

The Forgotten Heritage of the First World War in Croatia¹

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INTRODUCTION

Until 2014, not much was known about the memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia, except that there was an ossuary in the Central Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb and a national monument to fallen soldiers. Encouraged by the international centenary of the First World War, some Croatian historians started to research this previously understudied topic. From 2014 onwards, the first works on the First World War monument heritage were published based on the researched locations in Croatia – places where various kinds of monuments dedicated to soldiers fallen in the First World War

1 This paper is based on the historical research conducted in the framework of the national research project IP-2019-04-5897: “The First World War in the Culture of Memory. Forgotten Heritage” financed by the Croatian Science Foundation.

were erected (Huzjan 2014: 161–88; Kukić 2015: 123–25; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2017a: 53–66; 2017b: 439–61; 2019b: 239–169; 2020: 399–26; Huzjan 2018: 179–222; Dragoni, Mlikota 2019: 179–94; Huzjan 2019: 437–53; Hameršak 2020: 375–98, Vukičević 2020). Other publications² resulted from the project “Zagreb, Croatian First World War Memorial Heritage,” which was implemented by the 1914–1918 Association in 2018 and financed by the Croatian Ministry of Culture (today Ministry of Culture and Media). However, the end result of this project was an elaborated and mapped memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia. Even though they were not used in this paper, it is important to note that there are books and articles published by scholars on Croatian subjects investigating the First World War memorial heritage of Croatian citizens–soldiers killed and buried in today’s Ukraine, Poland, and Italy (Paščenko 2016; Skoupy 2015: 73–89; Tominac 2016; Paščenko 2018).

Therefore, the analysis of the First World War monument heritage in Croatia in this paper does not describe Croatian First World War cultural memory. Nowadays there are no commemorations organised on dedicated sites of memory for fallen First World War soldiers in Croatia, because such places do not exist. The state authorities in Croatia organised two events to commemorate the centenary of the First World War in 2014 and 2018,³ but did not render it a permanent commemorative practice. This commemorative practice has nonetheless been maintained by the Croatian veterans’ associations and the 1914–1918 Association starting in 2018 (Dobrovšak 2021: 56–61).

SITES OF MEMORY AND HISTORY

Sites of memory were first introduced by French historian Pierre Nora.⁴ One of his most renowned works was the collection of

2 Collected data was used in published articles. Source of data about First World War monuments was found in newspapers, as well as in numerous proceedings and exhibition catalogues published on the centenary of the First World War (see a bibliography made by Herman Kaurić 2020: 347–92).

3 Events were organised with the participation of Croatian state institutions along with embassy representatives of the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Canada, and some other countries to commemorate the victims of the First World War at the central monument in the Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb on Armistice Day (November 11).

4 He published the article *Mémoire collective* in the early 1970s.

essays published in seven volumes about *collective memory and sites of memory* titled *Les lieux de mémoire* (Winter, Sivan 1999:1). Even though he does not clearly define it, Nora uses the term *sites of memory* to explain institutionalised forms of *collective memory* rather than sites of memory (Szpociński 2016:246). His works sparked a historical debate about *les lieux de mémoire* or *a place of our memory* (Nora 1989: 7). Nora makes a distinction between *memory* as a concept that exists in an almost mythical sense in the minds of common people, and “history” which is a “story” written by a scholar in a professional sense (Nora 1989:8). For Nora, *les lieux de mémoire* is a place “where memory crystallises and secrets” occur “at a particular historical moment” (Nora 1989:7). Such historical moment represents a turning point – a conscious “break with the past” that “is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn” apart (Nora 1989:7). Memory is torn apart “in such a way as to pose” a problem for “the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists” (Nora 1989:7). Consequently, *lieux de mémoire*–sites of memory–are no longer *milieux de mémoire*–“memory backgrounds” (Nora 1989:7). Since memory is different from history, it exists in cultural sites or “lieux” that hold a specific significance for national identity (Nora 1989: 8). Memory is blind to all but the group it binds, which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs argues, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific, collective, plural, and yet individual (Nora 1989: 9). According to Nora, such sites of memory “are fundamental remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory” (Nora 1989: 9). Furthermore, he states that sites of memory originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, so people deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organise celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally (Nora 1989: 11–2). Thus “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep” away sites of memory (Nora 1989: 12). Accordingly, for Nora, sites of memory “are sites in three senses of the world–material, symbolic, and functional,” and they ‘are created by a play of memory and history, an interaction of two factors that result in their reciprocal overdetermination.” Without the intention to remember, claims Nora, sites of memory would be indistinguishable from sites of history (Nora 1989: 18–9).

