



# Project MUSE®

*Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.*

<http://muse.jhu.edu>

# How History Takes Place

## *Sacralized Landscapes in the Croatian-Bosnian Border Region*

MICHAELA SCHÄUBLE

Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork (2004–2005), this article conceptualizes a topography of the Dalmatian-Bosnian border region as a memorial and sacralized landscape. Focusing on how inhabitants on the Croatian side of the border perceive their surroundings in terms of genealogies and territory, I trace the construction of geographical and historical landscapes in a context of ritual commemoration of massacre victims, examining ways in which local people's memory is literally inscribed in the landscape, in particular in relation to massacre sites and mass graves—from different epochs and conflicts—that had previously been concealed under Tito's regime. Investigating long-neglected spatial aspects of the political in the region, my contention is that landscapes constitute mnemonic agents and sites of historic revisions.

A Croat, a Bosniak and two Serbs arrive on the moon. The Croat points to the lunar mountains and says, "Those are like the Dalmatian Hills. This must be Croat land!" The Bosniak argues that the cratered surface resembles the shell-scarred roads of Sarajevo, "so it must be Bosnian." One of the Serbs pulls out a gun, shoots the other Serb and says, "A Serb has died here. This is Serb land."<sup>1</sup>

This morbid—and admittedly rather biased—joke that is widely recounted in postwar Croatia illustrates the importance of landscape and particularly of burial grounds and graves to notions of national identity and belonging. It is not only the Serbs, however, who believe that Serbia is "wherever there are Serbian execution pits and graves," as Vuk Drašković—dissident

nationalist writer, founder of the Serbian National Renewal Party and later Serbian foreign minister—famously claimed in 1989.<sup>2</sup> The graves of the ancestors are an important factor in the politics of territory and likewise generate a sense of belonging to a particular *nacija* (nation, people) or region throughout the whole of the former Yugoslavia. Above all, places and landscapes of war, conflict and violence—such as ancient battlefields, front lines, vestiges of military constructions and memorials to commemorate them—are significant historical markers that constitute “fundamental parts of the national iconography of modern states.”<sup>3</sup>

Battlefield relics not only contribute to the materiality of historical landscapes but also bear national genealogies that have become important vehicles of separatist and nationalist politics over the past decades in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>4</sup> In this article I will take a closer look at the role material remnants of previous violent conflict play in contemporary Croatia, and more specifically in the Croatian-Bosnian border region. Drawing on my research in the Dalmatinska Zagora, the Dalmatian hinterland bordering Bosnia-Herzegovina—an area that is known as the heartland of Croatian Catholicism, ultranationalism and strong anticommunist sentiment—I emphasize the centrality of the immediate environment in which accounts of past battles and atrocities become grounded temporally and spatially.

Dalmatia is often referred to as both “Balkan” and “Mediterranean” and in either case the region is marked by the dense fragmentation and fractal character of its landscape, influencing not only the dominant cultivation techniques, channels of trade and the “political and ethnic untidiness” but also the religious topography.<sup>5</sup> Notions of locality and landscape play an important role in the process of (re)shaping national ideologies and identities in Croatia today and contribute to the composition of the nation’s history and heritage. In this article, I use the term landscape following Susanne Seymour’s understanding that “Landscape does not simply mirror or distort ‘underlying’ social relations, but needs to be understood as enmeshed within the processes which shape how the world is organized, experienced, and understood, rather than read as its end product.”<sup>6</sup> By focusing on my interlocutors’ embodied relations with the surrounding environment, I attempt to better understand not only how they position themselves within their natural habitat but also, more generally, how they assess their role as inhabitants of a marginal place within the framework of the new Europe.

Besides affecting the way people organize their livelihood, the physical conditions of the landscape also have an impact on the configuration of historically experienced and constituted space and time. Accordingly, I examine nationalist historiography in relation to territory and consider examples of how memories of past atrocities in the Croatian-Bosnian border region generate a sense of rootedness and belonging and how they—at the same time—are currently used to promote immediate political interests and to comment on political developments with regards to Croatia's role in the so-called Homeland War (Croatian: *Domovinski rat*), i.e. the Croatian War of Independence fought between 1991 and 1995 against the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav People's Army and local Serb forces in Croatia.

Particularly after the breakdown of Communist Party rule, rumors of various massacres committed during World War II and later concealed under Tito's regime fueled public resentment about suppressed memories of past atrocities. When unidentifiable corpses and bones of massacre victims—victims of communist Partisans, Serbian nationalist Četniks as well as of the Croatian fascist Ustaše—were rediscovered, excavated and partly reburied in their respective “native soil” in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a hitherto disclaimed version of history became literally tangible. The anthropologists Bette Denich and Robert Hayden first showed how the uncovering of mass graves and massacre sites led to a drastic reevaluation of notions of ancestry and territory and the increasing escalation of previously suppressed ethnonational tensions in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>7</sup> Drawing on these anthropological studies to analyze the role of dead bodies in the context of postcommunist nation-state formation, Katherine Verdery has addressed the nationalisms that emanated from the respective Yugoslav republics in terms of forms of an ancestor cult.<sup>8</sup> The place occupied by the dead in both time (genealogies) and space (territory) is closely linked to national sentiment insofar as references to *kinship rooted in particular soil* is one of the core metaphors for nationhood.<sup>9</sup>

Today, more than fifteen years after the end of the Yugoslav dissolution wars, the practice of commemorating atrocities committed during World War II is being resumed. In the case of Croatia, nationalists adhere to the practice of commemorating crimes committed against Croats decades ago rather than facing more recent events. Atrocities that took place during World War II (and before that) and were concealed in the Socialist Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia still constitute the template to which the violence endured during the Homeland War is emblematically linked. With reference to my recent research findings I argue, however, that the meaning and political intentions of commemoration ceremonies at World War II massacre sites has changed significantly since the unearthing of mass graves in the early 1990s. Taking the works of pioneering authors such as Denich, Hayden and later Pamela Ballinger into account, my article draws on more recent commemoration ceremonies and thus actualizes their analyses for the case of postwar Croatia.<sup>10</sup> I claim that present-day commemorative rituals at massacre sites in the Bosnian-Croatian border region are less intended to sustain or revive interethnic animosity than to establish a version of history in which Croatia plays the role of an unprivileged and victimized nation that cannot be held responsible for the war waged in the 1990s. This historical self-conception is backed by the Catholic Church and above all by the even more influential Franciscan order, who in addition have a traceable interest in rewriting the years 1945–90 as a litany of suffering for the Croatian people. On the basis of a detailed analysis of ritual commemoration I seek to show that Croatian clerics actively support the denial of any Croatian war guilt in the Homeland War by referring to prior injustices suffered by Croats during World War II as well as under the communist regime—thus deliberately distorting historical facts and/or circulating one-sided accounts. Furthermore, the Franciscans manipulate the emotional weight of previously endured atrocities to support their reactionary political and “moral” stand on processes of democratization and liberalization in the light of Croatia’s pending membership in the European Union (EU).

It is important to note that in contrast to the exhumations of mass graves and limestone caves that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the sacralized commemoration that is taking place today has a different agenda: it is not part of an openly voiced political reterritorialization process and is not linked to any direct territorial claims. The battle that is currently being fought over massacre sites is rather a rhetorical battle over the prevailing version of the past—over who is and who is not a perpetrator, who suffered the most during the communist period, who made the most sacrifices, who has the most casualties to bewail and who will eventually emerge as the victor of history. Through the back door, this rhetorical showdown addresses the delicate question of guilt for waging

war and committing war crimes in the context of the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Homeland War. It is further intended to reassess and to possibly strengthen Croatia's role within Europe. In other words, I will show that the same atrocities and the same dead, dating back to World War II, are now reutilized in a new line of argument and adapted to current political events.

During my doctoral fieldwork in 2004–2005 I was based in the small town of Sinj, a local pilgrimage site that hosts a famous Marian shrine (the sanctuary of *Gospa Sinjska*, Our Lady of Sinj), as well as the country's largest Franciscan monastery administering the shrine—both constituents of a sacralized town- and landscape in the remote Dalmatian hinterland.<sup>11</sup> Here Croatia's role in the war and the country's independence are perceived—more widely and far more vigorously than in other parts of the country—as glorious liberation from communist suppression, and indicted war criminals such as Ante Gotovina and Mirko Norac are openly celebrated as national heroes.<sup>12</sup>

Such radical positions are commonly justified by references to the region's violent past—a past that is not only temporally but spatially defined and located in the immediate environment. Historical references to armed self-defense and readiness to combat are the result of Sinj's location in a highly contested border area. Over the past centuries, the inhabitants of Sinj had to defend themselves against Ottoman invaders and later against a number of occupying forces such as the Republic of Venice, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, France, the German Wehrmacht and, more recently, the Serbian aggression in the late 1990s.

