

Yugoslav Monuments Associated with the First World War (1918–1941)

SYMPOSIUM

Ljubljana, 18–19 October 2018



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Partners: Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory, Moderna galerija



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On the cover: Edvard Ravnikar, *War Victims Ossuary*, 1939, Žale cemetery, Ljubljana, Slovenia; courtesy of: Marko Jenko

Yugoslav Monuments Associated with the First World War (1918–1941)

The First World War monuments produced in interwar Yugoslavia are today usually discussed separately, within the context of the successor state to which they belong. The symposium will attempt to present a picture of this production that is as comprehensive as possible, outlining not only the common features of these works but also their differences, which to a large degree were conditioned by very diverse local traditions of commemoration and memorial creation.

The second goal of the symposium is to consider how these monuments are inscribed with desires to strengthen a common Yugoslav identity, establish a collective imaginary, and develop a distinctive visual image of the young state. Yugoslavia faced considerable difficulties in this area, which were fostered not only by internal inter-ethnic and political tensions and a poorly thought-out state cultural policy, but also by the lack of unifying shared stories and memories. Because, before unification, the different peoples of Yugoslavia had often found themselves in opposing political camps, stories from the past could even be extremely divisive for the young state.

The creation of monuments dedicated to the achievements and to the fallen soldiers of the First World War was itself a problematic task: both victors and vanquished found themselves living in the same country, and the burial and commemoration of soldiers from both sides were happening simultaneously. Monuments normally tell us, directly and overtly, that the dead did not die in vain and the living embody the values for which they fought, but in Yugoslavia after the First World War such monuments were impossible. A sense of solidarity, whether sincere or pragmatic, constrained the victors, at least initially, from freely exulting in euphoric triumphalist narratives. And the vanquished were even more constrained, for what had happened was the very reverse of what they had been fighting for, and there was no possible way to rationalize the deaths of the many who had fallen in battle.

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The symposium is dedicated to Špelca Čopič (1922–2014), an expert and interpreter of Slovenian and Yugoslav sculpture and public monuments in the 20th century. On this occasion, we will also remember her with a commemorative display.

The symposium is affiliated with the international research project and exhibition *On the Brink: The Visual Arts in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1941)* due to open in spring 2019 at the Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art).

PROGRAM

Thursday, 18 October 2018

10.30 Introductions

Katja Mahnič (Head of the Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana)

Urška Jurman (Program Director of the Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory, Ljubljana)

Marko Jenko (Curator, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana)

The Production of Monuments Associated with the First World War in Different Parts of Yugoslavia

Moderated by Božidar Jezernik (Professor of Ethnology of the Balkans and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana) and Olga Manojlovič Pintar

11.00 Beti Žerovc: *The Development of Public Monuments on the Territory of Future Yugoslavia* (lecture in English)

11.30 Petra Svoljšak: *Stones of Memory: How and Why were the Memorials Built during the First World War – The Case of the Slovenian Territory and the Isonzo Front* (lecture in English)

12.30 Marko Štepec: *The Monuments to the First World War in Slovenia* (lecture in Slovenian)

13.00 Ljiljana Dobrovšak: *The Places of Memory of the First World War in Croatia* (lecture in Croatian)

13.30 Andrea Baotić-Rustanbegović: *The Monuments to the Victims of the First World War: Commemorative Practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (lecture in English)

15.00 Nenad Lajbenšperger: *The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Serbia without Provinces, in Vojvodina and Abroad* (lecture in English)

15.30 Danilo Šarenac: *The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro, and the Monuments to Foreign Soldiers in Serbia and Macedonia* (lecture in English)

16.00 Panel discussion with lecturers

17.00 Individual consultations with lecturers for students and monument researchers (applications in advance: info@igorzabel.org)

Friday, 19 October 2018

The Monuments in Service of the State

Moderated by Danilo Šarenac and Beti Žerovc

10.30 Olga Manojlović Pintar: *The Monuments to the Heroes and Victims of the First World War and the Remembrance Policy in Yugoslavia* (lecture in English)

11.00 Borut Klabjan: *Violence in Space: Marking the Border Space in the Northern Adriatic in the First Half of the 20th Century* (lecture in English)

11.30 Dalibor Prančević: *Ivan Meštrović and the First World War: An Artist's Path from Emigrant Activism to State Commissions* (lecture in English)

12.30 Barbara Vujanović: *Shaping the Nation: Interwar Monuments in the Context of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb* (lecture in English)