This initial framework established⁵ by Nora was later advanced by numerous scholars,⁶ most notably by American historian Jay Winter. Jay Winter as a First World War historian has greatly advanced contemporary understanding of sites of memory (Winter, Sivan 1999; Winter 2006; 2008; 2010; 2014). According to Winter, *sites of memory* are places where groups of people engage in public activity through which they express “a collective shared knowledge [...], of the past, on which a group’s sense of unity and individuality is based” (Winter 2010: 312; 2008: 61). He claims that groups that go to such sites inherit earlier meanings attached to the event they participate in while adding new meanings to it. The group’s activity is crucial for the memory and preservation of the commemorative sites. When such groups disperse or disappear, sites of memory lose their initial force and may fade away entirely. Thus, Winter defines the term *sites of memory* more narrowly to mean physical sites where commemorative acts take place.⁷ Namely, “states do not remember; individuals do, in association with other people. When such people lose interest, or time, or for any other reason cease to act, when they move away, or die, then the collective dissolves, and so do collective acts of remembrance” (Winter 2006: 4). He claims that agents of remembrance work in the borderlands linking families, civil society, and the state, so during and after the war, individuals, as well as groups, come together to do the work of remembrance (Winter, Sivan 1999: 40). How the group/individual/state remembrance was done in Croatia and to what extent it is possible to map sites of memory as a reminiscence of the First World War past will be evident from the chapter on war categorisation and the chapters about cemeteries, memorials, and monuments established during and after the war.

WAR MEMORIAL CATEGORISATION

So far, the initial categorisation of the Croatian First World War memorial heritage was made by Ljiljana Dobrovšak as a result of the aforementioned research project “Zagreb, Croatian First World War Memorial Heritage” (2020). Dobrovšak (2020: 409) categorises Croatian

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- 5 An analytical framework to study sites of memory, memorial culture, and collective memory.
 - 6 To name few: Halbwachs 1999; Connerton 2009; Assmann 1995; Winter, Sivan 1999: 6–39; Szpociński 2016: 245–54.
 - 7 The 20th century is marked by these sites since most of them signify the loss of life in war (Winter 2008: 61; 2010: 312).

First World War memorial heritage as follows:

- war cemeteries;
- public monuments;
- war memorials, such as crucifixes, plaques, altars and votive chapels, paintings and frescoes, cenotaphs; and
- family tombs.

Relying on Dragan Damjanović's (2013: 589) classification, public monuments are categorised in this paper into three subcategories: 1) monuments dominated by sculpture, 2) sculptural-architectural monuments, and 3) architectural monuments.

Namely, monuments to fallen soldiers of the First World War on Croatian territory were exclusively architectural in nature, dominated by various columns, pillars, crosses, pyramids, and obelisks. The only exception in this respect is the monument located on the osuary at Zagreb's Mirogoj Cemetery, which belongs to the group of monuments dominated by sculpture. However, monuments to fallen soldiers in Croatia during the First World War were largely erected in local cemeteries (military, civil, and religious). Only a few were located on the main town squares or villages, in the city parks and/or close to parish churches. The interwar period introduced some changes. Monuments to fallen soldiers in Croatia were then mostly located in front of parish churches, or there was a dedicated spot with a memorial plaque fixed on the inner wall of the church. Again, only a few monuments were erected in the city squares or city parks, and rarely in local or war cemeteries.

In general, First World War memorials in Croatia were erected by fellow soldiers, families of fallen soldiers, civilian and humanitarian associations, and rarely by town authorities or municipalities. For the greater part, it is known who initiated their construction, under what circumstances, and under whose authorship. However, there is still no data for some memorials.

First World War memorials in Croatia often took the shape of pyramids or obelisks. Some of them displayed the names of fallen soldiers in alphabetical order, and some had only the year of death (1914–1918). Other memorials were built as pavilions that stood alone or contained a sculpture (a Home Guardsman) usually made from wood.⁸ Even though one finds examples of memorials in the shape of a cannon shell, a great number of them are crucifixes with dedicated

8 Often modelled copying German war monuments called *Kriegerdenkmal*.

inscriptions to the First World War victims. In the place called Punat on the Island of Krk, for example, one finds a statue of an angel built in honour of the First World War victims. There is also a rare example of a figural memorial depicting a warrior of the First World War in a place called Kopačevo (in the region Baranja), and another one called *Pieta* erected above the ossuary in Mirogoj (Dobrovšak 2020: 409–10). However, the exact number of First World War memorials in Croatian cemeteries is still unknown. Croatian cemeteries still hide military sections, while those dedicated to fallen First World War soldiers remain unexplored. Document from the year 1921⁹ reports 580 settlements/ places with cemeteries on the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia¹⁰ where soldiers who died during the war were buried. The same document reports 23,533 “victims of war” buried in those cemeteries. Victims of war were of different nationalities—“Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Russians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Austrian Germans, Italians, French, Bulgarians, and Albanians,” which means that they belonged to different armies (the Austro-Hungarian army and the Allies’ armies). So far, the research has mapped out war cemeteries in the following Croatian settlements: Slavonski Brod, Osijek, Glina, Karlovac, Otočac, Petrinja, Sisak, Vinkovci, Nova Gradiška, and Kraljevica. With the exception of Kraljevica, all those places were part of the former military border with war cemeteries established before the First World War. These military cemeteries only expanded during the war. Cities and smaller towns such as Zagreb, Varaždin, Koprivnica, Bjelovar, Vukovar, Ilok, and others had several separate burial fields within the central, mostly Roman Catholic, cemetery. Those fields made up a military section (warrior section) where soldiers who died in hospitals from wounds or various diseases contracted on the battlefields were buried. Almost all places (districts) in Eastern Srem (Zemun, Šid, Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica, Irig, Sremski Karlovci, and Stara Pazova) had war cemeteries. In some of those places, there were several cemeteries where fallen soldiers were buried according to their religion (Orthodox-Roman Catholic-Jewish cemeteries). Those cemeteries had the largest number of fallen Austro-Hungarian soldiers, followed by Serbian soldiers and those of the Allied forces (AJ-69, Ministarstvo vera, Box. 114). Cemeteries with buried soldiers from both sides are found in all of these places due to the proximity of the battlefield on the Srem border with the Kingdom of Serbia. Not much is known about both

9 Report of the Provincial Government in Zagreb to the Ministry of Religion in Belgrade.
10 This is a territory covering entire Srijem, and excluding Istria, Dalmatia, Međimurje, and Baranja.



