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The Royal Tomb as a Place of Memory: Fabrication and Transformation of the Grave of the Supreme Leader Karađorđe in the 19th and the First Half of the 20th Centuries**

ABSTRACT: Since ancient times the tombs of rulers were shaped as key ideological *topoi* to be later turned into the places of pilgrimage depending on the historical circumstances. They could have also been the instruments of oblivion used to destroy the memory of a ruler, a dynasty, or the entire monarchist regime. The modern era of the Serbian state was marked by the on-going conflicts between the dynasties of Obrenović and Karađorđević. The source of this animosity that featured *the long 19th century* came out of the murder of Karađorđe in 1817. The founder of the Karađorđević dynasty was beheaded by order of Miloš Obrenović, a latter founder of the Obrenović dynasty. Over time, the grave marker of Karađorđe located in the church in the town of Topola became a secret place of homage since almost during the entire century the rival Obrenović dynasty was in power. In the late 19th century the tomb of Karađorđe became a subject of political manipulation. Young King Aleksandar Obrenović visited the grave of Karađorđe in Topola in 1893. On that occasion, he expressed the great reverence for the deceased, and a few years later this was visually immortalised by a drawing of Felix Kanitz, a notable German scientist and travel book writer. The carefully organised and staged activities helped the transformation of the tomb from the place of oblivion into the engaged artefact and *topos* in service of dynastic reconciliation. Biological disappearance of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903 led to the conversion of the Karađorđe's grave into the place of cult. Over time, the tomb became the national

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and dynastic symbol which set the core for the monumental church – the mausoleum of Karadorđević dynasty in Oplenac, near Topola shaped in the interwar period.

KEYWORDS: the royal tomb, Karadorđe, Karadorđević dynasty, Oplenac, dynastic reconciliation, place of memory.

Burial places have always reflected, via their form and contents, the basic religious, social, political, and cultural determinants of time (SÖRRIES, KNÖLL 2005: 126–153). Graves are places of private memory and emotional compassion (БОРОЗАН 2006: 952–963), but also they represent important political *topoi* in the service of community homogenization (KULJIĆ 2014: 319–332). Since ancient times the graves of prominent community leaders have represented peculiar cult places (ANTONACCIO 1994: 389–410). Set in a public space, they reveal the key socio-cultural determinants of epochs allowing us to understand them as first-class political phenomena (RADER 2003; KULJIĆ 2014). As part of the public sphere,¹ the graves of the community's greats reflect the desires and expectations of the upper strata of society.

The cult of the dead and the visualisation of the graves have always been incorporated into the collective memory.² During the 19th century, the exemplary omnipresence of Antique ideals assumed a canonical status.³ The attitude towards graves throughout Europe could be described as a fusion of invented ancient traditions and official Christian symbols. In the new circumstances, the ideals of the Antique world influenced the standardisation of sepulchral rituals that were largely based on the modern reinterpretation of ancient heritage. The 19th century perspective of the Antique concept of death is sublimed in the book titled *La Cité Antique: Étude sur le Culte, le Droit, les Institutions de la Grèce et de Rome* (ДЕ КУЛАНЖ 1956) written by Fustel de Coulanges, a famous French scholar.⁴ In the 19th century, most of the European states incorporated within their ideologies ideas such as those on the justification of killing a tyrant, the glorification of a fallen warrior, worshipping the cult of ancestors, commitment to the territory marked by blood, the remnants of famous and family predecessors, etc. The modern era called for a new interpretation of the old structures of death culture which were later matched with the current social and economic relations of most European countries (militarisation of society, modernisation of the economy, strong national movements, etc.)

Marked by graves, a unique national (extra-territorial) and state (territorial) space provided their subjects with a sense of mental and emotional cohesion (MANOJLOVIĆ PINTAR 2014: 25–28). *The blood ties* which in the Antique times gathered predecessors and heirs within one family now gave way to the subjects of the state and members of a particular ethnic group (SMIT 1998: 26–28). The sacredness of the territory needed to be confirmed by the graves of the ancestors (MANOJLOVIĆ PINTAR 2014: 27), but also by the grave markers of the chosen community leaders, that later became identity features of national and monarchist unity. Within the framework of the ruler's representation, the gravesites gained a prominent media role in the Medieval (ПОПОВИЋ 1992; BELGHAUS 2011: 434–442), Early Modern (BERTELLI 2001: 214–270)

¹ More on public sphere, see: HABERMAS 2012

² For better understanding of burial sites in the context of visualization of burial *topoi* of national heroes in Serbia in the 19th century, see: МАКУЉЕВИЋ 2006: 278–284.

