CHAPTER III

THE BLOCK OF REPEN MARBLE

The power of knowing where to strike

1. The second no

25 September 2026.
At 12:05 p.m., a certified email arrives.
Sometimes important things enter our lives without making a sound.
They do not knock.
They do not raise their voice.
They do not need a room full of people.
They arrive in an inbox.
Subject.
Sender.
Attachment.
Digital signature.
You open the document.
You read.
The refusal is confirmed.
The first one had arrived on 11 September.
Two pages.
Four reasons.
The request was too broad.
Too burdensome.
Partly indeterminate.
In some respects exploratory.
Some items, according to the Municipality, would have required analyses it was not obliged to carry out.
Others would have raised confidentiality issues, redactions, and third-party interests.
I had read those reasons many times.
Not to find a sentence to attack.
To understand.
Because a refusal can be read in two ways.
As a wall.
Or as a description of the problem.
The second way is less immediate.
But it is far more useful.
The confirmation of 25 September added one element that made the issue even more difficult.
The Municipality of Monrupino–Repentabor is small.
Fewer than one thousand inhabitants.
Eight employees in total.
Two in the office concerned.
Eight.
Two.
Small numbers.
But precisely for that reason, weighty ones.
Because behind a transparency request there is no abstract machine called Public Administration.
There are people.
Hours.
Deadlines.

Offices.
Budgets.
Taxes.
Contracts.
Civil registry.
Privacy.
Personnel.
Emergencies.
Telephone calls.
Citizens standing at the counter.
And then, inside all of this, a request like mine.
Nine macro-areas.
Six financial years.
Dozens of document types.
The problem could not be dismissed by saying:
the citizen has a right, therefore the administration must simply do everything.
But nor could it end with the opposite conclusion:
the administration is small, therefore the right necessarily becomes smaller.
Between those two statements there was a space.
And that was the space that had to be understood.

2. Eight people

There are numbers that seem like nothing more than numbers until you try to imagine them as people.
Eight employees.
You imagine eight desks.
Eight lives.
Eight calendars.
Eight people who have to keep a Municipality running.
Then you narrow the frame further.
The office concerned.
Two.
At that point, even a word such as “burden” changes substance.
It is no longer only a legal category.
It becomes time.
How much time does it take to find a document?
How much to determine whether it is the right one?
How much to check it?
How much to redact any personal data?
How much to identify an affected third party?
How much to turn an archive built for administration into an archive ready to answer an external question?
The problem was real.
And precisely because it was real, I did not want to oversimplify it.
The Switzerland of the Karst had not been born to prove a thesis.
It had been born to test one.
Listen.
Study.
Compare.
Design.
Verify.
Build.
If a fact contradicts part of your idea, you do not eliminate the fact.
You change the idea.

Or make it more precise.
Reality does not have to adapt to the project.
The project has to survive reality.

3. Do not defend everything

The first refusal contained criticisms that could be challenged.
But it also contained others that deserved to be heard.
The request was broad.
That was true.
Some formulations were too open-ended.
That too was, at least in part, true.
“Further attachments.”
“Any schedules.”
“Further summary schedules.”
Expressions that, when written by the person making the request, seem harmless.
Read from the other side of the counter, however, that plural can mean:
open the archives and search for everything that might perhaps fall within this wording.
Was it really necessary to defend those words?
No.
So they were narrowed.
If a formulation forced the offices into an open-ended exploratory search, I did not insist on it.
What remained were specifically identified documents.
Budgets.
Financial statements.
Reports.
Inventories.
Programmes.
Acts.
Schedules already in existence and concretely identifiable.
The request became smaller.
But was that a loss?
Not necessarily.
Sometimes removing something makes the rest stronger.
Stone teaches that too.
The largest block is not always the most useful one.