Fig. 1: Photo of the military cemetery in Bjelovar published in *Ilustrovani list*, Nr. 6., February 10, 1917, p.123.

cemeteries and monuments. The fragmented information found in documents is insufficient. It is, however, evident that war cemeteries and monuments were neglected and poorly maintained in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes /Yugoslavia. Whatever remained was greatly damaged, removed, or destroyed after 1945.¹¹ Namely, German, Ustashe, and Home Guards soldiers of the Second World War were buried in those military cemeteries. So, in the aftermath of the war, communists cleared out entire sections where the “enemies” of the state were buried while destroying First World War graves and monuments in the process (Geiger, Šola, Krznarić 2022). In places where First World War military cemeteries existed (Osijek, Vukovar, Slavonški Brod, Vinkovci, etc.), new buildings and entire settlements were built on top of it. As a result, the memory and sites of memory related to the First World War were gradually erased—both physically and mentally—from residents’ minds and city topography.

MEMORIALS HERITAGE CREATED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The idea related to memorials honouring war heroes was realised during the First World War. The Imperial and Royal Office for promoting crafts in Vienna (*Kunstverlag Schröll und Kopm*) published a catalogue entitled *Soldatengräber und Kriegsdenkmale* already in 1915. It was created in cooperation with 25 distinguished Austrian artists. Among

¹¹ This was the case with the obelisk in the military section Varaždin city cemetery (Huzjan 2014: 166–67).

other things, this catalogue contains blueprints of memorials built with different materials, for individual and collective graves, with specific solutions for rural areas and cities, and for lowlands and hilly regions (*Soldatengräber und Kriegsdenkmale* 1915). During the same period, in 1916, the Austrian and German governments launched a travelling exhibition called *Kriegergrab und Kriegerdenkmal*. The exhibition displayed artistically designed graves on the battlefields, behind the front lines, and in military cemeteries in the homeland, as well as performances of minor homages and medals of honour for courage (Jezernik 2014: 332). This exhibition was covered by the Croatian press. The article “In Honour of Our Heroes” published in the Croatian newspaper *Ilustrovani list* states that every soldier should have “an honourable (...) grave, that is, a warrior’s headstone” (Anon. 1916e: 543–44). However, the year 1916 saw a public debate in military circles over memorials dedicated to fallen soldiers/heroes. Their solution was to raise classical memorials—a memorial post or plaque for each soldier on his native soil. There were also proposals to erect collective monuments in the centre of each municipality or village, with ornaments to preserve the memory of each fallen soldier from a particular place (Anon. 1916a:3; Herman Kaurić 2007: 195–96). However, public-civilian circles also considered such proposals, but they were against individual grave memorials since they lacked the financial means to construct them (Anon. 1916h: 3). Therefore, they came up with a different idea, redirecting their actions to support children—orphans of fallen soldiers—and raising funds through charity (Anon. 1916h: 3). However, most of the proposals were never seen through during the war, even though the official Land Cemetery and Grave Care Committee for the Territory of Croatia and Slavonia¹² was established in Croatia and Slavonia in May 1916 to manage the memorials’ construction (crosses and collective memorials); the committee ceased to exist in early 1917 before it even began with actual work. Namely, their sole function was to handle its correspondence with state authorities until the end of 1918 (Herman Kaurić: 2007: 196; Anon. 1916f: 3MKM-PKB-OVK). Thereby, the committee’s idea to construct a memorial dedicated to an unknown soldier, which was developed in cooperation with the secretary and Croatian architect Viktor Kovačić, was also never realised (Galović 2015: 82–93; Kiš 2014).

It is important to note that the Military Command office in Zagreb had an independent Department of Warrior Graves responsible

12 This committee was presided by Count Teodor Pejačević.

for the construction and maintenance of over 580 graves throughout Croatia and Slavonia (Herman Kaurić 2007: 196). Among many ideas on how to develop a military cemetery and how it should look, only the one in Karlovac's suburb of Dubovac (made according to H. Bollé's plans) was properly shaped as a military cemetery (Damjanović 2013, 469–73). Today, only the *Glorieta* and several headstones attest to its existence. The *Glorieta* project was financed by the Red Cross branch in Karlovac. The *Glorieta* monument was conceived as a massive arcade wall with the chapel of St. Georg. It was planned to install marble plaques with carved names of Karlovac citizens who were killed during the war in the niches. However, due to insufficiently collected financial means in changed political circumstances, this project was left unfinished and the plaques with names of fallen soldiers ended up in the parish church of the Most Holy Trinity in Karlovac (Damjanović 2013: 469–73; Herman Kaurić 2014: 9; Štakorec 2018: 13–6).

