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CHAPTER FOUR

In Memory of the Other Resistance: The Places and Architecture of the Fossoli Memorial

Giovanni Leoni

[INSERT FIGURE 1: COLOR]

Abstract

The essay traces the architectural history of Museo Monumento al Deportato at Castello dei Pio in Carpi, designed by BBPR in 1963, and other projects of preservation and enhancement of Fossoli Memorial.

Introduction

The Museum-Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee in Carpi, designed by BBPR in 1963 and built over the following decade, is considered a key chapter in the national and international history of architecture dedicated to the memorialisation of deportation. The various reasons for its importance will form the structure of the pages that follow.¹

¹ In spite of this, historiography has overlooked the work, which has doubtlessly been overshadowed in its historical as well as its symbolic role by the monument designed by BBPR in Milan's Monumental Cemetery, which shall be discussed below. Note that there no systematic study has yet accounted for this important aspect of BBPR's work. On the Museum-Monument of Carpi, see: Carlo Andrea Dell'Amico, 'Il monumento mausoleo di Carpi al deportato italiano', *Rassegna annuale dell'Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Modena e provincia* 5 (1964), 93-5; Bruno Zevi, 'Cinetica per tollerare i massacri' in Id., *Cronache di Architettura* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1975), IX, 182-5; Bruno Zevi, 'Senso della morte dei morti nel museo-denuncia', in Id., *Cronache di architettura* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1975), X, 441-3; Annie Sacerdoti, Annamarcella Tedeschi Falco, *Emilia-Romagna. Itinerari ebraici: i luoghi, le storie, l'arte*, (Venice: Marsilio, 1992); Stefania Sciama, *Museo Monumento al deportato politico e razziale nei campi di sterminio nazisti a Carpi*, 1995, Politecnico di Milano, course in museum arrangement and museography, unedited (copy at CDEC Milano); Roberta Gibertoni, Annalisa Melodi, eds., *Il Museo Monumento al Deportato a Carpi* (Milan: Electa, 1997); Giovanni Leoni, 'Architettura in memoria della shoah', in

Firstly, the Museum-Monument plays a specific and crucial role in the history of Italian culture during the latter half of the twentieth century with regards to the development of a system of memories related to political and racial deportation as a whole, and their translation into memorial spaces.

The Carpi project also marks a key phase in how this theme was expressed by the Milanese group BBPR, a global leader in the design and construction of architecture for the commemoration of victims of political and racial deportation during the Second World War.

Lastly, and as a consequence of the two previous points, the planning framework of the memorial system, which from its conception included the Museum-Monument because of its connection to the Fossoli concentration camp, made its mark for being particularly original at the time it was designed, making it a reference for later architectural works of this kind.

The role of the Museum-Monument of Carpi in shaping the memory of political and racial deportation in Italy

To understand the originality and historical value of the planning and design choices behind the Museum-Monument by BBPR in Carpi, it is crucial that we frame it within the history of the role that architecture played in Italy within the processes of shaping the memory of the Resistance and political and racial deportation.

That history most certainly begins with the monument commemorating the victims of the massacre of 24 March 1944 at the tuff quarries in Via Ardeatina.² Reacting very swiftly, in January of 1945 the City of Rome had already announced a competition to build the memorial, with eleven groups taking

Metella Montanari, *Architetture della Memoria. Ideazione, progettazione, realizzazione del Museo Monumento al Deportato di Carpi* (Carpi: Comune di Carpi, 2003), 46-53.

² A recent essay by Claudia Conforti assesses the numerous studies on this work of architecture and clearly defines its design and construction history as well as its historical and design values. Claudia Conforti, 'Le Fosse Ardeatine: un'architettura per non dimenticare', *Casabella* 846 (February 2015), 4-27; 102-04, also cited for its reconstruction of the updated essential bibliography.

part. This competition had no winner, ushering in an era of difficulties which would mark nearly all the architectural competitions on this theme, up to the most recent of them. Instead, it was a draw between the group Risorgere, led by Mario Fiorentino, and the group UGA, under Giuseppe Perugini. Like other competitors, the two group leaders were involved with the Department of Architecture in Rome, and were about thirty years old. Fiorentino, who came from a Jewish family, was arrested for involvement in the underground press and imprisoned at Regina Coeli in 1943. He was later freed shortly before the tragic retaliation at the Ardeatine Caves. Perugini had worked with the Technical Department of the United States Army. Both were members of the APAO, the fledgling Association for Organic Architecture led by Bruno Zevi, which fuelled the entire competition.³ By joining together, the two groups gave life to a project that was extraordinary in ways that went well beyond its formal results. In the midst of a collective and immediate reaction within Roman culture, they defined many of the contrasting paradigms that would mark the history of architecture on this theme, and which, at the same time, clearly indicated the rise of new standards for architectural sensitivity in early post-war Italy.

[INSERT FIGURES 2 AND 3: BW]

The first distinctive trait of the Ardeatine project is that its memorial action does not rely on the contemplation of a monumental object, but rather urges visitors to cultivate awareness by reflecting in a structure that leads them to discover the exact site of the massacre – the quarries – limiting the architectural interventions to those required for structural support and passageways, almost as if it were an archaeological site.⁴

The other elements of the complex are lined up paratactically along the experiential route that visitors are required to take. The first of these are two diametrically opposed works of sculpture: the rail

³ The magazine *Metron*, an organ of the movement, published both the results of the competition – n. 18 (1947), 35-47 – and the completed work – n. 45 (1952), 16-23.

⁴ Adachiara Zevi also discusses the idea of architecture to be walked through in the first chapter of her recent *Monumenti per difetto dalle Fosse Ardeatine alle pietre d'inciampo* (Rome: Donzelli, 2014), 3-38.

fences by the then thirty-five-year-old Mirko Basaldella, for whom the theme inspired a breakthrough in his choice of materials, and the figurative group by the then forty-three-year-old Francesco Coccia, former Board Member of the Rome Quadriennale. He chose to evoke the necessary transference of memory through the straightforward image of the 'three ages'. In the ensuing history of architecture dedicated to this theme, there would be an indecision between symbolic representation and conveying an impression through abstraction. This would remain a constant motif in the attempt to use the expressive means of architecture, assisted by art, to resist the added violence of erasure, and the silence to which Nazism condemned its victims.

But the third, unexpected figure that appeared in the Ardeatine complex, which anticipates reflections and sensitivity on the theme that would run through the entire latter half of the twentieth century, derived not from the personal invention of an artist, but from the collective action of a spontaneous grouping of young architects. By magnifying to an unsettling size the image of a tombstone lifted to reveal the grave, they offered a direct translation of the silence to which the victims had been condemned when their mortal remains were concealed. The great concrete 'monolith' is like a gap in the structure of the place, a visual interruption which cannot be assimilated with Coccia's symbolic representation, nor with Mirko's abstraction, and is entirely different in nature from the interpretative and cognitive effort devoted to the tunnels. It was an initial step in the architectural investigation into the 'immemorable', to use the expression that Giorgio Agamben applied to Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe built fifty years later in Berlin.⁵ In the Ardeatine Caves, this silence rises above the individual tombs of the victims used not only to give them a rightful burial but also to perform another memorial act which would later recur in architecture on this theme, that is, 'naming', or restoring

⁵ Giorgio Agamben, 'Die zwei Gedächtnisse', *Die Zeit* (19 May 2005).

an erased identity by stating the names themselves.⁶ A book of the names inscribed into metal set by the tombs emphasizes this aspect.

As we have said, the Ardeatine Memorial – which was completed by 1949 and visible in its entirety after 1951, the year that Mirko's rail fences were finished – largely defined the scope of architectural sensitivity on this theme. However, while this was a memorial action aiming to investigate and redress an act of violence that went beyond the logic of waging war (and which had features rendering it similar to the experience of deportation to the concentration camps) it must be noted that it was, in any case, a matter entirely internal to the partisan struggle. Claudia Conforti brought this into clear focus in her recent work cited above: as early as the competition phase, the municipal government, as the organiser and commissioning body, was replaced by the newly formed Republic, and the episode took on the importance of a new 'altar to the fatherland' celebrating the 'Second Risorgimento' which freed the country from Nazi-Fascism.

Beyond its intrinsic architectural merits, which we have summarily recalled, the significance which the Ardeatine Memorial took on is doubtlessly connected to the particular role that the Roman culture and 'scene' played in the process of constructing the 'memories' linked to the Resistance, and to political and racial deportation.⁷

If we limited ourselves to a history centred on the architectural object, we would have to agree with the established historiographical theory which states that the natural counterpoint to the use of rhetoric and dynamics formulated by the Roman group of APAO members is the simple act marked by abstract

⁶ The erasure of the name as an essential part of the process of individual annihilation perpetrated in the concentration camps was described early on in *Se questo è un uomo* [*If This is a Man*]: 'No, I honestly do not feel my companion of today, harnessed with me under the same load, to be either enemy or rival. He is Null Achtzehn. He is not called anything except that, Zero Eighteen, the last three figures of his entry number: as if everyone was aware that only man is worthy of a name, and that Null Achtzehn is no longer a man.' Primo Levi, *If This is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: The Orion Press, 1959), 41-2.

⁷ See Robert S. C. Gordon, *The Holocaust in Italian Culture, 1944-2010* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), ch. VI, *Rome*.

anti-rhetoric found in the Monument in Memory of the Fallen in Concentration Camps in the Monumental Cemetery of Milan. This monument was built and designed by the BBPR group, therefore designers close to the MSA (the Movement for Architectural Studies) which was also founded in 1945 and in some ways took a cultural stance that was opposed to the APAO. **[INSERT FIGURES 4 AND 5: BW]** We shall analyse the work from a strictly architectural perspective later in the essay. For the present, it must be noted that the role that this second monument played in the process of shaping memories of the war was substantially dissimilar.

The first and most radical difference is the fact that the Milan monument addresses its memorial action not towards the Resistance fighting to free Italy from Nazi-Fascism, but towards the ‘passive resistance’ of the deportees to the concentration camps. As we shall see, this distinction was decisive in the history of how the Museum-Monument at Carpi was designed. The Ardeatine Caves and the Milan monument therefore belong to two diverging processes of remembrance: the first being the swift construction of a historiography and a rhetoric of the Resistance, the second being the slow, difficult construction of a memory of political and racial deportation.⁸

Rome's more energetic, emerging architectural culture collectively responded to an institutional appeal which, as we have seen, began at the local level – though it was still the Roman ‘scene’ – and quickly took on national and identity-forming importance. But in Milan the task, which chronologically coincided with the Ardeatine Memorial, came from the Association of Concentration Camp Survivors between 1945 and 1946. They contacted a firm, BBPR, that had been among the centres of the Milanese Resistance, but which at that time was in an extremely fragile condition. Gian Luigi Banfi had died of hunger in Gusen in April of 1945; Lodovico Belgiojoso had been arrested with him a year earlier and

⁸ The scope of this essay prevents us from sketching out even a basic bibliography on shaping the memory of the partisan Resistance in Italy; however, a similarly extensive bibliography on the historical events connected to political and racial deportation, the first attempt at reconstructing the ‘cultural field’ - to quote Pierre Bourdieu - of the Holocaust in Italy can be found in the previously cited volume by Robert Gordon.

like him deported to Mauthausen, where he survived and was freed in May of 1945; Ernesto Nathan Rogers, who came from a Jewish family particularly affected by the racial persecution, was returning from his exile in Switzerland. In his memoirs, Belgiojoso recalled the disorientation of his return to life in Milan and his more than understandable lack of interest in architecture after a personally devastating experience.⁹ **[INSERT FIGURE 6: BW]** It is very likely that Peressutti was therefore the one who designed the first project, in roughly the span of a week. Furthermore, Rogers confirms his authorship,¹⁰ but this does not rule out interventions by the other two members of the firm, (Belgiojoso in particular) in the subsequent, long design history of a work that only appears to be simple. Remaining on the topic of the role that the Milan monument played in shaping the memory of political and racial deportation, we must note that despite the inevitable shared intentions between the commissioning body and a group of designers so profoundly and personally affected by the events commemorated, the architectural response shows some weak points, precisely in connection with its memorial action. The three versions of the monument, which was rebuilt over five years and newly rebuilt in 1961, underwent significant variations in that sense.¹¹ The abstraction of the cubic metal grid, with its faces divided by a Greek cross proportioned according to the golden ratio, encountered problems relating to its location within the Monumental Cemetery and to visitor observation. This led the designers to make repeated changes to the overall size of the cube and its height from the ground. The choice of materials for building the metal

⁹ ‘Going back to normal life after my return wasn't very easy. I feared that I would no longer be able to work as an architect, as all concerns of a cultural nature seemed superfluous to me, particularly those regarding aesthetics, after the essential thing for us had become physical survival. Even in the most tragic moments, the knowledge I'd acquired at school and in working as an architect had been useful for overcoming desperation. For nearly a year I had trouble in my professional life; then I gradually regained my interest in architecture’. Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, *Frammenti di una vita* (Milan: Archinto, 1999), 116-7.

¹⁰ ‘Peressutti designed the simple monument to the fallen in the German camps’. Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Esperienza dell'architettura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), 33.

¹¹ For a precise reconstruction of the design and construction history of the work, the reference text is: Ulrike Jehle-Schulte Strathaus and Bruno Reichlin, 'Parole di pietra - architettura di parole', in *Il segno della memoria. BBPR Monumento ai caduti nei campi nazisti. 1945 1955*, catalogue for the exhibition held at the Triennale (Milan: Electa, 1995), 11-53.

frame and the stone cross on its base changed with each rebuilding, owing to problems connected to wear but also relating to the monumental tone they sought: a rustic simplicity dictated by urgency and by the lack of means in the first version, an excess of luxurious refinement in the second, and a return to the simplicity of the first version for the 1961 reconstruction. But what the commissioning body – meant not only in a strictly institutional sense, but as the work's reference community – seemed to find lacking above all else was the ‘naming’. The monument first bore inscriptions on marble slabs placed in the grid of metal rods: generic phrases commemorating the concentration camp victims and quotations from the Beatitudes (in significant indecision, these first faced the interior of the cube, in an almost entirely inward reflection, and then the exterior). Over time, survivors and relatives spontaneously added alongside these the names of the victims, which would finally be intentionally located in the flower beds surrounding the monument.

We shall return to the more strictly architectural aspects of the Milan monument, but we must note that there are not many other structures of Italian cultural origin that preceded the act of remembrance with regards to deportation, which certainly impacted Italy's national identity, and which generated the Museum-Monument in Castello dei Pio.¹²

On December 8 and 9 1955, a Manifestazione Nazionale di celebrazione della Resistenza nei

¹² In 1947, BBPR arranged an exhibition on the Resistance in Paris at the Palais de Trocadéro commissioned by ANPI, the National Association of Italian Partisans, with the cooperation of Gabriele Mucchi and Mario De Micheli for the documentation. The exhibition resonated somewhat with the Milan monument – see Ezio Bonfanti and Marco Porta, *Città, Museo e Architettura. Il Gruppo BBPR nella cultura architettonica italiana 1932-1970* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1973), 158, A55. In 1950, Gio Ponti designed a monument to Ebensee commissioned by the widow of Roberto Lepetit. In 1955, Mario Labò, a leading figure in Italian architectural culture, particularly in the Genoa area, designed a monument to Mauthausen in honour of his son, Giorgio, a partisan shot in Rome. The monument is characterised by a renouncement of the languages which Labò had experimented with in the course of his career – from Art Nouveau to rationalism – in favour of constructing a simple wall built with the stones that the deportees had extracted from the quarry and carried on their backs over the 'steps of death'. Alongside the wall is a monument designed by Mirko Basaldella, who as we have recalled designed the rail fencing at the Ardeatine Caves – see Teo Ducci, *Opere di architetti italiani in memoria della Deportazione* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1997), 18-21. Italian designers were also crucial to the ten-year history of the International Monument at Auschwitz Birkenau, begun in 1957, on which subject, refer to: Giorgio Simoncini, *La memoria di Auschwitz. Storia di un monumento 1957-1967* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2012); Gordon, *The Holocaust in Italian Culture*, ch. 9, section 3: *Italy in Auschwitz: Two memorials*.

