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## When the meaning creates the atmosphere

**The symbolic language of architecture in the Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa by Giuseppe Davanzo, Augusto Murer, Andrea Zanzotto**

According to the great modern architects, the very aim of architecture is to generate feelings. Consequently, monuments (etymologically meaning buildings linked to memory) represent the ultimate essence of architecture, since they express concepts, arouse moods and provoke reactions.

In order to investigate the concept of *atmosphere* applied to architecture, it is interesting to consider the space of the commemorative monuments, whose purpose is to nurture the collective memory through sensations. Specifically, in these modern and contemporary memorials, feelings and meanings are conveyed by symbolic figures that can be considered a sort of design matrix, sometimes playing the same role as the *type*.

The poetic strength of the Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa (Veneto, Italy), by the architect Giuseppe Davanzo, the poet Andrea Zanzotto and the sculptor Augusto Murer, is emblematic of an atmosphere generated by the presence of meanings effectively expressed and represented.

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## Touching architecture

The great Modern architects have often put emotions at the heart of their arguments: for many of them the very aim of a building is to generate feelings. For Le Corbusier the capacity to stir emotions is what separates architecture from mere construction: *"la construction était faite pour tenir, et l'architecture pour émouvoir"*.<sup>1</sup> Some state that architecture has no purpose other than to make people move, no function other than to induce a religious silence. This is true both for a humble mound suddenly appearing encountered in a wood and for a majestic Egyptian pyramid.<sup>2</sup> According to the Modern Masters, a building is not just a container but also the content itself. In fact, the authentic architecture is the expression of a comprehensible and shared meaning that is able, even after centuries, to make the strings of emotions vibrate, due to a precipitate of sense that survives and is renewed over time. As Loos and Kahn highlight, monuments (etymologically meant as buildings linked to memory) represent the irreducible essence of architecture. They express concepts, arouse feelings and provoke reactions: in other words, they are designed in order to create an atmosphere by means of shapes and figures. As the outcome product of an abstract language, monuments are characterised by a strong ambivalence: they contain the particular and subtend the general, are semantically defined and open to new meanings, represent history and allude to the present, enclose the past and return it to the future. At the sight of the Giza pyramids we are led to silence, as Louis Kahn notes.<sup>3</sup> Thousands of years after their construction, these cyclopean burial mounds arising from the desert like petrified dunes, are today still full of meaning, not only because they are a testament to a disappeared civilization, but also because they are symbols of transcendence. The pyramids communicate something that goes beyond the stereotype produced by the tourism industry or the fascination of a royal death that occurred in a distant epoch: they represent an eternal moment. And although we can understand very little of that moment due to the distance of time and culture, we

are able to find in them new meanings that stir up our feelings.

## The symbolism of memorials

The meaning of modern and contemporary monuments is conveyed by symbolic figures, which re-emerge as archetypes from distant eras. Their universality is well-suited to the compositional exploration begun by the Modern Movement<sup>4</sup> on the secular, pluralistic expression of death and pain, with a view to giving an inclusive and undogmatic answer to the need for the sacred. Such a quest becomes even more urgent in the aftermath of WWII when the need emerges for a language able to heal the political, ethnic and religious wounds still dramatically alive. In his appeal to modern architects, Giedion affirms the importance of symbols: *"Every period has the impulse to create symbols in the form of monuments, which, according to the Latin meaning are things that remind, things to be transmitted to later generations. This demand for monumentality cannot, in the long run, be suppressed. It tries to find an outlet at all costs"*.<sup>5</sup> A symbol was originally an object divided into two parts that, put together, could prove the reunion of their owners; over time it has become a powerful device for expression, which overcomes the uniqueness of the concept, by holding together opposite meanings with no purpose of synthesis: *"A symbol separates and unifies, implying both the ideas of separation and reconciliation. It recalls the idea of a divided community that, nonetheless, can be reassembled"*,<sup>6</sup> writes Jean Chevalier. A symbol puts reason in check. Its evocative power lies in an ambivalent meaning, which transcends the Visible to represent the Invisible, overcomes the Known to evoke the Unknown. The symbolic language is much more expressive than the ordinary one: *"it is the initiatory language par excellence"*.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the symbolic expression is the only possible key to the darkness of an inconceivable, elusive destiny. And the more this expression is archaic, free from superstructures, the more it is shared. For this reason, the symbolic language is universal even if cryptic, and its richness indicates the health of a civilization. According to Mircea Eliade, sym-