Taking the materiality of space as well as people's embodied, imagined and lived social relations with their surrounding into consideration, I study local landscape phenomenologies with reference to identity formation. If one follows Edward Soja's express aim to “spatialize the historical narrative, to attach to *durée* an enduring critical human geography,” it is salutary to investigate ways in which historical narratives and memories are embedded in physical surroundings and thereby made visible.<sup>13</sup> A historical landscape is “both material and meaning” and defined through phenomenological interaction and experience; it is shaped by visible historical interpretations as well as by meanings and readings related to them.<sup>14</sup> I argue that both individual and collective memories are attached to specific landscapes and thus have the potential to become sources for (re)writing the local

histories that have been ignored or neglected by the historiography of the nation-state. Especially after the historical rupture of memory and the forced amnesia about Partisan atrocities under communism, my interlocutors knowingly (re)constructed distinct “environments of memory”—or *milieux de mémoire* to use a much-cited term of Pierre Nora<sup>15</sup>—with reference to and often in opposition to official historiographies. “Although memory is surely a temporal phenomenon, the ... metaphors [that are necessary to represent memory] tend to transform the temporal into the spatial and are intensely visual. Layers are excavated, veils lifted, screens removed,” writes Paul Antze.<sup>16</sup> This article is accordingly concerned with deciphering the inscriptions and attributions of historical narratives in local landscape formations in the context of post-socialist and postwar transformations.

#### MARTYRED VILLAGES: LANDSCAPES, LEGENDS AND COMMEMORATION

The dominant characteristics of the steep-sided limestone mountains of the Dalmatian Hinterland are white-greyish karst rocks and arid treeless slopes. This karst topography—comprising the southern parts of Lika, Dalmatinska Zagora including Sinjsko Polje (the fertile karstic field that Sinj and adjacent settlements are situated on) and the larger part of Herzegovina—is riddled with hundreds of crevices and karstic grottoes, which became burial sites for innumerable victims of massacres in World War II. My interlocutors and friends told me that in the areas surrounding Sinj, large numbers of Ustaša fighters and civilians were killed by Partisan troops. In the civil war of 1941–45 Tito’s communist-led Partisans fought fierce battles with Croatian Ustaša troops governing the fascist Independent State of Croatia (NDH, *Nezavisna Država Hrvatske*), as well as against Serbian royalists or Četniks. During these years cruel mass murders took place on all sides. The Ustaša committed genocide against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies, the Četniks killed thousands of civilians, mainly in Bosnia, and the Partisans slaughtered tens of thousands of Ustaše, Četniks and other opponents. In the majority of cases the dead were simply thrown into the numerous crevices and pits in the karst mountains.

Throughout the former Yugoslavia, local villagers who survived or witnessed the massacres of World War II secretly remembered the dead

and the locations of their execution, even though they were prevented from publicly mourning and honoring their memory. Accounts of Partisan massacres of Ustaše, Četniks and civilians as well as Ustaša crimes continued to circulate in secret. The reemergence of these suppressed memories is a key to understanding how past atrocities were revived and fueled the emotions and (ethno)political consciousness that accompanied the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia. Moreover, in postwar Croatia these memories are currently being mobilized anew to support what I refer to as a politics of (self-)victimization: memory politics that aim at highlighting recurrent suffering in order to divert suspicion from one's own people's wrongs and, in the case of commemoration ceremonies at massacre sites, at underlining the physical and hence tangible remainders of crimes endured at the hands of others.

In Sinj and the surrounding villages, narratives of dead bodies are vivid and influence politics to this day, although no immediate exhumations or reburials of war victims from World War II took place after Franjo Tuđman became the first president of Croatia in 1990. My interviewees in the Cetinska Krajina did not know about specific mass graves or ossuaries, but as recently as August 2008, sixty-one corpses were exhumed in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian town of Livno, in the immediate vicinity of Sinj. A local Franciscan told me that the remains of the exhumed bodies had been sent to Banja Luka for identification, as they were expected to be Serbian massacre victims from World War II. The forensic analysis, however, revealed that the corpses were Croats who had been killed during the 1991–95 war. Discoveries like this cause great agitation in Croatia, as even now, more than fifteen years after the end of the war, not all mass graves have been exhumed and thousands of people are still missing. Each exhumation of massacre victims not only revives painful memories of the war but also triggers renewed narratives of Croatian victimization.

During my fieldwork I was also frequently told about a *jama* (crevice), located a few kilometers into the Herzegovinian mountains northeast of Sinj, where an unknown number of locals had allegedly been killed by Partisans and tossed into a ditch. During communism, scrap iron from the local spinning mill Dalmatinka had been dumped into the ditch, with the result that neither exhumations of massacre victims nor estimates of casualty figures could be made after the demise of communist rule. The fact that there was neither visual nor physical evidence and therefore no



Fig. 1. The miniature replica of the altar of *Gospa Sinjska* in the Croatian-Bosnian mountains. Photo by author, 2005.

exact numbers of dead made the *jama* even more susceptible to legendary or quasi-mythological accounts of past mass executions.

In January 2005 the son of my host family, Marko, a thirty-year-old former soldier, agreed to accompany me *u planinu* (into the mountains) to show me where the *jama* is located. To get there we had to cross the border into Bosnia-Herzegovina and follow a steep unpaved path into the mountains. The landscape turned bleaker and increasingly barren. Clambering over piles of stones and making our way through the undergrowth, we suddenly came upon a recently built Marian shrine, consisting of an altar approximately six feet high in the shape of a stone house with a saddle roof and a small brazen relief of the *Gospa Sinjska* in the middle (figure 1). Flowers, candles, coins and rosaries had been left there, and according to the inscription, the shrine had been built in 2000. Close to the altar, steep stone stairs, which also appeared to have been constructed quite recently, led down to the *jama*. The crevice in the rock was approximately twenty feet wide and surrounded by a protective waist-high stone wall, in the middle of which there was a small marble cross in commemoration of the massacre victims. A few withered wreaths decorated with ribbons



Fig. 2. Withered wreaths at the *jama*. Photo by author, 2005.

in the national colors lay against the stone wall (figure 2). To the left a marble Pietà relief had been erected, depicting Mary receiving her son's dead body for burial (figure 3). To me, the relief looked like a gravestone without an inscription. The crevice itself was so hidden that I would never have noticed it if it were not for the more visible altar.

On the way back we passed another monument that looked much more massive and official. I was told that it was a Memorial to the Victims of War and Fascism, which apparently hardly anyone ever visited "except for a few shepherds," and that the locals preferred to commemorate their dead at the *jama* and not at the official war memorial. Erected in Titoist Yugoslavia as a material and symbolic reminder of the Partisan struggle against fascism, the Memorial for the Victims of War and Fascism, like innumerable other Partisan monuments all over the country, was intended to appeal to the (officially prescribed) collective memory of the entire Yugoslav nation. The memorial was admittedly located in a very out-of-the-way place, but I still noticed that it looked very rundown and that there were no flowers or withered wreaths or any other sign of recent visitors. The fact that the inhabitants of Sinj and the adjacent hamlets



Fig. 3. The Pietà relief erected by the *jama*. Photo by author, 2005.

did not seem to acknowledge this memorial either as a private or a public commemoration site signifies that local historiographic narratives and memories differ significantly from the official version symbolized by the monument. It further suggests that here, in the heartland of Croatian nationalism, a shared Yugoslav memory or even nostalgia for the socialist past is deemed highly suspicious and almost obsolete. The *jama*, on the other hand, provides a location—a landmark within a memorial landscape—for local memory as it is embedded in people's engagement with their immediate surroundings.

As a commemoration site of historic atrocities, the *jama* has become a politically and religiously charged location—if only of local significance. Michel de Certeau makes a clear distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*) and concludes, that “space is practiced place.”<sup>17</sup> According to this distinction, the *jama* is no longer a mere geographical *place* but has been transformed into a sacralized *space* that plays an important role for the region's history and constitutes a highly visible part of the local cultural landscape. The erection of a Marian shrine and other sanctified icons instead of a classic war memorial further indicates the religious re-

signification of this historically most fraught ground. Built in 2000, five years after the end of the Homeland War and the “liberation” of Croatia, the Marian shrine is a visual and material manifestation of divine presence at the *jama*.<sup>18</sup> Marian veneration and nationalism are closely linked, both in Croatia and in the parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina with a Croatian majority. The *Gospa* (Our Lady) is considered a divine supporter not only of Croatian independence but also of “ethnic homogeneity” and of renewed claims to possession of land that once belonged to Croatia.<sup>19</sup> The *Gospa Sinjska* is furthermore said to have traditionally helped the people of the region during wars, against the plague, droughts, earthquakes and floods. As a remote subsidiary of the altar at the pilgrimage center of the main shrine of the *Gospa Sinjska* in Sinj, the mini-memorial in the mountains marks and extends the zone of divine protection.

