

SLOBODIŠTE MEMORIAL PARK: EXPOSING METAPHORS OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

ABSTRACT

The paper is focused on the analysis of the spatial, morphological and symbolic characteristics of the Slobodište Memorial Park, starting from the assumption that the artistic-quantitative determination and expression, as well as the materialization of the fundamental representations and expressions of this memorial park, is important for conveying its basic meanings and messages. In the first part of the paper, a brief historical review of the formation of the memorial in the Kruševac region is given, as well as the context of the construction of Slobodište Memorial Park. The focus of the work is on the analysis of the Memorial Park, from the urban determination of the space, through the analysis of individual compositional units and elements, in the light of their spatial, morphological and symbolic characteristics. In the third part of the paper an overview of Slobodište in the light of its connection to the city of Kruševac and its residents. The paper aims to examine the thesis that the primary ideological motto of Slobodište is embodied in the synthesis of architectural-urbanistic, sculptural, as well as literary achievements, and that as such it can be inspiring and instructive for further research of memorial architecture.

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KEY WORDS

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BOGDAN BOGDANOVIĆ
MEMORIAL ARCHITECTURE
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It is widely accepted to refer to the monuments of the National Liberation War as structures that acquired the characteristics of a historical monument during the National Liberation War in the period from 1941 to 1945, and which were inspired by the armed liberation and revolutionary war of the time. The war for liberation was waged and manifested as a war for freedom and independence against the occupiers, and its time limits were clearly determined by the beginning and end of the armed conflicts. Monuments, like any other artistic creation, and more than that, are the creator's message. They are a means of experiencing and a very subtle force for changing the human psyche and its cultural scope (Milenković, 1961). Regardless of their characteristics, monuments are intended to establish intimate and continuous contact with people, to be integrated into their environment and life, impact it with their message and change their perspective (Milenković, 1961). Cultural and sociological changes that arose with the ending of the Second World War, could be read in the design of memorial architecture (Adžemović-Andelković, 2017), where socio-realism had a strong influence. Numerous architectural competitions were held, with the intention of marking the places across Yugoslavia, where the collective suffering of civilians occurred. Memorial Park Slobodište is a project designed by notable architect and professor Bogdan Bogdanović and architect Svetislav Žujović, in collaboration with private companies, citizens and the youth of Kruševac City. The intention of this paper is expose the symbols of architectural expression through the analysis of the architectural and urban setting, as well as the analysis of the elements of the composition, to interpret them as a speech that needs to be paraphrased. The subject of the research is the analysis and research of the connection between the initial idea of establishing Slobodište, and the formed architectural-urban setting, as well as the individual spatial entities and elements that make it up. The primary goal of the research is to analyze the spatial, morphological and symbolic characteristics of the memorial park Slobodište, and to connect them with the initial concept on which this space is based. The research was conducted in three levels, the first is the analysis of the urban determination of the space, then the analysis of individual spatial units and the connections between them, and then the breakdown of each identified spatial unit into the individual elements that form it.

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION IN THE REGION OF KRUŠEVAC CITY

The building tradition in the region of Kruševac has left undeniable evidence of its durability and quality (Lazić, 1991). In addition to the monuments from the time of the Ottoman Empire, another monument was built in Kruševac - Slobodište, created with the ideological message that the era of proletarian revolutions and national liberation war brought with it. According to Lazić (1991), the memorials of the Kruševac region can be divided into three time periods, based on the year of their construction:

- *The first period: monuments built up to 1945-* The first time period of the construction of the memorials in the area of the Kruševac region, is related to the period up to 1945, which became and remained the main source of historical and motivational facts, important for later constructions (Lazić, 1991). This period is represented by objects, once centres of proletarian movements, which were given special attention and importance, or the birthplaces of the heroes who fought against occupiers. The most significant monuments of this period are: the Memorial home of national hero Miloš Zakić and Kriva Reka, a monument on the slopes of Kopaonik Mountain.
- *The second period: monuments built between 1945 and 1960-* In this period, memorials of significantly large dimensions were built. These are mainly busts, memorial fountains, and memorial plaques. They are primarily located in natural landscapes, from which they 'emerged', firmly tied to the space of the events they mark. The most significant landmarks are: Memorial fountains in Brus and Kapidžija, Memorial monuments in Aleksandrovac and Ribarska Banja, and Memorial busts of national heroes Mirko Tomić and Branko Perišić in Kruševac.
- *The third period: memorials built between 1960 and 1980-* In this last period, memorials built had more complete expression, comprehensive artistic and artistic presentations, and expanded content with the aim of continuing the life of the monument, and its integration into the everyday life of people. The strength, the overall expression, expresses the cultural and historical meanings of the spatial entity. In this period, the following were realized: memorials in Belović, Slatina, Mitrovo polje, Popina, and memorial park Slobodište.

2. SLOBODIŠTE MEMORIAL PARK

Slobodište Memorial Park, was built at the place where the occupier shot more than 1,000 prisoners in the period from 1941 to 1944, on the slopes of Bagdala Hill, in the city of Kruševac, behind one of the concentration camps. The remains of partisans from the Rasina district were also transferred to this area, thus Slobodište became a common monument to all warriors for freedom who died in the last fight against the occupiers (Lazić, 1991). The memorial park with its area of approximately 13.5 hectares, contains graves and cenotaphs commemorating 1642 civilians and partisan soldiers who were executed. The city of Kruševac was liberated from occupators control on October 14th, 1944 (Kruševac,n.d.). Sixteen years later, in 1960., the municipality of Kruševac City decided to build a memorial park, with the idea to memorialize tragedies that occurred. The most important general information about Slobodište Memorial Park are given in the Table below.