Campi di Concentramento [National Celebration of the Resistance in the Concentration Camps] was held in Carpi with a documentary exhibition on the topic, with Castello dei Pio having been chosen as the location. The decisive role that the exhibition played, on a national level, in the process of belatedly beginning to construct a memory of political and racial deportation is well established in historical studies.¹³ If we return to the idea of the Ardeatine Memorial as an 'altar to the fatherland' of the new Risorgimento, that is, the armed Resistance, we may find the comparison useful with Alberto Cavaglion's definition of the 1955 exhibition as the 'keystone' of the decade that culminated with the Eichmann trial in 1961, in which 'in Italy, and not only in Italy, the fetters of testimony were shattered', a 'disturbing element' set between the 10th anniversary of the Liberation and the 100th anniversary of the Unification of Italy.¹⁴

The choice of Carpi as the location for the event and the exhibition was of course because its municipal land includes the Fossoli camp, the largest Italian transit camp in the military operations of political and racial deportation towards central European concentration camps. In fact, in December of 1955 a memorial ceremony was held jointly beside the event and the exhibition at the camp. The Mayor of Carpi, Bruno Losi, received some soil collected in the concentration camps, which he mixed with the soil of Fossoli, and then placed in an urn that was set in a simple stone wall. A tablet with an inscription written by Piero Calamandrei was affixed to the wall. It was an anonymous monument, but it contained various elements that were already found in the few structures that had been designed and built at the time – the urn holding soil from the camps in the Milan monument by BBPR, the bare wall of the

¹³ The exhibition was held in various Italian cities over a five-year period. An exhibition held in Carpi in 2005 reconstructed its history – Marzia Luppi and Elisabetta Ruffini, eds., *Immagini dal silenzio. La prima mostra nazionale dei lager nazisti attraverso l'Italia 1855-1860* (Carpi: Comune di Carpi, 2005) – while the cited volume by Robert Gordon discusses the importance of the episode with bibliographic updates (Gordon, *The Holocaust in Italian Culture, 1944-2010*, ch. 4, section 3: 1958-1963: *The New Cultural Field*).

¹⁴ Alberto Cavaglion, 'Il mare richiuso', in Luppi and Ruffini, eds., *Immagini dal silenzio. La prima mostra nazionale dei lager nazisti attraverso l'Italia 1855-1860*, 7,10.

memorial by Labò in Mauthausen (1955) – and which would reappear almost without fail in architecture on this theme. The monument at Fossoli was unveiled by Ferruccio Parri, who would prove to be a key figure in setting up the Museum-Monument in Castello dei Pio and who on the occasion stated: ‘People of Carpi, partisan comrades, this evening it ought to be a poet who speaks, so complex are the feelings that seize us, so profound the meaning of this monument’.¹⁵ This statement would prove, as we shall see, to be more than mere rhetoric.

In December of 1961, the year in which the power of the media revealed the systemic dimensions of the extermination for the first time while covering the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a second exhibition was held at Carpi documenting the camps at Fossoli and Bolzano-Gries alongside the major camps in central Europe. On that occasion, Bruno Losi announced the decision to create a museum on the theme at Castello dei Pio. An Organizational Board was formed, chaired by Losi, which included the local governments of Modena and Carpi, the Province of Modena, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, and all the national organisations representing deportees, internees and former fighters. On 19 December 1962 Losi presented the proposal to the Senate in a press conference held with Piero Caleffi, senator and chairman of the National Association of Former Deportees, and with Sergio Piperno, representing the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, further confirming the national scope of the initiative. Ferruccio Parri later issued a press release which appealed for members of parliament, institutional representatives and also ‘artists and architects’ to participate.¹⁶ In the text, Parri made explicit reference to the relationship between the documentary exhibitions held in Carpi and the idea of founding a museum ‘that could serve to collect mementos and testimony of the victims, of sacrifices and of suffering’. It also made explicit its relationship with the land on which ‘stands the camp of Fossoli, tragic antechamber of the

¹⁵ Version reported by *l'Unità* on 9 December 1955. The version provided on the same day by *Gazzetta dell'Emilia* was the following: ‘We might need a poet to commemorate this moment in which the lands of the death camps are joined together’.

¹⁶AFF.

Nazi death camps'. The press release states that the jury members had already been appointed. The text of the press conference held by Losi also refers to the 'tragic concentration camp of Fossoli, antechamber of the extermination and death camps of Nazi Germany', evokes the massacre at Cibeno, mentions the figure of Leopoldo Gasparotto, and then clarifies that the place was not simply a step but rather an integral part of the extermination system. It then offers an emphasis crucial to understanding the museum's role in the history of memorial architecture of the latter half of the twentieth century: the museum would highlight 'the unbreakable bond that joined the armed Resistance fighters with the resistance in the death camps, because their objective was the same, and the values for which they fought, suffered, and in many cases died, were identical'. This is an important statement if set in chronological context: as we have said, this was the year following the Eichmann trial, and only four years after Einaudi had republished Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* [*If This Is a Man*], still the author's only book, whose jacket flap, in an unattributed quotation from Italo Calvino, cited the beginning of the story 'with the Biblical scene of the departure from Fossoli'. A year earlier, in his film *L'oro di Roma* [*Gold of Rome*], Carlo Lizzani also marked out a clear distinction between the suicidal surrender of Rome's Jewish community, represented by Simone, and the fighting reaction of the partisans which the Jewish cobbler David would join against his own religious principles.

This is therefore the time in which the Italian 'cultural field' connected to the Holocaust was fully taking shape. The museum proposed by Losi played a trailblazing role in this process, accentuated by the planning framework which the mayor of Carpi clearly set out in the press conference. It describes a place that would bring together the evocative dimension required by the 'immemorable' component and the ability to offer an 'archival memory', to reuse the previously quoted term offered by Agamben. As Losi stated in the cited press conference in the Senate, 'The Museum-Monument will have to take on ... the significance of a living and permanent reason to remember and an admonition, so as to create an atmosphere conducive to meditation on the tragic events connected to the political and racial deportation

committed by the Nazi government and the Fascist government ... Therefore, those who wish to learn about the atrocities of our century will find a horrifying, documented answer there by observing the mementos, the numbers, and the testimony’.

Thus, it was not a monument, but a Museum-Monument, and even at the time, Losi hinted at a theme that would resume the decade-long discussion between the awarding of the winning project and the opening of the Museum: the idea that the new structure was also a ‘place of peace’, an admonition against war in every form.¹⁷

Therefore, on the one hand there was the specificity of the memory of deportation, at the planning stage, set as a ‘passive resistance’ alongside the established memory of the fighting Resistance and joined to it so as to identify a single resistance action, a vision not at all formulaic in shaping the memory of the Holocaust. On the other hand, there was widespread acceptance of the memorial themes and a projection into the future that moved away from the idea of a single experience of the Shoah, a choice that was not irrelevant in the history of architecture on the theme.

Certainly, what Losi outlined was a structure, or rather a system of places – potentially Castello dei Pio with the new Museum-Monument as a place of reflection and the Fossoli camp as a place of remembrance – which distanced itself sharply, with regards to the theme of constructing memory, from such clearly monumental examples as the Ardeatine Memorial or the monument at the Milanese cemetery. This is what gave the Museum-Monument its originality and exemplary quality, and was also the cause of the many difficulties that intervened in its construction between the awarding of the competition to BBPR in 1964 to its unveiling on 18 October 1973. These difficulties were also of an

¹⁷ Losi added that ‘the Museum-Monument [...] will also serve as a permanent call to governments and peoples to absolutely find the path of a stable and lasting agreement which, by rejecting violence and war in all its forms, might ensure humankind peace, justice and liberty. From the vision and the knowledge of the most frightening horrors and the most admirable heroism, of the most atrocious crimes and the most sublime examples of compassion, all of humanity will be driven to act in the most effective way to attain a more civil coexistence ... so that the horrors of the death camps may no longer be repeated in the world’. Press conference, 19 December 1962, AFF.

economic nature,¹⁸ but above all involved the definition of the memorial framework.

This is made evident in the work done by the Museum-Monument Organizational Board. Meeting on average a bit more than yearly over the course of the decade-long planning phase, at times involving the designers, the board constructed an extensive reflection on the theme that was decisive in the history of the work, and that, one might say, was almost on par with the BBPR project. It had a strong exemplary value in the shaping of the ‘cultural field’ connected to the memory of political and racial deportation.¹⁹

The themes outlined by the 1962 press conference in the Senate returned in the discussions of the Organizational Board, and were discussed with the breadth and greater freedom permitted by the smaller setting, but also with the added complexity of the various positions that the organization represented.

The text announcing the start of work in 1963 returned to the relationship between the town and the Fossoli camp, a ‘disgrace’ balanced out by the role that Carpi played as a chief town of the first Partisan Zone, the ‘centre of a strong and well-organised resistance movement’ commemorated by ‘memorial stones and plaques on town lands’, experienced by the population ‘in full unity of intention’, and said to already be the subject of a ‘historiographical work’. More explicitly, the document, which was not yet a record of the discussion but a planning report that can presumably be traced back to Losi, Chairman of the Board, discusses the distinction between the partisan struggle as a value that was already shared and historicized, and an aspect ‘less known throughout the country ... political and racial deportation, that is, the passive resistance of millions of human beings, the resistance of the ‘silent heroes’ in the Nazi death camps’. The connection between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ resistance is one that Fossoli

¹⁸ In the archives of the Fondazione Fossoli the presumed and actual costs of the Museum-Monument are well documented, along with the difficulties encountered by the planned funding structure.

¹⁹ The minutes of the Board's proceedings are kept in the AFF. The initial composition of the Board derived in large part from the board that organized the previously mentioned 1955 exhibition, and it would naturally vary over the course of the decade, but always ensured that all the associations related to political and racial deportation were represented. The only member with close ties to architecture was Mario Pucci, a member of Modena's underground National Liberation Committee, as well as the primary collaborator of Piero Bottoni before the war, and, after the war, a key figure in rebuilding Modena.

exemplarily represents in a way that certainly goes beyond a local perspective. Among the most constant of the Board's actions over the decade of its activity was its continuous effort to raise awareness in national politics, particularly with the President of the Republic, an action fully and successfully completed with presidential patronage, and with Giovanni Leone attending the museum's opening.²⁰

Among the many themes that the Board discussed, certainly the most significant in the architectural history of the Museum-Monument was the collection of documentary materials to be placed in the halls. There were two key players in this matter: Adolfo Vitale (1885-1968), whom we can certainly identify as representing the Jewish component of the collective memory that the Museum-Monument aimed to document, and Andrea Gaggero (1916-88), a priest and partisan who was arrested and tortured in June of 1944, imprisoned in Bolzano (and later in Mauthausen), and expelled from the Church for his political activity after the liberation. He was a sympathizer of the Italian Communist Party, and a pioneer of collecting historical documentation on the death camps.

On 23 July 1963, in a signed letter, Vitale thanked Losi for having sent him photographs of the Fossoli camp which his mother and sister passed through before being killed in Birkenau, and ensured him that he was working towards collecting the material to be placed in the museum, as well as contacting his 'friend Gaggero' on the matter. On 7 August Losi thanked him for his help, informing him that the Board had appointed Professor Gaggero as 'lead coordinator'.²¹ Vitale informed Losi that he was giving up the assignment for 'unexpected reasons' in a letter dated 20 October 1963. In the meantime, Gaggero developed the research entrusted to him, the eventful and complex aspects of which are beyond the scope of this essay. He travelled and made contacts in central Europe and at Yad Vashem, writing various reports to the Board and speaking at the meeting on 10 February 1964 once the preliminary research was

²⁰ In 1972 the effort to raise awareness in Roman politics was entrusted to Senator Luigi Borsari as the 'most suitable person' for such a purpose.

²¹ The mayor spoke to Vitale about reimbursement for expenses. However, the letter of engagement to Gaggero, which is also dated 7 August 1963, speaks of a compensation of 80,000 Lire.

finished. The fact remains that it was not the commissioned research that would give a structure to the museum itinerary, or rather, to use the terms that often resounded in the Board, to ‘what we aim to say with this museum’, a narrative intent that, even in the choice of Vitale and Gaggero and in the failed collaboration between the two, would seem to sketch out a dual identity, political and racial, and some difficult issues.

In a Board meeting held not long thereafter, on 17 March 1964, the definitive road was already coming into sight. The National Association of Former Deportees stated that it had formed a committee tasked with working alongside the Board, without interference, to construct the museum. The initiative was met with appreciation by the Board, and in the meeting they expressed a hope that other associations would join them in similarly supportive activity. They were also notified that ‘a group of former internees working under the architect Belgiojoso’, therefore directly answering to one of the designers who had by then been declared winners of the competition, was collecting material. And it was certainly that group, working strictly within the architectural project and earning the decisive support of Albe Steiner (1913-74), a graphic designer and political commissar of a partisan brigade who lost his brother Mino at Ebensee, that developed the exhibition and museum itinerary. That itinerary was achieved through a long-distance discussion between Milan, where it was formulated, and the Board offices in Emilia (Carpi and Modena), where it was discussed ‘politically’ with various national representatives, a discussion that at times took on the tone of retreat and a defence on the part of the designers.²²

²² The theme permeated the entirety of the Board's work. In the meeting on 22 February 1965, when the definitive architectural project had been completed, the Board focused on whether to leave the designers the responsibility of choosing the materials or to entrust the choice to specialist historians, at least as regarded scientific review, a theory that was also supported by Mario Pucci. The discussion outlined the memorial interests of the various associations and institutions, which would return to enliven the discussion until the very end. On 5 July 1965, the Board succeeded in naming the panel of experts who would choose the materials based on the directions provided by the various associations: Professor Albe Steiner, National Association of Former Deportees, Milan; General Epifanio Chiamonti, National Association of Former Internees, Milan; Bianca Ceva, National Institute for the History of the Italian Liberation Movement, Milan; and Eloisa Ravenna, Contemporary Jewish Documentation Centre, Milan. The Chairman announced that this panel had already met with the architects to define

Belgiojoso and Steiner spoke on the matter, participating in the Board meeting on 13 February 1973, when the work on the Museum-Monument was close to its conclusion and strings were being pulled for the unveiling. Belgiojoso informed them that

the elements that we had proposed to create so as to express a linear statement on political and racial deportation that would touch visitors' hearts are progressively being brought to completion. The words on the walls, the graffiti inscriptions, the finalisation of the cases for displaying the material were the framework of this statement. It must be specified - Belgiojoso affirmed - that besides the display cases, there must be no further display of other visual material, which must be duly catalogued and placed in the Museum-Monument library. The underlying problem, therefore, remains the creation of Guttuso and Levi's works on the walls indicated and the choice and placement of the material in glass cabinets or display cases.

Belgiojoso 'on this matter believes that the contribution and input of Albe Steiner is indispensable due to his specific expertise and knowledge of the purposes we aim to achieve with this'. Albe Steiner then spoke, informing them that the material that had been gathered was more than sufficient 'for a display meeting the purposes of the statement we intend to make' but affirming that it was 'more necessary than

the panel's operational guidelines. We must emphasise that the panel was brought to the Board as a choice that had already been made and was in working contact with the designers. There is no doubt that when we get to the heart of the construction work the subject of gathering materials was firmly in the hands of ANED, which interacted directly with Belgiojoso in consultation that remained outside the Board's work, however much it was discussed among the Board and often stated that verification was needed. In the Board meeting held in June of 1971, the confrontation between the Board and ANED became clear, as Campedelli, who had been the new mayor of Carpi for a year (the Chairman of the Board, however, was still Losi) claimed that the material had to be brought to Carpi and examined by the Board, while Dell'Amico, the ANED representative from Modena, replied that the Milanese group working on the choice of materials offered every guarantee, and that the Board's contribution to the matter had to be very limited.

ever' to continue the research through contacts with individuals and institutions to prevent this heritage from going to waste.