Although it is still unclear as to what extent Croatian authors followed plans from Austrian and German magazines to establish war memorials during the First World War,¹³ it is important to note that a number of the memorial plaques/markers did survive the test of time. Namely, they were placed individually in cities, towns, and villages to commemorate the soldiers who fell on the battlefields of the First World War. The following is a list of identified local cemeteries with monuments to fallen soldiers constructed during the First World War:

- the pyramid at the cemetery of St. James in Ogulin (1915)
- obelisk at the city cemetery of the Holy Spirit in Koprivnica (1916)
- *Glorieta* at the war cemetery in Karlovac - Dubovac (1916), and
- memorial plaque on the wall outside the cemetery in the village of Klarići near Drivenik (1917).

Several memorials were also placed in the following public spaces:

- a war memorial on the town square in front of the Franciscan Church in Varaždin (1915)
- a monument to Franz Josef I on the promenade in Novi Vinodolski (1916)
- a pavilion with a wooden soldier in the city park in Sisak (1916)
- a wooden sailor in the square in Sušak (1916)

13 This is still under researched scholarly subject in Croatian historiography.

- an obelisk in Hober Park in Korčula (1917)
- a monument to fallen Dalmatian soldiers at the Veprinac shrine near Makarska (1917)
- two war monuments were erected in Otočac: one in the form of a pyramid with a relief of Franz Josef I in the city park (1916) and the other in the city cemetery of St. Rock in Otočac (1917/1918)—both monuments were erected in honour of the fallen soldiers of Count Jelačić's Infantry Regiment No. 79 (Otočac).

Monuments erected as part of military hospitals or military complexes are identified in the following places:

- the king's monument at the Ivanovčani military camp near Bjelovar (1916)
- the king's monument at the home for military convalescents in Osijek (1916),
- and the obelisk at the military camp in Orahovica (1917).



Fig. 2: Ogulin, local cemetery of St. Jakov. Monument to fallen soldiers from the First World War who died in the hospital in Ogulin from illnesses or wounds received on the battlefields. The monument was erected at the local cemetery of St. Jakov in Ogulin at the end of 1915 according to the design of Stanko Bičanić (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 4.1.2019).

Even though one could not classify above mentioned memorials under the general category of classical monuments,¹⁴ they nonetheless, due to the inscriptions on them, all belong to the memorial heritage of the First World War (Anon 1916aa: 9; 1916i: 867; 1917a: 403–4; 1916j: 892; 1916k: 1009–10; 1915: 3; 1917b: 2; 1916g: 627; 1916b: 4; 1916c: 1; 1916d: 1; 1917c: 196; Urlić 2007: 115–17; Bjelovar 2014: 61–2; Čakširan, Valent 2018: 59–60; Barčot 2015: 247–50; Dobrovšak 2020: 410–12).¹⁵

MEMORIAL HERITAGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN CROATIA ERECTED IN THE KINGDOM OF SERBS, CROATS, AND SLOVENES / KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

Even though it was previously believed that the newly created political circumstances in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia were an obstacle to erecting memorials to soldiers who fell fighting on the Austro-Hungarian side, this is only partially true. Namely, certain memorials were removed from public spaces in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, because they were memorials dedicated either to the Emperor and King Franz Josef I or to the Austro-Hungarian state and Austro-Hungarian army. In addition, a part of the memorial heritage constructed in numerous settlements with the goal of collecting material assistance for fallen soldiers and their families was destroyed. As a result, numerous memorial lindens, shields, coats of arms, falcons, posts, statues, boats, and similar were removed from public spaces in towns and cities (Dobrovšak 2020: 405–6). One example of this destruction is the memorial boat on the Nova Obala in Zadar, which was made for hammering in nails and was not yet finished when it was destroyed during the city's unrest in November 1918 (Anon. 1918b: 662; *Veliki rat* 2014: 21; Škiljan 2014: 162).

War memorials continued to be erected in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), a country that united the “victors” (former citizens of Serbia

14 Because some of them fall into the category of crucifixes and memorial limes.

15 In addition to commemorating soldiers who fell in the First World War, most of these memorials had attributes related to Emperor and King Franz Josef I, and were thus mostly removed or destroyed later in 1918. Among those that survived, albeit in bad shape today, are those in Ogulin, Orahovica, Novi Vinodolski, and the Otočac town cemetery, while those in Korčula and Karlovac have been partially preserved (Dobrovšak 2020: 412).

and Montenegro) and the “vanquished” (former citizens of Austria-Hungary), though not with the same enthusiasm (Jezernik 2014: 335; 2018). Thus, memorials in Serbia in honour of fallen Serbian soldiers were raised with support from the state and veteran’s organisations, while those in other parts of the Kingdom rarely received such support (Šarenac 2014a; 2014b: 153–12; Lajbenšperger 2015b: 330–36; Todorović 1976). According to research, approximately 150 memorials to fallen “Slovenian heroes” were erected in Slovenia by the summer of 1926, and by 1935 there was no settlement in Slovenia without some form of marker (Jezernik 2018: 129–61; Hazler 2021: 41–86). In Croatia, this number was far lower.

