

## **Historical Memory Symbols (Valhalla Memorial, Borodino Field, People's War Memorial, Waterloo Memorial, Liberty Statue)**

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**Abstract:** The emergence of memorial museums is rooted in wars throughout history. Examples include the Napoleonic Wars and World Wars. These memorial museums are built to honor individuals' memories, educate younger generations about the consequences of wars, and immortalize victories. This article examines memorial complexes such as the "Valhalla Memorial," "People's War Memorial," "Borodino Field," "Waterloo Memorial," and the "Liberty Statue."

**Keywords:** Memorial Museums, Napoleonic Wars, Empire Style, Valhalla Memorial, People's War Memorial, Borodino Field, Waterloo Battle, "Holm Lyva," Wellington Museum, "Liberty Statue," Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, Eugène Delacroix.

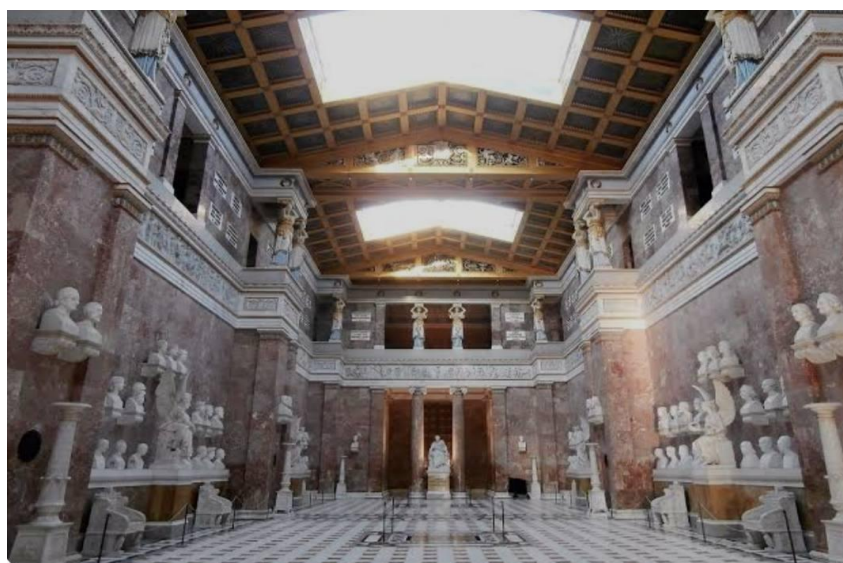
### **Introduction**

In world history, scholars and art historians often associate the emergence of the first memorial museums with the consequences of World War I and World War II. However, this perspective is considered inaccurate. This is because, a century before World War I, there were the Napoleonic Wars and other historical wars. Across Europe, various victory symbols and memorial complexes began to be constructed. After the Napoleonic Wars, specifically at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries (more precisely, in the early 19th century), the first memorial monuments and complexes that were not religious and intended for ordinary citizens were built. These types of monuments were erected in large and small cities, especially at sites where wars had taken place. All these monuments were constructed in the empire style, which was popular at the time, also known as the "imperial style" or late classicism. The main features of this style included grand and serious architectural forms, as well as decorations featuring military symbols—flags, cannons, cannonballs, epaulets, and other war-related images. One of the first memorial museum complexes is the Valhalla Memorial in Bavaria. Located on the high banks of the Danube River, 10 kilometers from the city of Regensburg, this memorial museum complex is architecturally designed in the traditions of classicism, resembling the ancient Greek temples, particularly the Parthenon in Athens.



### Valhalla Memorial

Its dimensions are nearly identical to the Parthenon, but in terms of appearance, it differs from later-built memorial monuments. The name "Valhalla" is derived from Scandinavian and Germanic mythology, where it is described as the hall where fallen heroes in battle reside. This memorial complex was conceived by Prince Ludwig of Bavaria in 1807, after the German armies were defeated by Napoleon in the war. However, according to the prince's plans, Valhalla was not only intended to commemorate soldiers, but also to honor prominent individuals who had served in Germany's history over the past 1800 years—such as scholars, writers, philosophers, and other great figures. While the legendary Valhalla held feasts for heroes who perished on the battlefield, this memorial complex in Bavaria was built not only for soldiers but also for those who made significant contributions to the fields of science and culture. The building was designed by architect Leo von Klenze in 1842, and construction was carried out under his supervision. The memorial stands magnificently on the high banks of the Danube River. The path leading to this memorial is a multi-tiered walkway with steps, surrounded by green meadows and ancient oak groves. Like the Parthenon, the building features two friezes adorned with sculptures (bas-reliefs): on the northern side, symbolic representations of historical states in Germany, and on the southern side, scenes of war are depicted. Inside the building, there is a large three-part hall. Its walls are decorated with marble friezes, depicting scenes from ancient German life. Beneath the friezes, shelves, and pedestals initially held 96 marble busts and 64 memorial plaques. Since then, only 32 new busts and one more plaque have been added.