³ For broader view on understandings and transformations of Antiquity in the 19th century, see: OSTERKAMP, VALK 2011.

⁴ This book is translated in Serbian language and published here in 1895.

and Modern Era (БОРОЗАН 2013: 654–754). Complex death rituals implied the mourning over the deceased, the ephemeral funeral spectacle in honour of the deceased, the solemn funeral, as well as a series of recalling actions (such as commemoration service at the gravesite, etc.).

The politicisation of gravesites is set in scientific researches as one of the key idioms within the scope of cultural memory of a community (RADER 2003: 20). The tomb of the ruler as an extraordinary place of remembrance was embedded into the community's collective consciousness via a range of mnemonic means.⁵ The anthropological understandings of Claude Lévi-Strauss suggest that the content of gravesites can be understood in the context of a historical moment, which in due course acquires a permanent structure of the myth (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1991: 229). The instrumentalisation of the gravesite inevitably leads to the creation of a connection between the myth and the group (subjects) (RADER 2003: 21). Political myths and their instrumentalisation are based on three interrelated structures that are recognised in the following form: *narration*, *rituals (rites)*, and *icon (image)* (RADER 2003: 20). Thus, the visualisation of the gravesite (icon) in the form of a monument, a artefact or an mark, produces the most powerful rhetorical effect in the system of representation of the ruler's tomb.

History as an objective category turns into a myth which, even though it blurs the authenticity of the historical, acquires the power of the iconic to finally produce the fiction of the factual (TELESKO 2010: 39–41, 119–122). The issue of the ruler's image was set at the heart of political mythology (TELESKO 2004: 34–78). The secularisation and profanisation of the sacred reached its climax in the Modern Era. The once undeniable sacredness of Christian history gave in to the effect of the autonomous action of history. Within the process of sacralisation of the profane history, modern heroes (rulers) defined the core of the transformation of the meaning as mentioned earlier. The rulers replaced the Christian saints, turning into new identity patterns within the framework of the death culture.

The public character of these standardised actions formed a subsequent memory of the deceased ruler, legitimising the current ruler as well as the normed value system. During the 19th century, various media expressions (sculpture, architectural-sculptural artefacts, painting, mass media, etc.) were put in service of the engaged popularisation of the rulers' graves. Particularly visualised were the graves of imaginary ancestors, which legitimised the current government, as well as dynastic succession.

The issue of the ruler's grave is inevitably linked to the understandings of the ruler's body. According to Michel Foucault, the institution of the ruler's body is based upon the thesis on the political economy of the body (ФУКО 1997: 16). The ruler's body is established as a sum of socio-political aspects that point to general social discourses.

Foucault's political anatomy of the ruler's body (ФУКО 1997: 30) inevitably leads us to the famous Ernst Kantorowicz's theory of the king's two bodies (KANTOROVIC 2012). Based on medieval legal premises, this theory rested on the distinction between the physical, decadent, and personal ruler's body, and the other symbolic, incorruptible, and suprapersonal ruler's body (PFOSTERER 2011: 559–566). This intellectual discourse is unavoidably linked to the sepulchral ceremonies and grave artefacts dedicated to the ruler (ФУКО 1997: 30). The tomb of the ruler becomes the replacement of that other body of the ruler, which points to the indestructible and

⁵ About diverse structures and memory policies, see: SLÁDAČEK, VASILJEVIĆ i dr. 2015.

everlasting body of the monarchy as a whole. Via construction of a gravesite, the mortal remains of the ruler are transformed into a symbol of the immortal monarchy, thus becoming a pledge for the permanent dynastic and monarchist continuity. Therefore, the rulers' tombs become integrative places of the everlasting concept of the monarchist authorities.

The idea of the ruler's body was closely related to the concept of cancellation of the ruler's physical body (ZITZLSPERGER 2011: 440–447). The annulment of the ruler's body would lead to the abandonment of trust in the supremacy of the sovereign, which potentially could have endangered the vitality of the state, dynasty, and monarchy as a whole (MERRICK 1998: 14). At the same time, the murderer of the king was regarded as the most terrible figure (the reverse figure of the ruler) whose body was deconstructed in particular and with special attention (ФУКО 1997: 15 – 16).