It should be mentioned here that, following King Petar’s death, King Aleksandar I Karađorđević attempted to impose himself as the main political factor—his influence became obvious among the ranks of all major Serbian parties, with the Ministry of War reporting directly to the Crown. Even though Austro-Hungarian officers could have asked to join the Kingdom’s army, they were treated completely differently from Serbian officers. In Slovenia, which was never considered a part of Greater Serbia, the military authorities were much more restrained, and this was reflected in the greater number of memorials raised to Slovenians fallen in the First World War (Banac 1984: 141–48).

If we limit our view to attitudes towards Croatian officers in the Kingdom’s army, it comes as no surprise that only a few memorials were erected in Croatia by 1925. In addition, Croatia celebrated the millenary of the crowning of King Tomislav and the founding of the Croatian kingdom in 1925, so most efforts to raise memorials in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina instead focused on the millenary jubilee (Jareb 2017: 109–76, 191–207; Matković 1998: 271–80; Kolar-Dimitrijević 1998: 281–306).

There were also other, far more mundane reasons for the lack of efforts to raise memorials to those who fell fighting on the side of Austria-Hungary. Initiatives to raise memorials or put up memorial plaques were led by small groups of individuals, associations, and sometimes even lone individuals. City governments often failed to reach agreements regarding the raising of memorials, they lacked sufficient funds, the calls lasted too long, or there were bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining licenses. Smaller towns and villages usually lacked the funds for memorials, so they produced memorial plaques, printed photo panels, or raised crucifixes. In the settlements where no memorials or plaques were set up, family members inscribed the names of soldiers buried far from their homeland onto family tombs. Photos of fallen soldiers were also added to some tombs (Dobrovšak

2020, 407–8). In addition to this, the difficulties in raising larger memorials and plaques were further complicated by the provision that no memorial or memorial plaque could be placed anywhere in the country without the approval of the arts section of the Ministry of Education in Belgrade. As a result, in 1933, the Society of Brethren of the Croatian Dragon was forced to remove a high relief depicting King Tomislav that they had set up in Ozalj because they had done so without permission (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1998: 294). For this reason, memorials, memorial plaques, and crucifixes were mostly placed in cemeteries, around or inside parish churches. Most of these memorials survived until today but are for the most part neglected, damaged, and the local population does not know why they were raised.

The installation of memorials to fallen soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army began immediately after the end of the war in 1918. Thus, in 1918, a monument in the shape of a cannon shell was erected at the local cemetery in Dol on Hvar. The Croatian coat of arms was engraved on the top of the grenade, with the names of the fallen soldiers from Dol engraved in the middle. At the local cemetery in Pakrac (1920?), thanks to veteran L. Šnedorf, a monument in the shape of a grenade was erected, around which three plaques with a list of locals who died were installed. Since more than 400 Austro-Hungarian and foreign soldiers were buried in the military part of the cemetery in Varaždin, the city authorities decided to erect some kind of monument as a sign of memory for the buried soldiers. In the beginning, they planted a linden tree because they could not agree on the monument's appearance, but at the end of 1930, they erected a common monument for all the soldiers who died in the First World War. Finally, a monument was erected in the form of an obelisk with the symbols of a sword, a helmet, and a cross. After the Second World War, the new authorities removed the markers from individual military graves at the First World War military cemetery, and the monument was taken down and thrown into a landfill in the 1960s. Although there remains a field within the local cemetery in Varaždin that was a cemetery for those who fell in the First World War, the monument no longer exists. That it is a military cemetery is confirmed only by a large linden tree planted in the 1930s and a memorial plaque that reads "In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. City of Varaždin, 2018" (*Ljepota prolaznosti* 2007: 42–4; Huzjan 2014: 161–88; Težak 2014: 23; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62 Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

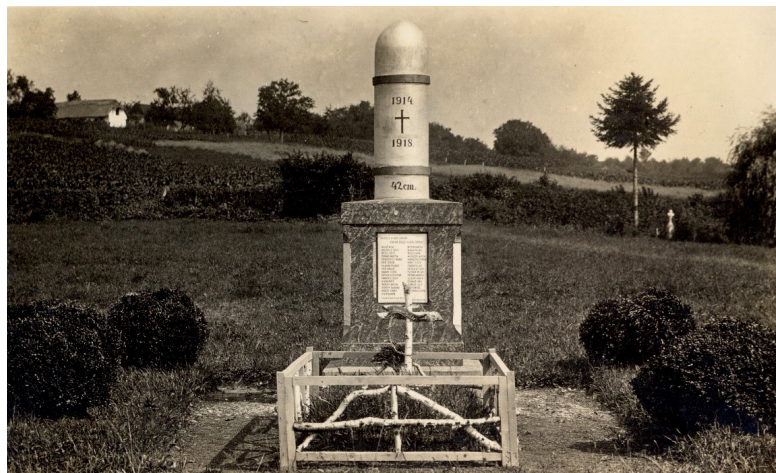


Fig. 3: Pakrac, local cemetery. The monument to fellow citizens who died in the First World War was erected at the Roman Catholic city cemetery in Pakrac. The monument was erected to his war comrades by Lujko Šnedorf (1882-1959) from Pakrac, probably in 1920. (Unknown author, photo from the archive by S. Njegovan Starek).

