Thesis of PhD Dissertation

Faculty of Arts, pázmány Péter Catholic University

Doctoral School in History

Economic, regional, and political history workshop

Örs Somfay

The I World War Hungarian related public art and community memories of the heroic, and their database

Head of the School

Ida Fröhlich D.Sc

Head of the Economic, regional, and political history workshop

István Berényi D.Sc

Supervisor

Sándor M. Kiss Ph.D

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Research background and problem statement

War memorials of the First World War had been erected even during the war and are being created to the present day with more or less frequency. Their assessment has been constantly changing during the history to suit the respective political establishments. Consequently, the attitude of the related publications and sources has also been influenced by the political backgrounds of different eras. Only one or two more detailed, nationwide research projects have been carried out during the last almost 100 years, and no significant interest can be seen until the '70-s. Even though the research intensity and the public interest have both increased in the last couple decades, the individual projects have remained isolated from each other and have been concentrating mainly on local history or on a certain area when processing the subject. Therefore, there cannot be found any projects with a collective assessment to round up and integrate the earlier results, attempting to extinguish the huge gaps in the content. The last nationwide collection and research project had been conducted more than 30 years ago, therefore, on one hand, its analytic and perceptional approach needs to be updated, on the other, it does not contain the results and changes of the recent past. Due to the lack of sources, the memorials of the detached areas after Trianon have also been disproportionately less covered, and it is time to start assessing the war memorials of these regions as well in the light of new possibilities.

Objective

The main objective of my PhD thesis and the associated databases that I intend to publish in accordance with the current professional and public standards is to assemble the historically and contemporarily most accurate cadastre of the World War I war memorials. I find it important to introduce the most significant professional publications and nationwide research projects. These projects, conducted decades apart, are determinative imprints of the changes in the assessment of these memorials and their disposition in the public awareness. The new research projects are always conducted in order to refine the results of the previous ones, and as well to register the current changes. During the last decades, these changes regarding war monuments have not been researched on a nationwide level, therefore this is the first such research in that scale.

Also, no one has yet rounded up completely all of the across-the-border memorials, therefore, these have not been properly embedded into the history either.

The professional literature of the war memorials does not require much improvement and addition in regard of its theoretical background, however, the histories of specific memorials suffer from great gaps and, in several cases, serious oversights that – according to my observations – the later authors tend to inherit from each other without checking the authenticity of the historical data. The number of these greater or lesser mistakes is so high (we are talking about more than 3500 memorials) that it would be impossible to list all of them. This is one of the reasons I wanted to create a database of the war memorials, in which all the sources are listed at every memorial, whether they are graphic or written materials.

I had access to an unprecedented abundance of digitalized and therefore searchable contemporary sources that allowed deeper than ever processing.

The largest gap can be found at the World War I. War memorials, concerning the specific historical analysis of the individual memorials. There is particularly little information about their creation and creator. The earlier works concentrated primarily on the politically more significant statues with major artistic value. During to my recent research I managed not only to obtain significantly more accurate information concerning the memorials of smaller settlements, but also to almost double the number of known war memorials. As a result, the lifetime achievement of almost all of the sculptors, artists and architects could be completed and further specified. During the field work several not yet published manuscripts of local history emerged as well from the bottom of desk drawers.

I have also raised an analytic system to assist me in the iconographical and visual analysis of those memorials that I can obtain a photograph of, beside the historical data.

Additionally, I find it important to clarify some previously perhaps overlooked definitions concerning the war memorials.

I intend to share my research findings not only in the form my thesis, but also implementing a constantly expanding online database that is accessible for everyone. This database provides much broader opportunities for presenting my research, as – besides introducing 3556 World War I memorials from a historical and an artistic viewpoint – it is illustrated with more than 13 000 photographs. Also, the database's search engine enables us to refine our search by several criteria, or to sort the war

memorials into various groups, thus making it a useful tool for researchers of other topics.

It is also important, that unlike the previous collections, this is not a static, final publication, but a database that is expandable by other researchers in the future. Since there are many World War memorials created currently, this digital collection can become the recording media of the present history and of the changes in the social consciousness in regard of this field. Additionally, a scientific online database can also provide the important function of coordinating scientific teamwork, with enabling the members to collaborate without personal meetings. Another important initial object was to collect and publish the results of previous researches in this field. The possibilities lying in the Web 2.0 have provided great help in this regard already, and will continue to provide that through the database, since there are still some archive and other material I could not gain access to just yet.

I would like to present by the online database the abundant new possibilities provided by the digital technology for scientific research, starting from the digital processing of the sources to the online professional communication and the creation of scientific databases.

From the research databases relevant to my dissertation the to be published can be reached at the address http://hosiemlek.szoborlap.hu, and the work chart and the table of artistic analysis can be found attached to the digital copy of my thesis as an appendix.

