

JOVAN KRATOHVIL'S MONUMENT DEDICATED TO THE YUGOSLAV FALLEN IN CENTRAL ITALY IN SANSEPOLCRO, TUSCANY

ABSTRACT

The article aims to analyse the morphological and spatial characteristics and the historical reasons that led to the construction of the monument dedicated to the Yugoslav fallen of the Second World War in central Italy. The monument, designed by Jovan Kratohvil and inaugurated in Tuscany, in Sansepolcro, on December 15, 1973, represents the third memorial built by the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia in Italy within the framework of cultural collaboration amid the geopolitical context that resulted in the signing of the Osimo Treaties in 1975 between Rome and Belgrade. The monument is situated near the location of the fascist concentration camp of Renicci, where over one hundred and sixty Yugoslav prisoners lost their lives between the autumn of 1942 and the autumn of 1943. Built around a statue and a crypt, it is situated at the centre of a cemetery field and is closely related to a strictly defined typological context. Jovan Kratohvil regarded the project for the Sansepolcro memorial as one of his most significant achievements, representing a peak of his research conducted between the second half of the 1960s and 1974, during his initial phase of complete abstraction.

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Within the cemetery of Sansepolcro, a historic village in the province of Arezzo overlooking the upper Tiber valley, renowned worldwide for being the birthplace of Piero della Francesca and Luca Pacioli, a monument inaugurated on December 15, 1973, commemorates approximately 1800 and houses the mortal remains of 446 fallen Yugoslavs who died or went missing between 1941 and 1945 in central and northern Italy, excluding the areas around Trieste, Gorizia, Rome, and the Tyrrhenian islands. This article aims to analyse the architectural and historical features of this work by Jovan Kratohvil.

This is the third memorial, following the one in Barletta designed by Dušan Džamonja in 1970 and the one in Gonars (UD) created on the project by Miodrag Živković in 1973, built at the behest of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia on Italian soil to commemorate Yugoslav prisoners who died in fascist concentration camps and Yugoslav partisans who, in participating in the Resistance, fell on Italian territory. The cycle of building memorials in Italy will conclude with the work of Ljubomir Denković and Savo Subotin in 1978 at the Prima Porta cemetery near Rome.

To reconstruct a comprehensive understanding of the Sansepolcro memorial, the paper will examine its physical and typological context (thus the paragraph titled ‘Where?’), conduct a compositional, morphological, and material analysis through the narrative of the visitor’s perceptual path (discussed in ‘How?’), and explore the historical events that led to its creation (addressed in “Why?”).

1. WHERE?

Before crossing the threshold of the cemetery enclosure, observing the toponymy of the surrounding streets reveals the significant role of historical identity and memory preservation that the community attributes to the cemetery and the central importance of the memorial in characterising this instance. The entrance is located on Viale Osimo, a municipality in the province of Ancona that, on November 10, 1975, witnessed the signing of the treaty between the Italian and Yugoslav foreign affairs ministers, solidifying the boundaries established by the 1954 London Memorandum, a turning point in diplomatic relations between Rome and Belgrade. On the opposite side of the cemetery on Viale Osimo, the road named in 2017 after Ottorino Goretti intersects perpendicularly: Goretti served as the mayor of Sansepolcro from 1964 to 1976 and played a decisive role in the construction of the memorial.

Along the northwest front of the site, where the final expansion of the cemetery designed by Paolo Zermani is located, flows via Sinj, a city not far from Split that has been twinned with the municipality of Sansepolcro since 1981.

Upon passing the entrance on Viale Osimo, the ossuary is relatively easy to find. By passing through the main path dotted with cypress trees for a few tens of meters, squeezed between the backs of two housing niches, the visitor arrives in a more spacious decompression zone. Of this square cemetery field, approximately 30 meters per side, 364 square meters were granted 'freely in perpetuity to the Yugoslav State for the purpose of allowing the construction of an ossuary monument intended to collect the remains of Yugoslav Fallen in central Italy' with the resolution of the Sansepolcro City Council, no.25, dated 2/4/1970.

2. HOW?

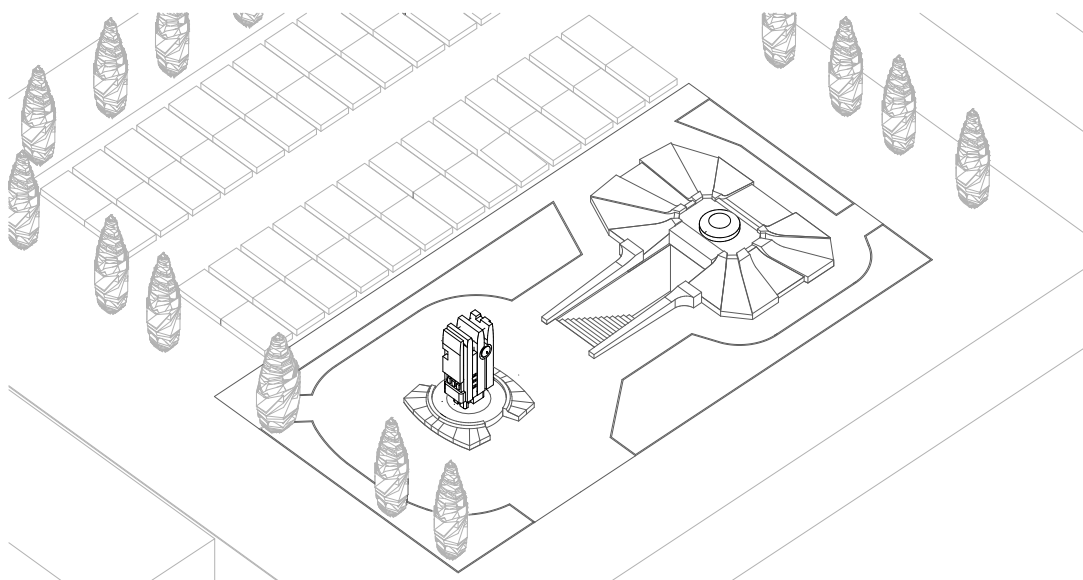
The first element that catches the visitor's sight is the sculptural part of the memorial, slightly shifted to the right from the access axis. A bronze statue over four meters high rests on a circular pedestal made of white stone composed of two parts: a central circular part serves as the actual pedestal, and an outer ring formed by blocks that taper towards the outside from a central arch. The ring is interrupted in portions perpendicular to the short side of the lot, allowing visitors to approach the statue as closely as possible at two distinct points. The statue appears as a slender parallelepiped with rounded edges that develops from a central cylinder, where abstract forms are achieved through subtractions and intersections of volumes starting from the core, with different motifs on

each of the four faces. The accentuation of vertical lines and the proportions of the volume suggest an upward tension. In some areas, the bronze appears smooth, while in others, such as around the hole bordering the semisphere on the side facing the entrance, it features impressed moldings that emphasise the outlines of the volumes.