Monument to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine, Roma 1944-51 (by Mario Fiorentino and Giuseppe Perugini, with Nello Aprile, Cino Calcaprina, Aldo Cardelli, Mirko Basaldella, Francesco Coccia). Photo: Francesca Mugnai.

bols have the social role of *"integrating the man in a broader unity: Society, Universe"*.<sup>8</sup> Symbols transform over time, but never cease to exist. Being the heart of the spiritual life, they may, at most, be camouflaged or degraded but never be erased, because they are spontaneously produced by the Psyche, just as concepts are produced by Reason. We can say that memorials are based on symbolic figures, which imply an emotional response, just like Jungian archetypes: *"Archetypes are both images and emotions at the same time [...]. The image alone is a notation of little importance, but when an emotion is entailed, the image acquires a numinous character (or a psychic energy)"*.<sup>9</sup> A symbolic figure should be comprehensible and shared but *"indefinitely suggestive"*,<sup>10</sup> enough mysterious to arouse the viewer's imagination. If, on the contrary, the meaning becomes obvious and univocal, the symbolic strength vanishes.

### The atmosphere of places

Memory and space are known to be linked to each other. Memory needs space to structure itself, as Aleida Ass-

mann states: *"The technique of the ars memorativa consisted of imagines - the codification of content in terms of meaningful images - and loci - the settings of these image in specific, structured spaces. This topological orientation leads logically to architectural complexes as embodiments of memory"*.<sup>11</sup> Non only Monument and Memory are interdependent, but they can be considered different sides of the same process of reworking the past. Referring to Henri Bergson's categories in *Matter and Memory*,<sup>12</sup> it can be said that if memory represents the spiritual side of that reworking process, the monument represents the material one, even though still shaped by Spirit. In the specific case of a memorial built upon the site where the event occurred, a very intense meaning arises, which favours the collective construction of identity. *Where* is a primary matter regarding the possibility of remembering and activating recognition: this is why we go back to places. But for this process to be triggered, the site must also be transformed, marked, not become a museum. In fact, we don't return there *"to know, but to feel, for the experience rather than for the knowledge"*.<sup>13</sup> A me-





Military shrine of Redipuglia, 1935-38 (by Giovanni Greppi and Giannino Castiglioni). Photo: courtesy of Michelangelo Pivetta.

morial should be a sign, a testimony, a *scoria* in the folds of the landscape. On the contrary, those sites crystallised at the time of the event, are likely to be disguised or trivialised,<sup>14</sup> since they are reduced to empty scenes, to sterile fiction. Only an obvious transformation, which amplifies the distance between the past and the present, can awake the evocative force inherent in sites of remembrance. In this task, a memorial works just like memory does: by re-reading the reality (the site and the event) a memorial traces a modified order, where elisions and transfigurations help transmissible meanings to re-emerge and consolidate. In other words, a memorial can offer an experience of reworking and overcoming the past by virtue of a new topography, where memory can be triggered by enigmatic, not trivially explicit images. In this way, the transformed site is more distant, elusive, estranged, but this estrangement brings it closer to the truth. For James Hillman, places have a soul. This soul is memory, which can be evoked by ritual gestures: remembering the blood flowing in the ground; marking the boundaries between the Sacred and the Profane; gathering meanings; relying on the fragments of the past; finally, being able to see the Invisible. According to Hillman, the latter is the most important aspect of an architect's education (*"the awakening of the aesthetic response, the*

*awakening from anaesthesia"*<sup>15</sup>) which allows one to grasp the hidden order of things. On this hidden order the *ritual* of Memory can take place; after all, *order* and *ritual* are linguistically connected,<sup>16</sup> as Guénon reminds us. An *in situ*-memorial is literally based on past events and draws its symbolic load from a bloody ground: by linking time and space, it represents a landmark for the territory and identity. From this perspective, a memorial carries out a *therapeutic* mediation, being a liminal space where the past and the future are linked to each other.

