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Establishing National Identity in Public Space

Public Monuments in Slovenia and Serbia
in the Nineteenth Century

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Public Monuments in Sacred Space

Memorial Tombs as National Monuments in Nineteenth Century Serbia

Ana Kostić

During the nineteenth century, the practice of erecting public monuments was in full swing all over Europe.¹ Although this practice had been present since ancient times, it reached its peak in the nineteenth century. In Serbia, the origins of the establishment of memorial culture can be found at the end of the eighteenth century, in the ideas and writings of Serbian philosopher Dositej Obradović (1744–1811), who adopted the Enlightenment's practice of memorializing remarkable men in cultural life.² The origins of nineteenth-century Serbian memorial culture can be found in contemporary magazines and newspapers,³ through which the Serbian public was informed about the contemporary processes of memorializing war heroes, important events and famous monuments erected all over Europe and Russia.⁴ During the nineteenth century, memorial practice was embraced in Serbia by students and intellectuals who became familiar with contemporary trends in the capitals of Europe.⁵

The chronology of adopting ideas for the erection of memorials in Serbian culture shows that this process reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In this period two general types of Serbian national monument can be differentiated. The first one comprises constructions from the past, pieces of cultural heritage that have become monuments of national culture, such as old churches and monasteries.⁶ The second type refers to monuments that were erected, dedicated to, or intended to commemorate national war heroes, heroes from political, religious and cultural life or important historical events. The form of these monuments is not the most important factor that defines them as public national monuments; thus they can take various

¹ Tomas NIPPERDEY, Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 206/3, 1968, pp. 529–585; Kathrin HOFFMAN-CURTIUS, Das Kreuz als Nationaldenkmal. Deutschland 1814 und 1931, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 1, 1985, pp. 77–100; Hans Ernst MITTIG, Das Denkmal, *Kunst. Die Geschichte ihrer Funktion* (eds. Werner Busch, Peter Schmook), Weinheim-Berlin 1987, pp. 457–489; Lars BERGGREN, The 'Monumentomaia' of the Nineteenth Century. Causes, Effects and Problem of Study, *Memory and Oblivion* (eds. Wessel Reinink, Jereon Stumpel), Proceedings of the XXIXth International Conference of the History of Art, Amsterdam 1–7 September 1996, Dordrecht 1999, pp. 561–566.

² *Domaća pisma Dositeja Obradovića*, Beograd-Zagreb 1899, p. 18; Nenad MAKULJEVIĆ, *Umetnost i nacionalna ideja u XIX veku*, Beograd 2006, p. 275; Nenad MAKULJEVIĆ, Public Monuments, Memorial Churches and the Creation of Serbian National Identity in the 19th Century, *Balkan Memories. Media Constructions of National and Transnational History* (ed. Tanja Zimmermann), Bielefeld 2012, p. 33.

³ *Novine Serbske*, 15, 21. 1. 1815, fototipsko izdanje, 6, Beograd-Novi Sad 1984, pp. 57–58; Pamjatnici u Slavenskim zemljama, *Serbske letopisi*, 5, 1826, pp. 119–120; *Nova iskra*, 4, 1899, p. 63.

⁴ MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 276.

⁵ Dušan IVANIĆ, *Memoarska proza XVIII. i XIX. veka*, Beograd 1989, pp. 273–288; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 277.

⁶ Miroslav TIMOTIJEVIĆ, Heroj pera kao putnik. Tipološka geneza javnih nacionalnih spomenika u Srbiji i Valdecova skulptura Dositeja Obradovića, *Nasledje*, 3, 2001, p. 39; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 275; MAKULJEVIĆ 2012 (n. 2), p. 33.

forms, such as memorial tombs, memorial churches, memorial houses, memorial schools, artificial nature, and historical sites.⁷

One of the most important forms of national public monument erected in Serbia during the nineteenth century originates from funeral culture, and consists of a form of memorial tomb. The graves of national heroes were the most important points of memory and active factors in the construction of Serbian national identity during the nineteenth century.⁸

One of the oldest forms of preserving the memory of important members of the community was by marking their graves. In religious culture, burial places have had memorial value since the earliest times. During certain religious ceremonies, the memory of the deceased renewed, so burial places became centres of the posthumous cult of the departed.⁹ The practice of marking the graves of national heroes in Serbian culture was subordinated to the life style and tradition in the Ottoman Empire (15th to 19th century). During the Ottoman Empire, the idea of commemorating national heroes was based on traditional practices of marking the tombs of distinguished people with relevant inscriptions and placing them in designated sacral spaces – in church interiors and churchyards.¹⁰ Such customs had their origins in the Middle Ages and in the ideology of emphasizing the tombs of rulers and religious leaders.¹¹ The transformation of graves into national monuments during the nineteenth century was also influenced by the cults of Serbian saints, who, in the previous centuries, had had strong pro-national characteristics.¹² The traditional Orthodox following of such cults believed in honouring the relics of saints, thus making the reliquaries and saint's tombs objects of utmost importance to the Serbian people. Believing in the importance and saint-like values of national heroes, sacralising them and honouring them along with Christian saints, was most likely the influence that transformed the old burial customs into a nationalistic culture of commemoration.¹³