The protective powers of the *Gospa Sinjska*, the allegedly miraculous image of the Virgin Mary in the church in Sinj, are linked to military resistance to Ottoman rule in the region. According to local legend, this painting had brought about the defeat of the Ottoman troops in a battle of 1715. After the head of the Franciscan order gathered the townspeople to pray in front of the painting, the apparition of a lady in a white dress was seen and caused the attackers to flee in panic. The townspeople, who attributed the defeat of the Turks to the aid of the Marian apparition, referred to the painting as *Čudotvorna Slika Blažene Djevice Marije od Milosti* (Miraculous Painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy), or simply as *Čudotvorna Gospa Sinjska* (Miraculous Lady of Sinj), and erected the shrine in the town church of Sinj that is worshiped to this day. The legend has inspired the popular imagination like no other story and many people in Sinj told me about the historic battle and the Marian apparition in a way that suggested they might have been present themselves.

Each year on August 15, on *Velika Gospa* as Assumption Day is commonly called, hundreds of thousands of people undertake a pilgrimage to the Church of Our Miraculous Lady of Sinj to commemorate the events of 1715 (figure 4). Some visitors come from as far away as Australia or the United States. Others who fled the Yugoslav Wars of Secession in the 1990s or who left Yugoslavia in the 1970s to work as *Gastarbeiter*—most of them in Germany, Austria or Scandinavia—return for this occasion and pay their relatives a visit. And although Sinj never became an internationally acclaimed pilgrimage site like Međugorje in neighboring Herzegovina,



Fig. 4. Procession on Assumption Day in which the painting of *Our Lady of Sinj* (*Gospa Sinjska*) is carried through the streets of Sinj. Photo courtesy of the Franciscan Monastery, Sinj, 2005.

the shrine of *Gospa Sinjska* has nonetheless developed into a pilgrimage site of supra-regional and even national salience that attracts annually over half a million pilgrims.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of *Gospa Sinjska* that is attended by many emigrants, the annual pilgrimage to the *jama* is an exclusively local pilgrimage that only a handful of people know about and attend. In this sense, the construction of a miniature replica of the original shrine and the onset of a “mini-pilgrimage” to the massacre site at the *jama* in addition to the annual pilgrimage on *Velika Gospa* expresses the apparent need for a more intimate form of commemorating the community’s afflictions in the recent past. It furthermore highlights the emblematic connection between a victorious battle in the eighteenth century after a continuous series of attacks by the Ottomans (signified by the replica of the altar of *Gospa Sinjska*) and a period of suffering and victimization in the twentieth century at the hands of the Partisans and under the communist regime through the symbolic sacralization of the site where the massacre had taken place. The choice of setting for the mini-replica of the

shrine in the mountains at the *jama* highlights the nexus of spatial and temporal aspects of the events commemorated.<sup>21</sup> By claiming the place of the *jama* for “their” war victims and erecting a religious shrine there, Croatian Roman Catholics exert power not only over a spatial site but also over the narratives and historic accounts related to it. As a visible marker of historic injustice, the Marian shrine draws attention to the region’s role in both recent and past wars. In these mountains, local warriors have frequently fought fierce battles since the fifteenth century in the effort to block Ottoman expansion into Catholic Europe and avert access of Ottoman troops to the Adriatic Sea. In this sense the Dinaric mountain range as a historic landscape of war and conflict constitutes a fundamental part of local iconography and provides a space in which public and private commemoration are openly acted out and overlap.

#### RITUAL COMMEMORATION: THE MASS FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

A few months after I had first been to the mountains I saw posters in the town announcing the celebration of a Mass for the Victims of the Communist Regime at the *jama* on September 3, 2005. I was very eager to attend the commemoration ceremony and made plans to join the festivity with Marko and his friend Predrag, a native of Sinj and one of the very few youngsters who had left the town to study law in Zagreb. In the early morning of September 3 the local radio station Radio Sinj announced that there would be shuttle buses to the *jama*. I imagined the ceremony in the mountains to resemble a pilgrimage in the sense that worshipers from throughout the region would travel through the landscape, gather at a cult place, mourn their dead together, remember their common violent past—beyond communist times as far back as the Ottoman attacks—and celebrate the community to which they feel they belong.<sup>22</sup> As a sacred site, the *jama* is indeed a culturally, religiously and politically significant landmark, but the annually celebrated mass took a slightly different twist, as I described in my fieldnotes of the following day:

By the time we arrive by the *jama* four coaches and several cars with local license plate numbers park all over the rocky terrain. Approxi-

mately 1,000 people have gathered in the shrubby field surrounding the Marian shrine. A dozen Franciscan priests from Sinj and many more from the Bosnian side (as I am later told) have come up here to celebrate the mass and have erected an additional altar decorated with flowers and candles in front of the stone memorial. Ten–twelve wreaths are laid out in front of it. The atmosphere is festive and at the same time lively.

On the way there Predrag whispers: “The main problem of our country is that we always look back. It’s all about history, never about the future. The past, the past...and we are always the victims.” ...

The service starts with a rather politicized speech by the former Franciscan Provincial Minister (*provincijal*), the head of the Franciscan order of Bosnia. Croatia, he says, has been a victim of imperialistic forces for centuries and had to suffer great injustice. The slogan “mali narod, velika nepravda” (small people, great injustice) describing Croatia’s historical destiny is on everyone’s lips anyway and it does not really come as a surprise to hear it here, too. The former *provincijal* names the Bleiburg massacre,<sup>23</sup> the manipulated numbers of victims at Jasenovac,<sup>24</sup> Goli Otok,<sup>25</sup> Vukovar<sup>26</sup> and itemizes them as a litany of injustices against the *Hrvatski narod* (Croatian people/nation). The tone is accusatory and very bitter as he goes on and on to list all the atrocities that Croatia and Croatians have had to endure. “But the worst tragedy of all was the communist regime. Worldwide communism has brought about millions of casualties.”

“Here at the *jama*,” he continues, “the Partisans claimed to be ‘antifascists,’ but fascism never generated as many victims as communism did.” Later in his speech he names Josip Broz Tito alongside dictators such as Hitler, Stalin and Ceaușescu, and he ridicules the so-called “Yugo-nostalgics” who still consider Tito a popular and successful politician. Here, Tito is regarded as a criminal and Yugoslavia is perceived as a ferocious dictatorship. “This *jama* was not the only one, but there were 400 more of its kind in Croatia,” he says. “And nobody knows and will ever know how many victims there really were!”

Predrag rolls his eyes and whispers to me “Do you know what country could be a role model for us? Spain! They had Franco, they had a fascist period, a communist period... And look at them today.

Today Spain is a normal country where people have the right to be born, to live, and to die. Here in Croatia everything is always about politics. It is about looking back and politics.” ...

In his subsequent sermon, a Franciscan from Sinj talks about politics too: “It is no disgrace—no disgrace!—what our *branitelji* (defenders) and our generals, our Mirko Norac and our Ante Gotovina, did.”<sup>27</sup> They defended our homeland and our people.” ... After his heated appeal for solidarity with Norac and Gotovina, the priest starts mocking contemporary values. First of all he ridicules “left-wing” claims for human rights that have been increasingly discussed in public of late. “What are human rights today? They are rights for homosexuals and rights that promote the splitting up of families...” I am quite shocked by the bluntness and open bigotry of his speech. I turn around but no one else seems to object or be distressed by his polemics....

After the Eucharist the official wreath-laying ceremony is announced. The whole congregation is invited to follow the priests down the narrow and steep stone stairs to the *jama*. A huge jostle starts and people try to elbow their way close to the crevice. I can only catch a glimpse of the scene from afar, but I can tell that the priest is praying for the people killed here. Some of the women attending the service start weeping out loud. One of them has brought a plastic bag full of flowers and starts to strew yellow petals into the crevice. After a brief prayer the priest announces the names of the parishes, associations and political parties that have donated a wreath in honor of the anonymous victims of communist atrocities, while representatives bring their wreath forward and place it by the small stone wall.

“Općina [Municipality] Hrvace,” “Općina Otok,” “Općina Trilj,” “Općina Sinj” “Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica [Croatian Democratic Union] Sinj,” “Splitska-Dalmatinska Županija [Split-Dalmatian Parish],” “Udruga Hrvatskih Veterana domovinskog rata [Association of the Croatian Homeland War Veterans],” etc., etc. The wreaths are all dedicated to “Hrvatskim Mučenicima,” the “Croatian Martyrs,” and are decorated with blue, white and red ribbons, the Croatian national colors....

After a final blessing and the sprinkling of holy water, the mass is officially over. But many people stay behind to light candles and utter

private prayers at the crevice. After a while everyone is gone and I can already smell grilled meat from several fires around.

When I arrive back at the “vikendica” [the weekend house of my host family in the mountains] one of the men is about to skin the lamb that they had just slaughtered.... I can hear laughter and “klapske pjesme,” traditional singing from other compounds nearby.... We spend the whole afternoon together, eating, drinking and laughing. The men complain about current EU politics and its bad influence on the local economy. At one point, one of the uncles asks me, “What did you think of the mass?” Not knowing what to say, I simply answer “quite political...” They all laugh. “Yes, it’s the priests who do the politics here nowadays.”

