

# Graves Were Tended and Monuments Were Erected to Soldiers after the First World War

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## PROLOGUE

As the son of an elementary school teacher in the village of Gomilsko, the author of this text spent most of his childhood years there, living among the families of labourers and peasants. At the time, the most widespread and profitable agricultural monocrop in the Lower Savinja Valley was hops, which were harvested from late August through the start of the school year. The hops were picked manually by hired labourers, mostly from eastern Slovenia, called *ubiruci* (pickers), and by locals, many of them children from the families of labourers and civil servants. The author himself took part in the harvest, earning some dinars to purchase school supplies.

During the hops harvest, he would often listen to the locals' tales of their life and work, as well as their service in the German and later the Yugoslav People's Army, along with many other interesting adventures.

One of the vivid recollections is of a peasant and hops producer who took part in the First World War as an Austro-Hungarian soldier on the Isonzo Front. If memory serves, he did not participate in direct combat on the front because he had a weaker constitution, making him more suitable for supplying the soldiers with water, maintaining cleanliness, sweeping, and other such tasks. This former imperial-royal soldier would always commend his Austrian army in these conversations, emphasising how tidy it was!

Another memory recalls past conversations with schoolmates as they compared two monuments: the first next to the school in Gomilsko that was dedicated to fallen soldiers and victims of Nazi terror from the Second World War, and the second in front of the church in the village of Grajska vas that was splendidly adorned with a mounted soldier and a kneeling man. Naturally, the children's eyes preferred the one in Grajska vas, but who would dare say such a thing out loud, when the one in Gomilsko was majestic even without the statues. And that was the end of it until over half a century later, when the author had the opportunity to examine the monuments and plaques commemorating the First World War not only in Gomilsko and Grajska vas, but across a much larger area as well.

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This article is one of the author's texts created as the result of a years-long research project *Dediščina prve svetovne vojne: reprezentacije in reinterpretacije* (*Heritage of the First World War: Representations and Reinterpretations*), headed by Božidar Jezernik, which brought together a number of researchers. One of the achievements of the joint research efforts was the publication of a collection of papers by the same name (Fikfak and Jezernik 2021). In it, the author published an article titled *Dediščina vojaških pokopališč, kapelic, spomenikov in spominskih znamenj prve svetovne vojne* (*Heritage of Military Cemeteries, Monuments, and Memorial Plaques of the First World War*) (Hazler 2021: 41–86), and an extended monograph with related contents is about to be published.

The article focuses predominantly on the author's professional experience<sup>1</sup> and the latest research efforts. Not all of the research find-

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**1** The author is an ethnologist and conservator who worked autonomously on the recognition, evaluation, and the physical and documentary protection of immovable (predominantly) ethnological heritage at the Celje Regional Office of the Institute for the

ings could be included in this article, so only a few highlights are presented: a somewhat longer elaboration on the utilised written and pictorial sources and literature, as well as a short overview of the preservation of some the First World War units of cultural heritage in the European area, wherein only the localities are listed without longer elaborations.

In addition, the problem of the authenticity of some units of the examined heritage before and after conservation-led renovation interventions is highlighted. The uncritical use of modernist restoration interventions and (especially some) inauthentic materials constitute a problem that far too many in professional circles seem to be insufficiently aware of.

### ON THE SOURCES AND LITERATURE

An array of written and pictorial sources and literature were used, all of which are pivotal for presenting the issue of military cemeteries, monuments, and commemorative plaques for the victims of the First World War. A number of texts have already been published by various authors; some are presented below chiefly for informative purposes.

One of the first prominent expert papers on the discussed topic was an article by Špelca Čopič titled *Slovenski spomeniki padlim v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Slovenian Monuments to the Fallen in the First World War*) (Čopič 1987: 168–177) published in the magazine *Kronika* 35. The book by Giacinto De Caroli and Maria Luisa De Caroli titled *Viaggio al Fronte* (*Journey to the Front*) (De Caroli, Giacinto and Marie Luisa De Caroli 2015) is very useful for field work; it is basically a diary of a former Italian second lieutenant and doctor, Giacinto De Caroli, while he was operating on the Isonzo Front, among other places.