It was at the beginning of the 19th century that the European monarchist experiences reached the Serbian society, including their constitutive element – the culture of death (БОРОЗАН 2006: 889–983). Leading Serbian intellectuals and artists, citizens of the Habsburg Empire, at the beginning of the century disseminated modern European practices to the territory of the Ottoman Empire inhabited by the Serbian population. New ideas were soon incorporated into the system of Serbian visual culture. Accordingly, funeral rituals and monuments, as well as mass funeral spectacles became an important part of the representation of the 19th-century Serbian dynasties, the Karađorđevićs, and the Obrenovićs (МАКУЉЕВИЋ 2006: 311–314).

In the light of the theories mentioned above and perceptions of the ruler's body and the ruler's tomb, as well as their transfer to the Serbian territories, we can examine the case of the grave of Karađorđe (МАКУЉЕВИЋ 2006: 281). The foundations of modern Serbian statehood were set up at the beginning of the 19th century. The rise of the First Serbian Uprising under the Supreme Leader Karađorđe in Orašac in 1804 marked the beginning of the decades-long struggle for the liberation of the Serbian people.⁶ The centuries-long Ottoman slavery started slowly withdrawing facing with the continued emancipatory actions of the young Serbian emerging nation. The First Serbian Uprising was marked by the undisputed figure of the Supreme Leader Karađorđe Petrović. The works of visual arts had an active role when it comes to glorifying the ruler's image. Hence, using the copy of the portrait of Vladimir Borovikovsky from 1816, the painters Arenije Petrović (Fig. 1) and Uroš Knežević made a canonic image of the Supreme Leader presenting the ruler at the optimum historical moment. The title of the Supreme Leader corresponded to the greatest extent to the concept of unlimited power. In 1813, the Uprising was suppressed, and Karađorđe fled to Russia.

In 1815 the Second Serbian uprising erupted. It was regarded as a natural extension and the next stage of the unique Serbian Revolution⁷ within the European and Serbian historiography. Prince Miloš Obrenović raised in Takovo a new rebellion against the Ottoman authorities.⁸ Unlike the Supreme Leader Karađorđe, the founder of the Obrenović Dynasty was a pragmatic politician. Having relied on warfare, as well as on diplomatic activities, Prince Miloš was more successful than his predecessor in acquiring Serbia autonomy.

⁶ On life and deeds of Karađorđe, see: ЉУШИЋ 2005.

⁷ For details on Serbian Revolution, see: РУДИЋ, ПАВЛОВИЋ 2016.

⁸ On the Takovo Uprising and the subsequent creation of the Takovo myth, see: ТИМОТИЈЕВИЋ 2012.



Fig. 1. Arsenije Petrović (after V. L. Borovikosky), *Karađorđe*, oil on canvas, 1840.
(Historical Museum of Serbia)



Fig. 2. Đura Jakšić, *The Murder of Karađorđe*, oil on canvas, 1862. (National Museum in Belgrade)

The relative peace in the country, based on some form of semi-autonomy under the rule of Prince Miloš, was suddenly jeopardised by the return of the Supreme Leader Karađorđe to Serbia in 1817 (ЉУШИЋ 2005: 462–473). The last thing that the current Serbian leader needed was the radicalisation of relations with the Ottomans, who on the other hand did not find any interest in worsening the situation in the unstable area of the Balkan Peninsula. Hence, it was with the tacit consent of the Sublime Porte, that Prince Miloš ordered the assassination of the former Supreme Leader (МЕРЕНИК et al. 2018). The killing was carried out under cover of the night by Nikola Novaković. The moment of this crime remained recorded in verbal-visual culture and later in the collective memory of the nation. The painters Đura Jakšić (Fig. 2) and Than Mór (Fig. 3) visualised the act of crime, which produced a collective trauma and shock, leaving it embedded permanently in the private and collective memory of the community.

After the crime, the murderer buried a beheaded body at the crime scene in Radovanjski Lug, near Velika Plana. Then he took the decapitated head to Belgrade (ЉУШИЋ 2005: 469). Some historical sources claim that the head was immediately handed over to Maraşlı Ali Paşa,



Fig. 3. Than Mór, *The Murder of Karadorde*, oil on canvas, 1863. (National Museum in Belgrade)

the Vizir of Belgrade (ЛЕТОПИСАЦ 1992: 4; ЉУШИЋ 2005: 470), while according to other written testimonies, such as that of Bartolomeo Cuniberti, a personal doctor of the Serbian Prince and his family, Princess Ljubica, the wife of Prince Miloš, first took the skull and washed it with wine while lamenting over it (ЕЛЕЗОВИЋ 1930: 49 – 51; КУНИБЕРТ 1988: 135; СТЕВАНОВИЋ 2005: 3). In any case, according to the order of Prince Miloš, the skin from Karadorde's skull was peeled off, and having it stuffed with the cotton, it was sent off to Constantinople.⁹

After the Orthodox funeral ritual, the skull without Karadorde's face was buried just along the wall of the Cathedral Church in Belgrade. This is how Karadorde's cotton-filled skin face ended up in Constantinople, while the skull was buried on the right side facing the entrance of the Cathedral Church in Belgrade in 1817 (СТЕВАНОВИЋ 2005: 3).

