citizen, an active philanthropist and a father, this memorial has been erected by his love". Emphasis on the role of personal qualities is reinforced by the reference to Proverbs 10: 7 which says: "The righteous memorial is blessed, but the name of the wicked melts when they are gone". It is the individual positive qualities manifest in Eiserman's life, not his professional status, that this inscription commemorates, written by "his love", which may refer to his wife. This characterization of the deceased is unique compared to other inscriptions dated to the 1800s. The deceased's individual life and actions are usually not emphasized, with the exception of the squire Abraham Gustaf Bildt's grave memorial in 1828 in the Bildt cemetery. The text reads: "He was an affectionate husband, loving father, active philanthropist and a true Christian. He is missed, blessed and glorious" (cf. Thorburn 2014 p. 88f).

That it is the body that lies in the grave is marked with the words on Eiserman's stone: "Here lies the mortal part" of the deceased. This is a common expression in many tombs in the 1800s or "here lies the dust", but this expression stops being used in the 1900s. Such expressions imply that there is something more than the mortal body. They may refer to the spirit or soul. Some thoughts about an existence after death are not expressed along with Eiserman's name but are found on the reverse of the stone regarding his wife and daughter (see below).

Closest in time after Eiserman with an inscription is the limestone gravestone over the parliamentary member and farmer Andreas Jönsson from the farm Korsgård



34. A rounded limestone gravestone commemorating the parliamentary member Andreas Jönsson from Morlanda who died in 1822 at the age of 56. His wife Christina Jonasdaughter died in 1845 at the age of 68. Her text has been repainted in black like the inscription on the foot of the stone, but this has not been done with the name of her husband. Photo: Kristina Gustavsson.

on the island of Flatön in Morlanda who died in 1822 at the age of 56 years (picture 34). The text on the gravestone from Psalms 94: 19 reads: “I had many worries in my heart but your consolation delighted my soul”. The deceased speaks in the first person. In contrast to Eiserman’s gravestone this inscription tells about a difficult earthly life, but God has comforted the deceased in his difficulties although there is no mentioning of a future existence. The difficulties can be explained by the fact that this parliamentary member was accused of treason. He had agitated at local parish meetings in Morlanda against the Royal Decree in 1811 and a parliamentary decision on the discharge of extra troops at a difficult time of war for the country. The entire legal process has been extensively studied by the church historian Bertil Rehnberg. Jönsson was sentenced to death in the first instance in the district court and in the second instance in the court of appeals in 1812. The verdict was mitigated, after a request for clemency from Jönsson, to imprisonment with handcuffs and shackles in a fortress in the town of Marstrand. He was set free later but was no longer a member of parliament and died in 1822 of a severe illness he caught in prison (Rehnberg 1997 p. 53ff).

In Fiskebäckskil a text from the 1819 hymn book was inscribed in 1827 on the limestone gravestone of the wife Maria Brita (see picture 27). This text radiates safety as Jesus guards and cares for the grave while her remains rest there. The soul is not there but is already resting in happiness with Jesus. Thus, a radical contrast between the body lying down in the grave and the soul far away up is manifest.

In Stala cemetery there is a rounded and broad limestone over the woman Johanna Nöring, with no epithets, who died in 1836 at the age of 40. She belonged to the Bohuslän family of Nöring, which had been famous since the 1600s for its many county bailiffs and clergymen. Her father Olof Nöring was a big farmer in Stala. The inscribed text shows a clear optimism about a future existence: “Now the harvest shall reach maturity which had only started to bloom. Now I go home to the Lord and will be together with the pious”.

Another preserved longer text is on a wooden cross dated 1838 over the fishmonger Anders Jonasson, who died in this year at 35 years of age in Gullholmen. God’s protection is needed in life against all the evil in the world. God’s help is needed to fulfill the earthly work “with faith and hope”. Then you can calmly fall asleep in death, and rise with joy “when night is no more”. Evil in earthly life contrasts with joy, and darkness with light in the future after death. The text conveys a positive vision of the future and is fetched from hymn 444 in the 1819 hymnal. Another fishmonger, Anders Arvidsson in Gullholmen, died in 1833 at the age of 52. The inscription on his limestone tombstone quotes Psalms 62: 8, which indicates that the deceased had his security and his hope associated with God. A difference between the earthly life and a future existence is not marked here.

The next text on a limestone tombstone is dated to 1847 in Torp; it was erected over the wife Christina Olsdaughter from a small farm Rödstegen in Torp parish who died of cold 48 years old (see picture 35). Unlike the earlier examples of inscriptions this woman didn’t belong to well-to-do people. The text from hymn 482: 6 in the 1819 hymnal reads: “God be praised! I reached the harbor, for a little time here I toiled and I got peace and consolation in the grave, and here God unites us again”. The deceased who speaks in the first person contrasts the difficulties she had in her earthly life against what she experienced after death when she “reached the harbor” and got peace and consolation in the face of God. The word harbor means that the existence after death is seen as the aim of life. At the same time, the deceased thought of her survivors and her wish to them is: “may God’s rest be with you”. These words are not taken from the hymnal but are a free addition.

