

Ihre Hauptziele sind (1.) ein Vorschlag für eine theoretische und methodische Untersuchung dieser Phänomene, verbunden mit (2.) einer Fallstudie der Rekonstruktion der zur Formung der kulturellen Landschaft im neolithischen Europa angewandten monumentalen Strategien, und (3.) die Erklärung von Kontinuitäten und Wandlungen dieser Traditionen.

La monumentalización del Paisaje: percepción actual y sentido original en el Megalitismo de Galicia (NW de la Península Ibérica)

Felipe Criado Boado y Victoria Villoch Vázquez

El estudio del paisaje como construcción social implica considerar sus dimensiones económicas, territoriales y simbólicas. Sería importante reconstruir cómo fue percibido el espacio natural y social, para lo que se debería construir una Arqueología de la Percepción que tendría entre sus objetivos evaluar el efecto de los rasgos naturales y artificiales del paisaje sobre sus observadores pretéritos. Aquí se propone una estrategia de aproximación basada en el análisis sistemático de los rasgos visuales de los monumentos prehistóricos y en la caracterización de los efectos escénicos y panorámicas relacionadas con ellos. Un examen detallado del patrón de emplazamiento de los megalitos y de sus condiciones de visibilidad y visibilización, permite reconocer regularidades que evidencian una voluntad intencional de remarcar su presencia y provocar artificialmente efectos dramáticos. Así, proponemos aproximarnos a una fenomenología de la percepción prehistórica sin incurrir en soluciones subjetivas. El estudio se basa en una revisión del megalitismo de la Sierra de Barbanza (NW de la Península Ibérica). Su objetivo final es contribuir al estudio de las estrategias monumentales de configuración de los paisajes culturales en el neolítico europeo, además de aproximarse a la diacronía y proceso de formación de esas tradiciones.

LANDSCAPES OF MEMORY: THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GARDEN CEMETERY

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Abstract: During the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, garden cemeteries were founded in most cities in Britain. Their characteristic appearance owes much to a British tradition of naturalistic landscape design but has particular resonances in the context of death and mourning in the nineteenth century. This article considers some of the factors that have been significant in the development of the British landscape cemetery, including public health, class relationships and foreign influences (particularly that of Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris). It is argued that none of these things explains the popularity of this particular form of cemetery in Britain; rather, the garden cemetery offered an appealing and appropriate landscape for remembering the dead and mediating the relationship between the dead and the bereaved.

Keywords: death, emotion, garden cemeteries, memory, nineteenth century

INTRODUCTION

This article is about the large garden cemeteries which were laid out on the outskirts of British cities from the 1820s and 1830s. British cemeteries assumed their characteristic 'garden' style during the 1820s and 1830s. From that time, the garden cemetery was the focus of widespread admiration and discussion in both popular and elite circles and became the standard way of disposing of the urban dead until the rise of cremation in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Within only a few decades of their establishment, the new suburban cemeteries had replaced the graveyards and vaults associated with churches as the main place of interment in Britain. In towns especially, the expectation of cemetery burial was, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the cultural norm in Britain.

Archaeologists, geographers, architectural and social historians have tried to account for the popularity of these new cemeteries in various ways. This article assesses some of the principal lines of explanation which have been proposed, including the mercenary motives of the joint stock cemetery companies founded

during the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, the concern for public health and hygiene, a desire to safeguard the corpse against body-snatchers, emulation of foreign or elite fashions, the opportunity to enhance status through the erection of ostentatious memorials and the possibility of liberation from the stifling and unsatisfactory confines of burial according to the rite and the whim of the established church. Although all these factors are important to the success of the garden cemetery, it is argued here that the 'garden' form of the cemetery was crucial in the creation of an aesthetic and sentimental landscape of remembering which had particular emotional resonances for the bereaved of the nineteenth century. In contrast to some previous work on nineteenth-century cemeteries, this approach highlights the understandings and values of the people who chose to bury and be buried in the new cemeteries rather than the philosophies of cemetery designers and reform campaigners. Garden cemeteries offered particular advantages in mediating and representing the relationship between the living and the dead.

FEATURES OF THE GARDEN CEMETERY

The landscape style of the garden cemetery is particularly British and Anglo-American. Large city cemeteries are known from elsewhere, but British and northern American cemeteries are somewhat different in appearance from their European and Asian counterparts. The British garden cemetery is characterized by its large size, its particular arrangements of ownership and management (most garden cemeteries before the 1850s were private initiatives), its semi-rural or suburban location, and its naturalistic style (Figs 1 and 2).

Garden cemeteries were usually situated just outside the town. British cities are now much bigger than they were in the first half of the nineteenth century, so that many garden cemeteries are now comparatively close to city centres but, at the time of their foundation, their locations were rural or semi-rural, chosen for their pastoral views and restful greenery, as well as, more prosaically, for the availability of large tracts of cheap land. This contrasted sharply with the overcrowded, unattractive city churchyards which endured polluted air, rank earth, foul water running nearby and often the proximity of waste from industry, meat processing and tanning, as well as domestic refuse. Garden cemeteries looked different from churchyards. They were generally much larger and were laid out with winding paths across lawns. They were attractively planted with domestic and exotic trees, shrubs and flowers. From the 1830s onwards, garden cemeteries were founded in all the major towns and cities of Britain, and many of the minor ones.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND POPULAR PREFERENCE

Questions regarding the specific form of the British garden cemetery have not been widely addressed by historians or archaeologists. Until recently, the nineteenth century was not generally considered to be the preserve of European archaeology at all.¹ For this reason, there has been very little archaeological fieldwork on or study of nineteenth-century cemeteries in Europe. Such archaeological work as has

