

The Contemporary Archaeology of Urban Cremation

Howard Williams and Anna Wessman

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INTRODUCTION

Modern cremation is often portrayed by archaeologists as a distracting antithesis of the open-air cremation practices encountered in the archaeological record from the prehistoric and early historic past. In some key ways, the process of burning cadavers within gas-fired ovens, followed by the grinding of bones to uniformly sized granules, offers a stark contrast to the varied multi-staged open-air cremation practices known from recent ethnographic studies, and from the increasingly rich data provided by the archaeological record. The cremation process is hidden, indoors and hence distanced from the survivors in modern cremation. However, there are also numerous connecting themes between modern and ancient cremation and this chapter hopes to shed light on how mortuary archaeologists can explore cremation today to better understand cremation's memorials, spaces and materials in both the distant and recent past, including both shared themes and distinctive dimensions in relation to other disposal methods, like inhumation. For while the burning of the body itself is hidden from view in modern cremation, the deployment of space, architecture, and memorialization before, during, and after the transformation of the body by fire choreographs comparable, if varied, emotive and mnemonic engagements between the living and the dead.

This argument certainly holds for the post-cremation disposal of the 'ashes' or 'cremains' (the burned, distorted, shrunken, dried, and fragmented vestiges of the body and the materials and fuels involved in the cremation process: although in modern cremation, all artefacts and artificial body parts are removed prior to the grinding of bones). Both ancient and modern cremation practices share in providing a wide range of options regarding the destinations and treatments of ashes. They might be left at the site of cremation (in the modern sense, dispersed by crematorium staff in the garden of remembrance), yet they are readily retrievable, transportable and partible, and can be dispersed and integrated into a range of spaces and materials unavailable to the treatment of the unburned dead (see Williams 2008). Some of the spectrum of opportunities for ash disposal are comparable to those available for the inhumed dead and involve a specific plot and memorial, yet others can take on other material and spatial dimensions far different from the traditional grave plot. While burning cadavers facilitates the dispersal, burial, integration or curating of ashes into potentially any urban and rural environment, as well as their transformation into artefacts and their association with living bodies and habitations, this chapter focuses on how cremation allows new ways of utilizing established, heavily used, urban cemeteries; those first established to serve the increasing populations of European cities and towns in the nineteenth century. Modern cremation, therefore, cannot be regarded as a disposal method seeking to distance the dead and avoid the need for memorialization per se, for cremation seems to afford the option for a wide range of different kinds of 'secondary

burial' through ash disposal (Hertz 1960) and fosters many new cenotaphic media for commemoration in which absence of the body facilitates, rather than restricts, memorialization. Furthermore, cremation affords many opportunities for the successive use of the same environments, allowing old graves to be re-opened and reused by adding more cremains to existing inhumed and cremated interments, or distributing ashes repeatedly in the same locales. From this perspective, whilst reflecting increasingly multicultural European urban communities with varied and complex relationships towards the dead, cremation has retained its role for societies often dislocated from their places of birth and close knit family groups, albeit with greater life expectancy, allowing dialogues between the living and the dead mediated by material culture, cemetery and landscape. By exploring the variability and trends in the memorialization of the cremated dead, new light is thrown on the principal shifts in relationships between the living and the dead in recent times. This includes investigating changing attitudes during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries towards death, the body, fire as a medium of disposal and commemoration, and the nature of social memory as incorporated into routines of grave-visiting and place-making.

Certainly, it can be argued that applying archaeological approaches to modern cremation's material and spatial dimensions challenges simplistic narratives about the rise of cremation in modernity. Cremation is often explained with regard to the movement of mortuary practice and commemoration away from religious control. The rise of cremation is often seen as one index of regulation, secularization, medicalization, and economic expediency in the disposal of the dead in the recent history of Europe, in which investment in, and relations with, death are distanced (e.g. Curl 2002: 311; see also Parker Pearson 1982). Linked to this, the dead are dislocated spatially from cemeteries and from communities in an ever-increasingly mobile society. Cremation is identified as a consistent solution to the combined cost of funerals and burial plots, and the pressures on cemetery space, and thus as one of the mechanisms of obliterating the physical traces of loved ones and relieving mourners of the obligation of maintaining a grave plot. Particularly in urban and suburban communities, the rise of cremation is often perceived as utilitarian, and a widespread 'neglect' of death and the dead, or at least a weakening of the connection between body and landscape with ritual and mourners (Curl 2002; Worpole 2003: 183–7).

This current academic discourse on the rise of cremation as a mortuary process has strict limitations. For example, it ignores post-cremation disposal strategies and it omits the widespread recognition that ash disposal has become part of the rebirth of mortuary commemoration in the later twentieth century (Howarth 2010). Cremation is hence stereotyped with vitriol in academic discourse, regarded as a static, modernist antithesis to the Victorian celebration of death, rather than as an evolving, complex, and varied set of disposal strategies utilized by many different socio-economic, religious, and ethnic groups across Europe from the late nineteenth century, in which its mutability has encouraged its widespread use beyond specific religious denominations and ethnicities (see also Rugg 2013). The consistency and modesty of cremation memorials are also regarded as evidence of the strict regulatory control over how the dead are to be commemorated in twentieth-century societies (e.g. Mytum 2004b), and yet, as Rugg (2013) clearly argues, this approach denies the agency of mourners to select and adapt the memorial choices available to them within capitalist consumerist societies in which death is often a money-making industry as

well as a regulated civil service. In this regard, cremation is not simply associated with restricted disposal choices, on the contrary, cremation facilitates a wide range of new commemorative strategies, fuelled by new technologies and business initiatives. The memorial modesty and/or neglect associated with cremation is therefore not a symptom of those opting for cremation failing to memorialize per se or the triumph of regulation over individuality, but a shifting relationship between memory and material culture and the ongoing tension between regulation and individual/family strategies of commemorative expression and material consumption during death rituals.

Within the diversity of ash disposal strategies associated with modern cremation, many may indeed choose to do nothing with the ashes or else have them disposed of in ephemeral ways outside the cemetery. Yet for those opting to utilize traditional cemetery space to memorialize the cremated dead, burning the body in gas-fired ovens facilitates new opportunities in disposal and commemoration. Hence, in part, cremation is linked to a late twentieth- and early twenty-first century re-valorization and individualization of mortuary ritual and mortuary commemoration, revealing the secular spiritualization within late modern capitalism. In this environment, cremation embodies strategies for creating ongoing bonds with the dead and the places connected to their lives and death. In these mourning and commemorative practices, traditional cemeteries have a series of distinctive and evolving roles.