Three years later in 1850, the farmer Mattias Samuelsson from Svineviken died in Röra at the age of 62, and his wife Johanna Andersdaughter in 1868. At the bottom of the stone the following verse is inscribed: “At the boundary of life they no longer tremble. No, they hurried happily towards death. They do not fear the grave, for it is the gateway that leads from death to the city of bliss”. Here you meet only a joyful vision of death and no fear because the deceased are on their way to “the city of bliss” although God is not mentioned by name, and nothing is said about the past life.

A contrasting and dark view of death is expressed in the inscription on the gravestone over the successful fisher merchant Anders Falk, who died in 1853 (see picture



17). The text on the stone is taken from Psalms 90: 10: “The years of our life are seventy, or at most eighty; yet their span is but toil and labor; they are soon gone, and we fly away”. Life has been toil and labor. Nothing suggests that there can be any continuation after death but rather decay. The introduction of the text on the stone reads: “Here lie the remains of Anders Falk”. The negative perception conveyed on the headstone is understandable in the context of the deceased’s sad family situation, despite his good economy. In 1812, his wife Anna Elisabeth Falk née Bergström from the coastal resort Mollösund died at only 26 years of age. On her gravestone lying in Mollösund’s old cemetery a totally different and forward-looking text is found compared to her husband’s tombstone: “He took me to his home because he wanted me” with a reference to Psalms 18: 20. Two of the couple’s three sons died as babies while the third reached adulthood. He died in 1843, ten years before his father who at his death was all alone in life (Rehnberg 1997), just like the vicar Pehr Sahlgren in Myckleby in 1714 (see picture 43). The great earthly fortune that Anders Falk had gathered was donated to a foundation for the needy in the future (see above).

Inscriptions are rare on cast-iron crosses due to the lack of space. One exception is the cross over the unmarried parliamentary member Johan Henricsson of Röra, who died of typhus in 1867 at the age of 34. The inscription refers to Psalms 144: 4: “Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow”. Here only life’s transience is pronounced, and nothing is said about an existence after death (picture 36). This view is very similar to the inscription on the successful fishmonger Anders Falk’s grave (see picture 17).

The few texts that can be found on cast-iron crosses are otherways inscribed on the back, as in the case of a cross over a peasant woman from the farm Häröd in Myckleby who died in 1899. The text in Myckleby says: “The larger the cross, the more your death will be a bright and safe harbor for you against fatal storms and troubles. Redemption is its real name. At the end the cross is erected over your grave as a sign that you have ceased your sufferings”. This text is a quote from hymn 235: 5 of the 1819 hymnal. Happiness, light and security after death are contrasted with the earthly life’s sufferings, but God is not mentioned. This text, which marks a sharp contrast between the darkness of earthly life and the light after death, reminds one of the inscription on the limestone gravestone over Christina Olsdotter in Torp in 1847 (see above), but shows a sharp contrast to the inscriptions on Anders Falk’s and Johan Henricsson’s graves.

A text emphasizing a positive view on death without any contrast to the conditions of the earthly life is found on the back of the undated cast-iron cross commemorating Gustaf, a member of the wealthy Edström family in the coastal community Nösund in Tegneby. “My lot is amusing. I have enjoyed a nice inheritance”. There is a marked similarity to the text from 1850 over the peasant Mattias Samuelsson (see



35. A narrow, rounded limestone gravestone with a radiant triangle on its top commemorating the wife Christina Olsdaughter from a small farm in Torp who died of cold in 1847, 48 years old.

above). The young unmarried ironing woman Maria Johansson who died in Torp in 1900, twenty-five years old, had the following text on her gravestone: “Eternal spring where death cannot reach you, the blessed delightful homeland”. This is a positive vision of a future away from negative death that reaches eternal spring time and a new happy homeland.

Long inscriptions on the limestone gravestones and cast-iron monuments are few. The same applies to granite gravestones in the 1800s. In the 1900s, inscriptions on granite stones became even fewer. In Röra one finds the text in 1921: “We will meet beyond the river where no storms will ever reach us” over the farmer Anton Abrahamsson and his wife Anna Helena, both of whom were born in 1854 and died in 1921. This text alludes to a diffuse future positive meeting of the spouses but lacks

any clear religious anchoring. This future existence stands in contrast to negative storms in the earthly life. In Orust there are almost no religious inscriptions in the whole of the 1900s until the present time. In this respect there is a great difference in comparison to the neighboring island of Tjörn (Gustavsson 2003 p. 97ff), which unlike Orust is known for its many free-church movements.

## References to the Bible and the hymnal

In the 1800's it was much more common to have references to a passage from the Bible or the hymn book rather than long inscriptions. This does not give the observer of the grave any direct message. The selected verses, which might have been chosen by close family members, may be looked up in the Bible or the hymnal.

If we first study Bible references, it is notable that certain limestone gravestones and cast-iron crosses refer to Psalms 90: 12: "So teach us to think of how few our days are so that we may obtain wise hearts". The transitoriness of life is emphasized. This is also the case with the reference to the Old Testament's Book of Job 16: 22 on other gravestones: "For few are the years that come, then I shall go the way from where I will not return". Or the Book of Job, chapter 7: 6: "My days disappear more rapidly than a weaver's spools; they disappear without any hope". This is no forward-looking vision, instead despondency dominates as on the fishmonger Anders Falk's gravestone and the cast-iron cross over the parliamentary member Johan Henricsson in Röra in the 1850s and 1860s respectively (see above). A similar approach can be found on early granite stones. The oldest granite stone at Röra cemetery in 1872 refers to Psalms 39: 6: "As a handbreadth, you have made my days, and my lifetime is as nothing before You; transient are people, how secure they stand in life" (see picture 11).