⁹ Karadorde's cotton-filled skin face was displayed on the window across the door of the Sultan's Palace. The head was then placed in a museum in Constantinople. It was then stolen and housed in a museum in Athens, and after this, we lose every track on it. See СТЕВАНОВИЋ 2005: 4.



Fig. 4. The Church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola, photograph

In 1819, upon the order of Princess Ljubica, the beheaded body of Karadorde was excavated and then buried in the church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola (ЉУШИЋ 2005: 472–473; ГАВРИЛОВИЋ 1908: 360). It is the church that was consecrated in 1811¹⁰ upon the order of Karadorde. It was built as part of the grand fortification (city) and designed as a burial church of the Supreme Leader (ВУЈОВИЋ 1986: 97–99) (Fig. 4). It fulfilled its purpose after the transfer of the body of Karadorde in 1819 (ВИЋЕНТИЋ 2008: 33–35; НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXV). According to Konstantin Nenadović, the body was placed in a previously designed gravesite, just next to the holy doors, which confirmed the special significance of the deceased, since the place in front of the iconostasis, as a rule, was reserved for the saints (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXV).

According to the symbolic value of the church interior and the status of the deceased, the gravesite was walled up and marked with a kilim. The kilim marked the sanctity of the burial site, which soon became the subject of a subversive cult. Namely, the followers of the Supreme Leader started secretly coming to pay homage to the founder of the Karadorđević Dynasty (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXVI). It was the cruel murder

that provided the Supreme Leader with pseudo-martyr wreath. Thus, the cult of the Supreme Leader Karadorde emerged, and its centre was his burial place in the church in Topola.

Despite Nenadović's claims, a more probable assumption indicates that the gravesite, according to Serbian medieval practice (ПОПОВИЋ 1992: 177) was located on the south side of the narthex (ЉУШИЋ 2005: 197), or possibly in a courtyard along the altar wall (ВИЋЕНТИЋ 2008: 34).

Having in mind the symbolic topography of the Christian temple, Prince Miloš could have been probably disturbed by the specially designated gravesite (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXV), so he might have ordered his subjects to move the body to the church's narthex, on the right side of the front door. Above the gravesite was a tombstone with a Church Slavonic inscription that abolished the guilt of Prince Miloš, and accordingly, shifted the blame for Karadorde's murder to the Ottomans (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXVI; ЉУШИЋ 2005: 473). Therefore, the grave turned into a political artefact and a place of the engaged incorporation of the historical (un)truth.

According to the State Archive records, it was in March 1820 that servants excavated the head of the Supreme Leader and then re-attached to his torso (ГАВРИЛОВИЋ 1908: 360, nap. 931),

¹⁰ More on the church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola, see: ВИЋЕНТИЋ 2008.

which completed symbolically and physically the reconstruction of the body of the leader of the First Serbian Uprising.¹¹

During the century, general social movements affected Karadorde's tomb. Except for the rule of Aleksandar Karadordević (1842–1858), the rival dynasty Obrenović ruled the 19th century Serbia. The destruction of the heritage of the Karadordevićs threatened to devastate the burial place of Karadorde. Despite the real danger, the Church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola and the Karadorde's grave were not destroyed during the revengeful action of the Obrenovićs in 1876. The popularity of the Supreme Leader's burial place, as the *topos* of pilgrimage (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXIX) with its pseudo-religious status, allowed it to escape the fate of Karadorde's town in Topola (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XLIV), which was completely devastated in a typical action of memory repression (*damnatio memoriae*) by the rival dynasty (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XLVIII–XLVI).