In Kalinovac, a monument in the form of an obelisk was erected in front of the parish church of St. Luke. The names of fallen residents were engraved on it, probably in 1919. In the courtyard of the Roman Catholic parish, the church of St. Luke in Orolik, a monument was erected around 1920 that looks like a burial chapel. Inside the chapel, there was a plaque with engraved names of the fallen residents. In the courtyard of the parish church of St. Barbara in Jakšić, a monument was erected in 1925, which, along with an inscription commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the Kingdom of Croatia, had a list of soldiers from the parish who died in the war. Similar action was also carried out in Samobor, where in 1934 the parishioners placed a statue of Mary in front of the parish church of St. Anastasia with the inscription “in memory of the victims of the First World War and in memory of 1000 years of the Croatian kingdom.” In front of the parish church of St. Anne in Slakovci near Novi Jankovci, the parishioners erected a memorial chapel in 1926 with a memorial plaque with engraved names of the locals. Next to the church in Gotalovo, a monument to the fallen locals was erected in 1927. A monument in the form of a crucifix with a memorial plaque containing the names of the fallen residents was erected at the main intersection in Ivanovčani, a suburb of Bjelovar (1922). A similar monument in the form of a crucifix was erected on the main road in Veliko Trojstvo near Bjelovar (1923). The crucifix was erected in the autumn of 1924 in the town of Šemovci (between Virje and Đurđevac) as a sign of memory

for the martyred locals by local resident S. Kolarević (Anon. 1922: 3–4; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

Several monuments were placed in parks and city squares. In 1925, a square-shaped stone monument was erected in the central park in Pleternica, inside which a marble slab with the carved names of the martyred residents was installed. Likewise, on the town square in Novigrad Podravski, the residents erected a monument in 1926 in the form of an obelisk with carved names of the fallen residents as well as the names of donors. In 1927, the inhabitants of the Podravina village of Gola erected a pillar-shaped monument in the centre of the village with the inscription “Fallen in the World War 1914–1918.” There are four plaques on the pillar with the names of the victims. In the town of Vrbanj on the island of Hvar, the parishioners erected a stone monument with the names of the fallen villagers in a forest near the chapel of St. Osib in 1928. One of the most important monuments to those who fell in the war was erected in the form of an obelisk as part of the city promenade in Čakovec in 1929. The city municipality erected it in 1929, but due to a conflict with the state authorities because not only with the names of the fallen soldiers but also those who survived the horrors of war were engraved on the monument, it was covered with tarpaulin until 1932 when it was ceremonially presented to the public. After the ceremony, it was found that monument was damaged because some individuals erased the names of the surviving locals with a knife. The monument was demolished after 1945, and the plaques with the names were placed in the city museum in Čakovec. At the initiative of Matica Hrvatska from Čakovec, the monument was re-installed in 1994 not far from the place where it had been erected in 1929 (Anon 1932: 3; Anon 1934: 3; Pavličević 2009:174–77; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Bunjac 2015: 215; Cik 2017; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

Memorial plaques with the names of the fallen soldiers were placed in the Franciscan monastery of Saints Philip and James in Vukovar in 1928, in the parish church of St. Anthony of Padua in Našice (1929), in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Karlovac (1930), and the parish church of St. Martin in Varaždinske Toplice (1933). Two plaques to the fallen in the First World War were placed in the bell tower of the parish church of St. John the Baptist in Koprivnički Ivanac. The plaques were installed by parish priest F. Brdarić, but it is unknown when exactly. Memorial plaques with the names of fallen and missing parishioners were mainly placed by parishioners and relatives from their towns, while in Varaždinske Toplice, plaques were placed

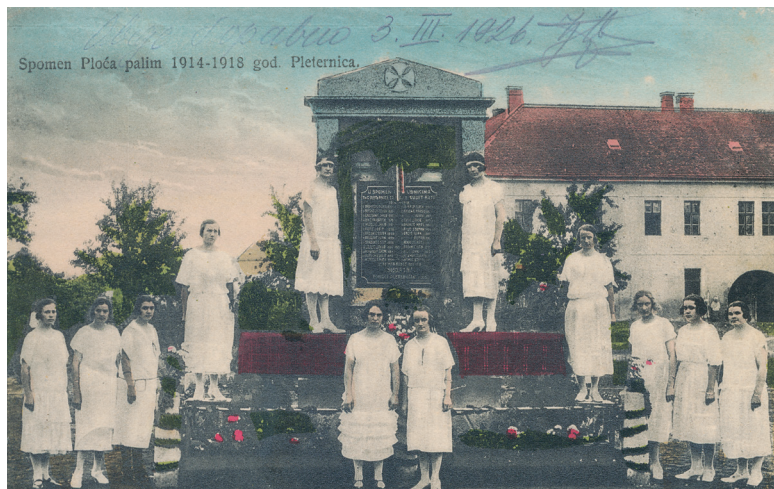


Fig. 4: Pleternica, memorial plaque for the fallen (soldiers) 1914-1918, from the private collection of B. Jezernik.