My fieldnotes illustrate how spatial, temporal, political and social perceptions of place are interwoven and affect the way locality and belonging are currently negotiated in rural Dalmatia. The landscape and the Marian shrine at the *jama* constitute what Halbwachs called the material framework (*cadre matériel*) in which the memories are embedded, while the religious ceremony provides the commemorative *practice* or *event* necessary for the dynamic remembrance of things past. The “miniature sanctuary” at the *jama* has been created as a spatial and spiritual realm in which all the grief and painful memories that have long been forcibly suppressed are allowed to surface. By actively evoking past atrocities committed by the communists, a hitherto silenced yet emotionally highly charged period of history is reawakened and a sense of communal belonging among the victims and their descendants is evoked. The religious ceremony, the patriotic and political speeches, and the wreath-laying ceremonies can be understood as ritual practices that on different layers contribute to visualizing the performative nature of collective memories and simultaneously constitute communal commemoration (figures 5–6). It becomes obvious that religious and national identities are closely connected and that the local Franciscans administer and foster a view of regional as well as national history that is constructed in direct opposition to the communist period and consequently overlooks atrocities committed on the Croatian side.<sup>28</sup>

Belonging to a place is constituted and expressed by remembering the particular history of that place, and the visitors’ feelings of collective allegiance are anchored and mobilized through shared religious activ-



Figs. 5–6. The Mass for the Victims of the Communist Regime, held in autumn 2005 at the *jama* in the mountains surrounding Sinj. Photos by author.

ity.<sup>29</sup> This process is noticeably implemented during the ceremony at the *jama* where the “political” rhetoric and religious practices performed appeal to the congregation’s common experience of past atrocities and injustices—and the formerly repressed memories thereof—while simultaneously evoking a sense of regional loyalty. James Fentress and Chris Wickham define social memory as “an expression of collective experience: social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future.”<sup>30</sup> In the case of Croatia, however, aspirations for the future are at present closely connected to past atrocities since “it is what one remembers of the past that determines how one sees the future,” as Edward Said once put it.<sup>31</sup> Narrative visions of the future are as contested as visions of the past and therefore equally susceptible to manipulation and political claims.

At this point it is important to note that the people who traveled to the *jama* for this occasion knew very well what to expect from the ceremony. Only those who appreciated the political tone of the speeches and sermons attended the mass (except, maybe for Predrag who only went to accompany me and who left early because he was so annoyed). The others, who did not want to participate in this particular form of politicized commemoration, did not attend the service. The majority of men and women, however, attended the ceremony. The rest retreated to their weekend houses, prepared the food and used the occasion as a “day out in the mountains.” It was they who, even if they never openly challenged the sermons’ content, ironically commented on the priests’ political agenda. Their retort that “it’s the priests who do the politics here nowadays” is both a realistic assessment of the situation and a sign of criticism toward the church and the Franciscan order regarding their wealth and/or their political influence in the region. I would interpret this comment in terms of a very mild form of “secular anticlericalism,” directed mainly against the priests’ worldly influence but not casting doubt on their religious integrity and authority.

The ground on which the Franciscan clergy actually manage to exert their interpretive power over local notions of identity and belonging is the shared regional history of political disadvantage and suffering. The speeches given during the church service appeal to identification with the recurrently mentioned victim status of Croatia and Croats (including Bosnian Croats) throughout history, rather than invoking the audience’s

common ethnonational origin. Hence, the celebration at the *jama* is not accompanied by political claims over territory but can be seen as expressing a political claim over a specific version of the past in which atrocities were committed exclusively by communists, Serbs and other people considered enemies. Neither my informants nor the speakers at the commemoration ceremony ever voiced any direct right to the terrain on which the *jama* is located. The fact, however, that they refer to the war fought in this region as the “Homeland War” suggests that while this part of Herzegovina may be officially and legally part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and not Croatia, it is still part of their “domovina,” and thus of Croatia.<sup>32</sup>

An unambiguous portrait of one’s own *nacija* as victim or victimized is a salient device in these narratives. During my fieldwork in Sinj I hardly ever heard accounts of atrocities committed toward any group other than Roman Catholic Croats. This is in line with each ex-Yugoslav ethnoreligious group’s perception of itself as always being the victim, not the perpetrator, of atrocities—not only under communism but also throughout the three Balkan wars.<sup>33</sup> I argue, however, that at this moment in time the legend of the *jama* functions primarily to strengthen, direct and validate personal as well as collective memories of casualties and discrimination during the communist period.<sup>34</sup> Narratives related to places and landscapes of victimization—whether personally remembered or imagined—are processes by which meaning is produced and represented for the present.

In a comparable manner, the “litanies of suffering” (to use Nancy Ries’s term) that the former Provincial Minister utters at the *jama* exclude disreputable aspects of the Croatian past and the rhetoric used is a powerful device for forgetting Croatian war crimes while condemning others.<sup>35</sup> Contingent feelings of guilt or remorse regarding either Ustaša crimes or atrocities committed by Croats during the Homeland War are avoided by proclaiming narratives of heroic resistance to previous oppressors as well as through distorted discourses of self-victimization. Such narratives, whether referring to real or imagined events, aim at connecting people durably to history and territory. Simon Harrison has pointed out that “People inhabit terrain, and interact with it, always in particular embodied ways which are also—among many other things—ways of structuring memory, forgetting and the political control of knowledge.”<sup>36</sup> Seen from this perspective, structuring memory as well as forgetting is a powerful means of

controlling the circulation of knowledge. In rural Dalmatia, knowledge of the past has become a valuable political resource that priests as designated ritual experts control and insert at appointed times and places.

Members of the Franciscan order have traditionally cherished very close ties with the local population. In the case of Dalmatia and nearby Herzegovina most of the friars administer parishes in the region of their origin and are known to be very attached to their native soil. They are considered down-to-earth and entertaining preachers who would prefer a meaty joke or saying over a lengthy intellectual Bible exegesis. They speak the language of the rural population and are known for their firm sense of regionalism and nationality—attributes that also gained them a reputation of consistently defying Episcopal authority.<sup>37</sup> And when Ivo Andrić writes, à propos of Bosnian Franciscan monasteries, that “throughout the centuries of Turkish rule [they] constituted a kind of storage battery of popular energy, and monks enjoyed the people’s sympathy and respect far more than did the diocesan clergy,” this also hold true for the Franciscan monasteries in Dalmatia.<sup>38</sup> A young friar in Sinj also told me that the Franciscans were particularly popular among the population because they had stayed in Sinj during the Homeland War and never abandoned the population. The Franciscans’ closeness to the rural population is also reflected in their belief systems and religious practices where Marian devotion plays a crucial role. Franciscan prayers, chants and sermons are strongly influenced by pictographic contemplation plates depicting the Virgin Mary—practices that form the center of Franciscan Marian mysticism.<sup>39</sup>

In the long military history of the region, the Franciscans excelled not only as fierce guardians of Catholic faith but also as advocates of a Catholic Croatian homeland. It almost goes without saying, therefore, that the Franciscans opposed the incorporation of Croatia into the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Yugoslav state after World War II. They constituted a strong anticomunist force on the local level that in turn was countered with severe retaliations and sanctions of both an ideological and economic nature. In the course of my fieldwork I frequently heard stories of friars and/or their families who had suffered from systematic discrimination in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Considered as ringleaders of subversive movements by the socialist authorities, many Franciscans were sent to prison or work camps and some of them were also tortured. As a

consequence, they “were considered political martyrs, which considerably enhanced their appeal.”<sup>40</sup>

While the Croatian branch of the Catholic Church for a long time pursued a policy of noninterference in domestic political affairs in Yugoslavia and some of the bishops even collaborated with the regime, the Franciscans always opposed the political system unequivocally.<sup>41</sup> Their unwavering nationalist positioning and subsequent persecution resonated with the sense of persecution on the part of many “common believers,” thus strengthening the Franciscans’ ties with the local population—especially with the nationalistic and rebellious peasants and shepherds from small villages. “The Franciscans are the carriers and guardians of our history and our tradition. If it were not for them we would have long forgotten who we are,” one of my interlocutors once said. This comment reflects a close affinity between the people and the clergy and illustrates that the friars act as both role models and representatives for lay people. As religious advisors and frequent advocates of nationalistic movements, they have a significant effect on ethnoreligious identity formation in Croatia. Due to their skills of literacy and access to higher education they are considered the “carriers and guardians of history and tradition” and are thus expected to preserve the cultural memory of the Croatian people.

It goes without saying that is no such thing as a unitary “cultural memory of the Croatian people” or a uniform “Croatian tradition.” The reactionary nationalistic attitudes frequently spread by the Franciscans or radical politicians and demagogues are not consistently absorbed and shared by the entirety of the Croatian population; and even in unusually homogenous regions like the Dalmatinska Zagora with an extraordinarily high proportion of traditionalists and nationalists, there are clearly dissenting voices. Commentaries such as Predrag’s statement that “The main problem of our country is that we always look back. It’s all about history, never about the future ... and we are always the victims” suggest that younger people in particular do not necessarily share the obsession with history and ethnonational antagonism of some of their compatriots. But although Predrag’s comment is meant as a criticism of a backward-looking understanding of history and self-pitying attitude, it confirms the view that such a thing as “national identity” is most efficiently constructed via the commemoration of communal suffering.

