Commemorative war museums in 1990s post-war Croatia

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Abstract This article investigates the activities and curatorial commemorative practices in three separate museums in post-war Croatia. It focuses on Homeland War Museums in Vukovar, Dubrovnik, and Karlovac, and seeks to establish on concrete example the similarities they share in display tactics of the wartime experience. In doing so, this article examines the inherent difficulties these authentic sites of memory have in conveying wartime memory to a post-war audience while also examining the museum's overall responsibility in shaping civic commemorative practices. It views the commemorative war museum as a powerful instrument which can be used to create public national memory.

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The Croatian war of independence took place between 1991 and 1995. The Homeland War, as it is also known, was fought throughout the country against the federal Yugoslav army and ended in victory for the Croatian military forces, resulting in the formation and sovereignty of the Croatian state. The damage from the war was overwhelming as the conflict unleashed a wave of violence not seen since World War II, causing a great loss of life, a refugee crisis, and unprecedented material devastation, while also introducing terms such as ethnic cleansing into popular journalistic parlance. In the aftermath of the war, commemoration of the conflict became a key point in the cultural discourse of the newly independent state, occupying a prominent role in popular consciousness and dominating the agendas of politicians seeking to capitalize on this state of heightened nationalistic sentiment. This article examines the culture of commemoration that took place in 1990s Croatia, by focusing on the extrapolation and preservation of war memory within its museum context, while also more generally exploring the role and responsibilities of commemorative war museums in a modern post-war European society.

The Croatian cities of Karlovac, Vukovar, and Dubrovnik are all medium-sized cities located within the vicinity of the border, but around different parts of the country itself. Vukovar is situated in the east at the confluence of the Vuka river and the Danube, Karlovac is centrally located at a cross section between Southern and Northern Croatia, and Dubrovnik is on the
Southern Dalmatian coast, at the border with Montenegro. During the war, all three cities suffered direct attacks by the Yugoslav army as they were on the front line of the conflict itself and considered strategic military targets. Human causalities were recorded in all of these cities, some of whom were innocent civilians, others of whom were military personnel from both the Yugoslav army and from the newly-formed Croatian army, the so-called “defenders” (branitelji) of the country. The immediacy of their war experience was registered in the layout and functioning of their urban space, through the disruption to civic life, but also through the damage inflicted on buildings and streets, markings that designate these spaces as authentic, if rather blatant, milieux de mémoires. It is thus not surprising that these localities are now part of a memorial landscape that commemorates the Croatian war of independence, and that they should be key sites where Croatian commemorative war museums were formed in the immediate aftermath of the war and where they still function to this day.

It is important to note that both geographically and culturally the cities of Vukovar, Karlovac, and Dubrovnik are very different places, and that despite the apparent commonality of the conflict they encountered, they, in fact, shared very distinctive experiences of the war itself. The manner in which their commemorative museums operate reflects this variance of experience, and demonstrates each city’s collective, but unique, remembrance of the war. Moreover, their separate treatment of their wartime past affects the way in which they chose to put that past on display for others to consider, and how they formed their individual narratives of remembrance for the outside world. The difficulty of constructing a uniform and static memory of the past has been argued extensively elsewhere,1 with many critics maintaining that due to its discursive nature, memory is necessarily in flux and invariably individualistic. This article does not dispute that premise. The museums addressed within this article in fact affirm this point, while demonstrating something else, namely, the inherently complex process that underlies the overall formation of a society’s collective memory. They show the degree to which the museum as a civic institution facilitates the manifestation of memory, providing the appropriate public forum in which it can be maintained and preserved.