We must therefore orientate ourselves towards research and collecting publications and any documentation relating to political and racial deportation as well as works of art (paintings, sculptures, etc.) pertaining to this topic to be placed in the last two halls of the Museum-Monument. This also applies to the works of great masters, such as Picasso and others, even if they are only copies of those works. Essentially, we must give an increasingly high value to everything that interests the Museum-Monument so that it can be constantly updated. We must seek out films or copies of films on deportation and anti-Fascism so as to create a film library. As regards both this last subject and the works of art, our research must also look abroad ... The material must be presented with only moderate dramatic force. Specific deadlines must be set: the completion times for work (graffito inscriptions, etc.) and the value system for the display material, taking into account the need to render the subject of deportation relevant (even today there are concentration camps and mass deportations in various parts of the world). We must also seek out sculptures pertaining to deportation, if only to display them temporarily.

Albe Steiner's input was referenced by Carlo Levi, who agreed with Steiner on the characteristic of 'permanence and relevance' that the Museum had to have,

to that end, making use of everything that we can find (museographic material, etc.) and ensuring we do not stray from the reality of today and from what is taking place in many areas of the world. The material and documentation in general that is on display must also be

constantly updated, and we must add to the works on deportation, including sculptural works.

Belgiojoso took the floor again and specified that sculpture was not considered at the time of planning, as ‘that kind of material was non-existent’, and insisted on the idea of creating a film library, as a screening room had been envisioned among the Museum's spaces. Lastly, Steiner spoke on the topic of the names which were to be inscribed in the room devoted to them, and reminded the Board of the risk of omissions owing to not having complete lists, and asked that the reference associations be consulted on the matter.

The determination with which Belgiojoso, supported by Steiner, kept the definition of the Museum layout and the memorial action within the purview of design clearly established an important and distinctive feature of the work. At the Ardeatine caves, of the designers only Fiorentino had been personally involved in the Nazi retaliation and imprisoned, as we have said, between November of 1943 and February of 1944. The Milan monument was a ‘dedication’ to the comrades who had been deported and killed that had been designed by the only member of the BBPR who had not been directly affected,²³ assisted by an undefeated Belgiojoso, as he would proudly affirm in a famous poem,²⁴ but who was in that moment understandably distant from the issues of architecture. The project for Carpi, however, designed fifteen years after Belgiojoso's repatriation, was the first and without any doubt one of very few personal reflections on the direct experience of deportation expressed through architecture, by an

²³ ‘These crosses composed in golden ratio are dedicated to you, dear friends, Giangio Banfi, Giuseppe Pagano, Filippo Beltrami, Raffaello Giolli, Giorgio Labò and all those who died in the German camps’, the friends who had ‘given even themselves to that world that they wished to build in a perfect harmony of space’. Enrico Peressutti, ‘Dedica’, *Costruzioni* 193 (1946), 3.

²⁴ ‘You shall not have me / I’m hungry, you give me nothing to eat / I’m thirsty, you give me nothing to drink, / I’m cold, you give me nothing to wear, / I’m tired, you do not let me sleep! / I’m weary, you make me work, / I’m exhausted, you make me drag / a dead companion by the feet, / with swollen ankles and his head / bouncing on the ground / with his eyes wide open... / But I was able to think of a house / atop a cliff over the sea / proportioned like an ancient temple. / I am happy: you shall not have me. Gusen, 1945’. Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, *Non mi avrete* (Venice: Edizioni del Leone, 1986).

architect, moreover, of his authority in culture and design. In this way, the reflection takes on the meaning of a key episode in the construction of memory, or of the various memories, connected to such an experience.

Moreover, the quoted remarks from Belgiojoso, Steiner and Levi before the Board delineate a very clear stance on the memorial actions to be executed: the bare display of testimony without any interference (the contents of the display cases and the names); a separate action of reconstructing history through documents;²⁵ a third action, equally distinct, of artwork on the theme. Furthermore, this was not a hypostatisation of memory, but an act of ‘remembrance’ that had to be updated and expanded upon over time. It would thus give the Museum-Monument, imagined as a true memorial device, the dual characteristic of ‘permanence and relevance’, which would enable the theme of deportation to be kept relevant and connect it to assimilable events.

Moreover, the designers agreed to ensure the plurality of the memories of deportation, as demonstrated by the rejection of a first sketch by Carlo Levi for the graffito to be set in the Museum. It was not accepted by Belgiojoso, Steiner and Peressutti, according to Losi's report on the meeting of 7 February 1973, because

the theme it follows, and which the work broadly expresses, strays quite a bit from the central theme that is the subject of the Museum-Monument, that is, political and racial deportation seen as global and universal, and rather concentrates on particular aspects of the man's life and the suffering of the Jewish people. These last aspects would end up limiting and restricting the scope and universal value of the work, and by shifting from the general to the

²⁵ The library would **never** be completed. A discussion that holds importance for the matter arose within the Board on the creation of an Institute for Deportation Studies to be set alongside the Museum, and the participation of the Regional Authority was envisaged from the outset. The idea came into being in December of 1972 and rekindled the discussion within the Board on the different memories which the Museum would hold and bear witness to.

specific, would misrepresent the theme, which we have adhered to in all the other rooms in a perfect and balanced way.²⁶

The architecture of the Museum-Monument

Coming now to the themes and architectural values of the Museum-Monument, and aiming to frame it within BBPR's design process, we must return briefly to the Milan monument, whose authorship can be indisputably traced to the group, in its habitual, collective way of working, despite the clarifications duly made regarding the state of the firm at the time.

The Milan monument's affinity with the burgeoning MAC, the Movement for Concrete Art, has been emphasized several times; the MAC was fostered by Gillo Dorfles and Bruno Munari, among others, and as is widely known, Ernesto Nathan Rogers was heavily involved with it as regards the architectural aspects. This affinity was sealed when Max Bill included the Milan monument in his genealogy of concrete art.²⁷ The success of the monument, understood as a work of sculpture (paradoxically if we think of the designers' previously mentioned difficulty in finding its restraint and tone), was sanctioned by the purchase of the first version in 1948 by the American collector Edgar Kauffmann, Jr., who added it to his famous collection.²⁸

In 1969, Manfredo Tafuri published a history of architecture in *Comunità*, in which he firmly listed the work, referencing and correcting Quaroni's schematic distinction regarding the contribution (which

²⁶ After some twists and turns, Levi's graffito, along with that of Guttuso, for that matter, who had also made a sketch for the project, was created using images taken from archives and not originally produced for Carpi. A similar discussion developed in regards to the sketch by Giuseppe Merighi for the postmark requested for the unveiling.

²⁷ Max Bill, 'De la surface à l'espace', *Architecture* 7 (February 1953), 245.

²⁸ The matter is well summarized in the previously cited work by Ulrike Jehle-Schulte Strathaus and Bruno Reichlin, 'Parole di pietra - architettura di parole', and, in connection with shaping an international memory on deportation, its application to the topic of collecting on the part of such an important American family in the history of architectural patronage merits further study.

differs, though not substantially) made by the 'Roman school' and by the 'Milanese school' to early post-war architecture.²⁹ In so doing he made use of a comparison between the Ardeatine monument and the Milan monument by BBPR, formulating a distinction that would acquire great relevance in the historiography of Italian architecture in the latter half of the twentieth century:

In a certain way, the monument by BBPR, as an homage to the past, closes a chapter which has its equivalent in Rome in the monument to the Ardeatine Caves; but while the Roman scene considered the Ardeatine Caves an end and a new beginning, for the Milanese scene the monument to the fallen in the death camps constituted an assessment, after which it was necessary to resume a tragically interrupted approach with a different commitment but a similar spirit, enriching it with new meanings, new moral impulses, but it was not considered an experience to be overcome with an abrupt change of course.³⁰

This continuity with pre-war rationalism was confirmed by Bonfanti and Porta in their seminal 1973 monograph on BBPR and later, as we have said, was established in historiography.³¹

²⁹ In 1948 Ludovico Quaroni had written: 'In 1935 Italy had already lost the war: not yet on a military and political level, but on the more general level of its spirit. The architects, at least, had already deserted; patterns had taken hold of the spirit: a classical pattern of arches and columns for the Roman school; a pattern of surfaces, right angles and the golden ratio for the Milanese school, a pattern certainly fresher, more up-to-date, but by then too safe to achieve beauty, the perfection of Winckelmann; in the best cases, there was only a bit more good taste in the place of a life force'. Ludovico Quaroni, 'La situazione dell'architettura moderna in Italia', *Metron* 25 (1948).

³⁰Manfredo Tafuri, *Ludovico Quaroni e lo sviluppo dell'architettura moderna in Italia*, (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1964), 76-7; this judgement was substantially repeated in the essay from which the mentioned historiographical relevance on Italian architecture derives: "that monument, that 'overly rational' grid facing the immensity of the slaughter, is also a reason for reflection which gives meaning to the motif of 'continuity' later theorised by 'Rogers'". Manfredo Tafuri, 'Architettura italiana 1944-1981', in Federico Zeri, ed., *Storia dell'arte italiana, Il Novecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), 6, a text that was later referenced in the volume published in Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi in different, updated editions, the most recent being 2002.

³¹ The monument 'can be considered a paradigmatic representation of 'rationality' in architecture ... the three-dimensional grid, a 'leitmotiv' of many successful experimentations in rationalist architecture in Lombardy, from Persico to Nizzoli and

It must be said, however, that one need not resort to external references for an ‘expressive study’ which Belgiojoso himself defined ‘typical of our firm, which aims to compose formal order and freedom in a synthesis that allows the ‘supporting’ structure to determine the order and gives the additional, ‘supported’ parts (the closing walls in the building) the option of variations depending on functional requirements, beyond geometric norms and rules’. He also described the genealogy: ‘the walls of the offices in the EUR Post Office building of 1938-1940, the houses in Via Borgonuovo, the storey added to Palazzo Ponti, the houses in Via Alcuino in the early post-war period, and later also the Velasca tower’ or in ‘subjects, rather, of a symbolic and representative nature, such as the 1945 monument at the cemetery or the earlier one from the competition for a monument to Victory in Piazza Fiume in 1938’ in which ‘compositional flow is achieved through elements included in the structure, but distributed in space using purely aesthetic criteria, as there is no need to express a practical function there’.³²

On the other hand, even if we disregard the substantial historical differences with respect to the Ardeatine monument in terms of the process of constructing memory analysed above, in evaluating the troubled planning and building history of this simple object straddling the line between architecture and sculpture (which was faced with repeated attempts to find proper proportions, an appropriate position in relation to the ground and a monumental tone suited to the occasion, changing the building materials several times), perhaps we ought to question the usefulness of pointing out this recourse to instruments and paradigms formulated before the war, a choice that perhaps was inevitable. There may not have been the means and time to formulate alternatives in 1945, especially if we imagine Belgiojoso contributing

Terragni, is the idea that informed the monument’ (Bonfanti and Porta, *Città, Museo e Architettura*, 110-11). Also following this was the position taken by Cesare de Seta: ‘A work that in its simple expressiveness is entirely an appeal to the roots of the modern movement in Italy: it documents that ‘continuity’ with tradition – take for instance the trellis of Innocenti pipes built by Persico in 1934 for a publicity display in the Milan gallery – which is the way that BBPR and Milanese architects in general operate’. Cesare De Seta, ‘L’architettura del Novecento’, in *Storia dell’arte in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 107.

³² Lodovico Belgiojoso, *Intervista sul mestiere di architetto*, ed. Cesare De Seta (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1979), 83.

to the project. Is it not perhaps more significant that it was clearly difficult to find a criterion for that 'rational' expression and to make use of it for the act of remembrance required, to the extent that the 'aesthetic' references included in the 'rational' grid were immediately surpassed by the spontaneous practice of 'naming' that survivors imposed on the monument? And perhaps it is worth recalling that the element most stable in its location and meaning, in the fraught transformation of the rational grid, is the urn containing the soil from the camps. The urn is the element which in this work of 'concrete art', if it can be considered as such, entrusts the immemorial component to the mere display of bare material, thus going beyond the materiality of the large tablet at the Ardeatine memorial, which in any case shows the material within an image – the uncovered tomb – and also anticipating the more advanced architectural studies on the theme such as the previously mentioned project by Richard Serra and Peter Eisenman in Berlin.³³ The essay that Ulrike Jehle-Schulte Strathaus and Bruno Reichlin wrote on the Milan monument by BBPR, which in a scholarly 'stylistic exercise' pursues many possible interpretations with different methodological approaches, primarily demonstrates the fleeting fragility of the architectural object, and hits on a very clear indication when it keeps to the most direct of references: the Ideal House which Peressutti published in *Domus* in 1942, whose affinities are evident, as the authors point out.³⁴

We could say that the radical difference in terms of the overall project philosophy between the Milan monument and the project for Carpi, which are separated by nearly twenty years, lies in the complete absence in the latter of any possibility of redemption, of a recomposition of rationality, and, all the less so, of any condition of general, shared happiness, as attested by the ideal house designed by Peressutti. As Leonardo Ricci wrote in a text directly contemporary to the BBPR project in Carpi, outlining the new tasks for architecture after the experience of the Holocaust, 'the unhappiness of others

³³ Here we refer to the first version of the Berlin project, that in which Eisenman worked closely with Serra, as it shows the most extreme form of the choice to entrust the theme of the 'incommunicability' of the experience in the camps to bare material on display, a choice which had to be toned down in the completed project.

³⁴ *Domus* 176 (1942), 313-17.

rains on our happiness and wipes it out ... Human compassion is no longer enough, nor is Christian charity. The collective pain weighs on our personal happiness'.³⁵ To Belgiojoso, however, the 'unhappiness of others' which 'rains on' and drowns happiness, that illusion of the unhappiness of the individual, is not an external term of comparison, but a dramatic personal experience which would have to wait another thirty years to become a clear, public, written memory.³⁶

The task in Carpi was to take a memorial device which had no room for celebration and allowed for no delusions of any possible redemption, but for which 'memory', 'admonition', 'meditation' and knowledge of history were required. This device also had to be transformed into architecture. This reflection – and this is a key concept, because it participates in a larger shift towards sensitivity in Italian architecture during the early post-war period – had to proceed in an individual form, not ideologically predetermined and guided by architecture. This shift from the illusion of a collectively shared architectural meaning and of conveying non-architectural values through architecture to the awareness of an experiential, individual, and solitary dimension of architectural space and of the meanings which can be found in it, was the result of the sensitivity of those who had wandered among the physical and cultural rubble of a country that needed to be rebuilt in its values, but also in its very physical substance. It gave rise to a design concept of a questioning rather than assertive nature like that which BBPR applied in Carpi.

To reconstruct the history properly we must cite a letter dated 2 November 1962 signed by Belgiojoso, which was sent to the Mayor as official correspondence on BBPR letterhead, from which we gather that it is the Milanese group drafting the competition announcement, complete with graphic printouts from the Municipal Technical Office.³⁷ Thus, the BBPR project for Carpi began well before

³⁵ Leonardo Ricci, *Anonymous (20th Century)* (New York: Braziller, 1962), 36-7.

³⁶ Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, *Notte e nebbia: racconto di Gusen* (Parma: Guanda, 1996).

³⁷ This letter, furthermore, speaks of an adaptation of the competition announcement. It is therefore very likely that the cultural

the preparation of the printouts sent for the competition, and in writing the competition announcement established the overall project philosophy, with all the elements already referring to the press conference in the Senate, immediately following this letter: the reference to Fossoli, where Belgiojoso had been a prisoner before being transferred to Mauthausen; the triple memorial structure we have discussed, ‘living and permanent cause for remembrance and admonition’, a place capable of ‘creating the atmosphere conducive to meditation on the tragic events linked to political and racial deportation’; and the documentation centre. A place which the visitor would be encouraged to experience actively, emotionally and cognitively at the same time. The announcement clearly explained the design tasks connected to this: a reordering of the interior spaces, which the planners were left completely free to define; a museographic display for the elements which were to be collected – ‘personal belongings, uniforms, flags ... photographs, graphics, documents, letters ...’ – the creation of a library/archive for scholars so that they could examine the documents ‘without being disturbed by ordinary visitors’. Beside this there was a request for joint action among architects, painters, sculptors and graphic designers ‘so as to create an atmosphere conducive to meditation and remembrance’.