THE AGENCY AND MATERIALITY OF MODERN CREMATION

While there have been histories of cremation and crematoria (Grainger 2005), as well as recent studies by sociologists of the choices made by mourners over the destinations of ashes (Kellaheer et al. 2005, 2010; Prendergast et al. 2006; Hockey et al. 2007; Hadders 2013), what is striking is how little research has been done on cremation's spaces and materialities of the last century. Most sociological studies of cremation focus upon the organization of funerals and cemeteries and both professionals' and survivors' perceptions of them, rather on how both together negotiate the deployment of material culture and architecture in cemetery space. In this regard, we might cite the work of Woodthorpe (2010; 2011) and Rugg (2013) as providing clear inspirations for exploring the agency of mourners in commemorative practice operating in relation to the regulatory impositions of uniformity and optionality in cemetery and churchyard memorials. Their approach emphasizes the role of cemeteries in continuing bonds of kinship and affinity between the living and the dead. This chimes with Wingren's (2013) appraisal of landscape designs for new Swedish cemeteries in facilitating multiple place-making strategies rather than a singular disposal destination and material form. Furthermore, for pre-existing spaces, a clear assertion of the importance of the traditional environment, its continuation and revitalization through ongoing burial practice, is provided by the detailed research into tensions between regulations and mourners in Yorkshire churchyards (Rugg 2013).

Yet specific qualitative discussions of ash disposal have given attention to the agency of mourners and place-making strategies for ashes taken away from crematoria (Kellaheer et al. 2005). Meanwhile, the distinctive range and detail of memorial practices in cemetery spaces deserves further attention. The ways in which cremation creates diverse memorial opportunities whilst retaining the option for, and continued use of, traditional burial spaces otherwise closed for new interments, has escaped attention. This trend might be seen as

counter to Kellaheer and Worpole's (2010) suggestion that cremation is part of a wider 'cenotaphization' of death (the dislocation of the body from the place of commemoration), in which memorials are increasingly detached from the locations of mortal remains. Their argument is undoubtedly correct for many contexts and environments and we should also see the continuation and adaption of existing cemeteries as a part of this phenomenon. However, it is equally necessary to recognize the distinctive materialities and spatialities created for the cremated dead in cemetery environments.

This chapter argues that memorials to the cremated dead cannot be understood as synonymous with, and exclusively in relation to, the traditional grave (cf. Kellaheer et al. 2005), but instead, we can identify a spectrum of strategies that depart from it in varying degrees, involving miniaturization, cenotaphization, and collectivity/relationality. These practices deserve attention on their own terms. We can identify such departures from the treatment of the inhumed dead as commemorative themes in operation amongst the newer memorial forms and spaces created within the traditional churchyards and cemeteries as part of their broader phenomenon of revision in the spatial and material components of urban and suburban cemeteries. Here, we can concur with Grainger (2005) in referring to these as 'landscapes of mourning' when designed around crematoria, but also recognize their proliferation into a range of other spaces and places in the burial landscape and beyond.

Key to understanding the significance of these late twentieth- and early twenty-first century innovations in cemetery space to facilitate the commemoration of the cremated dead is Marjavaara's research (2012), which identifies the role of cremation in facilitating the increasing post-mortal mobility of the dead, defining relationships with places in death increasingly distant from the places of lifetime residence. In this context of residential mobility from places of birth, and where burial is desired at places of spiritual and personal significance, cremation facilitates the movement of ashes to aspired and desired locales away from the locality of lifetime residence. In this fashion, cremation allows for the postmortem 'pilgrimage' of the dead to iconic and historic rural locations and historic cemeteries desired by the deceased as their final resting place. This approach is useful for understanding the agency of the dead themselves, and mourners, in place-making strategies and memory work, even if regulations tend to require ashes to remain within cemeteries rather than dispersed into the wider landscape (see also Williams 2011a).

Indeed, crematoria and their cemetery and gardens of remembrance are sacred spaces of corpse transformation within architectures that, to varying degrees and effectiveness, spiritualize and choreograph mourning and remembrance (Davies 1996). Furthermore, as places, they adapt pre-existing burial locations and have created, over the last century in particular, sophisticated environments for memorialization. If the crematoria ever was the stark spaces of mechanical and hygienic corpse disposal that Curl (2002) and other critics denounce, certainly newer crematoria built during recent decades attempt to re-valorize and ritualize cremation as a process and as the crematorium as a memorial locale (e.g. Grainger 2005; 2010). For example, Klaassens and Groote (2014) provide a clear appraisal about how post-modern crematoria architecture in the Netherlands serves to encourage interactions between landscape, mourning and mortality, that give meaning to the building and its surroundings. Therefore, while ashes might depart from crematoria far and wide,

the crematoria and its cemetery context has never ceased to be an environment with clear significance as a place of mourning and memory in which ash disposal persists as a key component into the twenty-first century. Furthermore, innovative designs of crematoria and their settings are responses to, and help to unfold, these relations between ashes, place, and memory.

Despite this research, there has not been detailed consideration to date regarding the new kinds of place-making through memorials and material culture linking cremation to the 'traditional' spaces of the crematorium, cemetery and churchyard. In terms of either the variabilities or the uniformities evident within the relatively modest memorials of the later twentieth century and early twenty-first century, the existing studies outlined have yet to explore in detail the similarities and differences between memorialization for the cremated dead and the traditional grave plot in particular contexts beyond generalized commentaries. Hence, cremation is not simply about affording mobility and diversity to ash disposal, but also the creation of new forms of miniaturization, cenotaphization and, in particular, the relational and collective nature of cremation memorialization. Where memorials are located close to or with the ashes, a closer, homely and intimate connection is retained and sustained through location and material deposition (flowers, cards, small artefacts, and other items). Likewise, the faculty of cremation to re-open and revitalize traditional burial spaces that have ceased to be used and remain closed to new inhumations is largely overlooked. Looking at such trends and practices, cremation can be seen afresh as far from the antithesis of memorialization, but a technology of remembrance which affords a range of new relationships to be forged between the living and the dead across the contemporary urban and rural environments.