The politicisation of the Karadorde's grave reached its climax at the end of the 19th century. It was within the scope of a great manifest tour over Serbia, that King Aleksandar Obrenović paid homage to Karadorde at his grave in the church in Topola, on 26 August 1893. This campaigning tour across Serbia was in the function of fixing a rather unstable ruler's position among the people. The reporter in his article entitled *King the Peacemaker*, published in the newspaper titled *Male Novine (Small Newspapers)* on 3 September 1893 (АНОНИМ 1893), praises the King's act, claiming that it confirmed his *aspiration* to annul the disagreement between the two leaders of the First and Second Serbian Uprising – Karadorde and Prince Miloš. The report written in an engaging language represented an active part of the actions related to the announced reconciliation of the two Serbian dynasties. The unstable time required inner conciliation of the two dynasties. The report gives a further detailed account of the event. According to the allegation, after laying a wreath on the Supreme Leader's tomb, the King said: “*I lay this wreath in glory and remembrance to the man who first started the Uprising for the liberation of Serbia – the great Karadorde – To him be the glory, forever!*” (АНОНИМ 1893) This unusual and solemn ceremony was featured by almost a pathetic action verbally presented via public media, thus becoming accessible to the wider audience.

Visual culture added to the popularisation of the event taking place in the church in Topola. For the illustrated travelogue titled *Das Königreich Serbien und das Serbenvolk von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (1904) (КАНИЦ 1991: 337), the famous German scholar and travel writer Felix Kanitz sketched the moment of the King's paying honour to the Karadorde's grave (Fig. 5). Based on historical facts, the author visually reconstructed the King's homage to the Grand Leader's grave. Via rhetorical means, Kanitz expressed the dramatic aspect of the event (the contrast of the light and the dark, or the sudden appearance of a ray of daylight that illuminates the King), thus confirming the sublimity of the royal act. According to the writer's testimony, King Aleksandar showed him his portrait, the work of Wilhelm Gause, the highly “fashionable” painter among Vienna's elite, which would be later used as a model for the staged image of the royal figure in the church in Topola. The subsequent visual reconstruction of this event was put in the service of propaganda of the Royal peace mission, which

¹¹ Despite Konstantin Nenadović's claim that Karadorde's head was re-attached to his body in 1837 (НЕНАДОВИЋ 1883: XXXVI), the theory that it was done upon order of Prince Milos in 1820 when the head was finally transferred to Topola, seems more plausible (ЉУШИЋ 2005: 472–473).



Fig. 5. King Alexander Obrenović at the grave of the Supreme Leader 1893. (КАНИЋ, Feliks. *Serbia – Land and Population from the Roman Times to the End of the 19th Century*. Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1991, vol. 1, 335)

highlighted the then-popular idea of the national unity expressed through the reconciliation of the two dynasties.¹²

Continually throughout the century, visual culture kept using references to the key exemplars of dynastic unity. The famous theme *St. Sava Reconciles his Quarreling Brothers*, enjoyed great popularity in various media over the century (КОСТИЋ 2013: 33–50). The mythical reconciliation of the brothers Stefan Prvovenčani and Vukan Nemanjić on the grave of the founder of the dynasty Stefan Nemanja was visualised corresponding to the current political situation. The medieval event referred to contemporary circumstances, which in some measure continued further with the act of King Aleksandar in Topola, demonstrating the dynastic reconciliation at the tomb of *the father of modern Serbia* (the Supreme Leader Karadorđe). King Aleksandar sought to present himself as a peacemaker acting above party and dynastic disputes, thus providing the nation with the desired peace and stability. On the other hand, the grave of Karadorđe finally became an integral *topos* and a place of reconciliation in the service of the dynastic concordance securing the rule of the actual dynasty.

Despite various propaganda actions, King Aleksandar did not manage to improve his image in public. The complex circumstances caused the brutal assassination of the King and his Queen Draga Obrenović in Belgrade, in 1903 (СТОЛИЋ 2009: 194–204). After the biological extinction

of the Obrenović dynasty, King Petar Karadorđević, Karadorđe's grandson, ascended the Serbian throne, and thus re-established the rule of the house of Karadorđević (ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ 2003). From the very beginnings of King Petar's rule, the church in Oplenac and the Karadorđe's grave were at the core of the ambitious plans of the new Serbian king. Like his predecessor, King Peter recognised the importance and ideological power of the grave of Karadorđe, so the visits and worships at the church in Topola became the regular feature of his practice (АНОНИМ 1903; 1913). The king sought to establish a dynastic mausoleum in Oplenac with the relics of

¹² On the other hand, here it is interesting to mention that, according to the article that was published later, the painter who made a large scale portrait of Karadorđe at the wall above his grave just prior to the visit of King Aleksandar, was, allegedly, sentenced to jail. (АНОНИМ 1903, *Шумања*)