At the end of the connecting path between the entrance and the memorial, it is possible, with a single glance, to identify the other elements of the composition: a crypt accessible by a staircase and a platform in red stone approximately ten centimetres thick that, defining the commemorative space, allows visitors to approach the statue and walk around the cover of the crypt. A system of green areas inhibits the use of the space as a shortcut within the cemetery. To complete the panorama that unfolds before the visitor, in addition to the buildings with columbarium and the four rows of graves occupying the remaining portion at the ground level of the cemetery field, some cypress trees enhance the sense of verticality in the composition already suggested by the statue and the ideal connection between earth and sky (Figure 1).

The crypt is covered by stone elements that, in their form, recall the outer ring of the statue's pedestal, with two arms extending to underline the stairs located on the axis connecting the crypt and the ossuary.

FIGURE 1: Axonometry of the monument showing all compositional elements: the statue, the slab, and the crypt.



This axis runs parallel to the long side of the lot and is perpendicular to the access path. Above the crypt's cover, which, like the statue's pedestal, has a more regular central part, a bronze dome with a diameter of approximately 1.60 meters is positioned. This cylindrical dome is topped by a lowered arch decorated with bas-reliefs of pictograms with a pre-Columbian taste.

The intersection between abstraction and ancient or prehistorical shapes is not unfamiliar within this type of memorial: the quest for the universalisation of values led artists to turn to prehistoric art in search of forms deemed necessary for their task. In this context, it is interesting to note that Jovan Kratochvil, not only an esteemed sculptor but also a prominent athlete, had his first encounter with the art of pre-Columbian civilisations during the shooting world championships, where he secured second place in 1949 in Buenos Aires.

FIGURE 2: Picture taken by Pietro Mariani from the bottom of the staircase towards the statue, June 2023.



He was deeply influenced by the impressions gathered during his South American journey and sought to incorporate reflections on this experience into his formal research.

At the bottom of the staircase (Figure 2), the entrance door of the crypt is covered by a bronze plaque bearing the names of the victims, similar to the other two plaques on the right and left of the door, placed on the two perpendicular walls that delineate the landing of the crypt entrance. The main portal displays the names of the fallen and deceased, while the side portals feature the names of the missing. The steps are clad in the same red stone used for the other walkable parts of the memorial.

The technical-descriptive report attached to the executive drawings, signed by engineer Milenko Simić from the ‘PAG’ studio in Zagreb and later used for construction by the Pecorelli construction company in Sansepolcro under the supervision of engineer Giustino Romolini, is a fundamental element to comprehend the genesis of the composition. It provides interesting insights to fully grasp the symbolic significance that the memorial seeks to convey.

In the introductory part, the two main themes are presented, the joint and complementary resolution of which determined the primary design choices: the first is defined as the spatial problem, involving the position, size, and proportional and typological relationship that the monument should have with the rest of the cemetery. The second is named ‘the ideal problem’, relating to the competition theme that asked ‘the ossuary represent a monument to the fallen and deceased, not a tomb or their cemetery.’

The critical characteristic from which the spatial issue arises is a shared aspect in the design experience of Kratohvil in Sansepolcro, Džamonja in Barletta, Živković in Gonars, and Denković in Rome: the need to intervene within the boundaries of a cemetery, not in a natural or urban context in the strict sense, as was common in their projects in their homeland. The success of the four projects will be attributed to a profound reflection on the ‘relationality among the three foundational elements of the monumental intervention: the landscape (urban or natural context), the sculptural-architectural object (or objects), and the subject experiencing the historical event’ where the landscape is never entirely natural or entirely urban. While the starting point is the same, the specificities of the four cemeteries led to significantly different spatial considerations.

Unlike the monument built in Gonars, it is not visible from outside the cemetery. This led Kratochvil not to choose the perpendicular axis to the entrance as the central compositional axis. Another unique feature of the lot is its position relative to the other volumes of the cemetery, or, in general, the absence of one or more walls that could define a clear visual boundary for the memorial and serve as a backdrop. In Gonars, Živković envisions the ideal completion of his perceptual journey in a corner of the cemetery, allowing the use of two walls as a theatrical backdrop for his composition and making them elements of spatial anchoring. In Barletta, Džamonja can rely on a boundary on a slope that opens the view to the Adriatic Sea, effectively incorporating symbolic and landscape significance into his intervention's identity.

The Sansepolcro monument must necessarily relate on every side to the niches, cypress trees, paths, and walls. To identify a natural backdrop, one must direct one's gaze upwards, where, beyond the walls, the hills of the upper part of Tiber valley appear. The need to guide the visitor's sight towards the natural landscape could explain the emphasis on vertical lines in the sculptural element, in addition to their symbolic value in commemorating the fallen through the exaltation of their deeds and their coherence with the directional alignment of the cypress trees that populate the entire cemetery.

In the small diary preserved by Kratochvil's family in their home in Senjak, reflections emerge on the challenge of intervening in an area already spatially and typologically defined. These reflections are later summarised and organised in the technical-descriptive report of the monument, where, regarding the positioning and characteristics of the lot, we can read

the existing cemetery, narrowly determined, and on a relatively modest plot, framed by fixed cypress trees and niches, defined by existing fixed paths, one must ensure space for the burial of 1382 fighters [...] this very delicate task is made considerably difficult by poor visibility[...] and delicate determination of the primary access to the ossuary.