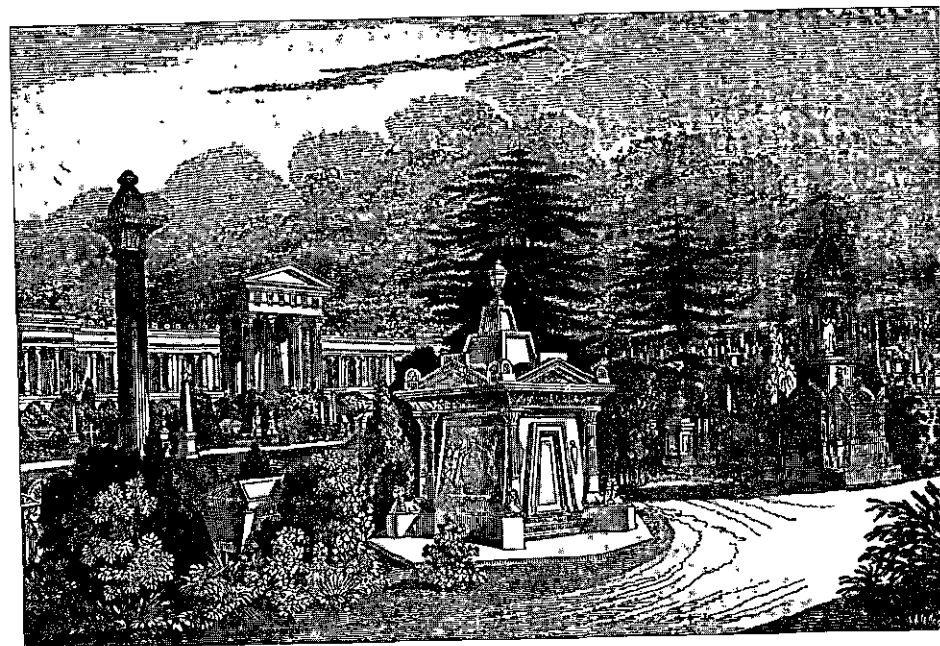


Figure 1. Kensal Green cemetery, from *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* 28 April 1838.

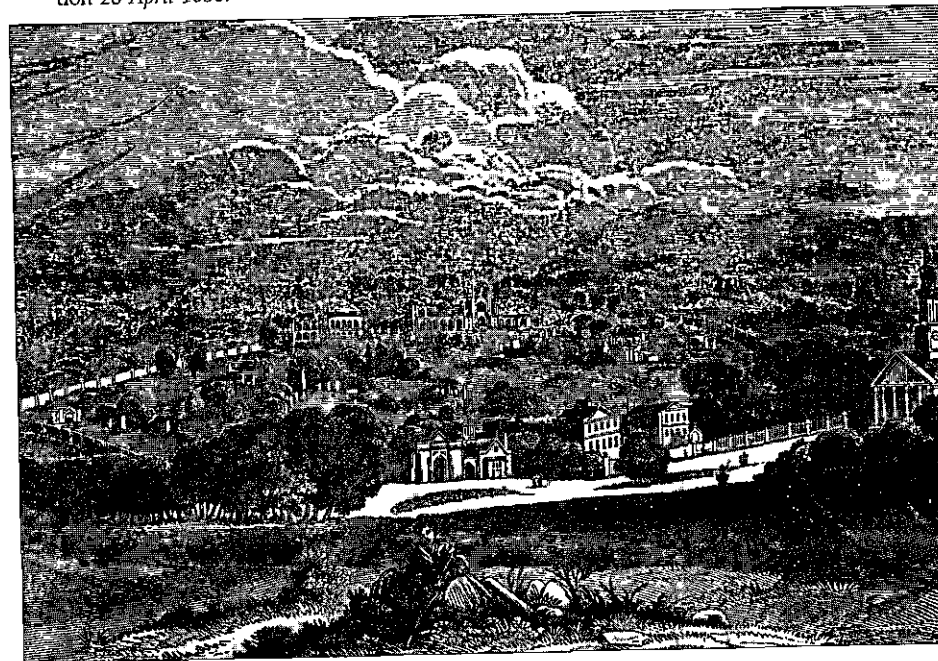


Figure 2. South Metropolitan cemetery, Norwood, from *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* 29 June 1839.

been undertaken on nineteenth-century mortuary practices has generally focused on the interpretation of commemorative monuments, rather than cemetery landscapes themselves (e.g. Rahtz and Watts 1983; Cannon 1989; Mytum 1990; Ellison 1993; Tarlow 1999a, 1999b).

Most scholarship regarding the cemetery landscape has been conducted by art or architectural historians, with particular attention paid to design principles, especially where these have been discursively addressed by nineteenth-century landscape architects.² Accordingly, scholarship of cemetery design has tended to involve assessment of stylistic influences from the continent and further afield, the history of hygienic reform and discussion of the philosophy and principles of great designers like J.C. Loudon (e.g. Curl 1983). The study of the history and architecture of nineteenth-century cemeteries is particularly dominated by the work of the architectural historian J.S. Curl. His work is based on a detailed study of the more artistically accomplished memorial monuments and the plans and discursive writings of designers, critics and social commentators in the nineteenth century, such as Loudon (1843), Strang (1831), Walker (1839) and the numerous eminent Victorians discussed in Curl (1972, 1980). He explains developments in cemetery design with reference to broad, international movements in art, architecture, philosophy and literature. Curl's use of source material is highly selective and strongly biased towards London, so that his contribution as a historian of high culture, particularly sculpture and landscape architecture, is greater than his contribution to the history of cemetery development, particularly outside London. His unapologetic appreciation of fine monumental sculpture sometimes leads him to ignore or dismiss those cemeteries and memorials that have little to recommend them in terms of artistic taste, originality or execution. Yet these ordinary stones and cemeteries can be very revealing about the currents of popular taste and widely-held mid-nineteenth-century attitudes to death and disposal. Curl is primarily interested in design rather than the social history of cemeteries. However, as Rugg (1998c:120) points out, the history of design is not the same as the history of actual cemetery development. By focusing exclusively on the most innovative or notorious cemeteries and designers, exceptional or unique examples can be represented as typifying national trends and tastes.

It is important to remember that in order to address questions about the popularity of a landscape form such as the garden cemetery, and not just its design, we need to address the concerns and values of consumers as well as the philosophy of the designer. This means that an understanding of emotion, belief and attitudes to death may be more important than tracing lines of artistic influence or design philosophy.

EARLY FOUNDATIONS: FREEDOM, PROFITS AND CIVIC SENSIBILITY

Garden cemeteries differed from the churchyards which had preceded them in many ways but perhaps foremost amongst these is their relationship to the Church. Whereas the traditional churchyard was attached to the church, not only geographically and economically but also in terms of theological and social power,

the cemetery was deliberately distanced from institutional or ecclesiastical influence. In a recent review, Julie Rugg emphasizes the significance of cemeteries in wresting control of burial from the established church, particularly for non-Anglicans (Rugg 1998a). The first modern British cemeteries were established in the 1810s and 1820s on the initiative of groups of dissenters motivated by the desire to secure religious freedom in burial practice.

