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2007

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Petersson, A. (2007). *Offerkast and Roadside Memorials*. 1-8. Paper presented at The 8th conference on The Social Context of Death, Dying and Disposal, Bath, United Kingdom.

Total number of authors:

1

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Offerkast and roadside memorials

Abstract

The erection of roadside memorials in Sweden is commonly considered a novel practice, appearing during the last 10-15 years. Nevertheless similar precedent practices can be found in the history of Sweden.

Stories about marking the site of an unexpected death with a cross could be said to date back to the eleventh century legend of Saint Sigfrid, telling of the first English missionary to spread Christendom in Sweden. A phenomenon more specifically related to the road is the so called *offerkast*, [literally: 'victim throw' or 'sacrifice throw'] referring to the throwing of twigs, branches, and stones onto places of accidental death by the road. This practice is for instance mentioned in Carl von Linné's travels of *Västergötland* in 1746 where it is commented on as a rural custom. An early literary mentioning of the similar practice of throwing stones onto places where extraordinary things had happened can be found in the so called first Swedish humanist, Olaus Magnus, fantastic work *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* from 1555.

Although these precedent practices may not be directly related to the recent practice of Swedish roadside memorialisation they are none the less interesting as a backdrop to the phenomenon. This since, as Jennifer Clark and Ashley Cheshire recognizes in their comparative study of roadside memorials in New South Wales, Australia, and Texas, United States, spontaneous memorialisation of today often draws from the cultural and religious heritage of the locale. Another concern is that changes in our attitudes towards death may span over several generations and thus go beyond collective memory. Hence, to minimize 'the risk of attributing originality to phenomena that are really much older', as Philippe Ariés states in *The Hour of Death*, I believe it is important to examine mentioned precedent practices in order to fully understand current Swedish roadside memorialisation.

Introduction

The practice of erecting roadside memorials, wherever motor vehicle accidents have ended people's lives, is a widespread phenomenon. It has been spotted in Northern and Southern Europe, North, South and Central America, Australasia and Japan.¹ The memorialisation of road crash victims should further be seen as a distinctive subset of what is commonly known as spontaneous memorialisation, which refers to unofficial public memorialisation on a place of fatality.² Spontaneous memorialisation may thus appear on a variety of places that have witnessed sudden death, such as sites of terrorist attacks, catastrophes, murders and the like. Expressively, one of the earliest published references to the practice describes a memorial created on the square where Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered in 1995.³ Other examples are spontaneously created memorials for the fatal car crash of Princess Diana, the Oklahoma City bombing, the shooting at Columbine High school, and the New York/Washington terrorist attacks.⁴ In Sweden we have seen spontaneous memorials created at the murder site of Prime Minister Olof Palme and, later, Foreign Minister Anna Lind, as well as after a large fire at a discotheque in Gothenburg, the wreckage of the ship M/S Estonia, and in connection to the international catastrophe of the Tsunami.⁵

Although the phenomenon of spontaneous memorialisation, including roadside memorials, seems to have appeared during the last 10-15 years, similar precedent practices can be found.⁶ These precedent practices may not be specifically related to the recent practice of spontaneous memorialisation but they are none the less interesting as a backdrop to the phenomenon. Or, as the researchers of classics, history and religion, Jennifer Clark and Ashley Cheshire, puts it, spontaneous memorialisation often draw from the cultural and religious heritage of the locale,⁷ even though, as the authors further state, this alone does not explain the phenomenon's recent dissemination.⁸

Another reason for mentioning these precedent practices is that changes in our attitudes towards death tend to arise very slowly or else occur suddenly between long periods of stability, as recognised by the

historian Philippe Ariés.⁹ These long periods of stability may, according to Ariés, span over several generations and thus go beyond collective memory. Hence, to minimize ‘the risk of attributing originality to phenomena that are really much older’,¹⁰ I believe it might be fruitful to look at practices that are somewhat similar to roadside memorialisation.¹¹ Since the subject of roadside memorials has, as far as I know, not yet been studied in a Swedish context the focus will in this paper be on examples of precedent practices situated in Sweden.