### **The Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa**

In Italy, the construction of monuments to the Resistance begins immediately post-war. Many are built on significant anniversaries (1965, 1975, 1985 etc.), but most between the 1960s and 1970s, when it is clear that Italian memory is "divided", as Giovanni Contini will write,<sup>17</sup> and that Fascism is still a threat after the war. Thus, the memory of the Resistance becomes an antidote to any undemocratic jolt and a source of historical-cultural legitimacy for the centre-left parties. As in other European countries, the tradition of collective monuments in Italy begins in the nineteenth century, but becomes an especially frequent feature during the Fascist Era when many mi-



Memorial in Gusen, 1967 (by BBPR). Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



Monument to Roberto Sarfatti, Col D'Echele 1934-35 (by Giuseppe Terragni). Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



litary shrines are built to bury the heroes of the fatherland. It is in this period that Italian architecture starts reflecting on the concept of monumentality, also including its relationship with the arts. The depth of the experience gained under Fascism becomes evident soon after Liberation, when the country symbolically marks the beginning of the Reconstruction with the creation of the Memorial to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine (Rome, 1944) and the Monument to the Fallen in Nazi camps (Milan, 1945).<sup>18</sup> The tension between the fascist heritage and the will to overcome it leads to a refined monumentality, obtained by carefully weighing types, figures and symbols, which are still indispensable tools in the design of poetic and emotional spaces, but no lon-

ger subservient to the emphasis of the patriotic rhetoric. The silent contrition expressed by the Italian monuments from the post-war period onwards is consonant with the memory of an unspeakable global trauma. This essential vocabulary of pure forms and abstract figures, already employed by the modernist avant-garde, now becomes enriched with further meanings, responding perfectly to the need for a universal, inclusive, archetypal language that expresses the immanence<sup>19</sup> of History and the transcendence of Death. In this archetypal language it is possible to recognize some recurring figures connected to ancient symbols of transcendence, which are therefore able to communicate shared meanings and feelings. Modern and contempo-

Aerial view: the monument to the Resistance (inside the red square) and the relationship with the imposing fascist shrine. Collage of aerial shots provided by Regione del Veneto – L.R. n. 28/76 Formazione della Carta Tecnica Regionale, Italia Open Data Licence v2.0

(<https://www.dati.gov.it/content/italian-open-data-license-v20>).



The half-circle terraces of the Italian ossuary in the military shrine. Photo: courtesy of Enrico Gugliotti.



rary architects rely, more or less consciously, on these archaic figures when designing spaces of remembrance, which are conceived as sacred places where the present meets the past, the living remember the dead and the earth rejoins the heavens. It is interesting to analyse the architecture of memorials from the perspective of their symbolic language and to try to decipher the complex vocabulary of forms in

relation to their polysemic value.<sup>20</sup> A flight of steps, a precinct, a door (and threshold), a labyrinth, a cross,<sup>21</sup> quarried stone and burial mounds are all figures that recur, alone or as a hybrid. In the context of Italian architecture, this interpretative criterion leads to a reading of the vast bare concrete block in the Fosse Ardeatine Memorial, both as a monolith suspended between the earth and the heavens and as a tomb-