The Franciscan parish priests preserve the memory of the victims of communist atrocities and what they frequently refer to as the “Croatian Holocaust” by celebrating the memorial service and presenting the stories of the anonymous dead as cases of innocent suffering. When examining the ceremony at the *jama*, it is clear that individual as well as collective memory is constituted, acted out and gradually transformed into historical memory. Henri Bergson distinguished between collective memory and historical memory by describing the former as representing lived experience, and the latter as preserving lived experience and mediating “between one’s own sense of having an experience and an external representation of that sense which is presumed to be valid for others as well as yourself.”<sup>42</sup> The “lived experience” that is remembered and enunciated at the *jama* is one of individual as well as collective grief due to either loss of family members or political and/or religious persecution during communist times, or the more general bemoaning of anonymous massacre victims. Efforts to rectify the previous suppression of mourning and open articulation of experienced injustice are crucial for validating these experiences for the whole community. In the distressing phase of acknowledging their earlier concealed pain and publicly mourning their dead, the bereaved and/or persecuted are supported and authenticated by official dignitaries as well as by fellow parishioners. And although the official commemoration act is highly ritualized and no individual “testimonies” are recited at the *jama*, I had the impression that the ceremony allowed for the release and revitalization of strong emotions related to painful personal memories, as people not only lit candles and strew flowers in the crevice but stayed behind long after the ceremony had ended to pray and mourn in silence. The numerous individual recollections were subsumed in the quasi-religious speeches and transformed into a polemical and politicized narrative that was at the same time very affecting.

By exclusively highlighting the enduring violence, the former Provincial Minister rejects Croatian responsibility for war crimes in World War II and the Homeland War in his speech. In this sense he proclaims an amnesty. The cleric’s memory is heavily politicized, evidently seeking to name and conjure up past atrocities as an attempt to anchor their status as Croatian national traumas. In his recently elaborated theory of cultural trauma, Jeffrey Alexander comments that “social groups can, and often do, refuse to recognize the existence of others’ trauma, and because of their

failure they cannot achieve a moral stance. By denying the reality of others' suffering, people not only diffuse their own responsibility for the suffering but often project the responsibility for their own suffering on these others."<sup>43</sup> Such or similar dynamics of denial are to be found on various levels of private and public discourse in all parts of the former Yugoslavia.

The feminist critic Žarana Papić, who has described comparable phenomena in postwar Serbia, for example, labels strategies of self-depiction as victims and persistent denial of others' suffering as the "re-invention" and "fictionalization of a chosen trauma."<sup>44</sup> While I am reluctant to adopt the expression "chosen trauma" for any side involved in the (post-)Yugoslav conflict, I nevertheless think that in his speech the former Provincial Minister deliberately reawakens "old ghosts" by calling upon the unsettled memories and the unpacified dead of previous battles. In this sense his words are directly linked to other narratives in which the rhetoric of dead bodies is applied and used in favor of a nationalized ideology.

Jonas Frykman has illustrated the "painful phase of publicly acknowledging the ... dead in order to put the past to rest." In postcommunist times, he claims, "crimes have to be made visible so that what has been a partly averted past can be worked on and thereby turned into manageable history."<sup>45</sup> This, however, is a euphemistic assessment of the process of coming to terms with the past if one considers the nationalistic rhetoric of previously concealed atrocities that has been—and still is—used in many regions of the former Yugoslavia. The visualizing and conjuring of previous crimes have not solely been used to work on the past, as Frykman's commentary might suggest. The speech at the *jama* is only one case that paradigmatically exemplifies how unsettled accounts of past crimes can be manipulated in order to obstruct appeasement rather than to transform painful memories into "manageable history."

The fact that Predrag mentioned Spain as an alternative model of dealing with the past is of particular interest in this connection, as it implies conscious avoidance and pleads for a politics of memory that did not exist in the Spanish case until very recently. In Spain, the Civil War (1936–39) was followed by almost four decades of one-party rule under the Nationalist General Francisco Franco, who had been supported by fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The Francoist regime was responsible for continuous serious human rights violations and mass executions. After Franco's death in 1975 the country moved quickly to a constitutional

monarchy organized as a parliamentary democracy. Until recently, however, Spain made little effort to account for its past, instead following a policy that has become emblematic for official concealments of violent history. Yet this “historical memory hole” or “memory void” in the Spanish case also enabled a comparatively efficient transition from dictatorship to democratic state.<sup>46</sup> Transferring this principle, Predrag’s comment thus implies a plea for Croatia’s transition from “dictatorship to democracy,” including inevitable EU membership, without further indulgence in any retrogressive politics of memory. This statement can be understood as manifesting a weariness of dealing with the past that is typical of many young people in Croatia today, who would rather prefer to “move on and forget about the past.” On the other hand, this attitude is diametrically opposed to currently prevailing beliefs and practices that locate the past in the present, with the backing of prominent political and religious forces.

#### THE POLITICS OF MARTYRDOM AND SELF-VICTIMIZATION

At the *jama* the grave of the nameless dead is collectively honored by the pilgrimage of the living to the execution site. This annual visit is a way of commemorating and paying respect to those who have died for what is widely considered a political cause; a sacrifice on which the present Croatian nation state is built. Through the ritualized ceremony and the speeches at the *jama* they are made into martyrs, and “keeping their memory alive has been a significant step in reshaping the nation in contrast to the ‘barbaric’ communist times.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, the Mass for the Victims of the Communist Regime is an occasion for publicly acknowledging the dead and simultaneously strengthening the emotional bond between the living and the dead. A tangible connection to the forefathers and to the land in which they rest constitutes a sense of (temporal as well as spatial) continuity and belonging that almost assumes the form of an ancestor cult. The rewriting and re-visioning of history is a strong emotional force and it is the pain of the mourners that keeps the memory of the dead as well as the memory of past atrocities alive. In the case of the commemoration ceremony at the *jama*, the women who publicly weep and strew flowers in the crevice to honor the deceased are in charge of and represent this emotion-laden process. Through their emotional engagement the absent

is made present and guarantees the undisturbed cohabitation of the living and the dead. The presence of the dead conjured in this way leaves mythic traces in the present and plays a vital role in the way local actors situate themselves in their environment.

Interrogating the powerful influence of “imagined communities” on individuals, Benedict Anderson points out that nationalism potentially has the capacity to offer citizens a means of converting their own deaths into a shared immortality.<sup>48</sup> I argue that it is the very idea of shared immortality that has facilitated, and continues to facilitate, concepts of a homogenous population that is unified and anchored in a common mythological past and identified with a particular place and territory to the present day. The notion of immortality, however, has a strong religious implication and, at least in the context of Croatian memory politics, it cannot be separated from the suffering that is related to the self-sacrifice of Christ. The symbolism implied in Christian eschatology enables the identification between personal suffering and the (historical, present as well as anticipated) suffering of one’s nation and provides a potential for manipulation to political effect. Katherine Verdery writes in this connection:

Like saints, ancestors engage deep feeling when their biographies can be cast in that most common of all nationalist tropes: suffering. The revival of religion has intensified this imagery. When it can be said of a dead person that, like Christ, he suffered—for the faith, for the nation, for the cause—then that gives his corpse both sanctity and a basis for empathic identification.<sup>49</sup>

In the specific case of the Mass for the Victims of the Communist Regime, the dead are sanctified and invoked as carriers of memory with whom the community of the living empathize. The suffering of the victims of the communist regime makes them martyrs of an independent Croatian nation-state<sup>50</sup>—and these victims-turned-martyrs become sacred figures who embody and provide a link between personal and communal suffering. An icon that personifies this suffering is the stone Pietà next to the *jama*, the sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding her dead son on her lap. The Pietà is a visual reminder of the martyrdom of Christ as well as of (maternal) suffering and points toward the Christian dogma of death and resurrection.

Standing at the *jama*, my companions repeatedly told me to “think about all the mothers who have lost their sons here.” This reminder points not only to the gendered notion of commemoration but also to the politicized glorification of motherhood. As literal and symbolic reproducers of the nation, mothers and motherhood have become interchangeable with national suffering in the sense that the personal suffering of mothers in times of war is portrayed as a (voluntary) sacrifice for the nation. The suffering mother thus signifies the suffering of the homeland, and the maternal body serves as a marker and maker of the nation and national territory.<sup>51</sup> The Pietà, as an established “commemorative figure” (in Jan Assmann’s term) or “memorial formula” (according to Sigrid Weigel), serves as a paradigmatic representation of mourning and bereavement as the most painful act of remembrance.<sup>52</sup> It is thus no coincidence that the recently erected monuments at the *jama* comprise a Marian shrine as well as a Pietà relief that correlate the commemoration of Partisan atrocities with maternal suffering. Mourning and suffering are constructed as gendered commemorative activities that are ascribed to the female sphere.<sup>53</sup> As a memorial, however, the Pietà dehistoricizes the actual historic event it is supposed to represent and incorporates it into a much larger framework of sacralized iconography.