However, another aspect of the project was also decisive: its being set up as a restoration of the Castle. This gives the work an important specificity which given its similarity should be placed alongside its role in the process of defining the memorial action through architecture. Indeed, if we set the theme of the memory of deportation in the larger framework of the relationship between architecture

approach of the project as Losi presented it at the previously mentioned press conference in the Senate in Rome is largely the work of BBPR. Correspondence confirms the privileged role that the BBPR firm played in the history of the competition. On 8 January 1963, Bruno Losi wrote a letter to Lodovico Belgiojoso, attached to a copy of the announcement, in which he said that he had agreed with the Board to issue it on 20 January. On 22 June 1963, it was presumably Pucci who wrote to Losi, on City of Modena letterhead, about the opportunity to move the delivery date of the competition from July to the autumn. He said he had received an appeal in that direction from the Editor of the magazine *Casabella* – at the time it was Rogers, of course – for two reasons: to avoid delivery of the project during a holiday period, and because if the deadline were not extended, ‘it could only be announced in *Casabella* towards the end of July, which would be of little use for propaganda purposes’. A letter from BBPR to Losi dated 25 June asked for an extension to hand in the printouts. Indeed, the delivery was then set for 20 November 1963.

and memory in architectural culture in early post-war Italy, the date of the competition is not irrelevant. To define the latest achievements in this area, we need only evoke the dates of three well-known episodes: in 1960 the Gubbio Congress on Historic Centres took place; in 1961 the international congress on the same theme was held in Santiago di Compostela; and in 1964 the Venice Charter was drafted. We can therefore say that the restoration of Castello dei Pio anticipated by the competition is set in the historic moment in which a phase of extensive experimentation was ending, when the ‘innovating’ architects of the pre-war period worked on damaged architectural heritage, ordinarily in close connection with government bureaus, vital to the reconstruction work, without any disciplinary formalisation of the new themes, the new methodologies, and the resulting cultural choices that the extraordinary situation and emergency demanded. The above-mentioned seminars held in the early 1960s marked a redefinition in disciplinary terms, which the Venice Charter sealed, and heralded a new divergence between the composition culture and restoration culture.

On 23 January 1964, the Board met in the Sala del Fuoco at the City Hall of Modena to officially name the members of the competition jury, which was composed of the architect Osvaldo Piacentini, Reggio Emilia, nominated by the Emilia Romagna Architects' Association; the Hon. Umberto Zurlini, Modena, representative of the Municipal and Provincial Administration of Modena; Professor Albe Steiner, Milan, nominated by ANED; Bruno Bonilauri, Modena, nominated by the National Association of Former Internees; engineer and architect Fiorella Foà, Rome, nominated by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities; Professor Roberto Salvini, Florence, nominated by the Partisans' and Fighters' Associations; engineer, architect and Senator Alberto Mario Pucci, nominated by the Board; and Senator and painter (sic.) Carlo Levi, nominated by the Board. Having met on 1 February at the Carpi Town Hall, after touring the Castle, the jury examined the eight projects that had been received, and judged unfavourably those presented by Giuseppe Minonzio of Lecco, Luciano Re of Turin and Renzo Toffolutti of Venice. One project was not examined because it was delivered after the deadline. The project

presented by Mario Brunati and Alessandro Mendini remained in the competition. They were recognised for their ‘remarkable effort in grasping the aims of the work’, though ‘despite having excellent details, the project is practically rendered into spectacular elements that would end up distracting visitors’. Also selected for a second evaluation were the projects by the group that included Pier Luigi Cervellati and Mario Zaffagnini, led by Giancarlo Mattioli, and the group from Modena led by Franca Stagi and Cesare Leonardi. Regarding the BBPR project, ‘the Board unanimously recognises that, despite having some questionable details, it is doubtlessly the best interpretation of the aims we have set ourselves for the construction of the work’. The following day, the jury concluded its work with the final ranking: 1) BBPR; 2) Stagi and Leonardi;³⁸ 3) Mattioli and Cervellati; 4) Brunati and Mendini.

The first concept expressed in the paper by BBPR was a reference to the ‘unitary nature of the previously chosen elements’, and there is no doubt that the concept is to be linked to the question of restoration as it was defined in those years. **INSERT FIGURES 7, 8 AND 9: BW** As regards the project-related events that led BBPR to the top of the Carpi competition ranking, it was of course necessary to refer to their experience of restoring and arranging the Castello Sforzesco in Milan,³⁹ which began in 1956 and was extended in phases to the dates of the Carpi project. Despite the clear difference between the two circumstances, it must be said that there are aspects of similarity that emerge as early as the text presenting the first Milanese project in *Casabella*.⁴⁰ First of all, the perception that ‘the museographic concept of the objects contained could not be distinguished from that which could be drawn from the poetic exaltation of the environmental vessel for containing it’, therefore the same idea

³⁸ Bruno Bonilauri asked that the minutes record his reservation on the position of the Stagi project, but only as regarded the positions expressed in the paper on the theme of political and racial deportation, which he could not agree with.

³⁹ See, in part for an updated overview of essential bibliographical references: Orietta Lanzarini ‘«Per restare Civitatis ornamentum»». Il progetto storico di Ernesto Nathan Rogers nel Museo di Arte antica del Castello Sforzesco di Milano (1947-1956)’, *Arte Lombarda* 161-2 (2011) 108-15.

⁴⁰ Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti and Ernesto Nathan Rogers, ‘Carattere stilistico del Museo del Castello’, *Casabella* 211 (June-July 1956), 63-8.

of integration with the building which we find again at the start of the paper presented in Carpi. Secondly, there was a markedly narrative connotation which, in Milan, considered the educational and popularising function of the Museo Sforzesco, distinguishing its tone from the lofty space in Brera.⁴¹ However, the arrangement ‘without a priori forms ... derived from the careful study of every item’ provoked accusations in 1956 of excessive rhetoric, even from those whom BBPR considered like-minded on such things, such as Antonio Cederna – one of the founders of Italia Nostra since the previous year – who lamented the architects' failure to note the ‘separation between their sensitivity and the old work ... having violently invested it with their taste as 'contemporary' architects’.⁴² In their project for the Rocchetta Courtyard, six years later (and thus coinciding with Carpi), the designers seemed to bear this criticism in mind.⁴³

The designs for the project presented in Carpi also respond, even in their graphics, to a desire to

⁴¹ ‘A difficult task’, the designers wrote, ‘because it forced us, from the first room to the last, to create a language which in expressing these social issues would never become banal or rhetorical, or worse yet demagogic, and which, constantly renewing itself with inventive freshness, would succeed in maintaining a uniform style ... We wished to give no a priori form to the individual parts or to the whole; rather, we sought to derive the forms from a careful study of each item, so that, though achieved through our clearly interpretative act, the aesthetic and historic value of the material displayed might prevail in the end. The stylistic features of each object and of the Castle were all translated, so to speak, into contemporary language, without indulging in clichés or a slavish interest in any past or contemporary style’. Ibid.

⁴² ‘While it is true that arranging a museum is an act of critical understanding, and as such cannot be inspired by the sensitivity of the time, it is also true that wisdom should induce the architect to disappear ... The sin committed by the Milanese architects is their having insisted on behaving with the familiarity of happier times, of not having felt enough the separation between their own sensitivity and the old work, but of having violently invested it with their taste as ‘contemporary’ architects, leaving the work no way out’. Antonio Cederna, ‘Il regista invadente’, *Il Mondo* (9 October 1956). This statement was followed by a letter to the Editor of the magazine edited by Ernesto Nathan Rogers (20 November 1956) and a reply from Cederna. The exchange reveals that the matters that brought about Cederna's hostility may have been of little merit, as he held it against the group that they had worked for Società Generale Immobiliare and built skyscrapers in the centre of Milan instead of defending its historic features.

⁴³ ‘For the architectural restoration and the museography we have profited from experience and criticism to find increasing simplicity in our stylistic expression; while initially we thought that a greater clarity and complexity of means, suggested by the very reality of things, were justified, here we have sought to adapt to the more modest tone of the rooms and the need to be able to observe the truly extensive collections with greater calm ... In this section, as elsewhere for that matter, we have emphasized the role of a museum of the sort that is popular and educational’. Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti and Ernesto Nathan Rogers, ‘Continuazione di un allestimento’, *Città di Milano* 23 (February-March 1963), 102-3.

enter into Castello dei Pio with an architectural intervention of integration, which here could be emphasised through the designers' control of the museum content, as we have already mentioned, effectively making them curators as well. In Carpi, the 'integration' plan followed different strategies.

In the first was the reappearance of a method typical of BBPR, which we have already discussed, in connection with the memorial at the Monumental Cemetery of Milan, here in the form of a single square module used to 'rhythmically punctuate' the interior and exterior of the part of the building involved in the project. This geometric principle regulates the entire project, connecting the existing structure with the new one.

The square module of the flagstones marks the indoor space and the smaller courtyard of the Castle which, according to the announcement, is an extension of the Museum-Monument, envisioned in pietra serena stone, which is polished indoors and with a natural cleft in the outdoor area.

Two primary, or rather sole, architectural elements enter into this module and are added to the existing building: the stelae placed in the courtyard, and the display cases located inside the halls.

The cases are austere enclosures envisioned in pietra serena like the flooring, topped with tempered crystal glass, defined in the paper as 'burial niches that rise from square bases and sink into them'. With a more literal than metaphorical spirit, the group thus places the direct testimony of the experience of the camps, the few, humble items listed by Belgiojoso in his report to the Board, among them his own items brought back from Mauthausen, inside real uncovered tombs which the visitors look into to observe the remains, and thus the direct testimony of the experience of death that is at the heart of the museum's construction.

Therefore, there are various factors changing the relationship between the geometric grid and the elements linked by the grid in comparison with the use that BBPR made of this device in other projects we have recalled, chief among them the very use of the grid in connection with the theme of 'integration'. Here the grid is no longer the synthesis of 'order' and 'formal freedom' evoked by Belgiojoso with

regards to the Milan project. It no longer combines disconnected fragments, nor is it an order set beside another – the first an order of geometric rigour, the second of formal and ‘aesthetic’ freedom – but it is the search for a single principle capable of connecting the three components of the project: the existing architecture of the Castle, the new architectural elements – whether display elements like the cases or monumental ones like the stelae – and, finally, the ‘mementos’.

This linking action is clearly aimed at presenting to visitors the displayed objects ‘like words in a long sentence, repeated constantly’. In other words, offering the historic evidence that refers back to the bare experience of the camps without comment, placing it without interference in the Castle's already dense space of historic values, and finally connecting them using the original monumental act chosen, that is, the stelae. **[INSERT FIGURES 10 AND 11: BW]**

The fine geometric weave therefore resembles more an act of setting a criterion for the existing structure than instituting a principle of pure and abstract rationality: the criterion of a route integrated into the building capable of connecting the unspeakable dimension deep within the cases and the monumental act that they deemed had to be added through the stelae.⁴⁴

The stelae and the wall enclosing the courtyard were envisaged in unfinished concrete. The choice of the stelae as a monumental component of the Museum-Monument, therefore of an element that refers back to the primitive rather than to ancient or modern formal sources, clearly indicates the willingness to stay outside historic expression in the monument form, choosing absolute simplicity, the prototypical element of memorial architecture.

The designers' paper specified that it appeared fruitless to discuss the symbology of these architectural elements at length, and that ‘each person may give it a meaning according to their own

⁴⁴ If we wish to identify a project, of an entirely different theme however, that marked the shift towards this idea of a modular structure subjected to a place's narrative and institutive function, we can certainly refer to the Pavilion at the Expo 58 in Brussels, designed by BBPR with Adolfo De Carlo, Ignazio Gardella, Gino Perugini and Ludovico Quaroni.

ideological and religious beliefs and according to their mood ... What we hope', wrote BBPR, 'is that everyone feels the price of so great a sacrifice. So that the Monument we have designed may express the most profound meaning of the ancient word *monumentum*, that is, memory (*memini*) and admonition (*moneo*).'⁴⁵ This affirmation makes clear the previously discussed wish to avoid accentuating one of the converging yet differing memories of deportation in the Museum. What is more relevant in terms of interpreting the architectural project, it also underlines the search for a monumentality removed from any stylistic connotation for a super-historical, absolute, direct transcription of the 'profound' and 'ancient' meaning of the monument. Choosing anonymity was fully consistent with the general formulation of the work.⁴⁶ **[INSERT FIGURES 12 AND 13: BW]**

In the courtyard with the stelae, the 'admonition' takes the shape of the names of the camps inscribed upon them 'as a concrete documentation of history'. It thus introduces the theme of names into the project which, as we will see, is one of the central themes connected the memorial action to which the Museum belongs, despite its contrast with one of the most significant rooms. **[INSERT FIGURE 14: BW]** Here, it was the names of the places whose existence had been concealed, whose nature had been denied. Already at the time there were physical traces of these places that were uncertain, but still had to be at the centre of the memorial action. This in fact would happen in time, as when Auschwitz, for instance, came to represent the concentration camp system. It is certainly significant that the element

⁴⁵An interesting term of comparison, owing to the difference in rhetoric tone, among other things, is the uncompleted project for the building for the 1937 Italian Civilization Exhibition, which also centred on the relationship between a square grid on which the Museum's informational system was distributed, and that which the designers themselves termed the 'plaque' bearing the 'essential history'. 'While the plaque, a celebratory element, goes from floor to ceiling (at night, specially arranged spotlights will be able to enlarge it with a vertical wall of light), the exhibition building, which is more strictly intended for a prescribed function, draws its criteria from the opportunity to display the entire exhibition on a single level ...'. Bonfanti and Porta, *Città, Museo e Architettura*, A27-28.

⁴⁶'There is a great tradition of celebratory architecture in Italy ... Opportunities to remember an event through art abound. However, this is also true: it's easier to commemorate a victory than to remember a suffering of this kind ... In the case of the concentration camps, it's more complicated...'. From an unpublished conversation between the author of this essay and Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso which took place in Milan in June of 1989.

of the project that can be defined in terms of a ‘monument’ more than anything else was not ‘dedicated’ to the victims, but used so as not to forget the slaughterers and the places they had built for the ‘final solution’. The denial of the monument as an instrument for remembering victims anticipates a decisive aspect of the later research if we consider that we would have to wait at least twenty years for real research on the anti-monument.⁴⁷ **[INSERT FIGURES 15 AND 16: BW]**

But writing did not enter into the project solely as a function of the warning action performed by the stelae: it has a much broader role. Alongside the weave that sets the criterion for the entire project, a second integration choice consisted of transforming the walls of the Castle into a ‘blank page’ upon which the story could be developed through painting and poetry, in order to support the bare display of memorial evidence while remaining fully distinct from it. The uniformity of the pietra serena flagstones is thus confirmed through a homogeneous plastering of both the walls and the vaults. This choice of material strongly emphasises the concept of ‘integration’.

‘The environments’, the paper reads, ‘have been intentionally left in the simplicity of the colour white, except for some walls, or parts of them, which will be powerfully accentuated by the frescoes by Renato Guttuso, or commented upon by poetry excerpts’.

During construction, all that would remain of the excerpts of poetry would be the Brecht quotation at the start of the museum route – which replaced the text written by Primo Levi, which the designers considered too long – and the words would be taken from *Lettere dei condannati a morte della Resistenza europea* edited by Nelo Risi. Based on the explicit example of the Memorial built in the Pinkas

⁴⁷ The reference studies on the anti-monument in connection with the memory of the Holocaust have been developed by James Young: *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) and the exhibition *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* held in 1994 at the Jewish Museum of New York (catalogue: *The Art of Memory*; Munich; New York: Prestel Verlag, 1994). On this theme, see the previously cited *Monumenti per difetto* by Adachiara Zevi.