### **Valhalla Memorial Interior Hall**

The memorial dedicated to the Battle of the Nations, which took place in October 1813 near the city of Leipzig, Germany, can be considered the first true memorial complex. In this battle, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Sweden united to defeat the French army under Napoleon, who at the time was trying to maintain his power in Europe following his defeat in Russia. This battle was the largest in European history before World War I. The memorial was designed by Berlin architect Bruno Schmitz. Its foundation was laid on October 18, 1898, and it was opened 15 years later, in 1913, on the 100th anniversary of the battle. The initiator of the project was Clemens Time, the leader of the Masonic association in Leipzig and the chairman of the German Patriotic Union. The construction costs were covered through lotteries and public donations. Located at the center of the battlefield, the memorial stands as one of the largest memorial complexes in Europe due to its height, internal structure, and symbolic meaning.



### **The Battle of Nations Memorial**

The height of the memorial is 91 meters. Visitors can reach the observation platform at the top via 500 steps from the lower part. At the base of the memorial, there is a statue of Archangel Michael, recognized as a defender among German soldiers. Inside the building, there is the "Hall of Glory," where the dome is adorned with images of 324 mounted warriors. In the hall, there are four massive monumental statues, each standing 9.5 meters tall.





## Hall of Glory

They represent the highest virtues of humanity: the power of faith, the strength of the people, courage, and selflessness. Next to the memorial stands the historically significant "Napoleon Stone." It is at this site, on October 18, 1813, that Napoleon set up his headquarters. This area has also been included in the memorial complex.

Another memorial site is the Borodino Field. This field holds a special place in Russian history as one of the memorials to the cavalry battle of 1812. When memorial complexes began to be built in Europe to commemorate battles, Russia also initiated the creation of memorials to immortalize the memory of the war. Known as the "War Museum," this memorial is now famously referred to as the "Borodino Field" Museum-Reserve. While, for example, the "Battle of Nations" memorial in Leipzig was planned and constructed over five years, the Borodino memorial was developed gradually, starting from the 1920s and was specifically prepared for the centennial anniversary. The creation of the Borodino Field memorial was a long process that took many years and evolved gradually over time.



## Borodino Memorial

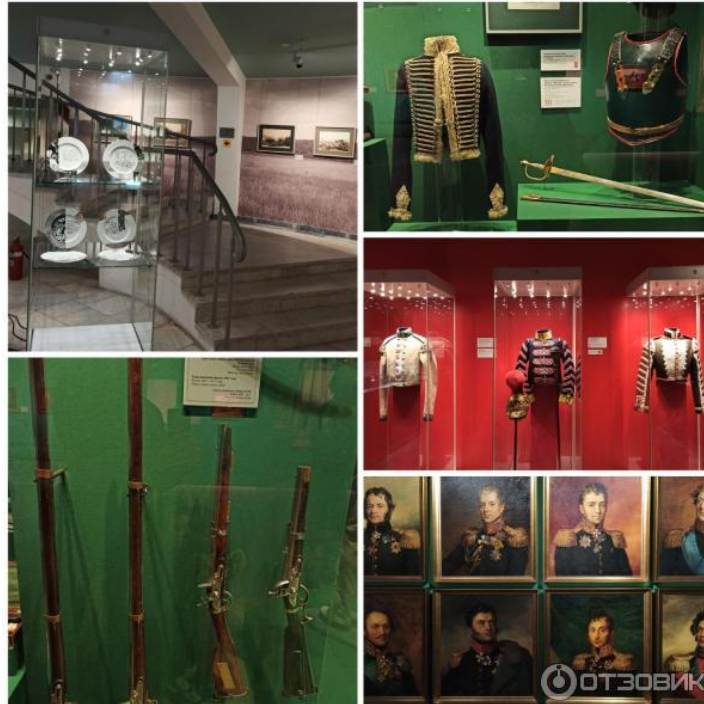
On the eve of the 100th anniversary of the 1812 war, the Borodino Memorial reached its current form. The differences between the Borodino Memorial and the "Battle of Nations" memorial in Leipzig are quite significant. The Leipzig memorial is composed of massive, heavy, and monumental pillars, while the Borodino Memorial is made up of various monuments, steles, and obelisks. These memorials are interconnected by pedestrian pathways, which enhances the unique design of the memorial, allowing for individual appreciation and remembrance of each monument and obelisk.