The reasons behind the inception of new cemeteries in Britain changed over time. Rugg divided the foundation of British cemeteries in the nineteenth century into three phases: first (1820–34) were the cemeteries set up by companies of dissenters for religious reasons; then, from 1834–53, the rhetoric of founding companies was dominated by concerns for public health and, finally, after the founding of the burial boards in the early 1850s, the cemetery was considered primarily as civic amenity and adornment (Rugg 1997, 1998a). These motivations are obviously not exhaustive – the desire for profit, concern for the security of the corpse and the interests of monument producers were all also significant. But if we transfer our attentions from the quest for a single galvanizing factor to explain the inception of cemeteries and think instead about their enduring and increasing popularity – their *success* as a means of disposal – we need to think about the desires of the people who used them as well as those who designed them.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Having crossed the canal by two bridges, the stream and the road run parallel as far as the hamlet of Kensal Green. . . . The Cemetery, or new Burial Ground lies on the left of the road, between which and the canal it extends about a quarter of a mile and contains about 48 acres. It is surrounded by a lofty wall, with occasional apertures, secured by iron railing. This area is laid out in the style of Père la Chaise near Paris: it has gravelled roads, and is planted with forest-trees and evergreens; in its parterres blooms for a season the gay flower, fit emblem of the transitory life of man, and harmonizing with the more costly memorials of his brief existence. The site is one of extreme beauty, and the view extends over the rich and varied scenery of the western environs of the metropolis and a large tract of the county of Surrey.

. . . We refer especially to Père la Chaise, and other cemeteries in the neighbourhood of Paris, these being most familiar to English eyes. In the cemeteries of a Protestant country, there will, however, doubtless, be less artificial sorrow in the shape of memorials and tributes, than in the environs of the French capital; and, flowers and evergreens, we know, are such simple tributes of affection to the dead as to be cherished in village churchyards, remote from the heart-burnings of society, such as rage in large towns and communities.

(*The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, 28 April 1838)

Historians of garden cemeteries have pointed to the influence of cemetery landscapes in Europe and elsewhere on British disposal practices (e.g. Curl 1984; Etlin 1984b). The *Mirror* journalist quoted above mentions Père Lachaise cemetery in

Paris and much discussion amongst designers and cultural pundits of the time consisted of evaluating the Parisian style. Père Lachaise was the largest of the new cemeteries founded in Paris in the late eighteenth century after the closure and clearance of the old city centre cemeteries at Les Innocents, rue St Paul and elsewhere. Although a number of other cemeteries were founded in Paris at around the same time, or shortly afterwards (Montmartre, Montparnasse and Vaugirard), Père Lachaise exercised a particular hold on the imagination of British and American visitors, and is frequently argued to be the inspiration for garden cemeteries in Great Britain and the USA (Etlin 1984a, 1984b). Curl, Mytum and others also emphasize the influence of British and French colonial cemeteries, such as the South Park Street cemetery in Calcutta and the St Louis cemetery in New Orleans, though how far this is evident in the actual appearance of British cemeteries is debatable. More convincing is the contention that Mount Auburn cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts was a significant influence on British cemeteries (French 1975:86; Schuyler 1984). Given that Mount Auburn was not dedicated until 1831 (French 1975:77), however, its influence must be limited to the designs of the later cemeteries in Britain. French's claim that Abney Park, founded in 1840, was the first significant garden cemetery in England could only be accepted if we choose to ignore the Liverpool Necropolis (1825), Kensal Green (1832), York (1837), Highgate (1839) and numerous others. However, Francaviglia (1971) maintains that the typical nineteenth-century American cemetery was more geometrical and rectilinear than the 'pastoral' or 'garden' style planning or planting prevalent in Britain (Francaviglia 1971:507). He argues that the American cemetery had more in common with contemporary American settlement plans than with British or European cemeteries (1971:509).

In any case, the British garden cemetery incorporates ideas about landscape, and in particular about the appropriate landscape of death, which do not derive from foreign traditions. They avoid the appearance of 'cities of the dead' – wide straight avenues, 'apartments' of alcoves for coffins (*loculi*) or urns (*columbaria*), which were founded in southern Europe. Even in northern Europe, the new cemeteries of Paris and Stockholm, for example, were more geometric and more densely packed with tombs. The new Parisian cemeteries have an altogether more 'urban' feel to them than their British counterparts (Fig. 3). They have cobbled streets with street names and divisional designations. The space between pavements is filled up with monuments, sculpture and other architectural features, leaving no room for lawns or naturalistic plantings. The trees in French urban cemeteries line the streets formally in the manner of a suburban avenue. British garden cemeteries were mostly asymmetrical in plan, incorporating large areas of lawn. Monuments were distributed, to begin with at least, more sparsely across the landscape. Their arrangement was apparently random with monuments dotted around the landscape (although beneath the ground surface, graves were organized by the cemetery companies in regular rows, which maximized the space available for burial).³

As some landscape historians have noted, the grassy lawns, winding pathways and imaginative plantings in British garden cemeteries are more reminiscent of British private parks and gardens of the eighteenth century than of the new



Figure 3. Avenue in Père Lachaise cemetery, Paris. (Photo: author's own.)

French or Indian cemeteries (e.g. Taigel and Williamson 1993:128–132). The resemblance to private parks is not accidental. Nicholas Penny (1974) traces a line of development from the landscape park to the garden cemetery. The design of many garden cemeteries was clearly influenced by the tradition of private parks: St James's cemetery in Liverpool, for example, was influenced by the eighteenth-century picturesque school of landscape design. The cemetery is situated on the site of an old quarry, landscaped, with catacombs and processional ramps, planted with trees and threaded with meandering paths (Fig. 4). The mortuary chapel resembles the temple-like buildings which adorn the best landscape parks. In London, the Kensal Green cemetery, opened in 1833, was more like a classic landscape park, with clumps of trees planted, serpentine drives, classical-style lodges and temples. Taigel and Williamson (1993), who also emphasize the connection between park landscapes and garden cemeteries, quote *The Builder* magazine, describing a visit to Coventry cemetery in 1847:

We approach an octagonal stone prospect tower on which a small notice board is fixed. This informs us it is the entrance of the cemetery. But for this notification we might have fallen into error, the place having much more the air of a gentleman's park than a city for the dead.