Synagogue in Prague,⁴⁸ the words would later be used to include, and strongly emphasize, the theme missing in the Milanese monument, the 'naming'. The route ends with the Hall of Names to which Steiner referred in the above cited meeting with the Board, the walls and vaults of which are entirely covered with the names of the deportees.⁴⁹

Years later, Belgiojoso would thus summarize the different components used in the project from a memorial perspective:

There were very few mementos. I too had given what I'd brought back: a spoon, some internee uniforms, a little box that cigarette smokers had ... very few things. Therefore, if I had to make a statement years later, as I'm doing now, I'd say that there was a need to bear witness to the period that was more evident than those few things. We sought to use three elements: the words; the graffito inscriptions, which were very well made by those in the cooperative ... Guttuso, Cagli... those by Cagli are very fine, with those big heads ... in other words, in such a way that the fresco – though it isn't really a fresco – would refer back to the mnemonic knowledge of the churches, of the shrines ... because it was obviously taken from that, and also from civic tradition ... so first painting, wall painting; second, the words; third, the objects. Because they were very small objects and we didn't want to make our words large, we decided against them and took the more authentic ones, the testimony, not a reinvented history: documentation. That's the spirit of the museum. Through literature and drawing, painting and then what we might call the 'leftover' element, we sought in the

⁴⁸ Belgiojoso declared on various occasions that he had been inspired by the Pinkas Synagogue in Prague, whose walls are completely covered with the names of Czech Jews deported to the death camps. See Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 'Idee e progetti per il Museo', in Roberta Gibertoni and Annalisa Melodi, eds, *Il Museo Monumento al Deportato a Carpi* (Milan: Electa, 1993), 37-41.

⁴⁹ *Le lettere graffite - The 'graffito' inscriptions* (Carpi: Nuovagrafica, 2001).

Museum to pin down memory.⁵⁰

The brief paper which BBPR presented to the jury contains another decisive consideration for understanding the project: 'the emotional events depend above all on the variations of the general theme. Each viewer will take away the symbolic depiction of the events almost at the rhythm of his breath along the winding route of the Castle'. The written statement corresponds to a clear graphic indication which, through a dotted line on the plans, marks out a route: a possible itinerary for visitors, emphasising the experiential aspect as fundamental to the project. The historic building, fully reinforced in its established historic presence and in its spatial structure, made into a blank page on which to depict and recount, questioned and ordered by a geometric grid which is not abstract but aimed at organising time and the memory of the experience of deportation, is also interpreted according to a different standard: the visitors' 'breath', a measurement of their physical and emotional participation in a path of awareness and empathy in which they are individually urged to challenge themselves.

The Museum-Monument was unveiled on 14 October 1973 with the President of the Republic in attendance. Initially, the design showed significant deficiencies, effectively lacking all the spaces devoted to specialist history studies. Over the course of the slow construction process, the architectural work underwent some changes, the most important of which was a reduction in the number of stelae and the variation in size between them and the square, ordering grid. In essence, however, it kept to the primary intent of the designers.

The Museum-Monument and Camp of Fossoli

Lastly, we shall come to the question of the design structure of the Museum-Monument, which has original motifs, part of which are unfortunately still unresolved, but nonetheless exemplary.

⁵⁰ From the cited conversation between the author and Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, June 1989.

We have already emphasized the factors that led to imagining the Castello dei Pio project as a Museum-Monument: a place of ‘memory’, ‘admonition’, ‘meditation’, and the study of history. The plan was only partially carried out, as at the moment of completion the library and documentation archives were still missing. Today, however, they are located not far from the Museum-Monument at Fondazione Fossoli.

It should be remembered, however, that the initial plan called for a more complex place, from the beginning combining the proposal to create a Museum-Monument with the need for a parallel and coordinated memorial action connected to the Fossoli camp.

As we shall see, there is a precise historic reason that prevented the Museum-Monument being developed in the camp area. Nevertheless, having reconstructed the origins not only of the work but also its role in the local and national memorial action connected to political and racial deportation, it appears evident that its location in the Castle, a place that had already been imbued with memories and identities over a much longer period, was also a cultural choice that gave an original feature to the memorial ‘system’ envisaged for Carpi. In the design of this system, as we have pointed out, the BBPR firm, and Ludovico Belgiojoso in particular, played a role that went well beyond merely translating an architectural project based on the wishes and decisions of others.

The reflection on the transit camp at Fossoli, as we have said, precedes the idea of creating the Museum-Monument at the Castello dei Pio and forms its roots. The camp has a complex history and, as other contributions to this volume attest in detail, it is still open to a memorial action that appears particularly delicate and difficult to implement.

Such an action effectively got underway on the occasion of the 1955 Exhibition, when the simple monument at Fossoli was built, though it was outside the camp. The practical reasons behind such a choice are easy to reconstruct. Once the events of Nomadelfia (1947-53) – the city of Don Zeno Saltini ‘where justice is law’ – had come to their conclusion, in 1955 the area, which was owned by the State,

had already been rented to the association Opera Assistenza Profughi Giuliano-Dalmati, who were building Villaggio San Marco to host over a hundred families of Italian refugees arriving from Zone B of Istria, which had come under Yugoslav control. Initially, and on a practical level, it was certainly this presence that generated a misalignment in the memorial action that involved this second site of the Carpi network.

Indeed, during the decade-long works of the Museum-Monument Organizational Board, the issue of the camp was rarely mentioned, and only appeared in a significant way three years after the Istrian refugees had left, having been moved to new housing between 1968 and 1970.

It was therefore in the meeting of 3 June 1973 that Onorio Campedelli, who had been mayor of Carpi since 1970, first broadly presented his idea for putting the Fossoli camp in order, proposing that all buildings be demolished. In his view, they had been subjected to changes over time such that there was nothing 'original' left. In their place, an enclosed, green area would be set up where they would place the Memory-Wall, built outside the camp in 1955, and newly build 'two or three barracks as they were originally ... and the little church' based on the memorial designs of Ludovico Belgiojoso. 'In this way', Campedelli affirmed,

those who go to such an area to rest from their exertion, from seeing those structures, will remember that where they are sitting or strolling, or where their children are running carefree, there once stood a concentration camp, a place of suffering and pain for thousands of human beings.

To execute his proposal, Campedelli suggested starting the procedure for transferring the

ownership of the area from the State to the Town, a proposal that the Board approved unanimously.⁵¹ Thus, a few months after the Museum-Monument was opened, the Board moved to erase the physical traces connected to deportation existing in the camp, that is, the ruins that can be found there even today, though they are much less substantial. These traces, considered to be disordered and compromised by later events, would be removed in favour of an exemplary programme of philological reconstruction performed retrospectively, based on the direct testimony of the designer of the Museum-Monument, a former prisoner at the camp. A design integrated as never before with the building of the Museum-Monument – the same designer, in fact – and a clear choice with regards to the theme of preserving the physical evidence of the camp, which, evidently, at that time, was not considered relevant to the archival documentation programme which was, however, at the centre of the museum plan. It is difficult to imagine that Campedelli had not consulted Ludovico Belgiojoso on the matter, though there are no documentary traces of such a discussion, and Campedelli did not hint at it when presenting the proposal to the Board.

In this regard, it may be interesting to read the testimony of Belgiojoso in which the architect reflected on the theme, both remembering, presumably, the reconstruction proposal made by Losi, and anticipating possibilities with the international competition of the late 1980s drawing near:

Perhaps it's a bit different for me than for an outsider, because having experienced it, I see it

⁵¹ The request to acquire the area was effectively made on 11 August 1973. 'It is in connection with the existence of the Fossoli camp that the initiative to construct the Museum-Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee to the Nazi concentration camps has been planned for the spaces on the ground floor of the monumental Castello dei Pio in Carpi [...]. The Fossoli camp ... is intimately connected to the above-mentioned work, and therefore it is unthinkable that we could continue to keep it in conditions of complete neglect, as it is currently [...]. It is the intention of this civil administration to proceed with the enclosure of this space, transforming it into a large park, within which some barracks would be kept (those less altered) along with the small church, with all the ecclesiastic privileges connected to it, to testify to the existence of the camp, while the 'Memory-Wall' will be located at the centre of the area with the inscription by Piero Calamandrei on Fossoli, which is currently located at the far northern side of the camp'. See Carpi Town Hall, Secretariat of the Mayor, 11 August 1973, record no. 15481, AFF.

in a certain way. I think a minimum of reconstruction could be done. For example – one of the mayors said this to me, too – barrack 18; managing to rebuild the interior to have a bit of atmosphere ... with the straw beds. So if I found my drawing with all the names, we could easily reconstruct barrack 18, at least in the part in front, not the back ... because in the back were all the stores of straw, so there would be little point. Maybe do one barrack, cover over the rest ... it would be a waste of money. We could do something like what they did in Pompeii: leave the walls at a certain height so as to have a sense of the size, put up signs with the roles so as to explain ... clearing the paths and marking the boundary to have a memory of the size, putting up signs that say, ‘This is where the Jews were, the women ... etc.’ to reconstruct how it was organised. And then redo one barrack completely, but here the idea is still a bit rough. I find that preserving it in this way, keeping one of these barracks standing, would be a bit unmethodical. One compromise could be a sort of ‘Italian’ way in the best sense of the word: we could keep the plan, putting some things in ... I don't know, some plants ... Because that way it would be an objective memory ... While the barrack where most of those who were massacred at Fossoli slept, well, that wouldn't just be a spot to walk by, where you'd just go there and look at it; there's also a connection with the Museum and with this act of presence that we observe each year ...⁵²

If the proposal envisioned by Losi had been pursued, it would certainly have given life to an experiment of great interest and originality, perhaps the only case of a reconstruction project designed by an architect-deportee. **INSERT FIGURE 19: BW**

The law that finalised the transfer of the land to the Town was issued in 1984, followed four years

⁵² From the cited conversation between the author and Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, June 1989.

later by the announcement on the part of the Town of Carpi of an international competition to restore the former concentration camp at Fossoli.⁵³ The idea of the park launched by Campedelli remained, and in order to create it as one of the three primary objectives, the competition indicated a larger area of intervention than that originally occupied by the camp. The announcement also kept the request to rebuild one or two barracks for documentary purposes, but the designers were left free to deal with the complex matter of the overall destiny of the existing ruins – those in the new camp, because the old one was completely destroyed – to which, as a third objective, they would add the idea of a second museum-monument.

There was extensive participation in the competition, with over a hundred proposals. The jury made an initial selection of thirty-five of these, finally succeeding in naming three finalists in a draw: Ludovico Belgiojoso, Roberto Maestro and Gian Luca Tura. **[INSERT FIGURES 20, 21 AND 22: BW]** All the projects focused on an interpretation and architectural optimization of the site as the result of a stratification over timespans much longer than the brief life of the sorting camp, with references going back to its centuriation (Paola Viganò). The very arrangement of the competition led to emphasising the landscape aspect, which in all the proposals made took on the same importance as the historical testimony, focusing on the events connected to deportation. We might say that the centrality which the competition attributed to the park began a true osmotic process between the two principles of memory, which were dissimilar, if not opposites: on the one hand, the provision of a pleasant, natural place for reflecting on known historic events and finding consolation – of a Romantic sort – and on the other, the wish to convey or highlight present elements prompted by a precise historic knowledge of the place of remembrance, to safeguard its fragile structure, and make the incidents more evident and give more of a

⁵³ See Giovanni Leoni, ed., *Trentacinque progetti per Fossoli* (Milan: Electa, 1990); Giovanni Leoni ‘‘The first blow’: Projects for the Camp at Fossoli’, in Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Holocaust Remembrance. The Shapes of Memory* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 204-21.

warning than a consolation. The competition projects were thus populated with substitutions that mixed philology and redemption: maples that indicated the original position of the prisoners' cots (Rainer Rietsch), barbed wire turned into hedges (Massimo Bonaffini), stretches of water marking the trough for the barracks (Ton van der Hagen). This expedient is used more frequently in the proposals for restoring the old camp, which even lacked ruins.

But while the complex layering of memories within the place was unanimously accepted as a central theme to the project, dealing with the ruins after complying with the competition requirement to rebuild two barracks led to the emergence of very different positions: from the complete demolition of every existing structure – in truth, proposed by only one competitor (Raffaele Dajelli) – to partial demolition and completion with new architectural elements (David Palterer), immobilise the current conditions using resins (Domenico Schiesari), or various solutions that involved knocking down the existing walls but reclaiming the volume of the original shapes using new architectural elements (Tal Barak, Vittorio Pedrocchi). Few designers entered into the philology of the complex building history of the camp by proposing critical, selective preservation (Alessandro Baldovini). However, the dominant approach was acceptance of the conditions of decay, and an attempt to establish its value. Some rendered the area inaccessible, for example by flooding it (Giulio Rossetti); others transformed it into a true ‘archaeological site’ (Italo Rota), while there were also enthusiasts of the very process of decay in the ruins (Frans Sturkenboom), perhaps documented in the new museum on site (Bernd Stanzel), or entrusted definitively to the act of progressive erasure by vegetation (Jan Karkzewski). These attitudes thus tended to favour the ‘immemorable’ component compared to the potential for ‘archival memory’. Only Mauro Galantino attempted to reconnect the two planes, proposing not to intervene ‘on the living materials, which convey memory’ but to enable scholars to access them. Only two proposals suggested philologically rebuilding the entire structure of the camp: Piotr Barbarewicz and the group led by Ludovico Belgiojoso. The latter, unlike the majority of the competitors, who placed displays or plants in

the ruins, treating them differently, ruled out any non-testimonial use of the rebuilt structures of the camp, and surrounded them with packed earth to avoid attitudes of a 'Romantic' sort.

In the absolute majority of the project proposals, the third theme- the creation of new monumental and museum elements- was certainly dominated by the desire to create architecture that would not compete with the place, to avoid nullifying the interpretative efforts described to this point. The proposed architectural elements were, in the majority of cases, the physicalisation of stretches of the route exploring the place, the 'evocative route' that nearly all the designers placed at the centre of their proposal, and that in some cases (Tura) set the tone of the architectural project, even in its completely new components. Many of these route structures were established on the camp's boundary (Marco Fogli, P. Viganò, M. Galantino, Claudio Sgarbi) to highlight the identity of the place in the wider fabric of the rural landscape. But there was no shortage of proposals which included, alongside the act of interpretation and creating dialogue with the place of remembrance, inventions of a plainly affirmative nature, making clear use of pure geometry (Palterer's circular museum), symbols (the complex narration by Maestro), or images of an abstract origin (Rota). It was again Belgiojoso who made the more radical choice, entrusting all meaning, in addition to the physical construction of the barracks, to a strictly educational and non-emotional route located beyond the camp enclosure. It is very easy to understand the jury's difficulty in breaking the draw between the three finalist projects, which outlined proposals that guided all prior and subsequent reflection onto the theme, each of them with a certain precision and in one case with the weight of an authority and testimony that was difficult to ignore. Roberto Maestro attempted the symbolic figurative path. The Tura project, which is a good representation of a dominant attitude among the competing designers, bears witness to a use of architecture subjected to the need to walk through places of remembrance to grasp the relics that are less than evident, or to offer meaning and awareness to physical evidence that cannot speak for itself. As the competition did not have a constructive result, it would not be useful for this essay to dwell on such an important opportunity for reflection. It is more

interesting to us, in tracing the sixty-year planning history of the place of remembrance formed by the Fossoli camp and the Museum-Monument in Castello dei Pio, to reflect on the third proposal, that of the group led by Belgiojoso, considering that the commissioning body and the designer are the same for the museum that was created. As regards the general strategic choices for the project, we can say that they are fully consistent with those enacted at the Castle: here, too, we have a path for reflection and learning that relies on words and images, quite distinct from the bare testimony which, in the museum, is entrusted to the display cases, and here to the rebuilt barracks. While it is difficult to discuss the story told through images and words, as the project was not completed, we can however emphasize that even in the designs, the pure display of testimony to the place of experience, and the need for it to be rebuilt, pose difficulties not unlike those that materialised in constructing the museum route within the Castle. If on that occasion, a memory of deportation was being sketched out with different identities, with the need to distinguish it from the memory of the Resistance, or to integrate the two while defining its autonomy. Here, fifteen years after the arduous completion of that path, the awareness of the value of other memories – Nomadelfia, the Istrian community – weighs on the place as a whole, and the refinement of historic research renders unlikely an identical reconstruction of the camp at the time it entered into the concentration camp system. Concerning the evolution of the place of remembrance at Carpi, it is, however, interesting that after requests for closer examination and hearings, the local administration chose, among the three competitors judged of equal merit, the project by Roberto Maestro, which was, however, never completed.