Set in this context, diminutive and collective cremation memorials do not speak of a decline and/or simplification of memorial practice, they reveal new and evolving strategies for commemoration in ephemeral and intimate ways, facilitating new modes of mourning and commemoration through materials and space. A more careful and contextual exploration of the memorials and spaces associated with the commemoration of the cremated dead today has implications not only for understanding death and memory in our society, but for more careful and sensitive interpretations of trends and variabilities in the memorials and monuments deployed for the cremated dead in past societies, helping us to avoid crude misinterpretations of the commemorative relationships between cremation and other disposal methods. It is this breach that archaeology has the potential to contribute new perspectives and approaches to the archaeology of modern cremation.

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF MODERN CREMATION

Archaeological attention and perspectives to memorial material cultures and commemorative spaces can make a strong contribution to the study of contemporary cremation (see Cerezo-Román and Williams 2014). While there has been a growing body of research—excavations, surveys, and syntheses—exploring late-historic death ways, most discussions have focused on the later eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century expansion of memorialization and cemeteries (e.g. Tarlow 2000; Mytum 2002). As outlined by Williams (2011a), in only specific fields of research, such as considering the politics and ethics of excavation, display, storage of human remains, the archaeology of conflict commemoration (e.g. Tarlow 1997; Walls 2011), or the forensic investigation of clandestine

burials (Davenport and Harrison 2011), have archaeologists found legitimate ways to explore more recent death-ways. Harold Mytum (2004a: 86) provides the groundwork for further archaeological work on death and commemoration in the contemporary past, arguing that the materiality of death in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been underplayed in studies focusing on grieving and mourning and the intellectual architecture of death. He proposes that the expertise of archaeologists has much to offer the study of death today. While the ethical and practical concerns preclude archaeological excavation in all but exceptional circumstances (see Anthony 2016), above-ground surveys of the materials and spaces of mourning and memorialization—not only gravestones, but their spatial settings as well as other kinds of memorial practice—hold rich potential for more recent times. In particular, these studies show the perpetuation of earlier commemorative practices and traditions despite changes in monumental form and ornament (e.g. Mytum 2002), as well as the agency and impact of specific group identities upon highly regulated burial places (e.g. Parker and McVeigh 2013) and the wider contemporary landscape beyond the cemetery (e.g. Corkill and Moore 2012).

While archaeology might be summoned as one avenue to enrich our understanding of recent trends in commemoration following cremation, as yet, only a handful of archaeological commentaries have been penned addressing the new material and spatial environments associated with ashes. Parker Pearson (1982) considered the trend towards cremation in the present as an analogy for the ideological dimensions of mortuary change in later prehistory. More recently, and also focusing on the nineteenth-century origins of cremation, Rebay-Salisbury (2012) uses modern Vienna as a case study illustrating the complex political and religious factors affecting the emergence of cremation architectures and environments in relation to the persistence of inhumation. With their valuable focus on the complex processes involved in cremation's origins and early popularity, there is a tendency here to buy into the predominant discourse of cremation as a secularizing and regulatory process (see Rugg 2013). However, Sørensen and Bille (2008) depart from this perspective and have usefully discussed the significance of fire in relation to both ancient and modern crematoria. Equally, Back Danielsson (2009, 2011) has looked explicitly at both the fiery transformation and the portability and materialities of ashes in thinking about the distribution of personhood in both the Iron Age and the present day. While making important insights and discussions regarding cremations' modern contexts of direct relevance to mortuary archaeologists dealing with cremation past and present, the focus of studies has been neither to consider in any depth the material culture and environments of cremation practices in the contemporary past, nor to investigate archaeologically the destinations and environments of ash disposal.

Further recent studies have said more about the specific environments and material cultures of modern cremation. Mytum (2004a) has recognized memorials to the cremated dead within the spectrum of broader shifts and trends towards mass-produced simplicity and regularity of cremation memorials. In his view, cremation memorials reflect late twentieth-century management strategies within cemeteries and churchyards. For this reason, cremation memorials are situated within the latest churchyard extension far from the church, making them separate destinations for mourners at the culmination of a horizontal stratigraphy of memorial practice. Yet again, the admittedly more muted variability of practices is not explored in any detail. For Denmark, Sørensen (2009)

considers the distinctive materialities of lawn cemeteries—memorials flush with the ground's surface—as more than reflecting a departure from the traditional family grave linked to efficient memorial management. Instead, he regards this cremation-driven space as a distinctive new interplay between the materialized presence and absence of the dead within churchyards linked with the rise of cremation as a disposal method. Likewise, Williams (2011b) explored Swedish 'memory groves' in over three hundred churchyards. He argued that, as an overtly non-textual cenotaphic and contemplative space for commemorating the dead (both individually and collectively), memory groves staged personal relations between mourners and the dead.

These studies remain rooted in traditional burial spaces, although the potential for considering ash dispersal and burial sites in new locations by employing archaeological perspectives and methods should not be overlooked either. While some nations have firm restrictions on ash disposal, in the UK, for example, Williams (2011b) has considered the range of other spaces in which cremation memorials are situated and ashes are distributed in the contemporary landscape. Focusing on an animal sanctuary, he argues that ash dispersal is one element of complex and original memorial landscapes where humans and animals can be mourned in close relationship to each other in 'natural' settings outside the cemetery. In such instances, ashes might be partitioned for disposal in different locales, as well as linked to spaces marked by further memorials (see also Holtorf and Williams 2006). Cremation is thus part of the increasing distribution of the dead across the European landscape (see also Kellaher and Worpole 2010).

A further noteworthy dimension relates to the specific relationship between cremation and both archaeological themes and archaeological practice. Back Danielsson (2011) has also considered explicitly the inspiration of ancient cremation materials and architectures as inspirations in the development of modern cremation practices and commemorative environments in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sweden. Janne Ikäheimo (2011) has found recycled ancient architectures, not known in the Finnish archaeological context, that have been imported from a global historical perspective into a rural cemetery in Finland. In the historic setting of a churchyard surrounding a fifteenth-century stone church, a new urn cemetery designed by the leading churchyard architect, Bey Heng, was opened in 2001. It contains a variety of 'ancient monuments,' including a Stonehenge trilithon-like circle of pillars and a Scandinavian ship-setting designed to contain urn graves and scattered ashes. Ikäheimo claims that the idea of recycling old archaeological monuments and transporting them into Christian postmodern setting as confusing, even though the idea of bringing history, at least artificially, into the cemetery space is understandable. The church once destroyed ancient pagan sacrificial sites with great force but is now bringing them back into their own ritual landscape, adopted from abroad (Ikäheimo 2011: 125–9, 132–5).