In Karlovac, the Homeland War Museum is located in the city’s southern suburb of Turanj. It consists of an open air display of items used by the Croatian army in the defense of Karlovac in 1991, and it exhibits weapons, heavy artillery, tanks, armored cars and the remnants of a shot-down Yugoslav aircraft. Information panels are provided to explain the significance of the items on display. The area is located on the site of an old military complex which was originally constructed in the seventeenth century as a defense against Ottoman attacks, and which later served as army barracks during the Austro-Hungarian rule. More recently, it operated as army barracks in the former Yugoslavia. This historical military context informs the public’s understanding of the site, giving the museum a firm cultural identity within the community. In 1991, Turanj became a frontline battlefield in the Homeland War, and was the actual territory used in the defense of Karlovac and northern Croatia. Any pre-existing historic symbolism associated with Turanj was compounded during this time by the fact that Croatian forces successfully defended Karlovac from their location in Turanj in 1991, commanding a strategic victory from this front. This early military success became part of war-time lore, and it has often been cited as an heroic example of wartime success during the Homeland War.2
Currently, patriotic attachment and attention to the area seem to have waned considerably as the museum space appears neglected and is not regularly maintained. Its location has also become rather problematic, as it is situated close to a major thoroughfare that carries traffic to and from the Adriatic coast. Due to the unrestricted access and its location at the outskirts of the city, it has suffered vandalism and theft, appearing thus rather a remnant, rather than a proper reminder of the war. Despite its derelict state, as a commemorative site it remains associated with the City Museum of Karlovac and it continues to be considered part of the permanent collection of its civic museum. The mandate of the Karlovac City Museum, however, does not have specific provisions for its collection of Homeland War artifacts, and considers these items part of a larger commemorative site that exists to mark the general military history of the Turanj region. In other words, the specificity of the Homeland War in Karlovac has been subsumed into a broader context in order to provide a more generalized understanding of the history of warfare in the region. A more explicit memorial to the Homeland War is located in the very center of Karlovac in the form of a professionally-crafted monument commemorating the 247 soldiers who died defending the city. It was erected in 2009, and is popularly referred to as the Spomenik ponosa (Monument of Pride) by the citizens of Karlovac.

The problem of establishing a formal and independent war museum in Karlovac that would be dedicated solely to the subject of the Homeland War is a matter of funding, and there has been much discussion about how best to raise funds to maintain the Turanj site properly. There are, however, also secondary elements that affect both the existence and functioning of commemorative sites such as the one found in Karlovac. Namely, in the immediate aftermath of the war in the mid-1990s there was a spontaneous impetus to establish memorial sites throughout Croatia that would mark the occurrence of war events, and establish a visible means of documenting the loss and sacrifice made by various localities in the conflict. This momentum to document the war was not officially mandated, nor was it centralized, leaving the entire undertaking to localized groups to organize and implement. As Sandra Križić Roban writes, most of these groups were comprised of people directly affected by the war with a deep personal emotional investment in the process of memorialization they were undertaking. As a consequence, many of the early memorials erected to the victims and victors of the Homeland War lacked professional implementation, a factor that affected not only the physical longevity of some memorials, but, in some cases, the very preservation of the memory itself.

It was thus not unusual that survivors of the conflict would erect their own memorials to fallen family members and friends, managing the commemorative site with a decidedly personal agenda, while claiming special rights to the process of commemoration. It was only in 2000 that an official government agency assumed responsibility for financing commemorative projects regarding the Homeland War, and that the process became a formal (fiscal) issue for the Croatian government. As the example of the Homeland War Museum in Karlovac so clearly demonstrates, the absence and unreliability of long-term state support has had a
decisive influence on the development of the site, allowing it, as is so apparent in this case, to flounder and lose its initial connotative memorial meaning. As Roban argues, without proper planning many other Homeland War memorial sites will eventually lose purpose, becoming insignificant places to those lacking immediate memory of the conflict and the necessary knowledge to recognize these sites as historically and sentimentally significant.7