4. Correcting yourself

Then there was something even less pleasant.
A mistake of my own.
In the first request for reconsideration, I had reconstructed the sequence of 11 September incorrectly.
I had written that, at the time the request for reconsideration was submitted, no express decision appeared to have been received yet.
When I checked the certified emails again, the picture was different.
The refusal had already arrived that morning.
The request for reconsideration had been sent afterwards.
A few hours.
But hours, in a chronology, are not opinions.
They are before.
And after.
I could have ignored it.
Probably no one would have built a monument to those few hours.
But if your method is verification, you cannot apply it only to others.
On 24 September the chronology was formally corrected.
The refusal had arrived before the request for reconsideration.

Full stop.
Other questions remained.
The deadline.
The reasoning.
Proportionality.
The possibility of partial access.
But that sentence was wrong.
So it had to be corrected.
It seems like a small thing.
It is not.
Because there is a very strong temptation when you begin to believe in a project.
To protect it.
To protect its words.
To protect its conclusions.
To protect even its mistakes.
But from that moment on, you are no longer searching.
You are defending.
And this book was not supposed to become a defence.

5. Ten hours

The day of 24 September contains another sequence that deserves to be told without forcing it.
At 10:53 in the morning, the Head of Corruption Prevention and Transparency signs the final decision.
The refusal is confirmed.
I, however, had not yet received that decision.
During the day I kept working on the file.
I reread.
Corrected.
Tightened.
Separated.
At 8:11 p.m. I sent the Municipality a formal supplement, clarification and correction to the request for reconsideration.
It was an important document.
It expressly acknowledged the breadth of the original request.
It removed residual formulations that could lead to exploratory searches.
It reiterated that I was not asking for new documents to be created.
It distinguished between documents already drawn up, documents not yet drawn up, and raw data that would have required a new analysis.
It asked for documents already published to be separated from those not published.
Digital documents from those that would have required a manual search.
Documents containing personal data from those that did not present that problem.
And it retained several precise priorities.
The 2024 financial statement.
The 2021 and 2022 financial statements.
The missing attachments for 2023.
But there was one indisputable fact.
When that certified email arrived, the decision had already been signed.
Ten hours earlier.
To expect a decision made at 10:53 a.m. to contain an assessment of a document that arrived at 8:11 p.m. would have been impossible.
And in the appeal to the Civic Ombudsman this is expressly acknowledged.
I did not want to manufacture a defect where time itself made one impossible.
But the story does not end at 10:53 a.m.
Because the decision was not communicated to me that day.

It arrived the following day.
25 September.
12:05 p.m.
When that certified email left the administration and reached my inbox, my supplement had already reached the Municipality the previous evening.
This does not rewrite the decision.
It does not retroactively enable it to know what it could not have known when it was signed.
But it raises a different question.
More subtle.
More interesting.
At the moment when the final refusal was communicated, the administration already had a document in which the scope of the request had been further narrowed and clarified.
The document sent at 8:11 p.m. did not broaden the request.
It did the opposite.
It narrowed it.
Removed.
Clarified.
Separated.
Renounced.
The question later put to the Civic Ombudsman would be precisely this:
did those clarifications, by then already in existence and received, change the problem enough to require reconsideration of the entirely negative response?
It was not for me to decide.
But it could no longer be ignored as an element of the story.

6. The value of time

In administrative disputes, time often looks like a row of dates.
11 August.
11 September.
24 September.
25 September.
But inside those dates there is something more.
There is what a person could know at a given moment.
What they could not know.
What had already been drawn up.
What had been communicated.
What arrived later.
An honest story must respect time.
It cannot take a document from the future and artificially place it in the past simply because that makes its own thesis stronger.
But it must also do the opposite.
It cannot freeze time at a signature when, before communication, something happened that may matter for the next stage.
Precision does not simplify.
It complicates.
But it makes stories true.

7. The boundary

At that point, the appeal to the Civic Ombudsman could not be:
I am right, the Municipality is wrong.
That would have been too simple.
The question had become:
even accepting that the original request was broad;

even recognising that a Municipality with eight employees must be protected from genuinely unreasonable burdens;
even accepting that some formulations were too open-ended;
even excluding new analyses;
even narrowing the categories;
was it still necessary to maintain a complete refusal?
Or could some parts be handled differently?
Documents already published.
Documents already in digital form.
Documents immediately identifiable.
Documents without particular privacy issues.
Priority documents.
The issue was no longer about absolutes.
It was about the boundary.
And it is at boundaries that law often becomes interesting.