13.00 Aleksandar Ignjatović: *Yugoslavism through the Syntax of Classicism: The Memorials to the First World War in Belgrade and Ljubljana, 1931–1939* (lecture in English)

13.30 Panel discussion with the lecturers

15.00 Individual lecturer consultations for students and monuments researchers (applications in advance: info@igorzabel.org)

ABSTRACTS

BETI ŽEROVC

Public Monuments on the Territory of the Future Yugoslavia

The aim of this lecture is to survey the terrain from which sprang the Yugoslav production of monuments relating to the First World War. It first discusses the cultural and political connections among the South Slavic peoples from the late 19th century onwards, in particular, the role played by art and artists in these processes. The latter were able to become genuine icons for the newly conceived national communities, and, for either practical or purely ideological reasons they enlisted, through their work and activities, to political processes that, for example, criticized the Austrian national policy or even presented Yugoslavia as an already existing cultural fact. Meštrović was probably, among the artists of the future Yugoslavia, the most prominent proponent of Yugoslav ideology, skillfully satisfying both the international artistic system and the politically aroused communities in the Balkans.

Further on we will touch upon the great diversity among the different parts of the future state, which meant that their attitudes towards public monuments were also very diverse. In areas that belonged to Austria–Hungary, the presence of monuments was similar to that in other parts of Central Europe, where, towards the end of the century, a real wave of public civic monuments is given significant impetus by nationalism. That is to say, the proliferation of monuments is due in part to a nationalistic marking of territory by local populations, who by such gestures seek to underscore their presence, importance, worth, and even their superiority vis-à-vis other groups. In such an environment the monument was not only a physical fact, it also functioned as a »vehicle«, where everything, from its conception to its demolition, the very process of its installation, could represent an effective strategy and platform for the lawful and long-term precipitation of tensions, aggressive speech, and various events. Or inversely, it might calm these kind of tensions.

In the south-eastern part of the future country, monument production before unification developed somewhat differently and also more slowly. The Ottoman Empire withdrew from the Balkans gradually, and, for example, it was only after the hatt-i sharif, or edict, of 1830 that Serbia received, along with its autonomy, the right to erect monuments and other similar objects. In these regions, such production continued to be fundamentally defined by the presence of both the Ottoman and Eastern Orthodox traditions, which structured public space and glorified and commemorated important social events and figures differently than the Central and Western European traditions. Both the Ottoman and Eastern Orthodox traditions were at the same time very committed to painting, while the Ottoman tradition was also very reluctant towards figurative representation. The emergence of bourgeois civic monuments in this part of the country was also greatly stimulated by the politic and nationalist moments, and especially by the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbia, which was trying to declare itself as a modern European country both at home and abroad.

The conclusion will indicate how the production of public monuments in a new country was established on a systemic level and from where its mindset and artistic influences were originating. While the state did not have any serious cultural policy in this area, it was predominantly certain excellent authors, trained within former political frameworks who became its key creators and pedagogues. In Zagreb, which had the only Yugoslav art academy until 1937, there was a great sculptural professorial team, led by Ivan Meštrović. Ljubljana did not have a fine arts academy until 1945, but immediately after the war a quality architectural study opens, also dedicated to the monuments and marked by professors Ivan Vurnik and Jože Plečnik. Somewhat paradoxically they transpose into the new country traditions and knowledge of the previous political framework and thus, among other things, provide a quality monumental production that manages successfully with the aspects of multiethnicity and multiculturalism.

Beti Žerovc is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her areas of research are visual art and the art system since the mid-19th century, with a focus on their role in society. In 2018, Beti Žerovc coedited the publication *The Lives of Monuments: World War II and Public Monuments in Slovenia 1945–1980*. Her latest book *When Attitudes Become the Norm: The Contemporary Curator and Institutional Art* was published in 2015 and reprinted in 2018.



Stane Cuderman, Boris Kalin, *Monument to the Fallen in World War I*, 1939, Kamnik, Slovenia; source: www.kamra.si

Stones of Memory: How and Why were the Memorials Built during the First World War – The Case of the Slovenian Territory and the Isonzo Front

According to Nenad Lajbenšperger's definition, the stones of memory, i.e., the memorials of the First World War, can be categorized into war cemeteries, memorials and other buildings. The hypocrisy of war is reflected in the fact that, on the one hand, it brought about mass destruction, including of cultural heritage, and on the other hand, gave rise to many outstanding monuments, which are not only the stones of memory, but also places of reflection.