The formal management of memory of the Homeland War is an ongoing issue at the Homeland War Museum in the coastal city of Dubrovnik, as well. The museum is located on Srd, a mountain that overlooks the city and is visible from all of its urban vantage points. Much like the museum space in Karlovac, its location bears both symbolic and factual historical meaning, factors that heighten significance of the exhibit to the museum visitor. The museum is part of the Imperial Fortress, a defense complex erected in the early nineteenth century by the French army as a building envisioned as a means of defense against the Ottoman Empire and other threats from the East. Although it was never used for this purpose during the Napoleonic Wars, the fortress was preserved to modern times and became part of Dubrovnik’s frequently cited pre-war heroic narrative, signifying an inherent liberty and freedom to its inhabitants.8 In 1991, Srd became a key combat location from which the city was both attacked and defended during the Homeland War. The building of the Imperial Fortress itself was used by the Croatian army to break the siege of Dubrovnik that had lasted for more than seven months in 1991 and 1992. A key battle was held at the fort on December 6, 1991, when the Yugoslav forces were finally defeated and made to retreat. This date is celebrated to this day as an overall turning point in the Homeland War in the region.

The Homeland War Museum in Dubrovnik was established in 2008, and it was deliberately housed in the Imperial Fortress to exact a maximum effect on visitors. The symbolism and message of war does not rest solely with the choice of building in which the museum is located, but resonates in the surroundings that lead to the museum as well. Srd was once a wooded, green area, but lost this boreal cover almost entirely during the war, and now stands barren and empty. The harrowing ascent to the museum itself makes the visitor think about war in a very concrete objective way. The date of inaugurating the museum was also carefully chosen to coincide with general wartime commemoration that would augment its significance: August 5th is Day of Gratitude, a public holiday in Croatia that celebrates the achievements of its defenders in the Homeland War. From the very beginning, the museum was envisioned as a display distinctly separate from other commemorative projects across the city. Throughout Dubrovnik there are many plaques and notices that state the architectural loss suffered during the bombings of 1991 and which lament the war damage done to the city as a UNESCO heritage site. The Museum of Homeland War on Srd does not focus solely on this cultural loss, nor is it part of this larger civic cultural initiative of remembrance in the old town. Its mandate is to remember the agency and sacrifice of the people of Dubrovnik during the 1991 conflict, taking note perhaps of the irony that both during and after the war many outsiders viewed the city primarily as a cultural site, rather than as a functioning urban center, with a human population suffering from the siege.9

In the museum there are many dramatic photographs that document the bombardment of Dubrovnik, and that show the damage these beautiful buildings suffered as a result of the war in 1991. These powerful photographs,10 a successful form of mediated memory, constitute a large part of the permanent collection of the Homeland War museum and attract many visitors
to the exhibit. Other items that are part of the exhibit are weapons, uniforms and ammunition that have been collected from the conflict itself. Despite the popularity of the exhibit and the social significance of commemorating this event for the region, there are issues with the display space itself that technically belongs to the larger bureaucratic association of Dubrovnik museums. This association, abbreviated D’UM (Dubrovnik Udruga Muzeja), is a civic institution that oversees the management of five different museums in the Dubrovnik area, and which is heavily invested in the marketing and management of tourism in the city as a whole. The Homeland War exhibit is considered part of its Dubrovnik Museum of Contemporary History, a museum with a general historical focus and a seemingly non-partisan stance to the Homeland War itself.

There is consequently clear tension between civic authorities and the curators of the Homeland War Museum over the status of the museum itself. The curators openly complain about the lack of funding for an independent museum, and about the poor conditions in which some of the items of the museum are held in their provisional, borrowed quarters. One of the curators, Mišo Đuraš, fought to defend the city during the war and personally assembled many of the items on display. He is particularly vocal about the neglect the museum suffers and frequently complains to the media about the lack of commitment shown by civic authorities to the long-term management of the museum. The Homeland War museum in Dubrovnik does not have official museal status, nor is it cited as an independent museum on the D’UM website. The official mandate of the museum association is “... to preserve, protect, present and interpret the local identity, history and culture of Dubrovnik for the benefit of the general public...,” phrasing that manifestly does not prioritize the Homeland War as its sole civic purpose. This wording, as the curators of the Homeland War Museum likely recognize, is problematic for future preservation of their collection. This wording would, namely, seem to suggest that the operation of the Homeland War Museum is wholly contingent on the strength of regional patriotic memory and can remain open only as long as autobiographical memory of the war remains a seminal part of local Dubrovnik identity.