Fig. 5: Našice, A memorial plaque with a list of fallen citizens in WWI of Našice was placed in 1929 in the parish church of St. Anthony of Padua in Našice (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.6.2022).

by the Croatian cultural society “Napredak” (Kranjčev 2015: 57–69; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

The example of the monument in Daruvar is interesting, because it is one of the rare monuments in Croatia that was not erected to the fallen in the Austro-Hungarian army, but by the fallen in the Serbian army and volunteers. It was erected by a Sub-Committee of the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors from Daruvar, supposedly

in 1930 in the park of the spa resort in Daruvar, and the plaque read “Fallen fighters for the freedom and unification of our people.” It was damaged during the Bannate of Croatia and removed during the Independent State of Croatia (Jakčin Ivančić 2002: 92).

For some monuments, neither the circumstances nor the year when they were erected are known, such as the votive chapel in Ciglenica near Popovača, the pyramid at the local cemetery in Kijevo, the monument to fallen soldiers at the local cemetery in Belišće, the crucifix on the promenade towards Kastav, and the monument at the local cemetery Viškovo near Rijeka. The monument placed on the ossuary of soldiers fallen in the First World War at the Kozala Cemetery in Rijeka is also valuable, but there is not much information about it either (Kovačić 2008: 120; Talijani 2012: 38; Dobrovšak 2020: 412–13; Archive of the author).

All of these memorials were dedicated to all victims regardless of their nationality or religion. However, there are examples to the contrary. These include the memorials erected to fallen Germans in Jarmina (1922), Breznica Našička (1925), and Krndija (1926), to Hungarians in Kopačevo (?), Novi Bezdán (1935), and Lug (?), and Jews in Slavonski Brod (1919?), Zagreb (1930), Koprivnica (1934), and Križevci (1935) (Dobrovšak 2017b: 439–61; Dobrovšak 2020: 413). Here we can include memorials to fallen soldiers of the Allied armies who died in civilian and military hospitals in Croatia. There are several of these, mostly in city cemeteries. For example, the Zagreb city cemetery contains two such memorials, one to fallen French soldiers and the other to Italians (Kukić 2015: 123–25). The circumstances



Fig. 6: Kopačevo, Baranja, Monument to fallen Hungarian soldiers during the First World War from the village of Kopačevo. The monument is in Ribarska street next to the local church. The year the monument was erected is not known (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.05.2020).



Fig. 7: Jarmina, Monument to the fallen residents of German nationality from Jarmina. The monument was erected in 1922 in the courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Wendelin (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 22.6.2021).

under which these were erected remain unknown. Memorials and ossuaries for fallen Italians were built at local cemeteries in Zadar (1937 to 1939), Pula, and Rijeka (*Sacri* 2005: 103–7). A memorial plaque to Serbian soldiers was put up at the Split waterfront, on the sidewall of today's St Peter's Quay.

MONUMENTAL MEMORIALS

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the most significant effort to commemorate the soldiers who fell in the First World War was linked to the raising of the Memorial to the Unknown Hero on Avala Hill and another memorial in Mirogoj, Zagreb's main cemetery. The first memorial was built between 1934 and 1938 by famous Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović and was supposed to be dedicated to all victims of the First World War, but the years inscribed in it (1912–1918) show that it also dedicated to victims of the Balkan Wars (Ignjatović 2006: 229; 2010: 624–51). The second memorial was the one in Zagreb, erected in the Mirogoj Cemetery. Around 3,700 soldiers were buried there during the war and in the first months of 1919, including those who died in numerous civilian and military hospitals and Red Cross hospitals in Zagreb. According to the cemetery statute of 1878, the 3rd class graves, in which most of the soldiers were buried, had to be dug up after 15 years, with the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors,

Zagreb Sub-Committee taking charge of the effort. The initiative to raise a collective tomb, exhume, and transfer the mortal remains of soldiers buried in Mirogoj was launched by the Zagreb City Government in 1927. The construction of the ossuary was financed wholly through the Mirogoj Foundation, owned and administered by the city authorities. However, nothing was done until 1931 due to the administrative inertia of the city and state apparatus. The ossuary, whose construction was launched in 1931 but prolonged for a whole decade due to a lack of funding and poor organisation, is the work of Zagreb architect Ante Grgić, while the *Pieta* monument was made by Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj, who later became very famous painters and sculptors. The lower part of the ossuary was completed in 1934, the same year when the exhumation was performed. The ossuary is divided into several chambers and is a secondary tomb of the fallen soldiers. It contains the remains of around 3,300 soldiers of various national, religious, and military affiliations, including over 1,000 Croats, 450 Hungarians, 330 Serbian prisoners-of-war, over 150 soldiers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, 110 from Austria, and a smaller number of Slovenes, Montenegrins, and others. The tomb was built in 1939. Due to a lack of funds, the city budget did not consider the upper part of the tomb, i.e., erecting a memorial, until 1938. Following a new call for the memorial in 1938, after numerous financial and judicial dilemmas, the memorial *Pieta* by sculptors Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj was selected, and finally put up in March 1940, when the tomb was officially presented to the public (Kukić 2015: 123–25).