Vis-à-vis this forceful evocation of martyrdom and anticipation of divine justice, the speeches delivered at the *jama* devalue and ridicule secular, and above all, international jurisdiction. The priests portray secular values such as human rights as corruptible and inferior to a more enduring set of divine values within which love for one’s homeland is emphasized as the prime religious duty. The Christian concept of “absolute and eternal truth” is perceived as incompatible with what T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper call “human rights narratives.” These authors argue that “One significant effect of the growing power of the human rights narrative and its various legal and quasi-legal agencies has been a strengthening of the transnational arena, as a domain where war memories previously unrecognized in the arena of the national state might be articulated.”<sup>54</sup> These, however, are exactly the reasons for which human rights narratives are rejected by right-wing Croatian nationalists, for whom not human rights per se but the political implications of a unitary judiciary and a new post-Cold War ordering of international relations seem to pose an immense threat. This attitude is a direct continuation of the

policy of Tuđman, who “considered human rights a Western fabrication, and [arrogantly discarded] the idea of a constitutional state respecting civil rights in favor of sovereignty and national independence.”<sup>55</sup> In the concrete case of the sermon at the *jama* in 2005, the polemic of the priest is in my view obliquely directed against the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the European Convention on Human Rights, that all EU member states are expected to ratify. And with their renunciatory attitude, the adversaries of a superordinate set of laws, who are by and large also opposed to Croatian EU membership, intend to rebuff any imposed legal or supranational state authority. By insinuating that they refuse to submit to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, they also refuse to accept the International Humanitarian Law, a legal corpus that is composed of the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Conventions, as well as subsequent treaties, case law and customary international law.

Church representatives in particular often justify such radical notions by stating that, as devout Catholics, the Croatian people are accountable to God alone and therefore not compelled to bow to international jurisdiction. I argue, however, that at bottom, all of this comes down to the rejection of a common war crimes law, of which the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is part. In this context, the main reservation of the Eurosceptics and ICTY objectors concerns the role of Croatia and Croatian soldiers in the Homeland War. Their refusal to cooperate with the ICTY and to accept the tribunal’s indictments of Croats rest on an apprehension that any admission of war guilt would create an equivalence of responsibility among Croats and Serbs and challenge the legitimacy of the Homeland War and of Croatia as a nation.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the *jama* is chosen as a site for this highly controversial proclamation illustrates how many nationalists stress and invoke the victim status of Croatia and Croats in order to argue that they cannot be perpetrators or be held responsible for crimes committed during the Homeland War. It is through this perception of continual victimization that war crimes charges and verdicts imposed by international jurisdiction are vehemently rejected.

CONCLUSION: RE-VISIONS OF HISTORY THROUGH LANDSCAPE

Recollections and memories of ancestors, past events and personal experiences are linked to places and landscapes.<sup>57</sup> The Dalmatian limestone mountains are commemorative landscapes—*Erinnerungslandschaften*, as Aleida Assmann calls them—that are seen through traces of struggle and self-defense.<sup>58</sup> And even though the landscape itself seems immutable, the memories attached to it have a capacity to vary widely and to change over time. While a (former) Partisan might perceive the mountains as a site of fierce fighting and victory over the fascists, a Serbian dweller might rather be reminded of Ustaša crimes and the eviction of Serbs. In turn, many Croats who have lost family members or friends in executions or mass killings perceive the place primarily as a site of Partisan atrocities and—depending on context—one of historic threat from Ottoman Turks followed by eventual victory. Hence, the region bears a particular aura of historical revision that inheres in the process of contextual memorialization.

Dalmatia's distinctive character is less rooted in fixed notions of ethnicity than in the texture of the environment and related modes of land use as well as spatialized historic accounts. The barren mountains shape and are crucial to concepts of belonging and micro-nationalism, as illustrated, for instance, by the joke cited at the outset of this article about the lunar Dalmatian mountains as a typical feature of "Croatian land." In writing on the relation between physical landscape and collective memory, Halbwachs stressed the stable and timeless quality of geographical commemoration sites, pointing out that "The collective thought of [a] group ... has the best chance of immobilizing itself and enduring when it concentrates on places, sealing itself within their confines and moulding its character to theirs."<sup>59</sup> Comments by urban Croats such as "Dalmatians are like the landscape they live in: tough and obstinate," or references to Dalmatians as "stone people," rest admittedly on highly questionable ethnogeographical deterministic assumptions. Nevertheless they support Halbwachs's theoretization of the geographical anchoring, adaptation and durability of a community. Elaborating on Halbwachs's approach to the role of collective memory in common identity, Pierre Nora suggests that a people or a group who perceive themselves as having been marginalized in traditional history are habitually "haunted by the need to recover their buried past."<sup>60</sup> This central proposition in memory theory

resonates with present-day Croatia and informs my argument that a crucial part of national as well as regional Croatian identity is based on a perceived marginalization that is geographically situated and continually linked to personal recollections and official historiography. The shared experience of disadvantage and continual performance of victimization result in the creation of a communal memory that is not only of major retrospective importance but also decisive for the future coherence of a group—be it Dalmatia on a regional level or the whole of Croatia on a national level.

Moreover, the previously described Mass for the Victims of Communist Atrocities at the *jama* conveys the emotional charge and political stance of public commemoration that follows after a lengthy period of “forced amnesia” about Partisan atrocities under communism. Recently transformed into a private as well as public sanctuary of religious devotion and pilgrimage, the *jama* is not so much a typical “site of memory” but rather corresponds to what Nora calls the “living heart of memory.”<sup>61</sup> In this function the location of the *jama* is symbolically embedded in a much wider commemorative context and contributes to the sustainability of an entire landscape inhabited by memories. I argue that what is experienced in the commemoration ceremony and kept alive beyond it on an everyday level is the actual phenomenon of lived and experienced connectedness with the past. In their speeches the Franciscan priests skillfully draw on the memories aggregated under communism and spontaneously actualize them by linking them to the immediate political situation. The speakers appeal to a group’s feeling of solidarity whose beliefs have previously been discounted; and although they use the national history of Croatia in their rhetoric of referring to the Croatian people’s suffering and global victim status (*mali narod, velika nepravda*), they in fact install the *jama* as a platform for the articulation of distinct regionally embedded memories. In this sense the *jama* is constructed as a local niche of heavily politicized (religious) commemoration, thus perpetuating regional belief legends and atrocity tales. As past atrocities are publicly conjured up and emotionally bewailed during the ceremony, their memory is considerably invigorated and revived. The erection of the miniature altar of *Gospa Sinjska* and the restoration of the *jama* site in the year 2000 demonstrate the relevance of remembering communist atrocities to the present sociopolitical situation and at the same time reveal the need to install this remembrance within the realm of the sacred.

The notion of landscape as a cultural or symbolic construct has been a matter of debate for some years, particularly in terms of how the physicality of the environment is organized, experienced and understood.<sup>62</sup> Yet in the particular case of the *jama* in the Dalmatian limestone mountains I argue that the crucial factor for understanding the cultural meaning of landscape and its “concrete actuality of everyday life”<sup>63</sup> is the memorial function that is ascribed to the environment via local narratives in the context of ritual and ceremony. In other words, the landscape helps to maintain a sense of continuity across time and therefore plays a vital part in connecting to the litanies of national as well as regional suffering that stretch across time. The land does not allow its inhabitants to forget and is in turn also not allowed to forget as the people of the region persistently charge the territory with commemorative meaning and erect monuments and religious shrines to that effect. The *jama* is like an open wound in the otherwise solid landscape that does not heal and is therefore comparable to the memories themselves that still cause pain and hinder reconciliation.

In rural Dalmatia memories of past and recent violence are merged, continued and currently revitalized with the support of material icons, such as the miniature altar of the *Gospa Sinjska* or the Pietà figurine. In contrast to the nearby official war memorial which is less frequented and seemingly has no direct impact on people’s affective memories, the memories and emotions that are evoked at the *jama* not only influence people’s engagement and relationship with the past but also secure the emotional weight of the past in the present. The memories of past atrocities cannot be separated from the soil where they “took place.” It is exactly the “concrete,” the material environment and space of the *jama* that the transmitted local memories are located in. The aura that sacralizes the *jama* and the memories related to it cannot be adequately re-presented by an abstract memorial. Especially in places where people were denied the right to mourn their losses and to tell publicly of their suffering, official commemoration sites are not sufficient to compensate for the deprivation.

I have mentioned earlier that the *jama* is part of a religious geography that accumulates many layers of meaning and provides a stable framework of national narratives and memories that are allocated to a specific place. The material space of the homeland is imagined as being founded on relics and bones, and the *jama* as a mass grave grants a sense of connectivity and continuity that reaches beyond linear concepts of historicity. It becomes

clear that the significance of territory is linked to the reconfiguring of time and secures the realignment of the local population with their ancestors. Ancestral and family graves impart to individuals a rootedness in time and space and simultaneously consolidate the cohesion of a community, most especially when a community uses mythic topologies as geopolitical markers to define its entitlement to a particular place or territory.<sup>64</sup> Whereas in the immediate post–World War II years the dead haunted the (forcibly repressed) memories of the living, since the late 1980s the living seem to haunt the dead in an attempt to secure them as allies for their changing political endeavors.