Backdrop to roadside memorials in Sweden

Stories about marking the site of an unexpected death could in Sweden be dated back to the legend of Saint Sigfrid.¹² The legend, which tells the tale of how the Englishman Sigfrid came to Sweden as the first Christian missionary in the eleventh century, mentions the erection of a cross by a grave for an apostle, who died a sudden death, as a sign that he died a Christian.¹³ Other stories, connected to the legend, speak of crosses erected along the road to invite prayer.¹⁴

The folk custom of marking the place of an unexpected death,¹⁵ by erecting a stone, a cross, or by carving a cross and the name of the deceased in a tree trunk located nearby such a fatal site, seems to have existed in Sweden as early as the twelfth century.¹⁶ Although most documentation in Lund University Folk life archive, *Lunds Universitets Folklivsarkiv*, refers to crosses erected or carved during the nineteenth century,¹⁷ a specifically interesting example, closely related to the erection of roadside memorials, reveals a stone with an inscribed cross placed on the site where a young man died in a fatal motorcycle accident sometime in the early days of motorcycling.¹⁸ Which in Sweden would imply somewhere between nineteen ten to nineteen thirty.¹⁹

A phenomenon more specifically related to the road is the so called *offerkast*.²⁰ The term *offerkast* is made out of the two words *offer*, meaning victim or sacrifice, and *kast*, meaning a throw, and stand for a pile of twigs or pebbles thrown onto a place of sudden death by road travellers.²¹ Sometimes the pile of twigs or pebbles was accompanied by a cross, which could be cut into a nearby rock or tree or simply erected on the spot.²² While it seems to have been most common to throw twigs and stones onto an *offerkast*, possibly because of their frequent occurrence by the roadside,²³ items such as coins, sugar cubes, and in the wintertime even snowballs, were occasionally thrown.²⁴

The first literary mentioning of *offerkast* dates back to the mid sixteenth century when the first Swedish humanist, Olaus Magnus, famous for his fantastic work on the Nordic people, refers to the folk custom of throwing stones onto places where extraordinary things had happened.²⁵ However, the Swedish researcher of folk life, Sigurd Erixon, claims that the custom referred to by Magnus is actually an earlier *offerkast* legend, from 1025-50, called *Brödrahalla*.²⁶ Erixon makes this claim since Magnus places the custom in the exact same region as where the hill *Brödrahalla* is situated. Hence, as Erixon puts it, through the rite of throwing stones the legend is fixed to a specific location, while the model of explanation (the myth) changes.²⁷ Another source of reference is Carl von Linné who, in his travels of *Västergötland* in 1746, refers to the practice of throwing twigs, branches, and stones onto places of accidental death by the road as a rural custom.²⁸ In Lund University Folk life archive generous documentation mentioning the use of *offerkast* in the eighteenth and nineteenth century can be found,²⁹ with a few exceptions mentioning *offerkast* active as late as the end of the nineteen thirties.³⁰ Additionally, a listener’s question, put on air in 1985 by the public radio in Sweden, *Sveriges Radio*, evoked several answers mentioning *offerkast* still active at the time of the radio broadcast.³¹

Other practices worth mentioning briefly, although dealing with travelling with the dead body rather than to accidental death by the road, is the marking of *vilstenar* or *likstenar*, meaning resting stones or corpse stones [my translation], as well as *korstallar* or *liktallar*, meaning cross pines or corpse pines [my translation]. These were authorised places where the pallbearers, carrying the deceased from home to the church, could set the coffin down and rest for a while.³² Sometimes a cross was carved to mark the resting place and sometimes the deceased name and date of death was imprinted. Some of

these resting places even functioned as offerkast, onto which travellers threw twigs and stones.³³ Another related practice is marking the place where the pallbearers first reached the main road to the church.³⁴

Body, soul, place

The main motivation for the customs mentioned seems to be the popular belief that the soul lingered on some time after death and that it furthermore had the power to trouble the living, if you did not take the necessary precautions.³⁵