Here we should also mention the construction of the Gučevo memorial ossuary where Austro-Hungarian and Serbian soldiers who died during the Battle of Gučevo on the Drina in 1914 were buried. Austrians were the first that started to build a monument on that site in 1917, but they did not finish it until the end of the war. In 1926, the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors in Belgrade decided to finish the monument and make it look more Serbian. This was done by placing on it the Serbian coats of arms, the eagle, and other symbols. Gojko Tadić implemented the project, while the sculptures are the works of Milorad Jovanović. Most of the money for the monument and the ossuary was granted by the state, while a minor part was contributed by the Association of Reserve Officers and Warriors and other donors. It was rearranged between 1927 and 1929 and opened on the Transfiguration feast (August 19) in 1930. In front of the monument, there is an ossuary with more than 3,500 remains of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers. Most of them were first buried in mountain Gučevo, while a minor part was buried in the nearby

valley (Lajbenšperger 2015: 507–14). Although this is not the only ossuary in Serbia where the remains of Austro-Hungarian and Serbian soldiers rest together, it is significant because among those buried are the remains of the 52nd Zagreb regiment, brought from the park in Bukovička Banja near Arandjelovac.

Immediately after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, the culture of memory regarding the First World War and those who perished in it gained a prominent place on the Croatian public scene. The Croatian regime began to create a cult of the Croatian warrior, and as a result, drew from the heritage of the First World War (Gabelica 2022: 241–67; Anon.1941: 6–7; Deliċ-Dubiċki 1942: 9) and began to commemorate its victims (Anon 1941: 8; 1941b: 9). However, as the war went on, the First World War heritage began to fade, and the cult of the Croatian warrior, hero, and martyr of the Second World War arose; commemoration of fallen warriors from the First World War was halted in 1942. Several memorials to the First World War victims were erected during the Independent State of Croatia. Two in the town cemetery of Nova Gradiška (1942) and Zastrazišće on the island of Hvar (1941) survived the war, while a third, in Drnje (1942), was demolished by the Partisans in 1945 because they associated it with the Ustasha regime. It is unknown who was responsible for raising the memorials on Hvar and in Drnje, while the inscription on the memorial in Nova Gradiška attributes it to the Association of Decorated Warrior Croats of 1914–1918, founded after the Independent State of Croatia was established (Dobrovšak 2020: 413–14; Gabelica 2022; Archive of the author).

No further memorials were raised after the Second World War; in fact, some of them were transformed into memorials to fallen People's Liberation Struggle fighters (Dobrovšak 2020, 414; Medvarić-Bračko, Kolar-Dimitrijević, 2015: 41–62). This situation persisted until recently, when initiatives within the frame of the First World War centenary commemorations appeared in some settlements, including Zagreb, intending to put up plaques in memory of soldiers who perished in the conflict. Over the last several years, old memorials were restored and new ones erected. The memorial in Ćakovec that was removed in 1945 was restored and returned in 1994 but placed in a new location. The memorial at the Mirogoj Cemetery was restored in 2014. The Croatian Officers' Choir of the Istria Municipality set up a plaque to Croatian sailors and soldiers in the naval cemetery in Pula in 2015. Collective memorials to victims of multiple wars were put up in some settlements, such as Prelog, Presečno near Varaždin (2014), and Donja Voća near Varaždin,



Fig. 8: Donja Voća, local cemetery. Monument to the missing and dead soldiers and residents of the municipality of Donja Voća and the parish of Martijanac who died in the wars fought during the 20th century. The monument was erected in 2009 and is located at the entrance to the local cemetery Donja Voća (Photo: L. Dobrovšak, 27.9.2018) .

while new memorial plaques to First World War soldiers were put up in Karlovac (2013), Pula (2014), Zagreb (2015), and Dugo Selo (2015) (Dobrovšak, 2020, 414–15; Archive of the author).

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the memorial heritage of the First World War in Croatia does exist. However, due to historical circumstances and states that did not commemorate the fallen First World War soldiers, these sites of memory disappeared from collective memory. Although the official authorities in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/ Yugoslavia did not prohibit the raising of memorials to First World War victims who had fought on the “enemy side,” they did not support it either, and so memorials were not built in adequate numbers, unlike in Slovenia and Serbia. One of the reasons for not commemorating those who fell in the war is related to the fact that most towns and cities did not have sufficient funds for building such memorials after the First World War. Furthermore, the Yugoslav state encouraged the erection of memorials dedicated to individuals or events that had contributed to its unitary ideology, such as those dedicated to King Petar

I and Aleksandar as well as those honouring King Tomislav during the millenary of the Croatian kingdom. Despite all of these aggravating circumstances, memorials and memorial plaques to all Croatian citizens-soldiers who fell serving in the Austro-Hungarian army were put up during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, mostly next to churches and in local cemeteries. These efforts were mostly initiated by various associations such as Croatian Women (but not veterans' associations), local authorities, or the families of fallen soldiers, and only rarely by city administrations and state institutions. Furthermore, Austro-Hungarian First World War cemeteries were not removed and were sometimes maintained. Neglect and destruction of graves, military cemeteries, and memorials from the First World War were commonplace after 1945 and the Second World War, when some of the memorials were transformed into memorials dedicated to fallen fighters of the People's Liberation Struggle. Memorials were ruined simply due to the passage of time, as wooden crosses rotted away, while families forgot about them or moved to other regions, leaving nobody to care about them. Some iron crosses and plaques survived, but time has completely erased the inscriptions on them.

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