The Orthodox Church in Nineteenth Century Serbia as a Public, National and Memorial Space

During the nineteenth century, memorial tombs were erected as national monuments for war heroes and heroes of cultural, political and religious life. Following the Christian tradition, many of them

⁷ NIPPERDEY 1968 (n. 1) pp. 529–581; on public monuments in Serbia in the nineteenth century see Desimir TOŠIĆ, *Ideje i rasprave o Karađorđevom spomeniku u dokumentima srpske štampe 1857. godine*, *Godišnjak Muzeja grada Beograda*, 32, 1985, pp. 125–165; TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2001 (n. 6), pp. 39–55; Miroslav TIMOTIJEVIĆ, *Mit o nacionalnom heroju spasitelju i podizanje spomenika knezu Mihailu M. Obrenoviću III*, *Nasledje*, 4, 2002, pp. 45–577; Igor BOROZAN, *Reprezentativna kultura i politička propaganda. Spomenik knezu Milošu u Negotinu*, Beograd 2006; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 274–5308; MAKULJEVIĆ 2012 (n. 2), p. 34.

⁸ MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 278.

⁹ Lazar MIRKOVIĆ, *Pravoslavna liturgika ili nauka o bogoslužjenju pravoslavne istočne crkve*, 1, Beograd 1995, pp. 114–115; Miroslav TIMOTIJEVIĆ, *Manastir Krušedol*, 2, Beograd 2008, p. 106.

¹⁰ MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 278.

¹¹ Erwin PANOFKY, *Tomb Sculpture. Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, London 1964; Danica POPOVIĆ, *Srpski vladarski grob u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1992.

¹² MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), pp. 278–279.

¹³ For more on the connection between Christianity and National ideas see Anthony D. SMITH, *Chosen peoples. Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford 2003; for more on emphasizing the holiness of national heroes see NIPPERDEY 1968 (n. 1), pp. 546–551; Ol'ga Vladislavovna BELOVA, «Kosti Velikanov» kak relikvii «Narodnogo Christianstva», *Vostočnochristianskie relikvii* (ed. Aleksej M. Lidov), Moskva 2003, pp. 638–646; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), pp. 278–279.

were placed in sacred spaces, i.e. church interiors and churchyards. The association of graves with sacred space is an old Christian tradition, which has its own symbolical, eschatological and soteriological significance.¹⁴ In Christian belief, the proximity of a burial ground to a church is very important. For one to be buried close to a church was seen as the chance to bring one's soul to the centre of that sacred place from which, metaphorically speaking, God's kindness spreads in wave-like ripples over the deceased. Furthermore, to be buried in the area bathed by the first "ripples of the wave", the very central area of the church or the churchyard, carried the utmost honour.¹⁵ Such honour was reserved for the burials of those who were notable in society, high-ranking members of the community, rulers and members of their family, war heroes and heroes of the cultural, religious and political life of the nation. In nineteenth-century church interiors, graves were placed in the west wing of the church: the western part of the nave or in the narthex. In addition to other uses, this area has had a funeral function in Orthodox churches since the Middle Ages.¹⁶ Since those times, the position of a burial space in a church has been clearly defined and stems from beliefs closely related to the hierarchy of church space. From a symbolical aspect of sacred spaces, the narthex was the least significant.¹⁷ From the nineteenth century onwards, the tradition of burials in the west part of the church continued and has become accepted and used as the norm. During the nineteenth century, following the customs of earlier times, monastic grounds and churchyards were used as cemeteries.¹⁸ Within them, the graves of prominent members of the community were, most often, distinctly marked by a clear separation between the spaces or by tomb decorations.¹⁹

During the nineteenth century, the practice of erecting national public monuments within aforementioned sacred spaces was supported because, at the time, the Orthodox Church in Serbia was seen not only as a religious but also as a public, national and memorial space.²⁰ This status was achieved because of the Orthodox Church's importance in nineteenth-century Serbia. The relationship between the church and the state took shape throughout history, going back as far as the Serbian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire in the period of 1804–1815, when freedom of religion and the establishment of a national religious organization became one of the main aims.²¹ Following the establishment of the Principality of Serbia (1830–1882), the close relation between the church and the state grew throughout the century. The state supported the development of the church, which resulted

¹⁴ MIRKOVIĆ 1995 (n. 9), pp. 114–115.