Similarly, Williams (2012) explores this argument for contemporary Sweden. He demonstrates the reuse and appropriation of archaeological themes in memory groves and individual memorials for the cremated dead. Many gardens of remembrance seem to be partly or entirely dominated by a romantic Nordic vision of prehistory and protohistory, including emulation of prehistoric mortuary monuments.

The relationship between modern cremation and archaeological practice is another dimension of the entanglement of material culture and burial. Williams and Williams (2007) discuss archaeology close to a rural churchyard setting as a distinctive form of memory work itself, sometimes facilitating the commemoration of the cremated dead. In their case study, excess topsoil taken from the excavation adjacent to the churchyard was utilized to create the bedding for the churchyard's new cremation-burial plot. Conversely, the completion of the archaeological work itself led to permission for the extension of the churchyard and the perpetuation of the traditional burial space for inhumation without recourse to churchyards and cemeteries elsewhere.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CREMATION IN THE URBAN CEMETERY

In modest ways, previous work has begun to address the diversity of ways by which archaeologists can explore contemporary cremation. However, to date, the ways by which large urban and suburban crematoria and cemeteries originating in the nineteenth and early twentieth century have incorporated the cremated dead during the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, have largely escaped attention (but see Back Danielsson 2011). To rectify this situation, this chapter explores the current range of commemorative material cultures and spaces associated with the memorialization of the cremated dead in urban cemetery environments originally designed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Our choice to focus upon one European cemetery serves to illustrate the varied, overlapping strategies by which the traditional grave has been translated and adapted, abbreviated, and compressed in the last century or more in order to accommodate the cremated dead, simultaneously perpetuating the utility of near-full cemeteries and creating new architectural and spatial forms subverted, to create new forms of memorialization for the cremated dead, since the mid-twentieth century within and beyond the traditional grave plot. Moreover, focusing on Finland's premier historic cemetery, in the country's capital city, illustrates one manifestation of the distinctively Nordic engagement with cremation during the twentieth and twenty-first century, in which the woodland cemetery and the national cemetery coalesce as an environment not only for commemorating the dead individually, but for understanding the dead in relation to concepts of nature and nationality. Hietaniemi also serves as a valuable case study because, under Finnish law, ash-scattering outside cemeteries requires special permission and is therefore a rare practice (c.1 per cent of funerals). In this context, the traditional cemetery has retained its commemorative stranglehold and hence its adaption to memorialize the cremated dead is especially poignant.

Let us finish this introduction by summarizing explicitly the archaeological dimensions of this study. They are fourfold:

1. Many of Europe's urban cemeteries of nineteenth-century origin are now recognized as heritage sites: protected and managed for their historic value for their commemorative histories linked to their early origins, rich and varied tombs, and the personal, family, local, regional, national and international narratives they embody. Therefore their recent and ongoing use for cremation deposition and memorialization is a key dimension in

understanding cemetery management, conservation, and interpretation by heritage practitioners;

2. The contemporary past is a now established aspect of mortuary archaeology as much as any other epoch in human history. While our data might be restricted to the above-ground remains on ethical and regulatory grounds, the recent past allows a high volume and rich range of material evidence to be readily surveyed and seen in comparative perspective with evidence from other periods;

3. Archaeological thinking has shaped modernity and its death ways, therefore the study of cremation today reveals the reception of archaeological evidence for cremation in the prehistoric and historic past and allows us to consider how our interpretations are shaped by engagements with cremation in both the past and the present;

4. Archaeological perspectives bring a distinctive focus on material practice.

In other words, our focus here is less upon the intended meanings of the landscape design and more upon the materialities and practices that emerge during the cemetery's use (see also Woodthorpe 2011; Rugg 2013). This focus on commemorative accumulation within mortuary environments allows us to consider the dialectic between cemetery design and management, and the development and use of individual memorials. Memorials are here not treated as atomized units of analysis or alternatively as identical building-blocks of the cemetery design, but instead as related and successive accumulations that sit in relationship with each other in the constructive of emotive and mnemonic environments (see also Williams 2014c, 2014d).

For all these reasons, archaeologists bring a useful and novel perspective to the complex and varied landscapes and materials of contemporary cremation hitherto afforded superficial attention. For this chapter, the research involves a brief and broad survey of one cemetery to compare and contrast the wide range of cremation-related memorials that can be found in the same commemorative environment.

MEMORIALIZING THE CREMATED DEAD AT HIETANIEMI

The case study chosen for this paper is the Hietaniemi cemetery (Fig. 14.1), established in 1829 but extended with new sections opening in 1864 and 1929 (Viro 2001: 33–4), serving as the principal historic cemetery of Finland's capital city: Helsinki. This case study is useful, for while any one cemetery cannot allow us to explore the full range of ways in which cremated individuals are memorialized in European cemeteries, it provides one clear instance where the cemetery's continuation and adaptation is intimately bound to the crematorium and a range of memorial options for the disposal of ashes. In this discussion, we focus on memorials and their arrangement, and only briefly address the ephemeral flowers, lanterns and other artefacts placed on and around memorials.