When looking at the documents describing the Swedish customs we find that if someone died, as it were, before their time on earth was up, the soul was believed to linger on to the place of death until the time of predetermined death should have occurred.³⁶ The throwing of twigs and stones onto an offerkast was hence a practice to be executed for as long as the soul was considered still on earth.³⁷ Interestingly enough, a similar idea, although without superstitious characteristics, is presented in a newly conducted interview study of recent Swedish roadside memorialisation, where one of the interviewed survivors emphasises the importance of caring for the grave of her deceased son for as long as he would have 'normally' lived.³⁸

The documents from Lund University Folk life archive reveal that the dead soul was most often considered dangerous and hence an offerkast, as well as a stone or a cross, was a construction made to persuade the dead soul to not haunt or harm passers by.³⁹ One informant tells of the fear of getting sick if not throwing something onto an offerkast.⁴⁰ Conversely, you could also regain health by repetitious sacrificing to an offerkast.⁴¹ Some documents even refer to the soul as good, and the throwing of twigs as a gift to the soul, illustrated by these words: 'Take these branches to light and warm up your cold room' [my translation].⁴² The same informant also points to the pile of twigs as a means to help the dead light a fire guiding road travellers at dark nights.⁴³

The Swedish researcher of folk life, Carl-Martin Bergstrand, investigates the hypothesis that stones were thrown onto an offerkast in order to weigh the soul down.⁴⁴ Erixon speaks of the practice of throwing twigs in a similar way, i.e. as a means to bind the soul to earth.⁴⁵ However, Bergstrand later concludes that it probably is the very act of sacrificing that is important, not the value or the weight of the things sacrificed.⁴⁶

It further seems evident that the place for an offerkast was considered sacred or enchanted.⁴⁷ One document states that when an old road was rebuilt and straightened in the nineteen thirties, the road workers carefully moved an offerkast so as not to enrage the dead.⁴⁸ The same source interestingly tells that the new offerkast, placed some ten meters from the actual place of death, did not attract the same sanctity as the old one.⁴⁹ Similar actions, although tied to more worldly considerations, may also be found in recent roadside memorialisation. As when the Swedish department of transportation moves roadside memorials, while maintaining and rebuilding roads, so as not to rage the survivors.⁵⁰

Worldly considerations for the erection of offerkast may however also be found. One informant from the Lund University Folk life archive states that 'Where a person died by accident or where she was beaten to death, one used to erect a cross in remembrance of how uncertain life was' [my translation].⁵¹ Others simply refer to the construction of a cross, a stone, or an offerkast as a means to remember and honour the dead.⁵² Similarly, one document simply talks about the growing pile of stones as the production of a memorial.⁵³ These are all reasons which, according to the earlier mentioned interview study, have their equivalence in recent Swedish roadside memorialisation.⁵⁴

Mixing the old and the new?

Recent studies of roadside memorials often put forward the practice as a mix of both old and new customs. In the US, the custom of erecting roadside memorials is often considered to originate from

the old Hispanic practice of constructing *cruses*, crosses, wherever the sixteenth century's early Spanish conquistadors met death unexpectedly along the road, such as during Indian attacks, and thus had to be buried where they fell.⁵⁵ Northern New Mexico's cultural ambassador, Juan Estevan Arellano, speaks of roadside memorials as an imitation of the old Hispanic custom of marking the *descansos*, meaning resting places, wherever the funeral procession had to stop and rest on its journey between church and the *campo santo*.⁵⁶ However, according to the anthropologists David Kozak and Camillus Lopez, even the indigenous Indians of Southern Arizona, such as the Tohono O'odham tribe, marked sites of sudden death long before they were Christianised, in this case with rock-piles.⁵⁷ Similarly, in one of his articles on popular belief, Erixon is inclined to at some extent agree with researchers that consider the construction of rock-piles to originally have been a general and international burial custom of great age, which later came to include the covering of victims of accidents, murders, or criminals.⁵⁸