The most powerful and numerous are certainly the war cemeteries. Along the former Isonzo front one finds roughly sixty Austro-Hungarian and three (post-war) Italian charnel houses, all a direct consequence of conflict and death on a massive scale. These cemeteries are not the only reflection of the need to remember. The soldiers often marked their presence with numerous inscriptions on plaques or monuments to regiments. Due to the harsh conditions during wartime the soldiers were in need of consolation, finding it in faith and religious rituals, next to altars in chapels and churches. One of the most striking such places is certainly the Church of the Holy Spirit in Javorca, built by the soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Third Alpine Brigade in 1916, following the design of the Viennese architect Remigius Geyling. That same year, the Russian prisoners of war built a chapel on the slopes of the Vršič Pass to commemorate their comrades who died in an avalanche that March.

Cemeteries, monuments and other monumental witnesses to the war had to reflect the sacrifice and heroism of the fallen, but they also had to abide by certain standards in the use of materials and subjects. One way to do this was to follow certain examples of monuments, cemetery entrances and gravestones in order to properly honor the heroes who had sacrificed their lives for their countries.

Petra Svoljšak is a Research Counselor at the Milko Kos Historical Institute, which is part of the Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana. She is also an Associate Professor of Cultural History at the University of Nova Gorica. Her research interests are the period of World War I and its vicissitudes on Slovenian soil, i. e., refugees, the role of women, the relations between the military and the civilian spheres, war demography, etc. Petra Svoljšak is also interested in the Slovene memorial landscape and the transformation processes of memorializing World War I.

Monument to the 20th Rifle Regiment, Panovec near Nova Gorica, Slovenia; courtesy of: Egon Valantič collection

Austro-Hungarian military cemetery in Gorjansko, Slovenia; courtesy of: Ciril Prestor Archive, ZRC SAZU



The desire to preserve the memory of the fallen soldiers and, on a smaller scale, the memory of the civilian casualties, arose already during the war. Many cemeteries with monuments to fallen soldiers were thus created behind the Isonzo Front. However, many plans for such monuments, which were closely connected to various ways of making sense of the huge number of deaths on the battlefields, as well as the planned museum presentations on the war, were interrupted by the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and changing attitudes toward old values.

In the newly-founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes the people had different, even opposing experiences of the war that made a collectively shared memory difficult to establish. This influenced attitudes toward the cultural, historical and memorial legacy of the war, and toward the new monuments to the fallen soldiers of the now defunct Austro-Hungarian army. Furthermore, the memorial topography of the fallen soldiers that were drafted on Slovenian soil did not geographically overlap with the borders of the new state. The Isonzo Front thus remained excluded from the public memory, just as much as its material legacy, together with the now destroyed military frontier, remained outside the lines of the new state.

After the war, the friends and relatives of the deceased, war veterans and local people attached commemorative plaques and erected monuments to the fallen. The interwar years consequently saw the creation of a large number of memorials that were designed by architects, sculptors and stonemasons, showing an array of different stylistic influences and local particularities. However, despite the vast number of monuments, the memory of the fallen soldiers, of those who died in prisoner or refugee camps, and the multi-faceted nature of their wartime experiences, remained marginal, removed from textbooks and official commemorations, unrecognized as being an integral part of the state and national identity. Their public significance was later completely overshadowed by the Second World War, and after this they fell into even deeper neglect in the new socialist state.

On the basis of chosen examples and the documentation that was assembled during the preparations for the museum project on WWI memorial topography in Slovenia, the lecture will present the related preserved, changed and damaged memorial heritage, its characteristics and the different possibilities of interpreting it—the possibilities offered to us by this heritage, its data, forms and images in stone.

Marko Štepec is a historian, Museum Counselor and the head of the Curatorial Department at the Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, where he is also in charge of the collections. His main focus is the period of World War I. He curated several exhibitions, wrote screenplays for documentary films, articles and publications on World War I, the 20th century and its cultural history. He is currently researching the everyday life of soldiers and civilians during wartime and the memorial landscape.



Inauguration of the *Monument to the Fallen Soldiers of the 17th Infantry Regiment*, designed by Svetoslav Peruzzi and Lojze Dolinar, in 1923 at the Ljubljana cemetery; courtesy of: Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (*Slovenec Archive*)

Construction of the monument to the fallen soldiers in Vojnik, Slovenia (finished in 1920); courtesy of: Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (*Slovenec Archive*)



Until recently it was commonly believed that the newly-established political climate in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, impeded the construction of monuments and memorials to soldiers that died fighting for Austria-Hungary. I will prove that this is a belief with little or no basis in reality. While it is true that some of these memorials were removed from public spaces, the majority of these were in fact erected in honor of the Emperor and King Franz Joseph, the Austro-Hungarian state and the Austro-Hungarian army.