There are trying circumstances that affect the city’s commemorative practices and openly threaten the existence of its Homeland War Museum. The location of the museum on Srđ, a mountain overlooking the city itself, is prime real estate and a key tourist destination. Since 2010, a cable car has been reintroduced to the site to take people to the top of the mountain, so that they may take photos and enjoy the Mediterranean vista. It has proven to be popular and is used by large groups of people. This mass tourism, however, is not associated with remembrance of the war, but with entertainment, a mood that trivializes the solemn commemorative stature of the site. In addition, there has been pressure to move the museum elsewhere in the region and to convert Srđ into a golf course, privatizing the area for the purpose of profit. There has been strong resistance to both of these developments from the local population. The war veterans organized a guest exhibition of the Srđ display in the History Museum in Zagreb in 2017, thereby marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attack on
Dubrovnik in the Croatian capital, alerting the general public to the pertinence of this regional display. The residents of Dubrovnik have also been active and have vehemently opposed the privatization of the Srd property, creating the online protest group “Srd je naš” (‘Srd is ours’) while also taking the Dubrovnik municipality to court.

Despite this instability, and the many challenges posed to formal museum commemorations of the Homeland War on the cultural landscape of Dubrovnik, the Museum of Contemporary History in Dubrovnik continues to exhibit material pertaining to the conflict. In December 2014, it hosted an exhibition centered on the conflict titled Donacije- temelj Muzeja Domovinskog rata (Donations- the foundation of the museum of Homeland War). This highly personalized display exposed the close relationship that exists between the exhibited objects and the people who used them, presenting each item as an intimate belonging connected with someone directly involved in the war. In doing this, it showed the Homeland War Museum to be a subjective, inter-personal enterprise driven by the communicative memory of participants from the war, who were able and willing to convey their experiences through the items displayed. It focused on the agency of the fighters. This type of presentation was quite powerful and had a definite bearing on the nature of the exhibit itself, shaping its overall purpose and conceptual design. Thus, rather than offering an historical retrospective of war, what the exhibit did, however obliquely, was to create a memory project, actively exposing how societal collective memory is formed. Through the objects exhibited, it showed a methodology of remembrance, demonstrating how people remember the conflict. Presented in this fashion, the items on display were transformed, and became what Marita Sturken termed “technologies of memory,” providing the physical means of communicating personal memory within a later historical context.

Significantly, through this type of display the exhibited items are disassociated from a static understanding of the 1991 war and are not viewed through a historical lens as ‘museal’/antiquarian objects. Instead, they are presented as concretely relevant to the public more than twenty tears after the conflict. In many cases the donors of the objects are present at the exhibit and contribute directly to the narrative of remembrance they are constructing. The advantage of this type of presentation is that the items are not reified within the museum context due to their connection to human agency and human memory. Moreover, the objects escape the danger of being viewed as impersonal historical documents that can be consigned to events of the past. Because the objects are perceived as belonging to people who used them (and not to the war itself), a detached clinical analysis of the historical event is difficult, if not entirely impossible, to do. The exhibit consequently represents a successful strategy of remembrance that keeps human aspects of historical remembering in focus, maintaining the past as relevant and fresh, while also providing a distinct social forum in which individual human memory is allowed to act and to shape the history put on display.
The emotion and trauma that underlie the exhibit are persuasive elements that create understanding and elicit genuine interest from the public. In her work Carrie Hamilton has argued for recognition of the strong interrelationship that exists between emotions and the formation of cultural memory, contending that the latter cannot really exist without the former and that theoretical considerations of cultural memory must be more inclusive of individual human sentiment. In her view, emotion empowers the memory being communicated, making its message more explicit to the outside observer. In the case of the most recent exhibit of the Museum of Homeland War in Dubrovnik, the presentation (and public reception) of this sentiment has indeed been successful and it is proving to be a useful promotional tool in more ways than one. Thus, while the presentation of personal objects reminds the public of the occurrence and historical importance of the recent Homeland War, more practically, it also signals to them the need to have an independent, properly-funded museum that can adequately commemorate the conflict for future generations.