Such exclusively negative pronouncements with emphasis on life's transience and nothing about the future are found on a number of grave memorials dated to a short period between the 1850s and the early 1870s. It refers in some cases to people who had high social and economic positions during their earthly life. This applies to both members of parliament, well-to-do farmers and fishmongers. No hope after death is expressed.

In contrast to these references to the Old Testament which convey an entirely negative outlook, there are other references with a positive view on life, referring to another Old Testament passage, namely the Book of Job 19: 26: "And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God". The difficulties of earthly life are here contrasted to the positive experience of meeting God. There is a similar passage in the New Testament, in John 11: 25 on the resurrection as professed by Jesus: "I am the resurrection and life. Those who believe in me will live even though they

die". Thus, life triumphs over death through the resurrection. This Biblical text is found on a limestone gravestone dated to 1845 over the parliamentary member John Johansson in Morlanda. It is completed with another positive Bible verse from the Book of Revelation 14: 13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, the Spirit says, they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them". Rest replaces earthly strife. The deceased also comes to something better even if he had a high social position in his earthly life as a member of parliament.

From the 1870s on, as in the pre-1850s, the entirely dark vision with emphasis on life's transcendence disappeared. It was followed by a vision characterized by joy and belief in resurrection after death. This is shown in the reference on the granite stone over the well-to-do farmer and trustworthy juryman Jacob Torgersson (1823–1898) in Röra to St. Paul's letter to the Philippians 3: 7–11; here the resurrection from the dead is stressed as a joyful hope. He was the man who made the first hearse in Röra in 1872.

I will now consider the references to hymns and verses in the hymnal. The reverse of the headstone over the county bailiff Eiserman's wife (dead in 1837) and daughter (see above and picture 15) cites number 332: 7 from the 1695 hymnal, which was in use until 1819. This hymn is entitled "Hymns for people from higher social strata". The first verses of the hymn emphasize the sorrow and lamentation of disease and suffering, but in verse 7 the hymn turns to God and prays for healing from "my great lamentation" and for forgiveness of sins. There is still hope in spite of the difficulties which the deceased had in their earthly lives despite the family's high social position.

As for the hymns from the 1819 hymnal, a reference to hymn 472 is found on limestone gravestones and cast-iron crosses. Its last verse is a prayer to Jesus: "Help me to overcome death anxiety, distress and anguish" so that the deceased could enter the "hall of gladness". It is a question of getting through death's needle eye to a better world. Another death hymn is 489. This reinforces the importance of thinking about death while living as an aid against the fear of death, "so when I will die, I should not tremble for dying".

In the passages from hymns quoted above, difficulties of life and death anxiety are contrasted with a better situation after death. This emerges clearly in the hymn 476: 3 referred to on a cast-iron cross from 1866 in Stala: "How blessed are they when they come to the country of peace from the storms of life". When the hymn 469: 5 is referred to, the desire for "a joyful resurrection" is at the centre (see picture 37).

All these references to various verses of hymns, on limestone gravestones, cast-iron tombstones and early granite stone memorials, fluctuate between the trials of earthly life and death anxiety on the one side, and a longing and hope for a better existence after death through resurrection on the other side. These opposites usually



36. A three-leaf-clover-shaped cast-iron cross commemorating the parliamentary member Johan Henricsson who died of typhus in Röra in 1867 at the age of 34. The inscription is quoted from Psalms 144: 4. The top is decorated with the symbols of faith, hope and charity while an angel holding a triumphal wreath decorates the foot.

occur in the same hymn. There is no similar one-sided emphasis on transience of life as was found above in some of the Old Testament passages used between the 1850s and the early 1870s.

In the 1900s, references to the Bible and hymnal gradually disappeared on granite tombstones. As I have shown in an earlier study, from the late 1900s religious allusions got new forms of expression by means of images and symbols. This is the case in places influenced by free-church movements and therefore not valid on Orust but in some parts of the neighboring island of Tjörn (Gustavsson 2011 p. 78ff). Within the innerchurch revivalist movement known as schartauanism which had a great influence on Orust in the late 1800s, emphasis was not placed on visualizing inner aspects of faith through words or pictorial symbols (Lewis 1997).

## Pictorial Symbols

In the 1800s, there were some memorials that lack inscriptions and references to the Bible or the hymnal and by the 1900s, this tendency became common. Then one can only rely on pictorial symbols when assessing the view of life and afterlife.

The pictorial symbol that distinguishes the earliest limestone gravestones is either a star or a *sparkling light* similar to a rising sun (see pictures 7 and 30), or a triangle on the top of the stone (see picture 35). The symbol of light conveys a positive message. In Christian imagery, the sun is a symbol of immortality and resurrection, while the triangle is a symbol of the Trinity (Biedermann 1994 p. 375, 427f).





37. This late example of a limestone gravestone commemorating the farmer Jakob Johansson from Morlanda (1817–1890) and his wife Christina Nilsdaughter (1819–1891) has a black cross symbol instead of a radiant sun or a star as was common earlier in the 1800s. The hymn 469: 5 from the 1819 hymnal contains a prayer for “a happy resurrection”. The texts have been painted and are thus clearly visible to observers.