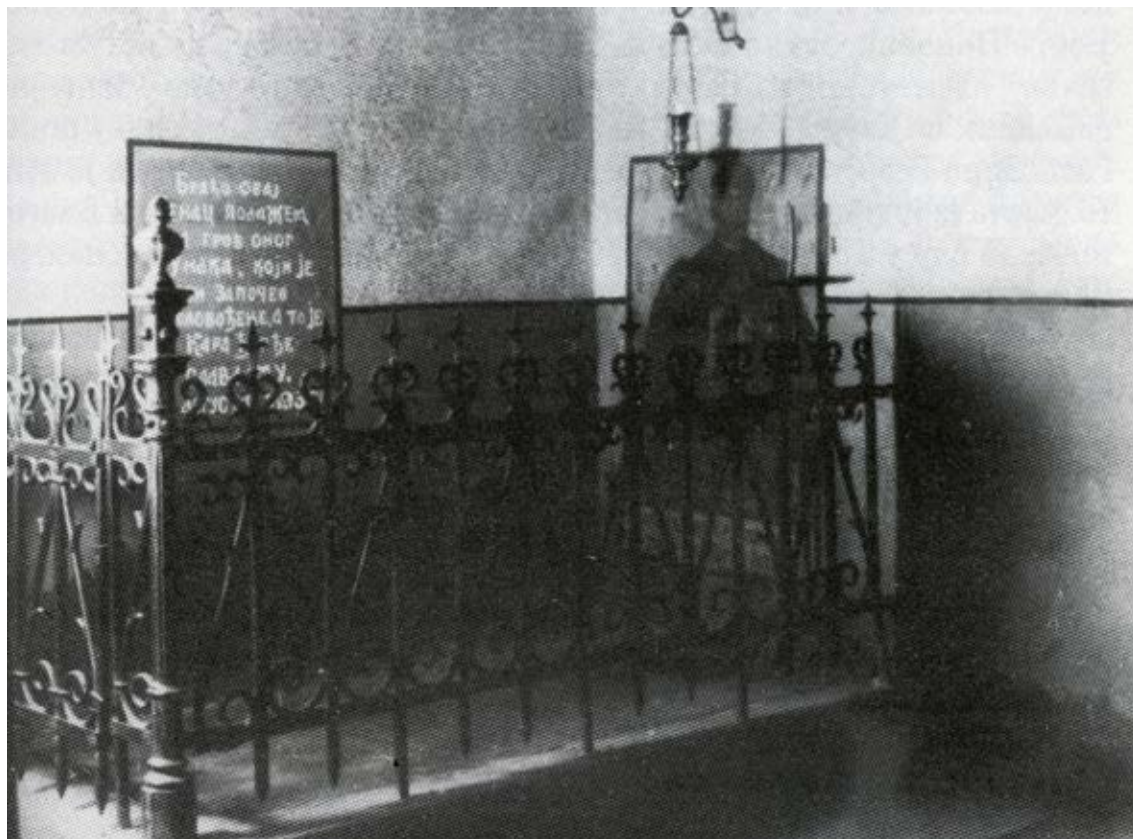


Fig. 6. Karadorđe's grave, narthex of the Church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola, photograph

the immortal founder of the Karadorđević dynasty in its centre. The legitimisation of the new/old dynasty rested heavily on the consecrated relics of the mythical hero, and therefore the burial place of the Supreme Leader became the pledge of the legitimacy of his descendants. The new circumstances brought about some transformation of the Karadorđe's gravesite. A valuable archival photo shows a fenced tomb of Karadorđe in the church in Topola (Fig. 6). In addition to the inscription on the wall above the tomb, which glorifies Karadorđe's leadership in the First Serbian Uprising, we notice a three-quarter-view portrait of the Supreme Leader. Karadorđe's portrait replaces the body of the absent ruler and becomes his iconic support, sanctifying the entire space. New political circumstances triggered by the dynastic turnover facilitated artist Vladislav Titelbah to create a *tableau* of Topola (1903), featuring the iconic image of Karadorđe at the top of the composition and his grave at the bottom (Fig. 7).

At the dawn of World War I, there was an initial step in the process of shaping the monumental burial church of the Karadorđevićs in Oplenac (ЈОВАНОВИЋ 1989). The Karadorđe's grave needed to be the ideological core of the mausoleum. The archival photograph (Fig. 8) shows