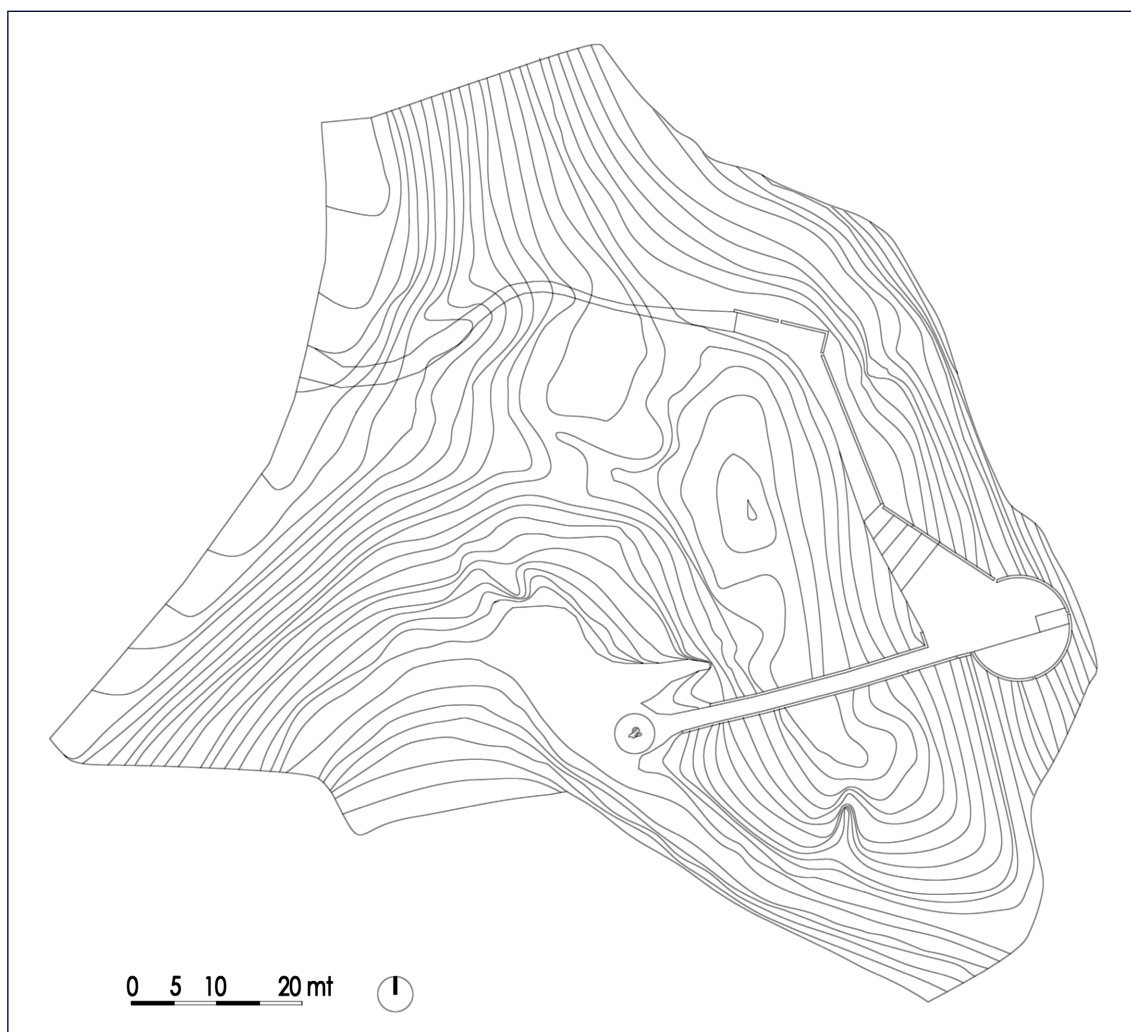
stone raised from the ground. The flight of steps in the military shrine of Redipuglia<sup>22</sup> can be read in two ways: from the top down it represents the ranks of an army led by the Duke of Aosta (the general buried in the granite cube at the base), from the bottom upwards the stairway turns into an ascent to Calvary that alludes to divine salvation. In Gusen, BBPR<sup>23</sup> design a precinct which is also a labyrinth protecting the crematorium turned temple; while on Col D'Echele, Terragni<sup>24</sup> lays a stone cross on the ground like a lifeless body to commemorate the sacrifice of Roberto Sarfatti, a young soldier who died during WWI.

Using the same interpretative key, it is interesting to look at the Monument to the Resistance in Cima Grappa (1974), the outcome of a happy blending of architecture, sculpture and poetry. The authors Giuseppe Davanzo, Augusto Murer and Andrea Zanzotto, natives of Veneto<sup>25</sup>, founded their own poetics on their rootedness in the homeland. Their intellectual encounter takes

place on the common ground of a visceral belonging to the landscape of the Alps and Pre-Alps of Veneto. It is further favoured by the bonds of friendship between Davanzo and Murer (for whom the architect designed the atelier at Falcade in 1972) and between Murer and Zanzotto, who were both partisans in the mountains of Treviso and Belluno during the war. The Monument to the Resistance stands on the bare peak of Cima Grappa, just below an imposing military shrine built during the Fascist Era by architect Giovanni Greppi and sculptor Giannino Castiglioni (1932-35).<sup>26</sup> In September 1944, some of the bloodiest episodes in the battles for Liberation occurred here, following the Nazi-Fascist round-ups in the so-called Operazione Piave. The monument to the Resistance, dedicated to all the victims of those events, is located near a natural tunnel where seven partisans were burned alive by Nazi flamethrowers.