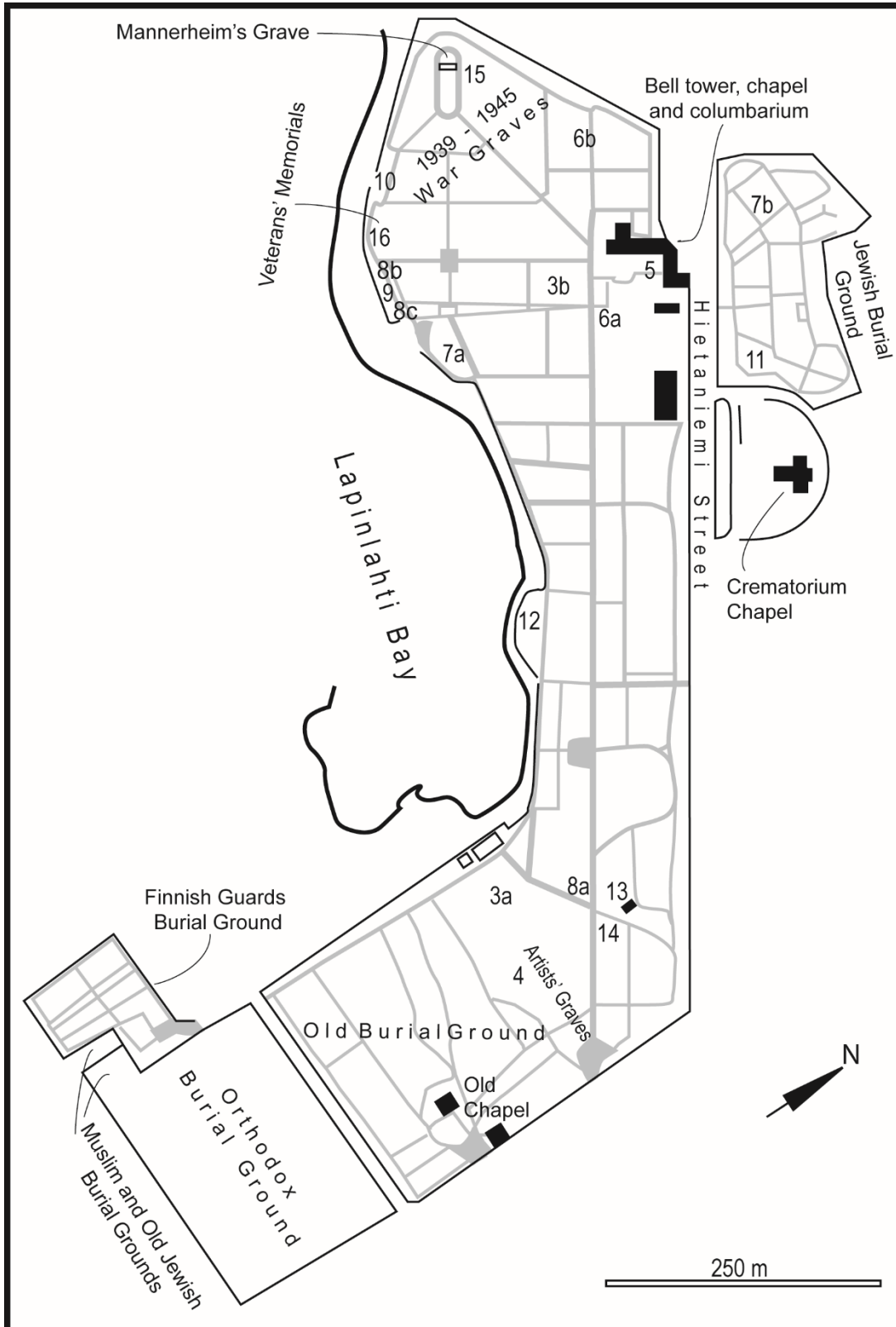


Fig. 14.1 Map of the Hietaniemi cemetery showing the principal features discussed in the chapter and annotations showing the approximate locations of the memorials illustrated in this chapter. Designed by Howard Williams

Today, the cemetery incorporates the parish church and burial ground of St Nicholas (for the Russian Orthodox population), the Helsinki Orthodox burial section, a small Muslim burial section and two Jewish burial sections. An important component of the cemetery is the area to the far north of Hietaniemi peninsula containing the war graves and war memorials focusing on the tomb of Finland's early and mid-twentieth-century politician, military leader and president, C. G. E. Mannerheim. This newer part of the main cemetery, founded in the 1930s, is laid out around the chapel and columbarium, which was built in 1933. Further additional burial plots have been designed in more recent decades across the road to the east and infilling within older parts of the cemetery.

Cremation is a significant minority rite in Finland. In the late 1990s, it accounted for between a quarter a third of funerals, but inevitably a far higher proportion for urban populations (Worpole 2003: 161). By 2012, 44 per cent of the deceased were cremated in Finland (Suomen hautaustoiminnan keskusliitto ry 2012), which is rather low when compared with (for example) Sweden, where 68 per cent of the population chose cremation already in 1999 (Worpole 2003). However, in the capital city Helsinki, nearly 82 per cent of the population chose cremation in 2012 (Suomen hautaustoiminnan keskusliittory 2012). At the Hietaniemi cemetery, less than 10 per cent of all burials are today inhumations (Molander 2009). In this context, Hietaniemi reveals seven discrete but related ways in which cremation is materialized within the cemetery space during the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, all juxtaposed in close proximity to the crematorium and the older nineteenth and early twentieth-century graves:

1. There are memorial representations of ancient cremation and fire associated with graves;
2. Memorialized ashes added to pre-existing family graves;
3. Ash disposal in columbaria;
4. Memorialized ash disposal in small grave plots;
5. Memorialized ash disposal in miniature grave plots;
6. Collective memorials to the cremated dead;
7. Gardens of remembrance.

What these memorial categories relate to each other spatially and reflect a complex interleaving chronological evolution in the management of cemetery space, they share in creating a dynamic tension between commemorating individuals and families on the one hand, and creating memorials that service to create a collective identity in death through uniformity between gravestones and memorials sharing the same space or monument. To different degrees, each disposal method creates an assemblage effect, either within individual memorials or in the shared materialities and forms between memorials and their spatial arrangements. Each of these commemorative options can be understood to prompt distinctive emotional auras and presences to the dead and contrasting materialities for memory work distinct from, but related to in varying degrees, the traditional grave.

Memorial Representations of Ancient Cremation and Fire

There is a 'prehistory' to cremation at the cemetery: in addition to architectural allusions to antiquity and the Middle Ages through neo-Egyptian tombs, Viking rune-stones and Gothic memorials, some of the nineteenth-century tombs invoke cremation in classical antiquity,

often by employing overtly heroic and martial themes. The cemetery also displays a modest but striking set of invocations of ancient Finnish and Nordic monumental forms, including cairns decked in multiple stone memorial plaques and with deliberately irregular water-worn stone borders. This Nordic trend towards classicism and prehistory was softened but not fully replaced by modernism in the cemetery designs of the early twentieth century (Wingren 2013), and unsurprisingly, these themes persist into some more recently graves. Representations of ancient cremation in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century graves include memorial stones topped with classical urns, invoking the ashes of ancient Homeric heroes.¹ Occasionally, there are examples of these from recent decades: late twentieth-century renditions of nineteenth-century visions of antiquity—allusions to allusions—are proximal to the columbarium and chapel, and probably covering the ashes of the cremated dead. In such instances, the memorials do not simply evoke a general sense of antiquity: they are themselves marking cremation burials and thus configure remembrance of the dead in relation to ideals of timeless fiery obsequies (Fig. 14.2).²

In addition to these heterotopic citations towards ancient architectures, fire is specifically alluded to in cemetery memorials. It is inherently ambiguous as to whether these memorials covered and commemorated those whose remains were subject to cremation. However, via the classical lamp and fiery torches, allusions to both ancient graveside mourning rituals and the promise of the soul's resurrection are encapsulated (Fig. 14.3).³ Further, military commemoration at Hietaniemi draws off these allusions to antique heroic material cultures with bronzes depicting helmets and weapons.