(Taigel and Williamson 1993:130)

Nineteenth-century Britons believed their native landscape park style to have a kind of moral superiority to the artistry of foreign cemeteries. *The Mirror*, quoted at the top of this section, illustrates the ambivalence of British attitudes toward Père Lachaise. While noting the artistry of its monuments and the grandeur of its vision, the anonymous journalist contrasts the French memorials with the 'simple tributes of affection to the dead' offered by the British. French – Catholic French – monuments are, by implication, fancy, inauthentic and designed for some baser purpose than the pure expression of laudable emotion. Stanley French notes that,



Figure 4. St James's cemetery, Liverpool, from *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* 23 February 1839.

in the mid-nineteenth century, Père Lachaise was admired by both British and American visitors but was also criticized for its artifice, vanity and lack of moral decorum (French 1975:86). By contrast, Britons and Americans praised the naturalistic landscapes of their own cemeteries, where the work of human hands was not too evident. This, they believed, had greater potential for religious and moral improvement (French 1975:86–92; cf. Rotundo 1984).

The popular appeal of the garden cemetery is at least partially explained by its naturalistic landscape, less ostentatious memorials and its emphasis on living plants rather than cold architecture. British garden cemeteries expressed what would have appealed to nineteenth-century Britons as a more genuine, Anglican emotional response to bereavement. An appreciation of the Protestant virtues of simplicity and nature was a central part of British identity in the nineteenth century. In their own understandings, the Protestant nations were distinguished from their overblown Catholic neighbours by an authenticity of unmediated, pure moral feeling (as discussed by Colley 1992).

Ultimately, however, the attempt to trace lines of influence and diffusion may not be the most fruitful approach to the significance of nineteenth-century cemeteries. Schuyler makes an important point when he suggests that the new cemeteries

'were the result of ideas that transcended national boundaries' (1984:299). Some general ideas of improvement and reform seem to be common to the histories of French, British and American cemeteries. Nevertheless, just as the precise meanings of class relations, ownership, nature, death, mourning and commemoration varied according to cultural and historical understandings, so too did the form and development of the cemetery. For example, Rotundo relates the comparatively late foundation of naturalistic, parkish, designed landscapes in the USA to an attitude towards nature that was markedly different from the European:

Not until the second and third decades of the nineteenth century did ideas about nature and the picturesque, the sublime, the primitive and all the other European notions that formed American Romanticism fully and finally take hold in the New World. The generation that worked out the constitution of the United States was still too close to fearing the forest . . . and too close to resisting nature because it created a wilderness that must be conquered.

(Rotundo 1984: 260)

HYGIENE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

How far is the form and success of the garden cemetery explained by the desire to safeguard public health and hygiene? An explicit concern with these matters is evident in the literature produced by burial reformers and cemetery companies. This was especially evident in the period 1839–1852 (Rugg 1998a, 1998b). The latter date marks the establishment of local burial boards; the former is the year in which Dr George Walker published his influential tract on the need for hygienic reform of burial practice. Entitled *Gatherings from Graveyards*, it described, in stomach-churning detail, the current state of London burial grounds. Urban churchyards at the beginning of the nineteenth century were evil-smelling places, the soil covered in a noxious black slime and the ground so frequently broken for fresh interments that trees and lawns could not be established. Inside the churches, burials continued to be made under the floor of the nave (Fig. 5) and sometimes the smell in the church would become so overwhelming that the congregation would have to leave. This is Walker's description of the graveyard of St Clement Danes, Portugal Street, London, also called the Green Ground, though this name might more aptly describe the complexion of those who visited it than the verdant scenery:

The soil of the ground is saturated, absolutely saturated, with human putrescence. . . . The effluvia from this ground, at certain periods, are so offensive, that persons living in the back of Clements Lane are compelled to keep their windows closed; the walls even of the ground which adjoins the yards [of neighbouring houses] are frequently seen reeking with fluid, which diffuses a most offensive smell.

(Walker 1839:150)

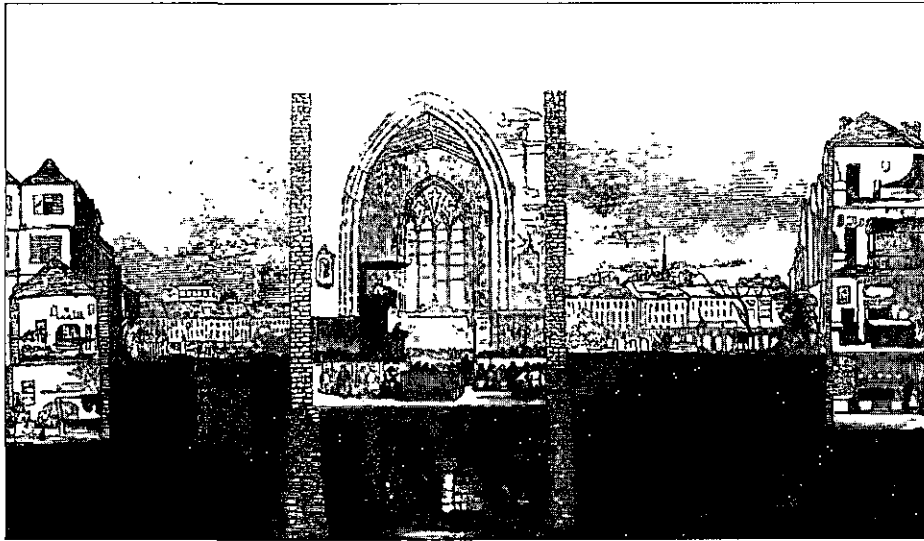


Figure 5. Section through a church and its vaults.

Obviously this state of affairs was a concern for Walker and his fellow reformers. People living adjacent to the graveyards were at constant risk of inhaling the 'mephitic vapour' issuing from the ground which, in its undiluted form, was believed to cause instant death (Loudon 1843). Walker recounts numerous cautionary tales about people who had dropped down dead after inhaling only a single lungful of the fatal miasma.⁴ Moreover, the risks from miasmatic graveyards were more than physical. Walker believed that 'burial places in the neighbourhood of the living are . . . the harbingers, if not the originators of pestilence; the cause, direct or indirect, of inhumanity, immorality and irreligion' (Walker 1839:ii). Walker's views evidence the widespread nineteenth-century association between material and moral uncleanness – between dirt and depravity. Therefore, there was an urgent need, for moral as well as hygienic reasons, 'to remove as far as possible from the living, the pestiferous exhalations of the dead' (Walker 1839:vii).