Architect:	Bogdan Bogdanović (Slobodište Memorial Park) Svetislav Žujović (Slobodište Memorial House)
Beginning of construction:	1960. (Slobodište Memorial Park) 1977. (Slobodište Memorial House)
The end of construction:	1966. (Slobodište Memorial Park), officially opened June, 19 th , 1965. 1978. (Slobodište Memorial House)
Purchaser: Construction company:	National Museum of Kruševac Construction company 'Jastrebac'
Recontruction:	DUP 1983, Institute for Urban Planning, Kruševac
Jurisdiction:	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments Kraljevo

TABLE 1: General information about Slobodište Memorial Park

2.1. Origins of the idea for Slobodište Memorial Park

The creator of Slobodište was the writer and politician Dobrica Ćosić, who was also the leader of the local Rasina partisan district during the Second World War. His written work “Charter in the name of the Living” (*Povelja u ime živih, srb*) was the initiator of the concept on which this memorial park was based. National Museum of Kruševac offered the project to the architect Bogdan

Bogdanović, who already had completed several monuments and memorial complexes (the Memorial to the Jewish Victims of Fascism in Belgrade, the Memorial Cemetery to the Victims of Fascism in Sremska Mitrovica, the Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar), and at that moment included in the project of the Monument to fallen fighters in Kosovska Mitrovica.

The concept of Slobodište, as the Monument of Freedom, born from the “*Charter in the name of the living*”, is the concept of antithesis. Antitheses to religions and myths, war and killing, crime and idleness. The antithesis of everything that is not human. The antithesis of death - for life and creativity. Slobodište was bequeathed with its Freedom Celebrations on June 19th, 1965. The decision on the Declaration of Freedom and the establishment of the Freedom Ceremony has ten chapters, and is kept as an important document in the archives of the Kruševac City Assembly.

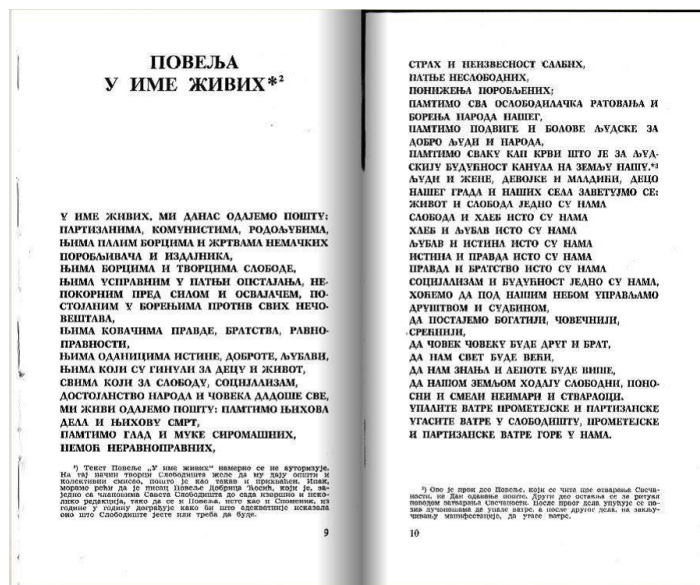


FIGURE 1: Charter in the name of the Living by Dobrica Ćosić

The presentation of the ten chapters, read at the ceremonial opening of Slobodište in 1965, is important because it indicates the explicit affirmation of the memorial park, and indicates its orientation as a monument to freedom, man and his creation. The Chapters read at the Freedom Ceremony in 1965, were the following (Lazić, 1991):

- The monument to the fallen fighters for the freedom of our country and the victory of the socialist revolution, to the shot patriots and to the victims of the fascist terror of the Kruševac area, which is located on the southeastern slope of Bagdala, is declared Slobodište.
- In accordance with its conceptual and functional purpose, every year from June 28 to July 7, Freedom Celebrations will be held in Slobodište.
- Celebrations of Freedom Act: a solemn memorial park and the performance of dramatic and musical works with a revolutionary, libertarian and general humanist content.
- Freedom celebrations are public and free.
- No other events, religious or funeral rites will be held in Slobodište.
- The repertoire and protocol of the Freedom Ceremony will have to be approved by the Freedom Council.
- The Council of Slobodište is appointed by the Municipal Assembly at a joint session of all Councils.
- The maintenance and arrangement of Slobodište, in accordance with its urbanistic, conceptual and functional purpose, will be entrusted to the National Museum of Kruševac.
- Funds for arranging and maintaining Slobodište and funds for holding the Freedom Ceremony will be provided through the municipal budget.
- This decision enters into force upon publication in the Official Gazette of Kraljevo.

2.2. *Spatial determination of slobodište memorial park*

The Complex of Slobodište Memorial Park, with a total area of 13.5 ha, was formed in the area between the Correctional Centar complex on the south, Brus-Aleksandrovac main road on the east, and residential complex Rasadnik II on the north side. Moreover, an additional 35 ha were planned for the construction of Slobodište Memorial Park, on the side towards the residential complex. In the predominantly plain landscape, a space without determination or over determination, without prominent articulation, craters

and slopes with a height difference of up to 10m were created (Anđelković-Adžemović, 2017). At his last lecture, held in June 1987 in the amphitheater of the Faculty of Architecture, professor Bogdan Bogdanović reflected on his completed works of memorial architecture, linking them into a system, where he clearly showed how each of his projects influenced all previous ones, as well as that all the previous ones influenced the concepts of the following ones, thereby creating a wider system each time (CZKD, 2008). On this occasion, speaking about the Slobodište project, he stated that there was not enough money for the construction of a Memorial Park. However, at that moment, the Kruševac bulldozer factory, “IMK 14.oktobar”, delivered new machines that needed to be tested. The construction of Slobodište started with Bogdanović’s “Let’s dig!”.