8. Then the question changed

For weeks I had been thinking about what a citizen could ask for.
Then, almost suddenly, the question reversed itself.
What if some of what I was looking for should not have had to be requested at all?
Not because I had no right to know it.
For the opposite reason.
Because it should already have been public.
This distinction changes everything.
Generalised civic access asks.
Simple civic access begins from a different question:
has what the law requires to be published actually been published?
They were not two identical requests.
And not everything I had requested in August was subject to mandatory publication.
That must be said clearly.
But there was an overlap.
Budgets.
Financial statements.
Shareholdings.
Asset information.
Payments.
And other categories.
At that point the problem was no longer only:
how much work does it take to find these documents?
It also became:
how much of this work would be unnecessary if what must be public were already organised, accessible and easy to consult?
It was a completely different question.

9. Twenty-five

On 26 September the new request took shape.
Twenty-five categories.
Seen from a distance, it almost looked like a provocation.
The first request had been considered enormous.
The new one cut across practically the entire “Transparent Administration” section.
Organisation.
Appointments.
Personnel.
Competitions.

Performance.
Shareholdings.
Measures.
Proceedings.
Contributions.
Budgets.
Controls.
Assets.
Services.
Payments.
Contracts.
Public works.
Planning.
Environment.
Access.
Anti-corruption.
And more.
But the new request followed the opposite logic.
It did not say:
search for everything that interests me.
It said:
if the law requires you to publish it, check whether you have published it.
If it is already there:
give me the link.
If it is incomplete:
complete it.
If it is missing and the obligation exists:
publish it.
If the obligation does not apply to this Municipality:
tell me.
A response could even be a single line.
“Not applicable.”
That too would have been information.

10. The grid

Then came a document.
A grid.
Sometimes administrative truth takes forms that are not very romantic.
Columns.
Cells.
Yes.
No.
Complete.
Incomplete.
Published.
Not published.
And yet, inside those boxes there was a trace.
The review relating to 2024, dated 9 January 2025, identified certain issues.
Consultants.
Performance.
Controlled entities.
Contributions.
Assets.
Fees.

Services.
Payment data.
The temptation was obvious.
To write:
here is the proof.
But proof of what?
Of the situation recorded then.
Not necessarily of the situation now.
Between January 2025 and September 2026 there is an interval.
In that interval a Municipality can correct.
Publish.
Update.
Migrate a website.
Put an archive in order.
So a language was needed that could respect time.

11. Three words

In the end we found three formulations.
Documented deficiency.
To be verified.
Not found.
They sound like office language.
Instead, they contain a moral discipline.
Documented deficiency:
an official source had indicated that situation at that time.
To be verified:
we do not know whether it is still so.
Not found:
I was unable to locate it.
Not:
it does not exist.
Not:
it was hidden.
Not:
the Municipality never published it.
Only:
I did not find it.
Perhaps the entire difference between research and polemic can lie here.
In the ability not to turn what we do not know into what we would like to prove.

12. Asking for verification

The report to ANAC was born in the same way.
Not as a complaint in the ordinary sense of the word.
Not as a request for punishment.
But as a request for verification.
Do these deficiencies identified in 2025 still exist?
Are these data published today?
Do these links work?
Did the website migration preserve the archives?
Are the historical series accessible?
Are the documents we were unable to find published elsewhere?
Verify.
That word again.
Perhaps I was beginning to understand that the whole project revolved around it.

Not being right.
Verifying.

13. The problem becomes bigger than the Municipality

At that point the issue slowly moved beyond the file.
Not because the file had lost importance.
But because it had revealed something larger.
If a small Municipality has very few people, and those people must simultaneously administer a growing number of specialised functions, can the solution simply be to ask the citizen to demand less?
Perhaps sometimes yes.
If the request is disproportionate.
But what if the weakness is not about that request?
What if it concerns the structure?
What if it recurs in transparency, privacy, contracts, digitalisation, European projects, document management?
Then the block is no longer the request.
It is the system.