Methodology

My first step was to explore the most significant professional literature of this field, to get acquainted with the current results, and the methodologies and research principles employed in different eras. I have conducted a thorough source investigation for the last decade in this light, exploring the possible collections and sources from various archives, museums and libraries. I have not narrowed my search to "official" sources, instead placed a great emphasis on finding private collectors and collections. At the end of the day, the private collections turned out at least as important as the previously used official documents.

I have been digitalizing the processed material as continuously as it was possible, and integrating their whole text into searchable databases. From the processed data I created a unified table, which was first created according to earlier methodologies, but which I have constantly refined and reshaped during my research.

Due to the unification it became clear which areas are the least researched and what kind of methodology issues have the previous researches had. Several contradictory data has emerged concerning the history of specific war memorials, and I have attempted to clarify each and every one of these cases. Similarly, I tried to restore all the missing data, where it was possible. Due to the digital source processing, the integration of the data into a unified system and the data restoration / correction was an enormously time consuming undertaking, but on the other hand, provided significantly more data that was also much more organized.

The development of the new processing methods of war memorials should be viewed as a process shaped by the constantly emerging new historical data and collections. This analytical system could not be established, nor could be the earlier used methodology reconsidered in advance, without gaining the better part of the collection. At the time of the last nationwide research only half of the current war memorials and third of the relevant historical information was known![1]

Using the new database I have also reconsidered the criteria set assigned to the World War I memorials, and on this basis I have subsequently sorted out the collection. The new criteria set is based on geographical, temporal and contextual aspects.

My definition of the World War I memorials incorporates those objectified creations of permanent material and shape that could be linked to the World War I and the soldiers who died there. They should unambiguously express the pious and commemorative intents of the creators concerning the heroic victims of the war, and their design and appearance should indicate that they function as a device of not an individual, but communal reminder. The independent presence of these criteria should not be required regarding neither the intent of the creators, nor the contextual appearance, in other words, the war memorial can be multifaceted both contextually and functionally, but its additional features should not compromise its basic pious, commemorative function.

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[1] It needs to be taken into account that during the last 30 years almost 600 new war memorials have been created in Hungary, as well as that the earlier research has not been extended to the across-the-border areas.

Architectural creations	Sculptural creations	Memorials
Temple of heroes	Sculpture of heroes	Memorial of heroes
Chapel of heroes	Shrine of heroes	Altar of heroes
Gate of heroes	Local sculpture of national sacrifices	Altarpiece of heroes
Room of heroes	Statue of the Holy Trinity	Heroes bell
Belvedere of heroes	Relief of heroes	Heroes wall
Crypt of heroes		Commemorative chest of heroes
Well of heroes		Heroes cross
Columbine		Heroes headboard
		Sanctuary lamp
Plaques	**Horticultural creations**	**Institutions**
Simple plaque	Cemetery of heroes	Mother and infant care institute
Relief plaque	Graveyard of heroes	Nursery
	Grove of heroes	House of heroes
	Garden of heroes	Commemorial school of heroes
	Alley of heroes	

Types of World War I war memorials by their appearance

In those cases, when the classification is not clear even by these criteria, the attitude of the receiver media is the most decisive factor, which can be most easily determined by the celebrations and events relevant to the memorial. Besides the historical data I have also created a contextual and visual classification in order to analyze the graphically documented memorials.


New results

The most important sources from the various archives, museums and books have been digitalized and incorporated in a full text searchable database, thus enabling the analysis of several million pages of previously unresearched documents that resulted in multiplying our knowledge of the individual war memorials.

The results of several forgotten research projects have also been explored and integrated with the most significant private collections. Supplemented with my own collection it is now the most complete database that includes **3556 war memorials**, consisting of **100 000 individual data entries** (that is one order of magnitude larger than previously). This database contains the currently identified across-the-border war memorials, and imparts

much more and more thorough information than could be found ever before. The collection is not only larger and more detailed, but also corrects and clarifies a lot of previously incorrect data and information. Each and every information in the database is based on specific and verifiable source and on graphic documentation.

The history of the war memorials created, renovated or renewed during the 30 years since the last national research has also been assessed. Similarly, the source exploration of the across-the-border war memorials has also been processed.
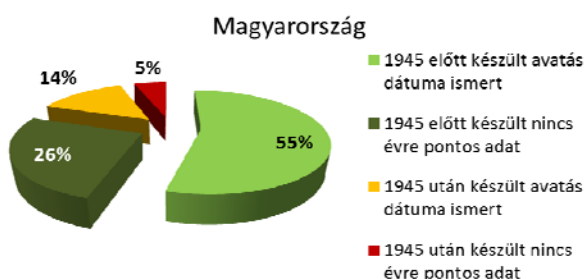
Magyarország		1981	2012
Created before 1945	Inauguration date known	1185	1783
	No accurate data about the year	695	846
SUM created before 1945		1880	2629
Created after 1945	Inauguration date known	54	468
	No accurate data about the year		178
SUM created after 1945		54	646
SUM		1934	3275

Concerning the latter, the exploration could not be as complete as on the Hungarian territories, but I believe that it helped to blaze a trail for further investigation.