With the formation of the first crater, the deepest, without a clear plan, later Valley of Giving Respect (*Dolina pošte, srb*), professor Bogdanović started the first sketches of the Slobodište Memorial Park. Construction began in 1960 and lasted until 1965. The compositional solution of Slobodište is dominated by a 250 m long axis. Unlike most monuments, Slobodište is not dominated by a vertical axis. The Memorial Park hardly implies the coordinates of its vocations, given that all the landscape interventions were carried out inside the park, and the peripheral parts remained predominantly flat, in a state of disrepair.

The memorial part of Slobodište Memorial Park, consists of three spatial entities. The Approach Field (*Prilazna poljana, srb*), the Monument (*Spomenik, srb*) and Cross Memorial (*Stratište, srb*). Professor Bogdanović achieved the division of the space into units through architectural and urban planning interventions, during which he gave the space a new topography. The author’s first encounter with the project in the Historical Archive of Kruševac immediately initiated the question of the shape and position of the paths through the Memorial Park. Literature research led to the information that 1,000 trees were planted in honor of those who were shot, which tentatively determined the position of the center of gravity of the project. The walking paths were designed in accordance with the position of the trees, bypassing them so simultaneously include them in the space, thus becoming an integral part of the whole memorial park. Figure 2 shows the memorial part of the Slobodište complex, with its position in relation to the surrounding spatial-functional units. Also, with grey circles, the division into spatial units of the memorial complex itself is given: The Approach Field, The Monument and The Cross Memorial, whose clear boundaries cannot be determined, but these units overlap.

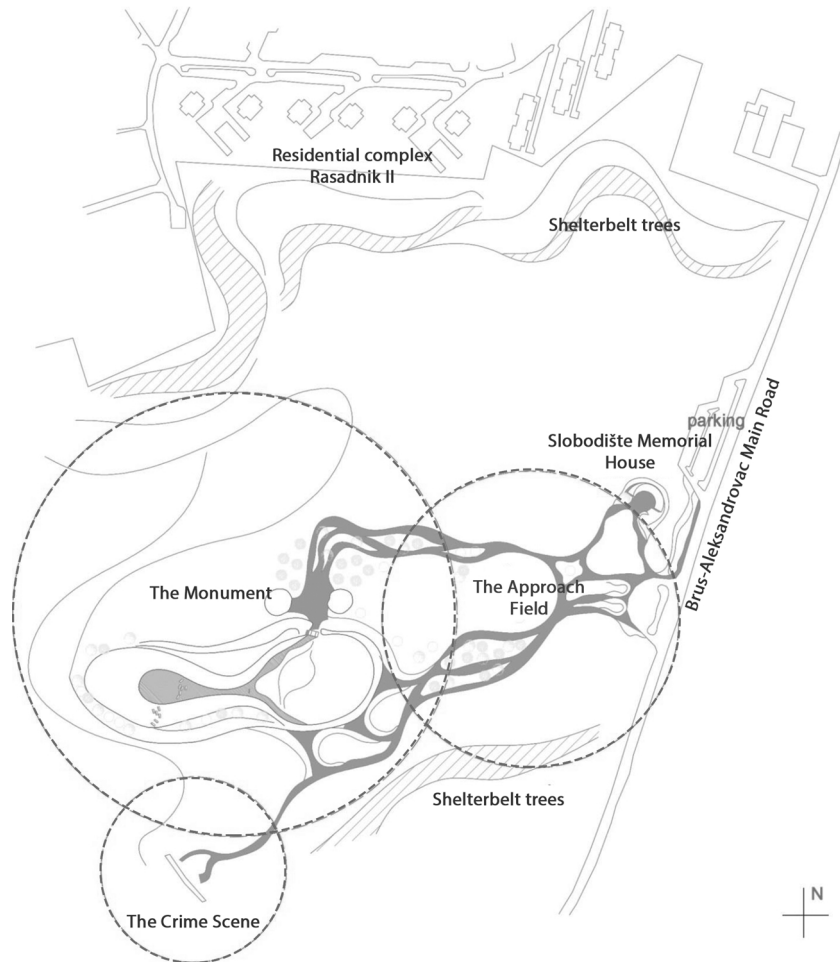


FIGURE 2: Aerial site plan. Source: author

2.3. Analysis of single spatial units

2.3.1. The approach field

Marching through Slobodište Memorial Park is exclusively pedestrian. The approach is from the east, along the road Brus- Aleksandrovac. An improvised parking lot defines the access area and the starting point. Making its way through the meadow, there is only one path leading to following spatial unit- The Monument. Immediately in front of the Monument, the path splits in two, one leading to the Monument, and the other to the Cross Memorial.

The paths are formed with free transverse profiles, laid freely between the existing groups of greenery. They were built from specific schist from the surrounding Jastrebac Mountain, a material traditionally associated with this area. The planted trees are part of the paths, incorporated into the area of Slobodište.

2.3.2. The monument

One of the paths of the Approach field leads to the Monument, the center of gravity of the Slobodište Memorial Park, a memorial park that is not observed, but entered and experienced. If the entire complex is built on the motto of the glory of life, it is an action that has no end. Expressing the glory of life through the means of plastic and urbanism means renouncing any conventional, statically limited composition, and seeking expression in the dynamic and free relations of sculpture and urbanism. Composed of sub-units, this spatial unit can be viewed as a separate system with all its peculiarities. Aerial site plan of the Monument is presented in the Figure 4, indicating its subunits.