Topics regarding the examined cultural heritage are covered in the collection of papers by the members of the Gorenjska Museum from Kranj titled *Mirno vojaki spite večno spanje* (*Soldiers at Peace Sleep the Eternal Sleep*) in which Jože Dežman published an article titled *Pokopališča in spomeniki na Gorenjskem* (*Cemeteries and Monuments in Gorenjska*) (Dežman 2014: 38–41). The work by historian

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Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia for fifteen years. Among other efforts, he participated in various thematic meetings in 1982 to be informed about the newly renovated Memorial Church of the Holy Spirit in Javorca above Tolmin, which was constructed by the Austro-Hungarian military forces for the spiritual care of Catholic soldiers as well as for the last liturgical farewell from fallen soldiers.

and conservator Marko Simič titled *Po sledeh soške fronte* (*Following the Traces of the Isonzo Front*) (Simič 1996) is pertinent for understanding the conditions surrounding the the First World War years in the area of western Slovenia. Historian Marko Štepec has also recently been researching the First World War and has published and participated as editor of the publications *Bedna kritja pod planoto tik nad Sočo ...* (*Pitiful Covers Under the Plateau Just above the Soča...*) (2016: 29–38), *Take vojne si nismo predstavljali* (*We Never Imagined Such a War*) (2014), and the booklet titled *1914–1918* (2010), published in English.

At the regional level, the examined heritage has been covered in important articles by several authors, including the article by Nataša Budna Kodrič titled *Vojaki s Škofjeloškega v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Soldiers from the Škofja Loka Area in the First World War*) (Budna-Kodrič 1999). The fact that *Škofja Loka* was part of the deep hinterland of the Isonzo Front is attested in important reports on the military hospital in the Ursuline convent (*Škofja Loka. Uršulinke Rimske Unije. Zgodovina*, web resource), as well as in an article about the *Žalujoča Slovenka* (*Grieving Slovenian Woman*) monument by Jurkovič (*Slovenec* 231/1928: 3), and an article on a monument to the fallen in the First World War in *Škofja Loka* and *Stara Loka* penned by Damir Globočnik (2012: 111–24), who was also the author of the comprehensive independent publication *Likovno in simbolno. Kolektivni spomin Slovencev v likovni umetnosti* (*The Artistic and the Symbolic. The Collective Memory of Slovenians in Fine Art*) (Globočnik 2017). David Erik Pipan (2003) wrote about the monument to the brave defenders of Mt. Rombon, Damjan Resnik (2004) wrote about the Isonzo Front as a memorial and a museum issue in his diploma thesis, and Vinko Avsenak (2006: 45–50) was one of the authors to write about the mosque in Log pod Mangartom.

For this study also found the articles published in the regional newspaper *Gorenjski glas* also proved very useful; articles by Miha Naglič had already been published there prior to the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, among others the article titled *Gorenjski spomeniki padlim v prvi svetovni vojni* (*Monuments to the Fallen in the First World War in Gorenjska*) (Naglič 2014: web resource).

The very topographically themed collection *Arzenal, Zbirka spomenikov, posvečenih padlim slovenskim vojakov v svetovni vojni 1914–1918* (*Collection of Monuments Dedicated to Fallen Slovenian Soldiers in the First World War 1914–1918*) can be accessed on the website of the Milko Kos Historical Institute, created in collaboration with colleagues from the Anton Melik Geographical Institute ZRC SAZU, and the Institute of Cultural History ZRC SAZU. Historian Drago Svolfšak

wrote several in-depth articles for the collection (e.g., the material on the towns of Brezje, Rateče, Srednja Vas v Bohinju, etc.).

Much of the data on the heritage of the First World War are kept in museums, libraries, and especially the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, which published the 626-page guide *Vodnik po arhivskem gradivu 1. svetovne vojne (Guide to the First World War Archival Records)* in 2017, organised by the Archives of the RS by editor-in-chief Jure Volčjak. This publication served as the main source for locating and establishing the dispersion of military cemeteries and military hospitals, as well as erecting some monuments and chapels in remembrance of the events of the Great War (Volčjak 2017).

The monograph by Tone Košir et al. titled *Dediščina župnije Šentjošt (Heritage of the Šentjošt Parish)* (Košir et al. 2013) is a valuable resource for the local study analysis of individual places and past events, as it contains a range of information about the Austro-Hungarian local soldiers who would return home for leave and would also be photographed with their family members.