The writer Cynthia Henzel further recognises that just as the popular tradition of celebrating the Day of the Dead in Mexico presently is a mix of both indigenous Indian beliefs and European Catholic customs, so is the practice of erecting roadside crosses in north-eastern Mexico.⁵⁹ Moreover, while the initial practice may be linked to both Catholic beliefs and indigenous Indian customs, the recent practice of marking the place of death has gradually become a secular commemoration of a life lost, states Henzel.⁶⁰ Hence, to mark a place that has witnessed violent death could be seen as part of an old tradition just as well as a new custom. Or, as Henzel puts it, 'Place has thus once again provided the continuity and transition between the old and the new'.⁶¹

Another way of seeing it, put forward by Clark and Cheshire, may be to look upon roadside memorialisation as a recent international phenomenon, emerging from a collective experience of motoring and media culture and as a reaction to the distancing of death from society.⁶² In contrast, Nobuho Tomita, professor of victimology at Tokiwa University in Japan, interprets the recent dissemination of roadside memorials in Japan as a reflection of the country's growing comfort with public displays of grief.⁶³ 'Survivors used to be expected to keep a stiff upper lip' says Tomita, 'But now people will say things like don't keep your grief bottled up, it's ok to let it out'.⁶⁴ A similar reflection may be found in before mentioned Swedish interview study, where roadside memorialisation is seen as a complementary way to commemorate the deceased's personal and social life rather than as a counteracting phenomenon.⁶⁵ The recent shift from an institutional to an individual notion of death, leaving its mark on everything from newspaper death announcements, to ritual activity, memorials and places of death,⁶⁶ may be a further cause.

As recognised by among others Clark and Cheshire, media culture has a large part to play in the dissemination of spontaneous memorials.⁶⁷ This connection is also to be found in Sweden. The media coverage of Prime Minister Olof Palme's murder in 1986 was widespread. At the murder site, a memorial space soon grew large as many people came to place flowers directly on the site of death. For many of the interviewees in previously mentioned study, the sight of Palme's memorial on TV was their first acquaintance with the practice of placing flowers directly on a site of death. Subsequently, almost all interviewees' refer to the late nineteen eighties and early nineties as a starting point for the appearance of roadside memorials in Sweden, with an increase in numbers during the nineties and early two thousands.⁶⁸ The increase of spontaneous memorials in Sweden then seems to follow the occurrence of four great disasters in a time span of only ten years, starting with wreckage at sea in 1994, when the ship M/S Estonia was swallowed by the Baltic Sea, leading to the death of 852 people, of which 580 were Swedish citizens. This incident was followed by a fire at a local meeting hall in Gothenburg in 1998, killing 63 young people attending a discotheque, which in turn was followed by the murder of the Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lind in 2003.⁶⁹ The last disaster was the international catastrophe of the Tsunami in South-East Asia in 2004, which caused the death of 702 Swedes.

Moreover, various media reports of Swedish families grieving their loved ones lost in the Tsunami has revealed yet another form of memorialisation, such as the creation of a memorial in ones own home. Some survivors even tell of the act of bringing home sand from the beach where the deceased went missing. The mentioned interview study shows that the practice of creating home-based memorials, as well as the practice of bringing things from the accident site back home, is also to be found in connection to fatal motor vehicle accidents.⁷⁰

Discussion

As we have seen, and as revealed by Clark and Cheshire, the cultural and religious heritage of the locale does not alone explain the recent dissemination of roadside memorialisation.⁷¹ However, since spontaneous memorialisation of today often draws from the cultural and religious heritage of the place where it is situated, we have also found several precedent practices that by various scholars and spokespersons are claimed as forerunners to roadside memorialisation

Further on, considered in the light of before mentioned interview study of recent Swedish roadside memorialisation, Henzel's recognition that place may provide a continuity and transition between the old and the new is highly interesting.⁷² This since nearly all of the persons interviewed referred to the practice of erecting roadside memorials in Sweden as something that must be inspired by other cultures, either by an increased travelling, by media coverage from abroad, or from a greater number of immigrants in the Swedish society.⁷³ In mentioned study, the practice of placing a memorial directly on the site of death was simply not considered as following Swedish customs and grieving traditions. This suggests that the precedent practices mentioned in this paper, which lasted until at least the nineteen thirties, have been forgotten or, to use Ariés words, now are beyond collective memory.⁷⁴