I have divided the remaining places of memory in Croatia into the following categories: war cemeteries, public monuments–memorials to those that died in the war, individual gravestones, cenotaphs, ossuaries, mausoleums, memorial plaques, photo panels and crossroad crucifixes. War cemeteries were built next to civilian and military hospitals throughout Croatia (e.g., at Bjelovar, Pakrac, Vukovar-Bršadin, Vinkovci, Ilok, Požega, and Slavonski Brod). Today, the remains of these cemeteries exist only in Zagreb, Osijek, Karlovac, Našice, Pula and Sisak. War memorials from this time can be found in Dubrovnik, Korčula, Karlovac, Ogulin, Otočac, Sisak, Sušak and Varaždin. Most of the monuments were later destroyed and today no longer exist.

Moreover, many of these monuments and memorials were erected after the end of the war. They were sometimes built in public spaces, in town squares, parks or next to parish churches, but most often appeared in local cemeteries. We have information about some of the initiators of these projects, the circumstances in which some were built, and the identities of some of the authors. For the most part, however, we have no information. The majority of the monuments or memorials were crosses, sculptures, and obelisks with lists of victims' names, or they were simple memorials with the inscription 1914–1918, obviously referring to the First World War. To the best of my knowledge, memorials that were built after the war ended and that honored the war victims include those in Zagreb, Pakrac, Dol (on Hvar), Gola, Jarmina, Varaždin, Čakovec, Šemovci (near Virje), Đurđevac, Gospić, and Koprivnički Ivanec. The memorials erected during the interwar period are dedicated to all victims regardless of nationality or religion. However, there are also examples that prove this was not always the case. For example, a cenotaph dedicated to local Germans who died in the war was erected in Krndija (1926). In Križevci (1935), Koprivnica (1934), Zagreb (1930) and Slavonski Brod (?) we find monuments to fallen Jews.

Photo panels are another form of memorial. Such panels were placed in Đakovo, Nuštar, Vinkovci, Koprivnica and Koprivnički Ivanec. Other communities produced metal plaques with the names of fallen parishioners and locals. Most of these were placed on the inside walls of churches, but some were also placed on the outside (e.g., at Šestine, Našice, Karlovac, and Varaždinske Toplice). Smaller villages and individual citizens put up crucifixes at crossroads, usually in front of churches or in cemeteries (as seen in Čazma, Milaševac, Bosiljevo, Dragičevci, Vučani, Dubrovčan, and Šemovci).

The neglect and even destruction of graves, cemeteries, memorials and monuments from the First World War became commonplace after 1945. The restoration of the old

First World War memorials and the construction of new ones in Croatia began only a few years ago, and such activities have mostly been related to the centenary of the war.

Ljiljana Dobrovšak is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb. Her areas of interest are the history of minorities, the history of Jews in Croatia, and World War I in general. She is currently focused on the transformation processes of memorializing World War I. She is also the head of two research projects in Zagreb: *World Memorial Heritage of World War I* and *Croatian Historical Memorial Heritage of World War I – Immovable Cultural Property in Northern Croatia*.

Monument to the Fallen Jews, 1930, Mirogoj cemetery, Zagreb, Croatia;
courtesy of: Filip Hameršak

Monument to the Fallen, 1921, Žrnovo, Prvo selo on Korčula, Croatia;
courtesy of: Mladen Klemenčić





1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

1921

The Monuments to the Victims of the First World War: Commemorative Practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As in many other countries, the commemorative practices that resulted in memorials were directly conditioned by the complex and changing social circumstances in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the first half of the 20th century. The question of building monuments as a means of “memory placement”, as a legitimization of political ideologies or as the presentation of the power of the ruling structures, turned out to be problematic as soon as Bosnia and Herzegovina fell under the governance of Austria-Hungary by the end of the 19th century. In a country with a religiously and ethnically divided population, and opposing political visions, it was difficult to find common values which could then be expressed by monuments. The commemorative practices also changed with every new political system that arose. The same holds for memorials that were built in remembrance of the victims of the First World War.

The first monuments, built between 1914 and 1918, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was still under Austro-Hungarian rule, commemorated the soldiers that died “for the emperor and the homeland”, and were used for the proclamation of loyalty to the Habsburgs. As soon as the war ended and Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), these monuments were removed as “signs of the old regime”. Their place was taken by the new monuments, focused not only on military casualties, but also on civilian ones, emphasizing the sacrifices that were made for the “liberation and unification” of the South Slavs under the Karadjordjevic dynasty. After 1941, these monuments were damaged due to neglect or acts of active destruction.