¹⁵ Filip ARIJES, *Eseji o istoriji smrti na zapadu. Od srednjeg veka do naših dana*, Beograd 1989, pp. 154–156 (original: Philippe Ariès, *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en occident*, Paris 1977); Igor BOROZAN, *Kultura smrti u srpskoj građanskoj kulturi 19. i prvim decenijama 20. veka, Privatni život kod Srba u XIX. veku* (ur. Nenad Makuljević, Ana Stolić), Beograd 2006, pp. 948–949.

¹⁶ POPOVIĆ 1992 (n. 11), p. 176.

¹⁷ POPOVIĆ 1992 (n. 11), p. 176.

¹⁸ Nikola DUDIĆ, *Stara groblja i nadgrobni belezi u Srbiji*, Beograd 1995, pp. 9–61; MIRKOVIĆ 1995 (n. 9), pp. 114–115; Jelena ERDELJAN, *Srednjovekovni nadgrobni spomenici u oblasti Rasa*, Beograd 1996, pp. 140–144; Nenad MAKULJEVIĆ, *Održavanje i obnova vere. Pravoslavni hramovi u Gornjem Polimlju tokom novog veka, Mileševski zapisi*, 7, 2007, pp. 157–158.

¹⁹ MAKULJEVIĆ 2007 (n. 18), pp. 158–159.

²⁰ For more about church in nineteenth century as public, national institution see Aleksandar KADIJEVIĆ, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi*, Beograd 1997, pp. 11–84; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), pp. 265–268; Nenad MAKULJEVIĆ, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji 1882–1914*, Beograd 2007, pp. 72–92; TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9), pp. 121, 135–136.

²¹ Đoko SLIJEPEVIĆ, *Istorija srpske pravoslavne crkve*, 2, Beograd 1995, pp. 295–425; MAKULJEVIĆ 2007 (n. 20), p. 9.

in Orthodoxy becoming the dominant religion and the Orthodox Church itself becoming the most important national public institution.²² Therefore, in addition to their primary cultural and religious value, churches became national public spaces where one could clearly identify and represent the national identity of a community, hold public, religious, royal, patriotic and national ceremonies and commemorate those whom the community held in the highest regard – national heroes.

In the nineteenth century, the Orthodox Church in Serbia also had a memorial character. This character was achieved by the presence of the graves of famous people from the past, thus allowing a secular cult of national heroes to form around the graves.²³ In Serbian memorial culture, this practice has been present since the second half of the eighteenth century, but it reached its peak as late as the nineteenth century with the growth of nationalism.²⁴ With memorial tombs placed within them, churches and monasteries in nineteenth-century Serbia became sites for the nation's collective public memory.

Nationalistic Interpretation of the Graves of Heroes

In nineteenth-century Serbian memorial culture, several practices connected with memorial tombs can be differentiated. One of them is the nationalization of the graves of heroes. In this process a private grave was gradually promoted into a national monument.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in parallel with the strengthening of the national idea and an awareness of the need to celebrate national heroes from the political, religious or cultural life of the nation, heroes' graves started to be perceived as national monuments. Thus, tombs erected for prominent members of the community by individuals or members of their families were gradually turned into national monuments in the nineteenth-century public sphere.²⁵ This is evident from written records, which detail the process of commemorating national heroes and their graves placed in churches and monasteries all over Serbia. The significance of graves as public monuments for national heroes has been confirmed in work by Joakim Vujić, Milan Đ. Miličević and Feliks Kanitz (Kanic), who have paid great attention to the nationalization process of graves.²⁶ Thus, in his description of the church in Topola, Joakim Vujić wrote about Karađorđević's grave as the grave of a national hero.²⁷ The graves of national heroes in nineteenth-century Serbian public life became, among other things, one of the points of interest that elevated a monastery or a church to the status of a national memorial centre.²⁸ The process of turning the graves of national heroes into national monuments in the nineteenth century was influenced by the way of life at the time and with a respect for tradition.²⁹

One of the earliest examples of this process of transforming a private grave and private memory into a public monument and collective national memory is the tomb of Lazar Mutap in the Vujan Monastery, near Čačak. In accordance with tradition, Lazar Mutap had been buried within the church

²² SLIJEPČEVIĆ 1995 (n. 21), pp. 295–425; MAKULJEVIĆ 2007 (n. 20), pp. 72–81.

²³ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9), pp. 121–162.

²⁴ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9), pp. 136.

²⁵ Miroslav TIMOTIJEVIĆ, *Memorijal oslobođiocima Beograda 1806*, *Nasleđe*, 5, 2004, pp. 14–16.