I therefore believe it might be important to apply the late Erixon's words, of how through the rite the legend is fixed to a specific location, while the model of explanation changes,⁷⁵ to the discussion of the dissemination of roadside memorials. Especially in order to not, as Ariés puts it, attribute originality to phenomena that are really much older.⁷⁶ By doing this we might suggest that the story of the deceased and his/her encounter with death is fixed to the site of death, through the construction and maintenance of a memorial, while the myth surrounding this production and practice continuously changes.

¹ As recognized at the conference *Creating Identities: Funeral monuments and public memorials in Europe* (Kassel, Germany, 31 Okt.-02 Nov. 2003), and in the section 'Roadside memorials to the dead', at the 7th conference on *The social context of Death, Dying and Disposal* (Bath, UK, 15-18 Sep. 2005). See also: Cynthia Henzel, 'Cruces in the Roadside Landscape of Northeastern New Mexico', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 11/2 (1995), 93-106. Kate V. Hartig and Kevin M. Dunn, 'Roadside Memorials: Interpreting New Deathscapes in Newcastle, New South Wales', *Australian Geographical Studies*, 36/1 (1998), 5-20. Holly Everett, *Roadside Crosses in Contemporary Memorial Culture* (Texas, Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2002). Alice Gordenker, 'So, What the heck is that?', *The Japan Times*, 18 Aug. 2005.

² C. A. Haney, C. Leimer, and J. Lowery, 'Spontaneous memorialisation: Violent death and emerging mourning ritual', *Omega – Journal of Death and Dying*, 35 (1997), 159-171. Sylvia Grider, 'Spontaneous Shrines and Public Memorialization', *Death and Religion in a Changing World*, ed. Kathleen Garces-Foley (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 246-64.

³ Maoz Azaryahu, 'The spontaneous formation of memorial space. The case of Kikar Rabin, Tel Aviv', *Area*, 28/4 (1996), 501-13.

⁴ Sylvia Grider, 'Spontaneous Shrines: A Modern Response to Tragedy and Disaster', *New Directions in Folklore*, 5 (October, 2001).

⁵ Tuija Nieminen Kristofersson, 'Places of Dying, Rituals of Mourning', paper for the *Inaugural Nordic Geographers Meeting* (Lund, Sweden, 10-14 May 2005). Anna Petersson, 'A Proper Place of Death', paper for the 7th conference on *The social context of Death, Dying and Disposal* (Bath, UK, 15-18 Sep. 2005).

⁶ Herman Schreiber, *The history of roads: From amber route to motorway* (London: Barry and Rockliff, 1961), 2, 136. Jennifer Clark and Ashley Cheshire, 'RIP by the Roadside: A Comparative Study of Roadside Memorials in New South Wales, Australia and Texas, USA', *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, 48/3 (2003-2004), 204, 212. John Carmi Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (New York: St. Martins Press), 209. George Monger, 'Modern wayside shrines', *Folklore*, Vol. 108 (1997), 113-4. Alberto Barrera, 'Mexican-American Roadside Crosses in Starr County', in *Hecho en Tejas. Texas-Mexican Folkarts and Crafts*, ed. Joe S. Graham (Denton, Texas: University of North

Texas Press, 1997), 278-92. Louise Hagberg, *När döden gästar – svenska folkseder och svensk folktro I samband med död och begravning* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1937), 522, 527. Sigurd Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare: Uppsatser om folklig tro och sed* (Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1988), 16.

⁷ Clark and Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 215-6.

⁸ Clark and Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 216. Everett, *Roadside Crosses in Contemporary Memorial Culture*, 15-37.

⁹ Philippe Ariés, *The Hour of Death*, translated by Helen Weaver (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), xii.