#### NOTES

1. Cited in *Guardian* (UK), December 27, 1995, 2.
2. Speech at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Serbian Writers' Union, Književne novine, March 15, 1989, quoted in Ivan Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia: Essays in Political Anthropology* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), 36.
3. Petri J. Raivo, *In This Very Place: War Memorials and Landscapes as an Experienced Heritage*, The Thingmount Working Paper Series on the Philosophy of Conservation, TWP 99-07 (Lancaster University, Department of Philosophy, 1999) (available at [http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/philosophy/awaymave/onlineresources/in%20this%20very%20place%20\(raivo\).pdf](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/philosophy/awaymave/onlineresources/in%20this%20very%20place%20(raivo).pdf)) (accessed October 21, 2010).
4. For a comprehensive analysis of how war violence is socially remembered in relation to the materiality of place, with a particular focus on the destruction of landscapes and builtscapes during World War I, see Paola Filippucci, "In a Ruined Country: Place and the Memory of War Destruction in Argonne (France)," in Nicolas Argenti and Katharina Schramm, eds., *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 159–83.
5. Cf. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 25, 622. For a conceptual outline of the fractal character of the Balkans, see Sarah Green, *Notes from the Balkans: Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 128–58.

6. Susanne Seymour, "Historical Geographies of Landscape," in Brian Graham and Catherine Nash, eds., *Modern Historical Geographies* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited: 2000), 214.

7. Bette Denich, "Unbury the Victims: Rival Exhumations and Nationalist Revivals in Yugoslavia," paper delivered at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, 1991; idem, "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide," *American Ethnologist*, no. 21 (1994): 367–90; Robert M. Hayden, "Recounting the Dead: The Rediscovery und Redefinition of Wartime Massacres in Late- und Post-Communist Yugoslavia," in Rubie S. Watson, ed., *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994), 167–84. For a more recent study on the Istrian case, see Pamela Ballinger, "Exhumed Histories: Trieste and the Politics of (Exclusive) Victimhood," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 6, no. 2 (2004): 145–59.

8. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1999), 104. Especially in chap. 3, "Giving Proper Burial, Reconfiguring Space and Time," Verdery primarily draws on ethnographic material on exhumations and reburials in the former Yugoslavia as described by Denich and Hayden.

9. Ibid., 105, 160. In this context, it is interesting to note that the relative strength of "genealogies" and "territories" in constituting national sentiment is gradually changing and that the Serbian "blood and soil" ideology, for instance, is putting a greater emphasis on "blood" rather than "soil." Probably the most noteworthy indication of this shift is Radovan Karadžić's remark of September 13, 1995, at a time when he was president of "Republika Srpska": "We will not become a nation until being a Serb is more important than living where your ancestors lived." Quoted in Robert M. Hayden, "Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia," *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 4 (November 1996): 783.

10. See Ballinger, "Exhumed Histories"

11. One of the objectives of my research was to analyze nationalist rhetoric in postwar Croatia. This explains my focus on nationalist positions—I am well aware, however, that my locally and thematically restricted research does not represent the entirety of postwar Croatian society in which liberal, democratic and secular attitudes and the development of a civil society exist alongside nationalistic circles.

12. Former Croatian Lieutenant General Ante Gotovina, who had served in the Croatian army during the Homeland War, was indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Captured in Tenerife on December 7, 2005, after spending four years on the run, he was extradited to The Hague where he is currently on trial. Many nationalist Croatians,

however, perceive Gotovina as a war hero who defended Croatia against Serb military aggression and fought for the country's independence. They equate the indictments of the tribunal against individuals such as Gotovina with an "attack against the dignity and legitimacy of the Homeland War" and fear that a guilty verdict might eventually excite doubts regarding the legitimacy of Croatia as a nation. See Victor Peskin and Mieczysław P. Boduszynski, "International Justice and Domestic Politics: Post-Tudman Croatia and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no. 7 (2003): 1117–42.

Mirko Norac was the first Croatian general to be convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Homeland War. In 2001 he was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment by a court in Rijeka for his involvement in the killing of approximately forty Serb civilians while "defending" the strategically important town of Gospić as part of *Operacija Oluja* in October 1991. War veteran organizations and powerful political groups opposed to the indictment of former Croatian generals organized huge rallies in his support.

13. Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso Press: 1989), 1.

14. Alan R. H. Baker, "Introduction: On Ideology and Landscape," in idem and Gideon Biger, eds., *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the Meanings of Some Places in the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

15. In his seven-volume collection *Les lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora creates an encyclopaedic inventory of sites and objects that embody the national memory of France, illustrating his generalizing theory that "we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left." Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7. He writes of a process by which history, or mere historical traces, residing in *lieux de mémoire*, steadily and irreversibly eradicates the kind of memory that subsists in and generates *milieux de mémoire*. In contemporary Croatia, however, references to the past in the form of repetitive personal memories, enumerations of previous atrocities and/or reinterpretations of historical facts are ubiquitous and are continually linked to actual political developments. These narrative accounts constitute vital and integrated parts of the present and are constantly interwoven with allusions to ancestors, mythical times and ancient war heroes. Contrary to Nora's much criticized argument, however, the prevalence of "memory" over "history" as I encountered it in Dalmatia by no means excludes a local historiographical consciousness. My interlocutors were all well aware of the representational character of "history" and knowingly (re)constructed distinct "environments of memory" with reference to and often in opposition to official historiographies.

16. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, "Introduction: Forecasting Memory," in Antze and Lambek, eds., *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), xii.

17. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

18. In their account of the relation between religion and the physical environment, Horden and Purcell note that "out of an estimated 3,248 active pilgrim shrines in Europe, 18 per cent are connected with cities of more than 25,000 inhabitants ... 30 per cent of those are 'suburban' (peripheral rather than central to the city landscape). Most of the shrines which are related to landscape features—the familiar trees, springs, rocks, summits of our survey so far—are remote from cities, and very few are in their centres." In addition, they stress that it is precisely because of their remoteness and their detachment from normal conditions of life that cold mountain tops "have been linked with the time of origins, suitable places for the abode of the divine" (*The Corrupting Sea*, 422, 413). In this sense, the shrine at the *jama* represents a rather typical specimen of remote pilgrimage sites. Cf. Victor Turner, "The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12, no. 3 (1973): 191–230.

19. A number of scholars have analyzed this connection in relation to the Marian apparitions that have continuously taken place in the pilgrimage site of Međugorje (Herzegovina) since the 1980s and which have become synonymous with the reawakening of the Croatian nation. See Bojan Aleksov, "Marian Apparitions and the Yugoslav Crisis," *Southeast European Politics* 5, no. 1, (2004): 1–23; Mart Bax, "The Celebration of a Violent Past: About Some Local Sources of the Recent War in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Narodna Umjetnost* 37, no. 1 (2000): 115–32; idem, *Medjugorje: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Rural Bosnia* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995); Juan A. Herrero Brasas, "In the Name of Mary: Sacred Space, Sacred Property, and Absolution of Past Sins," in Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, eds., *Religion, Violence, Memory and Place* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 150–62; Élisabeth Claverie, *Les guerres de la Vierge: Une anthropologie des apparitions* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003); Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 109–22; Pedro Ramet, "The Miracle at Medjugorje: A Functional Perspective," *South Slav Journal* 8, no. 1 (1985): 12–20; and Zlatko Skrbis, "The Apparitions of the Virgin Mary of Medjugorje: The Convergence of Croatian Nationalism and Her Apparitions," *Nations and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2005): 443–61.

20. The alleged apparitions and miracles at Međugorje have been extremely commercialized over the years and thus attract huge crowds of international visitors with diverse individual concerns that are entirely unrelated to the history and

politics of the region. Today, the pilgrimage site at Međugorje has a huge economic impact, but the initial political impetus has decreased since the apparitional phenomenon began to develop along its own independent lines. In contrast, the annual pilgrimage to and daily veneration of *Gospa Sinjska* preserved and revived its significance as commemoration and celebration of the idea of Croatian chosenness and of the Croatian people's resistance to foreign intruders dating back to the times of the Ottoman invasion. For the Franciscans' use of such legends, see Pedro Ramet, "Factionalism in Church-State Interaction: The Croatian Catholic Church in the 1980s," *Slavic Review* 44, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 298–315; and Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 119.

21. It also underlines the interrelatedness of culture, power and place as noted by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

22. Cf. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldin, 1969).

23. In 1945 Yugoslav Partisans killed thousands of Croatian Ustaše and Home Guards (*Domobrani*), Serbian Četniks and Slovenian White Guards, along with a large number of civilians who had fled ahead of the advance of the Partisans in May 1945. Hoping to surrender to and gain protection of the Allies, these fugitives tried to cross the border into Austria where British infantry brigades were stationed. The British troops, however, forcibly returned the fleeing militia and refugees to Yugoslavia, where the Partisans executed most of them. The question of how many people were actually killed at Bleiburg remains controversial. While some Croatian nationalists insist that up to 200,000 were killed, others have put the final death toll at 30,000. The Bleiburg massacre has become paradigmatic for the betrayal of Croats by the Allied troops and is commonly deployed as *the* trope of Croatian victimization.