From the general characteristic of the lot's position within the cemetery, which is the origin of spatial reflections, two compositional issues arise: visibility, to be resolved with appropriate sizing and positioning of elements, and access or directions and timing of perceptual pathways, to be resolved through the choice of privileged axes and paths. Regarding the proper balance of dimensional relationships and the ratio between solids and voids, the introductory part lucidly circumscribes the problem: 'the ossuary should not be oversized or excessively voluminous, so as not to disturb the existing harmony in the municipal cemetery.'

The main challenge from an ideal perspective was to create a structure in line with the production of memory architectures desired by the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia after the Second World War. According to the objectives of specialised commissions that, at the local, republican, and federal levels, promoted and regulated their constructions through the establishment of public competitions, the role of the memorial had to undergo a semantic leap from the simple commemoration of war victims to the future of the message. In other words, a memorial was not to be built solely in memory of the victims as such but to glorify their sacrifice in embracing a set of values opposed to those of the fascist and Nazi invaders upon which the federation should be founded. Primarily, this meant the brotherhood and unity of peoples. In cases dedicated to Yugoslav fallen in Italy, this takes on an even stronger character because it celebrates the difficult choice to fight alongside Italian partisans for the liberation of a country different from their own, attesting to the absolute value of brotherhood and unity opposed to fascism. To convey this type of message, then, ‘the memorial should not have a funereal character’, as asked by the selection committee.

The project proposed by Kratohvil stands out for its successful integration of a spatial solution with its symbolic significance. The combined use of the statue and the crypt allows the concentration of the functional aspect underground, avoiding an overly invasive volumetric intervention on the small cemetery grounds. Simultaneously, it establishes two distinct liturgical moments, physically and ideally connected by a staircase and sharing standard morphological features.

Only 25% of the surface is occupied by volumes above ground level, predominantly related to the crypt’s covering, reaching approximately 80 centimetres in height in the stone part and about 110 centimetres on the bronze dome’s summit at the centre. The sole volumetric element ascending is the statue, characterised by its proportions, volumetric fragmentation, and accentuation of vertical lines. The crypt, housing zinc caskets with the mortal remains of the fallen, is created through subtraction and serves as the void in opposition to the upward-reaching statue.

With vertical thrust, the statue establishes an ideal and visual connection with the cemetery, hills, and sky in the background, symbolising the moment of glorification. In contrast, the crypt symbolises the moments of remembrance and rest, imparting an overall sense of peace and calm. (Figure 3) The complexity and drama of the statue’s volumes recall ‘the exceptionally challenging circumstances of a war against a ruthless aggressor’, while the vertical development aims to ‘showcase the success of the redemption war’.

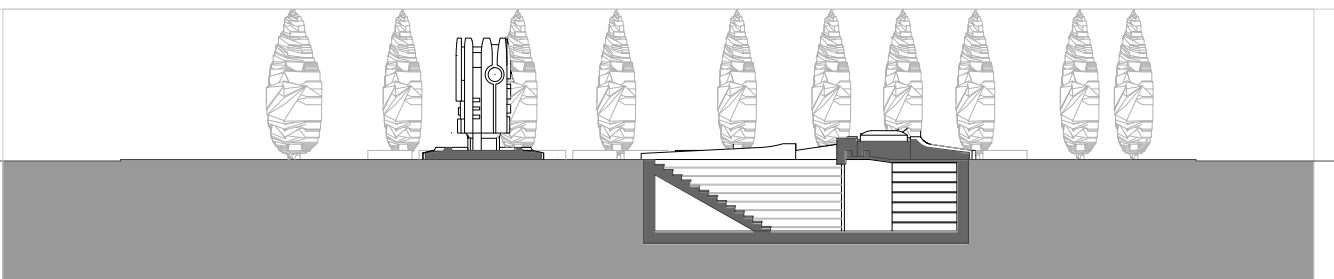
The abstraction of Sansepolcro's monument forms aligns with the practice of invoking remembrance 'through the interplay of abstract and primitive forms against the real natural landscape'. The low roof of the crypt, with its arms framing the access staircase, generates horizontal tension connecting the statue and the ossuary, contributing to a dual geometric tension between full and void, vertical and horizontal.

As a distributive tool, the staircase mediates between full and void, vertical and horizontal elements. The decision to keep the staircase visible is justified by acknowledging that

any attempts to render it invisible would be purposeless, false, and lead to railing issues. Opting for a direct and exposed staircase, partially integrated into the ossuary, was chosen to avoid the need for an additional railing

The visitor undergoes two contrasting yet complementary experiences when positioned at the top or bottom of the staircase. Ground level, with the statue behind them and facing the crypt, the observer witnesses the staircase leading towards bronze-fused doors inscribed with the victims' names and a bronze-lettered inscription in Serbian on the stone serving as the lintel: 'To the Yugoslavs fallen, deceased, and missing far from their homeland 1941-1945 / In eternal gratitude, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1973'.

FIGURE 3: Cross section of the monument: We can see the dimensional relationship between the statue and the crypt



Upon exiting the crypt and gazing upward, the staircase's walls, marked by pronounced horizontal joints in the stone blocks, create a visual cone framing only the sky, the tops of two cypresses, and the statue's uppermost section. Following the intense remembrance experience in the crypt, heightened by the numerous zinc caskets, their tight arrangement, darkness, and narrow passages, the visitor is compelled to rediscover the statue's volume gradually unfolding, tracing its vertical trajectory on the ascent. Regarding the staircase concept, Kratohvil asserts, 'this concept of a staircase is psychologically justified and often manifests in underground ossuaries or similar environments.'

Kratohvil's family's house still preserves numerous works of the sculptor, showcasing his intensely evolving artistic activity from the 1940s until his passing in 1998. The collection includes sculptures, sketches, preparatory drawings, and an extensive array of diaries, photographs, and documents testifying to his profound dedication to work and continuous exploration of new expressive horizons.

Regarding the Sansepolcro monument, a diary, the aforementioned technical-descriptive report, executive drawings, the inauguration promotional pamphlet (Figure 4), several articles from 'La Nazione', a miniature replica of the statue, an 80 centimetre model used for the statue's ultimate realisation, around thirty construction site and inauguration photographs, and a series of sketches delineating the work's initial conceptualisation were all identified. This material was relocated to the residence after Kratohvil's studio, located outside Belgrade, was sold. Kratohvil continually envisioned novel forms, documenting them on various supports without excessive concern for paper quality; some sketches that gave rise to his most significant works can be found on crumpled sheets or torn pages from exhibition catalogues, and in his children's school notebooks.