¹⁰ Ariés, *The Hour of Death*, xiii.

¹¹ A comprehensive work on practices antecedent to roadside memorials has yet to be written. Most information on the subject comes from researchers in Britain, the U.S. and Australia.

¹² See, for instance: Olaus Magnus, *Historia om de Nordiska folken*, II, Swedish translation by Michaelisgillet (Uppsala, 1909), 110. [Original: *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555).]

¹³ Pehr Johnsson, *Allmogeliv i Göinge* (Trelleborg, 1920), mentioned in Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 522.

¹⁴ Pehr Gunnar Vejde, 'Helgö', *Hyltén-Cavalliusföreningens årsbok* (Lund, 1927), 153, mentioned in Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 522. The same kind of practice, although in connection to the Spanish Catholic priests bringing the cross to America, is to be found in Clark and Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 212.

¹⁵ Such as death by murder, drunkenness, freezing, drowning, fights and driving accidents.

¹⁶ Per Arvid Säve, 'Kors på Gotland', *Sveriges Fornminnesförening, tidskrift 1873-74* (Stockholm, 1877), telling about several stones and crosses, erected from 1300-1848, in remembrance of accident or murder sites, cited in Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 523. Abraham Ahlquist, *Ölands Historia och Beskrifning*, II, facsimile after 1825 edition (Uppsala: Bromberg, 1979), 130, telling about a cross of stone erected in Förö, Öland, in honour of a priest, Martinus, who according to the Latin inscriptions on the stone had been beaten to death in 1431.

¹⁷ *Lunds Universitets Folklivsarkiv* will hereafter be referred to as LUF. 'Minneskors', M-Ark, LUF. 'Minnesmärke', M-Ark, LUF. 'Dödsplats', M-Ark, LUF. 'Mordplats', M-Ark, LUF.

¹⁸ Acc. Nr. M-11216, LUF, 1.

¹⁹ Gert Ekström and Sven Eric Delér, *Svensk motoreykelhistoria och 125 svenska mc-märken* (Hudiksvall: Winberg, 1989), 22-6.

²⁰ Also known as *vål*, *våle* or *risvål*, according to Erixon the word *vål* comes from the word *vård*, meaning care, custody or memorial, as used for instance in the word *gravvård*, meaning tomb stone [my translation]. *Risvål* is then a combination of the words *ris*, meaning twigs, and *vål*, meaning memorial [my translation]. Hagberg mentions some thirty variants on the words *vål*, *varp*, meaning a pile of rocks (originally ore), *hög*, meaning pile, *kast*, and *kummel*, meaning grave made of piled stones, combined with the words *offer*, *sten*, meaning rock, and *ris* when referring to offerkast in various Swedish landscapes [my translation]. Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 13. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 512-3.

²¹ See, among others: Acc. Nr. M-2891, LUF, 58. Acc. Nr. M-12572, LUF, 48. Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 14. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 521-30. Sometimes an offerkast may also be placed on a site that has witnessed shameful behaviour, such as adultery, see: Acc. Nr. M-10955, LUF, 9, and Acc. Nr. M-7097, LUF, 13. An offerkast may also be placed where a pagan king is said to have been buried, see: Acc. Nr. M-636, LUF, 64, and Acc. Nr. M-3461, LUF, 2, or when someone is buried outside the consecrated area of the cemetery, such as a murderer, see: Acc. Nr. M-2171, LUF, 35. An offerkast could also appear on an execution site, see: Acc. Nr. M-1687, LUF, 13. But, most often an offerkast is connected to a site of sudden death by the road such as death by murder, drunkenness, freezing, fights and driving accidents.

²² See, for example: Acc. Nr. M-7097 LUF, 9. Acc. Nr. M-464, LUF, 100. Acc. Nr. M-468 LUF, 152.

²³ Hence, you never risk being out of things to contribute to an offerkast. See, for example: Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 2. Acc. Nr. M-7097 LUF, 8, 16.

²⁴ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 15. See, for example: Acc. Nr. M-7544, LUF. Acc. Nr. M-6161, LUF, 3. Acc. Nr. M-6130, LUF, 2.