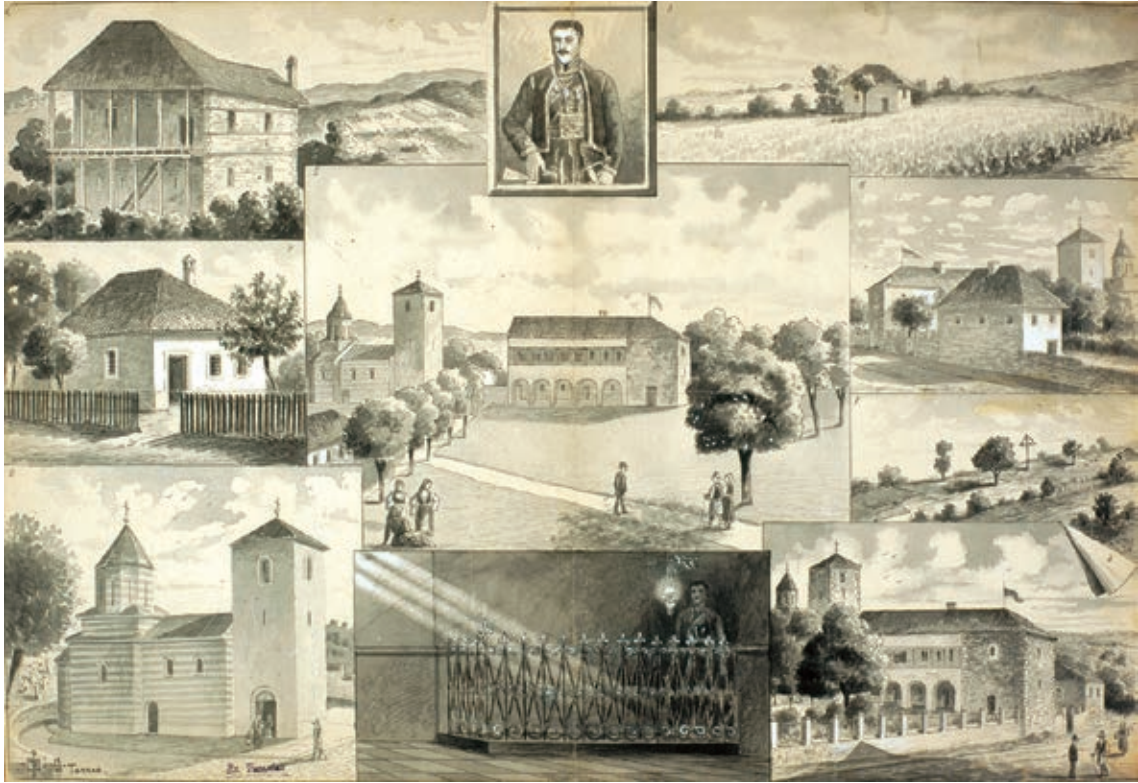


Fig. 7. Vladislav Titelbah, *Topola – view on the town of Karadorđe*, gouache (Matica Srpska Gallery, 1903)



Fig. 8. Karadorđe's grave, the nave of the Church in Oplenac, photograph from the 1920s

the monumental sarcophagus, and the splendid ruler's throne featuring Karadorđe's image in mosaics in its centre, a work of the famous academic painter Paja Jovanović made around 1911, emphasizing the special status of the body of the famous deceased (Fig. 9) (ЦРВЕЛКОВИЋ 2012: 281–300). Within this complex visual construction, the ruler's iconic image was regarded as a ruler's substitute. The image of Karadorđe became a representation of the immortal body of the dynasty and the monarchy as a whole, and thus confirming the Kantorowicz's theory on the king's two bodies in the space of the church in Topola. The style and concept of both

artefacts underline the contemporary cultural and ideological patterns adopted by the Serbian elite. The evocation of the Serbian-Byzantine style (МАКУЉЕВИЋ 2007: 232–252; КАДИЈЕВИЋ 2016: 169–172; ИГЊАТОВИЋ 2016: 122–170) reveals a tendency for the restoration of the Golden Age of the Serbian medieval state that was found in the era of the Emperor Dušan Nemanjić, in the middle of the 14th century, when Serbia experienced its economic, cultural, legal, and territorial peak (БОРОЗАН 2016: 119–134). Hence, within the (re)creation of Karađorđe's gravesite, the reinterpretation of old styles was revived highlighting the use of the historical reinterpretation of the past in the culture of the first decades of the 20th century.

The beginning of the First World War postponed works on the dynastic mausoleum on top of Oplenac hill. The creation of the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia brought the Karađorđević dynasty and the new ruler, King Aleksandar into a complex multinational and multi-religious state system. Within the new circumstances, the mythologization of the figure of Supreme Leader Karađorđe remained, and he (re)turned to be the fundamental symbol of the dynasty.