The data growth is significant by comparison to the 1981's research. The number of the identified and processed war memorials has grown by 50% in the pre-1945 era alone. The research results concerning the across-the-border territories do not have a benchmark to compare to, since in those areas there have been only local history researches.

Határon túli területek összesítő táblázat		AUSZTRIA	HORVÁTORSZÁG	NÉMETORSZÁG	ROMÁNIA	SZERBIA	SZLOVÁKIA	SZLOVÉNIA	UKRAJNA	összesen
1945 előtt készült	avatás dátuma ismert	3	4	1	36	3	57	2	9	115
	nincs évre pontos	11	3		51	4	50	1	3	123
1945 előtt készült összesen		14	7	1	87	7	107	3	12	238
1945 után készült	avatás dátuma ismert	1	1		7	1	1			11
	nincs évre pontos	2			16	1	11	1		31
1945 után készült összesen		3	1		23	2	12	1		42
összesen		17	8	1	110	9	119	4	12	280

The level of knowledge about the creative background of the war memorials has also increased by an order of magnitude, nevertheless, it still remains the most demanding area in terms of research. The lifetime achievement of notably important sculpture artists has become much more famous. The role of the local stonemasons, tombstone carvers has been previously overlooked by the researchers. Their significant role in the creation of war memorials has emerged as a new result of my investigation. During my research I succeeded in identifying 749 creators or groups of creators, but let us not forget that this number includes the contractors, bronze moulders and masons as well. Their separation from the list is unfeasible, partly because often they are the only ones who can be identified of some of the memorials' creators.

The history of war mementos has been thoroughly researched before, in this respect I made only some minor additions, the most notable part of which is the new era breakdown, as a progressive achievement. In the historical field, my most significant results concern individual war memorials, in which cases I went to great pains to graphically document the memorials during different periods. It is worth mentioning that during my research I collected a more complete source bibliography than ever existed, that contains – among others – the scientific source databases consisting of archive collections and periodicals.

Publications

Conferences

History of the Hungarian war grave care a paper in the conference titled *Space in the history*, organized by: PPKE BTK PhD School, Piliscsaba, 2003

Database of the I. World War monuments, a paper in the conference titled *Publishers for the education, learning & science researching,* organized by: College of Dániel Berzsenyi, Szombathely, 2004

Historical science databeses from the Hungarian archives, a paper in the conference titled *CreaSpace Conference*, organized by: Hungarian Association of Content Industry, Budapest, 2005

Geoinformation databases of the I. World War military surveyes, a paper in the conference titled *International Conference of Historical Geographers, Transformation processes of Cultural Landscapes*, organized by: Hamburg University, Hamburg, 2006

Connectivity options between the historical gazeteers & the geoinformatical systems, a paper in the conference titled *Geoinformation Connecting Societies Annual Conference & Expo*, organized by: Geoinformation Connecting Societies, Vienna, 2006

Hungarian historical databases, in paticular the archival collections, a paper in the conference titled *Annual meeteng of the Slovakian Archivists Organization*, organized by: Slovakian Archivists Organization, Zsolna, 2007

A plan for an online free access I. World War database, a paper in the conference titled *General meeting of the Pulszky Society*, organized by: Pulszky Society, Budapest, 2009

Arcanum Digital Science Library the base for the new type of historical researches, a paper in the conference titled *Conference of Intellectual heritage digital preservation*, organized by: Hungarian Librarians Association & Arcanum Databases Co., Budapest, 2012

Studies

History of the Hungarian war grave care, in. Space in the history conference book, Piliscsaba, 2004.

From reform to reforms. History of the Hungarian economy 1968-1978, in History of the National Bank of Hungary, Vol. III., (chief editor Dr. Katalin Botos), Tarsoly Kiadó, Budapest, 2004.

Digitization of cultural heritage values (feasibility study to the Ministry of Education and Culture), Mediahead, Budapest 2007.

Digitization of cultural heritage values & establishment of a uniform service interface (pre-feasibility study to the Ministry of Education and Culture), co-author Gyenes András, Budapest, 2007.

For protection of the state public-sector collections (synthesis study), National Trust Ltd., Budapest, 2009.

The digitization of archival materials requirements (synthesis study), co-authors Gábor Ambrus, Sándor Biszak, Budapest City Archives, Budapest, 2013.

Edited publications

Hungarians in the II. World War (Digital collection of reference books) CD-ROM, Arcanum Adatbázis Kiadó, Budapest, 2005.

The I. World Wars military battlefield maps of the Austro-Hungarian Empires DVD-ROM, Arcanum Adatbázis Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

Hungarian Museums Digital Library Online database, Arcanum Adatbázis Kiadó, Budapest, 2008. http://museum.arcanum.hu/kiadvanyok/

Arcanum Digital Science Library Online database, Arcanum Adatbázis Kiadó, Budapest, 2012. http://adt.arcanum.hu