14. The Republic

That is why a letter was sent.
To the President of the Republic.
To the Region.
To ANCI.
To ANAC.
To the Civic Ombudsman.
To the Department for Public Administration.
To the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.
Not to ask:
tell me that the Municipality is wrong.
The letter said precisely the opposite.
The legality of the individual measure belonged to the remedies provided by law.
The question was another one.
If the same right belongs to everyone, how can we prevent its practical effectiveness from depending on the administrative size of the Municipality in which a person lives?
It was a question about the system.
And the more I looked at it, the more familiar it seemed.
Because the Karst is full of things that look small only from a distance.

15. Repen

Repen is not a place that needs to explain stone to you.
The stone is already there.
Under the houses.
In the walls.
In the courtyards.
Along the roadsides.
In the marks left by people.
In the landscape.
There are territories where the material from which one builds seems almost a choice.
Not here.
Here stone is a presence.
We call it Repen stone.
At home, in the language of work and memory, it could simply become marble.
Repen marble.

Hard.
Pale.
Compact.
A material that gives nothing away for free.
To work it, strength is not enough.
You have to know it.
Know how a vein runs.
Where the stone holds.
Where it gives way.
Where enormous force is absorbed.
And where, instead, one precise gesture is enough.
I did not learn this from a book.
I saw it.

16. My grandfather

My grandfather was from Repen.
He was a man of stone.
He was not a big man.
Not one of those men who fill a room simply by entering it.
His strength did not need to be seen.
He had lived through a century that asked things of men that no century should ask.
The story passed down in my family says that during the war he was forced to leave with the Italian army.
Africa.
Then Greece.
Places that, for me as a child, were not geography.
They were words spoken by adults.
Words with weight.
In Greece, according to that family memory, he was ordered to kill a man.
Not with a pistol.
Not from a distance that would allow the act to be hidden.
With the butt of a rifle.
Up close.
Looking at another man.
My grandfather refused.
The Greek man lived.
I do not know what words were spoken at that moment.
I do not know how much time he had to decide.
Perhaps very little.
Perhaps none.
I know only what I was told.
He said no.
And that no had a price.

17. The price of a no

According to the story passed down in my family, he was tried by the Nazi-Fascists for treason.
Then he was sent far away.
Into the Nazi concentration camp system.
As far as Dachau and Auschwitz.
There are words that, once written, become too small for what they contain.
Auschwitz is one of them.
I do not want to turn my family's memory into a historical reconstruction that I do not yet possess.
There are records to search.
Dates to verify.

Transfers to reconstruct.
Memory is not an archive.
Memory preserves things differently.
It preserves a sentence.
An image.
A silence.
A gesture.
I remember the numbers my grandfather showed me on his arm.
As a child I did not know what they truly meant.
I knew only that they belonged to a part of his life that seemed to come from a place where the world had stopped working.
I did not yet know how to distinguish one camp from another.
I knew nothing about registration systems.
I did not know the archives.
I knew my grandfather's arm.
And those numbers.
That is what I can say.
The rest will have to be verified.
Here too.
Especially here.

18. Forty kilos

When he returned, according to what I have always heard in the family, he weighed about forty kilograms.
Forty.
Look at that number for a moment.
Not as a statistic.
As a body.
A man reduced to almost half of himself.
Bones.
Skin.
Silence.
And then home.
Repen.
The Karst.
The stone.
How do you begin again after something like that?
I do not know.
Perhaps no one who has not lived through it can know.
My grandfather began again by working.
He returned to stone.
He opened a quarry.
Or returned to building his life within that trade.
The hardness of Repen marble must have seemed different to him after he had known the hardness of men.
Stone can be hard.
But stone does not hate.
It does not humiliate.
It does not betray.
Stone resists.
And that is an enormous difference.
If you know it, you can work it.