However, on the limestone gravestones dated to 1880s and 1890s, there was a *black cross* engraved on top of the stone (picture 37) whereas the sparkling light had disappeared. There are very early crosses in picture 18 over a pastor in 1847 and in picture 26 over a farmer’s wife in 1865. The cross may signal death but may also symbolize victory over death through Jesus’ death on the cross as highlighted within the innerchurch revival movement named schartauanism that was influential in Orust in the late 1800s.

On cast-iron crosses, the cross symbol is represented by the form of the cross itself; in such cases there is no need for another cross on the memorial. In some cases *light rays shine out from the center of the cross* where the cross arms meet, resembling the sparkling sun symbol on limestone gravestones. This sign alludes to bright and positive aspects of death (see pictures 19 Käringön in 1860 and 24 Stala in 1867).

A symbol that is observable on cast-iron crosses consists of one or three *stars* on the top as well as on the two arms of the cross (see pictures 19 Käringön in 1860, 24 Stala in 1867, 31 Tegneby in 1888, 33 Torp in 1869, back cover Myckleby in 1875 and Herjulfsdotter 2013 p. 36ff). The star indicates light and divine guidance (Ferguson 1973 p. 44f) like the symbol of *faith, hope and love* that is a cross, an anchor and a heart intermingled in each other (Ursin 1949 p. 85f). This last symbol occurs in some cases on the top of the memorials (see pictures 36, 38 and 48). Stars, however, are more common.



38. A three-leaf-clover-shaped cross in Torp over the wife Johanna Ols-daughter dead of pains in 1870 at the age of 55. The symbols of faith, hope, and charity decorate the top. There are also stars on the top and on the cross arms and clasped hands at the foot.

The cast-iron crosses may have space for a symbol in the lower part nearer the ground, and this is often a *winged angel*, which can be related to a positive vision of afterlife and a belief in an invisible world. At the same time, the idea of a mourning angel also existed (Herjulfsdotter 2013 p. 39). The latter opinion may be the case with the memorial over the parliamentary member Johan Henricsson (see picture 36). *Two hands* that clasp each other as in a handshake (picture 38) also occur, but this symbol is rarer. Again, these hands signify a positive vision marking unity and love between husband and wife, they also represent farewell as well as a meeting in a new existence (Herjulfsdotter 2013 p. 37). Pictorial symbols that convey only negative associations to decay could not be found on the cast-iron crosses.

When the first granite blocks appeared during the late 1800s, a cross became used as a common symbol, just as on limestone gravestones from the same period. The first granite stone in Röra 1872 was designed as a cross (see picture 11), similar to cast-iron crosses, but this did not occur later to any significant extent: crosses were instead incised and painted on the stone (see picture 12). These were generally black crosses and this became the standard well into the 1900s.

In the late 1900s, the following change is observable: black crosses tend to symbolize only death, something negative; they no longer also signal resurrection, that is something positive. Then they disappeared to a great extent and were in many cases replaced by religiously neutral symbols expressing a more positive and brighter view of death. As an agent for a stonecutting firm in northern Bohuslän stated at the end





39. The radiant sun is hidden by a cloud symbolizing death. The flying dove brings peace. This granite gravestone in Tegneby commemorates the wife Marie-Louise Gissleholm who died in 1994, 33 years old.



40. A granite gravestone in Myckleby commemorating the farmer Carl Emil Peterson who was born in 1866 and died in 1954. His wife Hildur Fredrika was born in 1876 and died in 1958. The inscription shows that her maiden name was Holmdahl. This type of inscription is very rare on gravestones dated to the 1900s. Light rays beam from the center of the cross where the cross arms meet. This reminds of the cast-iron crosses dated to the 1800s (see pictures 19 and 24). Carl Emil Peterson's grandfather Anders Persson in Myckleby, who died in 1875, received a cast-iron cross with similar light rays (see picture 49).



41. A resurrection cross in Långelanda commemorating a man who died in 2005 at the age of 83. The family is inspired by a free-church movement. Two intertwined hearts signify the love between the spouses. A white dove on top signifies peace and was rather common on Orust in the mid-1900s.

of the 1900s: “People don’t want crosses nowadays. They prefer a brighter symbol. They can choose a sunrise, for example, to show that the deceased sat and watched the sun rise. Even a bird or a flower, which the deceased loved would do, lilies of-the-valley, for example” (picture 39).

Relatives who wanted to continue to use crosses and simultaneously highlight the belief in resurrection started *painting crosses in a light color*, instead of in black. From the mid-1900s the bright crosses have sometimes been supplemented by rays of light from the centre of the cross, similar to the beaming and rising sun that appeared on limestone tombstones and some cast-iron crosses in the 1800s (see above, picture 40).

Since the late 1900s one can also find the outline of a Jesus figure inside the bright cross which reinforces the image of resurrection. These crosses are referred to as resurrection crosses (Gustavsson 2011 p. 78ff). They occur especially in areas characterized by free-church movements, such as on the island of Tjörn near Orust. In Orust



there is only one such cross on a grave in Långelanda over a man (1922–2005) belonging to a family inspired by a free-church movement (picture 41). Instead, more stones can be found in recent days in Orust using the old symbols of faith, hope and charity, that is a cross, an anchor and a heart (cf. pictures 36 in 1867 and 38 in 1870) (picture 42).