Upon inspecting the sketches, it becomes apparent that Kratohvil invested considerable energy in defining the architectural component of his intervention rather than the sculptural aspect. Specifically, he focused on designing various spaces, paths, and alignments among the volumes. Notably, one sketch (Figure 5) proposed a more prominent emergence of the crypt's covering, closer to the statue, with the ground-level entrance and an entirely enclosed staircase. In the plan, Kratohvil suggested placing the crypt entrance off the midline, slightly southward, and displacing the statue further north to establish a more organic, non-linear connection.

SPOMEN – KOSTURNICA

SANSEPOLCRO

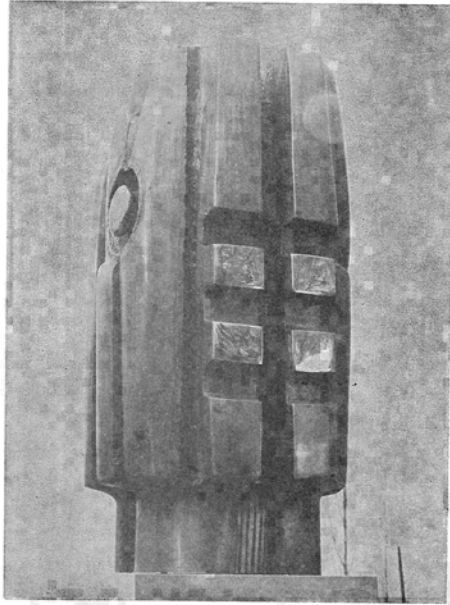
(provincija Arezzo)

REPUBLIKA ITALIJA

JUGOSLOVENIMA
PALIM, UMRLIM I NESTALIM
DALEKO OD DOMOVINE
U TOKU NARODNOOSLOBODILACKOG RATA
1941–1945.

U ZNAK VEČNE ZAHVALNOSTI

SOCIJALISTIČKA FEDERATIVNA REPUBLIKA
JUGOSLAVIJA
1973.

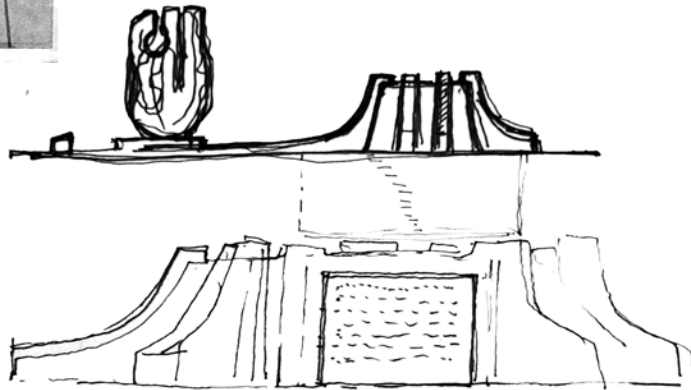


LEFT FIGURE

FIGURE 4: The brochure realised for the inauguration. Found in the Museum of Resistance of Sansepolcro archive.

DOWN FIGURE

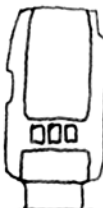
FIGURE 5: Sketches found in Kratochvil's house showing reflection about the relationship between volumes and the different faces of the statue



*memoria italij.
gloriorima*

*populo
gloriorima*

*memoria
Kratohvil*



Once the dimensional relationships among the statue, crypt, and staircase were determined, as well as their respective positions, Kratochvil delved into characterising the platform supporting the entire complex. He particularly focused on the composition of the red stone block mosaic and the flowerbeds demarcating visitor-accessible areas, thus defining entries to the memorial complex. A specific executive drawing was dedicated to the flooring design. Fissures between the blocks originated from the pedestal, crypt, and outer platform edges, forming vortices with their gravitational centres aligned with the memorial's sculptural volumes. Three substantial flowerbeds on the edges, covered with grass, and devoid of flowers or trees, complete the memory space. All cypresses emerge from the pavement, attesting to their pre-existence relative to the intervention. Stone curbs demarcate the greenery internally and externally, adding further dynamism to the platform's profile.

Access points are distinctly defined by the green area design. A flowerbed system directs visitor movement within the memorial spaces, regulates their pace, and enhances the gravitational tension towards the statue and the crypt, already hinted at by the pavement layout.

The descriptive report further reflects on the role of the flooring and flowerbeds, constituting the fourth component, alongside the statue, crypt, and staircase, integral to the composition's communicative power. The report underscores an intention 'to create a rather intimate atmosphere for the entire complex, guiding visitors during their movement and preventing those uninterested from using the platform as a shortcut.'

Continuing in reference to greenery care and the role of cypresses, the report states,

we do not envisage other horticultural interventions, considering that the existing cypresses, impeccably maintained, seamlessly integrate into our project. If deemed necessary, some of the more extensive lawns might host low, elongated coniferous shrubs, primarily to visually distance the ossuary from the four rows of Italian graves bordering our plot.

As of today, no shrubbery is present on the northwest side, just as it was on the day of the inauguration. A swift examination of photographs taken on the inauguration day, stored in both the Kratochvil family archive and the Sansepolcro Resistance Museum, elucidates why the cypresses were considered impeccably maintained and integral to the compositional system (Figure 6). Unlike today, back then, they had undergone meticulous pruning,

especially with their tops completely truncated. The low trunk and proportions of all cypresses surrounding the memorial, and their dark colour, conveyed the impression of an endless multiplication and dissemination of the statue throughout the cemetery. Presently, the cypresses exhibit their natural conformation, resulting in a less strong relationship with the statue.

FIGURE 6: A photo of the inauguration ceremony with perfectly shaped trees. Found in Museum of Resistance of Sansepolcro archive.



FIGURE 7: A picture of the competition's model. Found in Kratochvil's house in Belgrade.