Monuments that commemorated the victims of WWI, both before and after 1918, served the purpose of constructing and legitimizing different and mutually exclusive national identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will therefore examine how the visual means used with these structures met that particular purpose. Apart from the typological and formal or stylistic characteristics of these monuments, I will also focus on the placement, content and narratives that followed their unveiling.

Andrea Baotić-Rustanbegović worked as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Art History of the Faculty of Arts in Sarajevo between 2007 and 2018. Her main research focus is art in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially historicism and orientalism in public space. In 2018, she received her PhD from the Department of Art History of the University of Zagreb with her thesis *Sculpture in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Austro-Hungarian Rule 1878–1918*.



Jovan Dučić, Angel on the monument *To the Heroes for Freedom*, 1938, Trebinje Town Square, Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina; courtesy of: Tourist Organization of Trebinje

Josip Urbanija, The Dying Lion, 1916, Lav cemetery on Koševo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; courtesy of: Andrea Baotić-Rustanbegović



The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Serbia without Provinces, in Vojvodina and Abroad

The memorials dedicated to fallen soldiers and civilians of the First World War in Serbia were memorial plaques, monuments and/or ossuaries. Memorial plaques were usually on church walls. These displayed the names of fallen soldiers and sometimes even had sculptural elements. Monuments had various shapes, yet we can still categorize them into pyramids, obelisks, and pillars, as well as monuments with a figure of a soldier on top. Monuments could be inscribed with the names of fallen soldiers, figures of eagles or coats of arms. Memorial plaques and monuments were dedicated to soldiers from specific cities or areas. The remains of soldiers that died on the battlefield or of civilians that were killed by the occupying forces were gathered in ossuaries, usually constructed on or near the related battlefields. They were topped with churches, chapels or monuments, which were designed by some of the most prominent Serbian and Yugoslav sculptors (such as Ivan Meštrović and Antun Augustinčić) and architects (including Momir Korunović and Petar Popović, Ivan Rik). The works of Russian emigrants, of architects such as Nikolay Krasnov, Vasilij Androsov and Roman Verhovskoy, are also very important in this context.

Many men from the territory of the present-day Serbian province of Vojvodina volunteered for the Serbian army in the First World War. The Serbian population in Vojvodina was violently oppressed. While many memorials were erected to the soldiers and civilians who were killed, they were usually modest and in different shapes, with or without the names of the victims. A small number of monuments for soldiers from this area serving in the Austro-Hungarian army were also built.

The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or Yugoslavia also erected memorials to their soldiers that died abroad – in hospitals on Greek or French territories, during battles on the Salonica (Macedonian) front, or in captivity. Most of these memorials were ossuaries, designed in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or Yugoslavia, or in the states in which they were erected.

Nenad Lajbenšperger works at the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Belgrade, focusing on the preservation of war memorials. His area of research is thus predominantly war memorials, especially those from the first half of the 20th century. He also researches commemorative practices and the role of war victims in the political life of former Yugoslavia.



Author unknown, *Monument to the Kovilj Volunteers*, 1924, Kovilj, Serbia;
courtesy of: Nenad Lajbenšperger

Sergije Bagenski, *Ossuary on the mountain Cer*, 1927–1928, Tekeriš, Serbia;
courtesy of: Nenad Lajbenšperger



DANILO ŠARENAC

The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro, and the Monuments to Foreign Soldiers in Serbia and Macedonia

In geographical terms, Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro can be perceived as on the relative periphery of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, due to the fact that these lands had a huge symbolic importance within the Yugoslav ideology, the monuments built in these parts of the state offer an excellent possibility for studying various layers of Yugoslavia's approach to the 1912-1918 commemorations. The examples of memorials in these three historical regions show that it was impossible to separate the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) from the next war, the Great War.

Furthermore, these memorials were not only built in honor of the fallen, they also testify to the intentions of the Serbian elite to strengthen ties with the regions that had only recently been united with Serbia. Macedonia, one of the most troubled among the Yugoslav regions, became the site of some of the most representative Yugoslav war memorials. These include two monuments in Skopje: the *Temple of Glory* (1934) and the *Monument to the Fallen Student Combattants* (1935). Finally, in 1937, the Zebrnjak memorial was built near Kumanovo.