42. A small horizontal gravestone in Morlanda over the wife Maj-Britt Josefsson (1931–2012). The woman's name has been inscribed to the right in keeping with an older tradition. An empty space to the left is reserved for the husband. The family has chosen a natural stone decorated with the symbols of faith, hope and charity.



# Protection

What is worthy of preservation for posterity in the cemeteries?

Issues of cultural heritage have acquired an increased interest in cultural sciences in the Nordic countries during the 2000s. An anthology about the borders of cultural heritages with comparative perspectives in the Nordic countries was published in 2005 (*Kulturarvens gränser* 2005). Another anthology edited in 2008 by the research centre in Lund for the study of Denmark presented scholarly discussions from Denmark and Sweden about the concepts of canon and cultural heritage (*Kanon* 2008). The latest anthology on cultural heritage with Nordic contributions was published in Oslo in 2013 (*Å lage kulturminner* 2013) by the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Monuments, NIKU, and has been reviewed by this author (Gustavsson 2014). The folklorist Anne Eriksen, Oslo has presented and analyzed discussions on the concept of heritage (Eriksen 2014). In the cultural sciences in Sweden have cemeteries as cultural heritage hardly yet been taken into account (Nolin 2014). In Great Britain the archeologist Harold Mytum is a leading scholar concerning recording and analyzing graveyards (Mytum 2000). The Commission for Cultural Heritage and Property within Society International of Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF, is a sign of the international interest lately in issues relating to cultural heritage which should be preserved for posterity<sup>8</sup>.

Questions regarding grave memorials addressed in this study are: why must we preserve certain memorials and what criteria are relevant for the selection of such items? The present study has shown that the studied grave memorials reflect the culture of the age in which the deceased lived and died, in their choice of materials, inscribed texts and pictorial symbols. By studying memorials over time, we can follow changes in materials, social structures, gender relationships, age and views on life, death and afterlife. A basic idea may be to select items from each distinct epoch to be preserved for future generations.

This idea is in line with the current Swedish Heritage Conservation Act of 1988 (*Svensk författningssamling* 1988: 950) which states in chapter 4, section 11: "In the care of a cemetery, its importance as part of our cultural environment shall be taken into consideration. Cemeteries shall be cared for and maintained so that their cultural

8. I presented a summary of this book at a conference arranged by this SIEF commission in Bergen, Norway 6–7 March 2014. The contents of the book was also discussed at the annual conference of the Anthropological Association of Sweden, SANT, in Linköping 3–5 April 2014 and at the annual conference of Strömstad Academy. Institute of Advanced Studies, in Strömstad 23–25 June 2014.

value is not reduced or distorted". The current Funeral Regulation of 1990 (*Svensk författningssamling* 1990: 1144) entered into force in 1991 (Gustavsson 2011). Chapter 2, section 12 states: "A cemetery should be kept in orderly and dignified condition and the sanctity of the resting places of the deceased must always be honored". The Swedish National Heritage Board has stipulated that local cemetery authorities from January 1, 2014, must establish a care and maintenance plan for cemeteries to be audited at intervals of no longer than ten years. The plan shall record which grave memorials that qualify as "very precious" and "valuable" respectively and these will then be assigned the character of cultural memory. The "very precious" grave sites must "be kept and maintained well", and "if possible, be preserved at the grave site". The "valuable" grave memorials can, however, "be reused in their original location". The County Board is given the opportunity to comment on the preservation plan. When it is confirmed, there will be an opportunity for the local cemetery authorities to apply for government funding for church antiquarian compensation (*Kulturrådets författningssamling* KRFS 2012: 2).

*How has the aspect of cultural heritage hitherto been observed on Orust's cemeteries? What must further be done to counteract the destruction and extinction of important cultural values ?*

The stones that lay on the floor of the church until 1815 were left in their original location as in Morlanda where they are so worn-out that the texts cannot be read. A better way to preserve them has been to line them up along a wall in the porch. This has been done in Myckleby in connection with repairs to the church. In this way, they are protected not only against being trampled but also weather outside (picture 43). Another alternative has been to place such older gravestones outside along the church walls as has been done with eight large stone monuments in Fiskebäckskil (picture 44). Their texts are for the most part illegible. On one stone I could observe the name Johan Didriksson born in 1734 and dead in 1784. No one tramples on the rocks any longer but the weather can erode them. The essential point must be to maintain the selected items of cultural heritage as unspoiled as possible for posterity. From this aspect, it may not be necessary to preserve them in their original location if they are more exposed there.

A necessary measure in the case of many limestone gravestones is to carefully and leniently wash away moss and algae without damaging the inscriptions on the porous stones, as could easily happen. On many limestone gravestones it is impossible or at least very difficult for observers to read texts and picture symbols as they are filled with moss (picture 45). In some cases, one can see that the external form has been repaired after some physical damage (picture 46). The limestone tombstones must regularly be controlled so that they are steadily anchored in the base. Otherwise they may fall and get broken as the stone material is porous (picture 47).