¹ E.g. the Alfred Oström's or Walter Ahlqvist's family graves.

² The Eero Reinius grave monument being a clear example.

³ An example is the large memorial of Sophie Mannerheim and the naked male figure with loose toga and lighted torch on the Gebhard family memorial.



Fig. 14.2 Examples of memorials with urns, lamps, and one of the examples of a classical helmet. Photographs: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.3 Examples of fire represented in memorial art: a torch (left: 3a on Fig. 14.1) and flame in the hand (right: 3b on Fig. 14.1). Photographs: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.4 Two examples of elaborate long-lived family grave, likely to be commemorating individuals both inhumed and cremated (4 on Fig. 14.1). Photograph: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.5 Two views of the columbarium at the Hietaniemi chapel. Photographs: Howard Williams

Cremation in Traditional Space: Memorialized Ashes in Family Graves

Cremation is also evident as an ingredient of the nineteenth- and twentieth century traditional family graves. For while the grave form offers a space to receive many inhumed bodies, for its primary and successive occupants, these spaces facilitate the inclusion of ashes. Increasingly over time, the small size of the grave plot over adult individuals hints that the individual might have been cremated or interred elsewhere. More recently, cremation burials have become integrated into the grave plots themselves, whether the original choice for interment or through the addition of successive family interments to a burial plot, hinted at through the diminutive secondary memorials. In this way, cremation burials are subsumed into family commemoration over multiple generations, many originally designed prior to the adoption of cremation on any scale (the first cremation in Helsinki took place in 1926) (Figs 14.3a and 14.4) (Lahtinen 1989: 143). The original memorial becomes a collective focus for the inhumed and cremated dead, not only through the addition of successive names to the principal memorial stone, but through the grave plot becoming a composite monument with the addition of small horizontal memorial slabs marking the sites of burial of subsequent cremated family members. Furthermore, cremation extends the active life of the grave plot, since once a plot is full of inhumed corpses, cremated material can still be added.

Conflagration and Incorporation: Ash Disposal in Columbarium

The chapel and its classically inspired columbarium provide an architectural focus to the cemetery. Here, cadavers are transformed by fire, but leased loculi provide a collective, uniform repository with vertical surfaces constituting the memorial medium. These are found in three memorial rows, above which a mezzanine gallery allows access to three further rows (Fig. 14.5). These leased memorial spaces that have been physical and memorial homes to successive occupiers, by definition unrelated to each other. This reveals how cremation graves and loculi are all temporary repositories, subject to reuse for new bodies and ashes when leases have expired.

Abbreviating the Cremated Dead: Memorialized Ashes in Small Grave Plots

Among memorials dating from the 1930s to the 1960s, we can recognize the beginning of a distinctive memorial tradition geared to the rising popularity of cremation, from 3.3 per cent in 1927, 20 per cent in 1948, 33 per cent in 1955, and 88 per cent in 1963 (Lahtinen 1989: 71, 101, 104, 108) (Fig. 14.6). While memorial headstones continue to be one means of commemorating full-sized graves, we also find low ledgers and low headstones seemingly designed to memorialize cremation burials. These are sometimes placed to either side of linear pathways as in the earlier inhumation sections, or else they are incorporated into more specific multi-orientational designs that break the rigid geometry of traditional grave plots and integrate trees as foci. For instance, in one section adjacent to the chapel, memorials are set within curving pathways interspersed with deciduous and pine trees. The area is terraced, with a higher area reached by steps. At the centre of the lower area is a circular arrangement of memorials around a grove of trees. Some have additional plaques rather than augmentations to the original memorial inscription, resembling late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century family graves.

These diminutive versions of the traditional grave are found in contrasting forms in different cemetery zones, some fronted by small plantings, others arranged facing each other on two sides of the same paths and backed by low bushes and evergreen shrubs, contrasting with the open, borderless spaces of the main cemetery (Fig. 14.7). Other areas comprise of low sloping ledgers, reminiscent of common forms found in English churchyards and cemeteries. Across the road from the chapel and columbarium to the east, is an extensive modern extension to the cemetery, dominated by row graves from the 1950s to the present and set without a woodland environment of tall pine trees—a classic arrangement of the Scandinavian woodland cemetery (Fig. 14.7). A further permutation is a distinctive space set aside for the memorials of artists. Their proportions and their situation on a steep hillside set apart from the organized rows of family graves in the surrounding cemetery, thus creating a 'natural' hillock of artistic memorialization (Fig. 14.7). Thus, artists and the war dead are singled out for special memorial treatment in the cemetery.



Fig. 14.6 Small 'urn-grave' plots of different types, to the south of the crematorium (top: 6a on Fig. 14.1) and north of the crematorium (bottom: 6b on Fig. 14.1). Photographs: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.7 Small 'urn-grave' plots of different types in the main cemetery (left: 7a on Fig. 14.1) and the new extension (right: 7b on Fig. 14.1). Photographs: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.8 Miniature 'urn-grave' plots of different types. Above: two views of the same garden of remembrance in the south of the cemetery (8a on Fig. 14.1). Below: two designs of miniature urn-grave in the north-west of cemetery (8b and 8c on Fig. 14.1) Photographs: Howard Williams

Reducing the Cremated Dead: Memorialized Ashes in Miniature Grave Plots

In a number of zones in the cemetery, urn graves have taken abbreviation to a new level with 'miniaturizations' of the traditional grave plot. For example, adjacent to the Gångna släktled (Swe) memorial is an evergreen-hedged area containing miniature memorials within stone cobbled pathways. The memorials are polished stone blocks with memorial inscriptions on their upper face or miniature cross-shaped memorials with the inscriptions on the front face. The arrangement provides alternatives, sometimes replicating, sometimes reversing, the organization of the traditional grave, with plantings either in front or behind the memorial stone (Fig. 14.8).