The unhygienic conditions noted by health reformers like Walker were largely occasioned by the unprecedented and unsustainable demand for burial space. Mostly, the space problem was precipitated by the rapid growth in urban populations and consequently by mortality rates which far exceeded the capacity of small city churchyards and vaults. The number of deaths was high both because of the higher levels of urban population *per se*, and because overcrowded and unsanitary conditions produced endemic and epidemic disease. So there were more bodies to bury in the same space and often at the same time. But there were also changes in attitudes which exacerbated the need for more burial space.

There had been comments and complaints about unhygienic urban burial grounds well before the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Rugg (1998c:116) rightly

suggests that, rather than graveyards having suddenly arrived at the threshold of intolerability, as most historians claim, perhaps other sensibilities were being violated. She highlights concerns around the security of the corpse at a time when graverobbing was a widespread fear (detailed in Richardson 1987), but anxiety about the activities of the 'resurrection men' were only one manifestation of a new importance attributed to the body itself as the locus of individuality and, therefore, the significance of the corpse in bereavement and mourning. This emerging understanding of the body relates to the desire for a more aesthetically attractive place of the dead – something which I shall consider in more detail in the second half of this article – and also contributed to a desire for secure and extended grave tenure, which produced considerable overcrowding in many cases.

The traditional practice of disinterring bones after a few years, in order to make space for new burials became, from the later eighteenth century, less acceptable. By the nineteenth century, there was a widespread feeling that one's burial plot should belong to oneself and one's descendants in perpetuity. Intervention in burial space, removal of old bones and the interment of fresh, unrelated corpses in the same patch of land was held to be both a violation of the dead and a horror to the living. The nineteenth-century desire to own one's burial plot relates both to the modern ethic of enclosed, appropriated and exclusive possession, and to an emerging nineteenth-century attitude towards the self which was increasingly tied to the individual body, even after death. The need for new cemeteries was thus fairly clearly related to the problems of hygiene and space, though a concern for public health did not come to dominate the discourse of burial reform until some 20 years after the first cemetery companies were established (Rugg 1998a:53) and was therefore not the most significant factor in the foundation of Britain's first cemeteries. This differs from the situation in France, for example, where the earliest cemeteries were public rather than private initiatives and explicitly concerned with public health (Ariès 1981:476–496). The relocation of the Parisian cemeteries was also part of a larger project which relocated away from the city centre abattoirs, hospitals and other enterprises which were in any way 'polluting' (Etlin 1984b). In Britain, the concern for cleanliness included a popular recognition of the importance of moral and emotional cleanliness, as well as a philanthropic drive towards the creation of a more hygienic environment.

IMPROVEMENT

Improvement is a key concept for the historical analysis of garden cemeteries. Improvement was a pervasive and cross-cutting ideology which informed Victorian thought not only on questions of technology and design but also on social, moral, environmental and aesthetic matters. Improvement was not only an expedient but also a moral imperative. Garden cemeteries are a superb example of how this ethic manifested itself in nineteenth-century reform. As the landscapes were improved aesthetically, so also the environment was improved physically through better hygiene and public health. Improvement was not only enacted upon

inanimate landscapes and things, but on the people themselves. Moral improvement was believed to result from the encounter with natural beauty; physical improvement resulted from more hygienic city centres and the opportunities for decorous exercise provided by the cemeteries; spiritual improvement would result from the intimations of mortality derived from commemorative monuments; popular taste would be improved by the experience of monuments of artistic merit and intellectual improvement would result from study of the carefully chosen and labelled botanical specimens which adorned the landscape (as proposed by Loudon). For their early advocates, garden cemeteries offered opportunities for the betterment of the people and for mitigating some of the social and political unpleasantnesses of nineteenth-century Britain. This was especially true for Loudon, who was deeply concerned about British social conditions (Simo 1983:59). Improvement in these cases, however, was of a philanthropic nature. Although improvement was undoubtedly a significant motivation for the founders of cemeteries, it does not fully account for the popularity of the cemetery amongst the bereaved. However, the widespread desire for self-improvement in intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual areas, evidenced in the popularity of books, periodicals and societies explicitly devoted to such purposes, belies the notion that improvement was only a paternalistic ideology imposed upon the hapless masses.

WHY GARDEN CEMETERIES?

While the ethic of improvement certainly informs the general layout of the cemetery, it does not go far in accounting for its popularity. Neither the concern for hygiene nor the need to escape the grip of Anglican domination really tell us very much about either the specific form of the garden cemetery or its widespread popular endorsement. So long as the cemetery occupied a well-drained site, away from sources of drinking water, with soil deep enough to ensure that the 'miasmatic' gases of decomposition would not poison the living, the actual look of the cemetery shouldn't matter to those who were motivated only by concern for public health. And so long as it is independent of formal Anglican control, the look of the dissenters' cemetery should not be a primary concern in itself (the earliest dissenters' cemeteries in fact did not necessarily take a 'gardenly' form).

As we shall discuss, moral, aesthetic and emotional concerns were more important than hygienic ones, and at least as significant as economic ones, in determining the characteristic form of the garden cemetery. In these considerations, the naturalistic, park-like qualities of the British garden cemetery were of central importance. Although other forms of cemetery were sometimes attempted – for example, more formal geometric styles of garden – the open, asymmetrical, landscape-parkish cemetery resisted most competition. The more geometric cemetery at Brompton, for example, was not an economic success (Curl 1975). Similarly, on the other side of the Atlantic, the naturalistic, parkish design of Mount Auburn cemetery attracted imitators, in a way that the gridded Grove Street cemetery of Newhaven, Connecticut had failed to do (Rotundo 1984; Schuyler 1984).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Implicitly or explicitly, most commentators attribute the consumer appeal of the garden cemetery to the opportunities it offered for the display, consolidation or improvement of socio-economic status (Curl 1972, 1980; Mytum 1989; for a sophisticated discussion of consumers and consumption in cemeteries, see Buckham 1999). Harold Mytum, for example, suggests that the expression of economic status was facilitated by the monumental traditions of the garden cemetery:

The development of private property and wealth within the middle classes due to the onset of industrialisation also led to the widespread desire for private property of death. The Victorian cemetery plot can be seen as a materialistic expression of success. It could be justified on health grounds, but appreciated as a status symbol.