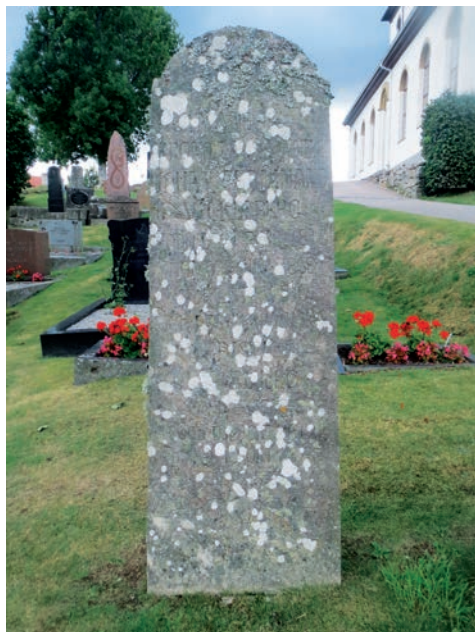


43. A headstone moved from the church floor and now placed in Myckleby church porch commemorating the vicar Pehr Sahlgren, who died in 1714 at the age of 57, his wife Margaretha Vincent-daughter, who died in 1704 and their ten deceased children, six sons and four daughters. The stone is richly decorated with the victorious Jesus in the middle who has risen from the grave. The figure is also surrounded with flying angels. A male and a female figure stand on either side of Jesus.



44. Three grave slabs that were moved from the church floor in Fiskebäckskil and raised along the outer church wall. The original text has been worn out and is for the most part illegible due to the earlier pressure of walking feet while the stones lay on the church floor.





45. The inscription on this narrow, rounded limestone gravestone in Myckleby is difficult to read due to dirt and algae. An enlarged view shows that the deceased were a county bailiff Johan Ferdinand Wickelberg (1816-1868) and his wife Christina (1819-1874).



46. The back of a narrow, rounded limestone gravestone repaired with iron in Långelanda. The limestone was broken in previous times. The farmer buried here was born in 1811 and died in 1880. His wife Kristina Sofia Persdaughter was born in 1812 and died in 1882.

For posterity, it is equally important that not only the external form, but also the texts and pictorial symbols can be identified and interpreted. On some limestone gravestones the inscriptions are painted in black (see picture 37), which facilitates the interpretation of the messages. Eventually such a painting needs to be repeated in the future to be kept permanently visible (see picture 34).



47. It is important that limestone grave-stones are firmly anchored to their bases like the stone in the background. The stone in the foreground from Morlanda cemetery leans outward. It is in danger of falling and breaking due to the fact that the stone material is porous.



48. A three-leaf-clover-shaped cast-iron cross in Röra that has been repaired with iron. Two cracks show that the cross was broken earlier. The farmer Olof Kristenson buried here was born in 1781 and died in 1858 while his wife Anna Jonsdaughter was born in 1782 and died in 1859. The text is no. 473: 4 from the 1819 hymnal. One star decorates the top with one on each of the two cross arms. Under the star on top can be found the symbol of faith, hope and charity intermingled with each other.

The cast-iron crosses are difficult to renovate. This explains why some of them have been removed from the cemeteries. Others have been repaired (picture 48) or moved from their original site and placed along the outer wall of the church. This is the case with five of the eight crosses in Röra, all five crosses in Torp (picture 49) and three of the four on Kåringön. There they are protected against damage that could occur during the maintenance of the cemetery. Some cast-iron crosses have during the 1900s





49. A three-leaf-clover-shaped cast-iron cross from Myckleby dated to 1875. Three stars decorating each arm and the top symbolize light. The image of light is enhanced by the rays radiating from the center of the cross. A winged angel decorates the foot. The text referring to Psalms 90: 12 emphasizes the transience of life. This cross was repainted in yellow in the 1970s by two great-grandchildren of the deceased spouses.

been repainted with gold paint by the descendants of the deceased. One example, which should be followed, is a cross dated to 1875 in Myckleby which was repainted by two great-grandchildren in the 1970's (picture 49).

The cast-iron fences are more liable to fall to pieces than are the cast-iron crosses. Therefore, several fences have been removed from cemeteries. It is important that the few that are left can be maintained as cultural heritage and kept either by descendants or by the local cemetery authorities. Stopping the grass growing inside the fences has in some cases been done in the 1900s by placing stone slabs or gravel inside the fence-off area (see picture 9). This may be recommended as a way to improve the look of the fence for observers (picture 50).

During my fieldwork in 2013, I was asked by some descendants whether or not they should renovate a cast-iron fence dated to 1885 in Morlanda cemetery. When I, in my role of a cultural researcher, explained to them the value of this type of grave memorial and its endangered existence, the family agreed to save the sections of the fence. Otherwise, they had planned to remove this memorial. Afterwards the local



50. A cast-iron fence around the family grave with the inscription farmer Anders Jacobsson from Vrångevatten but without other names and years. He died in 1881, which means that this is an early family grave. The wife is not mentioned. Leaves and grass inside the fence give the impression of an untidy grave.

cemetery authorities decided to classify it as “very precious” and thus to take over its care and maintenance for posterity. I have also been engaged by the cemetery authorities in Orust as an adviser to classify grave memorials as items of cultural heritage. In the minutes dated 3 December 2013, the parish executive committee instructed me “to establish a basis for decisions on the selection of valuable graves as cultural heritage”.