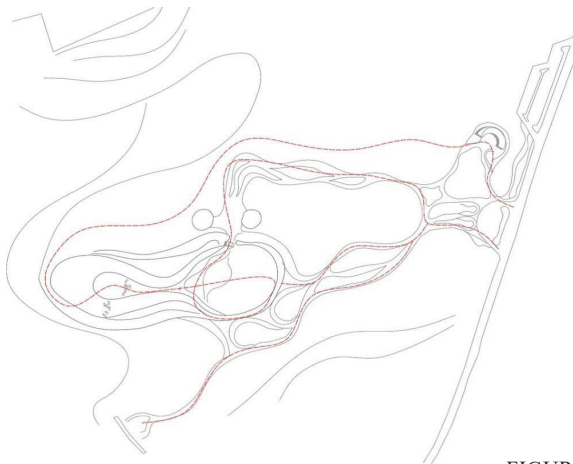
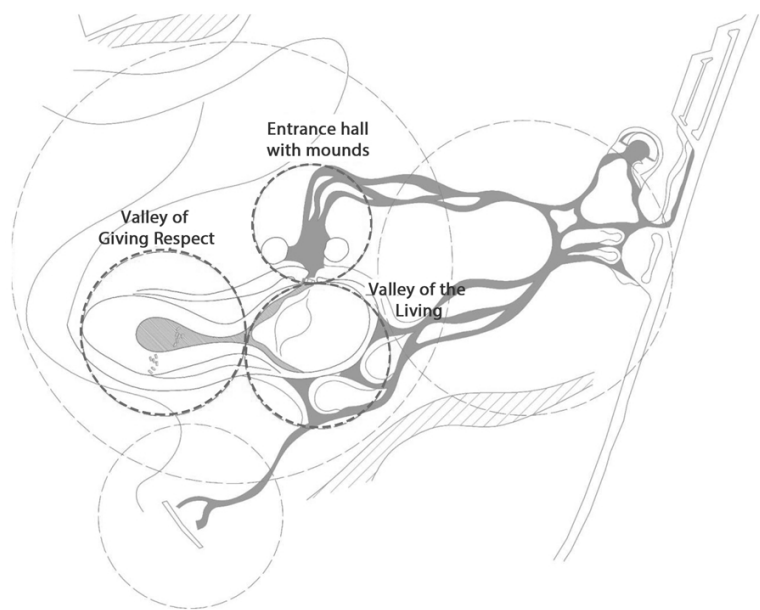


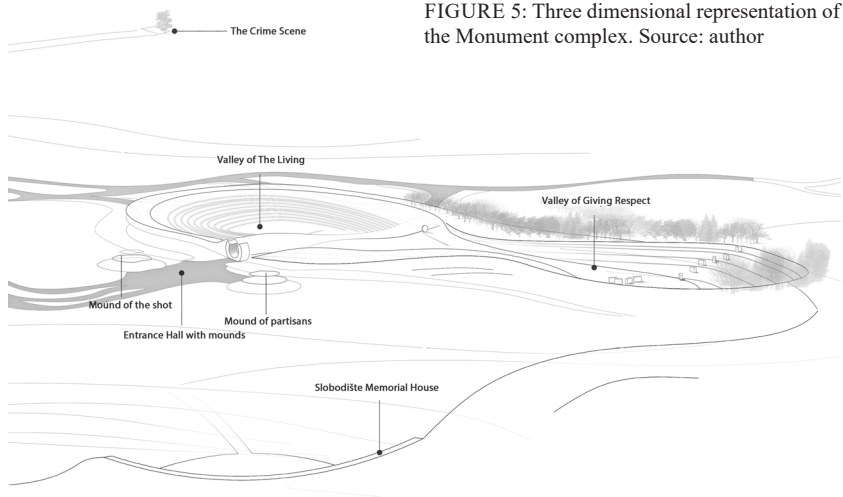
FIGURE 3: Potential marching paths.
Source: author

The monument consists of three spatial (sub)units: Entrance hall with mounds (*Predvorje sa humkama, srb*), Valley of the Living (*Dolina živih, srb*), Valley of Giving Respect (*Dolina pošte, srb*). Figure 5 represents three dimensional representation of The Monument complex. In the following text, each of subunits presented will be explored.



UP FIGURE
FIGURE 4: Aerial site plan with the Monument's sub(units) presented. Source: author

DOWN FIGURE
FIGURE 5: Three dimensional representation of the Monument complex. Source: author



2.3.2.1. Entrance hall with mounds

From the Approach field, the one may enter the entrance plateau of the Monument, named the Entrance hall with mounds. This spatial unit includes two mounds of the fallen, with a flat space between them. On the western side, the Mound of partisans was built, which preserves a concrete crypt with the remains of 42 fighters of the Rasina district. On the eastern side, there is the Mound of the shot, in honor of the patriots who died there. This spatial unit ends with the Solar Arch (*Kapija Sunca, srb*) a centrally placed sculpture, in the center of the visible space. In the Figure 6, the position of the Solar Arch in relation to the mounds and the landscape is shown, presented on two cross sections. The sculpture built from Kruševac sandstone, in the form of an unfinished ring, is clearly, directly, and distinctly monumental. The representation in the Figure 7 is important because, taking 70° as the horizontal width of the human field of vision, it shows that the Solar Arch in the mound system is always seen in the foreground. The plan of observing the monument is important because, as Bogdanović said, the sensibility of the monument changes in relation to the plan in which it is located (Bogdanović, 1961). Thus, by placing the monument in the foreground, its monumentality is emphasized, and the space in which it is located imitates its characteristics. The Solar Arch is placed at the junction of the slope and the flat, uneven terrain. The plasticity of the terrain makes it possible to create dynamic spatial relationships, where the terrain enters the volume of the monument, and the light through the material becomes an active element of the composition. The Solar Arch is a sharply emphasized boundary, an allusion to a door that is never closed, always allowing horizontal penetration, and passage, but also vertical, whereby some side of the volume of the sculpture is always illuminated. Approaching the sculpture, it tends upwards, above the horizon of the eye, thus indicating its strength and striving for height. In the center of the Solar Arch, the visitor is surrounded, overwhelmed, brought to the sculpture, becomes an active participant. The sculpture was built from Kruševac sandstone, a material that has merged with the building tradition of this region. Additional relief processing was performed on the sandstone, all the necessary plastic was recessed in vertical and almost vertical pieces of stone. It is interesting that the horizontal pieces were installed without previous plastic-relief processing, presumably to prevent water retention in the cavities. The horizontal pieces are only quilted. In the Figure 6, it can be seen that the terrain behind the Solar Arch turns, and closes the space, giving no information about what lies beyond. With this act, Bogdanović invites visitors to enter and further explore the site.