In October 2018, Ljubljana hosted the two-day symposium *Jugoslovanski spomeniki, povezani s 1. svetovno vojno (1918–1941) (Yugoslavian Monuments Relating to the First World War (1914–1918))* (Žerovc, Beti 2018) with several experts from the former Yugoslavia.

In addition to these articles and monographs, the articles published in the newspapers and publications *Jutro*, *Slovenec*, *Slovenski Narod*, *Štajerski Gospodar*, and others are also significant, but most of them are not attributed. The same applies to numerous articles published online about military cemeteries in the Karst, Gorizia region, Tolmin area, Bovec area, and the Trenta Valley.

Some available printed and web resources from other European countries were also important for a general familiarity with the issue of the First World War heritage. In Croatia, Branko Ostajmer and Vladimir Geiger published an article in the *Đakovo Museums Journal* on the issue of erecting monuments–cenotaphs–and maintaining the graves of fallen soldiers in the years after the end of the First World War in the area of Đakovo and its surroundings (Ostajmer and Geiger 2013: 139–56). A similar, but more topographically oriented study of the monuments and plaques in Koprivnica and the Đurđevac area of Croatian Podravina was carried out by Ružica Medvarić – Bračko and Mira Kolar – Dimitrijević (Medvarić – Bračko, Kolar – Dimitrijević 2015: 41–62); part of their study entailed collecting data on the fallen soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

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2 The author would like to sincerely thank Sanja Lončar, Ph.D., from the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology FFZG for forwarding articles and other pictorial materials.

The heritage of the First World War is a topic of interest to scientists in social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities, including archaeologists. Nicholas J. Saunders published *Killing Time. Archaeology and the First World War* (2007) with numerous drawings and analyses of the pictorial material presenting archaeological excavations from the pre-war period, which uncovered metal items and other findings under the fields of Flanders. Decades ago, archaeologists cast their gaze on the archaeological localities from the air, creating an extensive collection of papers titled *Conflict Landscapes and Archaeology from Above* (Stichelbaut, Birger and David Coweley 2016); it was a collaboration of 35 authors including Dimitrij Mlekuž, Uroš Košir, and Matija Črešnar from Slovenia with their article *Landscapes of Death and Suffering: Archaeology of Conflict Landscapes of the Upper Soča Valley, Slovenia*.

Thirty-one authors, including archaeologists, culturologists, and anthropologists contributed their findings in 14 articles for the collection of papers *Rediscovering the Great War. Archaeology and Enduring Legacies on the Soča and Eastern Fronts* (Košir et al. 2019), edited by Uroš Košir, Matija Črešnar, and Dimitri Mlekuž; it features a 3D digitalisation to present the former conflict area in the tourist offer of the Rombon and Kolovrat Mountains.

#### INTER-WAR AND POST-WAR PERIODS OF MILITARY CEMETERIES

During the First World War, parts of Slovenian as well as European territories were ravaged by military battles and their aftermath, which was also reflected in harsh interventions in nature and the landscape, especially in Alpine regions. Directly along the front lines, the warring sides dug trenches, hollowed out caverns, and dug tunnels into rocks. Hosts of shells reshaped landscapes. New buildings and equipment were being put up in places, including religious and commemorative plaques, water regulation devices, fenced military cemeteries, new roads and tunnels, railway tracks, cable lifts, etc. The war, therefore, led to significant transformations of cultural landscapes into “war landscapes,” whose traces remain visible even after over 100 years. Consequently, the heritage of the First World War is expressed in more diverse landscapes than any war has ever left behind, before or since.

Nowadays, the remnants of many military cemeteries and burial grounds, which have not all been preserved, mainly due to soldiers' posthumous remains being relocated, are limited to larger cemeteries and ossuaries. After the exhumations, the memory of the original cemeteries has largely faded and few now remain who remember the graves as they once stood in Bled, Hrušica, Kranjska Gora, Šentvid nad Ljubljano, and elsewhere.

The majority of the military cemeteries in Slovenia that are preserved are located directly on or in the hinterland of the Isonzo Front, where hospitals were often set up out of need during the war, along with various military devices and objects, which meant that military cemeteries would spread out around them. At a distance from the front's hinterlands, these remnants of the horrors of war become less common sights.

Viewing military cemeteries with today's eyes, the question of their authentic image arises: it is clear that different refurbishments occurred over the course of the century, including new materials being added out of a desire for a more permanent preservation of grave markings. This means some cemeteries have almost completely lost their original image and gained a new, upgraded one, which in time came to be accepted by the general public as historic fact. The field of conservatorship should be the first to practice consistency here.

