

## CEMETERIES

### Mapping the Sites of Death in Croatia

From the earliest Dawn of Human Civilization, Man looked upon the Death with deepest respect, either because of fear or desire to keep some traces of the ancestors, traces that would recollect memories of passed relatives and friends. Nearly every civilization managed to leave something behind (regardless the basic idea and reason for erecting the artifacts), extending the presence of memory after certain members of their society up to today. The Death of a close person becomes a clear fact when memories and recollection of his/her entity start to fade away. That is, probably the reason why we try to keep the memories after someone's Death as long as possible. One of the ways to prolong the memories upon the One that has passed away is to have a Place where we can return (physically or mentally) and exchange the Silence and Emptiness with beloved One. These Places we call Cemeteries and they help us in keeping connections with our beloved ones close to our mind. These physical and mental connections can even be spread over two or three generations.

Every Culture and Civilization had and has its own, very specific way in protecting the memories of passed members of the Society. Reading cemeteries we can read Cultural identity of People, Nations and Civilizations. Throughout the Man's history, cemeteries were nested on a silent, secure and remote Place, in order to provide the Peace for the Souls and Spirits. They were always outside the "City-walls". But human settlements needed more and more space for spreading and they head to overlap the city-walls. Soon, the cemeteries have become embraced by buildings and other human produced artifacts.

Cemeteries are Places full of Memories. In order to distinguish them from the surrounding Space, man has decided to make a borderline between two parts of Space in order to distinguish the Place called CEMETERY. These boundaries vary from Place to Place, Country to Country, from Time to Time. These borderlines have the essential purpose of dividing two Worlds, protecting the Insiders from Outsiders (or vise-versus), or perhaps to outline this special Place. In Croatia, they are either grandiose walls (arcades), or walls made out of plants or dry-stone walls. Another important part of every cemetery are the Gates and something that is there not because of to be seen, but to be heard – a Toll-Bell which sound announces that the body is passing the thin line between Life and Death.

Cemeteries also have their Lives, they can Live and Die, nearly in the same way as their inhabitants once did. Many of the once-to-be cemeteries are gone, covered with asphalt and serve as parking lots, or in their best they become parks with several tombstones scattered around as silent reminders of the Past. One of the roles of cemetery designers and planers is to preserve these Places by proper mapping and try to implement the new cemeteries next to the old ones, as much as the available space allows that.