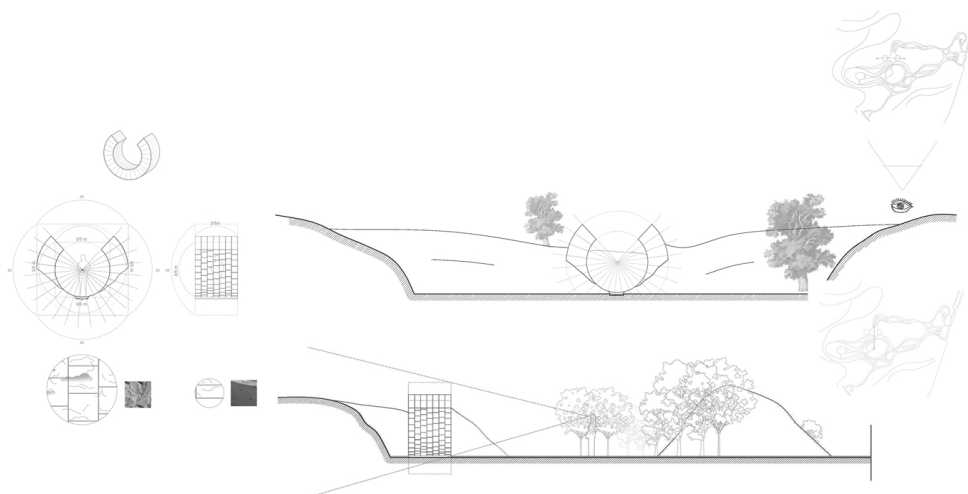


FIGURE 6: Entrance Hall with Mounds- cross sections and dimensional analysis of The Solar Arch. Source: author

2.3.2.2. *Valley of the living*

By passing through the Solar Arch, a narrow space is formed between the two ramparts, where the next compositional unit cannot be seen. From there, a beamed ramp ascends the left rampart, to the Amphitheater of the Living, or Valley of the Living. The ramp disappears, and the walk continues along the perimeter ring of the amphitheater. The bottom of the amphitheater is a narrowed circle, with auditorium seats around the perimeter, which expand towards the perimeter ring. Seen from above, the audience rows spill out towards the stage, towards the lowest elevation of this crater. The largest height difference between the perimeter ring of the amphitheater and the lowest elevation, the stage, is 6m. The width of the rows is about 120 cm, cascaded by 20-25 cm. for a better view of the space, with the possibility of seating for 7000 people. In the Figure 7, on the section through the amphitheater, it can be seen that, although the spatial characteristics of this unit initiate separation, the visual and acoustic connection with the Entrance Hall with Mounds and the Valley of Giving Respect is constant. Seen in this context, the amphitheater imitates the entire concept of Slobodište, as a place that is most directly involved in the life of the people of Kruševac, through organized cultural events, precisely by the visual connection with other entities: it reminds us of suffering, which is the main backbone of the creation of the conceptual concept of Slobodište. The accepted basic form of the auditorium and the stage enables, in addition to achieving the necessary design-spatial impression, also the satisfaction of the visual and acoustic requirements for the space for this purpose. The primary material is the soil, except for the stage, which was made of concrete until

1979. Beneath the stage there are auxiliary rooms for holding events. However, the level of underground water, as well as the effects of surface water, led to the fact that these spaces are no longer used. Also, in 1979, due to poor acoustics, the concrete stage was first replaced with a green one, which led to this whole being read as a monolith, as a fluid that descends from the perimeter ring, through the auditorium, to the stage. Seen through the base, this space can also be read as a symbol of a bird that takes off. If this allusion is connected to the function of this whole, the space that initiates the gathering, the key place for holding performances and other content during the Freedom Celebration, if the wings are auditoriums, then we return to the idea of Slobodište as a space that celebrates life, a space that is in his concept of the antithesis of death. What is particularly interesting, when talking about the spatial, morphological, and symbolic characteristics of the Valley of the Living, is that for this spatial entity, emptiness is more important than fullness. The void, the funnel-shaped crater, with its expansion towards the height, and the clearly differentiated bottom, the stage, exactly imitates the concept of Freedom, and the celebration of life, through the synthesis of architectural-urbanistic and sculptural gestures.