A comparison of predominantly pictorial materials reveals that the graves of Austro-Hungarian cemeteries had originally been marked by Latin crosses made of sawn-up planks, whereas Islamic grave markers were made of cut-up boards, as best preserved, albeit in a later form, in the cemetery in Log pod Mangartom. In cemeteries and burial grounds in mountainous areas, the Catholic graves were marked by crosses made of hand-planed spikes and branches, while markers for Islamic graves



Fig. 1: Log pod Mangartom, Austro-Hungarian war cemetery with iron Catholic crosses and wooden Islamic grave markers (photo: V. Hazler, July 25, 2012).

were hardly discernible. Crosses in Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in the remote and hilly regions of the village of Lepena, Mt. Mrzli Vrh, Medvedje pasture above Zatolmin and Polog pasture, and elsewhere were mostly made of hand-carved wooden sticks. These cemeteries are now mostly abandoned due to post-war exhumations and relocations; the only indicators today are informative signposts and in some places, for example in Lepena, the remnants of former cemetery chapels.

The general maintenance of the Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in the post-war years was accompanied by a tendency towards more permanent grave markings: examples of this can be found in Log pod Mangartom and the Trenta Valley, where the wooden crosses were replaced by iron crosses; only the Islamic grave markings remained



Fig. 2: Ajševica, remnants of reinforced concrete crosses with alcoves and metal plates in an Austro-Hungarian cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 24, 2021).



Fig. 3: Grgar near Nova Gorica, remnants of reinforced concrete crosses with alcoves and metal plates in an Austro-Hungarian cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, November 15, 2018).

unchanged. This significantly changed the appearance of these cemeteries, especially where the wooden crosses were replaced by identical reinforced concrete crosses. Most of the soldiers' graves from the Soča to the cemeteries in the Karst and the Vipava Valley, such as in the settlements of Brje, Bukovica, Dutovlje, Gorjansko, Grgar, Lipa



na Krasu, Oševljek, Prvačina, Renče-Žigoni, Renče-Lukežiči, Sežana, Vogrsko, and elsewhere, bore this type of grave markers.

In many other war cemeteries, concrete squares with a tilted upper facing side and a rounded back were placed on soldiers' graves after the war; these markers had a convex poured cross on the front with two square slots beneath, where iron pegs were used to place lead nameplates with the engraved names of the deceased. This kind of gravestone can be found in Austro-Hungarian war cemeteries in Banjšice, Bovec, Črniče, Gorjansko (also concrete crosses), Komen (simplified form), Loče near Tolmin, Loke near Kromberk, Modrejce, Podnanos, Solkan, under Vipavski Križ, Volčja Draga, and perhaps elsewhere.

In some Austro-Hungarian cemeteries, besides concrete tombstones in the shape of a cross and a cuboid, there are also preserved tombstones of officers, sanitary and quartermaster personnel. These tombstones are usually larger than those of soldiers, have different shapes, are often decorated with various artistic, even Art Nouveau motifs (Sežana) and were placed individually or in groups (Grgar) in the cemetery. Their shape and size seem to have been determined by military rank and status. Such clearly recognisable



Fig. 4: Loče near Tolmin, an older concrete gravestone with two slots to place the nameplate in an Austro-Hungarian military cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 6, 2021).



Fig. 5: Loče near Tolmin, younger concrete gravestone without two slots to place the nameplate in an Austro-Hungarian military cemetery (photo: V. Hazler, July 6, 2021).

gravestones of officers and other commanders can be found in the Austro-Hungarian cemeteries in Ajdovščina, Ajševica, all four war cemeteries in Brje pri Komnu, Črniče, Dutovlje, Gorjansko, Grgar, Kidričevo, Komen, Loče near Tolmin, Modrejce, Osek near Gorica, Prvačina, Renče-Žigoni, Renče-Lukežiči, Sežana, Sveto, Škofja Loka (preserved gravestone of a post office servant, Ger. Postamtsdiener), Štanjel, in Vipavski Križ and elsewhere.