Captions

Figure 1. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. The graffito by Corrado Cagli.

Figures 2-3. M. Fiorentino, G. Perugini, Ardeatine Memorial, 1944-51, Rome.

Figure 4. BBPR, Monument in Memory of the Fallen in Concentration Camps, Milano, 1946. First solution, working drawings.

Figure 5. BBPR, Monument in Memory of the Fallen in Concentration Camps, Milano, 1950. Second solution, perspective.

Figure 6. BBPR group in the Thirties: Enrico Peressutti, Lodovico Belgiojoso, Ernesto Nathan Rogers and Gian Luigi Banfi.

Figure 7. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi, 1963. Competition project, plan.

Figure 8. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi, 1963. Competition project, internal perspective.

Figure 9. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi, 1963. Competition project, perspective of the courtyard.

Figure 10. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. Competition project, plan. Drawing by M. S. Badiali, G. Birarelli, N. Covili, M. Dellapasqua, E. Savini.

Figure 11. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. Realized project, plan. Drawing by M. S. Badiali, G. Birarelli, N. Covili, M. Dellapasqua, E. Savini.

Figures 12-13. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. Photos of building yard.

Figure 14. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. The Hall of Names.

Figure 15. The presentation of the Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee on the journal *L'architettura. Cronache e storia*, 1974.

Figure 16. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. A hall of the Museum.

Figure 17. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. The courtyard of the castle with the stelae.

Figure 18. BBPR, The Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee, Carpi. The graffito by Corrado Cagli.

Figure 19. Lodovico Belgiojoso, Notes on Fossoli.

Figure 20. Lodovico Belgiojoso et al., Redevelopment of Fossoli concentration camp, Carpi, 1998. Competition project, perspective.

Figure 21. Roberto Maestro et al., Redevelopment of Fossoli concentration camp, Carpi, 1998. Symbolic architectural elements.

Figure 22. Gian Luca Tura et al., Redevelopment of Fossoli concentration camp, Carpi, 1998. Competition project, site plan with shadows.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