19. Children's problems

I, on the other hand, was a child.
And children possess a privilege that they lose as they grow up.
Their problems can be tiny and still occupy the entire universe.
Something does not work.
A fear.
A school assignment.
Something I cannot manage to do.
To me it was enormous.
My grandfather listened.
Then he brought me back to a different scale.
Today I cannot guarantee every word.
I can guarantee the meaning that remained with me.
He would say something like:
I survived that.
You can solve a million problems like this.
A million.
And then:
believe me.
That word mattered.
Believe me.
It did not mean:
your problem does not matter.
It meant:
do not confuse what seems impossible to you today with what is truly impossible.
I did not understand yet.
But I remembered.

20. The quarry

One day he took me with him to the quarry.
It is one of those memories that time does not preserve like a film.
It preserves fragments.
The light.
The dust.
The noise.
The dirty white of the stone.
The metal of the tools.
The hands.
The men.
To me they were giants.
Big men.
Broad shoulders.
Arms used to lifting things I could not even move.
They were working around a boulder.
A great block of Repen stone.
It seemed to belong more to the mountain than to men.
They struck it.
A sledgehammer.
Then another.
The sound bounced around the quarry.
Metal.
Stone.
Dust.
Again.

A hard blow.
Then another.
The block did not open.
It was there.
Stubborn.
Compact.
Indifferent to force.
The men kept at it.
Harder.
Again.
I watched.

21. My grandfather looks at the stone

Then my grandfather arrived.
He did not say:
move aside, I will show you how strong I am.
That would have made no sense.
He was smaller than many of them.
He took his time.
He looked.
That is the image that has remained with me over the years.
My grandfather looking at the stone.
Not at the hammer.
Not at the men.
At the stone.
The surface.
The line.
A small irregularity.
A vein that did not exist for me.
Perhaps a point of tension.
I saw a boulder.
He saw the structure of the boulder.
That is an enormous difference.
He picked up a smaller sledgehammer.
Much smaller than the ones the others had used.
He stepped closer.
He did not draw back for the blow as though he had to challenge the mountain.
He raised one hand.
An almost modest gesture.
Then he struck.
Once.
Sharp.
The sound was different.
And the block opened.

22. Two halves

Two halves.
What I remember most is the disbelief.
The big men.
The big tools.
The big blows.
Then that small man.
A small sledgehammer.
A single blow.

To a child it was magic.
My grandfather explained that it was not.
It was craft.
It was knowledge.
The meaning of what he told me was this:
if you know what you are doing and truly know the stone, you do not need to be the strongest.
You have to know where to strike.
That is the power of knowledge.
Not strength.
Knowledge.
Perhaps that was one of the most important lessons of my life.
And for many years I did not know that I had learned it.

23. Repen marble

Karst stone is in no hurry.
It was there long before us.
It will be there long after us.
We arrive with our hands.
Our tools.
Our presumption.
We think a bigger hammer can solve everything.
The stone does not take offence.
It does not react.
It absorbs the blow.
And remains.
Until someone understands it.
In my family's memory, Repen marble was this.
Hardness.
But not only hardness.
Order.
Structure.
Direction.
A resistance that cannot be defeated by insulting it.
You have to read it.
Knowing the stone means respecting it enough to understand that it will not give way where you want it to.
It will give way where it can.
Perhaps the same is true of problems.

24. Many years later

Many years later I found myself in front of another block.
It was not white.
It raised no dust.
It made no sound.
It was made of words.
Article 5.
Paragraph 2.
Article 5-bis.
Protocol No. 3535.
Refusal.
Reconsideration.
Digital signature.
Affected third parties.
Proportionality.

Privacy.
Good administration.
Transparent Administration.
ANAC.
Civic Ombudsman.
Certified email.
A block of paper and bits.
And the first temptation, when facing a block, is always the same.
To strike harder.
If the first request does not work:
make a tougher one.
If a refusal arrives:
raise your voice.
If a second refusal arrives:
accuse.
If something cannot be found:
say it was hidden.
If someone does not answer as we would like:
attribute an intention to them.
More force.
More noise.
More hammers.
But the quarry had taught me something else.