As a historical monument, the Borodino Memorial has gathered Russia's significant symbols and memories of the 1812 war. Compared to the Leipzig memorial, the Borodino Field more accurately reflects the historical context, with each obelisk, stele, and monument holding its own distinct significance. Additionally, the interconnected pedestrian pathways emphasize the interactive and dynamic nature of the site, offering visitors a more intimate connection to the history of the war.

There are several common characteristics shared by the Borodino Memorial and other similar memorials in Europe. All of them were created in the "imperial" architectural and artistic style of the time. This style, common in memorials of the period, was grounded in realism, with many of the monuments featuring details made of iron and forged stone. These details include depictions of weapons, helmets, eagles, and horses. Another notable feature is the presence of numerous busts and bas-reliefs of military commanders and war heroes.

The architecture of the Borodino Memorial stands out in comparison to European memorials due to its simple and natural approach. While memorial complexes in Europe, such as the "Battle of

Nations" memorial in Leipzig, are characterized by heavy and large structures, the Borodino Memorial consists of steles, obelisks, and monuments that are interconnected by pedestrian paths. This, in turn, harmonizes the memorial with its surrounding landscape simply and naturally. This approach makes the Borodino Memorial distinct from other memorials.



In commemorating the Battle of Waterloo, which marked Napoleon's final defeat against the British and Prussian forces, the importance of memorials and monuments cannot be overstated. The Waterloo Monument is undoubtedly one of the largest and most renowned memorials. On June 18, 1815, at the Battle of Waterloo, the French army under Napoleon was decisively defeated by the coalition forces consisting of the British army led by General Wellington and the Prussian forces commanded by Field Marshal Blücher. This battle entered history as Napoleon's final defeat, marking the end of his brief return to power during the Hundred Days. Among the most prominent monuments at Waterloo is "Hill 62," also known as the "Lion's Mound" or "Löwenburg." This artificial conical hill, constructed over two years through the combined efforts of the soldiers, the women of the battlefield, and the townspeople, stands as a powerful symbol of the battle. Positioned in the direction facing France, it is a grand yet simple memorial. The monument is deeply symbolic, representing the strength of the Seventh Coalition, which fought the final battle against Napoleon. It memorializes not only the battle itself but also symbolizes the indomitable strength and will of the forces that triumphed. The establishment of the monument holds particular significance as it was erected in honor of Prince William of Orange, the son of the King of the Netherlands, who was wounded in the Battle of Waterloo. This aspect of the memorial highlights that it is not only a military symbol but also carries personal and familial meaning. The design and shape of the monument play a crucial role in commemorating Napoleon's last major defeat and the end of his empire, providing a powerful and lasting tribute to the historical events that transpired on that fateful day.



### **Waterloo Monument**

The "Lion's Mound" memorial forms a unique and expansive complex of monuments. Included in this complex is the Wellington Museum, which provides visitors with detailed information and historical archives about the battle. Additionally, from a tourist perspective, several other significant landmarks can be found at the Waterloo site. For instance, the Catholic church where Wellington prayed before the battle, the partially destroyed farm of Hougomont, and the Panorama building, which have all been preserved as witnesses to the events of the battle. These landmarks not only hold immense historical value but also offer visitors a deeper engagement with history, allowing them to explore the past in a more immersive way during their visit to the memorial.