Examples from each distinct period of the 1800s ought to be selected for preservation. Moreover, examples of different types and forms of graves must be preserved. In the case of limestone gravestones, this applies to broad and narrow stones respectively and those with a rounded or a pointed top. The same situation applies to various forms of cast-iron crosses, namely simple, hollow and three-leaf-clover shaped. The few preserved cast-iron fences should be saved as they reflect a short period in the late 1800s. Since there are so many granite gravestones, a selection must be made so that the earliest examples from each cemetery dated to the late 1800s could be maintained. Some of the first examples of family tombs should also be preserved.

Cemetery authorities have an opportunity to undertake this preservation task because starting in the year 2000, all taxpayers in Sweden regardless of their creed have to pay a burial fee. These payments are set aside for the care and maintenance of grave memorials in accordance with the relevant funeral and culture monument laws (*Svensk författningssamling* 1999: 279).



51. A wooden cross preserved in the attic of Gullholmen church commemorating the widow Inger Johansson, who was born in 1816, and her son Carl Johan Andersson, who was born in 1849. They died on the same day, September 4, 1866 in connection with a severe epidemic of cholera (Hansson 1983). A radiant half-sun decorates the top as on the limestone gravestones dated to the same period. A winged angel holds a garment inscribed with the names of the deceased, their birth and death data, and a reference to hymn no. 345: 6 in the 1819 hymnal. The widow Inger Johansson is one of the very few women in the 1800s using a last name with the addition –son instead of –daughter. In the Death and Burial minutes, however, her name is written Inger Johansdaughter by the clergyman. Photo: Berth Kullholm.

Because the tomb memorials of stone have become so numerous during the 1900s, cemetery authorities may be very restrictive in the selection for cultural heritage items. Grave memorials from the 1900s consist primarily of stone and are therefore more resistant than porous limestone gravestones and cast-iron memorials from the 1800s. In Orust I have not found reused older gravestones, something that has lately been more and more common in Norway (Gustavsson 2011 p. 46f).

The few wooden crosses that still remain from the 1900s should be preserved as examples of grave memorials that were very common in earlier times but also had a short existence before they were destroyed by weather. Some of the remaining wooden crosses are painted or impregnated while others are marked by a beginning destruction. These must be renovated if they are to be maintained. The preservation of a few wooden crosses from the 1800s in the church attic on Gullholmen was a good idea (picture 51). However, to be accessible, they ought to be placed in a more visible area of the church.

The *frames* around the granite gravestones that became common from the late 1800s, were largely removed by cemetery authorities in the late 1900s and early 2000s. This has been done for the practical reasons of facilitating the maintenance of



the cemetery with the help of motor-driven lawn mower. In some cases the frames have been saved and placed near the cemetery wall as in Käringön (picture 52). From a cultural standpoint, the frames may not be considered as important as raised grave-stones that still remain standing. It is primarily the stones that by their design, their inscribed texts and pictorial symbols convey historical messages for posterity.



52. Granite frames in Käringön that have been removed and placed near the cemetery wall. The alternative is to crush them.

Another aspect in cultural monuments selection is how they can be made *available* to as many people as possible. The inscribed texts and pictorial symbols ought to be made readable for observers. Therefore, continuous cleaning is important. Selected grave memorials also ought to be digitally accessible on the Internet which requires photographing. A number of Swedish cemetery authorities, primarily in cities, have arranged this. The available Internet addresses are: [www.finngraven.se](http://www.finngraven.se), [www.hittagraven.se](http://www.hittagraven.se) and [www.svenskagravar.se](http://www.svenskagravar.se). However, such general photographing has not yet been carried out in my study area in Orust, but it has begun in 2014.

## Concluding aspects: Anonymity – collectivity – individuality

### Anonymity

Before the 1800s, nearly everybody who was buried on a cemetery was anonymized for posterity due to the absence of permanent grave memorials. Only a few people belonging to the higher social strata got permanent memorials consisting of lying stone slabs on the church floor.

In the 1800s, a large number of deceased persons were still anonymous for posterity as they didn't get a permanent grave memorial in the form of a limestone gravestone or later, a cast-iron cross. The possibility of getting a permanent grave memorial was counteracted as long as each farm or homestead, according to the old custom, had its own gravesite at the cemetery, and it was necessary to dig new graves at the same place after a short time. Opportunities for getting an individual grave memorial increased when the lap funeral was introduced alongside the old custom which also continued to be in use on many graves.

A special form of anonymity appeared in the late 1800s through the introduction of family graves in the 1870s. This anonymity continued into the early 1900s. It was not until the 1920s that women's names were inscribed on the gravestones and they again became visible. As 26 of the 50 cast-iron crosses in Morlanda lack inscriptions this also indicates an anonymity for the deceased.

It was only in the first part of the 1900s that this anonymity disappeared for the majority of the deceased, regardless of social status, gender or age. An increasing number of granite stones began to appear in cemeteries. This can be demonstrated by the photos from Morlanda cemetery taken during different times in the first part of the 1900s (see picture 3-5).