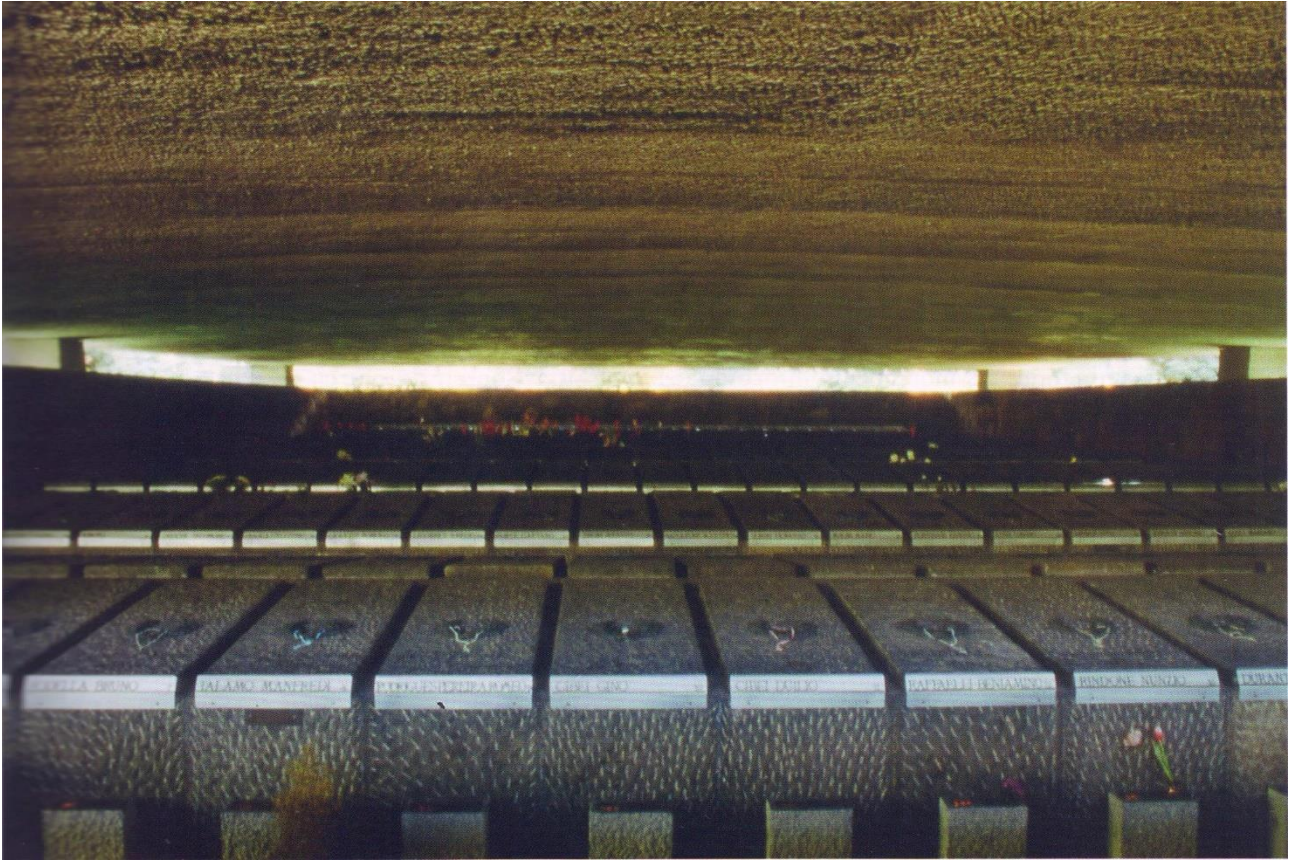


Fig. 3

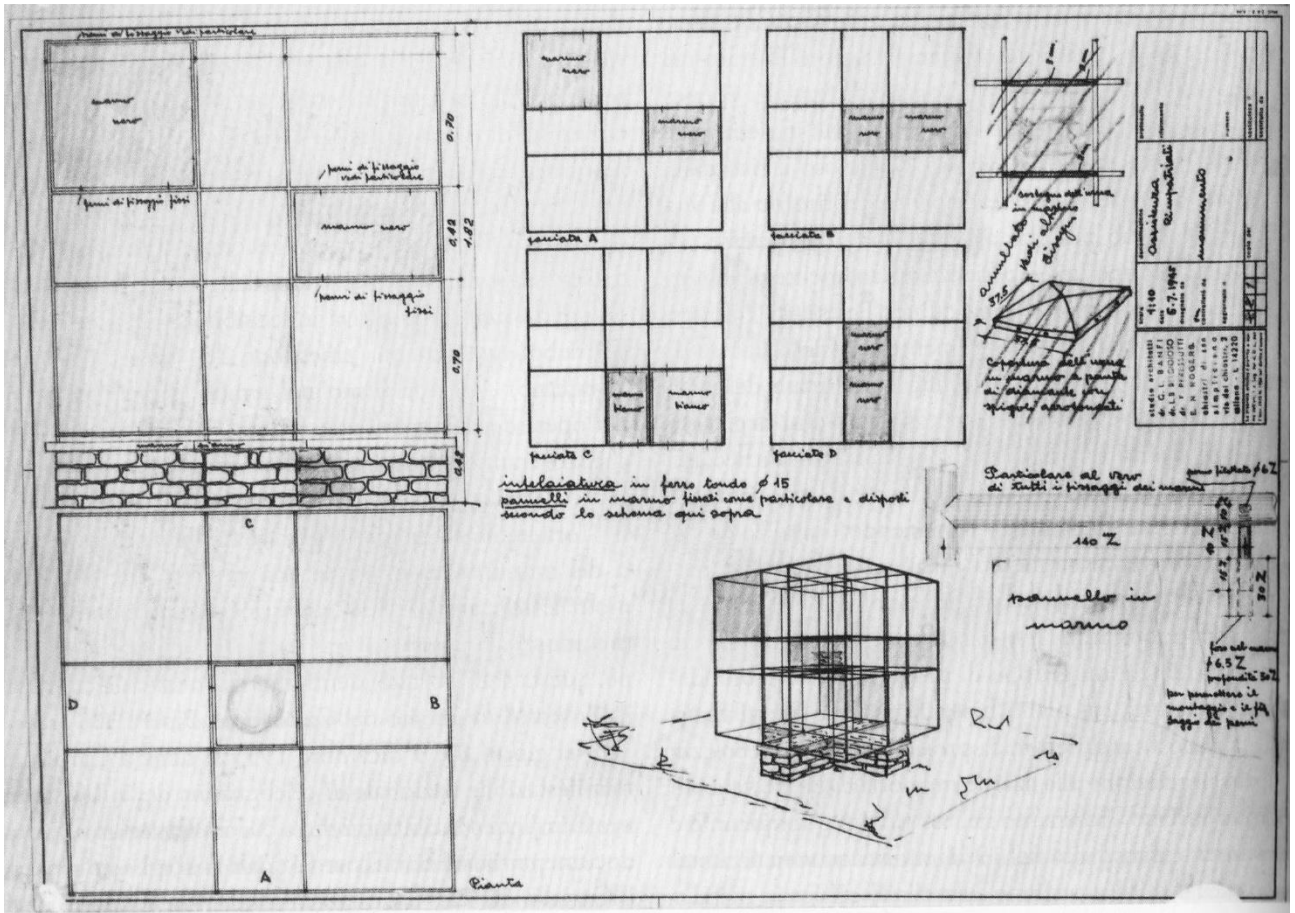


Fig. 4

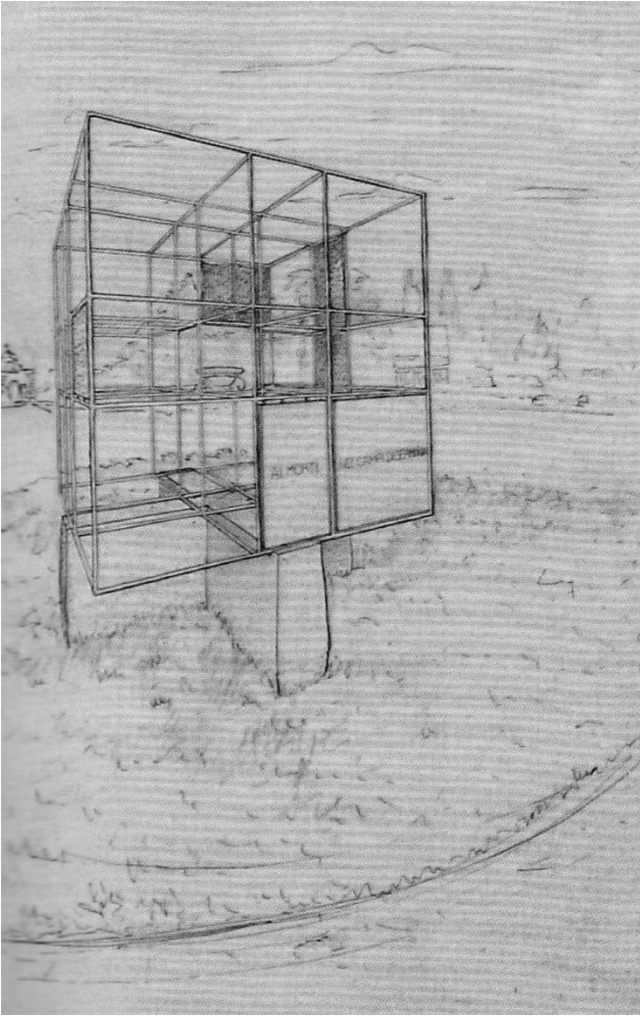


Fig. 5

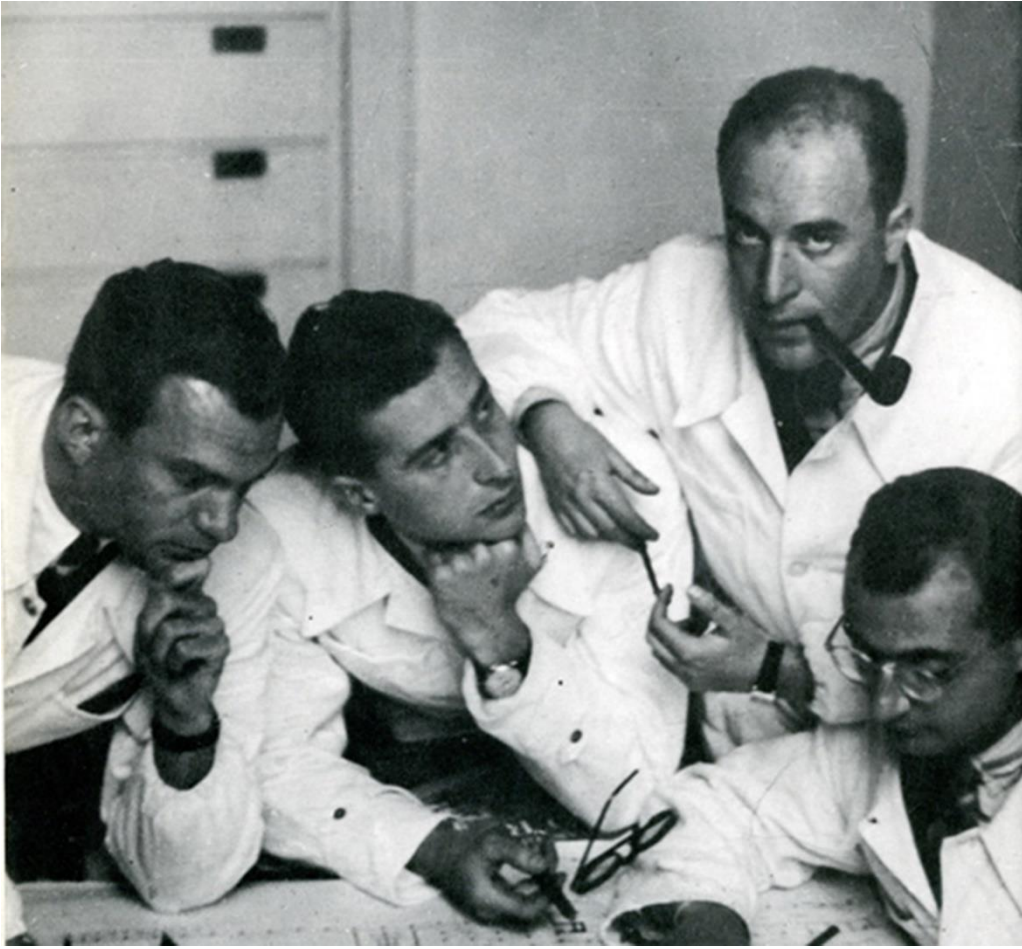


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

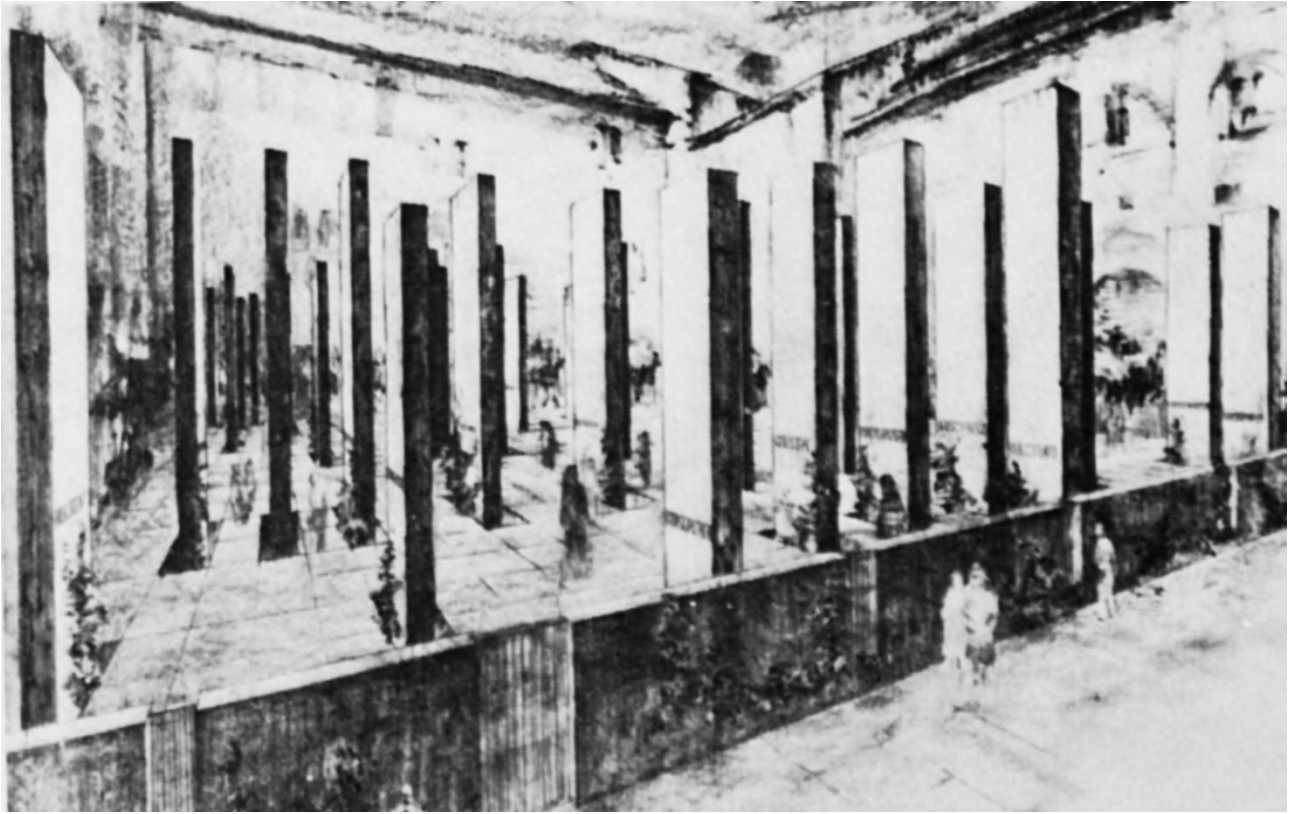


Fig. 8

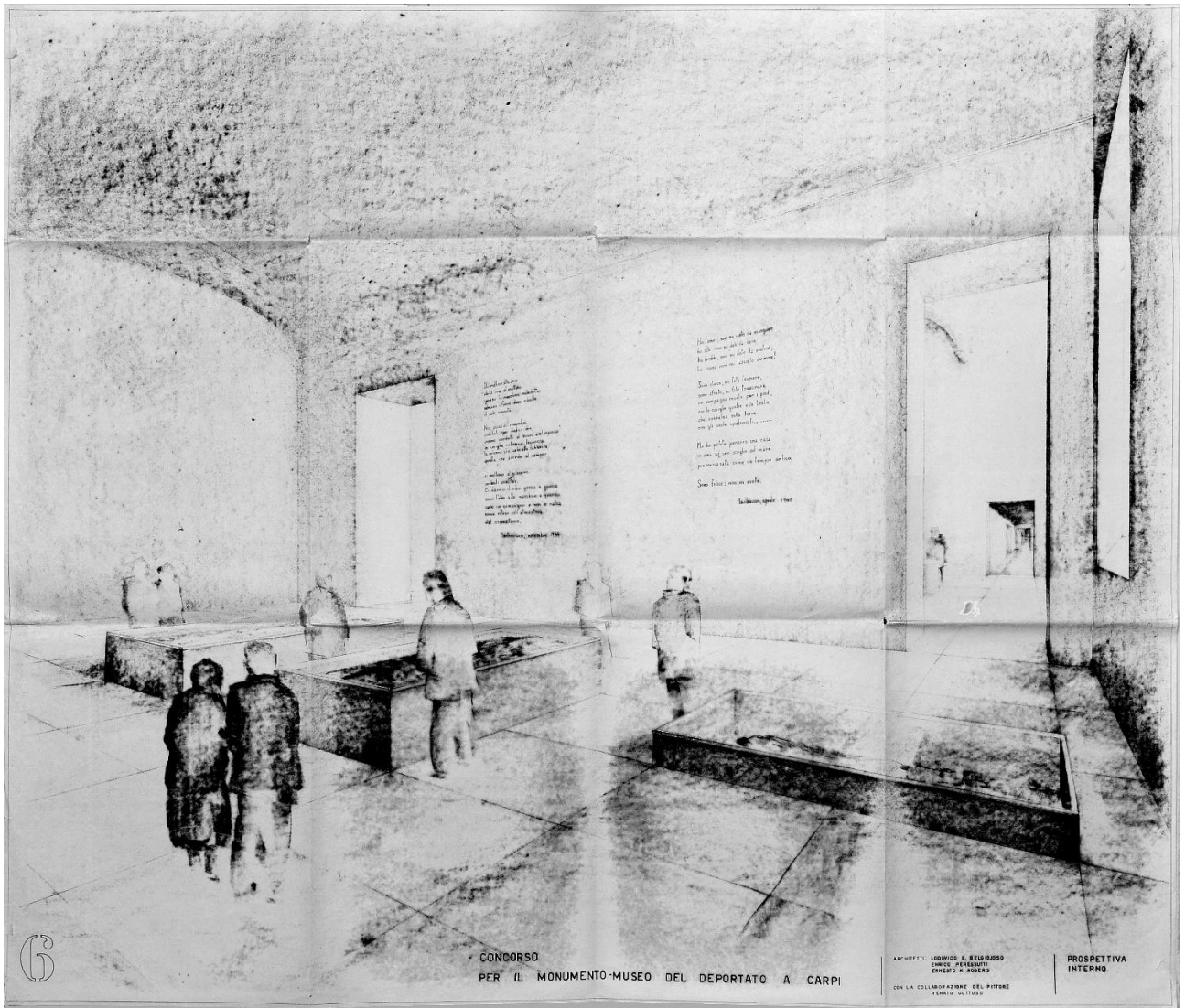
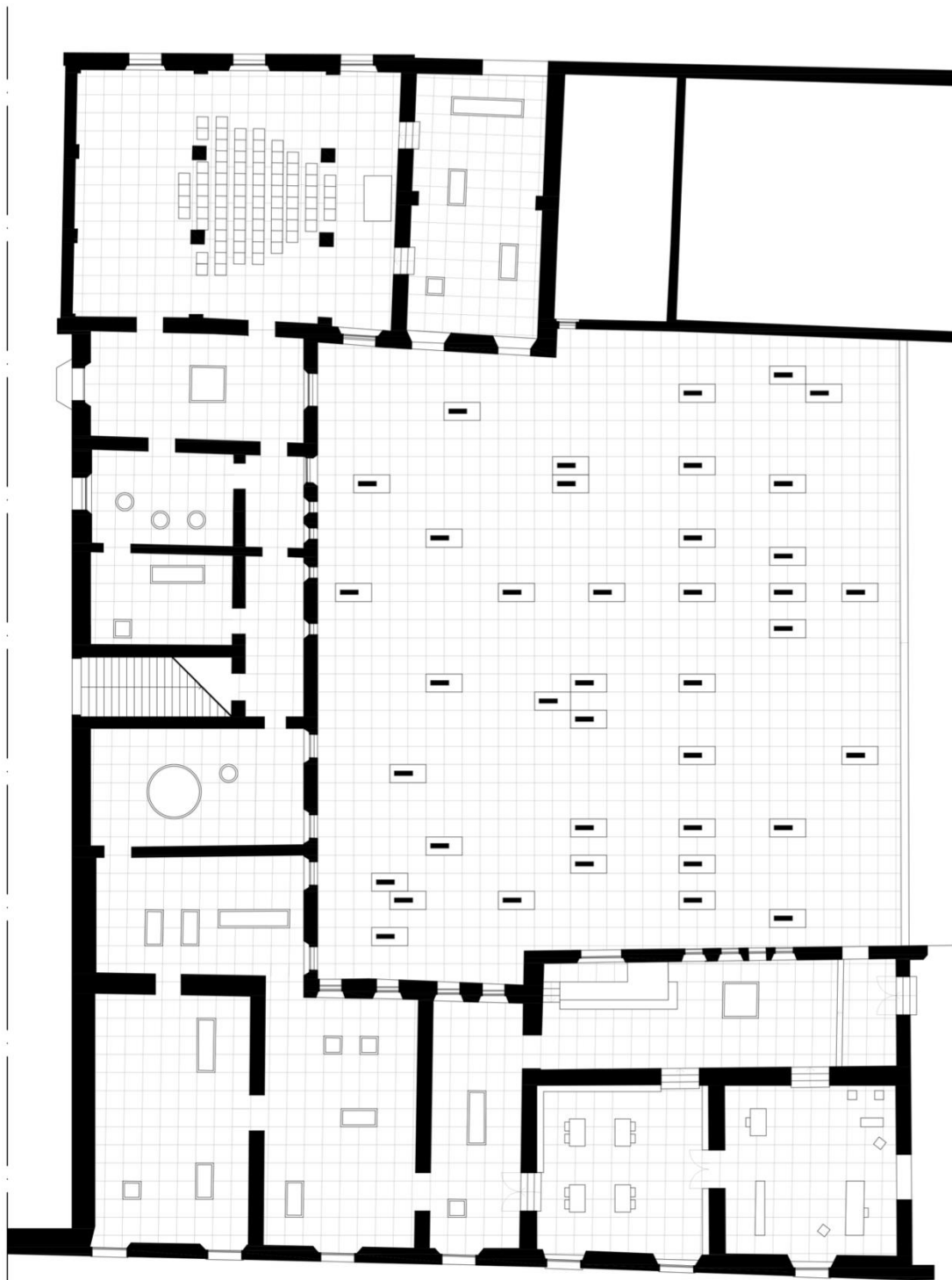
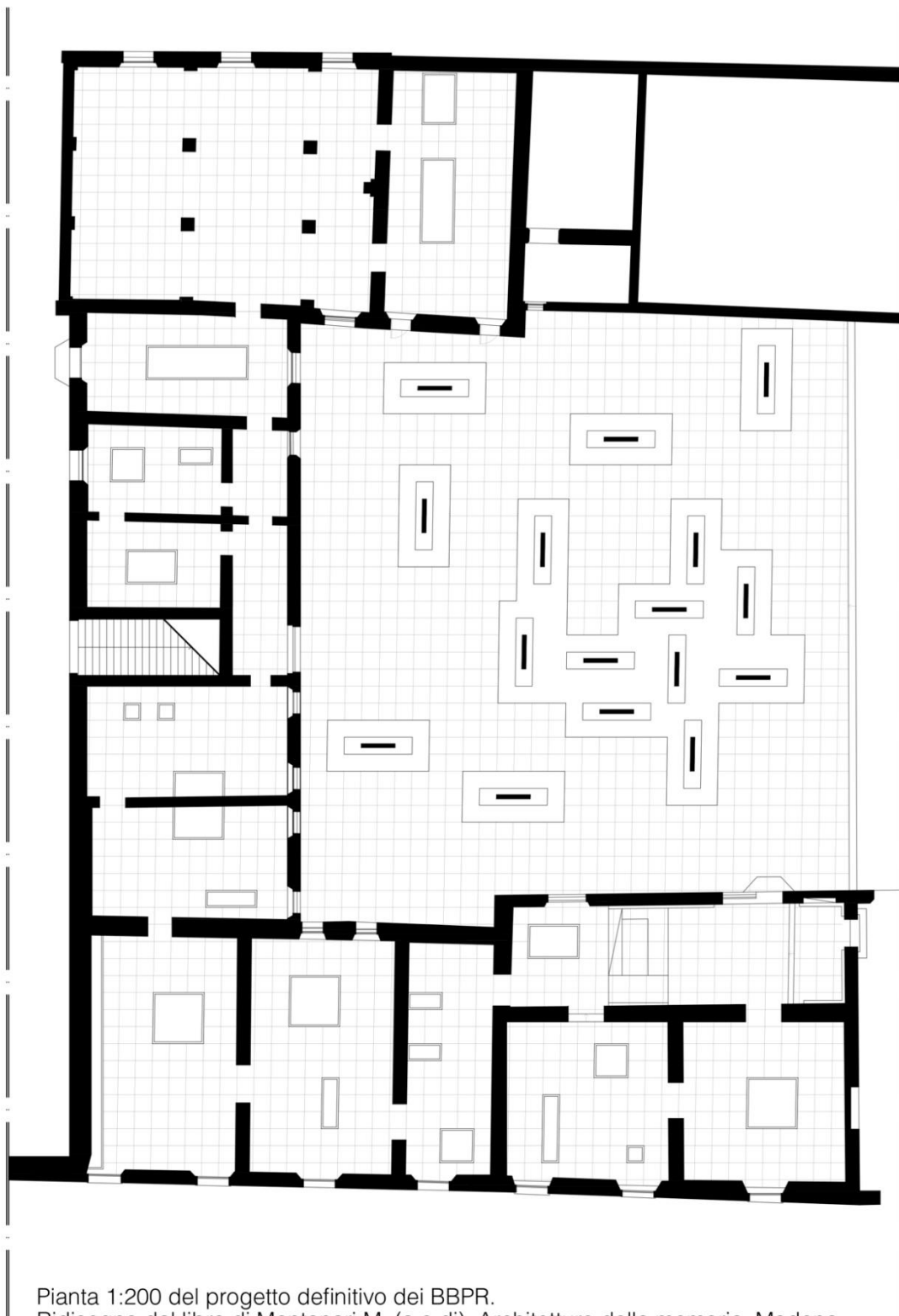


Fig. 9



Pianta 1:200 del primo progetto proposto dai BBPR.
Ridisegno dal libro di Montanari M.(a c.di), Architetture della memoria, Modena,
Grafitalia 2003, e dalle tavole esecutive fornite dall'archivio della Fondazione Fossoli



Pianta 1:200 del progetto definitivo dei BBPR.
Ridisegno dal libro di Montanari M. (a c.di), *Architetture della memoria*, Modena,
Grafitalia 2003, e dalle tavole esecutive fornite dall'archivio della Fondazione
Fossoli