The decision to build the monument where the slaughter occurred not only

Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa . Plan of the memorial. Drawing: Francesca Mugnai.





represents an opportunity for the authors to tell a deeply moving story in the setting of the Venetian Pre-Alps, it also gives them the chance to underline the indissoluble relationship between place and history and to give witness to the vital link between men and their land. The memorial is conceived as a symbolic journey through a sequence of outdoor spaces forming an almost hidden architecture, made of subtle signs and silent traces in respectful recognition of the tormented soul of this place of death. The nearby fascist military shrine, which dominates Monte Grappa with a series of semi-circular steps built along the flank of the mountaintop, is a strong presence. Despite this proximity, the monu-

ment to the Resistance refuses to engage in any dimensional competition, but rather employs a language which is architecturally antithetical yet politically reconciling. The only common feature is the presence of a path comprising symbolic and allegorical stages.<sup>27</sup> The Italian tradition of memorials in the form of paths can be traced back to the fascist architects who, charged with commemorating the WWI soldiers who fell in the mountains, exploit the nature of the war sites by turning the slopes into tragic and triumphal ascents, both civil and sacred *promenades architecturales*. In this type of memorial, the "spatial" narration, not only allows for the "topological orientation"<sup>28</sup> typical of mnemonic me-

Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa. The path leading to the terrace. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



The theatre-terrace with the landscape in the background. Photo: Ezio Quiresi (photographer); courtesy of Paolo and Silvia Quiresi.



Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa. Detail of the interrupted parapet behind the stage. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



Detail of the stage. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



chanisms, it also transforms the process of remembrance into a rite of initiation following different stages set in a precise order.<sup>29</sup> The journey into the Resistance memorial starts at the last bend before the summit, where a path descends to the right. At first the path is a simple track, then gradually paved and finally bounded by a fragmented step-parapet; it leads to a circular space 12 metres in diameter.

This is a terrace from which the plain between the rivers Piave and Brenta opens out as far as the eye can see;

or maybe it is a theatre, as suggested by the step that cuts the circle in two and forms a stage with the landscape in the background, in the manner of the Greeks. Just as in a theatre, in this sacred and civic precinct a reflection takes place: a mirroring between those who now look and those who once acted, between the Present and the Past, between the Memory and the History. Eugenio Turri (a geographer from Verona) wrote about the landscape as a theatre, where the man *"only as a spectator can find the sense of his work, of his actions, of his being*