A late form of consciously chosen anonymity is a burial in *memory groves* which appeared in Sweden from 1956 on. In Orust such graves were established in the late 1900s and the early 2000s. The main reason for old people who choose to rest in a memory grove has been their desire to free their survivors from maintaining the grave in the future. Gradually, however, a reaction occurred among many survivors who desired to have a place to visit for the sake of mourning and remembering. During the 2000s a change in burial customs has been the advent of so-called *ashes groves*. They have small nameplates in bronze but the exact location of each deceased person is not



marked (Gustavsson 2003 p. 119f, picture 53). In the same cemetery there can be both “memory groves” and “ashes groves”. The discontinuance of such total anonymity is consistent with the trend towards individual traits on the cemeteries, which can be traced to the late 1900s (Gustavsson 2003 p. 114ff).



53. Ashes groves in Röra. A natural stone with two small nameplates in bronze commemorating the farmer Erik (1925–2011) and his wife Ingrid Johansson (1936–2013).

## Collective grave memorials

The family graves were introduced in the 1870s and persisted primarily into the 1920s. They were a type of collective grave memorial. All deceased persons within a household were part of the family and were not mentioned individually, with the exception of the husband as the head of the family. The family graves never prevailed on the cemeteries.

Especially in the coastal belt of Morlanda severe epidemics of cholera occurred in 1834, 1855 and 1866 (see picture 51, Hansson 1983). Cholera is a bacterial stomach disease with diarrhoea and vomiting, and with a mortality of about 50%



54. A collective memorial stone erected in 1955 by the local historical association in Morlanda commemorating all the victims of the cholera epidemics in 1834 (cf. Thorburn 2014 p. 117). The individuals are not named. An iron cross has been placed on top. There is a lot of high grass around the stone in the summer time.

(www.ne.se Kolera). Because of the danger and fear of infections, corpses were buried secretly in separate so-called *cholera cemeteries* far away from the local inhabitants. There they were anonymous until the mid-1900s when newly founded local historical associations began to erect collective memorial stones over all the deceased buried in these secret cemeteries (picture 54).

In the coastal belt of Morlanda many fishermen and seamen also perished at sea in the second half of the 1800s and were never buried. This situation began with the extensive fishing from the 1860s on (Hasslöf 1949) and when long-range shipping became more and more widespread. In such cases, only the wife's name was written on the headstone along with the epithet widow (see picture 28). The husband and sons who died in the same boat remained anonymous in the local cemetery.

Later on, especially in the 1990s, many of the later-day descendants of sea victims erected collective memorial stones over all the men from the local community who had perished at sea. Extensive archival research was carried out by enthusiastic local historians to ensure the inclusion of every name on the stone so that no one would be forgotten. The value of such memorials for posterity is that all the victims' names are inscribed as well as their age and the year when they perished at sea. Through these collective stones the deceased regained their individuality in local society after a long period of invisibility (picture 55). In Morlanda and Kåringön a memorial stone without names was erected in 1996 over those deceased from Kåringön buried at the Morlanda cemetery before Kåringön got its own cemetery in 1796. I



55. *The memorial stone erected in 1994 in Mollösund in commemoration of the 48 fishermen and mariners who were lost at sea between 1861 and 1994. Note that six men drowned at the same time in a shipwreck in 1882 and another in 1924. The last date marks the death of a man who drowned in the sinking of the ferry MS Estonia in 1994 in the Baltic Sea. The inscription on the stone reads: “During storms and strife they got a grave at the cemetery of sea”.*

have more closely examined the appearance of these collective memorials related to tragic events of the local history in a separate study (Gustavsson 2011 p. 123ff).

## Individuality

Individuality of the deceased could be presented in several ways during the 1800s. Thus lap funeral assumed that individuals were separated from the collectivity of their family and homestead, in contrast to the earlier custom. At lap funerals the gravesite was determined by the place of the latest previous burial. If a grave memorial was erected, it only concerned the deceased himself or herself. Therefore one can find grave memorials having only the name of a wife and not her husband.

Throughout the 1800s, the wife’s personal identity in relation to her husband was



marked by her maiden name made from her father's first name followed by the affix *-daughter* (see above). The contrast to this earlier practice became great when family graves began to appear in the 1870s. A woman's identity underwent a sudden change from the manifest individuality to complete anonymity after death. This situation lasted into the 1920s. At that time, the wife's name and the data of her life returned to the tomb. Simultaneously, specific female surnames used throughout the 1800s had disappeared, and instead the wife got her husband's surname. Thus her identity change after her wedding was visible after death.

All birth and death data have to do with individuality. There has been a change during the latter part of the 1900s when in several cases only birth and death years have been indicated on the grave memorials but not the precise dates of birth and death for both women and men. In earlier times these dates were an important part of the deceased's personal identity. In this respect individuality has in many cases decreased well into the 1900s.

The deceased's view of life and afterlife has also become more difficult to trace on the grave memorials when inscribed texts and religious references increasingly ceased to appear during the 1900s. They are extremely scarce in Orust during this period compared to the 1800's, when they were rather common. However, during the early 2000s, I have found that memorial websites on the Internet complement what is lacking on the tombs regarding beliefs about life, death and afterlife (Gustavsson 2011 p. 142ff).

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Pictures

With the author

Photographs taken by the author and Kristina Gustavsson in Orust's cemeteries. Photographs, unless otherwise indicated, are taken by Anders Gustavsson.

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