²⁵ Olaus Magnus, *Historia om de Nordiska folken*, I, 68-9. Although Olaus Magnus texts generally are creative writings, rather than scientifically correct works of history, they have some historical value. See also: Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 16. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 513.

²⁶ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 19.

²⁷ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 19-20.

²⁸ Carl von Linné, *Wästgöta-resa 1746*, facsimile after 1747 edition (Malmö, 1940), 9-10.

²⁹ 'Offerkast', M-Ark, LUF.

³⁰ Acc. Nr. M-6174, LUF, 2-3. Acc. Nr. M-13294, LUF, 12.

³¹ Bengt af Klintberg, 'Kommentarer' in Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 148-9.

³² See, for example: Acc. Nr. M-2902, LUF, 12. Acc. Nr. M-7830, LUF, 12-4. Nr. M-10092, LUF, 166. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 356-62.

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- ³³ Lars Bondesson, *Seder och bruk vid livets slut* (Stockholm: Verbum Förlag, 1987), 69. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 356. Acc. Nr. M-4133, LUF, 18. Acc. Nr. M-2902, LUF, 12.
- ³⁴ Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 357-9.
- ³⁵ Bondesson, *Seder och bruk vid livets slut*, 67. Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 15. Hagberg, *När döden gästar*, 357. Henzel, 'Cruses in the roadside landscape of north eastern Mexico', 95. Kozak and Lopez, 'The Tohono O'odham Shrine Complex', 8-9.
- ³⁶ Acc. Nr. M-7097, LUF, 14-5.
- ³⁷ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 15. Bergstrand, 'Gengångartro och kashögar i Värmland', 16-43.
- ³⁸ This practice is so important for the mentioned survivor that she has ensured it by asking her other children to continue the practice when she eventually has passed away. Personal communication, Petersson, 2005.
- ³⁹ See, among others: Acc. Nr. M-4120, LUF, 4. Acc. Nr. M-6122, LUF, 1-2. Acc. Nr. M-10204, LUF, 6. Acc. Nr. M-3881, LUF, 2.
- ⁴⁰ Acc. Nr. M-6492, LUF, 1-2.
- ⁴¹ Acc. Nr. M-3441, LUF, 47.
- ⁴² Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 3-5. [Originary in Swedish: 'Tag dessa grenar och lys och värm ditt kyliga rum.']
- ⁴³ Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 3-5.
- ⁴⁴ Carl Martin Bergstrand, 'Gengångartro och kashögar i Värmland', *Folkminnen och Folktankar* (Göteborg: Hilding Celander, 1938), 16-43.
- ⁴⁵ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 15.
- ⁴⁶ Bergstrand, 'Gengångartro och kashögar i Värmland', 29-30.
- ⁴⁷ Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 9.
- ⁴⁸ Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 9.
- ⁴⁹ Acc. Nr. M-6153, LUF, 9.
- ⁵⁰ Personal communication, Petersson, 2005.
- ⁵¹ Acc. Nr. M-6130, LUF, 2. [Originary in Swedish: 'Där en människa dog genom olyckshändelse eller där hon blev ihjälslagen, brukade man resa ett kors för att minna om hur osäkert livet var.']
- ⁵² See, among others: Acc. Nr. M-2924 LUF, 4. Acc. Nr. M-13294 LUF, 12. Acc. Nr. M-10204 LUF, 6. Acc. Nr. M-4123, LUF, 4.
- ⁵³ Acc. Nr. M-4123, LUF, 4.
- ⁵⁴ Personal communication, Petersson, 2005.
- ⁵⁵ Barrera, in *Hecho en Tejas. Texas-Mexican Folkarts and Crafts*, 278-92. Clark and Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 212.
- ⁵⁶ Juan Estevan Arrellano, 'Descansos', *New Mexico Magazine* (1986), 42 cited in Barrera, 'Mexican-American Roadside Crosses in Starr County', 279.
- ⁵⁷ David Kozak and Camillus Lopez, 'The Tohono O'odham Shrine Complex: Memorialising the Locations of Violent Death', *New York Folklore*, 1-2/17 (1991), 1-19.
- ⁵⁸ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 18, referring to F. Liebrecht, 'Die geworfene Steine', *Germania XXII*. Extensive references to the custom can further be found in writings from Germany and Norway, such as: 'Steinhaufen, Steinopfer, Steinwerfen', *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, VIII (1936/37), 406-13, and Svale Solheim, 'Kastrøysar', *Ord och sed*, 98 (1941), both mentioned by Klintberg in Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 149.
- ⁵⁹ Cynthia Henzel, 'Cruses in the roadside landscape of north eastern Mexico', 95, 104.
- ⁶⁰ Henzel, 'Cruses in the roadside landscape of north eastern Mexico', 100.
- ⁶¹ Henzel, 'Cruses in the roadside landscape of north eastern Mexico', 104.
- ⁶² Jennifer Clark and Ashley Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 216. C. A. Haney, C. Leimer, and J Lowery, 'Spontaneous memorialisation', 159-171.
- ⁶³ Also Buddhist countries have a tradition of 'roadside gods', erected for the convenience of travellers and pilgrims, such as statues of the deity *Jizo* in Japan. According to Kunihiko Shimizu, a *Jizo* scholar and assistant professor at Kanazawa University, the earliest record of *Jizo* in Japan is from the eighth century, but most of the *Jizo* statues along Japan roads date back to the Edo period (1603-1867). Gordenker, 'So, What the heck is that?'
- ⁶⁴ Gordenker, 'So, What the heck is that?'
- ⁶⁵ Petersson, personal communication 2005.
- ⁶⁶ Douglas J. Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites*, second edition (London, New York: Continuum, 2002). Curt Dahlgren, *När döden skiljer oss åt... Anonymitet och individualisering i dödsannonser: 1945-1999* (Stockholm: Databokförlaget AB, 2000). Göran Gustavsson, *När det sociala kapitalet växlas in: om begravingar och*