Within this grave plot is another memorial form: a series of tall and very slender white stone slabs with metal memorial plaques, each topped with a cross and each with a lower aperture for candles and other ornaments, again with micro-gardens at their base (Fig. 14.8).

Elsewhere, memorials are designed into spirals, distinctive memorial forms are arranged to create centrepieces within large burial plots. The most miniature forms are the small boulder memorials marked with metal plaques and often adorned by lanterns and black

stick-thin crosses, creating an undifferentiated rockery between the path and the cemetery wall (Fig. 14.9).

Integrating the Cremated Dead: Collective Memorials

This leads us to discuss how cremation burial has finally severed itself from the traditional grave through the use of single architectural forms upon which memorials to many individuals and families are placed (Fig. 14.10). We find this trend only recently coming to the fore at the cemetery, and therefore it is a fundamental shift in the way the cremated dead are commemorated, perhaps the most radical since the adoption of cremation itself. In one space, the cemetery wall—itsself mirroring traditional rural churchyard boundaries—has served in this capacity. Elsewhere we find a wide range of monuments as collective memorials to the cremated dead: cross-shaped blocks, pillars, and walls.

In many ways these memorials are connected to memory groves (discussed next), since they fragment memorial action between multiple locales—the placing of flowers, the recording of names and the scattering of ashes being separated and dispersed across a collective architectural space rather than condensed within a personal or family grave plot.

Subsuming the Cremated Dead: Gardens of Remembrance

Memory groves take on a diversity of forms, providing contrasting spaces within which the cremated dead can be memorialized without individual memorials, or adjacent to memorial walls and pillars where their names are memorialized (Fig. 14.11). As their centre-piece, as in many Swedish memory groves (Williams 2011a), monumental features serve as cenotaphic foci, simultaneously also alluding to the traditional family grave. In one, for example, there is a nineteenth-century style iron memorial cross providing a commemorative focus to the memory grove.

A further example is the spruce grove, where ashes are scattered around the bases of trees and names recorded in a nearby pillar (Fig. 14.12) and a memorial garden bereft of any textual remembrance (Fig. 14.12).

While not a garden of remembrance per se, there is also a further memorial focus created from the natural slope of the hill (Fig. 14.13). Steps rise to this memorial: commemorating those buried elsewhere or who no longer have a tended grave, inscribed bilingually (Fi. *Menneiden sukupolvien ja muualla lepäävien muistolle*, Swe. *Till minnet av gångna släktled och dem som vilar på annan ort*) (To the memory of past generations and to those who rest at another location). The stone is topped by a bronze sculpture of an angel in flight. The memorial itself is a stone wall with the inscription, fronted by a slab—invoking an altar, but here instead covered with lanterns and flowers. To the right of the memorial is a bench for mourner's to repose. When visited, flowers had also been placed on the steps ascending to the memorial. There is also a memorial grove, remembering those buried in the lost territory of Karelia. The focus is a sculpture representing a family: a man, woman, and boy facing a cross. Ashes can be scattered and urn graves dug here from families descended from those who lived in Karelia (Fi. *Karjalaan jääneiden vainajien muistolle*, Swe. *Till minnet av avlidna som blivit kvar i Karelén*) (In memory of those deceased who were left behind in Karelia) (Fig. 14.14). In Sweden, there is a move away from this most anonymizing of

memorial forms, with various compromises offered. The juxtaposition of collective memorials and gardens of remembrance at this cemetery is a clear attempt at a softening of the hard anonymity of the garden of remembrance, whilst retaining it as a clear option in the cemetery's use.



Fig. 14.9 Miniature 'urn-grave' plots: 'cobbled' memorials (9 on Fig. 14.1). Photograph: Howard Williams



Fig. 14.10 Collective memorials to the cremated dead (10 on Fig. 14.1). Photographs:
Howard Williams



Fig. 14.11 Gardens of Remembrance (11 on Fig. 14.1). Photographs: Howard Williams

DISCUSSION: CREMATION, VETERANS, AND THE WAR DEAD

Hietaniemi is a national cemetery and is an apposite place to complete this survey because it reveals the importance of cremation as a means of commemorating the displaced and dislocated by war. For the UK, Walls (2011) shows how traditional memorial spaces of churchyards and cemeteries configured the vast majority of war memorials, and cremation memorials sometimes accrue around war memorials. In Finland, the Hietaniemi cemetery is home to a large focal point of war graves: over three thousand in total (Viro 2001). In 1952, the memorials were given consistent stone slabs designed by the architect Matti Siitonen. These slabs would have been strikingly diminutive and consistent at their time and today are joined by near-identical planting of fuchsias. These line paths that focus on a plaza, a large cross (designed by the famous sculptor Wäinö Aaltonen), and the tomb of Finland's leading twentieth-century general and politician, Mannerheim, raised after the creation of the design of the war cemetery in 1954, also designed by Aaltonen (Pehkonen 2009) (Fig. 14.15). In the north-east part of the war cemetery is also 80 metre-long wall of fame with name inscriptions in alphabetical order of all 727 soldiers that went missing during the Second World War (Viro 2001: 211). Therefore, Second World War dead, and other memorials to the conflict, were commemorated in a consistent fashion within an overall memorial design, situated in relation to the grave of Finland's premier hero and 'founding

father', and yet mirroring the trend from individual grave plots to collective commemoration seen in the memorials to the cremated dead. In this fashion, the materiality and form of the memorials creates a sense of collective military and national identity, subsuming the individuality and family identities of those interred.



Fig. 14.12 The spruce memorial grove: monoliths providing foci for flowers and lanterns and with plaques appended, plus boat-shaped cairns of stones set around spruce trees. (12 on Fig. 14.1) Photograph: Anna Wessman



Fig. 14.13 A memorial to those who rest somewhere else (13 on Fig. 14.1). Photograph: Anna Wessman

There are other military memorials that follow this pattern. Comparable war graves and cremation memorials are juxtaposed in the Orthodox section of the cemetery, and there is uniformity to the commemoration of those civilians who gave their lives for Finland during wartime. At the war grave area, closest to the seashore, there is a new urn cemetery

established in 1992 reserved solely for the war veterans. There is room for 15,000 urn graves here (Viro 2001: 220–1). In short, this patriotic collectivity finds multiple locales within the cemetery.