25. Look first

The Municipality says:
the request is too large.
Look.
Perhaps it is.
Reduce it.
The Municipality says:
some formulations are exploratory.
Look.
Perhaps some of them are.
Remove them.
The Municipality says:
some schedules would require new analyses.
Look.
Distinguish.
If it already exists, ask for it.
If it does not exist, do not demand that it be created.
The Municipality raises privacy concerns.
Look.
Which documents?
Which data?
Which can be redacted?
The final refusal arrives.
Look.
There is external review.
Use it.
You find an OIV grid.
Look.
Do not turn a deficiency recorded in 2025 into a fault in 2026 without verifying it.
You cannot find a document.

Look.
Write:
not found.
Not:
non-existent.
Then you discover that some information is subject to mandatory publication.
Change instrument.
Simple civic access.
Do not strike harder.
Know the stone better.

26. Thank you, Grandfather

I do not know when I understood that that day in the quarry had something to do with all of this.
Perhaps when I began writing these pages.
Perhaps when I lined up the certified emails.
Perhaps when I corrected my own chronology.
Perhaps when I realised that giving up a mistaken formulation made the rest stronger.
Perhaps when I wrote “not found” instead of choosing a more accusatory word.
At a certain point I saw it.
I was still there.
The child in the quarry.
The block in front of me.
The men striking it.
And my grandfather looking.
He was no longer looking for more force.
He was looking for the point.
Perhaps part of the method of The Switzerland of the Karst was born then.
Long before The Switzerland of the Karst existed.
Long before I knew what FOIA was.
Long before I had a certified email account.
In a quarry in Repen.
Thank you, Grandfather.

27. The block is not the Municipality

But this is precisely where we have to stop.
Because every metaphor, if pushed too far, becomes false.
The block is not the Municipality.
The block is not the Municipal Secretary.
It is not the eight employees.
It is not the two people in the office.
It is not the person who signed the refusal.
An administration is not something to be broken.
It is something that has to work.
The block is the problem.
And the problem changes shape.
It can be an overly broad request.
It can be an archive that is difficult to search.
It can be a complicated obligation.
It can be a migrated website.
It can be a missing skill.
It can be a structure too small to support, on its own, all the functions assigned to it.
It can even be a conviction held by the citizen.
A mistake of one's own.
A sentence of one's own.

An idea that must be broken before the block is.

28. Fewer staff

Eight employees.
Let us return there.
If a very broad request requires disproportionate work, the problem may be the request.
But if an ordinary function becomes difficult because the available capacity is structurally minimal, the problem cannot be solved indefinitely by asking the citizen to give up.
There is a difference.
An exceptionally burdensome request.
A permanently fragile structure.
Confusing the two would mean using an answer suited to an individual case to address a systemic problem.
And perhaps this had now become the real question.
Not:
how do we force a small Municipality to do what it cannot manage to do?
But:
how do we prevent a small Municipality from being left alone to face functions that require skills it cannot realistically possess entirely in-house?

29. Not citizen against employee

The easiest conflict to tell is:
citizen against Municipality.
It is also the least interesting.
Because the employee who has to search for a hundred documents and the citizen trying to exercise a right may be victims of the same thing.
Poor organisation.
A difficult archive.
Systems that do not communicate.
Duplicated obligations.
Separate platforms.
Skills fragmented too widely.
Procedures designed for large administrations and applied to tiny structures as well.
The citizen sees a right become difficult to exercise.
The employee sees their work multiply.
Setting them against one another means we have not yet understood the stone.

30. The third way

The solution cannot necessarily be to hire dozens of specialists in every small Municipality.
But nor can it be to accept a gradual reduction in the practical effectiveness of services and rights.
There is another possibility.
Share capacity.
A supra-municipal service for transparency, privacy and access.
A shared digital archive.
Shared specialists.
Regional platforms.
Standard procedures.
Interoperability.
Support from the Provinces.
Regional assistance.
Automation of publication processes.
A document properly registered today is a document that no one will have to reconstruct tomorrow.
Good transparency does not necessarily create more work.
It can eliminate it.