These three geographical areas are also of a special commemorative interest due to the number of small war memorials and cemeteries. These landmarks were constructed immediately after the battles and under the direction of local Serbian military commanders, who acted independently and in an *ad hoc* manner. The war memorials in Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro show how the Yugoslav commemorative policy stretched in various directions, striving to achieve multiple tasks. Regardless of whether these memorials are large or small, or whether they were commissioned by the army or members of the local elite, they all reflect the immense legacy of the 1912-1918 turmoil, as well as the interwar complexities of the Yugoslav state.

Danilo Šarenac is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade. His research focus are the social and cultural impacts of World War I in Southeastern and Central Europe, the history of violence, technology and the culture of memory. He is currently involved in the international project *Roma Interbellum*, which aims to reconstruct the interwar status of the Roma in Europe.

Vladimir Dević, *Memorial Ossuary of Dolno Karaslare*, 1929, Dolno Karaslare, Macedonia; courtesy of: Nenad Lajbenšperger

Inauguration of the now partly destroyed *Monument to the Fallen in the Kumanovo Battle* (1937) on Zebrnjak, designed by Momir Korunović; source: www.wikimedia.com





The Monuments to the Heroes and Victims of the First World War and the Remembrance Policy in Yugoslavia

Over the last four years, the European public space has been full of symbols and images commemorating the First World War. The centenary of the Sarajevo assassination opened a new chapter in the perception of the war (its preconditions, causes, military losses and civilian suffering) and re-examined the global political realities that were set after the Paris Peace Conference. The academic and political revisions of WWI and its legacy have inevitably influenced contemporary European identity, which is supposed to transcend the century-long confrontations between the defeated and victorious European nations in the Great War.

These new perspectives also shed a light on the new Yugoslav post-war state as being one of the pillars of the “Versailles system”. It became a paradigmatic example of how the symbolism of the war victims, heroes and of “making sense of the war” was (mis)used in the creation of the founding myth of the new Yugoslav society. The specific Yugoslav “monumentomania” thus appears as one of the most intriguing research topics in this context.

How did the Yugoslav state institutions direct the activities of the construction of WWI monuments? To what extent were these actions influenced by local and regional traditions of commemorating the dead and who were the main memory agents in this complex process? To what degree were the monuments to war heroes and martyrs reflections of wider European practices? In order to answer these questions one needs to analyze the two-way relationship between the official state bodies (such as the ministries of religion, culture and the Court Office) and the numerous social groups that cherished, constructed and spread the memories of the fallen soldiers and civilians (war veterans’ associations, womens’ and cultural organizations, and so on).

In my presentation I will therefore explore the (unsuccessful) process of the official policies of history creation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. By analyzing its specifics (and by tracing its similarities) I will compare and contrast the ways of commemorating in Yugoslavia with various European examples from the interwar period.

Olga Manojlović Pintar is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Recent History of Serbia in Belgrade. She has published numerous articles and edited two collective volumes: *History and Memory, Studies of the Historical Consciousness* (Belgrade 2005) and *Tito: Visions and Interpretations* (Belgrade 2011). She is the author of *The Archaeology of Memory: Monuments and Identities in Serbia 1918–1989* (Belgrade 2014).



Anton Augustinčić, *Monument to King Peter and King Alexander Karadjordjevic*, 1937, destroyed, Skopje, Macedonia; source: www.europeana.eu

King Alexander and Queen Marija, wearing the national Slovene costume, at the inauguration of the monument to King Peter in Kranj in 1926; courtesy of: Gorenjski muzej



BORUT KLABJAN

Violence in Space: Marking the Border Space in the Northern Adriatic in the First Half of the 20th Century

In the lecture I will discuss some questions that deal with the ideological markings of space through the architectural transformations of the cultural landscape, memorials and commemorative practices connected to them in the region of Trieste, the Slovene Littoral, Istria and Venezia-Giulia. These areas were all hit by the Isonzo Front and went through a change of rule, from Austria-Hungary to Italy.

My analysis will be mostly focused on the way slogans and notions of Italian fascism and irredentism became embodied in the space of the newly annexed areas, defined as “liberated territories” (*terre redente*) during the interwar period. My examples will include the so-called Victory Lighthouse, the tallest lighthouse in the Adriatic, built in 1927 as the symbol of the victory over Austria-Hungary; the university in Trieste that the Italian nationalists called the “fortress” of the Italian civilization; the Park of Remembrance that they constructed next to the castle of St Just and the cathedral in 1935; and finally the monument to the irredentist martyr Nazario Sauro in Koper. My explanation will hopefully contribute to the understanding of the role of the representation of the past and to the reinterpretation of different politics that had violently forced themselves upon the borderline regions of the northern Adriatic.