(Mytum 1989:295)

This line of explanation deserves serious consideration: there is no doubt that the garden cemeteries were fashionable places to see and be seen. They were explicitly designed to be places for seemly and appropriate recreation, usually characterized as decorous strolls, looking at the plantings, the view and the monuments, all of which were held to be intellectually improving and morally uplifting. Tasteful or expensive monuments were sure to be admired and the names of the deceased and their family noted and perhaps discussed. So from that point of view, the cemetery was a good milieu for social display, and social display appears to have been an important factor in the erection of many of the monuments. Large numbers of obviously expensive and ostentatious memorials are positioned where they will attract most attention – close to paths and roads, around the entrance to the cemetery and on the highest grounds. The most expensive monuments are often broadly archaeological in style – classical, Gothic and Egyptian designs were particularly popular in the early garden cemeteries. By making reference to a glorious past, the erectors of the memorials could be said to frame themselves as the heirs of an illustrious, imperial tradition, thus gaining prestige and legitimation in the present. Nevertheless, as was discussed above, the British attitude to ostentatious display in commemoration was ambivalent. While personalized and sentimental forms of remembrance were approved, and fine artistry appreciated, too artistic a monument could signify poor taste or questionable morals. So in order to play status games with memorial monuments, one would have to know the particular associations of various styles, materials and forms. Expenditure alone could not act as an index of status. In any case, the number of original and artistic memorials, although significant, particularly in city cemeteries like Highgate, Northwood and Abney Park, is far exceeded by the number of simpler, cheaper monuments, sited away from the paths and the chapel. These monuments are not apparently concerned with the expression of wealth or social position in any simple sense. So, although in some cases the enhancement of social position could have been a factor in the erection of memorial monuments in cemeteries, there are other important motivations which must be considered.

We need, in any case, to ask why should the context of burial be so powerful in the nineteenth century, and what was the specific attraction of garden cemeteries? Why should status be more easily expressed in a cemetery than in a parish churchyard or church? In previous centuries, elite status was evident in mortuary practices such as intra-mural burial under the floor of church buildings. With pressure on space, a monument inside an urban church in the early Victorian period surely should have been at a greater premium than ever and thus an even more effective way of expressing elite status than erecting a gravestone in one of the new, non-exclusive garden cemeteries. The interior of a church, moreover, was an excellent place to display memorials to lots of people, who would be spending extended periods there on a regular and repeated basis at weekly services. Yet there was something about the context of the garden cemetery which made it particularly attractive. That gentry classes often chose to bury their dead in garden cemeteries rather than in mausolea or old churches on their own private estates is a tribute to the appeal of the smarter new garden cemetery. One additional advantage of the garden cemetery was that, at a time when even wealthy families were unsure of their extended tenure of land, the cemetery offered security in maintaining the grave into posterity.

Through siting their monuments in these attractive, park-like surroundings, the bereaved of all classes were not only saying something about their socio-economic status, but also something important about their emotional identity and their relationships with those who had died. This article suggests that the aesthetic and emotional aspects of the garden cemetery are of greater significance than has generally been recognized and that lines of explanation which centralize the negotiation of status through the ostentatious display of wealth are inadequate to explain the popularity of the rural or semi-rural garden cemetery.

PRIVATE PROPERTY OF DEATH

If prestigious plots in the garden cemetery were about more than the overt display of wealth for the purposes of social climbing, do they say something at least about nineteenth-century attitudes towards property? In his discussion of garden cemeteries, Mytum asserts that the nineteenth-century cemetery plot was a manifestation of the growing middle-class demand for 'private property of death' (1989:295). This idea needs some further exploration. Matthew Johnson has recently developed archaeological narratives of the early modern and modern periods which emphasize private ownership and alienable property as central to the historical process of modernity (Johnson 1993, 1996). As fields, houses and internal spaces were increasingly organized in a way that emphasized private, appropriated spaces, so the burial practices which developed over the early modern and modern periods can be seen as enclosing and individualizing space. In the late medieval and earlier modern periods, most burials in Britain had gone unmarked, but, from the eighteenth century onwards, the erection of gravestones became much more common and the actual space of the grave was often marked out with slabs or kerbs. The burial is recorded with a gravestone which marks the position of the grave. The stone is

of durable material and set into solid foundations; it bears inscriptions with wordings such as 'Erected by . . .' which proclaim ownership of the place, not only at the moment of burial but also projected into the future. So, for all these reasons, the nineteenth-century cemetery plot does indeed appear to be an enclosed, appropriated place where the expression of ownership is significant. Private property of death did not, of itself, demand new landscapes in which burial might take place, however. The possibility of owning burial space had been provided in the preceding early modern period, for example, through private burial vaults beneath churches, as known to archaeologists through excavations at Spitalfields and St Augustine-the-Less in Bristol, for example (Boore 1985; Reeve and Adams 1993). Nevertheless, the garden cemetery was a popular venue for marking out such private space. What does this mean? Mytum equates the private property of death with 'status symbol' or 'materialistic expression of success' (1989:295). Rugg (1998c:123) reviews those cemetery historians who have seen the cemetery as a microcosm of the world of the living, expressing class differentiation through ostentation of memorials and the occupation of prestigious spaces. Jupp is typical of these, contending that 'social distinctions, by gender, age, class or ethnicity, have always been identifiable in the degree of investment in the disposal of the dead' (Jupp 1997:3). This kind of argument has been extensively discussed and effectively critiqued by mortuary archaeologists, notably Pader (1982) and, in the context of modern western burial practices, Parker Pearson (1982), who demonstrates that burials can never be read as mirrors (to use one of the prevalent metaphors) of social status in life.

The significance of cemeteries in articulating and developing the complexities of class relationships and class consciousness has not yet been widely addressed (but see Brooks 1989; Laqueur 1993), but the significance of private ownership and appropriation in modern history is about more than the attempt to secure a good or better place in the class system. It is also about identity, sense of self, presentation of self (Campbell 1987), and about new relations of production and exchange, new disciplines of order and closure (Leone 1988; Shackel 1993; Johnson 1996). Laqueur sees the cemetery not as an expression of new class relationships but as a profound indication that 'the underlying cultural assumptions of capitalism had taken root, that what might have seemed outrageous in an earlier age . . . freehold in grave sites divorced from the church – could be taken as part of the landscape of everyday life' (Laqueur 1993:185). He also asserts that cemetery interment is not epiphenomenal to the development of capitalist values, but itself creates them: 'Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution are not among the causes of cemeteries; if anything, the converse is true: cemeteries produce a cultural world fit for the new economic order' (1993:185). The cemetery provided alienable and ahistorical space, in the sense of being free of specific and local encrustations of historical meaning. Not only did this liberate religious dissenters (Rugg 1998a), but it enabled and encouraged the formation of different, personal relationships between the living and the dead.