FIGURE 7: Valley of the Living- cross section. Source: author

2.3.2.3. *Valley of giving respect*

From the Solar Arch, through the Valley of the Living, it is natural to move towards the Valley of Giving Respect. On the stretch from the Valley of the Living to the Valley of Giving Respect, one will come across the sculpture of the Water Mill (Žrvnje, srb). The Water Mill represents a stone, sandblasted sculpture, below the observer's horizon line, sunk into the ground, drowned. It is approached from the front: it is in the center of the field of vision, which

emphasizes its importance in that very place, on the axis that connects the Valley of the Living and the Valley of Giving Respect. This sculpture with metal elements is associated with a mechanism: one gets the impression that it is working- that it is turning. The analysis of the literature indicated that this sculpture is an allusion to life, as a wheel that is constantly moving and constantly renewed, from the ground, and the sculpture is also immersed. The outer ring is rougher in materialization, with a texture that indicates movement, turning, while the central one is less embossed, with a shallower texture, along with the metal inner, smallest ring, which resembles a mechanism. Gradation is made, from a more pronounced texture to completely smooth metal. Figure 8 represents the Water Mill and the Valley of giving respect.



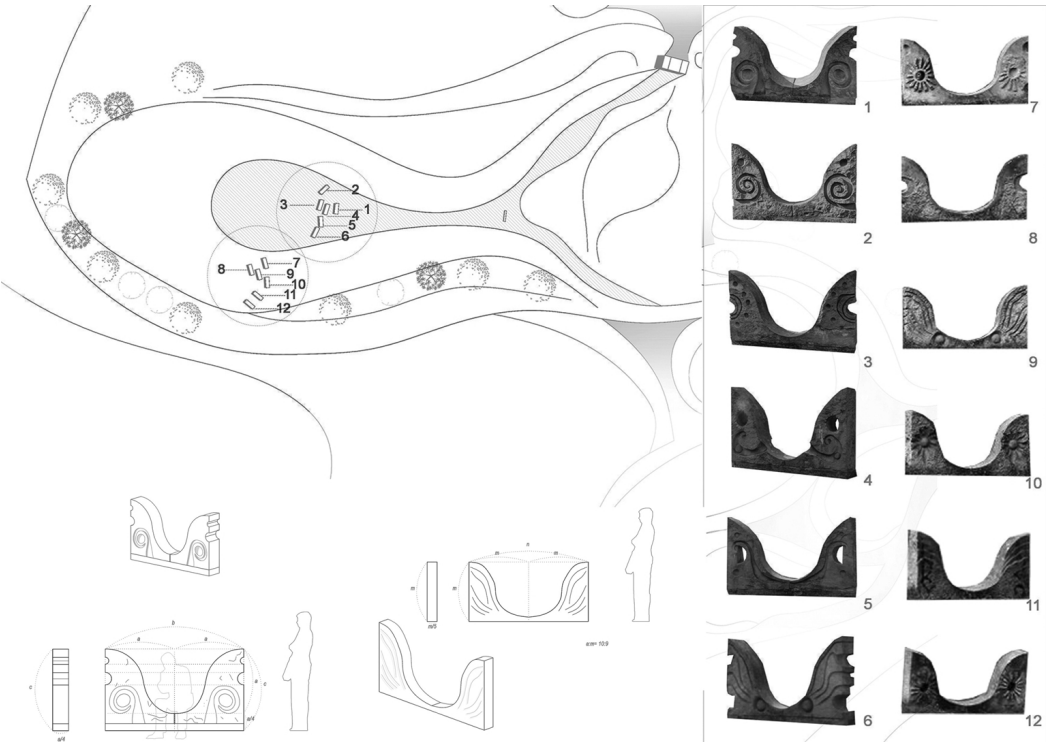
FIGURE 8:
The Water Mill and The
Valley of Giving Respect.
Source:
Author, August 2018.

The Valley of Giving Respect is defined by a crater with a depth of 10 (Lazić, 1991). the first crater formed in the initial phase of the work on Slobodište, already discussed in the beginning of this paper. In a lecture in June 1987, at the Faculty of Architecture, Bogdan Bogdanović (CZKD, 2008) spoke about the fact that the formation of this crater, and its spatial relationship with the rest of the original landscape, was crucial for the creation of the Valley of Giving Respect. The crater is “surrounded” from the western and southern sides by dense plantings of different types and heights. This group of trees consists of black and eastern white pine, birch, cypress, weeping willow.

If the Valley of Giving Respect is a sanctuary, the Valley of the Living is its dome, where emptiness and fullness have the same importance, spatial features interact, communicate, and are related. The idea and belief about the tirelessness of life, as Bogdanović says, is symbolized by 12 Stone Birds, emerging from the ground. The explanation why there are exactly 12 birds was not found in Bogdanović’s texts, interviews and lectures.

However, secondary sources have given three interpretations. According to the first interpretation, the number twelve is a symbol of completeness (Anđelković-Adžemović, 2017). The product of four sides of the world and three levels of the world. According to another interpretation, the year has twelve months and indicates completeness and renewal (Anđelković-Adžemović, 2017). The third interpretation is related to Christian symbolism, Christ and the twelve apostles, Jerusalem built on twelve foundations, with twelve entrance doors (Anđelković-Adžemović, 2017). The stone birds are placed seemingly at random. They are divided into two groups, a group of six is in the deepest part of the crater, while the other six are placed on the slope. Through a more detailed analysis of their position, in relation to the spatial characteristics of the terrain, in relation to the mentioned symbolism, but also in relation to their morphological characteristics, one thread can be drawn that connects all these levels, a synthesis of ideas, sculpture and landscape. Figure 9 represents author’s analysis of the Stone Birds, where their position in the Valley is shown, as well as dimensional analysis.