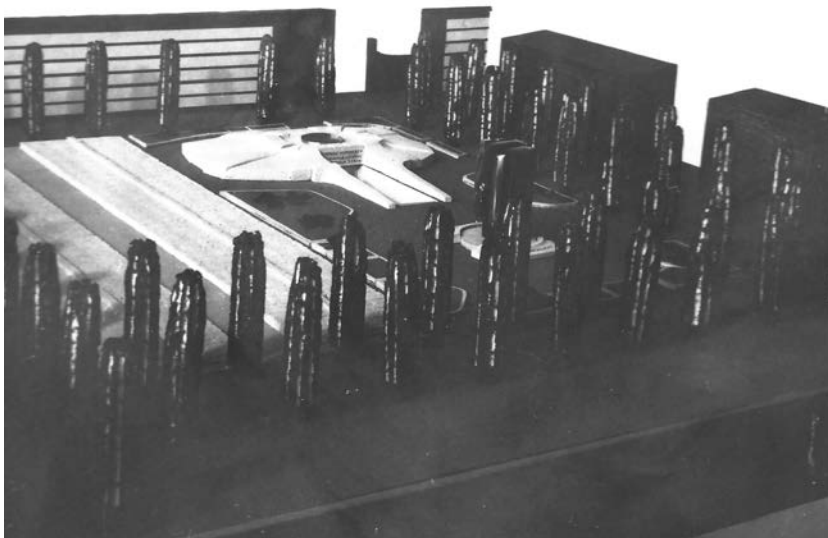




FIGURE 8: Picture from the inauguration day. We can see some parts of the statue completely polished, as they are not nowadays.

Photographs from the inauguration ceremony not only reveal greater attention to vegetation maintenance but also highlight another substantial difference between today and 1973, the moment of maximum correspondence between Kratochvil's design and its realisation—the treatment of the statue's materiality. In the technical report, the sculpture was indicated to be 'cast in bronze, with well-ground surfaces [...] certain elements, which have undergone fine polishing on the model, would be coated with gold and highly polished.' Visiting the memorial today does not allow us to verify this differentiation in surface treatment. Examining the miniature reproduction of the statue initially placed in the competition model (Figure 7), we can observe that in some portions, the bronze is perfectly polished, consistent with Kratochvil's approach in abstract sculptures similar to that of the Sansepolcro monument, which populated his production from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. In photos of the inauguration, however, it is noticeable that in certain protruding portions, especially on the side of the statue facing the staircase—a crucial area gradually unveiled to visitors ascending the stairs after visiting the crypt—the bronze appears much shinier, almost like a mirror (Figure 8).



FIGURE 9: A picture of Jovan Kratochvil working on the gypsum mold for the statue.

Among the various photographs preserved in Belgrade, many depict the stages of constructing the plaster model of the statue used for casting and the final phases of the construction site. Besides serving as evidence of Kratochvil's dedication, working alongside assistants with absolute control over every technical aspect of the project, these photos unveil the original intensity of some vertical grooves running in the statue's base, partially filled during the casting process or less visible due to the bronze's very dark colour (Figure 9). The technical report had proposed two different methods for creating the statue: the first, ultimately executed, involved casting in bronze, while the second entailed welding brass and *tombak* sheets with an internal stainless steel support structure. A variant for the crypt's realisation was also proposed, incorporating glass elements into the bronze dome above the covering to allow natural light to illuminate the ossuary during the day.

Concerning stone materials, *Beli Venčac* marble with light grey streaks was recommended for crafting the statue's pedestal and the stone portions of the crypt covering. Additionally, the technical report suggested using an Italian variant of 'red coral' stone for the walkable parts. The report includes all tables containing comprehensive drawings of the memorial and construction details for each element, as well as calculations and dimensions of reinforcements for the reinforced concrete in the crypt. Jovan Kratohvil possessed a profound understanding of statics and technical construction aspects; his role extended beyond conceptualising the work to defining its feasibility, overseeing proper project execution, and actively participating in the casting process for the bronze elements.

Considered by Jovan Kratohvil as one of his most successful projects, the Sansepolcro memorial can be regarded as the peak of maturity in one of the most crucial phases of his artistic exploration. Stylistically and formally, his body of work can be divided into four distinct periods: spanning the 1940s and 1950s, his initial engagement with traditional sculpture led to the creation of works with pronounced figurative character. Notable among these are his self-portrait of 1942 and his initial foray into monumental art in 1953 with the creation of a 'Monument to the Fallen Fighters of the People's Revolution 1941-1945' in Zemun.

After participating in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, Jovan Kratohvil ceased his professional involvement in sports and fully immersed himself in artistic activities, embarking on developing an increasingly personal and refined artistic language. He entered a phase of distancing from socialist realism, seeking more stylised and geometrised modulations. The turning point came in 1955 with 'The Pit', a small sculpture of a stylised, volumetrically decomposed human head gazing upward, expressing a scream. This work introduced one of the main leitmotifs in Kratohvil's subsequent production: the theme of suffering, anguish, and dismay caused by the atrocities of war. Having actively participated in the partisan movement and grown up in an intellectual family, Kratohvil staunchly believed in the ideals that guided the Liberation War, dedicating his energies to representing the sufferings from which they emerged.

From the mid-1960s to 1974, forms utterly detached from any reference to nature, except in proportional relationships, were cast and sculpted in iron, bronze, and brass. The Sansepolcro monument represents the culmination of this formal research. Following the biennium '73-'74, Kratohvil did not abandon abstraction but began experimenting with plastic materials, sometimes

used as substitutes for bronze and brass in sculptures similar to those produced earlier, and at times to explore new expressive forms.

Examining various works, what stands out is that, despite the incessant evolution of themes and materials, Kratochvil's distinctive signature manifests itself consistently. The forms of the Sansepolcro memorial seamlessly integrate into this cohesive flow and gain further clarity in an overall view.

In the strict sense, the morphological, symbolic, and material analysis of the monument can be considered concluded. Now that the *where* and the *how* has been established – how the memorial's impulses have become architectural matter and form – we can investigate *why* it was built in Sansepolcro. To do so, it is necessary to explore the local history, primarily linked to the events of the fascist concentration camp in Renicci, and the international context: the monuments in Barletta, Gonars, and Sansepolcro, constructed between 1970 and 1973, all fit into a broader scheme of historical and cultural collaboration initiated in the mid-1960s between Rome and Belgrade, culminating in the signing of the Osimo Treaties in 1975.