31. The invisible infrastructure

In the first chapter we spoke about biodiversity.
Stone.
Agriculture.
Businesses.
Funding.
The border.
Europe.
Heritage.
All visible things.
Then this path led us inside something that cannot be seen.
Administrative capacity.
And yet without that capacity, many of the other things remain only possibilities.
To obtain funding, someone has to know how to read a call for proposals.
To manage assets, you need to know what you own.
To design a public work, you need data.
To build a partnership, you need skills.
To evaluate an investment, you need financial statements.
To imagine the future, you need to know the present.
Administration is infrastructure.
Invisible.
But fundamental.

32. A small territory

The Switzerland of the Karst was born from a question.
How can a small territory turn its scale into an advantage?
Perhaps now we knew another part of the answer.
Being small is not enough.
Smallness has to be organised.
The skills that cannot fit within one Municipality must be able to exist somewhere else.
Region.
Province.
Shared structures.
Networks.
Platforms.
Small can be agile.
But only if it is not forced to reproduce in miniature everything that a large organisation can distribute across dozens of offices.

33. Strength and craft

My grandfather did not split that stone because he was stronger.
That is what I remember.
He split it because he knew the craft.
And perhaps this is precisely the difference between administering and reacting.
Reacting means responding to the problem when it arrives.
Administering means building a system in which many problems do not even have to arise in the same form.
If documents are organised, finding them costs less.
If data are published, many requests never arrive.
If platforms communicate, there is no need to reconstruct information.
If skills are shared, no small office has to become expert in everything.
This is applied knowledge.
Not force.

34. Not knowing

As I close this part of the story, many answers still do not exist.
I do not know what the Civic Ombudsman will decide.
I do not know what assessment ANAC will make.
I do not know what the response to the new request for simple civic access will be.
I do not know which of the issues recorded in 2025 have already been corrected.
I do not know whether some documents we were unable to find are in fact perfectly well published in a section we did not identify.
I do not know.
For many years I thought “I do not know” was a weakness.
Today it seems to me one of the most important sentences in this book.
Because it marks the exact point where what we have verified ends.
And where what we still need to learn begins.

35. What I know

But I do know some things.
I know that the first request was very broad.
I know that it could have been improved.
I know that the Municipality rejected it.
I know the reasons it said it had rejected it.
I know that the reconsideration confirmed that refusal.
I know that at 10:53 a.m. on 24 September that decision had already been signed.
I know that at 8:11 p.m. the same day I sent a supplement that narrowed and clarified the request.
I know that at 12:05 p.m. on 25 September the decision was communicated to me when that supplement had already been transmitted to the administration.
I know that the matter was then submitted to the Civic Ombudsman precisely without claiming that the document sent at 8:11 p.m. could have been known at 10:53 a.m.
I know that publication obligations exist separately from generalised civic access.
I know that an official grid had identified certain issues at an earlier point in time.
I know that I cannot automatically turn those historical issues into a description of the present.
I know that failing to find something does not mean proving that it does not exist.
I know that a small Municipality can face real capacity problems.
And I know that those problems deserve a better solution than a permanent clash between the person asking and the person who has to answer.

36. The vein

Perhaps knowing a problem means precisely this.
Not looking only at the surface.
Looking for the vein.
The point at which things change nature.
A broad request becomes a narrowed request.
A refusal becomes a question about review.
An organisational difficulty becomes a question about administrative capacity.
A document not found becomes a verification.
A local case becomes an institutional question.
A memory becomes a method.
And a block stops being only a block.

37. One blow

As a child I saw a small man.
An enormous block.
And a sledgehammer.
I thought the miracle was the blow.

It was not.
The blow was only the final thing.
Before it came years of craft.
Stone touched.
Stone listened to.
Stone misread.
Stone understood.
Knowledge had prepared that gesture long before I saw it.
Perhaps the same is true here.
At first I thought the problem was obtaining documents.
Then I had to understand which documents I could ask for.
Which had to exist.
Which did not have to be created.
Which could be redacted.
Which were already public.
Which should have been public.
Which I had simply failed to find.
What capacity an administration needed to manage all of this.
The block had not become smaller.
I had begun to see its structure.
And that, in the end, had been the lesson.
The same one.
From the quarry to the file.
From Repen marble to a certified email inbox.
You do not always need a bigger hammer.
Sometimes you need to know.
To look.
To understand.
To wait.
And then to find the point.
The others had tried force.
My grandfather knew the stone.