It is difficult to discuss commemoration of the Homeland War in Dubrovnik without mentioning the Spomen Soba Poginulim Braniteljima (The Memory Room to the fallen Defenders) that is located in the very center of the historic city. This room is an intimate commemorative space that honors the fallen defenders of Dubrovnik through a simple combination of their individual pictures and small plaques that provide their names and ages. The presentation is solemn and understated, and appears poignant to the outside observer who may not expect to encounter this commemorative space. The location of this room is within the scenic Sponza Palace at the very end of Stradun, the main street of the historic city. This coveted and touristy location in the old town ensures frequent and spontaneous visitation from those passing by. The Sponza Palace, a sixteenth-century renaissance edifice is, however, also the site of the state archives in Dubrovnik, a fact that many tourists visiting this central location may not know. It is interesting to note that the state archives would take on the management of this commemorative space and that they would consider this emotional material part of their institutional domain. The austere appearance of the room may be explained in view of its perceived archival status, although it is difficult to comprehend this highly emotional space as a matter of historical record alone.

The most famous memorials dedicated to Croatian victims of the Homeland War are certainly to be found in Vukovar. The city of Vukovar itself is a sacred site for most Croatians and holds national commemorative meaning due to the sacrifice and suffering the city endured during the war. As is well known, the battle of Vukovar in 1991 was a key battle in the Homeland War, lasting more than two months and resulting in the complete devastation of the city itself. Vukovar's location on the border with Serbia made it a disputed territory early in the war, and its mixed pre-war population made it a prime target for virulent nationalism, fracturing civic society and creating deep ethnic divisions between Croat and Serb inhabitants. After heavy shelling and a devastating siege, the city surrendered to the Yugoslav forces and was ethnically cleansed: all Croats were expelled from the city on November 18, 1991. The fall of the city was documented through media reports at the time, leaving a clear archive of the trauma experienced by the people of Vukovar, the most prominent being the historical footage showing long processions of civilians leaving the city. The city was occupied by Serb forces for the duration of the war, and was only returned to Croatia in 1998 through political negotiations, and a full three years after the conflict ended.
The physical scaring of the city has been left manifest through a conscious civic refusal to rebuild certain buildings damaged during the war. The devastation of war is thus part of the current city landscape for everyone to see. The most famous example of this is the city’s water tower, which was severely bombed during the siege and made unusable to citizens of Vukovar during the conflict. It still stands in its battered state, and has been left so deliberately by city authorities, as physical testimony to the bombings and violence of 1991. Despite its historical significance, the structure is imbued with both past and present meaning for the residents of Vukovar. It visibly mediates memory, connoting the suffering and deprivation suffered during the war, but in addition to this, it also stands as a stark memorial to the resilience of its people, paying homage to their post-war resistance and renewal. It connotes civic pride.

Another edifice that bears markings of the war is the city hospital. During the conflict, it was repeatedly bombed, yet remained open, accepting injured citizens of all nationalities. The basement of the current hospital is now a museum that commemorates the siege, by preserving the sub-human conditions under which it is operated. The exhibit mimics the scenario of war in an eerie fashion: it has mannequins placed throughout the display, personifying the carers and patients of the hospital. The ceiling of the hospital shows other markings of war: a crater from the conflict that remains lodged, rather ominously, in its ceiling.