3. WHY?

The genesis of the construction of the Sansepolcro monument can be traced back to meetings in early April 1964 between the Delegation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the erection of monuments to the Yugoslavs fallen on the territory of the Italian Republic and the Italian government. Such a dialogue became possible in a political climate undergoing significant changes, particularly in Italy, due to the first true crisis of post-war centrism.

On December 4, 1963, Aldo Moro, secretary of the Christian Democracy party since 1959, guided the birth of the first 'organic centre-left government' in Italian history, including representatives of the Italian Socialist Party within the government. Moro was strongly convinced of the need to maintain ties with socialist countries, ensure conditions of peace and collaboration on the eastern front, and foster friendly relations with neighbouring states. This was seen as vital for Italy's identification as a power capable of mediating between the Western bloc and some Eastern bloc countries, such as Yugoslavia, not aligned with Moscow. Moro's vision included a dynamic political structure for Europe.

Moro's push for the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Italy and Yugoslavia aimed to surpass mere coexistence, seeking to regain influence and economic collaboration with the Balkans. It also sought international confirmation of Italy's sovereignty over Zone A, intending to resolve the issue of the eastern border conclusively and, consequently, the construction of a unified state. Moro also prioritised the economic development of the southern regions, deemed possible only within a framework of peace and prosperity in the Balkan region.

Apart from economic and political reasons, Moro emphasised a system of age-old historical and cultural ties uniting the shores of the Adriatic, along with shared values underpinning their respective struggles for independence and national unity. The authorisation for the construction to commemorate fallen soldiers thus became part of a broader system of socio-cultural collaboration.

In April 1964, a bilateral agreement which regulated the transfer of the remains of fallen soldiers to and from their respective countries during World War II, was signed between Italian and Yugoslav foreign ministers.

Additionally, explicit authorisation was granted to the Yugoslav government to proceed with the permanent arrangement of the graves of its fallen soldiers on Italian territory. Specifically

to transfer and concentrate the remains from various cemeteries and tombs, the Yugoslav government would construct three commemorative ossuaries in cities designated by the competent Italian authorities based on the wishes and requests expressed by the Yugoslav side. The specific locations of the ossuaries, will be determined by mutual agreement between the two delegations.

With the Italo-Yugoslav protocol on the implementation of the exchange of notes from April 15, 1964, for the arrangement of war cemeteries, signed in Rome on July 30, 1971 the cemeteries of Gonars, Sansepolcro, and Prima Porta in Rome were designated, along with the arrangement of a crypt in the municipal cemetery of Gorizia to contain the remains of fighters already interred in the same cemetery. According to this protocol, Gonars would house the remains of those fallen in northern Italy, Sansepolcro, those fallen in central Italy, and Rome, those of fighters buried in cemeteries in the area.

The choice of Sansepolcro as the location for the construction of a memorial for central Italy can be attributed to two main reasons: first, its proximity to the Renicci prison camp where about 160 people died from cold and hardship, and

second, the personal interest of Ottorino Goretti, mayor of Sansepolcro from 1964 to 1976. In the brochure created for the inauguration, preserved in both the archives of the Museum of Resistance in Sansepolcro and the Kratochvil home, it is stated:

The choice of the location where the shrine was erected is not random. Right here, in the local cemetery, the remains of 22 Yugoslav citizens rested for three decades [...] while in two nearby cemeteries in the municipality of Anghiari, 107 Yugoslav internees who died in the Renicci concentration camp were buried between 1942 and 1943.

The Renicci camp was established in 1942 following the issuance of Circular 3C by General Roatta and the roundups in Ljubljana. Lieutenant De Filippis of the Carabinieri highlighted, in the 'Fifteen-day Report on the Spirit and Morale of the Troops and Populations', the necessity of constructing new camps due to the overcrowded conditions of the prisons in Rab, Monigo, and Chiesanuova were already saturated. Initially designed to house prisoners of war, it was transformed into a civilian internment camp from October 1942.

Eight detainees had escaped from Gonars in early October, leading to the decision to move many prisoners to a more isolated location. The first prisoners, all men aged 12 to 70, were deported from Gonars to Renicci on October 7, 1942, when the camp still needed to be fully prepared. Some prisoners reported that the tents, intended as a temporary solution, served as their accommodation throughout the winter, and for some, until September 1943, when the camp was closed, and the prisoners were released.

The Renicci camp quickly became overcrowded. In a report by General Roatta in response to a document from the Vatican, which had been alerted by Catholic circles in Ljubljana about the presence of 30,000 Slovenian internees in Italy, there were 3884 internees at Renicci, in addition to 6557 in Arbe, 2250 in Gonars, 1136 in Monigo, and 3552 in Chiesanuova. These numbers do not complete the picture as both the Vatican and Roatta referred to Slovenians, but certainly, the camps were also inhabited by numerous Montenegrins, Croats, Serbs, and individuals of other nationalities.

The internment conditions, as reported by professors Capogreco and Kersevan, who collected testimonies from former detainees, were highly precarious. This was evident in hygiene and health due to the lack of running water, nutritional inadequacy, and the absence of structures allowing detainees to endure the consequences of an exceptionally harsh winter. The first of the 160 internees who perished in Renicci died in November 1942. The majority of the victims did not die from violent causes but instead succumbed to cold,

deprivation, or infections primarily caused by the consumption of raw acorns collected from the numerous oaks in the area. After the camp's closure in 1943, local residents gained access to warehouses where numerous blankets and supplies were found, which had not been deliberately distributed to the internees.

The political life at Renicci was particularly active, as many prisoners who had caused difficulties managing unrest at Gonars were transferred here. Among the most significant testimonies is that of Lojze Bukovac, head of the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People in Rakek, where he was arrested for subversive activities. Along with others, he initiated numerous internal protests, including the one on September 9, 1943. The news of the armistice between Italy and the Allies had circulated among the prisoners the previous evening, leading to the establishment of a committee with representatives from various barracks that would organise a protest the next day, only quelled through the use of weapons. The standoff persisted until September 14, when leaders fled upon seeing a group of German soldiers. Seizing the opportunity, prisoners began fleeing to the surrounding areas.