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Crowds on the Oberdan Square in Trieste, Italy, in front of the Fighter House (Casa del combattente), designed by the architect Umberto Nordio, 1930s; courtesy of: Photo Archive of the Musei civici Trieste

Arduino Berlam, *Victory Lighthouse*, 1927, Trieste, Italy;
courtesy of: Photo Archive of the Musei civici Trieste



Ivan Meštrović and the First World War: An Artist's Path from Emigrant Activism to State Commissions

Some of the most relevant monuments in the interwar period, such as the *Monument to an Unknown Hero* on Avala or the *Monument of Gratitude to France*, were the work of the prominent sculptor Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962). His urge to commemorate had been obvious since his monumental – yet unrealized – project *The Vidovdan Temple*, and was further motivated by the birth of a new state and its desire to commemorate the casualties of WWI. This can be clearly witnessed in *The Canadian Memorial* and the aforementioned projects.

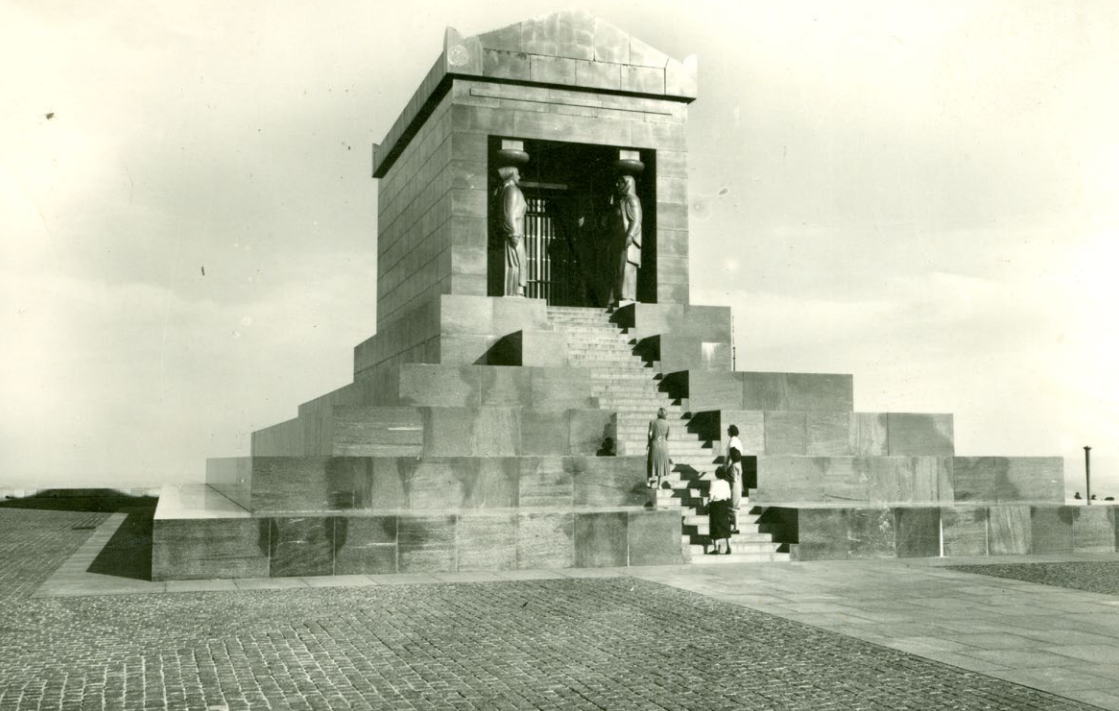
Interestingly, almost all of these memorial projects draw on past sculptural practices, particularly those of ancient civilizations, yet also the Gothic ideals of “the collective” behind the building of cathedrals. As his projects attest, Meštrović did not shy away from archaic stylistic forms, i. e., the forms “borrowed” from art-historical repositories, especially in the period when he articulated the archaic, pseudo-historical narrative of the *Vidovdan temple*, which he put into service of his own political activism during World War I, also prompted by the unification of the South Slavs. This project betrays a grand structure: an architectural amalgam comprised of forms of various historical origins, though still not entirely appropriated in sculpture. However, the more compact projects, albeit much smaller in size and of entirely different functions and historico-political frameworks, also instigated by his studies of artistic heritage, were realized later in the interwar period through Meštrović's monuments that were erected in Belgrade. These recurring forms are not accidental, since their function is the visual representation of the unification of the South Slavs (which particularly holds for the *Monument to an Unknown Hero* on Avala), appearing at a time of entirely different socio-political circumstances, marked by both global and local rifts and crises.