deltagandet i begravningar, Lund studies in Sociology of Religion, 4 (Centrum för Teologi och Religionsvetenskap, Lund University: Arken bokhandel, 2003). Curt Dahlgren & Jan Hermanson, 'Kremation och spridning av aska: förändrade begravningsseder i Sverige under sent 1990-tal?', *RIT religionsvetenskaplig internettidskrift*, 6/2003 [online PDF], (published online 27 Nov. 2003) <<http://www.teol.lu.se/rit/pdf/6/jh1.pdf>>, accessed 30 Mar. 2004.

⁶⁷ Jennifer Clark and Ashley Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 216. C. A. Haney, C. Leimer, and J Lowery, 'Spontaneous memorialisation', 159-171. Monger, 'Modern wayside shrines', 113. Grider, 'Spontaneous Shrines', 2.

⁶⁸ Petersson, personal communication 2005.

⁶⁹ See also: Per Pettersson, 'Implicit Religious Relations Turned Explicit. The Church of Sweden as Service Provider in the Context of the Estonia Disaster', paper for *The International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) Conference* (Toulouse, France, July 7-11, 1997). Per Pettersson 'Ten years after the M/s Estonia disaster. The development of the Church of Sweden as Public Provider of Rituals – A Complementary Welfare Function', paper for the *NCSR - The 17th Nordic Conference in Sociology of Religion* (Reykjavik, Iceland, Aug. 19-22, 2004).

⁷⁰ Personal communication, Petersson, 2005.

⁷¹ Clark and Cheshire, 'RIP by the roadside', 215-6. Everett, *Roadside Crosses in Contemporary Memorial Culture*, 15-37.

⁷² Henzel, 'Cruses in the roadside landscape of north eastern Mexico', 104.

⁷³ Petersson, personal communication 2005.

⁷⁴ Ariés, *The Hour of Death*, xii.

⁷⁵ Erixon, *Offerkast och bjudhammare*, 20.

⁷⁶ Ariés, *The Hour of Death*, xiii.