P.S.

Sometimes I think that all of this — the certified emails, the paragraphs of law, the refusals, the grids, the checks — is only a complicated way of returning to that quarry. To that child watching the big men strike the stone without managing to open it. To that grandfather who did not need strength, but the ability to see.
When I work on a document, when I correct a sentence, when I remove a formulation that serves no purpose, when I acknowledge a mistake of my own, I find the same calm again. The same attention. The same patience.
I am not defending a project. I am looking for the point.
And perhaps, deep down, I am still looking for him. The exact gesture. The invisible vein. The blow that opens the block without breaking it.
Because some stones do not split through force. They open through memory.

ESSENTIAL NOTES AND SOURCES

1. Request for generalised civic access dated 11 August 2026.

Request concerning economic, financial, asset-related and planning documentation, divided into nine macro-areas and referring mainly to the financial years 2020–2025.

2. Refusal decision dated 11 September 2026.

The Municipality gives reasons for the complete rejection by referring to disproportionality and burden, indeterminacy and exploratory character, possible analyses not required by law, and issues concerning confidentiality, redactions and affected third parties.

3. Request for reconsideration dated 11 September 2026.

4. Supplement, clarification and correction dated 24 September 2026.

The document corrects the chronology, expressly acknowledges the breadth of the request, removes residual formulations liable to generate exploratory searches, and distinguishes between documents already drawn up, documents not drawn up, and data that would require new analyses.

5. Confirmation of the refusal by the Head of Corruption Prevention and Transparency (RPCT).

Decision digitally signed on 24 September 2026 at 10:53 a.m. and subsequently communicated to the applicant.

6. Documentary sequence of 24–25 September 2026.

The final decision appears to have been signed at 10:53 a.m. on 24 September; the supplement was sent later, at 8:11 p.m.; the decision was communicated on 25 September at 12:05 p.m. The appeal to the Civic Ombudsman does not claim that the supplement could have been known at the time of signature, but argues that it is relevant to the subsequent assessment of whether the substantive grounds for a total refusal still remained.

7. Appeal to the Regional Civic Ombudsman of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The appeal acknowledges both the breadth of the original request and the relevance of the authority's limited organisational capacity, and asks for a review of the proportionality of maintaining an entirely negative refusal.

8. OIV grid concerning publication obligations.

Review used as a source for the state of publication as at the date considered.

9. Review sheet updated to 25 September 2026.

Introduces the classifications “documented deficiency”, “to be verified” and “not found”, avoiding any equation of failure to locate a document with an established omission.

10. Report to ANAC dated 25 September 2026.

Request for verification of the current state of publication, without requesting sanctions and without presupposing that any violations have been established.

11. Institutional report dated 25 September 2026.

Letter concerning the administrative capacity of small Municipalities and the effective protection of rights, separate from the dispute over the legality of the individual decision.

12. Request for simple civic access dated 26 September 2026.

Independent request concerning data, documents and information subject to mandatory publication, asking for a direct link to material already published and an indication where specific obligations do not apply.

NOTE ON FAMILY MEMORY

The story of the author's grandfather is told in this chapter in the form in which it has been preserved in personal memory and family tradition.

His participation in the war, the periods in Africa and Greece, the refusal of the order he received, the subsequent proceedings, the deportation, and the complete sequence through to Dachau require specific archival research before they can be presented as a fully documented historical reconstruction.
Likewise, the memory of the numbers the grandfather showed on his arm is reported exclusively as the author's recollection, without attributing at this stage either their origin or the place where they were applied.
This distinction does not diminish the value of the testimony.
It applies to memory the same principle that runs through the entire book:
say what we know;
distinguish what we remember;
and verify what can still be verified.