This paper will analyse Meštrović's artistic “journey”, which underwent many changes and occurred in different socio-political contexts.

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Ivan Meštrović, *Monument of Gratitude to France*, 1930, Belgrade, Serbia; courtesy of: Archive of the Ivan Meštrović Gallery Split, Ivan Meštrović Museums

Ivan Meštrović, *Monument to an Unknown Hero on Avala*, 1934–1938, Belgrade, Serbia; courtesy of: Archive of the Ivan Meštrović Gallery Split, Ivan Meštrović Museums



BARBARA VUJANOVIĆ

Shaping the Nation: Interwar Monuments in the Context of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb

The interwar period in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is marked by a large scale production of monuments, celebrating and proclaiming both the new post-war identity and its history. The majority of these memorial projects were the work of the Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović. Taking into consideration his role as professor and rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, I shall first inspect the production of his predecessor, the Croatian sculptor Robert Frangeš Mihanović, and that of Meštrović's students, the young generation of Croatian and Slovene sculptors. I will also include the artists that were influenced by his style in order to analyze Meštrović's impact and grasp the possibility of defining the specific features that could be linked to the role of the Academy of Fine Arts, the central institution of its kind in the state.

Ivan Meštrović not only reformed the Academy's educational system, he also set a new course for public sculpture, mainly in terms of monumental classicism, which was particularly useful as a platform for various historical and regime subjects. The newest features of the monuments were also religious motifs, which corresponded nicely with Meštrović's style.

Meštrović's influence spread through his classes and own studio, organized according to his ideal of a Renaissance workshop. While working on Meštrović's major projects, his students not only gained the practical knowledge which was essential for their own future work, but also accepted some of his values that were further developed within their own styles. The influence of the Zagreb Academy, thanks to Meštrović and his student Antun Augustinčić, who later took over Meštrović's role of the regime artist, spread outside the borders of Yugoslavia. This confirms the Academy's international relevance, something that was re-confirmed during socialist Yugoslavia.

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Inauguration of the monument to King Alexander I by Antun Augustinčić in Sombor in 1940; courtesy of: City Museum Sombor, Serbia

Postcard issued on the occasion of the inauguration of the monument to King Alexander I by Antun Augustinčić in Sombor in 1940; courtesy of: City Museum Sombor, Serbia





Lojze Dolinar, *Monument to the Fallen Student Combattants*, 1935, destroyed, Skopje, Macedonia; courtesy of: Moderna galerija

Yugoslavism through the Syntax of Classicism: The Memorials to the First World War in Belgrade and Ljubljana, 1931–1939

Contrary to the idea that classical forms typically refer to the universal and invariable, as well as the oversimplified identification of classicism with cultural conservatism that supposedly went hand in hand with the political authoritarianism of the 1920s and 1930s, the position of classical architecture in interwar Europe was much more complex. This is perhaps best witnessed in numerous monuments and memorials to WWI, which are distinguished not only by the diversity of ways in which architects and artists experimented with the classical language of forms, but also by their social and political connotations.

Unlike most countries, both newly established after the First World War and old nation-states, the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) had its own ideological *raison d'être* in the idea of a simultaneously composite and primordial nation. The ideology of Yugoslavism was a complex set of ideas referring to the multi-ethnic community of Yugoslavs — sharply divided not only by culture, but also by their experiences in the Great War — seeking a cohesive national culture. The idea of a single, primordial nation, united by common descent and future prospects, was based on the mythologization of the people's original unity, as well as the obliteration of cultural, religious and, most importantly, political differences. In this respect, the symbolic legacy of classicism had much to offer to the cultural imagination of Yugoslavism. From Roman Verhovskoy's *Monument and Crypt to the Defenders of Belgrade* (1931) or the nearby *Memorial to the Russian Soldiers Fallen in the War* (1934), Ivan Meštrović's *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* (1934-1938) to Edvard Ravnikar's *War Victims Ossuary* (1937-1939), the classicizing vocabulary of the state-sponsored monuments referred not only to the great synthetic ideas like victimhood and patriotism, but also connoted a nostalgia for an integrated community in a country deeply divided by the traumatic experience of the Great War. At the same time, the universalistic overtones and cultural legacy of this politically employed classicism corresponded to the ongoing supra-ethnic imagination of the Yugoslav nation and its common ancient Greek and Roman legacy, which preoccupied the Yugoslav elites.

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Edvard Ravnikar, *War Victims Ossuary*, 1939, Žale cemetery, Ljubljana, Slovenia;
courtesy of: Marko Jenko