Some sought refuge in the mountains, specifically on the nearby Alpe della Luna, while others found shelter in the homes of local farmers who cared for and fed them. Some joined local battalions to participate in a liberation war similar to the one their compatriots were waging in their homeland. The solidarity of the farmers in the areas surrounding Renicci and Anghiari was recalled both by the testimonies of survivors and in the brochure for the inauguration ceremony, as well as in Ottorino Goretti's speech on the same occasion.

Surviving Yugoslavs, who, during the Liberation War, were in Italy as internees or refugees from prisons and concentration camps, or as members of the Italian Resistance Movement, cherish an unforgettable memory. This is primarily of a large number of Italian farmers who, despite the constant danger of Nazi reprisals, offered them fraternal hospitality, sharing their last piece of bread and the last cup of milk. For this reason, they renewed the bonds of close friendship forged during the war, deepening them through reciprocal visits that significantly contributed to the post-war development of relations between Italy and the Yugoslav Peoples.

Our city and our valley have a strong partisan tradition. Many Yugoslavs fought, struggled, and suffered alongside our patriots in our mountains. Civilian populations, at great risk, welcomed Yugoslav citizens into their homes as if they were brothers.

The community of the upper Tiber Valley is a virtuous example, even today, of the value of preserving historical memory and transmitting testimonies related to the Resistance, fought both in Italy and Yugoslavia. Local history expert Alvaro Tacchini, along with the Resistance Museum of Sansepolcro, is working on a publication to reconstruct the events of those from the upper Tiber region who, in the ranks of the Italian partisan division Garibaldi, took part in the Liberation War in the Balkans. The strong partisan tradition of the Sansepolcro community, as mentioned by Goretti in his speech, found a perfect embodiment in his role as an administrator, which was the necessary impetus for the definitive assignment of the small town of Sansepolcro as the guardian of the memory of this shared history.



Comitato Provinciale ANPI AREZZO

Gli antifascisti italiani ricordano con commozione e riconoscenza l'eroico sacrificio dei partigiani jugoslavi caduti in Italia nella lotta contro il nazifascismo.

Il generoso contributo dei partigiani jugoslavi liberati dai campi di concentramento di Renicci e Laterina alla lotta per la liberazione del nostro Paese è testimoniato dal numero dei caduti, 446 nel centro Italia di cui ben 132 nella sola Provincia di Arezzo.

Gli antifascisti e i partigiani italiani ricordano nella circostanza della inaugurazione del Monumento Ossario dei partigiani jugoslavi in Sansepolcro, i caduti della divisione "GARIBALDI", che in terra di Jugoslavia combatterono a fianco dei partigiani di quel Paese contro lo stesso nemico. Il ricordo del sangue insieme versato per la causa della libertà dei popoli costituisce l'impegno più solenne per il rafforzamento dell'amicizia fra i popoli jugoslavi ed italiani, per la comune volontà di lottare contro ogni tentativo di rinascita del fascismo e per la pace fra tutti i popoli.

Arezzo, 15 Dicembre 1973.

Il Comitato Provinciale dell'ANPI

FIGURE 10: ANPI poster calling for participation to the inauguration ceremony .

Photographs of the memorial's inauguration ceremony, as well as articles published in 'La Nazione' testify to how the citizenry, called to participate by posters (Figure 10) coordinated by the municipality and the provincial committee of ANPI in Arezzo, responded with enthusiasm and significant involvement in the event.

Nearby Renicci, close to the locality Motina, Ottorino and Odilio Goretti's parents ran a grocery store and knew what was happening in the camp. Mazzina, who later married Ottorino Goretti, had been a partisan courier, and her family had hosted a young Montenegrin who had escaped from the Renicci camp for about a year. The physical proximity during their youth and awareness of the events inside the Renicci camp left the two Goretti brothers deeply affected. Ottorino, during his terms as mayor, formally contacted the embassy of the SFRY and personally assisted in the operations of the 'Delegation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the erection of monuments to the Yugoslavs who fell on the territory of the Italian Republic'. He became personal friends with Jovan 'Lola' Vujosevic, a colonel in the Yugoslav People's Army, who played a prominent role in the commission's work, especially in the bureaucratic operations necessary to recognise and transfer the remains. Ottorino Goretti proposed the resolution, leading to Sansepolcro City Council resolution no. 25 of April 2, 1970 whereby the cemetery lot on which the monument was later built was loaned to the SFRY.

Ottorino Goretti's commitment throughout the procedural process of constructing the memorial, from preliminary operations to organising and promoting the inauguration day, is attested by three specific events. Following the ceremony on December 15, 1973, the head of the delegation, Nevenka Novakovic, wanted to offer, at her own expense, a reception in the municipal palace of Sansepolcro in honour of Ottorino Goretti and his collaborators. She delivered a speech during the reception in which she repeatedly thanked the administration.

Preceding this inauguration were numerous discussions and commitments, among which the highlights include the transfer of land by the Municipality of Sansepolcro and the selection of the company for executing the works. In all these operations, active assistance was provided by the competent authorities, the Municipality, and particularly its Mayor, Mr. Ottorino Goretti, along with his collaborators.

Two other significant acknowledgements of Goretti's commitment were firstly the award by the SFRY of a certificate of thanks 'for the diligent and caring custody of the graves of Yugoslav fighters, fallen, dead, and missing,

who sacrificed their lives for freedom and forever rest in Italian soil, serving as a perpetual bond between neighbouring peoples and as a warning to future generations to develop collaboration and friendship between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Italian Republic'. Secondly, in 1975, the Order of the Yugoslav Flag with the Golden Crown was conferred. Jovan Kratohvil's sons still cherish fond memories of the days spent in 1973 in Sansepolcro while their father was working on constructing the monument. The deep friendship between the Goretti and Kratohvil families continued for many years after 1973. The interpersonal collaboration and sharing of ideals between Kratohvil and Goretti reflect the ideals of unity and brotherhood among peoples that the monument was meant to testify.