The most moving war memorial in the Vukovar region is, however, Ovčara, a rural commemorative site located five kilometers outside the city itself. After the capitulation of Vukovar in November 1991, 264 people were taken to a disused hangar and killed there. Their remains were buried in mass graves and not returned to relatives until 1998, when Vukovar itself was reintegrated into Croatia, and relatives could safely claim the bodies. At the time (November 1991), the massacre at Ovčara represented the biggest mass killing of people in Europe since World War II, setting a brutal precedent for other atrocities that would happen throughout the former Yugoslavia during its civil war. The Ovčara massacre is a central point of remembrance for Croatians when reflecting on the Homeland War. It is perceived as the central symbol of sacrifice made for Croatian independence and is closely associated with the very notion of independent Croatian statehood. In 2006, a formal memorial center was opened in Ovčara. The site has become an unmistakably Croatian site of pilgrimage, with a unilateral display of nationalistic paraphernalia and rhetoric. The official website affirms this patriotic point by commemorating the victims of Ovčara in terms of statehood, saying: “Hvala im za hrabrost, za njihove zivote, hvala im za Vukovar i Hrvatsku” – “We thank them for their courage, for their lives, we thank them for Vukovar and Croatia.”

Vukovar’s difficult history and protracted misery during the Homeland War remains a central narrative in Croatia’s post-war society even today, almost twenty years after the conflict has ended. The city is openly venerated as a hero city (“Grad Heroja”) due to the resistance it
showed during the 1991 conflict, and the noted courage of its defenders who kept on fighting for the city, even though they were vastly outnumbered by the Yugoslav army. Throughout the country the special status of the city is reinforced through various strategies of everyday life that serve to remind the people of its wartime sacrifice. Every urban center in Croatia has a Vukovar street in order to highlight the national commemorative significance of the city, and there are many movies, books, and songs that continue to be produced in order to commemorate aspects of its siege and surrender in 1991. November 18, the day Vukovar fell to the Yugoslav forces, remains an important national day of remembrance, and it is passionately marked throughout the country by its citizens. Many Croatians observe this day by walking through the candle-lit Vukovar squares and streets of their cities, imitating, as it were, the expulsion of Croats from Vukovar in 1991. While highly symbolic and moving, these imitative processions are also extremely problematic, due to their emotional one-sidedness and their staid focus on a narrow and singular interpretation of the past. They are, moreover, often accompanied by heightened displays of nationalism, the practice of which creates tensions and intolerance that continues past the ceremony of commemoration, invariably politicizing the event.

Sociologist Kruno Kardov has written on the nature of the annual Vukovar commemoration, noting the social difficulties this type of ceremony creates through what appears to be a veritable exhibition of prosthetic memory. In Vukovar these commemorations are particularly fraught as there is so little autobiographical distance on the part of participants to the historical event itself and, quite obviously, much difficult memory that is yet to be socially processed and categorized. The ceremonies are consequently highly emotive affairs where people seek to reenact the suffering of 1991, with little aspiration to accomplish reconciliation or to achieve a greater historical comprehension of the tragedy itself. The Vukovar march is entitled “Kolona sjećanje” (colony of memory) and takes place on a carefully chosen route that takes participants from the hospital through the city and, finally, to the cemetery where the fallen defenders of Vukovar are buried. Other defenders from across the country come to join the symbolic Vukovar processions, as do many politicians from Zagreb. The entire ceremony has become a type of annual ritual of remembrance, which, in itself, as Paul Connerton has observed, is not unusual or uncommon in processes of remembrance.

It is, however, quite clear that this ceremony contains little self-critical evaluation and that it offers no reassessment of the original memory, more than 20 years after the actual historical event. From year to year the event does not vary, appearing immutable to future modifications or potential growth. The procession thus exists as a set presentation of individual trauma and mass memory, rather than as an organic manifestation of a negotiated and shared collective memory. Furthermore, as Janine Clark has observed, the ceremony has little resonance outside of the Croatian community, which is not very useful for a broad transnational dissemination of that memory, for it makes the event appear insular and nationalistic to the outside uninformed observer. Significantly, the Vukovar commemorations are also not socially inclusive, and continue to showcase only one side of historical events in 1991, highlighting Croatian heroism, nationalism, and statehood as the essential components of the memory celebrated. The Croatian memory of the event is clearly considered the dominant memory of the past. The code of commemoration that governs the ceremony omits consideration of all other cultures that may have suffered during the siege and occupation of 1991, preventing their participation in this annual national event. This public omission has
ramifications past the commemorative November ceremony itself, and has created tension among the different ethnicities that live in contemporary Vukovar, contributing to a continuously divisive civic culture.