In addition to these grave markings, some war cemeteries have also preserved central monuments with a distinct spatial placement

and various original design motifs, such as the monument in Log pod Mangartom, created in 1917 by Czech sculptor Ladislav Kofránek (1880–1954), and the monument with a staircase in the military cemetery near Štanjel, where this majestic four-column monument was erected in mid-1917. At the time, the cemetery in Štanjel already had stone-carved entry doorframes inscribed with the years 1915 and 1917 and a fence made of stone columns and wooden planks. The cemetery, which was half the size of today's dimensions, had around ten grave rows running parallel to the staircase under the central monument with about ten to fifteen grave units (or more or less in places) that were surrounded with a low stone wall, while the crosses and the Muslim grave markings were made of wood. The pictorial materials lead to the presumption that several gravestones shaped like the Maltese cross were put up soon after the war, along with two Jewish headstones<sup>3</sup> and at least three iron crosses on stone pedestals.

A number of central monuments have a pyramid shape, such as the ones in the villages of Čepovan, Modrejce, Sveto, Vojščica, Volčja Draga, the shape of a step pyramid, such as in the villages of Lipe na Krasu and the Medrja mountain pasture above Zatoľmin, the shape of a large step cuboid as in the village of Črničė, the shape of a large Latin cross as in the village of Renčė (hamlet of Lukežiči), the shape of a large cross as in the village of Dutovlje and an abandoned Italian cemetery in the village of Avčė.

The most diverse grave marking designs can be found in the Austro-Hungarian military cemetery in Gorjansko in the Karst, which already largely assumed its original appearance in the final years of the First World War. Many other cemeteries also have central monuments with very diverse designs, confirming the theory that each cemetery is actually original both in its artistic design as well as its layout and size.<sup>4</sup>

The aforementioned changes and additions in several Austro-Hungarian military cemeteries were carried out as part of systematic reconstruction efforts by the state and veteran institutions in Austria and Germany that took place soon after the end of the First World War; these were very diligently carried out in the territory of today's western Slovenia, which fell to Italy in 1920 after the Treaty of Rapallo. This illustrates the respectful attitude towards the deceased on the part of both warring sides. The same, however, cannot be said of territories that were merged

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**3** One was placed on the grave of a sergeant by the name of Dezső Steiner (who fell on August 19, 1917) with an inscription in German and Arabic.

**4** For comparison: four Austro-Hungarian cemeteries of different sizes in the village of Brje na Krasu, whose shape was determined in part by the varied terrain configuration.

into the new country, i.e., the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The reason for this probably lies in the conflict of interest and the related renovation possibilities, because despite the War Cemeteries and Graves at Home and Abroad Act of 1920, the Kingdom of SCS did not take significant steps in that area. It was only between 1954 and 1974, and especially after 1980, that the conditions in the former Socialist Republic of Slovenia began to improve. At that time, the Office for the Protection of Monuments focused part of its activities on preserving this heritage and started working with other relevant institutions to meet the obligations of the Geneva Convention for the Protection of War Victims of 12 August, 1949 (war cemeteries, gravesites, and graves from the First World War, web resource).

In light of the aforementioned situation, the military cemeteries on Slovenian territories to the east of the former border, as was set in the Treaty of Rapallo, were not maintained with the same intensity as those to the west of the border. The equipment of these cemeteries, which were mostly in the deeper hinterlands of the Isonzo Front together with war hospitals, were generally not preserved nor updated. Typical examples of this are cemeteries in Bohinj on Reber Hill above Bohinjska Bistrica where the central monument to fallen soldiers from the First World War was not erected until 1945,



Fig. 6: Bohinjska Bistrica, Rebro Hill with an Austro-Hungarian war cemetery. Years ago, the white-painted wooden crosses with no roofs were replaced with wooden crosses in a natural hue with roofs, which raises the question of modern interpretation of tradition (photo: V. Hazler, January 13, 2019).

and the cemetery in Ukanec, which was in use between June 1915 and November 1917. A stone monument was erected there back then with a plaque that reads: “To the Heroes of Krn, the Defenders of Bohinj.” The monument also features a wooden cross on a stone pedestal with a built-in plaque saying: *Strangers before – now you have become brothers after graves have been dug for you here. May the*

*mountain sun shine on you, may the Bohinj Lake bring you peace!* and a wooden chapel with a belfry on top of the roof ridge.