²⁶ Feliks KANIC, *Srbija. Zemlja i stanovništvo*, 1–2, Beograd 1985–1986; Joakim VUJIĆ, *Putešestvije po Srbiji*, Gornji Milanovac 1999; Milan Đ. MILIČEVIĆ, *Kneževina Srbija*, Beograd 2005; MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 279.

²⁷ VUJIĆ 1999 (n. 26), p. 183.

²⁸ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9), pp. 121–162.

²⁹ MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), p. 278.



1. Jovo Kursula's grave, Cvetke Church

as one of the monastery's prominent donors. His tomb was placed by the south wall of the church nave.³⁰ The tomb of the war hero Mutap, who was mortally wounded in 1815 during the second Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire in the battle near Čačak, was erected by his family.³¹ Although the tomb primarily had a private memorial function, Mutap was publicly promoted to the status of a national hero, which led to the transformation of the grave into a memorial tomb. As a result of the growing ideology of nationalism in the nineteenth century, the monument of Lazar Mutap in the church of the Vujan Monastery became a place for the remembrance and worship of national war heroes, supported further by the preservation of his war banner, guarded as a national relic in the church, and his portrait painted on the church's south wall.³²

At the same time, Mutap's grave represents the oldest form of memorial tomb in the interiors of Serbian churches for the first half of the

nineteenth century. It is plain in form and inartificial. It consists of a tomb underground and a tombstone above, in the form of a sarcophagus made of four marble plates, plain in design and modest in decoration. Such a form for a memorial monument has its origins in the design of Serbian medieval royal tombs.³³ The top marble plate of Mutap's tomb displays a commemorative inscription about the deceased. Inscriptions most frequently stated the name of the deceased and the day of his death, as in the case of Lazar Mutap's tomb, or were followed by a description of his life, origin, status, as well as the deceased's special contributions to the wider community and the fatherland. All these elements, combined in such a commemorative unit, gave the tomb historic value.³⁴

Numerous examples of this practice of turning the graves of war heroes into national monuments by retaining their plain forms can be found in churches and monasteries all over Serbia, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century. One of these is the memorial tomb of Jovo Kursula placed in Cvetke village churchyard near Kraljevo (fig. 1).³⁵ Kursula, one of the most prominent war heroes of the first Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire (1804–1813) was buried in a churchyard near the church. His grave is designed simply; it is rectangular in shape, with an added vertical

³⁰ KANIC 1985 (n. 26), p. 493; MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 318.

³¹ KANIC 1985 (n. 26), p. 493; MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 318.

³² Vuk KARADŽIĆ, Početak opisanija Srpski namastira, *Sabrana dela Vuka Karadžića* (ed. Milorad Pavić), 8, Beograd 1969, p. 51; KANIC 1985 (n. 26), pp. 488, 493; MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 318.

³³ POPOVIĆ 1992 (n. 11), pp. 177–179.

³⁴ POPOVIĆ 1992 (n. 11), p. 179.

³⁵ Irena GVOZDENOVIC, Uloga i značaj crkve brvnare u selu Cvetke kod Kraljeva u našoj tradicionalnoj kulturi, *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu*, 67/68, Beograd 2004, p. 24; MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 387

commemorative plate. This type of memorial tomb represents some of the oldest memorial forms found in churchyards and on monastery estates in the nineteenth century. The commemorative inscription on the tomb plate celebrates Kursula as a hero of the first Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire. For the purpose of future liberation wars and the militarization of the nation, nineteenth-century state ideology focused primarily on creating a national cult that glorified war martyrs who gave their lives for the fatherland, thus accentuating the commemoration of their graves. This practice continued throughout the century.³⁶ Many examples, such as the graves of Miloš Pocerac near the church in Dobrić in Pocerina³⁷ and Jovan Dimitrijević Dobrača near Drača, confirm this practice.³⁸

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the graves of heroes of cultural life (distinguished artists, writers and poets) were declared national monuments. One such example is the grave of Serbian philosopher and Enlightener Dositej Obradović, which was placed in front of the main entrance to St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade (fig. 2). From the very beginning, his grave was observed as a national monument, as confirmed by contemporary written sources.³⁹



2. Memorial tomb of Dositej Obradović,
Cathedral Church, Belgrade

The Memorial Tomb as a National Monument in Sacred Spaces

Awareness of the need to erect monuments to respected members of the community continued to develop in Serbia during the nineteenth century. By the second half of the century, it resulted in the adoption of contemporary European monument forms, which could be found in sacred places of the time.⁴⁰ We distinguish two main principles related to the erection of memorial tombs in nineteenth-century Serbia. One of these was the erection of public monuments on former burial grounds, or the transformation of graves into national monuments by changing their artistic form. The other was the marking of a burial ground and the erecting of a public monument from the very beginning, following the funeral of a national hero. Both practices included the organized, collective erection of a memorial tomb as a national monument.