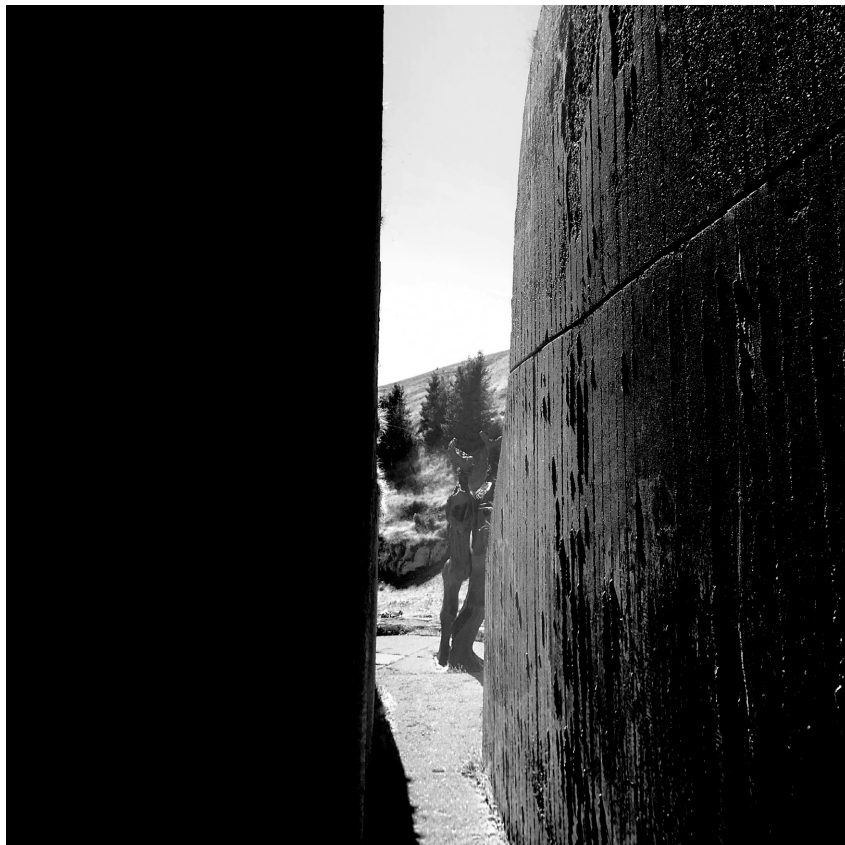


an actor who transforms and activates new scenarios".<sup>30</sup> Such a thought is also shared by Andrea Zanzotto, engaged in the defence of the Italian landscape just like Turri: *"The world is the limit within which a man can recognize himself, and this bond, which emerges espe-*

*cially in the circle of the landscape, also defines the circle of the I".*<sup>31</sup>

The space designed by Davanzo, surrounded by the void of the sky and the valley, seems to hint at the *"horizon within the horizon"*<sup>32</sup> which for Zanzot-

Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa. The narrow passage leading to Murer's sculpture. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.



The bronze sculpture seen from the exit of the narrow passage. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.







The fissure in the rock seen from a distance. Photo: Courtesy of Isabella Balena (photographer).

to defines the relationship between men and places: a necessary bond that lets an individual, or rather an inhabitant, consider himself as part of a much larger and sometimes unreachable whole. What opens up before the eyes is not a panorama, but the background that makes sense of the human actions in the foreground, semantically as important as the landscape behind the main subject in the interpretation of a fifteenth-century Italian painting. On the contrary, the nearby fascist shrine employs the mountaintop as a breath-taking location, well suited to represent the patriots' apotheosis. Yet, in both memorials the relationship with the landscape creates a sense of vertigo: a romantic vertigo in the shrine, where the vain effort of architecture to challenge nature inspires a sinister feeling of death; a historical vertigo in the terrace-theatre of the monument, where the individual, literally projected into the landscape's embrace, can perceive the flow of the events. Moving forward along the route, the path, now narrowed to 2 metres wide, continues for 30 metres between two concrete walls, like into a fissure in the rock. This space, which can be read as a *door* leading from a condition to another, encompasses multiple images: an evocation of the tunnel where the Partisans died; a metaphor for the wound dividing the country under the war; an

eschatological symbol: the biblical eye of a needle before an earthly freedom or a divine heaven. From a typological point of view the narrow passage recalls, instead, an archaic *dromos* engraved in the ground, which joins two circular chambers.

The second circle (5 metres in diameter) houses in the middle the body of a Partisan in the act of freeing his huge hands from the ties of captivity. The bronze sculpture by Augusto Murer, which can be seen from behind leaving the *dromos*, as if following in his footsteps, is divided in two by a long gap that goes from head to toe, recalling the fissure in the rock. In his sculptures, Murer has always represented the Resistance as a struggle more painful than heroic. This mountaineer-partisan is torn by an irreparable wound and his tormented body merges with the image of a dry melancholy tree.<sup>33</sup> The human figure emerges as if reborn from the earth, to dissolve immediately afterwards into the natural forms of the landscape, fulfilling an eternal cycle. It should be noted that, as a sign of piety and pacification, the sculpture turns its imploring hands towards the military shrine, as if to invoke justice and freedom for all the victims of the war. It is a completely different way of representing the mass sacrifice that is now evoked by a single



**Monument to the Resistance on Cima Grappa. The bronze sculpture in the snow. Photo: Francesca Mugnai.**

figure, Murer's partisan, in clear opposition to the multitude of columbaria in the fascist shrine. Along the different stages of its route, the monument to the Resistance creates a space for the reworking of a collective trauma by using ancient symbolic figures: two *precincts* linked by a *door*. The *precinct* has always been a sign that separates the sacred from the profane, the known from the unknown, the real from the unreal; it guarantees the recognition of a place and, by extension, it evokes a sense of security and salvation. The *door*, meanwhile, represents a single point of transition from one condition to another; its presence marks the passage from the profane to the sacred world, signifying discontinuity rather than contact between two connected worlds. These symbolic figures, set in the landscape of the Pre-Alps and designed to convey the dreadful horror of the mass-slaughter, encompass a rich layering of meanings. Beside the symbolic and narrative value, the sequence of the different spaces resonates with a strong emotional impact. The continuous change of perspective, the transition from narrow to wide spaces (path – first circle – fissure – second circle), the sudden passage from light to shade are all features which provoke a range of oppo-