Both cemeteries in Bohinj are well maintained, but have been callously updated in recent years with the placement of new, smoothly planed wooden crosses, protected with wood finishes and protective roofs, which is a deviation from the grave markings' original appearance. The gabble roofs especially stand out, as available sources attest



Fig. 7: Bohinjska Bistrica, Rebro Hill with an Austro-Hungarian war cemetery. The oval plaque is attached to the cross with two *spax* screws (photo: V. Hazler, January 13, 2019).

that former military cemeteries certainly did not have them. The oval (Rebro cemetery) and square (Ukanc cemetery) name plaques with modern iconography that are attached using industrially produced *spax* (sic!) screws are also completely new. According to available sources, no such examples have been recorded abroad. Only one exists in neighbouring Austria in the town of St. Michael in Upper Styria to the northeast of Graz, where the graves of a smaller military cemetery similarly have brown painted wooden crosses with gabble roofs placed on graves.

#### ORIGINALITY OF THE MEMORIAL MEANING OF TWO MONUMENTS

This article focuses on a smaller part of a more extensive body of research on the First World War heritage that encompasses multiple areas. The first area includes military cemeteries, gravesites, churches, chapels, and a mosque erected by the authorities during the war for the spiritual care of soldiers. The second area includes chapels, small chapels, and crosses that were put up by soldiers and their relatives to return home or to remember a fallen relative. The third area analyses

the monuments and memorial plaques that were mostly erected in the post-war years, some even after the Second World War (1941–1945), Slovenia's independence (1991), and on the occasions of the centennial of the beginning (2014) and the end of the First World War (2018). Altogether, the three areas encompass 524 units.

This article presents the problem of preserving the original appearance of such heritage using a few selected examples. Preserving originality wherever and as much as possible is one of the fundamental principles of contemporary conservation. For more reflection and encouragement, two examples of public monuments created in the 1920s are presented, in addition to examples mainly found in military cemeteries.

### GRAJSKA VAS

Erecting monuments and plaques has always garnered a response from the local inhabitants, preserving diverse written and pictorial material and even oral tradition. Some of the most notable events are documented in newspapers, especially in cases where the journalist was a local or was familiar with local goings-on.

Such attention was paid to the erection of a monument to those fallen in the First World War in Grajska vas in 1924 and its solemn unveiling, which was reported by the *Jutro* newspaper in the article titled *Grobovi tulijo*. The author is said to be Stanko Virant, a journalist and editor of that newspaper, and a local from the neighbouring village of Gomilsko.

The monument to fallen local soldiers in Grajska vas is one of the most extraordinary freestanding monuments of the First World War. The monument is about four metres high and stands in the very centre of the village, to the south of the north–south oriented of St Christopher's Succursal Church. Together with the church and the neighbouring farmsteads, it forms one of the most picturesque clustered villages in Slovenia, with active agricultural practices of cattle breeding and hop growing. The central structure of the village is obviously also reflected in the exemplary mutual help and cooperation even in the most difficult tasks, such as the construction of a monument to fallen locals in less than six years after the First World War.

Soon after the war ended, the inhabitants of Grajska vas founded a committee to erect a monument of their very own whose purpose was both to give thanks for the safe return from the war, and

to show respect to the fallen locals. Landowner Jernej Kunst assumed the role of president and treasurer of the preparation committee, and he was in charge of the monument's construction from initial preparations to the solemn unveiling.

The design for the monument was created by master bricklayer Ivan Basle (some sources cite him as Vasle), who envisaged it in the shape of a triangular column, on top of which was an open, three-sided hutch with a concrete roof and a cross above. In the open three-cornered hutch, a wooden sculpture is placed of St Martin and the Beggar by Celje native sculptor Miloš Hohnjec (Grajska vas – Spomenik padlim v prvi svetovni vojni, web resource).<sup>5</sup>

Marble plaques are affixed onto the lower triangular section of the monument, created by a stonecutting company from Celje. These plaques bear the divided inscription IN MEMORY OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS and the years 1914–1919 on all three sides, then three slabs of black marble below on each side, with nine names and dates of birth and death of the fallen soldiers inscribed.

The models for the concrete pours of individual parts of the monument were created by Martin Rajovec, and were such that the monument could be assembled gradually, piece by piece (Šmajdek, Grajska vas, web resource). Three cast-iron grenades are placed at a certain distance from the corners of the triangular monument.

The locals renovated this majestic monument years ago, protecting the open three-sided hutch with sculptures of Martin and the Beggar with transparent plexiglas.