³⁶ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2004 (n. 25), pp. 14–27.

³⁷ MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), pp. 428–429.

³⁸ MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), pp. 283–284.

³⁹ VUJIĆ 1999 (n. 26), p. 13.

⁴⁰ On the erection of public monuments in Serbia in the nineteenth century see TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2001 (n. 6), pp. 39–55.



3. Memorial tomb of Dimitrije Davidović,
Old Church, Smederevo



4. Memorial tomb of Dimitrije Davidović,
Old Church, Smederevo

The manner in which monuments to national heroes in Serbia gradually took on a shape and design that was influenced by the rise of national ideology and the actual expectations of contemporary society can be illustrated with some examples of nineteenth-century memorial tombs in sacred spaces. Unlike the previous examples, which included the promotion of private graves into national monuments while retaining their original shape and inartistic form, the following examples of memorial tombs were either built on the former burial grounds of national heroes or the graves were upgraded and transformed into public monuments. One such example is the monument of the cultural hero Dimitrije Davidović. The memorial tomb of this prominent Serbian politician, diplomat and publicist is placed in the churchyard of the Old Church in Smederevo (fig. 3).⁴¹ Its foremost design followed the requests of Davidović himself: a horizontally erected tomb memorial plate carved from Studenica marble. The plate was to feature a skull and a cross, one of the older Christian symbols of resurrection. Intertwined olive and oak branches behind the skull symbolised immortality and the glory of the deceased (fig. 4).⁴² The choice of Studenica marble along with a section of the epitaph that bore the name of the deceased, emphasizing his status as a *true Serbian*, show the close relationship between national ideology and the interpretation of death in nineteenth-century Serbia.⁴³ In the second half of the nineteenth century, Davidović's tomb was perceived as a monument to the person responsible for Serbian national progress and, as such, was to be commemorated. This was achieved after the service

⁴¹ Bojana JOKIĆ-ILIĆ, Nacionalna ideja i funeralna kultura. Grob Dimitrija Davidovića, *Smederevski zbornik*, 3, 2011, pp. 95–113; BOROZAN 2006 (n. 15), p. 972.

⁴² JOKIĆ-ILIĆ 2011 (n. 41), pp. 102–103.

⁴³ BOROZAN 2006 (n. 15), p. 972.

for the fiftieth anniversary of Davidović's death, when, in 1888, the town of Smederevo erected a public monument in his honour. The design and form of the existing memorial tomb was then officially transformed into a national monument.⁴⁴ The existing tombstone plate was raised, framed in stone and an iron fence was added. The higher west-facing side of the fence was designed to resemble the vertical memorial plate and to house an oval porcelain portrait of the deceased. This type of portrait originates from the ancient Roman *Imago Clipeate* – an art form used for honouring the departed.⁴⁵

One example of a monument erected over the grave of a national hero is the monument of Vasa Carapić, a national war hero who died in the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire, during the Belgrade liberation battles in 1806. The monument is situated in the Rakovica Monastery in Belgrade, along the north church wall.⁴⁶ In 1910, King Peter I Karađorđević erected a monument over the grave of Vasa Carapić, which was originally only modestly designated,⁴⁷ to coincide with celebrations marking the First Serbian Uprising.⁴⁸ The marble monument was the result of a project run by Serbian architect Konstantin Jovanović. Around the tomb a low stone frame was designed, on which a stone plate was placed. The three unadorned sides of the actual tomb were framed by a cast iron fence. The rear side was reserved for the monument which was placed partly against the temple wall. The monument is supported by a triangular base that contains a further stone plate in the shape of an obelisk, i.e. a pyramid, a well-known symbol of eternity.⁴⁹ There is an engraved cross on top of the obelisk, with a motif of an engraved pistol and a traditional sword, *jatagan*, below it, featuring a broken chain weaving through both. This motif alludes to a popular iconography – the cross signifies resurrection and the weapons, through which the broken chain weaves, denote the Serbian people's fight for liberation from the Turks. Below the engraved image there is a commemorative inscription depicting the heroic achievements of Vasa Carapić as well as the commissioner, King Peter I Karađorđević.⁵⁰ On the grounds of Rakovica Monastery, the monument to Vasa Carapić functioned to commemorate a national hero as well as to promote his grave as a commemorative contribution from the Karađorđević dynasty.