sing feelings, arousing in the visitor a sense of continuous surprise, making this a *journey* pregnant with expectation. Yet the architecture of the monument is extremely simple, consisting only of walls and floors made entirely of bare concrete, as is the tradition in post-war Italian memorials:<sup>34</sup> a material endowed not only with a dramatic strength resulting from the surface roughness, but also with an evocative power due to the military use in the two World Wars. The monument, which the bare concrete makes resemble the ruins of an alpine military building (like a fort, a causeway or a trench), is composed of empty rather than full spaces, solely inhabited by Murer's dark sculpture, the tree-man who marks the passing of time by casting his shadow on the ground like a sundial. The limited number of signs and the absolute nature of the pure forms nonetheless correspond, in inverse proportion, to an extreme semantic wealth. In fact, the essential, symbolic nature of the language leaves room for the imagination, which is therefore free to construct alternative and parallel meanings, capable of continuously renewing the process of memory. This bestows the monument with mystery and its spaces with a *metaphysical* quality that recalls De





Chirico's compositions. Indeed, Louis Kahn considers the "enigma" a defining feature of monumentality.<sup>35</sup> The *circular* route of the monument is an allegory for a story and the emblem of a silent anti-heroic Resistance, representing with dramatic but not triumphal tones the painful transition from freedom to oppression and back to freedom again. Walking through the memorial may be likened to undertaking a journey

into the land of the Venetian Pre-Alps and, at the same time, an introspective journey, during which the psyche can recognize its own archetypes in the symbolic figures underlying the architecture and surrounding landscape. Through the stages of a route made up of symbolic topography, places and images of the psyche overlap with the real landscape, in a subtle balance of the physical and metaphysical.