In a cemetery context, the appropriation of space had other specific implications. By the nineteenth century, the relationship between the living and the dead was an intensely personal, individual and affective one (Tarlow 1999a, 1999b). The response

to death was grief of a romantic or sentimental nature and, in an increasingly individualized world, the focus for that grief was the actual bodily remains of the deceased. Bereaved individuals wanted to visit the graves of their dead to indulge in melancholy reflection and personal memories (Jalland 1996). So the actual location of the remains assumed particular importance – the dead person had to be in some sense ‘visitable’. The ownership of cemetery burial plots guaranteed the future security of the burial place, unlike the old churchyard, where the church retained final control over the burial. I believe these considerations to be central to understanding the popularity of the garden cemetery. The state of urban churchyards was certainly a threat to health, but it was not only health considerations which meant that city vaults and churchyards were no longer attractive. They were simply not very nice places to consign loved ones to or to visit. Laqueur (1993) cites a witness appearing before the select committee of inquiry into interment in towns in 1842 claiming that ‘the crowded state of the places of burial, the apparent want of seclusion and sanctity *pollute* the mental associations and *offend the sentiments* of the population’. Laqueur italicized the words he believes ‘suggest that the concerns here are more those discussed in Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger* than in an epidemiology text’ (Laqueur 1993:187).

SENTIMENTAL LANDSCAPES

Therefore, perhaps the more complex question is why garden cemeteries took the form they did. There are many ways of disposing of bodies and the garden cemetery – or in fact any kind of cemetery – was by no means the inevitable solution. For example, suggestions were made that a vast, pyramidal mausoleum with a capacity of up to five million individuals should be constructed to house London’s dead (Curl 1980:212). This dramatic monument, designed by Thomas Willson in 1824, would have been sited at Primrose Hill and would have been considerably taller than St Paul’s. Similarly, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a small group of radical reformers advocated cremation as the solution to the problems of poor hygiene and lack of space (Jupp 1990). In the latter part of the century, someone decided that the dead of London could be put to better use in reclaiming the low-lying parts of Kent and Essex by making up the ground with corpses (Haden 1875; Tegg 1876). Even discounting these more extreme solutions, why should the garden cemetery have proved more popular in Britain than the style of cemeteries founded in France, Italy or India?

ET IN ARCADIA EGO

In the style of their monuments and in the design of their landscapes, British garden cemeteries are Arcadian. That is, they reference both an ancient past and an idyllic, picturesque and sentimental kind of nature. The Arcadia of the cemetery is a place of natural charm and simplicity, but it is also a place of melancholy and reflection.

References to the remote past made by the styles of the monuments evoke not only ideas of power and natural authority, but also signify both romance, in the broad sense, and timelessness. So ‘classical’ suggests ancient Greece and Rome, but classical designs also mean something closer to what we would call ‘classic’ – the triumph of beauty and truth over transience and fashion.

Both the individual monuments and the landscape as a whole are sentimental, and the key to understanding the garden cemetery is in the idea of the emotional landscape. Like the private parks of the early nineteenth century, the cemetery designs use asymmetry, varied plantings and winding walks to emphasize affecting and picturesque vistas. Even in the eighteenth century, the idea of the private park had been not only to create a landscape which combined pleasure with utility, but also to design a place

where one could, at the very least, reflect upon the ephemeral nature of past civilisations or upon lost Arcadian innocence, and where, in most cases, one would be encouraged to think with affection of one’s departed relatives, friends or pets.

(Perry 1974:66)

Therefore, later landscape parks often incorporated tombs, urns, memorials and mausolea (Curl 1984) – often to specific individuals, but sometimes just to give a general reflective and melancholic air to the place. So the idea of a beautiful landscape as a place of reflection and memory was widespread amongst the upper classes well before the establishment of the first garden cemetery. Just as the landscape park was designed to provide an environment which would inspire and facilitate emotional response of a romantic, melancholic or sublime kind, so the cemetery satisfied a need for an essentially sentimental landscape of remembering. The belief that natural scenery had a beneficial effect on the mind, morals and emotion was well-established in the nineteenth century (Schuyler 1984:294), and in many ways the ideal garden cemetery softened, by reference to nature, the terror of death, replacing dread with ‘sweet sorrow’ (Rotundo 1984:260). The garden cemetery landscape combined the picturesque with some elements of the sublime – derived from the presence of death and memory (1984:260).

Nineteenth-century attitudes towards burial space show a preoccupation with bodies. Neither the health of living bodies nor the dignity of dead ones should be compromised. The garden cemetery provided for the needs of the living and of the dead. By the nineteenth century, the concepts of body and soul which characterized Reformation thought had been transformed. The increasing importance of personal identities in general life led to a stronger identification of the self with the unique body. The person was thought of as an integrated body – the centre of a web of relationships – and the body itself was the place where the bundle of meanings and identities which make the individual were expressed and the self was defined. At death, the actual body demanded care and attention. The bereaved commonly felt that the resting place of the body should be comfortable and attractive. The excavators of the vaults at Christ Church, Spitalfields in London cite

evidence which shows that, in the early nineteenth century, some individuals were explicitly choosing to bury and be buried in vaults because either the cold or the dirt of churchyard burial repelled them (Reeve and Adams 1993:66). The concern of the bereaved for the comfort of the corpse is of particular interest here. Although it was, and is, 'irrational' to be concerned with the temperature, comfort, beauty and cleanliness of the grave site from the point of view of the corpse, who would be well past worrying about such things, the bereaved nevertheless associated the needs of the living body with the comforts of the dead one. The individualized person continued to have a social identity past the point of their death. The comfort of the corpse was obviously of considerable importance to the bereaved, who felt that the body should be attractively clad and provided with sheets and pillows. Grave plots were selected not only to display monuments to their best advantage, but also for the attractive view they offered, which provided an appropriate mourning environment for the bereaved and a pleasant place for the deceased; the grave was a place to look *from* as well as a site to look *at*.

In 1852, Thomas Miller wrote *Picturesque Sketches of London Past and Present*, in which he envisaged the removal of the dead from the bustle and din of the tumultuous city into a place that was more fitting for remembrance. Miller contrasted the present state of affairs with his vision of a garden cemetery,

where it would be possible to walk through a land littered with living affections, and strewn over with tokens of existing love. There, sympathies would be divided between the mourned and the mourners, for sorrow is not alone for the dead; the flowers would be reminders of those people who went to the cemetery now and then to weep, and to remember.