24. Jasenovac was the largest concentration and extermination camp in Croatia during World War II. Set up in August 1941 and run by the Ustaška Narodna Služba UNS (Ustaša People's Service) of the NDH, Jasenovac was constructed in a manner similar to Nazi concentration camps. Victims included mainly Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and opponents of the Ustaša regime. Estimates of the numbers of victims murdered in the Jasenovac camp vary tremendously due to the lack of exact and reliable records. Many Serbs use Jasenovac as a metonymy for genocide and the Ustaša campaign to expel them from Croatia, whereas a number of Croatian historians in turn have sought to "correct" or to downplay the number of actual victims.

25. Goli Otok (literally "barren island") is an island off the northern Adriatic coast that was converted into a high-security prison in 1948. Run by the authorities of Socialist Yugoslavia, the entire island was used to incarcerate political prison-

ers, mainly Stalinists and/or Yugoslav citizens who sympathized with the Soviet Union. Later, mainly nationalists were imprisoned and forced to do heavy labor in a stone quarry. A large number of political prisoners were never released and died on the island. The prison camp was shut down in 1988.

26. Located on the Danube on the Croatian-Serbian border, Vukovar was attacked by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and Serbian paramilitary troops in July 1991. During a devastating three-month siege, the city was almost completely destroyed. The Croatian population of Vukovar was partly exiled and a large number were killed. In a nearby field called Ovčara mass executions of Croats took place and the actions of the JNA and Serb paramilitary forces are widely regarded in terms of ethnic cleansing. Croats saw the battle for Vukovar as a life-or-death struggle for the survival of their nation, which they compared to the Soviet Union's decisive Battle of Stalingrad. Today Vukovar remains largely destroyed, the surrounding fields still covered with landmines.

27. The official term for Croatian war veterans, *branitelji*, reflects the official perception of the Croatian military actions during the Homeland War of 1991–95 as mere defense operations.

28. The strong anticommunist sentiment of the Croatian Catholic Church and the Franciscan order is based on the severe repressions the Yugoslav communist regime exercised against the Church. Large numbers of clerics were subjected to ruthless persecutions and many priests and monks were killed during and after the war. Tomislav Jonjić notes that "The Shepherd's Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Yugoslavia dated 20 September 1945 especially pointed to the unprecedented persecutions of Catholic priests: 243 killed, 169 in prisons and camps, and 89 missing. There were also 19 killed clerics, 3 killed monks and four nuns." Tomislav Jonjić, "Organised Resistance to the Yugoslav Communist Regime in Croatia in 1945–1953," *Review of Croatian History* 3, no. 1 (2007): 136.

29. Cf. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

30. James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell 1992), 25.

31. Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xxxv.

32. In this sense, the commemoration comprises an emotional (but not a political) claim over the Croatianness of the territories and victims in question. Similarly, the border between Croatia and Herzegovina is never referred to or taken seriously as a state border, but is instead either ridiculed or verbally disparaged.

33. Cf. Vlasta Jalušić, "Gender and Victimization of the Nation as Pre- and Post-War Discourse," *Gender, Identität und kriegigerischer Konflikt: Das Beispiel des ehemaligen Jugoslawien*, ed. Ruth Seifert (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004), 40–67.

34. Cf. Susanne Kühler, "Landscape as Memory: The Mapping of Process and Its Representations in a Melanesian Society," in Barbara Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995), 86.

35. Cf. Nancy Ries, "The Power of Negative Thinking: Russian Talk and the Reproduction of Mindset, Worldview, and Society," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 10, no. 2 (1991): 38–53.

36. Simon Harrison, "Forgetful and Memorious Landscapes," *Social Anthropology* 12, no. 2 (June 2004): 149.

37. The Franciscans constitute the largest and most influential religious order in Croatia today. They are divided into the Order of Friars Minor, Conventuals, Capuchins and monastic Third Order Franciscans. Spread over three provinces in Croatia with headquarters in the municipalities of Zagreb (15 monasteries), Split (13 monasteries) and Zadar (5 monasteries), the order of the Friars Minor is the most prominent branch. The Franciscan Conventuals have twelve monasteries throughout Croatia with headquarters in Zagreb. Also with headquarters in Zagreb, the Third Order Franciscans have fourteen monasteries; the Franciscan Capuchins have one province with ten monasteries. Cf. Bax, *Medjugorje*.

38. Ivo Andrić, *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*, ed. and trans. Zelimir Juričić and Hohn F. Loud (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 65.

39. Cf. Hanna Egger, "Franziskanischer Geist in mittelalterlichen Bildvorstellungen," in idem and Harry Kühnel, eds., *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi: Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters* (Krems-Stein, Minoritenkirche: Niederösterreichische Landesausstellung, 1982), 471–505.

40. Bax, *Medjugorje*, 18.

41. Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 57–58.

42. Cited in Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997): 1375.

43. Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in idem et al., eds., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1.

44. Žarana Papić, "Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascistization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia," in Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti, eds., *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies* (London: Zed Books 2003), 133; Cf. Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships* (Northvale: Aronson, 1988).

45. Jonas Frykman, "When the Dead Come Alive" (unpublished ms.), 2. Frykman refers particularly to the *ensuli*, the Italian-speaking population of Istria who were heavily persecuted under Tito's communist regime and fled into exile (*esuli*). For a comprehensive ethnographic study of the repercussions of the displacement

of up to 350,000 ethnic Italians from the border zone between Italy and Yugoslavia, see Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

46. Cf. Susana Narotzky and Paz Moreno, "Fighters, Martyrs, Victims: Political Conflict, Ambivalent Moralities and the Production of Terror and Modes of Governance in Contemporary Spain," in Frances Pine, Deema Kaneff and Haldis Haukanes, eds., *Memory, Politics and Religion: The Past Meets the Present in Europe* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 273–93. For a detailed study of the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, see Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002).

47. Frykman "When the Dead Come Alive," 2.

48. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 10.

49. Verdery, *Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, 114.

50. The majority of those Croats who died in the battle against the Partisans had fought for the fascist Croatian NDH. Today, these dead are reinterpreted as victims in the fight for the independent Republic of Croatia.

51. Dubravka Žarkov, *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 69.

52. Jan Assmann, "Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität," in idem and Tonio Hölscher, eds., *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), 12; Sigrid Weigel, "Pathologie und Normalisierung im deutsche Gedächtnisdiskurs: Zur Dialektik von Erinnern und Vergessen," in Gary Smith and Hinderk M. Emrich, eds., *Vom Nutzen des Vergessens* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 258.

53. Insa Eschebach has underlined that the equation of "woman and mother" and the subsequent universalization of motherhood within the Pietà iconography encompass the danger of naturalizing history and possibly of normalizing terror. Silke Wenk and Insa Eschebach, "Soziales Gedächtnis und Geschlechterdifferenz: Eine Einführung," in Insa Eschebach, Sigrid Jacobeit and Silke Wenk, eds., *Gedächtnis und Geschlecht: Deutungsmuster in Darstellungen des nationalsozialistischen Genozids* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2002), 22.

54. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, eds., *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London and New York: Routledge 2000), 68.

55. Cf. Drago Hedl, "Living in the Past: Franjo Tudjman's Croatia," *Current History* 99, no. 635 (March 2000): 104–9 (available at <http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=297>) (accessed October 11, 2010).

56. Peskin and Boduszynski, "International Justice," 2.

57. Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, 3rd ed. (1999; Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006).

58. The description of a wounded space that continually fails to heal corresponds to Aleida Assmann's definition of a "traumatic place" (ibid., 338). I would, however, refrain from considering the *jama* a classic "traumatic place," as the notion is habitually used with reference to concentration and extermination camps whose horror exceeds all powers of imagination. The extent to which the *jama* represents local trauma is in my opinion quite significant, yet not comparable to classic traumatic places.

59. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (1950; New York: Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1980), 156.

60. Nora, "Between Memory and History," 15.

61. Ibid., 23.

62. Cf. Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon, *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Seymour, "Historical Geographies."

63. Hirsch, "Anthropology of Landscape," 3.

64. The literary critic Tatjana Pavlović notes that "Allusions to nature, animals, stones, earth, trees, etc. are common Croatian metaphors illustrating the 'profound' connection of the people to their historical roots. These allusions are also found in many of our pop-groups that tie their belonging to the nation to a particular tree, which they envision as a pillar of nationhood." Tatjana Pavlović, "Remembering/Dismembering the Nation: The Archaeology of Lost Knowledge," in Rada Iveković and Julie Mostov, eds., *From Gender to Nation* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2002), 140–41. This analysis illustrates that closeness to nature is seen as rootedness in place and connection to the territory that marks a nation and constitutes nationhood.