### **"Lion's Mound"**

When evaluating memorial museum complexes formed during the era of cultural change, in terms of their cultural significance, popularity, and recognition, the most iconic of all is one of the most famous symbols of the United States — the Statue of Liberty in New York. This statue is not only one of the most famous monuments in the United States but also a globally recognized symbol of freedom and democracy. It is often referred to as the "Symbol of New York," "Symbol of Liberty and Democracy," or "Lady Liberty."

One might ask whether it is a statue or a memorial complex. While the Statue of Liberty is officially referred to in documents as simply a grand statue, in reality, it embodies the full form of a memorial museum complex. It possesses all the main elements typical of modern memorial museum complexes: an area equipped for visitors, a small museum with historical exhibits, the



monumental sculpture itself — the statue, and an observation platform located at its top, offering a panoramic view.

Unlike many historical monuments, which are typically created to commemorate tragic events, the Statue of Liberty was erected with a distinct purpose. It serves as a symbol of freedom, democracy, and the welcoming spirit of the United States, making it not only a memorial but also an inspiring symbol for millions worldwide.



### "The Statue of Liberty"

It was gifted by the French people in 1886 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United States' independence. Therefore, this monument does not commemorate war, disaster, or heroism, but rather celebrates a national holiday — national freedom. This characteristic makes it one of the most unique memorials of its time. For many people, it has become not only a symbol of the United States but also a symbol of freedom worldwide. Interestingly, the statue was not created by Americans, but by French artists. The statue was first unveiled to the public on October 28, 1886. The sculptor was the young French artist **Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi**, who initially proposed the idea for a large lighthouse for the Suez Canal. According to his original plan, the lighthouse would depict a woman holding a torch. However, after this project was rejected, patrons in Paris suggested creating a monument to gift to the United States in honor of its 100th anniversary of independence. Bartholdi gladly accepted this idea and continued with his design in this new direction.

The conceptual roots of the statue trace back to the famous French artist **Eugène Delacroix's** painting "*Liberty Leading the People*." Bartholdi was inspired by the image of Liberty depicted in this painting. For this reason, the statue is not just a work of art but holds profound symbolic meaning: it represents liberty, human rights, independence, and democracy.



## Eugène Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People"

The Statue of Liberty is not just an ordinary statue — it is a complete memorial museum complex. The statue is located on Bedloe Island, approximately 3 kilometers from Manhattan. This island was once home to Fort Wood, which was built in preparation for the War of 1812. The fort was constructed in the shape of a star, and the statue was placed at its center. In 1924, this site was officially designated a national monument.

The statue itself is made of copper plates, which were molded in wooden forms and then mounted onto an internal iron framework. In its right hand, the statue holds a torch, while in its left hand, it carries a tablet inscribed with the date "July 4, 1776" — the day the United States Declaration of Independence was adopted.



At the base of the **Statue of Liberty** lies a broken chain, symbolizing freedom from oppression. Visitors to the statue can ascend 192 steps to reach the pedestal, and a further 356 steps to the top of the crown. The crown itself contains 25 windows, which symbolize "the beauties of the Earth and the rays of the sky." The seven rays of the crown represent the "seven continents and seven oceans." The **Statue of Liberty** is remarkable not only for its outward appearance but also for its deep symbolic meanings.

The **Statue of Liberty** became an international sensation in its time. Not only is it powerful in its symbolism, but it also served as one of the earliest examples of the construction of monumental memorial-museum complexes. In particular, the statue became a source of inspiration for memorial constructions after 1918. Throughout the 20th century, numerous **Memorial Museum Complexes**, formed in the aftermath of major wars, were built following the conceptual and visual model of the **Statue of Liberty**.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the memorial monuments listed above are of immense historical significance as symbols of collective memory. They were all built to preserve the memory of people's freedom, heroism, and historical events. The struggles for freedom, independence, and liberty in human history will never be forgotten. These monuments are not only architectural landmarks but also symbols of a people's respect for their history, ancestors, and future generations. Indeed, only people who understand the value of freedom and independence can shape a bright future. Therefore, preserving historical monuments and instilling their spiritual significance into the hearts of future generations is our sacred duty. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, several memorial monuments and complexes have been built to preserve the national memory. In Tashkent, the "**Memory Square**" is dedicated to the victims of World War II and the defenders of the homeland. The "**Grieving Mother**" statue installed there symbolizes the suffering of the people. These memorial complexes encourage us to never forget our history, honor our ancestors, and cherish our homeland and freedom.



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