The sacrosanct status of memory in Vukovar has been a matter of public international record since 2013 when Croatia entered the European Union. Since late 2013, there have been many protests throughout Vukovar over the implementation of bilingual (Cyrillic/Latin alphabet) plaques on public buildings in the city. This decision, made in accordance with EU minority language laws, has been causing much upset among the Croatian population of the city, which felt that the Cyrillic script on the signs was too evocative of the Serbian/Yugoslav occupation in 1991. One members of the public, charged with vandalizing the plaques, clearly stated that the last time Cyrillic was seen in Vukovar, was when it came into the city written on military tanks.\(^2\) In order to express the level of disquietude felt by citizens, the appearance of Cyrillic on the streets of Vukovar has even been likened to the appearance of swastikas, summoning a truly deep traumatic historical precedent.\(^2\) In an attempt to circumvent the legal requirement of installing these bilingual plaques, the Vukovar city council declared the city a space of special reverence (\textit{Mjesto posebnog pijeteta}), however, this decision was overruled by the central government and the EU mandate on the representation and visibility of minority languages was fully implemented.

Although Vukovar does have a distinct memorial quality that is nationally recognized and thus difficult to dispute, all three sites described within this essay exemplify deliberate and individually-valid processes of commemoration that seek to preserve the memory of Croatia’s recent wartime past. They do so under the auspices of a museum context, relying on institutional display and public representation to preserve recollections of the Homeland War, while creating a narrative of remembrance that is apposite to the event itself. The variance shown in their display tactics and success of commemorative endeavors speaks to the inherent difficulty of exhibiting memory within traditional museum structures, exposing the challenges these institutions face in making such difficult memory manifest and relevant to present audiences. Historical proximity to the war continues to influence these displays, as does the prevalence of autobiographical memory, both of which appear to be the key factors that perpetuate memory of this war to future generations. What this article has attempted to show is that this unilateral observance of the past may not be entirely productive, for it precludes the possibility of a broader and future transcultural remembrance, limiting the legacy of the Homeland War to the context and memory of Croatia alone.

\textbf{Notes}


2 For more background on the battles around Karlovac, see Misha Glenny, \textit{The Fall of Yugoslavia}. 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (London: Penguin, 1996), 118-120.
On the museum’s website, this area is addressed as ‘Vojni Kompleks Turanj’ (Turanj Military Complex), and is described primarily as a key strategic point in the military history of the region. For more on this, see www.gmk.hr/onama.

The subject of funding the museum was widely discussed in the Croatian media. See, for example, Snježana Bičak’s article “U muzeju Domovinskog rata nema sadržaja, ali ni naplate,” Večernji list, September 9, 2010, accessed July 10, 2017, http://www.vecernji.hr/sredisnja-hrvatska/u-muzeju-domovinskog-rata-nema-sadrzaja-ali-ni-naplate-188613


“Libertas” is the official moto of the city of Dubrovnik. It is a word that is featured on its flag and on many businesses in the area. For a quick overview of the historical significance of this word/concept for the region, see, for example, Lovro Kunčević, “On Ragusan Libertas in the late Middle Ages,” Dubrovnik Annals 14 (2010): 25-69.

There was much controversy about the international outcry over the bombing of Dubrovnik, with many Croats feeling that the attention received was largely due to the historical buildings under threat, and not due to concerns for the citizens under siege. The most famous remonstration at the time to this effect was made by Federico Mayor Zaragoza, the director of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in October 1991. For more on this, see Barry James’ article, “Civil war nears Renaissance City: Spare Dubrovnik, Unesco Chief Pleads,” The New York Times, October 8, 1991, accessed June 30, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/08/news/08iht-dub_.html.


For more on this, see “Gdje je zapao Muzej Domovinskog rata?” dubrovniknet.hr, accessed June 30, 2017, http://dubrovniknet.hr/novost.php?id=9191#VJmlvBAsI.


For more on this development, see www.srd-je-grad.hr/category/1/