A similar national monument was erected on the churchyard of Ćelije Monastery at the beginning of the twentieth century, above the tomb of Ilija Birčanin (fig. 5). Before that, the tomb of Ilija Birčanin, which had always functioned as a point of reference for national remembrance, was marked by a tombstone plate.⁵¹ On Birčanin's grave a new monument was built in the form of an obelisk, which was very often used in the commemorative practice of twentieth-century nationalists.⁵²

A similar example is the memorial tomb of Nikola Milićević Lunjevica in Vujan Monastery church near Čačak (fig. 6).⁵³ The monument was erected in 1902 by his granddaughter, Queen Draga Obrenović, on the burial ground of Duke Lunjevica where it was placed inside a church, along the south wall. The monument was carved from marble and designed as an arch, with a picture of Lunjevica dominating the

⁴⁴ JOKIĆ-ILIĆ 2011 (n. 41), pp. 105–110.

⁴⁵ BOROZAN 2006 (n. 15), p. 956.

⁴⁶ MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 76–77.

⁴⁷ MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), pp. 76–77; KANIC 1985 (n. 26), p. 124; VUJIĆ 1999 (n. 26) p. 175.

⁴⁸ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2004 (n. 25), pp. 14–16.

⁴⁹ Miroslav TIMOTIJEVIĆ, *Crkva svetog Georgija u Temišvaru*, Novi Sad 1996, pp. 165–166.

⁵⁰ TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2004 (n. 25), p. 16.

⁵¹ KANIC 1985 (n. 26), pp. 438–439; MILIĆEVIĆ 2005 (n. 26), p. 381.

⁵² BOROZAN 2006 (n. 16), p. 955.

⁵³ KANIC 1985 (n. 26), p. 493.



5. Burial monument of Ilija Birčanin,
Čelije Monastery



6. Memorial tomb of Nikola Milićević Lunjevica,
1902, Vujan Monastery

centre, with carved weaponry below it and a commemorative inscription glorifying his national contributions. The form of the monument arch carries a complex symbolic meaning. According to humanistic theories, it represents a victory gate, a portal that only the chosen enter, as well as a border between this life and the afterlife.⁵⁴ This funeral theme was completed by two pillars with shrouded urns representing the ancient symbol of the divide between the world of the living and the world of the dead.⁵⁵ The arch form of the monument, the marble signifying glory, the portrait of the deceased and the weaponry that “speak” of his military contributions to the fatherland are all witness to the deceased as an individual and as a member of the family that erected the monument. As the monument was erected by the Serbian Queen Draga Obrenović in memory of her ancestor and with the intention of making her prominent origins known, it can be seen as a part of monarchical ideology and propaganda, transformed by the temple interior into a national dynasty-promoting ploy.

There are some examples of memorial tombs placed in church interiors, which were, from the very beginning, following the funerals of national heroes, built as national public monuments. One such example of a commemorative monument in the second half of the nineteenth century is the monument to Prince Mihail Obrenović in St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade situated in the furthestmost

⁵⁴ On the form of the tomb-altar and its symbolic meaning see PANOFISKY 1964 (n. 11), p. 53.

⁵⁵ Igor BOROZAN, *Spomenik u hramu. Memorija Kralja Milana Obrenovića*, Beograd 2008 (unpublished master's thesis), p. 175.



7. Memorial tomb of Prince Mihail Obrenović, 1868, Cathedral Church, Belgrade



8. Memorial tomb of Serbian Metropolitan Mihail Jovanović, 1902, Cathedral Church, Belgrade

south-eastern part of the nave, by the narthex (fig. 7).⁵⁶ After Prince Mihail's death at Košutnjak on 29th May 1868, his monument was erected by his wife, Princess Julija Obrenović. It comprises the tomb, the pedestal, the sarcophagus and a bronze statue of the Archangel Michael above the sarcophagus.⁵⁷ In its form, the monument of Mihail Obrenović shows the adoption of contemporary European memorial forms in church interiors. The materials used for the monument (i.e. marble and bronze), as well as the dimensions of the monument itself, emphasised the ruler's grandeur. The engraved decoration on the monument, consisting of the crest of the Obrenović dynasty and two bronze angels on the front of the sarcophagus, also functioned to glorify the deceased ruler and the Obrenović dynasty. The statue of the Archangel Michael, placed on the sarcophagus, symbolically represented Prince Mihail,⁵⁸ thereby following the rules and regulations set out by the Moscow Council of 1667 and the decree of the Holy Synod of

⁵⁶ Branko VUJOVIĆ, *Saborna crkva u Beogradu*, Beograd 1996, pp. 151–152.

⁵⁷ VUJOVIĆ 1996 (n. 56), pp. 151–152.