The significance of the monument and its most recent renovation was covered in a review article by Marija Rančigaj in *Detel'ca*, the newsletter of the Gomilsko Cultural Society, titled *Grobovi tulijo ...*, which is a partial summary of Virant's article from 1924 (Rančigaj 2002: 17–9). In the article with the same title as the aforementioned one in the *Jutro* newspaper from 1924, the author describes all of the circumstances surrounding the creation and construction of the monument, listing numerous pieces of information she had gathered from locals and the Celje Historical Archives. She also described the event when one of the three iron grenades poured into the Ravne Steelworks in July 1924 for 1,435 dinars was stolen. The grenade was stolen by unknown persons years ago, which reduces the expressiveness of the monument; a suitable replacement for the grenade has not yet been found. Marija Rančigaj wrote in the newsletter: "I also spoke with Mr.

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5 Sculptor Miloš Hohnjec piqued the local women's attention both with the sculpture as well as his appearance (field notes V. Hazler, August 21, 1997).



Fig. 8: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher, in 1976 (photo: V. Hazler 1976).



Fig. 9: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher, in 2018 (photo: V. Hazler, September 29, 2018).



Fig. 10: Grajska vas, monument to the fallen in the First World War from 1924 next to the succursal church of St Christopher (photo: V. Hazler, September 29, 2018).

Milan Sušak, who went to great lengths to procure a replacement grenade from the Isonzo Front, but which needs considerable refurbishment. Unfortunately, its dimensions do not exactly match, as it originated from the Italian, not the Austrian side, and its diameter is 2 cm smaller” (Rančigaj 2002: 18–9).

Compared to the monument’s state in 1976, its appearance today is significantly better following renovation. The monument has been entirely reconstructed, including the area around it and the smaller park surrounding the church. However, the monument has one unnecessary addition that significantly mars the integrity of its appearance: the fact that the images of St Martin and the Beggar have been covered up with transparent plexiglas.

## ČRNUČE

The Črnuče District in Ljubljana has a monument to the fallen in the First World War by architect Ivan Vurnik (Ivan Vurnik – Pogled osebnosti, web resource) in front of the parish church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus from 1927. The monument is shaped like a Minoan column, with a pronounced cylindrical capital and Ionic volutes and crosses at the very top (Ljubljana – Spomenik pri cerkvi Simona in Jude Tadeja v Črnučah, web resource). A metal rim with four lanterns is placed under the capital with an inscription underneath: TO THE VICTIMS OF THE PLAGUE AND FAMINE IN THE PERIOD 1914–1918. The three sides of the capital have the names of 34 fallen soldiers along with the years of their birth and death inscribed in black letters. These were locals from the villages of Črnuče, Gmajna, Prod, Nadgorica, Podboršt, Dobrova, and Ježa.



Fig. 11: Črnuče in Ljubljana, monument to the fallen soldiers in the First World War in front of the church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus in 1927 (photo: unknown author, photograph provided by Janez Bogataj).



Fig. 12: Črnuče in Ljubljana, monument to the fallen soldiers in the First World War in front of the church of St Simon and Jude Thaddeus in 2019 (photo: V. Hazler, January 9, 2019).



Compared to its original appearance at the official inauguration in 1927, the monument today looks quite different, much more modest. The reason for this is the excessive filling of the terrain around the monument and up to the church. Originally, the surrounding terrain was up to 20 cm lower, which changed the appearance of the monument. It was once higher than the surrounding terrain, and a double concrete enclosure with iron bars, along with what appeared to be a chain and a decorative flower bed, gave the monument a more sombre appearance than it has today. It is very likely that the original letters of the text and the names of the soldiers were originally not black, but lighter, probably gilded. It seems that these changes do not bother anyone, because the older inhabitants of Črnuče do not remember the original appearance of the monument.

## EPILOGUE

The heritage of the First World War, as well as all other wars and their aftermath, is part of the shared, collective memory. This heritage is often connected to painful losses of loved ones, relatives, friends, or neighbours, even though over a century has passed since the tragic events. There are plenty of families in Slovenia for whom the memory of a deceased relative or friend is very much alive, so these memories must be nurtured and passed on from generation to generation. Monuments and plaques with no living personal or collective memory of these people and events are doomed to deteriorate soon. Along with them, the memory of all other similar events that have carved a painful memory into a nation's history must be preserved and nurtured.

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