The move from uniform grave plots towards an abbreviated and collective nature of the war dead at the Hietaniemi cemetery serves to foreground absence in a comparable way to the cremation memorials of recent decades. This strongly suggests that the commemoration of the war dead may have directly inspired, and at least legitimated a precedent for, the move towards the miniaturized and collective commemoration among Helsinki's civilian population during subsequent decades.



Fig. 14.14 Karelian Garden of Remembrance (14 on Fig. 14.1). Photograph: Howard Williams

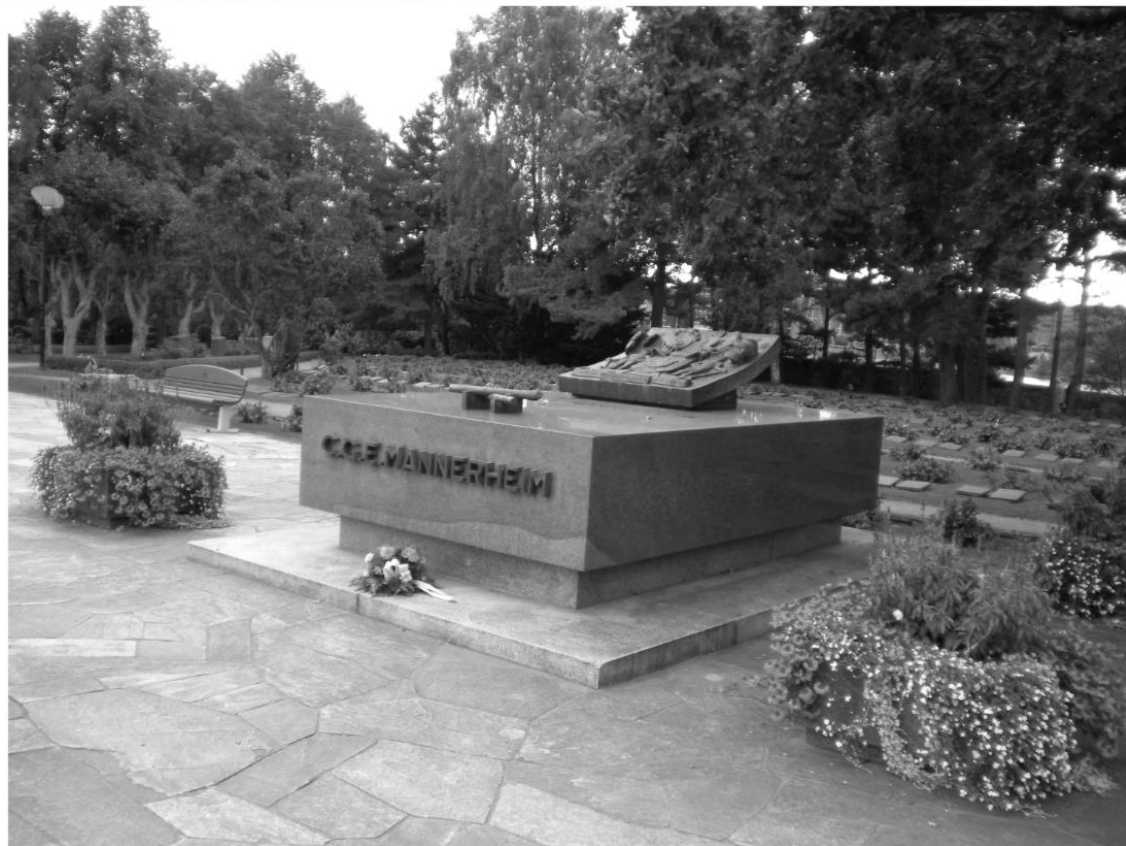


Fig. 14.15 War graves with chapel's bell tower behind looking from Mannerheim's grave (above), and Mannerheim's grave (below). (15 on Fig. 14.1) Photographs: Howard Williams

A further link to the cremation memorialization is the breakdown of conventional orientation; at the army memorial, the low-ledgers are orientated around a common cenotaph in all orientations, a distinguishing from traditional memorial practice found elsewhere only in recent cremation memorials. Indeed, Mannerheim's grave, while installed subsequent to the war graves, creates a focal 'ancestral' focus to the design. Therefore, spatially and materially, the cremated dead, and the war dead, are closely associated in the Hietaniemi cemetery, with the latter evidently providing inspiration and precedent for the small, diminutive and collective nature of the former as they were developed during the later twentieth century (Fig. 14.16). In this national cemetery, the cenotaphic and the fragmented nature of war-torn bodies seems to provide a clear commemorative precedent, legitimizing the focus on place over grave plot, and upon collective uniformity in grave design over idiosyncrasy and individuality in the arrangement of particular family and individual memorials.



Fig. 14.16 Collective memorials to veterans established in 1992 (located in the environs of 16 on Fig. 14.1). Photographs: Howard Williams

CONCLUSION

This chapter does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of Finnish commemorative practice. Instead, the aim has been to use the Hietaniemi cemetery as a case study to sketch the recent evolving spectrum of innovative commemorative strategies facilitated by cremation within the traditional space of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban cemetery. These are overlapping axes of variation which have been developed to save space and cost for mourners, and in so doing facilitate the continuation, but also the transformation, of memorial practice. We have identified how cremation is materialized through representations of urns, torches and fire in mortuary art. Subsequently, we explored six ways by which the cremated dead are memorialized within the traditional grave plot, and in a range of more diminutive grave plots, collective memorials and gardens of remembrance over the last half-century. In so doing, cremation has reshaped commemorative topography in the cemetery and facilitated the continued use of both old and new areas of the burial ground. Furthermore, it has been postulated that conflict commemoration created a memorial precedent, driving the creation of collective foci and near uniformity memorial forms and materials as new, increasingly abrupt, commemorative media have been selected. While the costs and pressures on space available in the cemetery are clearly also driving forces behind these moves, the precise affordances of these materialities cannot be reduced to such an economic determinism and we see considerable variability in how the cremated dead are commemorated through text, form, ornament, and materiality. In particular, what is seen in the move towards cenotaphic, collective, and miniaturized memorials both encapsulates the reduced and fragmented nature of the cremated body, and simultaneously it increases spatial relatedness between the memorials. Through these architectures, collectively memorials become more than the sum of their parts and inform each other as an emotive and commemorative environment. As such, the commemoration of the cremated dead is a process of ongoing incorporation and revitalization for urban cemetery spaces in increasingly collective and condensed forms which sustain and transform, rather than abandon, the traditional grave and the traditional cemetery as a place of memory.

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