⁵⁸ BOROZAN 2008 (n. 55), pp. 154–156.

the Russian Orthodox Church on 30th November 1822, which banned the displaying of non-canonised figures, including rulers, inside churches.⁵⁹ Subsequently, the symbolic representation of Prince Mihail on his commemorative monument, as established in Belgrade Cathedral Church, was abandoned towards the end of the nineteenth century as a result of the growing influence of national ideology, which led to the true-to-life depiction of rulers and national heroes on funeral monuments in Serbian churches.⁶⁰ Examples include the monument of Nikola Milićević Lunjevica in the Vujan Monastery church near Čačak and the monument of Milivoje Petrović Blaznavac in the Rakovica Monastery church in Belgrade, as well as the monument to King Milan Obrenović in a church in Ćurline near Niš. They clearly show how social and political life dominated religion in certain periods of the nineteenth century, i.e. the influence of the state and social expectations on the design of Serbian church interiors. The placement of a commemorative monument above Prince Mihail's tomb in Belgrade Cathedral Church defined its sacred space as patriotically-relevant and relevant to the dynasty, as well as a memorial to the deceased prince.

A similar example of the practice of the planned and collective erection of national monuments is the monument to the Serbian Metropolitan Mihail Jovanović, erected in 1902 in Belgrade Cathedral Church (fig. 8). The monument is situated in the furthestmost western nave, along the north wall, next to the monument of Prince Mihail Obrenović.⁶¹ The monument to the Metropolitan Mihail was erected by the priesthood of the Kingdom of Serbia. The commemorative tomb was made from red, black and white marble, using the blueprint of Serbian architect Milorad Ruvidić.⁶² In order to create the design for the tomb of this high-ranking church persona, Ruvidić evoked the most representative funeral design of medieval Catholic Europe.⁶³ The monument consists of two bases with a sarcophagus, above which is a memorial plate supported by four small posts. There are two pillars above the main plate which carry the final construction in the form of a gable. The arch between the pillars shows an icon of St. Sava, designed by the academic artist Nastas Stefanović. The facial image of St. Sava was likened to the portrait of the Metropolitan Mihail Jovanović, while ensuring that it was sufficiently abstract so as not to contravene contemporary public opinion regarding the displaying of non-canonised persons inside churches.⁶⁴ The crest of the Serbian Orthodox church, the date of the Metropolitan Mihail's death and the inscription *love Orthodoxy, love Serbdom* found below the icon of St. Sava clearly indicate the importance of the deceased, portraying him as a spiritual worker and a worker for the nation, while at the same time forming a historic memory of him within the sacral space of the St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade.⁶⁵

Conclusion

This paper is a first survey of public monuments in sacred spaces in nineteenth-century Serbia. It attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the development of public monuments in Serbian

⁵⁹ Nenad MAKULJEVIĆ, *Grob mitropolita Mihaila u beogradskoj Sabornoj crkvi*, *Godišnjak Muzeja grada Beograda*, 40/41, 1993/1994, pp. 144–145.

⁶⁰ BOROZAN 2008 (n. 55), pp. 173–174.

⁶¹ VUJOVIĆ 1996 (n. 56), pp. 151–152.

⁶² MAKULJEVIĆ 1993/1994 (n. 59), p. 144.

⁶³ See PANOFSKY 1964 (n. 11), pp. 53–54.

⁶⁴ MAKULJEVIĆ 1993/1994 (n. 59), pp. 144–145; BOROZAN 2008 (n. 55), p. 176.

⁶⁵ MAKULJEVIĆ 1993/1994 (n. 59), pp. 141–145.

culture. In earlier studies, it has been noted that memorial tombs were one of the most common type of national monument.⁶⁶ Since the earliest times, graves had memorial value and were connected with sacral spaces – church interiors and churchyards. With regard to these previous studies, this article attempts to identify and explain the relations between memorial tombs and sacred spaces in nineteenth-century Serbia. It discusses some of the important issues, such as cultural and social circumstances, that led to the erection of memorial tombs in sacred spaces. Placing national monuments such as memorial tombs in sacred spaces during the nineteenth century was possible due to the fact that the contemporary Serbian Orthodox Church was a public and national space as well as a religious one. The presence of memorial tombs as national monuments in sacred spaces resulted in churches and monasteries becoming commemorative centres for the nation in the nineteenth century.

In previous academic work, several nineteenth-century national monuments erected in sacred spaces have been discussed as case studies.⁶⁷ This article is a survey of public monuments erected in sacred spaces during the nineteenth century. By considering various examples of memorial tombs, this paper provides some general conclusions that will contribute to a better understanding of the development of public monuments in Serbian culture. One of them is related to the different practices of erecting public monuments in sacred spaces. Three main practices for the erection of memorial tombs can be distinguished. One of them is the nationalization of the graves of war heroes and heroes of the political, cultural and religious life of the nation. The nationalistic interpretations of the graves of heroes are confirmed in numerous nineteenth-century accounts on Serbia. In this process, a private grave was gradually promoted into a national monument in the public sphere. The graves that were declared as national monuments retained their plain, inartistic form. The second group comprises monuments that were erected on the burial places of national heroes or, by redesigning old graves into national monuments, while the third group of monuments were erected anew, following the funeral of a national hero.