Under the auspices of the state, the construction of the dynastic mausoleum in Oplenac continued. In 1930, there was a consecration of the monumental five-domed church designed in a Serbian-Byzantine style on top of Oplenac hill (КАДИЈЕВИЋ 2016: 170). Also, under the supervision of the architect Kosta Jovanović, the Supreme Leader's tomb was opened 30 August 1930, the authenticity of his mortal remains was confirmed (ЈОВАНОВИЋ 1989: 100). On that occasion, a funeral spectacle of the transfer of the body of the Supreme Leader was organised in the presence of King Aleksandar Karađorđević (СТЕВАНОВИЋ 2005: 12–13), the entire military and civilian leadership of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as well as the highest dignitaries of Serbian Orthodox Church. Six black horses were used to transfer the body of Karađorđe from the old church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Topola among the lined up mass of people to the newly built mausoleum in Oplenac.

The last transfer of the body of Karađorđe happened when it was finally placed in the monumental interior of the dynastic mausoleum. In line with the spirit of late Historicism, a group of Russian emigrants, creators of representative culture who were in service of the official state (Nikolai Krasnov, Sergei Smirnov, etc.), was employed to shape the interior of the mausoleum. The Karađorđe's sarcophagus is set in a composite interior (southern space of the church) and adapted to the idea of artistic processing of the Middle Ages. The following carved inscription dominates on the front of the simplified sarcophagus: *Kara Đorđe / 1762–1817*. (Fig. 10)



Fig. 9. Paja Jovanović, *The Supreme Leader Karađorđe*, mosaic (the Church in Oplenac, around 1911)



Fig. 10. Karađorđe's grave, 1930, the nave of the Church in Oplenac, contemporary photograph

In the background of the sarcophagus, the aforementioned mosaic image of Karađorđe was set on the royal throne. Thus, the burial site of the Supreme Leader in the church of Topola was symbolically completed in modern times. The completion of the process of shaping the tomb of Karađorđe confirmed the emancipation of the Serbian state in the 19th century, highlighting its victorious transformation into the imperial Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

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The question of construction and deconstruction the ruler's body is inseparable from his burial place. The process of transformation of the Karađorđe's grave revealed broader social and cultural concepts of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. The grave reflected one-century long stylistic and conceptual perceptions. From the modest grave marker in the church in Topola to the purified grave artefact in the monumental dynastic mausoleum of the Karađorđevićs in Oplenac near Topola, the Karađorđe's grave paradigmatically defined the society, art, and

politics of the Serbian and Yugoslav nation. Its political significance confirmed it a status of dynastic and national memory site. The Karađorđe's grave finally became the first-rate *topos* of reconciliation and national integration, which confirmed the significance of the body of the Supreme Leader (bones) and his burial place in the collective consciousness of the community.

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ВЛАДАРСКИ ГРОБ КАО МЕСТО СЕЋАЊА: УОБЛИЧАВАЊЕ И ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЈЕ ГРОБА ВОЖДА КАРАЂОРЂЕ ТОКОМ XIX И У ПРВОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ XX ВЕКА

Резиме

Грбови владара су од давнина дефинисани као кључни идеолошки топоси, око којих се у зависности од историјских околности уобличавао поклонички култ. Они су могли бити и предмет заборава, којим је поништавано сећање на владара, династију и монархистички режим. Модерно доба српске државе обележио је сукоб династија Обреновића и Карађорђевића. Корени нетрпелјивости који су обележили дуги XIX век лежали су у убиству Карађорђа 1817. године. Оснивач династије Карђорђевић је обезглављен по налогу Милоша Обреновића, потоњег утемељитеља династије Обреновић. Фунерални белег Карађорђа у тополској цркви је током века постао место скривеног поштовања, будући да је готово цео век на власти била супарничка династија Обреновић. Карађорђево гроб је крајем XIX века постао предмет политичке манипулације. Млади краљ Александар Обреновић је 1893. године посетио Карађорђево гроб у Тополи. Том приликом је исказао пијетет према великом покојнику, што је неколико година касније репортажним цртежом овековечено Феликс Каниц, знаменити немачки научник и путописац. Гроб је изрежираном акцијом од места заборав претворен у ангажовани артефакт и топос помирења у служби манифестације династичког помирења. Биолошко затирање династије Обреновић 1903. године је довело до претварања Карађорђевог гроба у култно место. Гроб је временом постао државни и династички симбол, око кога је у међуратном периоду уобличена и монументална црква-маузолеј династије Карађорђевић на Опленцу, крај Тополе.

Кључне речи: владарски гроб, Карађорђе, династија Карађорђевић, Опленец, династичка конкордија, место сећања.

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