FIGURE 9: Analysis of Stone Birds. Source: author



If we look at the first group of Stone Birds, the first among them (marked with number 1 on Figure 9), is the first one we come across, the only one placed perpendicular to the direction of movement, from the Valley of the Living. It is placed centrally in the field of vision, it is clear, direct, strong, and seems the most monumental, the most robust.

Again, we come across a situation where the terrain and the spatial framework in which the sculpture is located emphasize its sensibility, and thus increase the scope of its action. Like the others, it was built of stone, its monolith structure is emphasized. Form-wise, it is associated with a bird without a body, only the wings are shown, which are a symbol of flight and rising to the sky. Approaching, it is below the horizon line of the human eye, but its shape says that it is moving up, towards the heights, and not down, towards the earth. It was created from the earth, the crater is the womb, as professor Bogdanović defined it (CZKD, 2008). The plastic-relief processing is different for each of the Stone Birds. For the bird numbered 1, the treatment resembles the volutes of an Ionic column plunging into the ground, as if the bird had flown from the top of the column. The other five Birds from this group form a sub-unit. Together they form a series. The first one among them, marked with number 2 in Figure 9, is facing the side of this row, as if lining up, controlling, introducing order. It is whole, without cavities, with plastic-relief processing in the form of two volutes, from two different columns. So it still hasn't taken off, its position is clear. The other four birds emphasize insecurity with their position, as if they do not have a clear course of movement, but lean towards the south-west, lean towards the slope, towards another group of Birds, which have already taken off. Observing their loose design features, they seem lighter, they are in motion, not static. The relief-plastic treatment of their surfaces seems to be derived from the volutes of the previous two, but is freer, decomposed. If this grouping is viewed through the orientation in relation to the movement of the sun, the shadow will never fall towards the south, i.e. towards the slope where the birds stayed, symbolically, because that path, the path towards the birds that have already taken off, is the only correct one. The remaining six birds (numbered 7-12) can be observed together. They are slightly smaller than the first group, which can be seen in attached dimensional analysis, and are never viewed from the front, they are not so clear, so strong and expressive. They are in the background, gentler, lighter, and less exclusive (Bogdanović, 1961). All the birds in The Valley of Giving Respect have only one face, that is, only one side embossed, so it is always clear where they are facing, which way. They were carved by self-taught stone carvers from the Kruševac area. They are built according to the impulse of nature and the strength of will and skill, without signatures and names (Lazić, 1991).

2.3.3. Cross memorial

According to the first, broader division of the memorial part of the memorial park, next to the Approach Field and the Monument, the third part of the composition is Cross Memorial that initiated the creation of the idea of Slobodište. Cross Memorial, the place where the occupiers shot fighters and patriots, is located in the western part of the complex (Figure 2). This event, at this place, is evidenced by the existence of an inscription on a laid stone. The marked place of suffering, and the later construction of Slobodište, on that place, indicates that this space from a memorial in the form of a plaque, characteristic of the period up to 1960, became a space of strong expression, which expresses the cultural and historical meanings of this spatial entity. Therefore, the marking of the shooting event itself has gone through a transformation in the marking method, or, more precisely, today it is expressed by the synthesis of two special marking methods. At the time of the beginning of the construction of Slobodište, in the area of Cross Memorial, there was a rampart with a hint of the existence of parts of the pit into which the firing squads were dragged, a semicircular concrete element 4 m wide and 3.5 m high, which is considered to be part of a bunker, or the base of a bunker that was never built memorial to the victims (Živić, 1979). During the construction of the complex, care was taken to ensure that the marked place of suffering was not damaged by anything, that it remained as a whole as it was found. Therefore, nothing was built on the site of Stratište, nor was it highlighted, but the entire Slobodište was built in its honor. The only element marking this event is a 1 m by 0.5 m stone slab (Figure 10). On the slab, it is written:

‘Here German fascists shot about a thousand patriots in 1941-1945.’ⁱ



FIGURE 10: Words on the Cross Memorial.
Source: <http://nbks.org.rs/digNBK/slobodiste/> 17th September 2018.

The plate is in the grass, under a tree, almost unnoticeable. The plaque has become an integral part of the land in which it was placed, and that same land is one of the most important building elements of Slobodište. Symbolically, Slobodište was born from Cross Memorial, the idea of the event was incorporated into the land.

2.3.4. Slobodište memorial house

Slobodište Memorial House was built in 1978, according to the project of the architect Svetislav Žujović. The original and current purpose of the building is a museum space. Slobodište Memorial House was designed as a circular building, with a total area of 350 m², with a hall space of 200 m², for various purposes (exhibitions, gatherings, teaching activities, etc.) next to the Brus-Aleksandrovac main road. The building is covered by an earth embankment on all sides, except towards Cross Memorial. When looking at the aerial plan from Figure 5, the openness of the building is precisely towards Cross Memorial and the Monument, and the Approach Field, which, even though it was built 13 years later, becomes an active element of the whole.

Due to the covering of the building with an earthen embankment over the roof structure, 80 cm thick, the building received extremely good acoustic and thermal insulation (Živić, 1979). Temperature measurements in the building showed that temperatures are 5-6 degrees higher in winter and lower in summer, compared to the outside temperature. This data is important, because it means that cooling in summer and heating in winter are insignificant, and there was no need for special building systems in order to regulate the temperature. According to its structural characteristics, the building is a skeleton system, built of reinforced concrete.

FIGURE 11: Slobodište Memorial House.
Source: google.com, 18th September 2018.
slobodiste/ 17th September 2018.



The axes in which the pillars and vertical tie beams lie are placed radially, and intersect in the center of the plateau in front of Slobodište Memorial House. The largest clear distance between the pillars is 280 cm, the axial distance is 300 cm. The depth of the object is 435 cm. Viewed through the base, it can be seen that the building is embedded in the ground on three sides, while one facade is free. The three buried facades were built from reinforced concrete walls with a thickness of 20 cm, all around, in order to additionally stiffen the building so that splitting does not occur during uneven settlement.