Clearly no single line of explanation for the success of the garden cemetery is going to be adequate. Those involved in the cemetery companies might have different motivations from those who purchased plots in the cemetery or those who campaigned for burial reform. But changing burial practices in the middle of the nineteenth century articulated with other processes and practices involving the consolidation of a set of views which we could term capitalist, modern or individualist. These views emphasize the possibility of change and the ability of humans to alter their own conditions. They give unprecedented importance to the body of the individual and demand the freedom to present and negotiate personal identities in particular emotional and aesthetic contexts. For this reason, protection of the corpse from body-snatchers, disgust at bodily decay (all too evident in many old churchyards at the time), the desire for an emotional place of remembering, the potential to express aspects of one's social and personal identity through commemoration, ownership and control of grave space, civic adornment, the moral 'improvement' of the people and so on should not be seen as conflicting lines of explanation but as aspects of a complex nineteenth-century cultural understanding of self, other, property, landscape and death.

IMPLICATIONS AND SIMPLIFICATIONS

Do these conclusions have any implications for landscape archaeology beyond the specific study of nineteenth-century cemeteries? Here are a few general points which perhaps emerge from this brief discussion:

First, landscapes are emotional places as well as economic, social or symbolic spaces. Second, landscapes are not only containers in which emotional experiences take place; emotional experiences are in part *constituted* by landscapes, and landscapes can be selected or modified to suit or even promote the particular kinds of experience which take place in them.

Third, a nuanced and contextual history of landscape needs to address consumption and use, not just design. This is not a new point in landscape archaeology (see, for example, Williamson 1995:1–18), but it does seem to be a particular strength of the archaeological approach to landscape. Archaeologists of later historical periods have made extensive use of historical and architectural evidence and scholarship but it is only very recently, and partly in response to recent academic moves towards a more inter-disciplinary study of the past, that historians and design scholars have shown much interest in or awareness of archaeological research. Yet archaeology has much to offer. The potential of an *archaeology* of later historical landscapes lies in our discipline's traditional ability to evaluate trends and to observe mass, popular movements, such as the adoption of a new burial practice. This large-scale change does not emerge from traditional architectural or art-historical perspectives, as exemplified here in the work of J.S. Curl, because of their concern with the processes of design and the evaluation of artistic accomplishment. For this reason, the mass-produced, the clichéd and the shoddy, but widespread and popular, can be ignored or under-emphasized in art-historical narratives. By contrast, artefacts and landscapes which can be thus described are well-served by archaeology's broad and synthetic approach. Fourth, apart from this ability to look at change on the larger scale – something which, even with the wealth of documentary sources available for Britain in the nineteenth century, is more visible through material practice than through records – our recognition of the recursive quality of objects and spaces – their ability to 'act back' on human practices and inform cultural understandings – empowers archaeology to examine landscape as profoundly meaningful. As Matthew Johnson has written, 'spaces and objects [are] just as ideological, just as laden with meaning, as any historical text' (Johnson 1996:18).

However, this discussion is not offered primarily with the purpose of making points which might be relevant to prehistoric or early historical archaeology. The study of later historical periods is, in itself, a legitimate focus of our interpretative and analytical skills in understanding spaces and landscapes of the past. The archaeologist can make as much of a contribution to our understanding of the processes of modernity – processes such as enclosure, appropriation, and the development of modern codes of emotional experience – as the historian, architect or literary scholar.

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NOTES

1. This is not the case in other parts of the world. Particularly in former colonial countries in the Americas, Africa and Australasia, there are well-developed traditions of historical archaeology which include the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.

2. In this respect, J.C. Loudon, the landscape architect responsible for several cemetery designs of the mid-nineteenth century, was a gift to researchers, since he carefully delineated the principles and values by which he designed cemeteries. His main objects were, first, the disposal of the dead in a manner that would 'not prove injurious to the living; either by affecting their health, or shocking their feelings, opinions or prejudices' and, secondly, 'the improvement of the moral sentiment and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society' (Loudon 1843:1).

3. I am grateful to Harold Mytum for drawing this to my attention.

4. At the time of the first waves of cemetery establishment it was believed that disease was spread by noxious airs ('miasmas') produced by decaying matter.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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ABSTRACTS

Paysage de la mémoire: le cimetière-jardin du 19ème siècle

Sarah Tarlow

Entre les années 1820 et 1940, les cimetières-jardin étaient communs dans la plupart des grandes villes anglaises. Leur apparence caractéristique doit beaucoup à une tradition britannique de paysagisme naturaliste, qui a une résonance toute particulière dans le contexte de la mort et du deuil au 19ème siècle. Cet article fait la revue de certains facteurs considérés avoir une signification particulière pour le développement du paysage des cimetières anglais, y compris l'idée de la santé publique, des relations de classes et des influences étrangères (tout particulièrement celle du Père Lachaise à Paris). Aucun de ces éléments ne peuvent individuellement expliquer la popularité de cette forme particulière de cimetière en Angleterre. Il semble plutôt que le cimetière-jardin offrait un paysage approprié et qui se prêtait à la commémoration des morts et agissait donc comme médiateur entre les décédés et les personnes en deuil.

Landschaften der Erinnerung: der Garten-Friedhof des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts

Sarah Tarlow

Während der 1820er, 30er und 40er Jahre wurden in den meisten Städten Großbritanniens Garten-Friedhöfe eingerichtet. Ihre charakteristische Erscheinung verdankt sich einer britischen Tradition des naturalistischen Landschaftsdesigns, hat aber eine besondere Resonanz im Kontext von Tod und Trauer im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. Dieser Artikel betrachtet einige der Faktoren, die als signifikant für die Entwicklung des britischen Landschafts-Friedhofs erachtet wurden, wozu öffentliche Gesundheit, Klassenbeziehungen und auswärtige Einflüsse gehören (besonders jene des Friedhofs Père Lachaise in Paris). Es wird argumentiert, dass keines dieser Elemente die Beliebtheit dieser besonderen Form des Friedhofs in Großbritannien erklärt; vielmehr bot der Garten-Friedhof eine ansprechende und geeignete Landschaft für das Totengedenken und die Vermittlung der Beziehungen zwischen Toten und Hinterbliebenen.