## Notes:

- 1 Le Corbusier: *Vers une Architecture-Verso una Architettura*. Milan 1992 [Paris 1923], p. 9.
- 2 We refer both to the famous Loos' statement: "*Wenn wir im walde einen hügel finden, sechs schuh lang und drei schuh breit, mit der schaufel pyramidenförmig aufgerichtet, dann werden wir ernst und es sagt etwas in uns: hier liegt jemand begraben. Das ist architektur.*" (Adolf Loos: *Sämtliche Schriften*. Wien, München 1962 [1909], p. 317) and to Louis Kahn: "*Now we see the pyramids in full presence. There prevails the feeling 'Silence', from which is felt Man's desire to express*" (Louis I. Kahn: "*Silence and light*". In: Alessandra Latour: *Writings, Lectures, Interviews*. New York 1991, p. 248).
- 3 Louis I. Kahn 1991, p. 248.
- 4 Cf. Jeffrey T. Schnapp: *In cima. Giuseppe Terragni per Margherita Sarfatti. Architetture della memoria nel '900*. Venezia 2004.
- 5 Sigfried Giedion: "The need for a new monumentality". In: Paul Zucker: *New architecture and city planning*. New York 1944, pp. 549-568.
- 6 Jean Chevalier: "Introduzione". In: *Dizionario dei simboli*. Milan 2014 [Paris 1969], p. XVII. Translated from Italian.
- 7 René Guénon: *Il simbolismo della croce*. Milan 1973 [Paris 1931], p. 17. Translated from Italian.
- 8 Mircea Eliade: *Trattato di storia delle religioni*. Torino 2004 [Paris, Payot 1949], p. 412. Translated from Italian.
- 9 Carl Gustav Jung: "Introduzione all'inconscio". In: *L'uomo e i suoi simboli*. Azzante 2016 [London 1967], p. 96. Translated from Italian.
- 10 Chevalier 2014, p. XVII.
- 11 Aleida Assmann: *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*. New York 2011 [Munich 1999], p. 146.
- 12 For Bergson, Memory is pure Spirit, but the brain (Matter) gives Memory "*a grasp on the present*". Henri Bergson: *Materia e memoria*. Bari-Roma 2016 [Paris 1896]. Translated from Italian.
- 13 "...non per sapere, ma per sentire, per l'esperienza più che per la conoscenza". Patrizia Violi: *Paesaggi della memoria. Il trauma, lo spazio, la storia*. Milan 2014, p. 89.
- 14 Cf. Assmann 2002, p. 375.
- 15 "...il risveglio della risposta estetica, il risvegliarsi dall'anestesia". James Hillman/ Carlo Truppi: *L'anima dei luoghi. Conversazione con Carlo Truppi*. Milan 2004, pp. 103-104.
- 16 In Sanskrit "order" is "rita". Cf. René Guénon: *Il regno della quantità e i segni dei tempi*. Milano 1982 [Paris 1945], p. 23.
- 17 Giovanni Contini: *La memoria divisa*. Milano 1997.
- 18 Monument to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine, Roma 1944-1951 (by Mario Fiorentino and Giuseppe Perugini with Nello Aprile, Cino Calcaprina, Aldo Cardelli, Mirko Basaldella, Francesco Coccia); Monument to the Fallen in the Nazi camps, inside the monumental cemetery of Milan, 1945 (by BBPR).
- 19 According to the meaning given by the German Idealism.
- 20 See my work: Francesca Mugnai: *La costruzione della memoria*. Menfi 2017.
- 21 The cross is a symbol of transcendence par excellence. René Guénon states: "*If Christ died on the cross, it can be said that this was by reason of the symbolic value which the cross possesses in itself and which has always been recognized by all traditions*" (René Guénon: *The Symbolism of the Cross*. New York 1996 [Paris 1931], p. XIII).
- 22 The military shrine of Redipuglia (1935-38) was designed by the same authors of the shrine on Cima Grappa: Giovanni Greppi and Giannino Castiglioni.
- 23 BBPR (Luigi Banfi, Ludovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti, Ernesto Nathan Rogers) is a practice based in Milan active from 1940 to 1998. After the war, during which Banfi dies in the Nazi camp of Gusen, they have designed and built many memorials; they are also the authors of the Torre Velasca in Milan (1955-57). Gusen Memorial is built in 1967.
- 24 Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943) is the greatest exponent of pre-war Italian Rationalism, author of the Casa del Fascio in Como (1932-36). He builds the monument to Roberto Sarfatti between 1934 and 1935.
- 25 Giuseppe Davanzo was born in Ponte di Piave (Treviso) in 1921, Augusto Murer in Falcade (Belluno) in 1922, Andrea Zanzotto in Pieve di Soligo (Treviso) in 1921. Davanzo is a pupil of Carlo Scarpa.
- 26 The shrine houses the remains of about 23,000 Italian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers, who died during the battles fought around Monte Grappa, pivot of the Italian defense during WWI, after the defeat at Caporetto.
- 27 The military shrine consists of two ossuaries (the Italian and the Austro-Hungarian) linked by a monumental ridge path, the Via degli Eroi (Street of Heroes). In particular, the Italian ossuary is characterised by five half-circles shrinking upwards.

**28** See footnote 11.

**29** According to Anna Maria Fiore, the Italian ossuary recalls the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia in Palestrina, a Roman sanctuary made up of six terraces that marked the stages of the journey towards the oracle. Anna Maria Fiore: "La monumentalizzazione dei luoghi teatro della Grande Guerra: il sacrario di Redipuglia di Giovanni Greppi e Giannino Castiglioni". In: *Annali di architettura* 15/2003, pp. 233-247. Moreover, the circles evoke the Dantesque construction of the afterlife.

**30** "...soltanto in quanto spettatore può trovare la misura del suo operare, del suo recitare, del suo essere attore che trasforma e attiva nuovi scenari". Eugenio Turri: *Il paesaggio come teatro. Dal territorio vissuto al territorio rappresentato*. Venezia 1998, p. 16.

**31** "Il mondo costituisce il limite entro il quale ci si rende riconoscibili a se stessi, e questo rapporto, che si manifesta specialmente nella cerchia del paesaggio, è quello che definisce anche la cerchia del nostro io". Andrea Zanzotto: "Il paesaggio come eros della terra". In: *Luoghi e paesaggi*. Milano 2013, pp. 29-38.

**32** "...orizzonte dentro orizzonte". Ibid.

**33** Murer is basically a sculptor who carves out figures from trees, even when working with bronze.

**34** From the Monument to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine onwards.

**35** Louis Kahn: "Monumentality". In: Paul Zucker. *New architecture and city planning*. New York 1944, pp. 77-78.