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

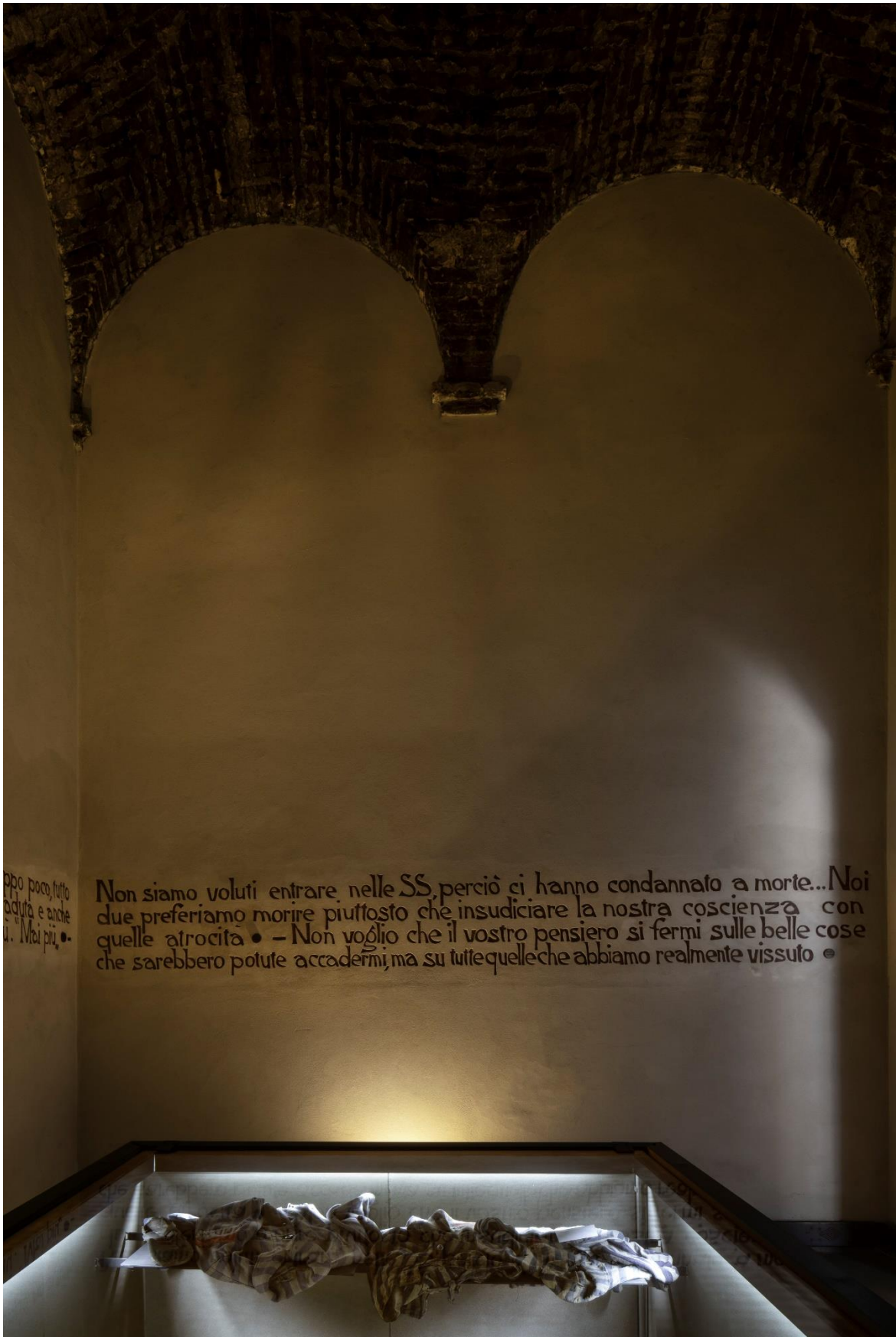


Fig. 16



Fig. 18

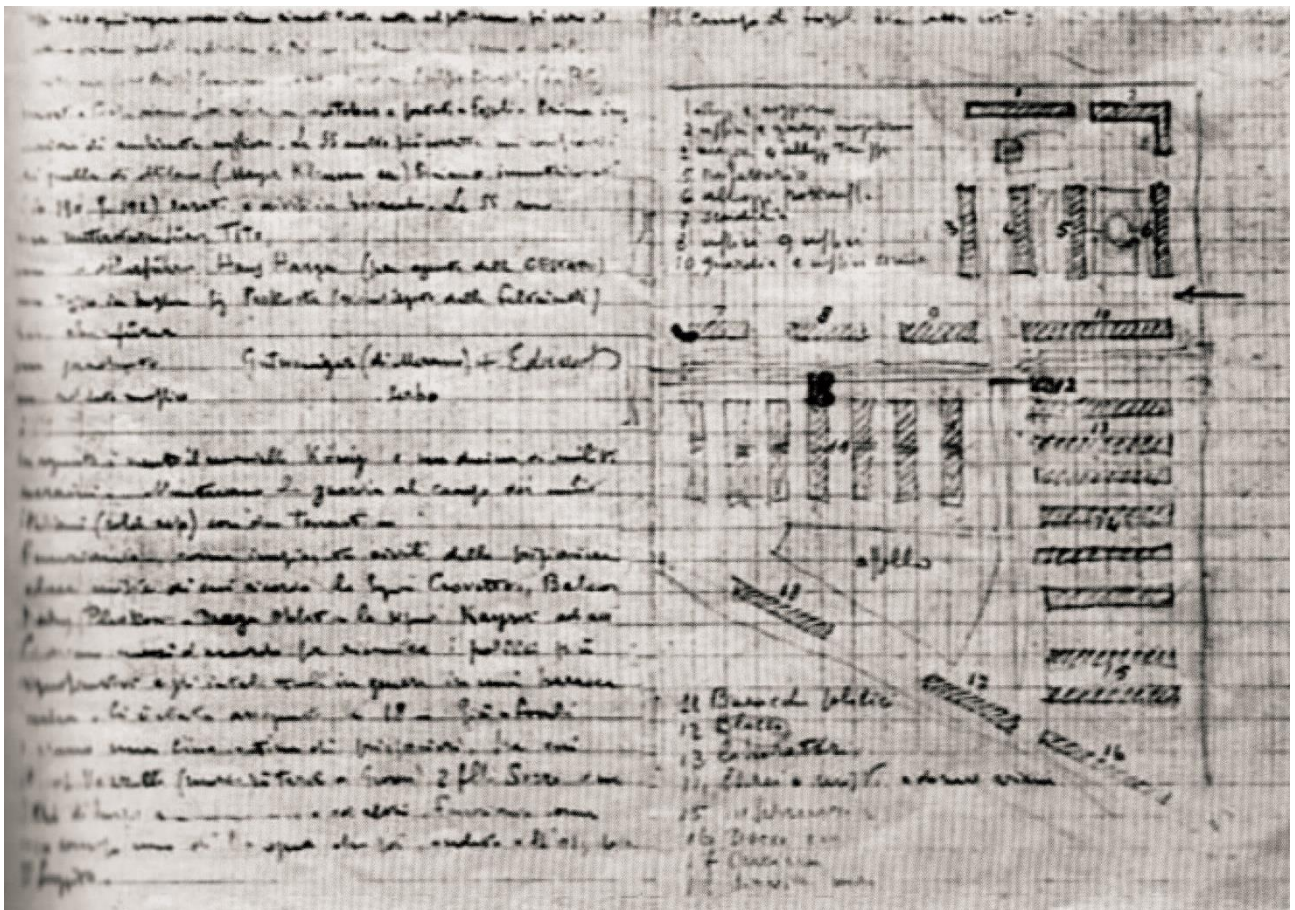


Fig. 19

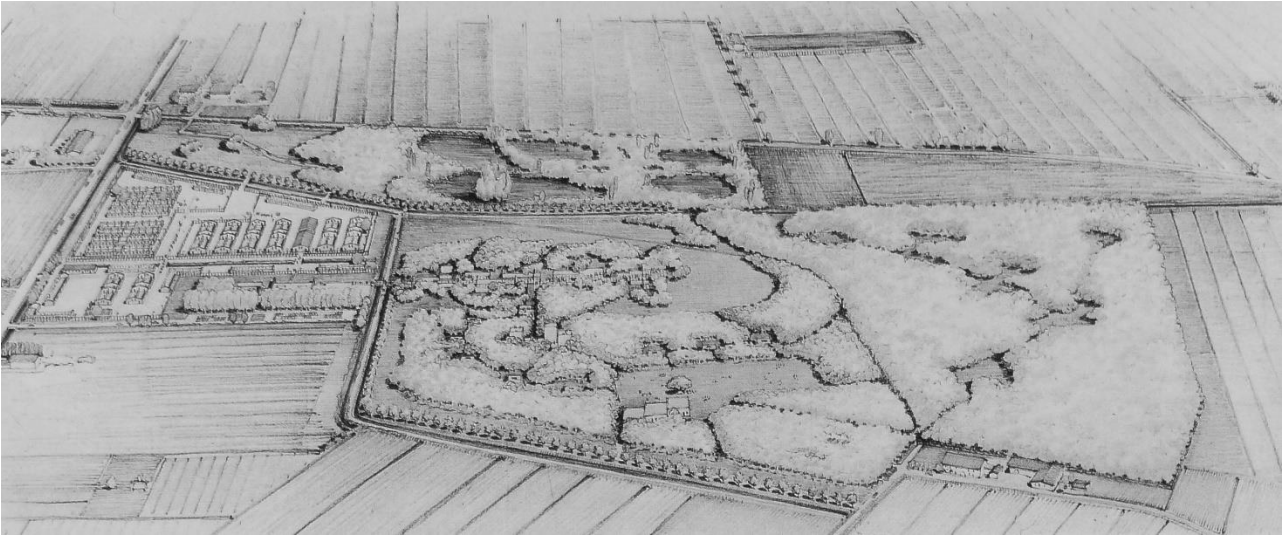


Fig. 20

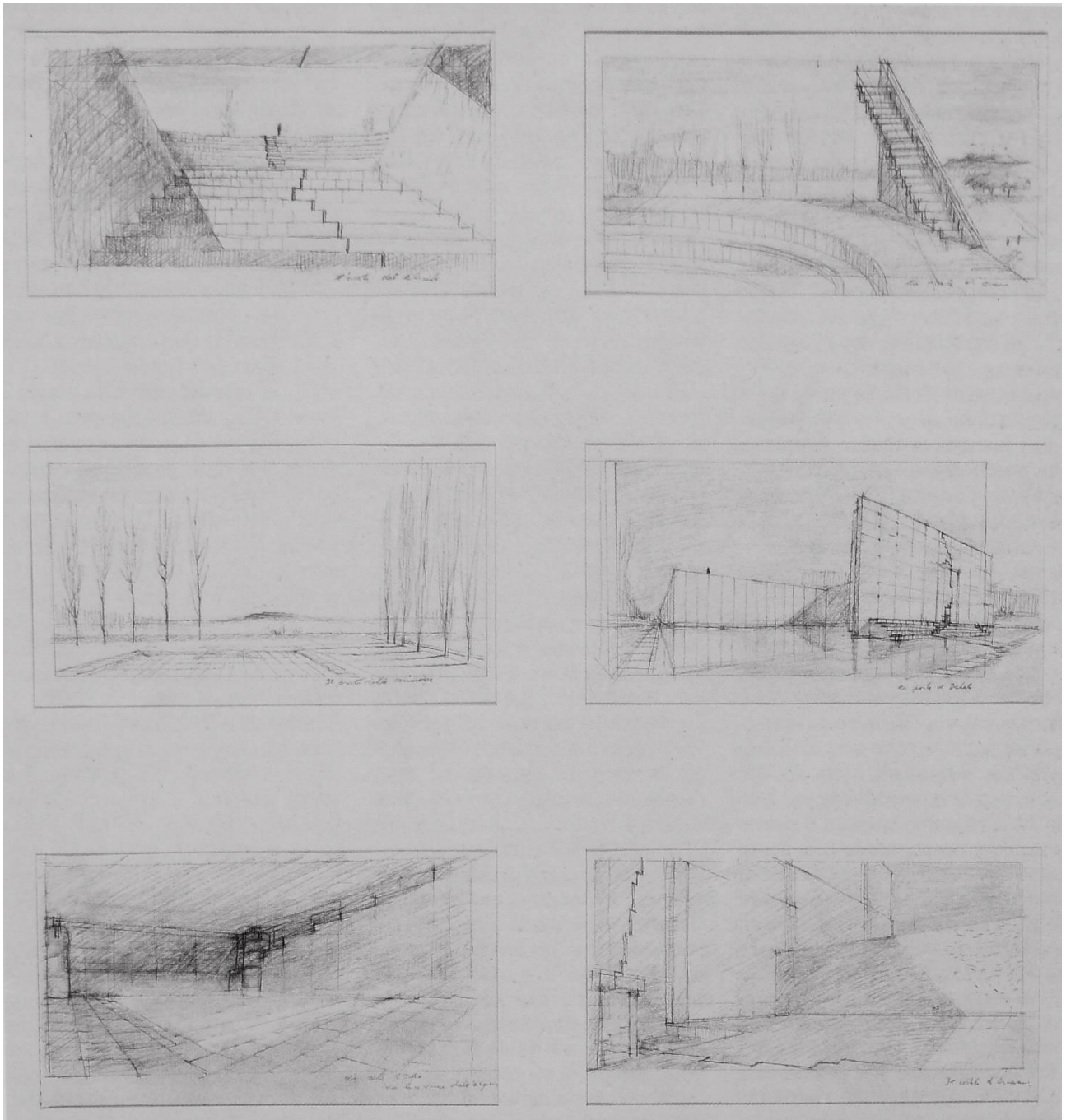


Fig. 21

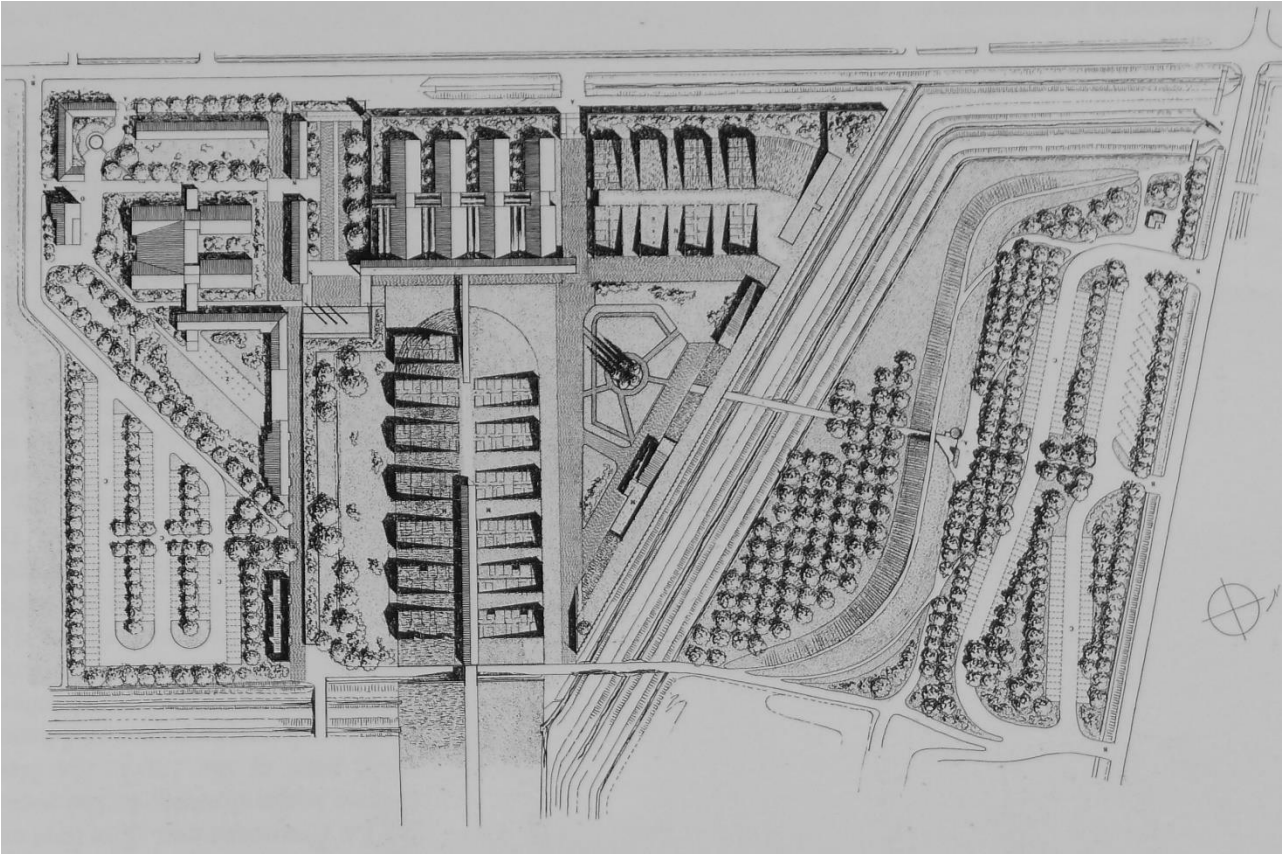


Fig. 22