Within the Kratohvil family archive, a Christmas greeting card from Goretti dated 1978 can be found:

Sansepolcro, Christmas 1978. Always remembering him with great sympathy and looking forward to his return to Sansepolcro for the promised exhibition of his works, we wish happy holidays and a happy and serene new year. Ottorino Goretti and family.

Unfortunately, the promised exhibition of Kratohvil's works never took place. However, on the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration, on December 15, 2023, a small exhibition dedicated to the memorial was inaugurated in the exhibition hall of the Palazzo Pretorio in Sansepolcro, curated by the Resistance Museum; one section was dedicated to the life and works of Jovan Kratohvil.

The Resistance Museum of Sansepolcro was established in 1977 at the behest of Odilio Goretti, Ottorino's brother. It is a valuable collection of texts, documents, and historical objects whose value is nationally recognised, and its archive has proven crucial for many specialised research projects, including this text.

As Goretti hoped in his speech, the connection between the city of Sansepolcro and the SFRY continued over the years. Particularly during the administration of Ivano del Furia, mayor after Goretti, a twinning agreement, still ongoing, was signed with the Croatian city of Sinj.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the memorial's historical context, typology, and architectural morphology is complete in accordance with the intentions expressed in the introductory chapter. However, the work can only be deemed partially exhaustive. Further research could lead to deeper historical and compositional insights into the memorial.

Access to the competition documentation for the construction of the memorials would be particularly interesting. This would allow us to understand the rules imposed by the committee, shedding light on specific design choices made by the authors, as well as the reasoning provided by the juries for awarding the first prize. Additionally, reviewing the other projects that reached the final stages would broaden the spectrum of design reflections pertaining to the same site. Bibliographic research has already revealed that Živković participated in both the Sansepolcro and Rome Memorial competitions, where Kratochvil and Džamonja also developed alternative designs.

As highlighted in both the introduction and the 'Why' paragraph dedicated to the historical contextualisation of the memorial, four monuments were constructed in Italy at the behest of the Yugoslav government. Despite the geographical distance and morphological differences, studies of the other three memorials, and this paper, illustrate how, despite their intertwined origins, they represent four distinct examples of narrative and typological choices. In Sansepolcro, the sculptural element and the crypt are separated, delineating moments of liturgy and remembrance. In Barletta, the two elements are closely connected, with the sculptural feature resting above the crypt from which it emanates. At Gonars, the theme of passage serves as the primary narrative instrument, while the Rome memorial is constructed through an organic spiral, where the sculptural element bends the surrounding terrain.

The scale of all four interventions differs, yet, in every case—particularly in Sansepolcro, given the narrow lot and its proximity to other chapels—the challenge for the four artists was to harmoniously integrate the socialist modernist monument within cemeteries, which are already strongly characterised, without compromising their integrity. Rhythm, variations in symmetry, attention to materiality, and the perceptual journey are key ingredients present in all four significant interventions, of which this paper has explored one with previously unexamined elements.

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NOTES

- 1 Spomen – Kosturnica Sansepolcro, 1973, p. 9
- 2 <https://www.arezzonotizie.it/attualita/strada-intitolata-a-ottorino-goretti-sabato-27-maggio-la-cerimonia-a-sansepolcro.html>
- 3 Resolution of the Sansepolcro City Council, no.25, 1970
- 4 Skansi, 2022
- 5 Čubrilo & Bajic, 2022
- 6 On the portal, there is written *Pali i Umrlji*
- 7 On the portal, there is written *Nestali*
- 8 Kratohvil, 1971
- 9 Kratohvil, for example, had already designed a Monument to the Fallen Fighters of the People's Revolution 1941-1945 in Zemun in 1953 and a monument dedicated to the victims of the Avala plane crash in 1965
- 10 Skansi, 2021, p. 211
- 11 Kratohvil, 1971, p. 2
- 12 Ibidem
- 13 Horvatinčić, 2018
- 14 Kratohvil, 1971, p. 2
- 15 Ibidem p.3
- 16 Ibidem
- 17 Ibidem
- 18 Skansi, 2021, p. 211
- 19 Kratohvil, 1971, p. 3
- 20 Ibidem
- 21 Florence newspaper that covers local news from all over Tuscany
- 22 Kratohvil, 1971, p. 5
- 23 Ibidem
- 24 Kratohvil, 1971, p. 7

- 25 In the report, there is written Arandjelovac Marble (Kratohvil, 1971, p.7)
- 26 Čubrilo & Bajic, 2022, p. 327
- 27 For information about the relationship between Italy and Yugoslavia during Moro's governments (Garzia, Monzali, & Bucarelli, 2011)
- 28 Garzia, Monzali, & Bucarelli, 2011, p. 91
- 29 Exchange of notes concerning the meetings in April 1964 BILYUG092, 1964
- 30 Ibidem
- 31 Italo-Yugoslavian Protocol on the Application of the Exchanges of Notes of April 15, 1964, and July 25, 1969, on the Arrangement of War Graves - BILYUG117, 1971
- 32 Spomen – Kosturnica Sansepolcro, 1973
- 33 Capogreco, 2001
- 34 Capogreco, 2004
- 35 Kersevan, 2013, p.81
- 36 Kersevan, 2013
- 37 Capogreco, 1998
- 38 Martocchia, 2011, p. 37
- 39 Spomen – Kosturnica Sansepolcro, 1973
- 40 Goretti, 1973
- 41 National Association of Italian Partisans
- 42 Martocchia, 2011, p. 198
- 43 Municipality of Sansepolcro. (1970, April 2). Resolution of the Sansepolcro City Council, no.25. Sansepolcro, AR, Italy.
- 44 Novakovic, 1973
- 45 Martocchia, 2011, p. 306
- 46 (50° anniversario della inaugurazione del Sacratio degli Slavi, 2023 <https://www.anpi.it/50deg-anniversario-della-inaugurazione-del-sacrario-degli-slavi>)
- 47 Galerija 73 Beograd, Sutjeska, 2019
- 48 Čubrilo & Bajic, 2022
- 49 Tupputi, 2022 | Rizzi, 2007 | Toniato, 2021 | De Sabbata, 2015 | Mariani, 2024