The height of the building is 3 m, while the height of the roof is 3.60 m. Conceptually, the burying of the object, i.e. its filling, fully corresponds to the already built spatial units of the Memorial Park. However, the large contact surface with the terrain necessitated the need for additional waterproofing. Therefore, the 30 cm thick reinforced concrete ceiling is covered with 3 layers of roofing cardboard and 4 layers of bitumen. Also, under the floor insulation, at an elevation of -0.5 m, a drainage channel was formed for the collection and drainage of atmospheric sewage.

A special moment in the construction of Slobodište Memorial House is the interior design. Construction elements represent an important part of the building. The facade is made of glass panels, arranged between RC columns. The use of glass in combination with concrete has a dual role in this case. One is to provide visual contact between the Memorial House and the rest of the Memorial Park, which is part of the concept of the facility. On the other side, with the glass panels between the pillars, you can clearly read what is supporting, what is being carried, you can clearly read the hierarchy of importance of the elements from which Slobodište Memorial House was built. All ceilings are white in order to reflect light better. The basic tone of the processing of all wooden elements (against the glass facade, paneling made of pressed oak planks) is dark brown, with a matte lacquer finish. In addition to the careful positioning of the building, in accordance with the already formed Memorial Park, the materials used in the construction of the Slobodište Memorial Park additionally bind the building to the space in which it is located, the materials used are in “collusion” with the earth masses and the plateau paved with Jastrebac slate.

From 2020 until 2023, The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments Kraljevo, in collaboration with National Museum of Kruševac, developed a reconstruction project of Slobodište Memorial House, planning to be used as an exhibition space. A permanent exhibition dedicated to the victims of the Second World War is planned, next to the multimedia space dedicated to the memorial architecture of Kruševac region (Novi izložbeni prostor, 2023).

3. CONCLUSION

This research of the Slobodište Memorial Park confirms the hypothesis that the expression of an idea through the means of plastic and urbanism cannot be reduced to pre-defined and generally accepted expressions, but new expressions should be sought by forming specific spatial, morphological and symbolic characteristics of the composition and elements. The nature of memorial architecture and its symbolic value directed the research to the analysis of available literature and technical documentation. However, in the end a free, individual understanding of the symbol was given, because only such a personal understanding of the symbol makes sense.

What was confirmed in the paper, and what was the backbone of each chapter and sub-chapter, is the existence of a thread that connects the context of the construction of the memorial park, the architectural and urban planning of the space, the morphological characteristics of the elements and the literary marking of the space. From the very beginning of the analysis, due to the spatial framework of the construction, no major restrictions and technical norms conditioned the project. This situation made the research even more difficult, given that, in an effort to make the research scientifically based, it was necessary to find threads and connections between the whole, sub-whole and elements.

The memorial park of Bogdan Bogdanović expresses one clear and consistent idea, recognized in different levels of spatial research. The ten chapters pronounced at the opening of Slobodište were important to mention and give them space in the work, because they express precisely that idea of celebrating life in the space of suffering, different from the traditional understanding of death. According to its conceptual message, Slobodište thereby overcame the previously known and accepted attitudes towards suffering. By synthesizing different skills, design, spatial, literary and sculptural, Bogdan Bogdanović created a new understanding and attitude towards memorial architecture. In each of its segments, Slobodište consistently and discreetly revealed an idea by building spatial entities, shaping the terrain, and elements, and the aspiration was that the research shown in the work, primarily through the structure, gradually revealed the words of the universal message of Slobodište. This unobtrusiveness and gradualness were achieved by gradation of spatial units and their purposes, shaping the terrain, relationships of spatial units and acoustic, visual and ambient separation of spatial sub-units. The architectural-urban layout is logical and simple and the primary directions of development of the memorial part of the complex are visible. In a broader context, the central

axis that connects the farthest points, Cross Memorial and Slobodište Memorial House, is clearly visible and is emphasized by the orientation of the Dom. In a narrower spatial context, in the composition of the Monument, two main axes can be observed, one that connects the Solar Arch and the Water Mill, and the other that connects the Valley of the Living and the Valley of Giving Respect, “capturing” the Water Mill. At the intersection of those two axes is a cluster of Water Mill with the main message from the charter “In the name of the living”.

With this project, Bogdan Bogdanović laid the foundations and elements of a new formula for the construction of memorial architecture. The idea of opening to the sky is recognized through the architectural-urban planning solution, applied elements, processing of materials and sculptural skill. At his last lecture, held in June 1987 in the amphitheatre of the Faculty of Architecture, professor Bogdan Bogdanović looked back on his completed works of memorial architecture, linking them into a system, where he clearly showed how each of his projects influenced all the previous ones, as well as that all the previous ones influenced the concepts of the next ones, thus creating a wider system each time.

‘In your opinion, how long the monuments you built will last?

...In any case, it is certain that those monuments will not speak to future generations the same as they speak to us, but it is important that they do not fall silent. (Bogdanović, 2001)’ⁱⁱ

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NOTES

- i In the original, the quotation is the following:

‘Ovde su nemački fašisti streljali oko hiljadu rodoljuba 1941-1945.’

- ii In the original, the quotation is the following:

‘Šta mislite, koliko će trajati spomenici koje ste napravili? ...U svakom slučaju, sigurno je da ti spomenici neće generacijama budućnosti govoriti isto što i nama govore, ali važno je da ne začute.’ (Bogdanović, 2001).