Moreover, this paper is a typological and formal survey of public monuments erected in sacred spaces during the nineteenth century. In the sacred spaces of nineteenth-century Serbia, a number of national monuments existed, which differed greatly in their artistic form. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the predominant form was a simple commemorative tomb. Based on the changing character of national ideology and political, social and cultural changes during the nineteenth century, existing grave forms in sacred spaces saw a number of architectural additions and changes, as well as the introduction of new forms of memorial tomb, which followed the contemporary memorial practices of other European countries. This is clearly evident through the analysis of a number of monuments erected in church interiors and churchyards in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Finally, the question of the relationship between sacred spaces and public monuments remains open and requires further analysis. Depending on their message, the monuments performed a multi-functional role in sacral spaces, which, among other aspects, comprised commemorating the departed and the wider community one belonged to, supporting and intensifying patriotism and promoting the ruling dynasties.

⁶⁶ MAKULJEVIĆ 2006 (n. 2), pp. 278–279; TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9).

⁶⁷ MAKULJEVIĆ 1993/1994 (n. 59), pp. 141–145; BOROZAN 2008 (n. 55); TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2008 (n. 9).

Javni spomeniki v sakralnem prostoru

Spominske grobnice kot nacionalni spomeniki v Srbiji v 19. stoletju

Povzetek

V 19. stoletju so bile v srbski kulturi spominske grobnice ena od najbolj običajnih oblik javnega spomenika. Grobovi so imeli vedno spominsko vrednost in so bili vezani na sakralni prostor – cerkvene notranjščine in pokopališča. V skladu s to tradicijo so spominske grobnice 19. stoletja postavljali v zahodnem delu cerkvene ladje oziroma na pokopališču v bližini cerkve. Nastanek spominskih grobnic v sakralnem prostoru je v 19. stoletju omogočilo dejstvo, da je cerkvena stavba v Srbiji predstavljala ne le sakralni, ampak tudi javni, nacionalni in spominski prostor. Takšen status ji je omogočila pomembnost pravoslavne cerkve v Srbiji v 19. stoletju. Začetki oblikovanja odnosa med cerkvijo in državo segajo daleč nazaj v srbsko zgodovino, v čas srbske vstaje v Osmanskem cesarstvu (1804–1815), ko sta verska svoboda in oblikovanje nacionalne verske ustanove postala eden od najpomembnejših ciljev. Po nastanku kneževine Srbije (1830–1882) se je tesna vez med cerkvijo in državo dodatno okrepila. Država je predano podpirala razvoj cerkve, kar je omogočilo, da je pravoslavlje postalo vladajoča veroizpoved, pravoslavna cerkev pa najpomembnejša srbska javna ustanova. Zato so cerkve poleg primarne kulturne in religiozne vloge prevzele vlogo javnih prostorov, kjer je bilo možno jasno predstaviti in prepoznati nacionalno identiteto skupnosti, prirejati javne, verske, patriotske in nacionalne slovesnosti ter se spominjati narodnih junakov. Prisotnost spominskih grobnic v vlogi nacionalnih spomenikov v sakralnem prostoru je omogočila, da so cerkve in samostani v 19. stoletju postali središča nacionalnega spomina.

Srbska kultura 19. stoletja v zvezi s spominskimi grobnicami loči tri prevladujoče prakse. Ena od teh je nacionalizacija grobov posameznikov, ki so se izkazali v boju oziroma igrali pomembno vlogo v kulturnem, političnem ali verskem življenju naroda. Nacionalistične interpretacije takšnih grobov potrjujejo številni zapisi iz 19. stoletja. V tem procesu so zasebni grobovi polagoma postali nacionalni spomeniki. Tisti, ki so jih za takšne razglasili, so obdržali svojo preprosto, neumetniško podobo. Naslednja praksa vključuje postavljanje spomenika na starem mestu pokopa, kar se razlikuje od tretje prakse, ki predvideva postavitev spominske grobnice takoj po pogrebu narodnega junaka.

V sakralnih prostorih Srbije so v 19. stoletju obstajali številni nacionalni spomeniki, katerih umetniška podoba je bila raznolika. V začetku stoletja je prevladovala preprosta oblika nagrobnika. Vzporedno z razvojem nacionalne ideologije ter pojavom političnih, družbenih in kulturnih sprememb so obstoječe oblike grobov dobivale arhitekturne elemente, obenem pa so se pojavljale nove oblike spominskih grobnic, ki so sledile sočasnim spomeniškim praksam v drugih delih Evrope. To je jasno razvidno iz analize mnogih spomenikov, ki so jih v drugi polovici 19. in začetku 20. stoletja postavljali v cerkvah in na pokopališčih.